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7032AAD Final Project Written Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

While the Fourth Industrial Revolution offers important technological innovations and the opportunities to improve human life, growing social problems such as poverty, income and social inequality have also raised people concerns and anxieties about the future (Zervoudi 2020). And because of factors from daily life events, such as redundancy or demotion at work, loneliness, boredom, emotional swings (Simmons and Daw 1994), social media and epidemic (Fraga 2019), many young people feel anxious for their future and life especially Millennials and Generation Z (Mcmaster 2020).

This project investigates how design visualisation strategies and futures thinking might help discover and ameliorate mental well-being problems of contemporary young people.

Reference texts include books and essays that focus on Cyberpunk's visual artistic style and mental health as a design concepts. They are used as secondary resources for text analysis and organization. Meanwhile, the existing products and art works to alleviate anxiety in modern cities are investigated as design cases. These texts mainly explain the conceptual content and influence of the two core themes of Cyberpunk and anxiety.

As a popular art style, the Cyberpunk aesthetic presents content and form of expressions that show us a bleak vision of future life, which can mirror the current situation that young people feel anxious (Cavallaro 2000). This aesthetic can be used in graphic design to draw the attention of public to the subject of this project, guiding and encouraging target audiences to understand anxiety and relieve it through some of effective methods, such as interpersonal communication (Bourne 2019).

This report consists of 5 main sections including this introduction. Following this, the Methodology presents the research problem, the research question, and the methods selected. Then, the Outcomes section presents the design artifacts that embody the knowledge generated through the design practice of this project, and highlight key design specifications, that represent this approach's contribution to knowledge. This is followed by a Discussion section which evaluates the outcomes in the context of the Module's Learning Outcomes, and a Conclusion which summarises the main points supporting this projects contribution to a wider understanding of Graphic Design practice, demonstrating how the use of Cyberpunk aesthetic in future thinking can positively address the theme of anxiety, and encourage public to understand and find the problem of anxiety in urban life.

1.2 Aims and purposes

The project outlined in this report addresses two key issues through research and design. Firstly, it will show how the future thinking visual expressions of graphic design can be used to help target audiences relieve anxiety and raise awareness about anxiety. Secondly, it will discuss and display how the artistic style of Cyberpunk aesthetics can be combined with the mental health problem of anxiety, so as to trigger the target audiences to think and reflect.

1.3 Project title and subtitle

Cyberpunk for Anxiety: The graphic design and campaign project with Cyberpunk aesthetics to relieve anxiety and raise awareness about anxiety among urban youth

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This project focuses on the connection between anxiety and Cyberpunk aesthetic as the research focus, which is studied through secondary research. Reference images and textual sources are secondary sources that focus on the themes and the research question of this project, such as Cyberpunk aesthetic and anxiety. Related books are used as auxiliary resources for text analysis and organization.

Also, existing works in the field of graphic design on raising awareness about anxiety are investigated as design cases through visual research. This project uses case studies and comparative analysis to find design commonalities and design issues.

2.2 Research problem

While living in a big city can have benefits for young people such as access to entertainment and greater opportunities for work, the stress of urban life and work can take a greater toll on the mental health of young people in cities than on those in rural areas (Fraga 2019).

Covid-19's spread worldwide has led many people to feel increasingly anxious or depressed about the future of their lives and the world (Huzar 2020). The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the rate of mental problems in adults over 16 in the UK is more than double the level before pandemic (Williams et al. 2021). During this time many people have taken to creative practices to distract themselves from their anxieties. Cyberpunk artworks as an imaginative creative practice is also a way to raise awareness about anxiety, and release the pressure through imagining the future (Brainstorm Marketing 2021).

Cyberpunk art presents an imaginary form of the future world, that is chaotic and which represents a disorderly ideology (Neon Dystopia 2021). Cyberpunk aesthetics has been slowly rooted in visual media technology since the 1980s and 1990s, and has developed as a new popular artistic style in many fields such as video games, film and design so young people accepted this visual artistic style (Murphy and Schmeink 2017). Common characteristics of this genre are dystopian visions of the future set in urban areas (Murphy and Vint 2010).

In conclusion, the anxiety of young people is closely related to the epidemic and fast-paced urban life, which is consistent with the characteristics of Cyberpunk aesthetic. Meanwhile, in order to avoid the more serious psychological problems that anxiety and stress can cause such as depression and self-harm, it is so important to raise awareness about anxiety and call public attention to this mental health problem (Anxiety UK 2018).

2.3 Connection and relevance

In the 1990s and early 2000s, when Japan was emerging from its bubble economy, many young Japanese had no future and no desire to return to the past, resorting to the Internet, mobile phones, subcultures and games as a way to escape from reality. This kind of youth culture which relies on the network and spreads gradually, and the anxiety about the technology control future increasingly develops into the global Cyberpunk subculture (Hashimoto 2021).

Cyberpunk is a metaphor for people's anxiety and a pessimistic view about the future, which is also in line with the current situation of mental problems for young people in city and under the epidemic. However, the picture painted by Cyberpunk aesthetic and Cyberpunk culture is not all bleak. It can reflect reality in an available way, and pierce the darkness by imagining the future (Cavallaro 2000). Moreover, the "punk" of the term Cyberpunk was originally a branch of rock music, representing the anti-mainstream, avant-garde, extreme and rebellious. In summery, Cyberpunk itself has the spiritual attribute of reflecting social problems in realistic society and finding the inner self.

Furthermore, visual design with distinctive ideas can be an important aid to social media campaigns (Warren 2020). The Cyberpunk aesthetic as a visually strong design style may help attract the target audiences to pay attention to the campaign and events in this project.

Therefore, combining the popular expression of Cyberpunk artistic style into the work and campaign of reflecting or easing the mental health problem can not only attract the target audience, urban young people, but also enable the audiences to have a deeper perception with strong visual effects for the content of design.

2.4 Research question

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the body's natural and normal response to stress and manifests itself as the human emotion of fear or panic psychologically (Holland 2020). Sometimes anxiety is like a sudden wave that destroys people's minds and sneaks into our normal lives.

Anxiety comes in different forms and intensities. Mild ordinary anxiety is one that comes along with time and what's about to happen, but it usually goes very fast too. However, if the anxiety is strong and lasts long enough to interfere with daily life, it could be a severe "anxiety disorder" (Bourne 2019). The details about the definition of anxiety will be presented in the project work to help the audiences understand anxiety.

What is Cyberpunk aesthetic?

Cyberpunk culture and aesthetic originated in Philip Dick's book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* in 1968, which was adapted into the film *Blade Runner* in 1982, can be seen as a classic visual example of Cyberpunk's style and aesthetic. William Ford Gibson, the father of the Cyberpunk art movement, described many characteristics and elements of Cyberpunk aesthetic in his first novel *Neuromancer* which is published in 1984, laying the foundation for later Cyberpunk artistic works.

The features of Cyberpunk aesthetic in many artworks include visual sense of technological future, sense of urban conflict and collision, and the loneliness and alienation of escaping from reality. Many later Cyberpunk style works influenced by this aesthetics embody above characteristics, and the classic examples for that is the film *The Matrix*, *Blade Runner 2049* and the game *Cyberpunk 2077*.

Cyberpunk aesthetic has developed over the years and has spread to all forms of media with the help of the web and technology, creating a subculture. Today the Cyberpunk aesthetic is ubiquitous in film, games, fashion and every field of art, influencing contemporary graphic design deeply as a multicultural art movement (Bailey 2020).

How does Cyberpunk artistic work in the specialized field of graphic design?

The Cyberpunk aesthetic has become one of the most popular and important fantasy genres in the field of graphic design and illustration because designers can expand their imagination and show more future-thinking content in their artworks (Brainstorm Marketing 2021). In the field of

graphic design, Cyberpunk aesthetic can be used to call public to pay attention to social problems. Designers or producers also created many illustrations in this style to imagine the future world in order to express the content of their reflection on anxiety for the future or urban life.

What are the expressive characteristics of Cyberpunk artistic works?

In various categories of Cyberpunk artistic works such as illustration, graphic design or costume design, there are some main characteristics of Cyberpunk aesthetic expression: colour, space, shape (Murphy and Schmeink 2017) and oriental texts (Hashimoto 2021).

Main characteristics	Visual example	Explanation
Colour	 Figure 1. Popular pink and purple (Pwnk Digital 2019)  Figure 2. A combination of warm colours and cool colours in the movie art poster: purple and blue (Oomori 2018)	The colours associated with Cyberpunk artistic style are usually a combination of dark and bright colors that is able to make the design have the avant-garde visual experience of futurism (Brainstorm Marketing 2021). The main choice is vibrant and bright colours from neon in cities, more commonly in various combinations of warm colours and cold colours. In summary, the main colours in Cyberpunk style are basically based on the six primary colors of RGB and CMYK, and they all appear in the form of high saturation and high brightness. The whole picture of Cyberpunk artistic works usually has a strong contrast between light and shade, mainly with dark tones and light tones.

Space	 Figure 3. Space example (Cherik official 2020)	The space in Cyberpunk aesthetic always features dark underground or futuristic building in cities based on conceptions of real world in the future. They often carry bright colors, flashing neon lights or strong futurism.
Shape	 Figure 4. Geometric pattern and scientific background (Berya113 2021)	Geometric or grid patterns with gradient effect often appear as decorative elements in related art works. And these visual elements are often decorated in the background of the works, delivering audience a sense of science fiction or the future.
Oriental texts	 Figure 5. Blade Runner's vision of 2019 Los Angeles in 1982 (Scott 1982)	Cyberpunk aesthetics is closely related to oriental cultures and countries. This is evidenced by the presence of Chinese culture, East Asian imagery, and neon signs with Japanese texts in many Cyberpunk style artworks. The main reason is that Cyberpunk aesthetics originated from the anxiety of Japanese in the 1980s about the life and the fear of Westerners for China (Hashimoto 2021). Furthermore, a globalization society dominated by East Asian culture is also a important part of the imagination of the future (Bui 2017).

2.5 Existing products

Title	Work	Explanation and Analysis
Anxiety cure artworks (Ryken 2019)	 Figure 6. Anxiety cure artwork that combines photography and graphic design (Ryken 2019)	Shaun Ryken suffers from severe anxiety so he has created some design artworks to cure and share the story of his fears and anxiety disorder (Ameline 2020). His work also uses many metaphors and puns to create a new perspective on anxiety.
When anxiety visits (Jain 2021)	 Figure 7. A series of illustrations on the theme of feeling anxiety in life (Jain 2021)	This illustration series attempts to express some moments of feelings about anxiety in our daily life. The author hopes to make the viewer refer to what it is like to bravely face anxiety so that they can positively confront mental health issues.

Living with anxiety
(Muskeen 2018)

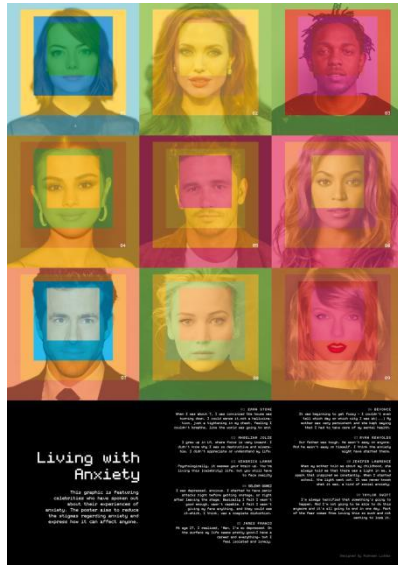


Figure 8. Poster (Muskeen 2018)

The author used a combination of square shapes and bright colors, the author shared individual stories of anxiety and interviews with some Hollywood celebrities on the poster to increase awareness about anxiety in school.

2.6 Target audiences

Millennials and generation Z are more anxious in today's society than previous generations. In addition to the wide range of anxiety triggers mentioned above in introduction, they are also affected by a number of long-term environmental and social stresses in the 21st century, including school violence, financial instability, news media, social media, and epidemics. The fact that millennials and generation Z have access to accessible and easily accessible information on a daily basis through the Internet and mobile phones which developed in the 21st century, realizing the tragic news of the world constantly, which can also have a subtle impact on their mental health (The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2021). Members of generation Z include young people born between 1995 and 2010, so target age group is 20 to 26.

2.7 Aims and purposes of project

This project hopes to use graphic design with Cyberpunk aesthetic style to reflect the current situation of anxiety of young people, boosting public to focus on mental health problems. Furthermore, this project wishes to use Cyberpunk style campaign and events to help target audiences to alleviate anxiety slightly. The design with the theme of Cyberpunk in this project revolves around the content of anxiety and marketing campaign.

2.8 Conclusion

As the content and subject of graphic design, these research and texts can help conducive to the deep integration of the two themes, deepen the correct understanding of audiences for concept and theme, and increase the depth and appeal of the project.

3 Outcomes

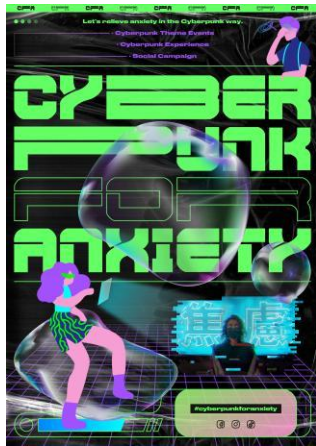
3.1 Introduction

The main content of the project is the design for campaign and thematic events. In this project, the marketing campaign is an effective and influential way to raise the audience's awareness of anxiety, call attention to mental health problems and guide them to take the required action (Decker 2020).

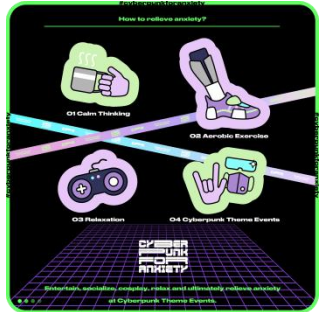
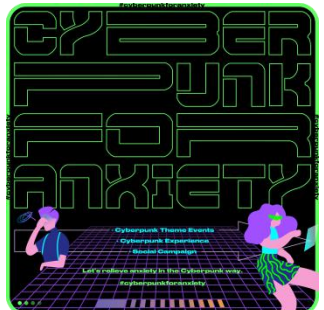
The original intention of practical thematic events is to allow target audiences to participate and feel in real life rather than through mobile phones and the Internet, and to relax and entertain in the way of Cyberpunk so as to relieve anxiety slightly.

3.2 Outcomes

Outcomes include campaign posters, mockup images of social media campaign and theme events, AR experience, campaign website, marketing animation, project logo design, tickets, stickers, event venue map and paper bag.

Main campaign posters	
Work	Explanation
 Figure 9. Main campaign poster "Android"	The content of the illustration poster is that an android man loses sleep because of anxiety in a dark room, and looks out the window at the noisy Cyberpunk city. The android, display screen, dark and damp room, oriental texts and bright neon lights in this poster are the main visual elements of the Cyberpunk aesthetic. The neon colours of pink and purple, and terminal colours of green match the characteristic colours of the Cyberpunk aesthetic (Brainstorm Marketing 2021). As the first step of the marketing campaign in this project, the author hopes to guide public to pay attention to this project and campaign, and to trigger thinking about the mental health problem of anxiety through these posters with strong Cyberpunk aesthetic style visuals.
 Figure 10. Main campaign poster "Cyberpunk for Anxiety"	The man above the poster was clutching his head in anxiety. In contrast, a girl below the poster with VR glasses sitting on the bubble couch, uses a Cyberpunk style futuristic screen to project and release anxious emotions. These two roles are right in line with the purpose of this project, which is to move from anxiety at the beginning to a state of releasing anxiety. The poster introduces the concept, the tag in social media, the main content of the campaign and the purpose of the project. Description of design style The acid bubbles in this poster are a reference to the design style of "Acid Graphics". Acid graphics tend to be dark in color and have the same sci-fi futuristic style and the inner spiritual attribute of rebellion as the Cyberpunk aesthetic (Gosling 2019).

	Meanwhile, the projection image below is designed using the design style of glitch art. Glitch art is also an application of the Cyberpunk aesthetic to contemporary design, bringing a futuristic feel and adding texture to the work (Bailey 2020).
 Figure 11. Main campaign poster "What is anxiety?"	The definition and distinction of anxiety are displayed on dense monitors in a dark room. Purple texts and images represent serious anxiety disorder, while green represents mild ordinary anxiety. After the first step to attract attention and provoke thought, the second step in design solution is hope to use this strong visual effect to raise the awareness of anxiety, boosting target audiences to understand the anxiety.

Social media campaign posters	
Work	Explanation
 Figure 12. Social media campaign poster as well as stickers	The final step in design solution is to introduce audiences to how to relieve anxiety, and direct them to the themed events that may help to relax and relieve anxiety in a Cyberpunk way. Relaxation, short breaks, calm thinking, entertainment, socializing and aerobic exercise are all effective methods to relieve anxiety (Bourne et al. 2004). Some of these methods are drawn in the Cyberpunk aesthetic style and are displayed in the poster. This can also be used as stickers.
 Figure 13. Social media campaign poster	Square posters can be more suitable for social media campaigns.

AR (Augmented Reality) experience	
Work	Explanation
 Figure 14. Screenshot of AR experience recording video  Figure 15. Screenshot	Audiences can enter the Adobe Aero App to experience the real Cyberpunk world in AR technology by clicking the link or scanning instant updated QR code with mobile phone.

Website	
Work	Explanation
 Figure 16. Main page: home  Figure 17. Main page: help	The interactive website of this project aims to help audiences understand the campaign and related events. In addition, more information about anxiety relief and related helplines are posted on this website for audiences to read for finding out available ways to relieve anxiety.

Cyberpunk theme events	
Work	Explanation
	The concept, design plan and details of this Cyberpunk theme event are included in the event venue map in Figure 18. Audiences enter the event venue with the ticket in Figure 19 and Figure 20, and are able to entertain, socialize, Cyberpunk style cosplay and relax in order to relieve anxiety ultimately.

Figure 18. Event venue map



Figure 19. Ticket



Figure 20. Ticket



Figure 21. Exhibition and Cyberpunk street

The exhibition area in this Cyberpunk theme event in Figure 21 is allowed audiences to view the content of campaign in this project and take photos with the scenes in Cyberpunk aesthetic style street. Audiences can purchase campaign themed products or other products sold by sponsors at the fair area in this event.

Marketing campaign display posters

Work (Events)	Work (Campaign)	Explanation
 Figure 22. Campaign poster "Exhibition"	 Figure 25. Campaign poster "Stickers"	These focus on the details of theme events and social media campaigns that can be used to attract the attention and engagement of targeted audiences.



Figure 23. Campaign poster "Map"

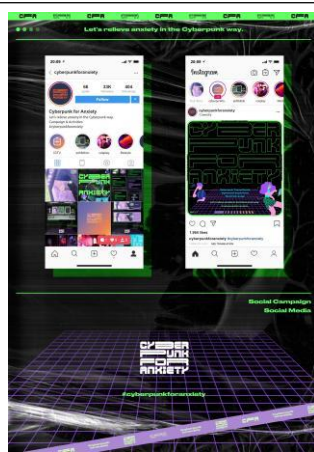


Figure 26. Campaign poster "Social media"



Figure 24. Campaign poster "Tickets"

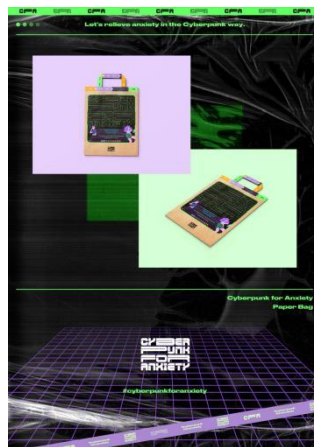


Figure 27. Campaign poster "Paper bag"

Other campaign theme peripheral products

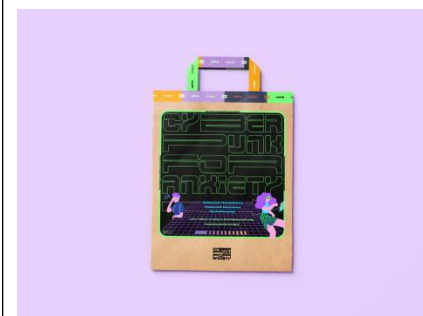


Figure 28. Paper bag



Figure 29. Paper bag

Mockup images of social media campaign

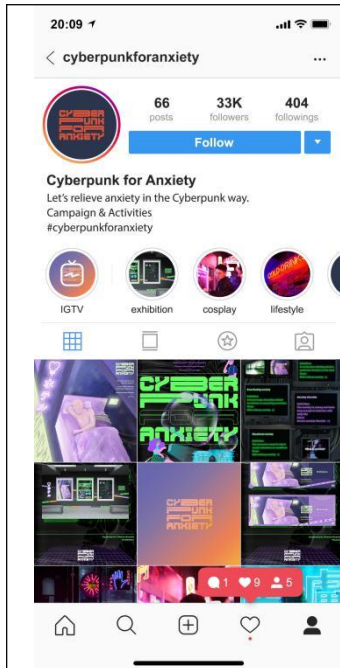


Figure 30. Social media campaign



Figure 31. Social media campaign

3.3 Conclusion

The project reaches the aims and purposes gradually through the three steps mentioned above, from attracting attention to raising awareness and finally to anxiety relief by campaign and outcomes with Cyberpunk aesthetic style.

4 Discussion

4.1 Contexts

The graphic design and interactive design in this project is dominated by a black background with the bright purple, pink, blue and green that are iconic colours in the Cyberpunk aesthetic. Many design languages such as glitch art and acid graphics, and contents what design presents are also based on the Cyberpunk aesthetics, the theme of anxiety, and the combination of Cyberpunk and anxiety.

4.2 Future trends

Cyberpunk aesthetics, as a way to release the negative emotions of creators and participants, presents dystopian features and gradually becomes a culture with distinct attitudes and styles (Neon Dystopia 2021). Cyberpunk, as a representative of the rebellious spirit, reflects the gradual break with traditional aesthetics in contemporary youth culture and a rethinking of fashion and society. Although Cyberpunk reflects high technology and low life, these imaginations and reflections on the future will help to improve the quality of our real life. In our current social environment and global pandemic, the popularity of the Cyberpunk aesthetic and what it presents makes more sense than ever before (Bailey 2020). This design style that

imagines the future and rebel against reality will be more popular and meaningful in future scenarios.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

Cyberpunk presents a bleak view of the future that is consistent with the theme of anxiety and not at the opposites. However, this project aims to combine the themes of Cyberpunk aesthetics and anxiety. Graphic design is an available way to combine the two themes, and visually deliver information about anxiety and anxiety relief to the audiences. The events in this project are intended to immerse the audiences in the Cyberpunk festival and relax themselves, releasing their negative emotions and relieving their anxiety through the fascinating Cyberpunk style experiences, such as AR, exhibition and cosplay with this style. And the campaign and design in this project is intended to increase audiences awareness and call for action.

The design, the campaign and the events in this project may increase public awareness of mental health problem and help target audiences with anxiety to reduce their anxiety which will be of great significance to society.

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