



OPAALS PROJECT

Contract n° FP6-034824

WP9: Communication and dissemination

Del9.1 – Brand Identity (Part 1)



Project funded by the European Community under the "Information Society Technology" Programme

Contract Number: FP6-034824
Project Acronym: OPAALS

Deliverable N°: 9.1
Due date: 31/09/2006
Delivery Date: 22/12/2006

Short Description: Sets out our approach to Brand Identity and the process that we will follow, as well as (Part 2) providing an interim design.

Author: Neil Rathbone. Mauro Giorgetti
Partners contributed: LSE, T6
Made available to: All

Versioning		
Version	Date	Name, organisation
1.0	21/12/2006	Neil Rathbone, LSE Mauro Giorgetti, T6

Quality check
Internal Reviewers: Paolo Dini and Mehita Iqani, LSE

Dependencies:

Work Packages	All
OPAALS Partners	All
Domains	None
Targets	Network members



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit : <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Contents

Overview.....	4
Understanding brand identity.....	4
Brand identity in the context of a Network of Excellence.....	5
The brand identity process.....	6
Stage one: Input, analysis and consensus.....	7
Stage two: Design and specification.....	7
Stage three: Implementation.....	8
An interim identity.....	8

A separate annex (Interim identity manual) forms Part 2 of this deliverable

Overview

Brand identity is the management of the public persona of an entity. Such management is important in order for the entity in question to be correctly perceived. A brand identity should accurately reflect its values and characteristics in both tangible and intangible ways, from logos and descriptions, to tone of voice and personal behaviours.

As we are at the start of a newly forming Network of Excellence, OPAALS has not yet had the time to develop its values and personality. Thus we are not yet in a position to project and to manage a coherent and accurate identity. We could 'design' an identity based on our wishes and intentions, but this would risk producing something that, while idealised, would be derived from too narrow a basis and thus fail to represent the network itself, or to have any 'ownership' by the network.

For practical purposes we plan to adopt some basic physical elements of branding as a 'stop-gap' measure to give a consistent and professional look and feel to project materials. These will be based on the DBE branding so as to reflect links with that work, and are described in the annex to this document, D9.1(a).

Meanwhile we will treat the discovery and development of a comprehensive OPAALS brand as a parallel track of the Phase I research work. To do this we will engage a formal process of self-examination and consensus forming. This process-driven approach will be a valuable adjunct to the scientific work. By gradually 'knitting' the network members together around a common ethos and set of values that come from the network members themselves and are owned by them, we will use the brand identity process as an integral part of forming the OPAALS NoE. By undertaking and documenting this formal process the project will thus become an exemplar of the formation of brand identity for NoEs and other R&D instruments.

Understanding brand identity

Fundamentally, brand identity is about making appearance represent values. Just as we assess and relate to other humans by factors such as the way that they dress and the way that they speak, so we form opinions about organisations and groups based on the way that they present themselves. Such 'first appearances' are important. Once formed, an opinion can be difficult to change.

To get the value from brand identity we need our outward appearance to reflect our inner values. In other words, our visual and written and spoken manner should give a clear indication of our nature and values. If we get it wrong, we may put off those who should be attracted to us, and attract those who we don't want to attract.

Some characteristics lie on a good-to-bad scale, such as honesty and integrity. We can to some extent assume that we want these at the good end of the spectrum. It is of little use to dwell on these types of characteristics, for everyone may be said to aspire to them.

What is more critical is to assess what characteristics represent us on a scale that is neutral. For example are we a big or a small group? Either option could have advantages, so we have to choose the one that is most accurate.

As well as representing what we are, brand identity can to some extent help us to become what we want to be. By identifying and promoting characteristics brand identity can help us to become what we jointly agree that we aim to be.

Brand identity in the context of a Network of Excellence

In the modern world, brand identity is most familiar to us in the business context, where it is generally regarded as a marketing tool. A corporation is able to design its offering to appeal to its identified market and to project the nature of its offering via a brand - in particular the intangible qualities of its offering. Thus the objective and the mechanics of brand identity are normally defined by marketing objectives.

However, this is a limited view of brand identity and ignores its contribution to group coherence. Brand identity under various, more ancient, names is a tool with multiple uses. In tribal communities it has long been used to define and differentiate groups - for example in body painting and language variations. It is also used in warfare in the form of flags and uniforms to identify armies; and in heraldic coats of arms to identify families and their ancestral connections.

Within a research network like OPAALS we can see that the function of brand identity can be more concerned with forming a close-knit integrated group

with powerful research capabilities. The identity must thus act as an attractor that will cause appropriate individuals and organisations to want to join the network. It must also act as representation, and more importantly a codification, of shared values within the network. The brand identity needs to create a psychological divide - an 'inside' and 'outside' of the network so that a researcher whose life touches the network is continually conscious of their position with respect to it.

Such a brand also defines the intangibles that constitute network membership. As such it provides a guide as to what an 'outsider' has to do to become an 'insider'. It becomes a prized badge of membership.

The brand identity process

While any group will naturally tend to form shared values, and this is inevitably to some extent an emergent process, the generation of team spirit, like that often experienced in sport, is something that requires more than a set of individuals who discover that they have some common goals. It requires shared experiences, a sense of comradeship and commitment, and a sense of a single objective. In sport, such a situation is deliberately developed and nurtured so that a team is able to optimise its collective strength and capabilities.

Our intention is to build and manage a brand identity that is both a reflection of OPAALS to the outside world, and a part of the network building process internally. Our main task therefore is to start and sustain a continuous process of self-evaluation in order to elicit our values, and of expression in order to represent them. Matching representation to reality and looking for gaps or inconsistencies causes a further examination of values and completes the iteration. Iteration is part of the process as no group can articulate all its values at the start and values change over time as knowledge and perspectives change.

Our process for the development of a brand identity can be seen in three stages:

1. Input, analysis and consensus
2. Design and specification
3. Implementation

Given the introduction of the lightweight branding as a 'stop gap' measure, we intend that during first year of the project the network 'personality' is allowed to emerge naturally. Starting in year two we will begin the stage one

process and progress through to stage two so that the brand identity can be launched in year three as a refreshing and confidence-building exercise.

Stage one: Input, analysis and consensus

Input will be captured from formal and informal sources. Informal input will be gathered by studying interactions within the network and with external entities. An example is studying postings to the OKS to identify patterns where a tone of voice has become adopted that can be said to represent OPAALS.

In order to involve the network in the process, and to give them ownership of the results, a formal consensus-building process using a 'Delphi technique' will complement this informal analysis.

This technique maintains anonymity, so avoiding any group effects, and can be conducted electronically within a short time frame being seeded by several 'straw man' statements.

It is expected that three or four iterations of the Delphi statements will show either a trend towards consensus or a polarisation of views, the management of which can then become part of the branding process.

Stage two: Design and specification

The output from the internal work above will be made into a written brief for a professional branding design contractor. They will be tasked to produce, first in draft ideas, and then in final version, a comprehensive set of branding specifications with end-user guidelines and tools.

Part of the brief will be to avoid too rigid a specification. Identities within the corporate world tend towards the pre-design of all materials and elimination of personal expression. Within a research network we feel that this is the wrong approach. Not only is it unlikely to be acceptable to independently minded researchers, but it will not give us the team feeling that we seek. Instead we would like to set a 'style', a way of doing and presenting things such that related materials can be understood to belong to the same genre without being identical. This can be thought of like a style in art, architecture, or fashion - recognisable as belonging to a concept and school of thought, but

allowing for individuality and, more importantly, allowing for evolution over time.

Stage three: Implementation

In keeping with the way we wish to use brand identity, as a cultural binder rather than an imposed stamp of uniformity, we do not propose to launch it publicly or with a big bang approach. Instead we will have a soft-start launch internally, at a project General Meeting at the time that branding material is first made available on-line. Brand support will be provided to help network members adapt and adopt the brand within their work and their organisations. Rather than specifications and templates, we will provide guidelines and examples.

An interim identity

As previously mentioned, while the desired brand identity process is in progress there is a practical need to provide some form of visual imagery simply in order to support the work of the project by identifying items belonging to OPAALS.

This interim branding is an annex to this document and forms **Part 2** of this deliverable. It encompasses a symbol, which is based on the DBE 'butterfly' symbol plus an accompanying logo and specifications on usage.