

THE NEW YORKER

VISUALIZING INFORMATION SPACE
PROCESS BOOK

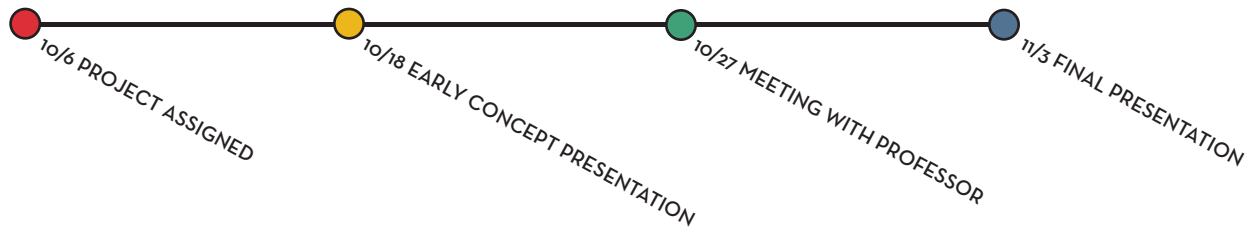
MOLLY LAFFERTY



The New Yorker iPad application

OUR TASK

Visualize the information space of your assigned artifact. Make use of Wurman's five hat racks as a way to organize and filter your information. After you fully grasp the information space, explore how to represent this as a large printed poster. Your goal is to clearly explain the content, structure, and navigation of your information piece in an engaging manner.



MY ARTIFACT

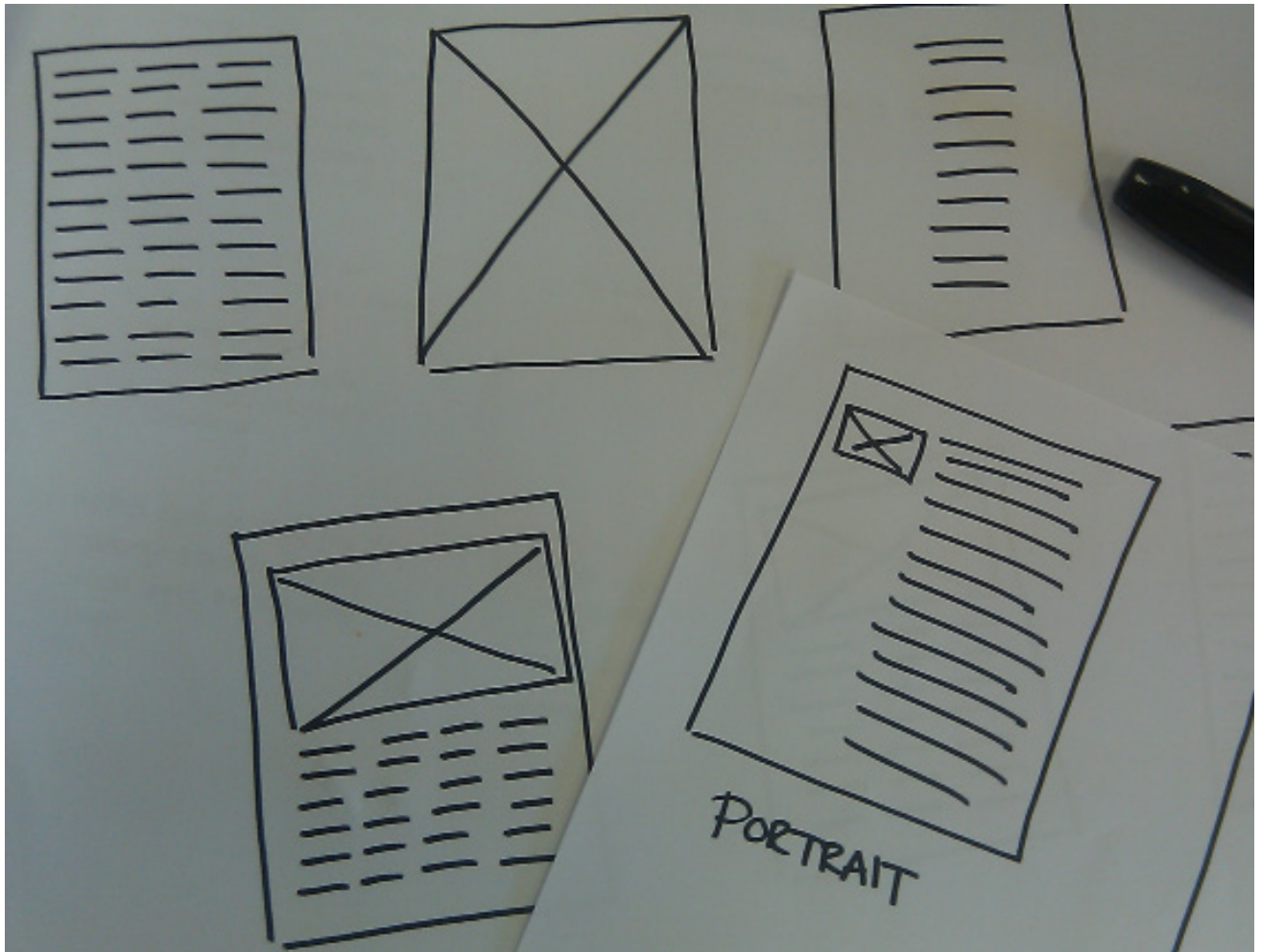
I was given The New Yorker magazine, but with a catch: I would be visualizing the October 4th, 2010 issue, the first issue released for both print and iPad. I was excited, intrigued, and a bit intimidated. Assuming the content is the same, how would I compare these two mediums in an interesting and meaningful way?

CONTENT MAPPING

Fortunately, I was dealing with only one issue of the New Yorker, and after a quick look I discovered the content is essentially the same across the two versions.

I began by mapping out the content of the print edition with Post-it notes. Each Post-it represents a page and is color-coded according to content type: Ad, Written Content, Visual Content, and Cartoon. I also noted the type of ads and the type of visual content. This allowed me to see the breakdown of the content more clearly and begin to understand the structure of the print edition.

Some trends emerged from this process. For example, ad content is clustered towards the front of the print edition. Once I saw this, I went to the iPad, examined how the ad content is dispersed, and discovered that ads are much more evenly placed in the digital version. Such findings helped shape my approach to expressing differences between the two artifacts.



Sketches of layouts on print and iPad

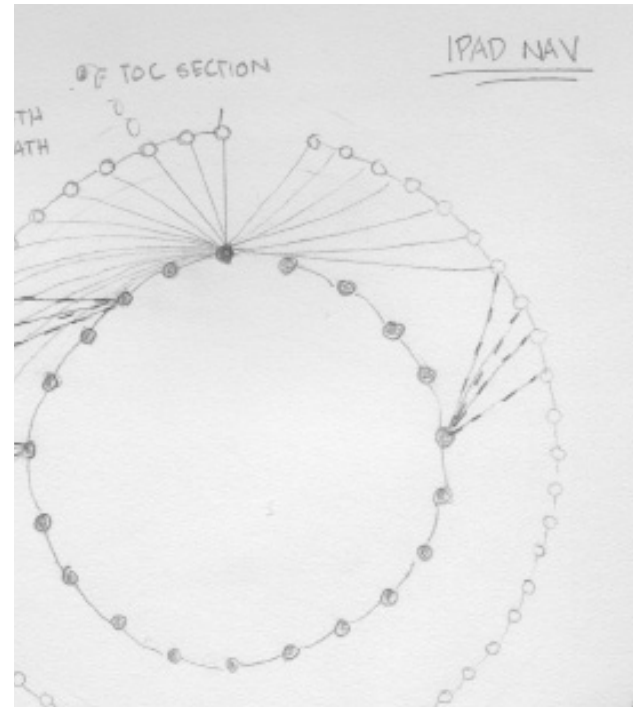
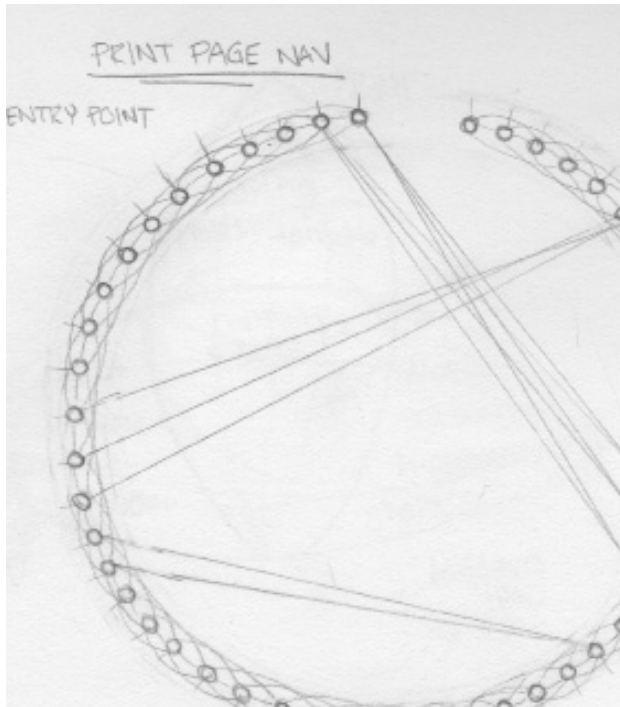
MAKING COMPARISONS

Once I had a handle on the content of the issue, I began looking more closely at the more subtle differences between the print and iPad version.

I began by examining layout. The New Yorker print edition follows a fairly strict three-column layout, but the grid is often broken. I counted over 20 different layouts within the print edition.

The iPad edition, on the other hand, has fewer variations. While the issue can be read in portrait or landscape mode, I decided to focus on portrait mode, assuming most readers use this orientation. The iPad portrait mode displays content in a one-column format. Images are either placed above or to the left of the content.

What's more interesting, though, is how the difference in layout influences the experience of reading: an eight-page article in the print edition becomes a twenty-page article in the iPad edition. Because each "page" in the iPad edition requires a swipe to move onto the next page, the experience of reading the iPad version is more physically active than the print edition.



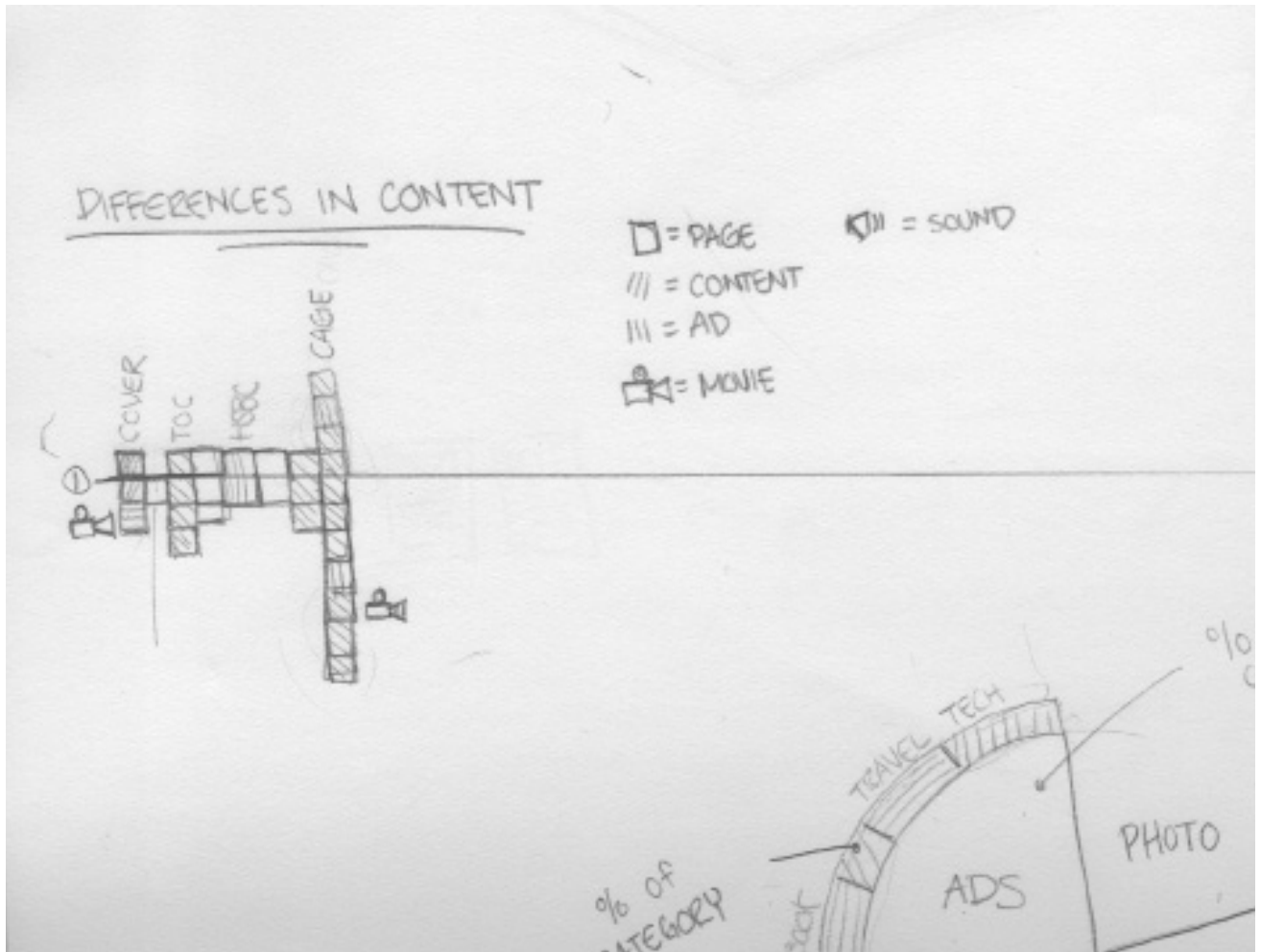
Sketches of differences in navigation

EXAMINING NAVIGATION

Once I discovered the difference in layout between the two versions, I decided to look more closely at the navigation. As I mined for data, I felt myself going back to the print version again and again. The iPad was just more difficult to use. Part of this was my unfamiliarity with the application, but I had a feeling its design was also a factor.

After a bit of playing around I realized a main difference between the two: in a print artifact, every page is accessible from every other page. It's a complex navigational tree, but the interaction is intuitive and elegant. The iPad application, on the other hand, has a two-layer navigation. Content is accessible in a linear fashion or by delving into a table of contents section. There is a "scrubber," which readers can use to navigate to any page from their current position, but the small images representing the pages make the feature unusable.

I initially struggled with how to contrast these two artifacts. I wanted to subtly comment on the complex challenges designers face when translating content from an analog to digital medium and how not-so-successful they've been thus far. It was during this phase of my process that I decided to visualize difference of navigation to express this idea.



Sketches exploring ways to compare content

DIGGING INTO DESIGN

Following my explorations of content, structure, and navigation, I decided to focus on two aspects I felt were most compelling: the relative “bulk” of the iPad version and the differences in navigation between the two.

I started experimenting with ways to represent the content. I began with a conventional pie chart approach to communicate the content of the issue. Comparing two pie charts, however, proved ineffective. The largest difference in content (pages per article) was not represented.

After some sketching, I decided on a horizontal chart. The iPad and print edition share an x-axis and each square represents a page. This design allows the viewer to quickly see differences in bulk across articles.

This approach also allowed me to express iPad-only content through icons and color. While the written content remains constant, extras such as video, pictures, and audio, are available on the iPad. Icons within the squares represent this content.



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New Yorker

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Futura

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Neutra Text

Color and type samples

DEVELOPING STYLE

To develop a color palette, I pulled colors from the cover of the October 4th New Yorker issue: a “painting” done by David Hockney using an iPad drawing application. I chose the brighter colors for a more striking and clear poster.

The internet is full of typefaces ripping off the New Yorker’s iconic type. Unfortunately, they’re all pretty awful. The one to the left, “New Yorker,” appears to be a digitized scan plagued with rough, uneven lines. I began looking for other typefaces with a high x-height, such as Futura. In the end, I settled on Neutra Text. While it has an extremely low x-height, it still evokes the Art Deco feel of the New Yorker style.



The screenshot shows the Adobe Illustrator interface with a document titled "Illustrator 01 (CMYK) (Preview)". The main workspace contains a diagram comparing content for "PRINT" and "IPAD".

The diagram features a central horizontal black bar with white dots. Above this bar, the word "PRINT" is written vertically. Below the bar, the word "IPAD" is written vertically. To the right of the bar, there are several vertical bars of varying heights and colors (red, blue, yellow, green) representing content elements. Some of these elements are labeled with text like "COMPARISON" and "DIFFERENCES".

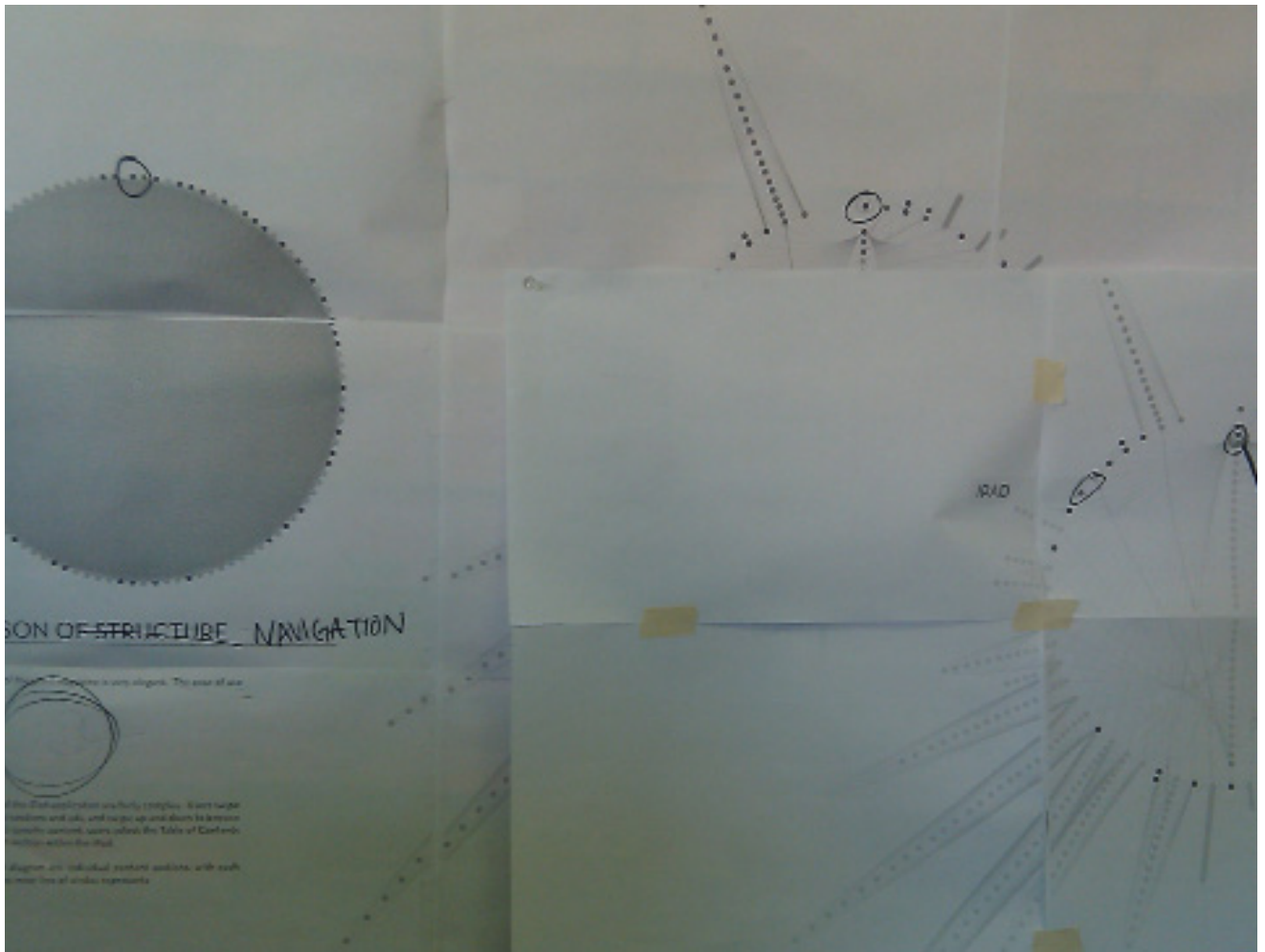
In the bottom-left corner of the workspace, there is a black and white illustration of a man in a top hat, looking thoughtful with his hand to his chin. Below the illustration, the text "A COMPARISON OF CONTENT" is displayed.

The Illustrator interface includes a top menu bar (File, Edit, Object, Type, Select, Effect, View, Window, Help), a toolbar on the left, and a color panel on the right.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There isn't much to say about this part of my process, but I can offer a brief *Designer's Survival Guide for Illustrator*:

- Copy/paste is a designer's best friend.
- Snacks, music, and more snacks are essential.
- Save, save, save and then save again. Ideally every five seconds.
- When working with 12,000 vector lines, 4GB of memory isn't enough.



Editing on full-scale print outs

EDIT, EDIT, EDIT

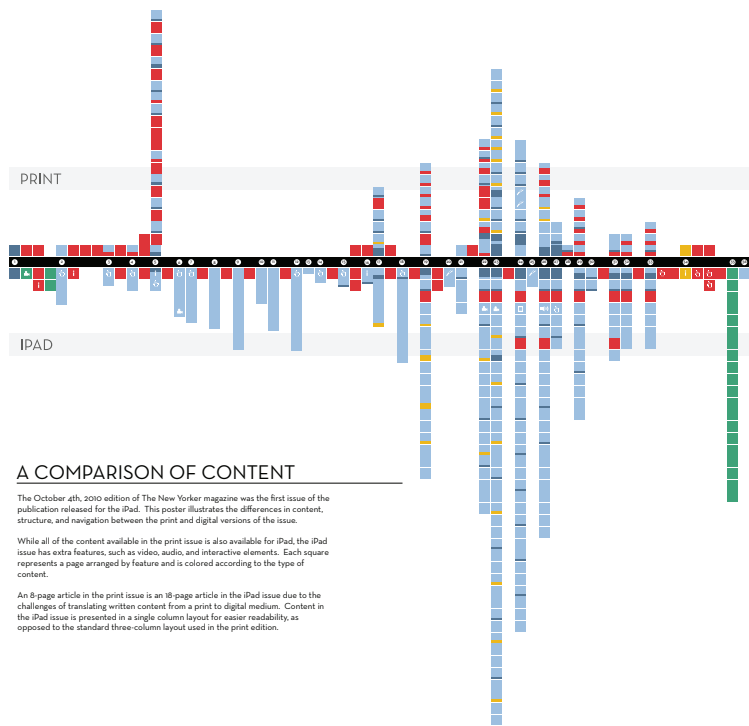
The most nerve-racking part of any large project like this is committing it to print (and to your credit card bill). As I neared the end of the project, I printed off my poster in large sheets, taped them together, and rounded up studio mates for critiques.

Through this process I was able to address issues that were not apparent on my 15-inch monitor. Copy editing was also much easier, though it took several rounds to catch that last misspelled “cicrle.” I was also able to find some design flaws, such as lines on the wrong layers, oddly shaped elements, and poorly aligned squares.

Most helpful, though, was the feedback I got from classmates. The complex shapes of the visualizations made the layout of the poster a challenge, but a few sessions with some talented print designers plus a couple readings by some great writers, and I solidified my final design.



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A COMPARISON OF CONTENT

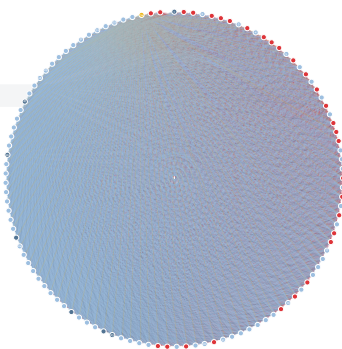
The October 4th, 2010 edition of The New Yorker magazine was the first issue of the publication released for the iPad. This poster illustrates the differences in content, structure, and navigation between the print and digital versions of the issue.

While all of the content available in the print issue is also available for iPad, the iPad issue has extra features, such as video, audio, and interactive elements. Each square represents a page arranged by feature and is colored according to the type of content.

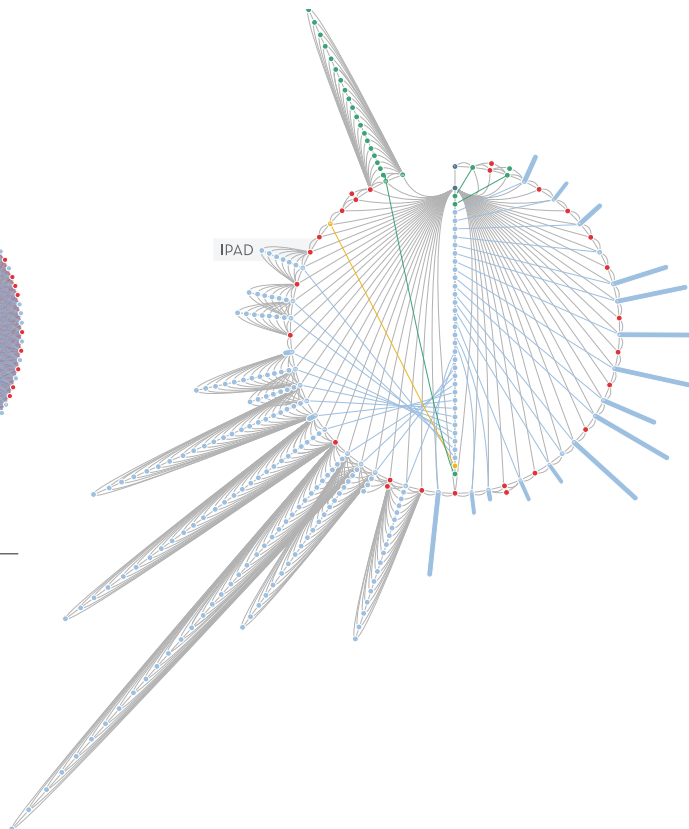
An 8-page article in the print issue is an 10-page article in the iPad issue due to the challenges of translating written content from a print to digital medium. Content in the iPad issue is presented in a single column layout for easier readability, as opposed to the standard three-column layout used in the print edition.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| ADVERTISING | 1 COVER |
| CARTOON | 2 TABLE OF CONTENTS |
| IPAD ONLY | 3 CONTRIBUTORS |
| WRITTEN CONTENT | 4 THE MAIL |
| | 5 SONGS ON ABOUT TOWN |
| | 6 CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK |
| | 7 THE THEATRE |
| | 8 NIGHT LIFE |
| | 9 ART |
| VIDEO | 10 DANCE |
| | 11 CLASSICAL MUSIC |
| INTERACTIVE | 12 MOVIES |
| | 13 READING AND TALKS |
| LINK | 14 ABOVE AND BEYOND |
| | 15 TABLES FOR TWO |
| DOCUMENT | 16 ON THE HORIZON |
| | 17 THE TALK OF THE TOWN |
| AUDIO | 18 LONG-HULI SOFT |
| | 19 ANNALS OF INNOVATION |
| POETRY | 20 POETRY DISCUSSIONS |
| | 21 SHOUTS & MURMURS |
| | 22 OPINIONS AND OPINIONS WITH THE ARTS |
| | 23 PROFILE: DALAI LAMA |
| | 24 ANNALS OF LIFE |
| | 25 POETRY TO HEAR |
| | 26 FICTION: THE DUNGEON MASTER |
| | 27 THE SPYLINE: VINCE HARRISON IN VEGAS |
| | 28 BRIEFLY NOTED (PRINT) |
| | 29 A CRITIC AT LARGE: HELLBONDING PEOPLE |
| | 30 BRIEFLY NOTED (IPAD) |
| | 31 ON TELEVISION: SHAGGY DOGS |
| | 32 THE THEATRE: IT'S A MAN'S WORLD |
| | 33 THE CURRENT CINEMA: SUCCESSES |
| | 34 CARTOON GALLERY |
| | 35 VISIT US AT NEWYORKER.COM |

PRINT



IPAD



A COMPARISON OF NAVIGATION

PRINT

Navigating the print issue is straightforward: every page is accessible from any other page in the issue. In the above diagram, each circle represents a page and is colored according to its dominant content type. The lines represent paths between pages and are colored according to the parent page. This reveals an interesting pattern in the organization of content: advertising content is clustered in the first half, while written content dominates the second half.

IPAD

To navigate through the iPad application, users swipe left and right to browse across sections and ads, and swipe up and down to browse within sections. To navigate to specific content, users select an ever-present table of contents icon, which shows a list of links to each section within the issue.

The ring of circles in the iPad diagram denote content sections, with each circle representing a page and expanding outward to illustrate the depth of sections. The line of circles represents the table of contents links. The gray lines are paths from pages to the table of contents or paths between pages. The colored lines represent paths from a table of contents links to its content section.



An Early Sketch of Eustace Tilley

LOOKING BACK

Pen and (large) paper is the most important tool.

The more design that happens before hitting the Adobe Suite, the easier the process becomes. I spent a lot of time with Post-its, my sketchbook, and even a bit of Excel. I was ready once I dug into Illustrator, but still there were moments where a more fully fleshed out idea on paper would have accelerated the digital design process.

Choose your focus early.

The key to grad school success? Form your focus early and commit to it. Give your ideas some time to simmer, but the more quickly you decide on your approach, the less stressful and more successful the final result will be.

Don't feel married to one idea.

From the start of the project, I really wanted to use Eustace Tilley, the New Yorker's iconic mascot, in my poster. But the image wasn't adding any value and instead cluttered the design. It was hard to discard, but the best decision for the final product. So in the end, it's a delicate dance: commit to a focus but keeps your ideas fluid and flexible.

