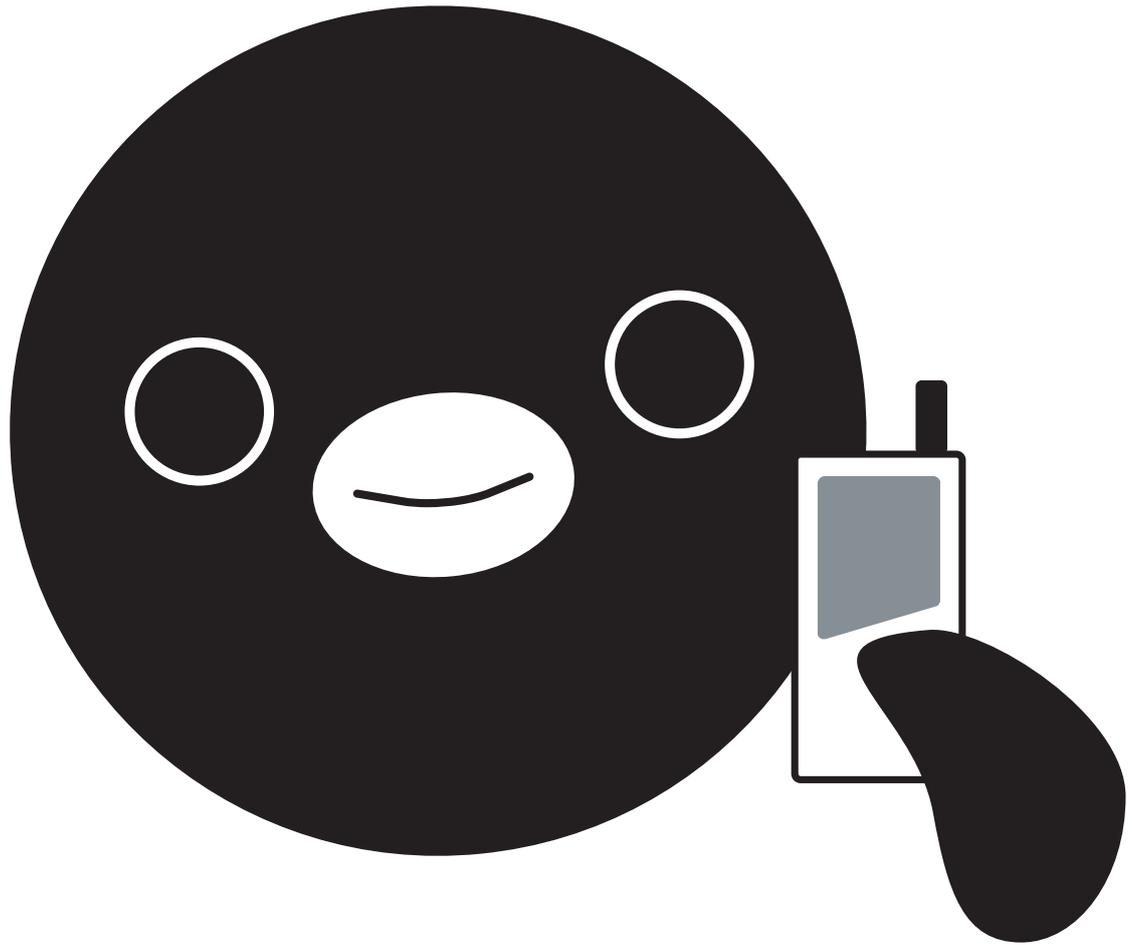


Brief JS01: RFID ICONS



Aims

To think functionally. To develop a sense of how signs can work across different contexts with specific meaning.

Brief

Design an icon or series of icons to communicate the use of RFID technology publicly.

Details

RFID is complex because it is very new and there is no simple metaphor that it easily fits. Explore several elements and think about appropriate representation for those. Think about the following:

The act

Think about how the icon should represent the physical act of activating an RFID tag.

This technology works when the RFID tag is brought near the RFID reader. It is important to show how the RFID tag should be used. One of the ways London Transport manage this is to repeatedly broadcast “remember to always touch in... and out with your Oyster card” over their public address system, their logo also represents an image of the card moving in an arc, the logo being printed on the surface of the reader.

The verb

When you swipe the RFID a transaction will take place. This is true in nearly all situations. I want you to develop icons which represent the verb that takes place when the tag is activated.

Develop icons for the following actions:

Purchase. Your account will be deducted when you swipe. Imagine your switch card was a digital wallet, and you could use RFID instead of chip and PIN. How would you communicate, that when you swipe, you will be charged.

Identify. If you go through this gate your details will be read and known, you could think about a passport.

One Way. If you pass through this door you will not be permitted to leave by it. Think about security at airports.

Download. Imagine your phone had an RFID inside it and when you wave your phone at a reader, a file is downloaded to your phone, perhaps a local map.

Phone. Imagine if when you waved your phone at the reader, it phoned someone, perhaps a helpline.

Destroy. If you used the RFID to store sensitive data, and you wanted to delete the data, like from a memory stick, swiping the RFID will erase the data on the stick.

There might be secondary verbs like Open, or Start. Lifts might require people to identify themselves before they gain access to certain floors. Tickets are often purchased in order to access certain areas, like with Oyster cards.

This is important too, think about how you can combine verbs in the system you develop.

Ownership

RFID cards often work in closed systems, where particular companies or institutions have ownership over the system. Starbucks have just released a 'smart card'. Think about how this can be represented along side the verbs too. You could think about graphic consistency or colour, or perhaps there is a feature of the icon like a character, which appears across the brand.

For the branding side, Don't get distracted by a specific brand that already exists. I want you to just think about the kind of business. So think about the following:

- an international transport company like an airline.
- a money system, like a bank
- a supermarket

Some points to remember:

The icons should be universal as possible, so English language or culturally specific meaning could make the icon obscure to some people.

Think about the context of the reader, does this icon go on doors, busses, airports etc?

Deliverables:

For Thursday 23rd at 9am bring the following: **40 sketches with assorted ideas for Act, Verb and Brand.**

Resources

Background on the technology:

<http://technology.guardian.co.uk/online/story/0,3605,1260978,00.html>

Some existing icons. I recommend you look at these after you have done some sketches already. I want original thinking.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/timo/197626853/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/julianbleecker/214082563/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/timo/191771413/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/timo/191774129/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/timo/181969867/>

The sketches should be good, not widdly little drawings in a sketch book, make sure the drawings can be seen clearly at a distance. Also, the design should be good, not bad. So try to make it good.

Research

Look at signage and icons in the world and think about how they communicate acts and verbs. Bring in some examples that have influenced your work.