



CONTAGIOUS

MOST CONTAGIOUS / 2007



/ MOST CONTAGIOUS / 2007

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If you began 2007 thinking that wikinomics must be a group of Hawaiian mathematicians, that an API was some kind of repetitive strain injury and that laser tagging is the latest crime prevention wheeze from the Greater Manchester Police, then don't worry. We did too.

2007 has been an astonishing year for technological developments, and for the consolidation of power players like Google, Facebook, Microsoft's Xbox, and Apple's iPhone. This year, the advertising industry took words like 'widget' and 'avatar' to its collective bosom. The *Contagious* team gleefully followed Warner Bros. extraordinary ARG for *Batman* flick *The Dark Knight*. We flagged up cutesy virtual world Club Penguin as a Wildfire brand during our Cannes seminar and watched it get snapped up by Disney for \$700m two months later. We gawped at websites for Orange and Halo 3, and lived on the Coke Side of Life. After Professor Jeff Cole of USC's Center for the Digital Future predicted that 'everything will move to mobile' we learnt how to use our pocket gadgets to do everything from updating Twitter pages to staring at 3D animals. To sum up this year in two words: Exciting. Terrifying.

In October, our glorious editor Paul Kemp-Robertson interviewed Microsoft ceo Steve Ballmer, who made the encouraging prediction that 'the future is ad-funded'. However, this is not advertising as we know it. If 2006 was the year of User-Generated Content, then 2007 was the year of Social Media. Advertising used to be about things. Now it's about conversations and relationships. Brands have finally started to twig that providing useful tools and services can be more effective than one dimensional marketing messages that belong in the last century.

We hope you enjoy our review of the 'Most Contagious' happenings of the past 12 months. We don't believe in Christmas cards, so this is our way of saying thanks and wishing you all a fantastic 2008. Have fun.

Contagious / London

Cover Image / Halo 3 / Xbox 360 / © Microsoft Corp.



Cell Phones / www.chrisjordan.com / Contagious 11 /

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01 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / LANDMARKS

Facebook

Where to begin? We hate to kick things off with a new media cliché, but the tipping point of the social networking behemoth has produced this year's largest number of industry column inches. Facebook's 24-year-old founder, **Mark Zuckerberg**, has displayed a canny ability to fuse user-generated applications and business savvy, suggesting that his network may finally be the one to establish a funding model worthy of the traffic statistics.

The master stroke came in May, when the network's **Application Programming Interface (API)** was made public, allowing independent developers to produce their own mini-gizmos, widgets and gadgets for the service. (See the online buzz section for our explanation of how **API** – a seemingly tedious techie acronym – became one of the buzzwords of the year). This momentum quickly lead to unfortunate comparisons with **MySpace**, whose ugly functionality and no-widget policy positioned it as a lumbering dinosaur to Facebook's mosquito.

In October, membership of the site was growing at a staggering 250,000 active users per day and **Microsoft** paid \$240 million for a 1.6% stake in Facebook, valuing the social networking site at a quite staggering \$15 billion. One month later, over 100,000 advertiser pages were launched as part of Zuckerberg's latest wheeze: an advertising system entitled **Beacon**, providing tempting new platforms for brands and services. **Dove** and **The New York Times** were amongst the first to sign up. Our favourite ad-funded application has to be the **Dylan Messaging** service – promoting Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits and created by London's **Ten4 Design** for **Sony BMG** and embedded

on Facebook, thanks to **Techlightenment's** adaptation.

Of course, as with any pioneering and wildly popular venture, there are teething problems. Almost every new addition to Facebook's functionality is met with dismay, such as the addition of a news feed on each member's homepage. However Zuckerberg displayed his trademark dogged determination, insisting that we'd all get used to it. We did. The new ad platform will also see our e-commerce purchases displayed as part of our news feeds – 'Dave has just bought the new Jay-Z album on Amazon', for example.

Whilst restricting the distribution of this information is a fairly simple matter, do we really want our commercial decisions splayed out online as part of normalised media consumption? Zuckerberg says yes. The world doesn't stand a chance.

With Facebook membership standing at 60m members and rising, Zuckerberg now has plans for expansion into China, a country in which the social network will play an increasingly important part due to the army of only children created by the government's one child per family policy. Watch this, (My)Space.

Google /

Microsoft CEO **Steve Ballmer's** admission at Microsoft's Imagine 07 event in Paris in October that 'the future is ad-funded' suggests that he knows where the company's real competition lies. Apple and its piffing hardware barely register in comparison to the multi-coloured search giant. In 2007, **Google** has:



Dylan Messaging Service /



X-Prize /



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/ Ramped up its challenge to Microsoft in the form of additions to **Google Apps**. What does this mean? That everything in your Microsoft Office portfolio is now available online, from Google, for free, from Gmail to Gchat to Google Docs & Spreadsheets. Also added were a set of APIs allowing all of the above to be adapted depending on what you decide you want to do with it (again, see p.23 for an explanation of API. Sounds boring, actually incredibly important).

/ Launched a wildly popular version of **Google Apps** for the **iPhone**.

/ Launched **OpenSocial**, a platform that will allow developers to create applications for multiple social networks, rather than just one at once á la Facebook. Websites currently using the code include **MySpace**, **Oracle**, **hi5** and **Friendster**. This would enable brands to have a wider presence across social networks — imagine the creation of a branded widget that could span all those applications at once.

/ Committed to the **Carbon Footprint Project**, allowing users to calculate and find ways to reduce their carbon footprints with a handy widget to help out.

/ Been voted the world's number one brand just above rivals Microsoft, according to this year's **BRANDZ Top 100 Most Powerful Brands**, with a brand value of \$66,434m. The study of over 39,000 brands was undertaken by **Millward Brown**, and balanced consumer brand interest with financial measures to give an overall value.

/ Stirred controversy with the acquisition of internet ad service DoubleClick for \$3.1bn. Rivals **AT&T** and **Microsoft** have expressed concern that the marriage damages competition and raises anti-trust issues.

/ Launched the **X-Prize**, daring the private scientific community to reach the moon by 2012.

Any more for any more? As Google has nothing to do with its increasingly staggering advertising revenue

apart from trouser it, use to it to buy stuff, or throw it at well-intentioned initiatives to distract us all from the fact that they have access to far too much of our personal information, we predict an even bigger year to come.

China / MindArk /

One of this year's most mind-boggling stories came from **The Guardian**, which reported in November on an ambitious co-venture between the Chinese government and **MindArk**, Gothenburg, the company behind virtual world **Entropia Universe**. The plan is to construct a virtual world that will play host to billions of avatars, repeating what China has done in manufacturing, only this time in services. Hosting 7 million avatars at a time, this will dwarf Second Life's 50,000 average online users at any one time, and the Chinese authorities plan to convert an 100 sq km industrial site to house the project's servers. The implications for international trade and commerce are huge, potentially creating a one-stop shop that connects consumers direct with Chinese suppliers and offering a base for international companies' online wares. OK, it doesn't sound that sexy, but it is social shopping, virtual existences, online retail, and a potentially hugely destabilising influence on the global economy that we can't afford to ignore. It's already being described as surpassing the Industrial Revolution in terms of velocity and influence.

Radiohead / In Rainbows /

You may have heard of a band called **Radiohead**. You may also have heard that this year they decided to sidestep their record label EMI and release their latest album **In Rainbows** online, allowing downloaders to pay whatever they wanted for it. The Radiohead exercise has thrown the questions surrounding illegal downloading and the broader issues inherent to discussion of web 2.0 into sharp relief. Come ON, the music industry. It's time. ▀



Radiohead /

Facebook /
www.dylanmessaging.com

Google / Open Social /
<http://code.google.com/apis/opensocial>

Google / Carbon Footprint Project /
www.google.co.uk/carbonfootprint/index.html

China/ MindArk /
www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2007/nov/01/comment.secondlife



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02 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / GAMING / ENTERTAINMENT /

Halo 3 /

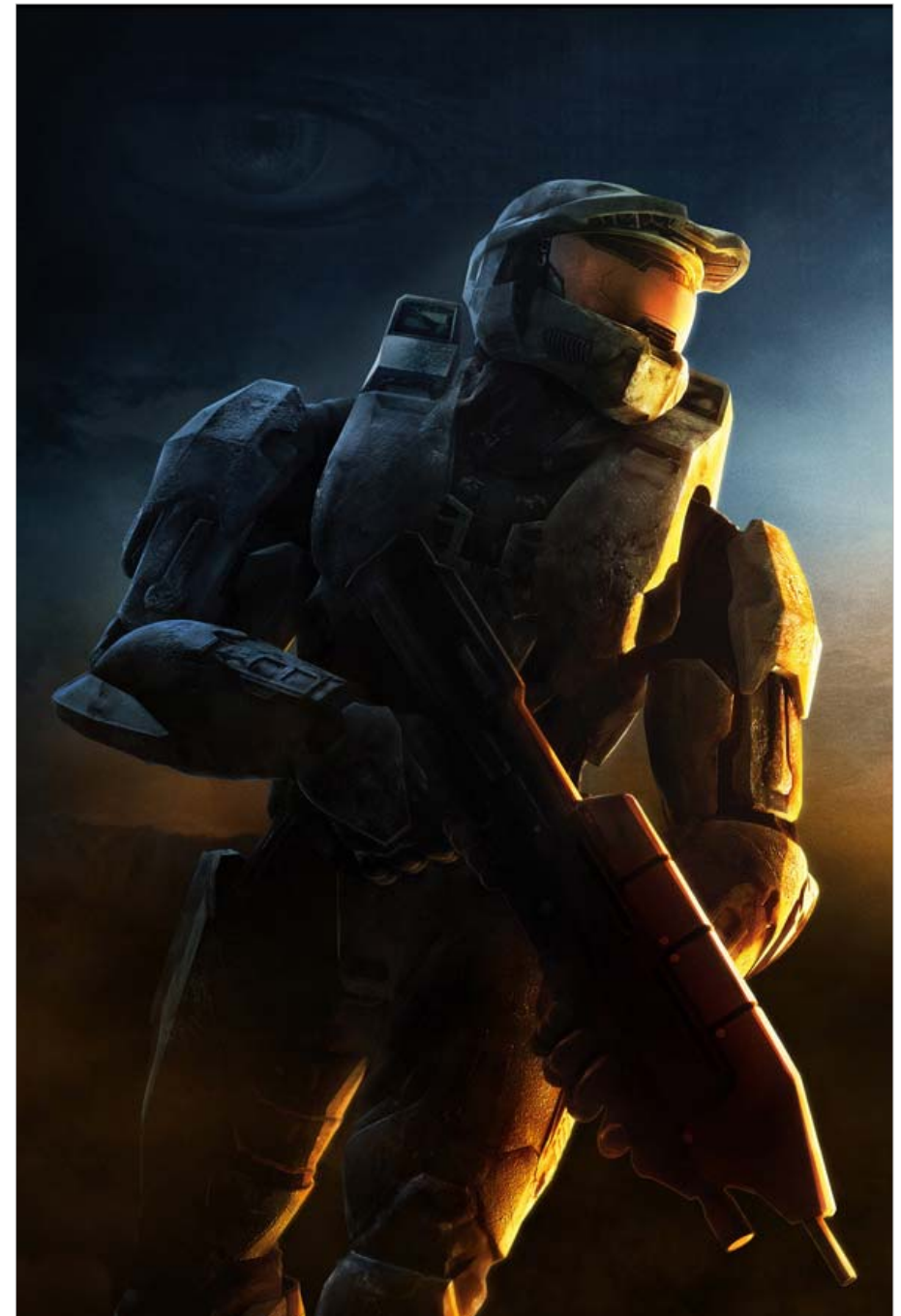
Now officially the most successful launch in entertainment history, shoot-em-up **Halo 3** simultaneously took gaming into the entertainment mainstream, hammered another nail into the coffin containing **Sony's PS3** and established **Microsoft's Xbox 360** as the console of choice for the dedicated gamer. The third in the wildly successful trilogy overcame some slightly disappointed reviews to take \$170 million on its first day in America alone. To put this in perspective, the latest *Harry Potter* film – *The Order of the Phoenix*, took just \$77 million in its first weekend and *Star Wars*, released at a time in which movie box office takings dwarfed today's paltry figures, only made \$108 million. Suck it up, Lucas.

The marketing surrounding the launch featured collaborations between **AKQA** and **McCann Erickson** in San Francisco to create a 1,200 square foot diorama of '**The Battle of New Mombasa**' filched from the Halo storyline. A haunting television spot directed by MJZ's Rupert Saunders and web films exploring the 'history' of the great battle were complemented by one of the year's most impressive interactive web experiences (halo3.com/believe) in which users could investigate the diorama in full. Featured in *Contagious* 13.

Alternate Reality Gaming /

AKQA also constructed an Alternate Reality Game for fans of the Halo brand. For the uninitiated, an ARG is an intricate treasure hunt spanning both the offline and online worlds, in which a vast community of players (often termed 'the hive mind' for its worker bee dedication and problem-solving ability) collaborate to solve a series of clues and take the game to its conclusion.

Halo 3's complex ARG, entitled *Iris*, demanded a level of involvement which raised interesting points about the nature of marketing, namely: one would be hard pushed to think of a more sure-fire success story





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than Halo 3, with its dedicated audience and worldwide acclaim. When something as resource-intensive as an ARG is targeted at those who are guaranteed to buy the product anyway, what purpose does it serve as marketing other than as an extension of the Halo experience to those who've already invested significantly in its success - in other words, a thank you? Is this the next step in the advertising industry's shift from pushy control to genuine engagement? When asked about the use of such ARGs in its ongoing Microsoft Entertainment releases, corporate vice president of global marketing Jeff Bell says: 'The use of alternate reality games is a core element of word of mouth marketing. It engages the influentials, enthusiasts and evangelists, and provides them with a forum where they can share their experiences with others. This succeeds when the ARG is owned by the participants. It must be natural and organic from within.'

This year has also seen a shift in the role of the ARG itself. Previously a backseat and complex addition to the entertainment and technological marketer's portfolio, in the last few months clients as diverse as Warner Bros (for the June '08 launch of Batman flick *The Dark Knight*) and **Diageo** (who cunningly hid the latest **Guinness** commercial online and constructed an elaborate treasure hunt until it was unveiled) are dipping their toes in this most murky and thrilling of waters.

The marketers at Guinness in conjunction with **AMV BBDO** and **iChameleon** seeded clues using Google AdWords, YouTube and Flickr, and made sure that players were rewarded along the way with Guinness merchandising and motivated by the prospect of a solid gold domino waiting for them at the end. www.guinnessstipping.com

In the meantime, *The Dark Knight* (developed by twisted geniuses **42 Entertainment** in Pasadena) could prove a turning point for the very concept of the ARG, pushing it into the converging mainstreams of marketing and popular culture. Up until this point, the Alternate Reality Game has operated on three levels. There are the super-involved, the problem solvers, the forum posters. Then, there are the interested, the seeders, the followers and the watchers. And finally, the third tier - all of their friends, who come into contact with the ARG at some point through word of mouth or surrounding PR and buzz. The activity surrounding *The Dark Knight* could do much to swell the ranks of the first group, with subject matter deliciously dark yet accessibly trashy, and an uncommonly low barrier to entry maintained with a fast turnover of tasks and clues. See *Contagious* 13.

www.whysoserious.com
www.ibelieveinharveydenttoo.com
www.rorysdeathkiss.com

Burger King / Xbox Games /

We know, we know. It's been done to death and yes, it won the Titanium Grand Prix at Cannes Lions this year. But it's hard to ignore an exercise which marks the convincing evolution of a brand into a successful entertainment magnate. **Burger King's** three-title series of games for the Xbox 360 were conceived by **Crispin Porter** and sold in BK restaurants for the bargain bucket price of \$4, at a time when other games for the console were retailing at around \$60. The move was subsequently credited with a 41% rise in their second quarter profits.

Following suit is the ever-experimental **Toyota** on behalf of the **Yaris**. A driving game called 'Yaris' was developed in conjunction with **Saatchi & Saatchi LA**



The Dark Knight /



Guinness /



Yaris /



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and launched in October this year. It will be given away for free on **Xbox Live!** until October 2008.

www.xbox.com/enUS/promotions/burgerking/default.htm

www.toyota.com/vehicles/minisite/yaris/game

Stop press / Giant Gaming Merger /

In December, games developer and publisher **Activision** (they of the wildly successful Guitar Hero) and **Vivendi** (World of Warcraft - if we need to say more, you need to read more) announced that they would merge in an \$18.9 billion deal-the biggest ever in the video games industry. This move backs the development of gaming into an increasingly complex entity. For every mega-popular shoot-'em-up (Halo 3) there is a super-dedicated **Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game** (World of Warcraft) and a chance to get drunk, hang out with your friends and irritate your neighbours (Guitar Hero, natch). Gamers are everywhere. Get used to it.

One to watch /

Despite incurring both disparaging reviews and the wrath of the literary community, November movie release **Beowulf** – a CGI re-imagining of the 7th century Old-English poem – has stirred considerable debate on the future of the entertainment and gaming industries. Remarkably lifelike representations were constructed of actors **Ray Winstone** and **Angelina Jolie**, who were needed for a mere two days of filming before the animation masters went to work.

As **George Lucas** prepares for the lengthy and painstaking of process of converting all six **Star Wars** films to 3D, the advantages of such 'synthespians' becomes clear. Why update existing 2D footage when you can shoot in a combination of live action and 3D-ready computer animation? **James Cameron's** forthcoming venture, **Avatar**, will be based entirely on

motion capture animation technology. The system is sophisticated enough to interact with the digital world in which the movie will eventually appear in real time, allowing him to adjust, direct and 'reshoot' the scenes as if shooting live action. Cameron's team is also experimenting with a way of letting computer generated characters interact with human actors on a real, live-action set while shooting live action. 'Ideally at the end of the day the audience has no idea which they're looking at,' Cameron said. The future is upon us.

www.beowulfmovie.com ■

links /

www.halo3.com/believe

www.halo3.com

www.guinnessstipping.com

www.whysoserious.com

www.Ibelieveinharveydenttoo.com

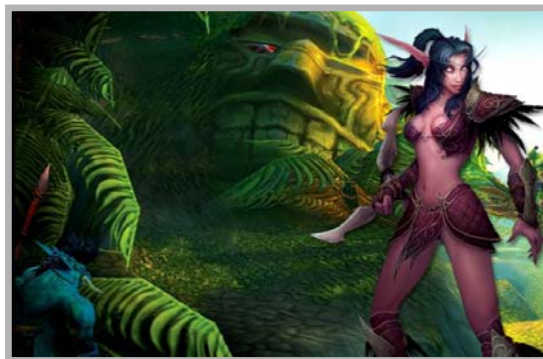
www.rorysdeathkiss.com

www.42entertainment.com

www.xbox.com/en-US/promotions/burgerking/default.htm

www.toyota.com/vehicles/minisite/yaris/game

www.beowulfmovie.com



World of Warcraft /



Beowulf /





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03 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft / Photosynth /

How we absorb, share, explore and store data will radically change over the coming years if **Microsoft** has anything to do with it – the company's recent innovations aim is to break down the barriers between people and technology. Since the February acquisition of **Seadragon Software**, the tech giant has been putting its newfound screen expertise to good use.

Our favourite is **Photosynth**, which invites you to jump inside photographs to explore particular places in more detail, reconstructing scanned images to display them in a 3-D stitched-together portrait. The stunning technology enables users to access photos quickly, and view scenes from particular angles, so they can zoom in to see a particular detail. See *Contagious* 12.

Microsoft plans to facilitate their customers with Silverlight – a cross browser, cross platform plug-in which promises to deliver the next level of .NET-based media experiences, not to mention a plethora of interactive application across the web.

And the race for touch-screen ubiquity is on. Microsoft launched its own Surface table (see the Gadgets section for an unfortunate comparison to the altogether more nimble iPhone) and Jeff Han's Multi-touchscreen project goes from strength to strength.

Citywall /

Residents of Helsinki, Finland have been getting to grips with **Citywall**, a new public touchscreen installation that allows users to navigate through various layers of information in a user-friendly, intuitive way. The display is 2.6 metres wide, but can be used simultaneously by as

many people as can elbow their way into the space available. The same technology has the potential to extend across a 16 metre interface, so there's interesting potential for increasing the scale of this project. Perhaps the coolest feature of Citywall is that anyone can contribute, as the system continuously gathers annotated photos and videos from public sources like Flickr and YouTube. Content can be submitted via MMS or via email to post@citywall.org.

Megaphone /

Manchester-based **Megaphone** has devised a platform allowing anyone within sight of a large video display to dial a number and join a simple game using their cellphone as a controller. The games have a retro appeal, and the ability to join in immediately is an obvious temptation for Wii-loving phone-addicted passersby. The system's creators have ambitions to apply the Megaphone technology in the world's highest-profile screen locations from Times Square to Piccadilly Circus and Ginza, Tokyo. As well as the fun of playing against fellow pedestrians, there's scope to engage in real-time competitions with gamers in other parts of the world as well. The smart money's on a brand getting involved any day now.

RFID Tagging /

We were enchanted by **MINI's RFID** tagging scheme, in which MINI owners were sent a keyfob tag and a URL. By programming their own personal message online, they were able to see it appear on interactive billboards every time they drove past. Top marks to **Butler, Shine, Stern & Partners** for rewarding existing customers in a way guaranteed to make the rest of us jealous. ▶



Photosynth /



Citywall /



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Advanced Graffiti /

An SMS tagging project dubbed 'TXTual healing' encourages passers-by to text their own messages into speech bubbles that are projected onto buildings nearby.

As is often the case, some of the smartest technocreative thinking is coming from outside the branded realm. Any Graff writers with dreams of blockbusting (that's Graff speak for doing a reeeeeally big painting...) can now do so without scaling walls, struggling with litres of paint and risking lengthy prison sentences. A new system of projection called **L.A.S.E.R** allows graffers to point a pen at a building, start writing and witness their pen movements shining across the entire building. Creator **Theo Watson** disapproves of advertising but helpfully his crew, **Muonics**, have made the secret recipe available to all on their website. It's probably illegal. Good luck. Featured in *Contagious* 11.

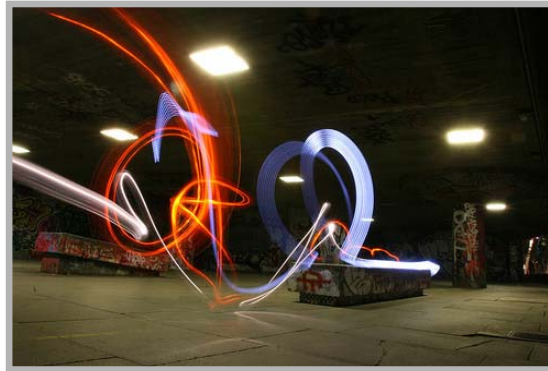
The geniuses at art collective **Lichtfaktor** came up with light tagging, using slow shutterspeed exposures to capture their work on celluloid before zooming off to develop the results.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=1F5RnaJkIeA>

... a technique that was swiftly borrowed by US mobile operator **Sprint** for a commercial.

One to watch /

Google Maps' Street View is looking to host a 360 panorama at street level of American cities, captured in a kind of old-school way by the Google camera van. You can eyeball buildings, store fronts and unsuspecting souls who happened to be passing at the time. Privacy schmivacy. Stalkers of the world unite! ▀



Lichtfaktor /

Microsoft /
<http://labs.live.com/photosynth>
<http://multi-touchscreen.com>

Citywall /
www.citywall.org

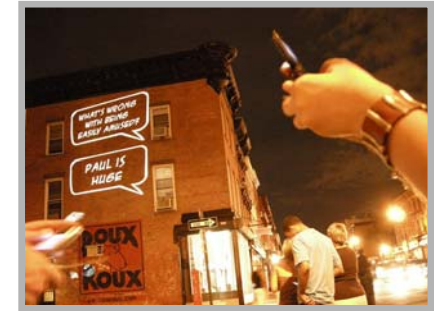
Megaphone /
www.playmegaphone.com

Advanced Graffiti /
www.txtualhealing.com
www.muonics.net

Lichtfaktor /
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=1F5RnaJkIeA>

Sprint /
http://youtube.com/watch?v=IW_9SYaWAQg

Google Maps' Street View /
<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview>



TXTual healing /



L.A.S.E.R /



Google Maps' Street View /



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04 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / GADGETS

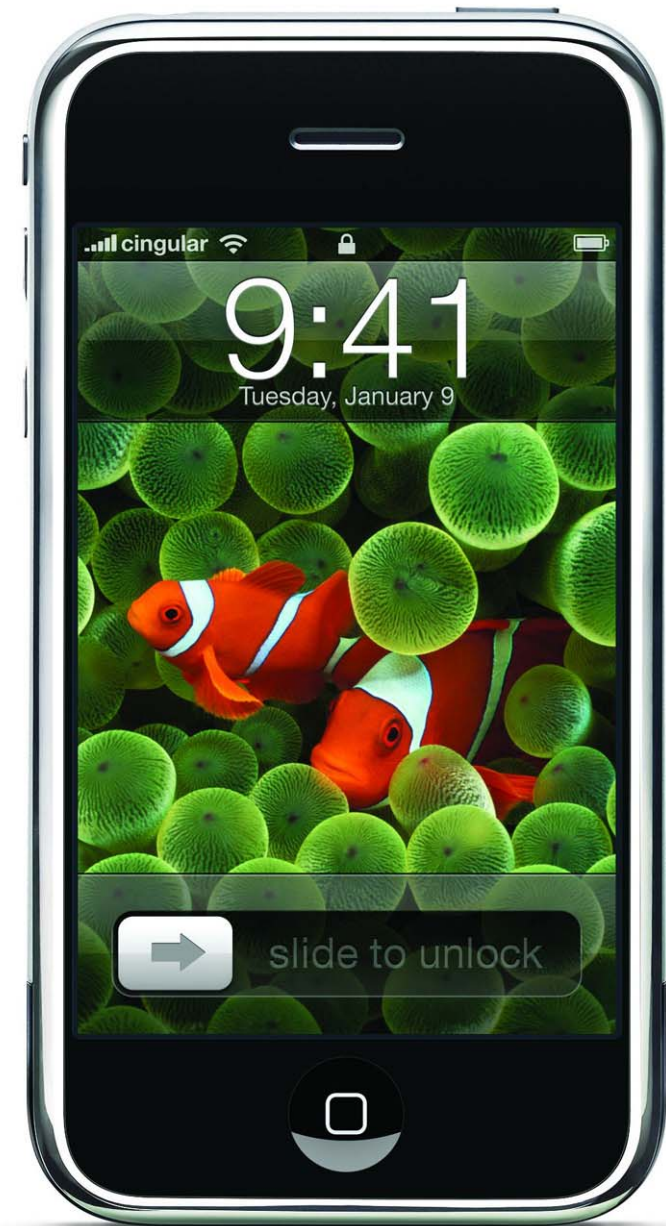
iPhone /

Without doubt the most exciting, intuitive and down-right desirable gadget of 2007 – there was little chance of us omitting the **iPhone** from our Most Contagious was there? A multi-function touchscreen desktop operating system makes it arguably the first real handheld computer, as well as a fully-functioning 8GB music and video player. What excites us however, is that **Apple** is never content to rest on its laurels and we need only to look at how far the iPod has come in the last few years for proof of this. The question we're forced to ask is what have the designers and researchers in other mainstream mobile phone companies been doing for the past twenty years? We can only wonder what the cunning chaps from Cupertino have in store for future models – maybe 2008 will reveal more from its competitors as well. Featured in *Contagious* 12.

Microsoft obviously recognise the importance of such engaging, user-friendly operating systems, hence the development of its **Surface** hardware and software combination. This will allow users to manipulate digital content with natural motions, gestures or physical objects. Expect a spring 2008 release.

Erasable Paper /

Xerox has taken a plain, inanimate object and turned it into one of the most exciting prototype gadgets of 2007. A special printer uses specific light frequencies instead of ink to produce the images/writing on a sheet of paper. However, these only last a day or two and then disappear, giving a clean surface for further use. We like this for two reasons. First, 90% of documents in a busy office are discarded within one hour of being printed, so the concept of re-usable paper has massive implications for environmental sustainability. And second, because by enabling ordinary paper to accept a limitless amount of changing information, Xerox have blurred the lines between digital displays and the real-world analogue of what comes out of your printer. Hold the iPhone – there may be life in the old paper yet...





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One Laptop Per Child /

One Laptop Per Child continues to do its sterling work by providing rugged yet inexpensive computers for children in under developed countries. The machines themselves contain flash memory instead of a hard drive and can currently be sold to governments and schools for US\$188 with a target of \$100 per computer in 2008.

Featured in *Contagious* 11.

Sony Rolly /

And also – recently launched in Japan, the **Sony Rolly** speakerbot is the cutest little thing we ever did see. The MP3-playing gadget not only blasts out your favourite tunes, but dances along in time to the music, flashing its lights and waving its vaguely anthropomorphic antennae as it gets its groove on. File under 'Pointless, but We Want It Anyway.' <http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu37TSfKx2A>

Slingbox /

Another gadget gaining traction is the **Slingbox**. It enables users to redirect music/video from any source, including a cable or satellite receiver, to their PC and then via broadband, to anywhere in the world. And the best bit? UK inhabitants don't even need a new TV licence to indulge in this global-streaming frivolity... *Contagious* 13. ▀

links /

www.apple.com/iphone

www.microsoft.com/surface

www.xerox.com

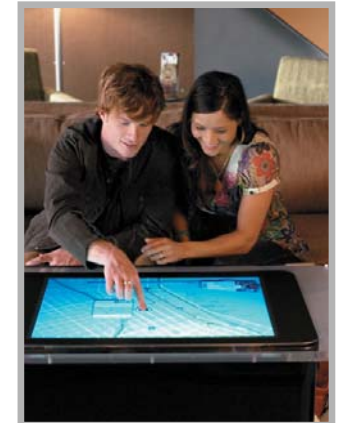
www.xerox.com/go/xrx/template/inv_rel_newsroom.jsp?ed_name=NR_2006Nov27_TemporaryDocuments&app=Newsroom&view=newsrelease&format=article

<http://laptop.org>

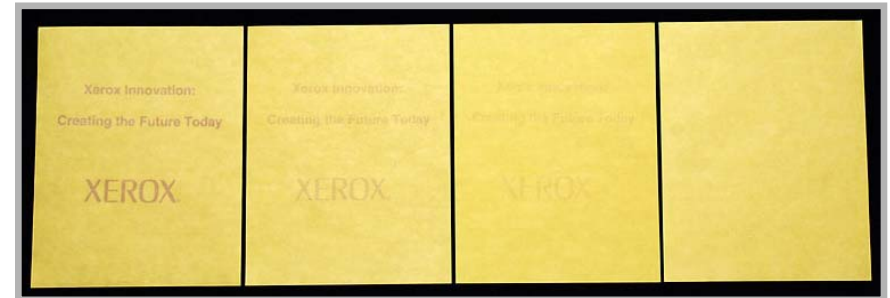
www.slingmedia.com



One Laptop Per Child /



Surface /



Xerox /



Slingbox /



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05 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / DESIGN / ARCHITECTURE /

Nou Camp Stadium /

Another blow for English football comes in the form of the staggering **Nou Camp Stadium**, home to **FC Barcelona** in Spain. The epic Gaudi-inspired remodelling will bring the seating capacity of the largest ground in Europe up to 106,000. The most eye-catching part of the redesign is a beautiful multi-coloured skin placed around the outside of the building and over the retractable roof, embracing the original asymmetrical shape. The tiles, created from polycarbonate and glass panels, are able to change colour, enabling the stadium itself to be used for light displays or as a giant screen. Created by renowned British architect **Norman Foster**, the €245m redevelopment will be completed for the 2011/12 season. www.fosterandpartners.com/Projects/1552/Default.aspx

Zaha Hadid /

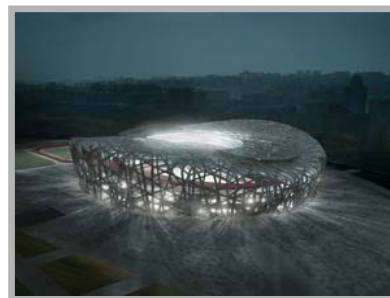
Few have been as busy this year as architect **Zaha Hadid**. The opening of the **Nordpark Cable Railway** took place in December, serving ski stations in the mountains of Innesbruck, Austria and comprising the fluid shapes that are typical of Hadid's designs. Taking inspiration from natural geometry, 2007's output also included the beautiful Dune Formations furniture which launched at the Venice Biennale, alongside **Chanel's Travelling Exhibition Pavillion** (see Retail and *Contagious* 12). Other remarkable achievements include the **Abu Dhabi Performing Arts Centre** and a temporary installation at London's **Serpentine Gallery** this summer. London's **Design Museum** also hosted the first full scale exhibition of Hadid's work this year, focusing on her recent highly productive period. www.zaha-hadid.com

Ross Lovegrove /

British designer **Ross Lovegrove** has combined his fluid, natural designs with the latest groundbreaking technology. Turning his hand to everything from aircraft interiors to furniture design, Lovegrove has created **System X** (see *Contagious* 12) - an organic, x-shaped light for Japanese collective **Yamagiwa**. The lights can be linked together and emit isometric electrical currents that mimic the sun's rays, attempting to achieve the humanisation of artificial light. www.rosslovegrove.com

Beijing National Stadium /

Bird's nests aren't credited with providing the inspiration for too many landmark buildings, but the centre piece of the Beijing Olympics, by Swiss architects **Herzog and de Meuron** certainly nods in that direction. The stadium's façade also provides its supporting structure, creating an iconic impression from a distance or close up, in a similar fashion to other recent Beijing constructions such as **Rem Koolhaas'** **CCTV** headquarters and **PTW's 'Watercube'** for the **National Swim Centre**. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herzog_%26_de_Meuron



Beijing National Stadium /



Nou Camp Stadium /



Ross Lovegrove /



Zaha Hadid /



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06 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / SOCIAL MEDIA /

2007 has been the year of online social communities. Facebook has been growing at an exponential rate, leaving users unable to organise any kind of social activity without it and extending the space for brands that **Second Life** initiated last year. As well as hosting content and competitions in worlds such as **Habbo** and **GAIA**, brands have also been creating and buying up their own virtual spaces. Here's the best of the bunch:

Shortly after *Contagious* identified kiddy kingdom **Club Penguin** as a 'Wildfire' brand in Cannes 2007, it was snapped up by **Disney** for a cool \$700 million... In gaming, you can't count yourself as having any kind of identity without a **Wii Mii**... **Sony** has countered Nintendo's triumphant year with the launch of its next-generation online-user community, '**Home**'. The service is available as a free download, allowing users to create an avatar and interact with other blu-ray enabled gamers, though it remains to be seen if this will help turn around a rough year for Sony in the games department...

In a classic 'right time, right place' scenario, **Levi's** branded virtual world/social networking sites have taken off in Hong Kong and China, developed through **TEQUILA** Hong Kong and **OMD**. Generating 10 million hits in less than a week and a ten page spread in *Face*, the initiative certainly hit home with its 15-24 year old target group. **Levi's World** was promoted in the brand's retail spaces. Featured in *Contagious* 13.

The beautiful anime world of **GAIA** was boosted by content created by New York agency **Idealogue**, who launched a short film trilogy in the world, entitled **MMVII**. The films aimed to drive member sign-up and raise the world's profile amongst its 8.5m residents and beyond. With storylines based around the GAIA 'earth goddess' myth and prophecies, elements from the films have been recreated in the virtual world, and residents are able to interact with the films online. See *Contagious* 12.



Levi's /



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Bebo /

Bebo has seized the initiative from rival social networks, repositioning itself as a media platform and offering a combination of entertainment and social media. It added to its impressive content offering such as drama series **KateModern** (see Branded Content) by joining forces with digital media delivery company, 7digital, to launch a music download service for Bebo's 40m users. This will allow 'Bebo Bands' to sell their music online via 7digital's indiestore, counting towards their chart position.

MySpace has since hit back with the announcement of their own dedicated music channel – **Earwig TV**, which will help promote unsigned bands with profiles, interviews and live gig footage.

Bebo has also launched **Open Media**, a platform that allows content producers free and direct access to its users, in return for providing those users with thousands of hours of premium content from some of the world's best known media brands including the **BBC**, **Channel 4**, **Sky** and **CBS**. Video content can be stored and curated on profile pages, as well as distributed virally.

Content owners are able to add advertising to their material, and keep the revenue which it generates. This channel looks set to be invaluable for advertisers looking to generate a word-of-mouth interest in their offering and build an ongoing relationship with an empowered fanbase.

Gated Communities /

In November, *Business Week* reported on the development of 'Social Networking with the elite'. According to Reuter's CEO, Tom Glocher, **Reuters Space** is a 'MySpace for the financial community' targeting fund managers, traders and analysts with exclusive information.

The invite-only nature of such communities explains their appeal for time-short, information-overloaded workers and surfers looking for valuable networking opportunities. Other groups getting in on the gated community act include the high-IQ society **MENSA** and the **CIA**, with social software offering features similar to Facebook/Wikipedia/del.icio.us to share intelligence reports. **College.com** steps into the exclusive American university space previously occupied by Facebook, offering campus specific information.

www.asmallworld.net is typical of the select, invite-only networks, with users selected via algorithm and given privileges depending on their contribution to the site.

Niche communities also have the option of charging a membership fee. We predict far more exclusive online conclaves in the upcoming year. We just hope that we're invited.

View *BusinessWeek*'s feature here for an indepth list of other communities:
http://images.businessweek.com/ss/07/11/1115_in_in_gated/index_01.htm ■

links /

www.levisworld.com.hk

www.MMVII.tv

www.indiestore.com

www.bebo.com

<http://space.reuters.com>

<http://www.asmallworld.net/login.php>



Playstation / 'Home' /



Gaia / MMVII /



Bebo /



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07 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / IMMERSIVE WEBSITES /

Get the Glass /

Web developers have been reveling in the potential that broadband's faster load times offer. The **California Milk Processing Board** stretched the frontiers of the web with [gettheglass.com](#), built by Swedish whiz kids **North Kingdom** and backed by an integrated campaign from **Goodby Silverstein & Partners**. The site boasts beautiful graphics that wouldn't be out of place in the latest commercial games releases coupled with a compelling narrative, urging gamers to overcome a series of challenges while moving along a board game grid towards a life-giving glass of milk. The site boasted lengthy dwell times of up to 30 minutes at weekends and deservedly gained a Gold Cyber Lion at Cannes. See *Contagious* 11 for a full review and demo of the site.

Diesel Heidies /

Farfar's 'blink and you'll miss it' campaign to launch **Diesel's Intimate Collection** gained a great deal of attention and recognition for little media spend. Parodying the TV and online craze for self-publicising stunts, the campaign saw two models, 'the Heidies', steal the brand's new underwear collection and kidnap an unsuspecting Diesel sales rep. The Heidies holed up in a hotel room for five days, with their antics captured by webcams and broadcast online, taking over the Diesel.com homepage. Visitors to the site were able to interact with the situation, issuing instructions and taking part in polls to decide what misery the scantily-clad pair should inflict on the hapless rep, as well as contributing via email and video. Diesel.com usually attracts an average 25,000 daily visitors, but the 'kidnap' peaked at 85,000 per day. The campaign confirmed Diesel as an innovative and open brand and boosted its online credentials with the Cannes Cyber Grand Prix. The aftermath can be seen at [diesel.com/lockin](#) and in *Contagious* 10.





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Orange Unlimited /

How better to promote an unlimited mobile phone contract than with a stunning infinite website? London-based digital agency, **Poke**, constructed www.goodthingsshouldneverend.com for Orange as part of a richly integrated cross-media campaign which also included an interactive TV spot by **Weapon 7**, with prizes to be won by deciphering clues hidden in the website. The site includes public walls to doodle on, characters to interact and share icons with and content that can be posted on popular social networking sites. See *Contagious 13*.

Ones to watch /

Other sites we've been impressed by include **Lowe's** relaunch of stellaarfois.com, which hosts a cinematic short film and a series of intricate games and narratives relating to Stella's history (*Contagious 13*).

Halo 3's beautiful halo3.com (AKQA) is swooned over in this report's Gaming section (p.05) and *Contagious 13*.

www.michelinman.com/forward uses every inch of your bandwidth to portray the interior of 'the **Michelin Factory**' (**Cohn & Wolfe**) and **Fiat's** online showroom is better than the real thing at www.fiat.co.uk (AKQA) following on from the impressive fiat500.com (**Arc**) that launched last year. ▀

links /

www.gettheglass.com

www.diesel.com/lockin

www.farfar.se/awards/cannes2007/heidies

www.goodthingsshouldneverend.com

www.stellaarfois.com

www.halo3.com/believe

www.michelinman.com/forward

www.fiat.co.uk

www.fiat500.com



Get the Glass /



Orange /



Fiat 500 /



Diesel Heidies /



Stella Artois /



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08 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / APPLICATIONS /

It's been a tough year for the technophobes in the 'creative industries'. With technology splintering and progressing at an increasingly incomprehensible rate, there are masses of effective ways to get your message out there. Most of which don't involve shooting on a Caribbean beach. The moral of the story? Accept you know nothing. Hire people who were born after 1985. Read *Contagious*.

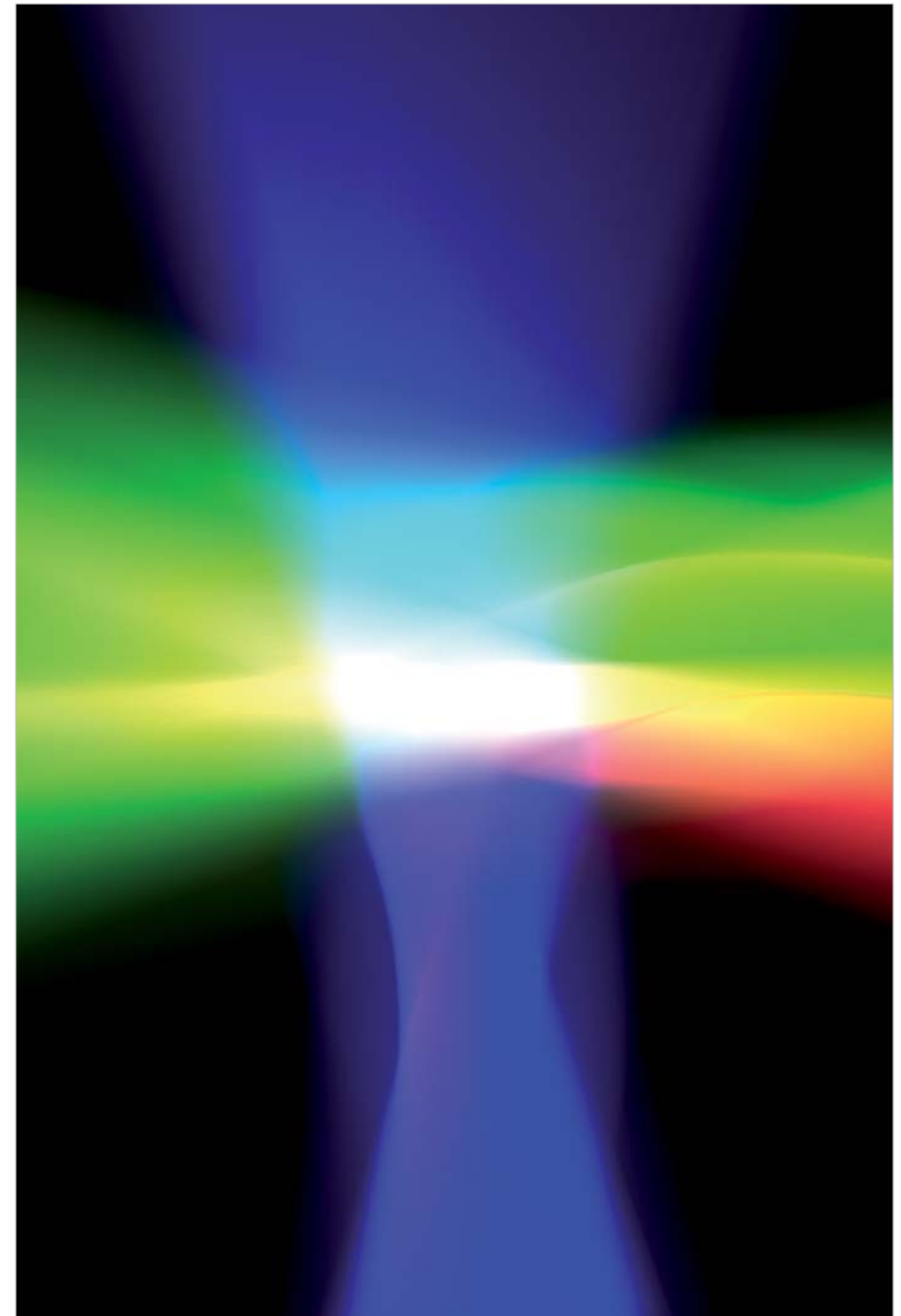
Widgets /

In case you weren't aware, widgets are the delicious little service applications that sit on your desktop, web browser homepage or Facebook page, keeping you constantly updated on everything from the time, the state of your local expressway, the latest Amazon recommendations, the temperature in Taipei, all the most recent developments on Last.FM... Unsurprisingly, given the disproportionate emotional clout of the humble widget, brands all over the world are making the transition from professional irritant to service provider.

Many an old school creative's eyes glaze over when the word widget is mentioned, but why bug people with annoying commercials when you can enrich their lives with a snazzy little branded tool that sits on their PC screen for 24 hours a day. Services, not messages, ok?

A *Contagious* favourite comes from couriers **UPS**. With the development of a desktop widget in the form of an animated critter who delivers up-to-the-minute information on the exact whereabouts of your precious packages, UPS have hit on a very tangible reason to choose their services over their rivals'. Top marks to **McCann Erickson**, London.

Student travel company **STA Travel** employed **Electric Artists**, New York to develop nifty branded widgets which include a travel countdown, weather comparison and special offers widget, to be placed on home pages including Facebook and MySpace. **Marc Schiller**, ceo of Electric Artists, describes the effort as part of a much larger 'branded utility' trend: 'brands can be very effective in providing tools for their customers whereas adverts online need to change dramatically'.





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We're also enamoured of a widget from everyone's favourite Gallic electrobots **Daft Punk** to promote new album '**Alive**'. Fans used it to listen to previews of new tracks, buy the single, read their biography and newsletter and see photos. A nice indication – following on from the Radiohead revolution – that the music industry is finally starting to wrap its head round this wonderful invention called digital technology.

Twitter /

Micro-blogging – the reduction of the confessional or informative nature of a blog post to a teeny tiny sentence – came into sharp focus this year with the rise of Twitter, a service aimed at getting users to answer the question 'What are you doing right now?' And answer they did – the Twitter community now numbers in the millions as an ADD generation obsessed with sharing took it to their collective bosom, and applications such as **Twittervision** were developed to show the remarkable activity of the community splayed across a world map. Why worry about the situation in Iraq? Stacey from Des Moines is currently de-worming her cat.

However meaningless Twitter may appear to be, its vast community has been finding some ingenious ways to put it to good use as a management tool, a to-do list, and most importantly, a means of locating each other at music festivals. Anything this flexible and this popular is surely worth keeping an eye on.

Joost /

And finally – 2007 will be remembered as the year Internet TV almost took off. Rival services **Joost** and **Babelgum** launched after extensive beta-testing and investment, with Joost the immediate forerunner due to the reputation of its founders, Skype and Kazaa creators **Niklas Zennström** and **Janus Friis**. Essentially, Joost is DVD-quality on demand TV run off a file sharing network big enough to guarantee superfast downloads. Think

about it as a giant, unlimited DVD collection, accessible from PCs and mobiles the world over. And what does this mean for advertisers? The ability to target campaigns at members of the Joost community according to their personal details and preferences, and a fast-track to smart, innovative and cheaper branded content delivered through a mechanism which involves no icky messing about with media owners.

Whilst adoption has been slower than its inventors initially predicted, the addition of content partners to the Joost offering has seen a sudden influx of hungry consumers. Brands such as Audi, Garnier Fructis, IBM, Kraft, L'Oréal, Microsoft, Motorola, Nestlé, Nokia Nseries, Opel/Vauxhall, Purina, P&G, Sony Electronics, Taco Bell, United Airlines, Virgin Money, Visa, Vodafone and Wrigley are testing the Joost waters.

Most recently, **Coke** launched **Bubbles**, an application which allows users to share their thoughts and comments on specific scenes with their friends by sending a Coke Bubble to anyone in their email address book. You could be watching *The X Factor* via Joost, and your friend's comment appears on-screen in its own transparent bubble, thus combining the endearing drivel of Instant Messenger conversations with on demand TV programming. Brilliant. ■

links /

www.statravel.com/traveltools

<http://bms.daftalive.com>

<http://twittervision.com>

<http://twitter.com>

www.joost.com



Daft Punk /



STA Travel /



Twittervision /



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09 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / CONNECTED PRODUCTS /

The most tangible of this year's technical phenomena, a connected product can be defined thus: any product and web service which are fully integrated so that the on and off-line activity are combined into one product sold at retail. No, no, stay with us. It's easy. Take the game-changing **Nike+**, for example. The collaboration between Nike and Apple which sees information from your sneakers transmitted from your iPod nano to the Nike+ website via a one touch interface is the granddaddy of connected products. It's a sneaker – a real object – combined with an online resource – the website through which you can update your info, compete with other runners, and generate new routes. Here's the best of this year's bunch:

Dole Banana /

If ever there was an initiative to silence the digital doubters once and for all, it would be the **Dole** banana. Every organic banana sold by Dole in the US comes with a stickered three-digit code. When consumers enter the code on the Dole website, they can access information on where that banana was picked, the family that grew it, the community they're based in as well as background information on Dole's Fair Trade policies. Bollocks to the naysayers. It's a banana. When a banana goes digital, the future does too.

Barbie Girls /

Utilising all the pink pixels and virtual schmaltz the web has to offer, **Mattel** launched www.barbiegirls.com, an online community aimed at 7-12 year-old girls. The social networking site attracted 2.75m registered users in the first three months with up to 50,000 newcomers registering on the beta site every day. The site is already trouncing other popular virtual worlds in terms of growth, but the really clever bit as far as actual revenue is concerned is the ability to connect with a Barbie-themed mp3 player, which unlocks a deeper level of interactivity to the site... Ken perhaps? Tweenie enthusiasts can use the \$59.99 device to download tunes and other media.





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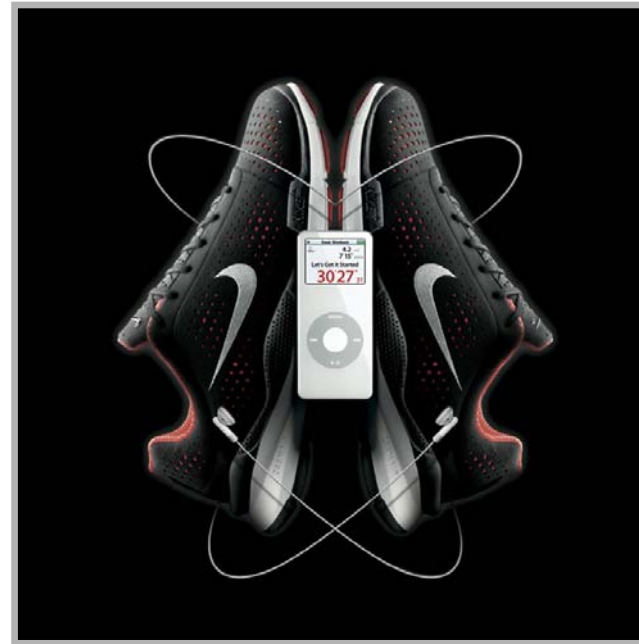
Innocent Drinks / Buy One Get One Tree /

A brand built on an all-organic, just-fruit promise and the familiar buddy-buddy tone of voice which proved so successful it was adopted by everyone from BP to Wal-Mart is also taking the plunge with a more environmentally focused connected product. The brilliantly-named 'Buy One Get One Tree' initiative sees Innocent Smoothies launching a sustained on-pack promotion to give purchasers of its oversized smoothies the opportunity to get a tree planted on their behalf for free. With the aim being to grow 100,000 trees, Innocent's thirty-year pledge not only benefits the planet by releasing more oxygen, but it also supports the African and Indian communities that supply the brand with fruit. Innocent will pay a quarterly fee to the communities for nurturing the saplings into fully fledged trees, and the mature trees can then provide crops for income or food for the local neighbourhood.

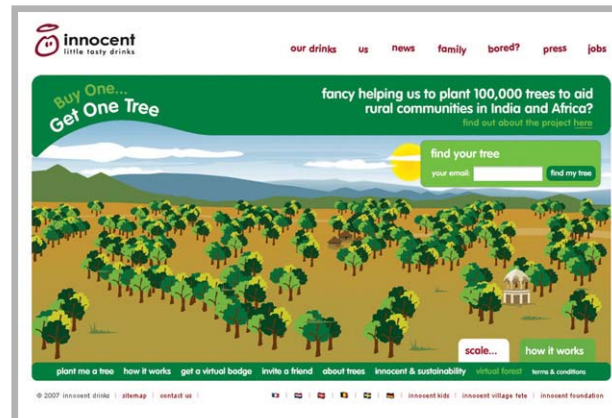
On the website, customers register their code, name their tree and enjoy Innocent's lovely virtual forest. Feeling suitably virtuous, they can then click into the company's main site and join in all kinds of Innocent Family fun. See *Contagious* 13. ▀

links /

- <http://nikeplus.nike.com>
- <http://www.dole.com>
- www.barbiegirls.com
- <http://trees.innocentdrinks.co.uk>



Nike + /



Innocent Drinks /



Barbie Girls /



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10 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / INTEGRATED /

Coke Side of Life /

More a belief system than an integrated advertising campaign, **Coca-Cola** has taken its Coke Side of Life proposition to impressive lengths. **Wieden & Kennedy** Amsterdam's **Happiness Factory** is the most literal embodiment, an uplifting and colourful animation that picked up metal at Cannes Lions 2007. A six-minute cinema version of the film is showing at the **World of Coke** in Atlanta (see Branded Destinations), with characters voiced by actual Coca-Cola employees. A strong focus on internal culture and creativity via Coke North America's Creative Excellence Group has ensured a viable, long-term brand platform offering opportunities way beyond your average integrated one-off, incorporating music, art and online. Highlights include an exhibition at London's South Bank Centre showing artists like **Sir Peter Blake**'s interpretations of the 'Coke Side of Life'.

See a full interview with **Pio Schunker**, Coca-Cola's senior vice president of creative excellence for North America in *Contagious* 13.

Doritos /

The first brand to create a viable, sustained proposition from user-generated content was **Doritos**, via its **Snack Strong Productions** platform. During February's Super Bowl, Doritos broadcast two commercials created by consumers as part of its '**Crash the Super Bowl**' challenge and all five finalists' ads aired on national television. The winning commercial was voted for online and the brand was overwhelmed with positive responses. Although the winning effort, 'Live the Flavor' was produced for a mere \$50, the investment by the agency, **Goodby Silverstein**, was obvious in their careful seeding of the competition amongst artistic communities that would be inspired to create impressive contributions by which the brand would be proud to stand. Top marks to Doritos for demonstrating that the surge of user-generated content should be seen as more of an opportunity than a threat.

A Doritos case study is featured in *Contagious* 12.





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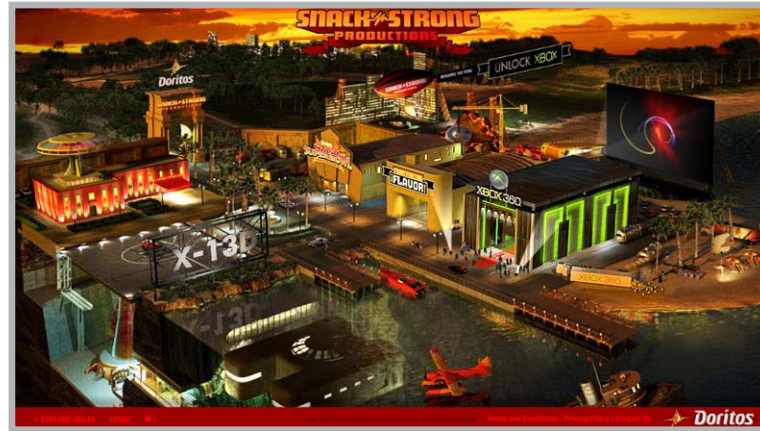
JetBlue /

JetBlue is legendary in the States for high levels of customer service and perks only dreamed about by other budget airline travellers, such as leather seats, inflight TV and free snacks. **JWT NY's** strategy to help the brand grow from JetBlue to JetBig while continuing to place its consumers at the heart of everything it does involved featuring the brand's strongest advocates in its advertising, harnessing the vast amounts of positive word of mouth that the brand generated naturally. JWT captured 'the JetBlue Experience' by creating the JetBlue StoryBooth, where customers recorded their testimonials and loyalty to the brand in front of a videocamera.

The agency then interpreted these stories using lo-fi animation technics, producing 16 commercials, 2 cinema executions, 12 online viral videos an a half-hour inflight video for a third of the cost of JetBlue's closest competitor's traditional campaign. Postcards sent by passengers to the brand are reproduced and distributed at airports, and when disaster struck in the form of the 'Valentine's Day Massacre' which saw travellers stranded at JFK for hours by ice storms, ceo **David Neeleman** issued an immediate apology on YouTube and launched a 'Consumer Bill of Rights'. A JetBlue case study is featured in *Contagious 11*.

Axe /

Distasteful as it sometimes is to those of us not part of Axe's young rutting male target group, there's no denying that the brand has had a great year, with integrated campaigns proving successful around the world, from **Vegaolmosponce**, Buenos Aires, Cannes Integrated Grand Prix work for Axe 3 through to fictitious band '**The Bomchickawahwahs**'. A second series of Axe-funded MTV show **Gamekillers** was commissioned. See Axe case study in *Contagious 11*.



Doritos /



Axe /



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www.coca-cola.com

www.snackstrongproductions.com

www.jetblue.com

www.theaxeeffect.com



JetBlue /



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11 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / VIRAL / ONLINE BUZZ /

Cadbury Dairy Milk / Gorilla /

Once the preserve of those funny little clips that we either couldn't wait to forward or couldn't wait to ignore, the concept of what passes for viral has evolved considerably since this time last year. 2007's biggest viral splash was a TV commercial in the form of the Cadbury Dairy Milk 'Gorilla' from **Fallon London**, featuring a syncopated simian belting a drumkit to the strains of **Phil Collins'** 'In The Air Tonight'. Media placement for its debut – the finale of **Big Brother 8** in the UK and the Rugby World Cup final – and a website with a data capture facility at aglassandahalffullproductions.com also helped propel the rockin' ape into the limelight. The brand benefit – **'A Glass and a Half of Joy'** – has legs the size of a giant Naomi Campbell stretched on a medieval rack. Rumours of the next installment abound, but if we told you the theme, we'd have to kill you. See *Contagious 13* for more.

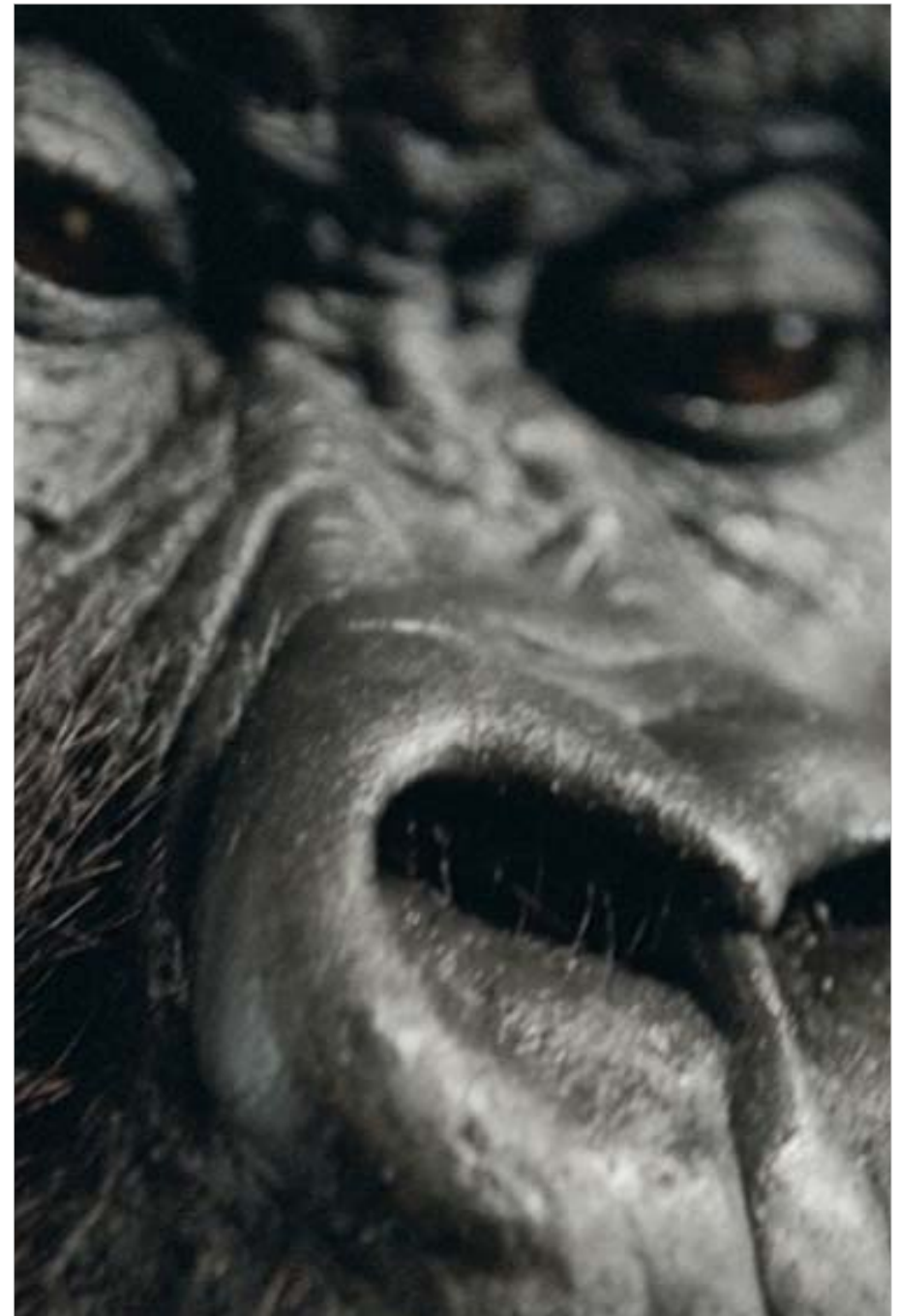
I'm a Mac /

Also causing a splash and plenty of spoofs is **Apple's** 'I'm a Mac' series, which has played out happily as TV, web films and banners over the last twelve months. Whilst we can't help feeling that idea of being clearly defined by the computer you choose to buy is completely antithetical to the creative individuality that Apple is championing, there's no doubting its success. iPhone? Yes please we'll take ten.

www.apple.com/getamac/ads

Quiksilver /

An honourable mention to **Saatchi & Saatchi Copenhagen** for their neat little clip showing Danish teens chucking dynamite in a river and riding out the consequences on behalf of surfer brand **Quiksilver**.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xfBNxNds0Q>





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API /

As if further proof were needed that technology and advertising were increasingly smug, satisfied bedfellows, the fact that one of this year's hottest stories involves a tedious techie acronym ought to do it. An **Application Programming Interface (API)** is a set of instructions by which users can add to and extend applications they're using, and programmers can create their own 'mods'.

We apologise for the trite analogy, but think about developing applications without an API as trying to make a meal with the lights off. You'll get there, but it won't be anywhere near as tasty or well presented as it would have been if you'd been able to see what you were doing. Releasing the API is like turning the lights on.

Still not convinced? Check this out:

/ Facebook went public with its API in May, allowing for the creation and embedding of widgets that rival **MySpace** had foolishly attempted to ban. Thousands of users realised Facebook's potential for fun, friendly social networking, and membership went through the roof.

/ Despite pressure on **Steve Jobs** to release the API for the **iPhone**, Apple continued to attempt to protect the quality of software available by only building apps themselves. In the meantime, people were making software for it anyway by trial and error. In October, Jobs relented and announced that in February the iPhone's API would be made available.

/ Everything that **Google** releases comes with an API. This means Google Maps, Gmail, Google Docs, Google Whatever's can be modded into whatever you're building, and made part of each individual system. How's that for mash-up culture?

This user-generated utility is now a staple of our media diet, whether we know it or not. It's infinitely more important than people creating their own ads or video

mash-ups, as they're actually building stuff that DOES things. On the one hand, we could be terrified. On the other, we could be elated. How much better to live in a world where whatever it is that you're building, there's an army of willing volunteers out there to help you?

Wikinomics /

Whilst the very term sends our jargonometer off the charts, it's tricky to ignore Wikinomics, the older brother of last year's gleeful user-generated explosion. Spearheaded by a book written by business strategist **Don Tapscott** and **Anthony Williams**, Wikinomics is the theory that your consumer base can contribute to all areas of business growth, from the design of a giant airplane (step forward Boeing) to a multimillion pound product launch (thank you the FIAT 500). Now, 'power to the people' implies much more than simply getting the public to make ads for you so your creative department can go home. It's time to put your money where your mouth is and put those thousands of opinions to good use. ▀

- links /
- www.aglassandahalfproductions.com
 - www.apple.com/getamac/ads
 - www.wikinomics.com



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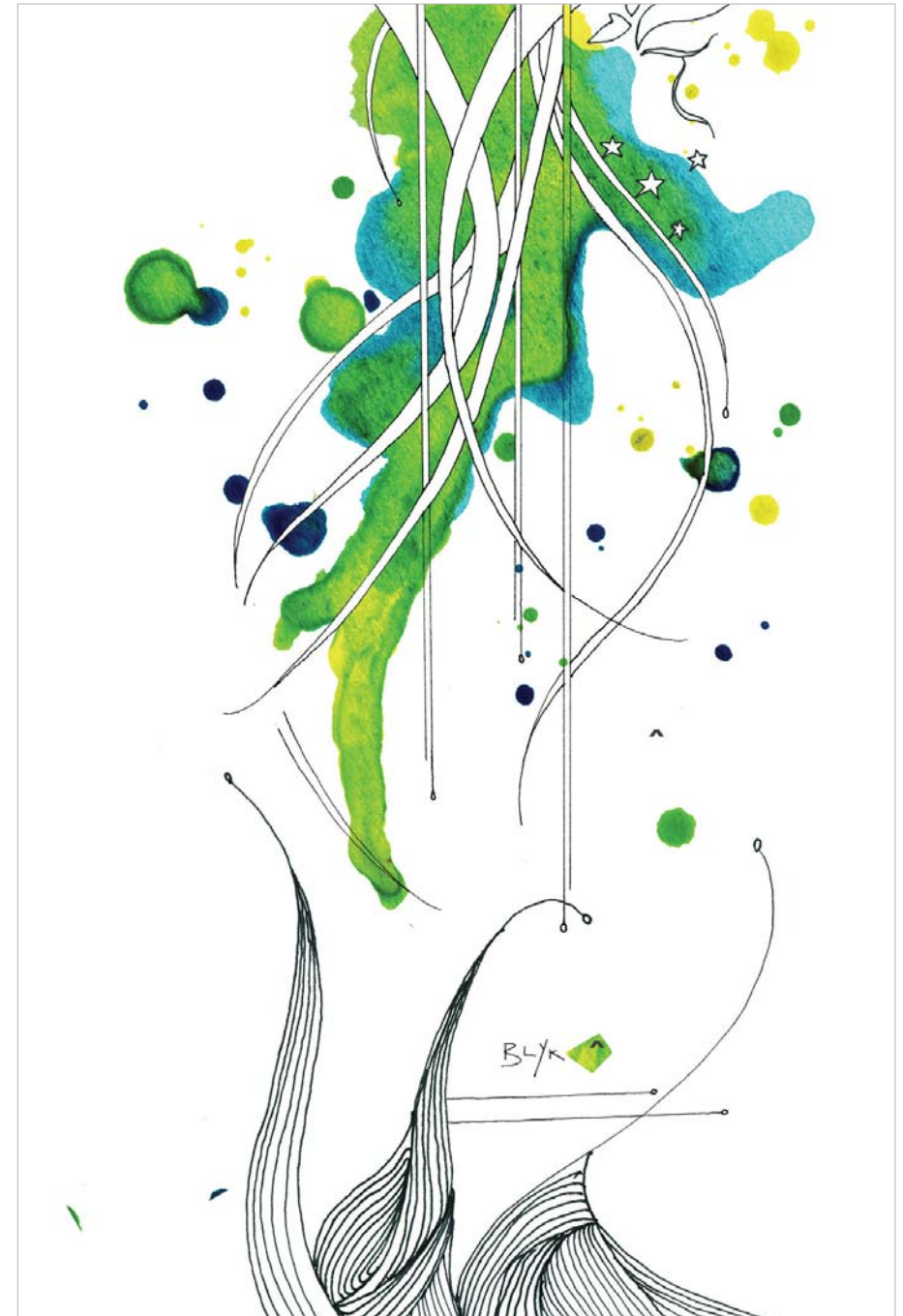
12 / MOST CONTAGIOUS / MOBILE /

Blyk /

The birth of Blyk has fulfilled two prophecies, the first of which is the prediction by 80's ad execs that TV, radio and (had they known about it) internet as well would be substituted by one all-encompassing portable box, through which all our media-related needs would be met. By creating a mobile phone network which is free for young consumers and paid for by advertising, Blyk has also fulfilled the second prophecy made by *Contagious* quite some time ago – that the future of advertising lies in 'branded utility'. Let us explain – in order to make the branded messages on Blyk engaging and relevant rather than intrusive, it utilises a complex engine which filters the feed according to each user's personal profile. These advanced targeting techniques have been a big draw for major brands, with **Buena Vista, Coca-Cola, i-Play, L'Oreal Paris, StepStone** and **Yell.com** all on board for the launch. Blyk offers useful, relevant and entertaining services rather than brash, traditional marketing messages, and also a major advantage. Would you rather pay for calls and texts? YES/NO. If targeted correctly, the ads feel more like conversations, invitations and welcome information. Featured in *Contagious 12*.

Augmented Reality /

Blurring the lines between the real world and the digital world - AKA 'augmented reality' - became de rigeur in 2007. New York fashion designer **Mark Ecko** encouraged passers-by to indulge in a bit of impromptu graffiti by using their mobile phones Bluetooth capacity in close proximity to digital screens, translating the gestures into a realistic digital spray of paint. To promote the DVD of feature film **28 Weeks Later**, **Twentieth Century Fox** used QR Codes as part of a mobile marketing campaign to make people aware of the release in the UK. Traditional barcodes can store up to 20 digits, but QR codes can hold far more information and the film company is planning to use them in its future mobile marketing, aiming towards enabling people to buy cinema tickets or DVDs via their handsets. New Zealand mobile renegades The





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Hyperfactory turned their hand to Augmented Reality with an award-winning campaign for **Wellington Zoo**. After downloading basic software to its mobiles, visitors could view actual multi-angled 3D renderings of animals, simply by viewing special print images through their cameras.

Featured in *Contagious* 13.

Pantone / Softbank /

As you can tell from our magazine, we're suckers for lots of bright colours. For this reason, we were secretly quite excited to see that Japanese electronics superstars **SoftBank** had teamed up with **Pantone**, using twenty of their finest shades to create a mobile phone that looks good enough to eat. Viewed in isolation, each phone has the plastic-fantastic sheeny finish of a child's toy, but assemble them as a group and their appeal increases exponentially. We like any product which places as much emphasis on design as it does on technology – we just think that it helps make the world a slightly prettier place, don't you?

Featured in *Contagious* 12.

Pago /

So far we've seen digital graffiti and 3D animals, so it was only a matter of time until the world's great evil was made virtual too. **OMD** and **Whybin\TBWA** New Zealand created a mobile campaign for **Pago**, launching an innovative new service that turns mobile phones into virtual wallets, allowing users to text money from one phone to another. Hypertag technology was used to transform bus shelters into cash machines, with radio promotions alerting listeners to a time and place when an adshell would go live for an hour, allowing people to download digital cash to their mobiles. The campaign saw over 1,200 early adopters register in the first week alone. Pago is now the first payment option on trademe.co.nz, the county's largest online trading site, and New Zealand has

claimed its place in history as the first nation to set up the digital wallets. The campaign also scooped the Media Lions Grand Prix at Cannes this year. Good work guys...

One to watch /

Never one to miss a trick, **Google** did its bit for mobile operating systems in 2007. Not content just to launch one 'Google phone' – it plans to control them all! Mwuhahaha. Apparently technology offering a new user interface and applications is under construction. Google will then be making it available free to all handset makers and developers. ■

links /

www.blyk.co.uk

www.design-factory.de

www.foxinternational.com/28weekslater

<http://nvbrand.com/client/thehyperfactory>

<http://mb.softbank.jp/mb/en/product/3g/812sh/#>

www.pago.co.nz

<http://code.google.com/android>



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2007 has been an important year for the reassessment of the retail environment. The increase of social networking, digital interfaces and user-generated content means that traditional physical spaces with such antiquated devices as shelves and checkouts will no longer suffice. We need only look at the **Starbucks Salon** or consider how brands such as **Sony, Orange, Samsung** and **Diesel** are reinventing retail to see that the modern consumer expects a means by which to associate and engage with the story of the brand, as well as its products.

Nike iD Studio /

Nike took its immersive shopping experience to a whole new level in 2007 with the creation of the **iD Studio** in **Nike Town**, London. Existing as a giant cubic Mecca for sneaker devotees, this store within a store is constructed entirely of glass, so that shoppers can gaze straight through the walls at the shelves of custom footwear which lay within. Inside, customers are greeted by design consultants ready to help them create their ultimate bespoke pair of Nikes from a vast range of models, fabrics and colours. Apart from the magnificent design of the studio, what we feel makes it Most Contagious is its beautiful execution of the Nike iD philosophy – namely that despite being the biggest sports brand in the world, they still have time to cultivate the dreams and designs of the individual. Featured in *Contagious13*.

http://nikeid.nike.com/nikeid/index.jhtml?_requestid=2007479#collection,london_studio

adidas mi Innovation /

The German brand was hot on the heels of its US rivals, building the largest adidas Sport Performance store to date. The focal point is the world-first '**mi Innovation Centre**', utilising the latest industry-leading interactive technologies.

Superconnected treadmills customise a shoe design to the needs and shape of the runner, and digital interfaces allow for further customisation. A smart move for adidas, who by bringing the joy of user-generated content into the retail environment are not only trumpeting their mastery of new technology, but also allowing their customers to develop their own brand story.

Featured in *Contagious11*.

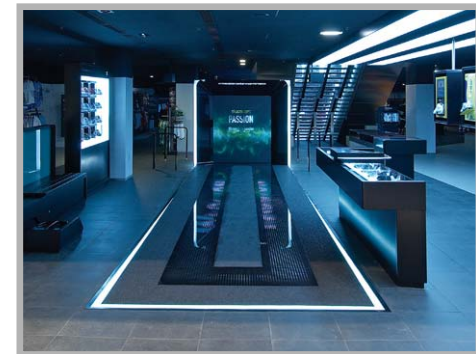
www.press.adidas.com/DesktopDefault.aspx/ta/bid-11/16_read-7162/

Chanel / Elle Macpherson Intimates /

As part of the **Coco Mademoiselle** campaign in September, internet users were able to take a virtual tour of **Coco Chanel's** lovingly-preserved Paris apartment, re-tracing the footsteps of Keira Knightly who starred in the recent TV spot. In addition, interactive projections of the actress were also created in selected Chanel boutiques. Designs were also released in July by **Zaha Hadid's** leading contemporary architecture practice for a new mobile exhibition pavilion. Chanel plans to visit numerous different cities and with a self-adjusting temperature system, expect to see the state of the art brand experience in capitals from Moscow to Madrid. **Elle Macpherson Intimates** captured the

attention of shoppers in a completely different but directly engaging way, using interactive shop fronts. The store on 6th Avenue, New York, used '**Human Locator**' technology to track the movements of unsuspecting Manhattanites – allowing them to interact with the lingerie models, although perhaps not in quite the way that many of them would have liked to... Featured in *Contagious12* and *13*.

www.chanel.com ■



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Nike iD Studio /



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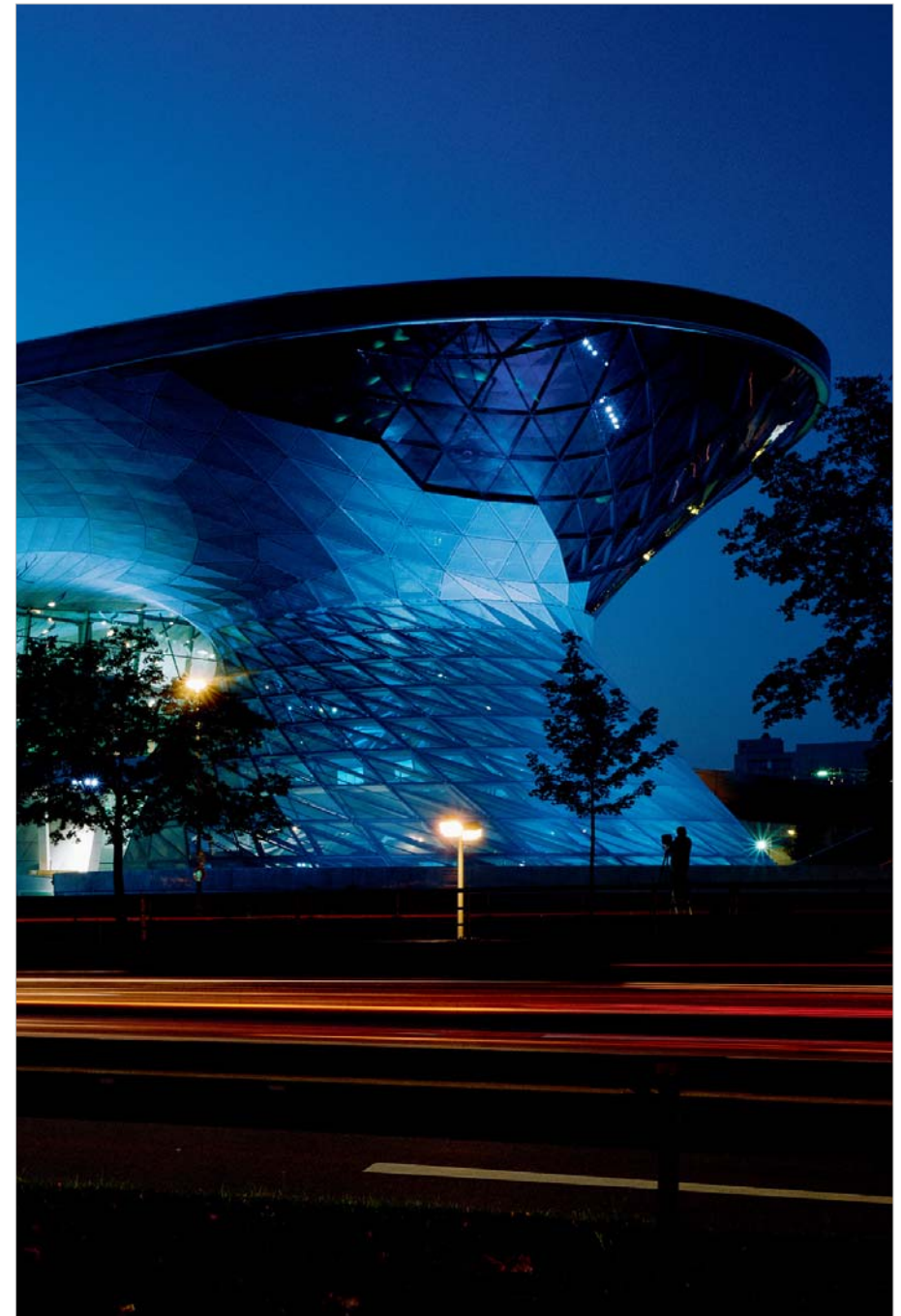
New World of Coke /

As one of the world's best-loved brands, **Coke** has the potential to be a defining influence in the developing realm of Branded Destinations. In 2007, Coca-Cola replaced its 17-year old Atlanta museum with a brand-spanking '**New World Of Coke**'. Conceived as a physical manifestation of Coke 're-discovering its mojo', the soft drinks behemoth approached New York-based **Formavision** to curate several installations featuring artworks, video, interactive stations and other tools to transform some of its spaces into experiential and interactive environments. Other attractions included a unique 4D film, as well as a spoof documentary featuring interviews with animated Coca-Cola workers for which real employees were interviewed and their responses used as voiceovers.

Featured in *Contagious* 13.

BMW Welt /

Out of all the architectural interpretations of a branded destination in 2007, we would be inclined to suggest that the BMW Welt building (right) is possibly the most visually arresting. The design was created by Austrian architects **COOP HIMMELB(L)AU** and features a cloud-type roof suspended by 11 pendulum supports. The result acts as a beacon on the Munich cityscape and attracting neighbours, visitors and customers to come and immerse themselves in the brand experience. Other car brands got in on the action too – the **Citroën C42** building on the Champ-Élysees is fronted by an impressive glass latticework exterior showcasing soaring chevrons in a bold assertion of the brand's identity. **Ferrari** has frankly astronomical plans for their \$40 billion branded Gulf Island off Abu Dhabi and **Porsche** have released designs of a luxurious residential tower and office block to be built in Business Bay, Dubai (see *Contagious* 12 for more details).





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O₂ Dome /

In stark contrast to the appealing new design of BMW Welt, O₂ managed the complete opposite by giving London's boil of a building, the **Millennium Dome**, the mother of all makeovers to create their new branded entertainment space. Having already created a credible narrative around music through its **O₂ Wireless Festival**, 'the O₂' is now one of London's foremost credible venues for everything from dining out to rocking out, whilst maintaining a heavy brand presence throughout. Loyalty to the brand is rewarded with a VIP lounge experience for its customers in the **Blue Room**, where guests can interact with digital screens and receive drinks vouchers with their mobile phones. An O₂ case study is featured in *Contagious 13*.

Sony Colour Rooms /

Sony was keen to immerse the consumer in a different side of the brand – showing how a cultural social environment can be created using its sophisticated technology. Created in collaboration with design consultancy **Odd** and **Naked Communications**, the **Colour Rooms** are event spaces in London and Berlin which are available for hire until the end of the year. Both venues use **Bravia** products and are heavily branded with vivid media representations and explosions of colour throughout. The Colour Room in East London also features a swing, a bar, a screening room and a main space with capacity for 160 people. The artistic approach to branded destinations was also adopted by **Lexus** who built on the prestige reputation of its brand with a subtle injection of culture. The **460 degree gallery** toured the US for three months featuring installation art pieces and gala events, seminars and presentations by invited luxury retailers such as **Soolip**, **Micucci** and **Teuscher** who complement Lexus' lifestyle vision. Featured in *Contagious 13*. ■

links /

www.woccatlanta.com

www.bmw-welt.com/web/bmw-welt/en/index_highend.html

www.theo2.co.uk/web/guest/home

www.thankodd.com

www.sony.co.uk



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Lexus /



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Where are the Joneses? /

Where are the Joneses? is a web-based comedy series funded by the **Ford Motor Co.** that broadcast five minute episodes every day for 12 weeks online. Initiated by experiential design consultancy **Imagination**, the plot follows a brother and sister as they drive around Europe on the trail of their other siblings, following the discovery that their father was a prolific sperm donor. Utilising the promise of web 2.0, viewers were asked to contribute plot ideas and scripts, and had the opportunity to interact with characters and crew through numerous touchpoints including Wordpress, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube and Del.icio.us. Production company **Baby Cow** acted as editor and producer, but the story relied on contributions via the blog and wiki sites. This is not branded content in the strictest sense; Ford, as sponsors, had minimal involvement in the plot and structure, leaving that up to contributors, and branding was subtle throughout the show, bar some tidy product placement in the form of the Ford S-MAX used throughout. Although the 'media cloud' that the project generated is impossible to track fully, Technorati ranked the main blog at 40,000 out of 90 million blogs registered after the final episode. Seven hours of footage was produced which is available for use under the creative commons license, so the potential for the Joneses' influence to continue remains. www.wherethejoneses.com
Featured in *Contagious 12*.

KateModern /

The rise and rise of **Bebo** as a content platform (see Social Media section) spawned online series **KateModern**, developed by the team behind **LonelyGirl15** (featured in Most Contagious 2006). The show followed a London art student and came complete with opportunities for brands to integrate themselves into the plot, with revenue split between the LonelyGirl team and Bebo. With each episode costing just £6000 and supported by advertising partners including **Microsoft**, **P&G** and **Orange**, the exercise has proved a profitable one. The success of the series has led to Bebo commissioning further series including **The Gap Year** and **Sofia's Diary** both due out in the new year. www.bebo.com/katemodern

Honeyshed /

New York agency **Droga5** and production company Smuggler unveiled the consumer version of new e-mail shopping channel, **Honeyshed**, in December. Placed somewhere between MTV and QVC, it features sexy young presenters demonstrating products in a chatty and irreverent style. Heralded as a new breed of branded entertainment, the channel is backed by **Publicis Groupe** and was described by CEO **Maurice Lévy** as 'our most important creative bet today'. Honeyshed aims to build a reputation as an influencer, providing content that people will seek out online. The site has interactive elements, allowing viewers to chat about what they're watching, and provides more information and links via the 'I WANT IT' button. All

products are easily forwardable to friends and can be added to social networking sites with advertisers paying for inclusion and click-throughs, rather than the number of potential viewers. www.honeyshed.com

Glamour Reel Movies /

Other notable branded content includes the latest Glamour Reel Movies, which partnered films directed by and starring celebrities including **Kirsten Dunst** and **Kate Hudson** with beauty brand **Clinique** to broadcast the films on its website, with no advertising agency involved. <http://us.glamour.com>

Quarterlife /

Quarterlife, the sitcom which debuted on **MySpace** this year after being passed over by **ABC**, has been sold to **NBC**. The original eight-minute episodes will be combined to form full length shows, airing in the US next year. www.quarterlife.com ■



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NedBank /

Bringing the African bank's 'Make Things Happen' strategy to life, **Network#BBDO**, Johannesburg, created the now renowned solar-powered billboard which provided power to the kitchens of a township primary school making 1000 hot meals for underprivileged children every day. Despite questions over the one-off nature of the billboard, the project created a great deal of resonance around the potential of the advertising industry as a force for good, whilst continuing to offer great work to clients. Featured in *Contagious* 11.

Earth Hour /

Thousands of buildings along the Sydney skyline took part in the first annual **Earth Hour** event by switching off their lights for an hour. Causing spontaneous applause in Cannes audiences and eco-advocates alike, the ambitious event, organised by **Leo Burnett Sydney** and **Fairfax Media** in collaboration with **WWF Australia**, kicked off Sydney's 2007 objective of reducing greenhouse emissions by 5%. More than 2 million businesses and residents turned off their lights for an hour, resulting in a 10.2% drop in energy usage – double the predicted figure. The campaign was repeated in New York and London in July this year, and will go global in 2008, when it will no doubt be followed by a worldwide baby boom. Featured in *Contagious* 11.

Honda Fuel Cell /

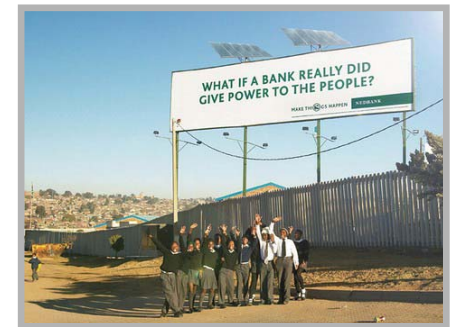
Because they produce nothing but water from their exhaust pipes, hydrogen powered cars are regarded by many as the most realistic and effective solution to the alternative fuel debate. However, up until now the problem has been that there are no current forms of hydrogen distribution – step forward the **Honda FCX Clarity**. The new car works in conjunction with a personal '**Home Energy Station**' unit, which sits outside your house and reforms natural gas to produce enough hydrogen to power both the car and the home's energy needs at around 50% of the normal cost and with a 30% emissions reduction. Therefore, as well as being the first realistic hydrogen-powered car to enter production, the Clarity also helps the consumer to seriously reduce the carbon footprint of their home, making it as much a way of life as an A-B machine...

ElectroCity /

Genesis Energy, a power company in New Zealand, has launched an online game entitled **ElectroCity** via its agency **Rivet**. The game pivots on making land-use and energy decisions to determine the fate of a community, and is available free of charge to the public and schools. There are up to 55,000 daily visitors to the website and each one stays an average of ten minutes. What's more, as the game is designed for use in the classroom: over 370 schools have registered to play in a competition where the student judged to have the best city wins \$10,000 worth of Hewlett-Packard kit for their school.



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method /

One to watch in the coming year is US homecare brand method. Backed by a word of mouth army, method's 'fight against dirty' has crossed the Atlantic bringing its beautifully designed and ecologically sound products to a British audience.

Vélib' / Paris Cycle Scheme /

Vélib', the Paris Cycle Scheme, is a simple yet ingenious way in which to get people out of their cars and on to bicycles. 20,000 robust two-wheeled machines are provided at 750 special bike racks, which can be used by simply swiping one's travel card and pedalling off. The self-service bike can then be deposited at any one of numerous racks across the city. Riders can pay for a one-off journey, yet a year's subscription costs just £20 (\$40 USD) which is pretty much what one might spend on petrol navigating the treacherous Arc De Triomphe...

Sigur Rós /

One of the most beautiful and heartwarming stories of the last year is the release of *Heima*, a film following Icelandic band Sigur Rós returning from a gruelling world tour.

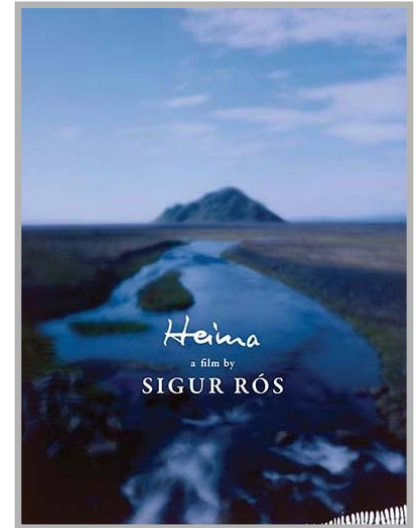
The band played a series of free homecoming gigs around their native country, in a series of random places taking in vast and tiny venues, including far flung community halls, caves and deserted factories with the entire tour filmed and gig-goers stumbling across the concerts entirely by word of mouth. ▀

links /

- www.nedbank.co.za
- www.earthhour.org
- <http://world.honda.com/FuelCell>
- www.electrocity.co.nz
- www.methodhome.com
- www.velib.paris.fr
- www.heimafilm.com



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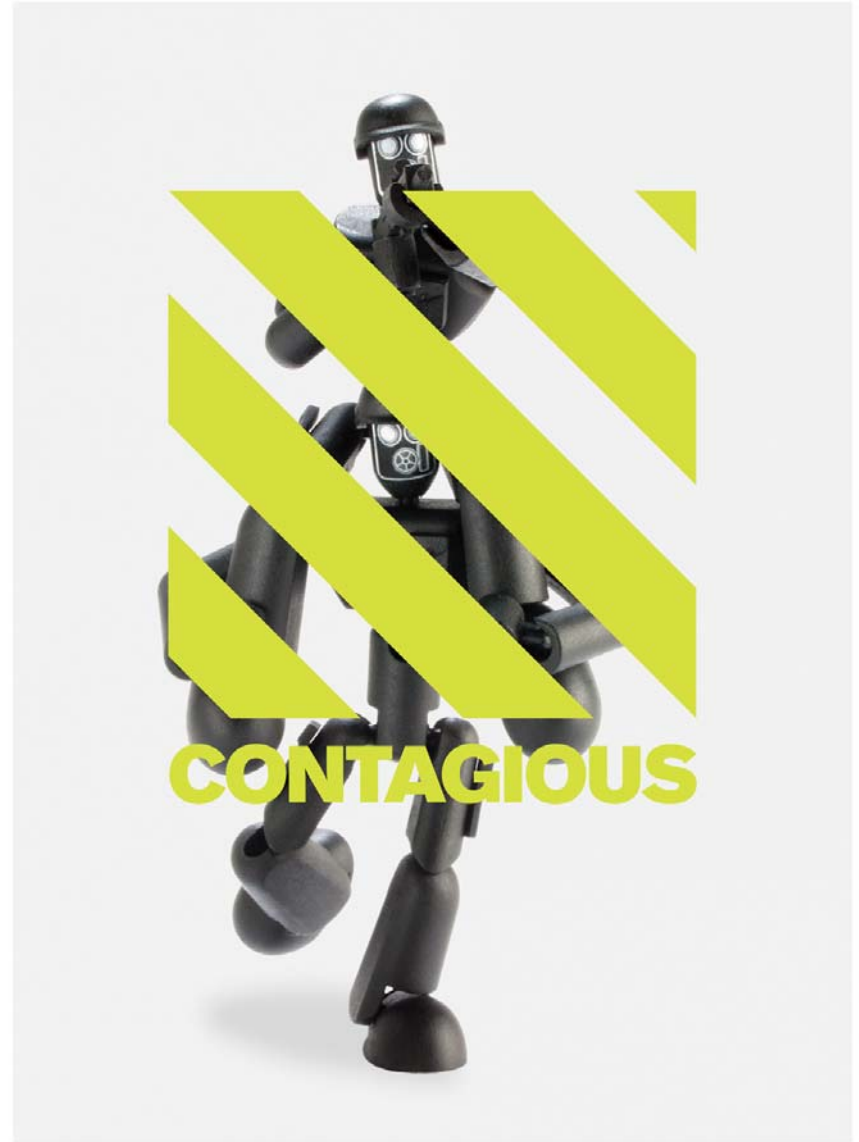
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