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Visual communications in park environments

Abstract: Analysing the current state and historical development of visual communications necessitates thorough research to enhance the organisation and interaction of visual information in urban environments. With cities' increasing complexity and reliance on effective communication systems, optimising the placement and integration of visual elements is crucial for functionality and aesthetics. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how visual communications shape the experience and usability of urban spaces. The study subject is the principles and methods of organising and integrating visual information within urban spaces. The study object is the system of visual communications in urban environments. The analysis of the current state and historical development of visual communications necessitates thorough research and careful analysis to improve the placement and interaction of visual information within urban environments. The study aims to analyse and propose strategies for enhancing the functionality, accessibility, and aesthetic quality of visual communications in urban environments. The author combined academic literature, case studies, and urban design guidelines, which provided a foundation for the theoretical framework and practical recommendations. The author concludes that visual communications in park environments are essential for the larger urban space, contributing to its functionality and aesthetic appeal. They guide movement, convey information, and create a cohesive identity for the area. Improving visual communications in urban parks enhances the overall structural harmony of the city and strengthens its cultural and social fabric.

Keywords: visual communications, visual systems, environment, integration of visual elements.

Introduction

Analysing the current state and historical development of visual communications necessitates thorough research to enhance the organisation and interaction of visual information in urban environments. With cities' increasing complexity and reliance on effective communication systems, optimising the placement and integration of visual elements is crucial for functionality and aesthetics. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how visual communications shape the experience and usability of urban spaces.

The study subject is the principles and methods of organising and integrating visual information within urban spaces.

The study object is the system of visual communications in urban environments.

The analysis of the current state and historical development of visual communications necessitates thorough research and careful analysis to improve the placement and interaction of visual information within urban environments.

The study aims to analyse and propose strategies for improving the functionality, accessibility, and aesthetic quality of visual communications in urban environments.

Based on this goal, the following tasks were developed:

- study the history of visual communication development;
- understand the significance of visual systems;
- examine the types and forms of external visual communication elements and signage.

The study employed specialised methods, such as comparative analysis, modelling, and field observations, to evaluate the organisation and integration of visual communications. These methods allowed for identifying patterns and practical solutions to optimise urban visual systems.

The author combined academic literature, case studies, and urban design guidelines, which provided a foundation for the theoretical framework and practical recommendations.

Results

The quality of modern life is directly influenced by the quantity and quality of visual information surrounding individuals and by the speed at which people can understand and perceive it. Effective external visual communications can simplify and accelerate the process of receiving and interpreting information in urban spaces.

Visual communications in urban design have become crucial to sustainable modern consumption. The informational and communicative processes within the spatial environment form a constantly evolving system that harmonises over time with the surrounding environment.

The study and improvement of visual communications require a multidisciplinary approach, considering various aspects from different academic fields. Therefore, it is essential to draw from cultural history, art, psychology, sociology, and urban planning knowledge, including insights from domestic and international authors. This research uses literary sources and practical design examples to investigate the origins and historical development of visual communication systems, signs, symbols, emblems, heraldry, and writing. It also seeks to understand the significance of visual systems and to explore the types and forms of external visual communication elements and signage.

A comprehensive and comparative analysis of the interaction between elements of the overall urban environment and spatial visual communication systems is essential. This holistic approach to studying literature and practical project examples is fundamental for creating an independent project of external visual communication, as it will be based not only on the analysis of the existing situation but also on principles and methodologies for designing visual imagery in society's communicative sphere.

Park space is the primary object for creating external visual communication and is viewed as an element of the broader urban area. A user-friendly navigation system should effortlessly guide pedestrians to service areas or points of interest without confusion.

Urban landscapes and recreational areas are classified by their functional structure based on usage, size, location within the city layout, and user demographics. They are divided into three groups:

(1) Public green spaces;
(2) Restricted-access green spaces;
(3) Green spaces for special purposes (*Petryshyn, 2022*).

The area of public green spaces (parks, gardens, squares, boulevards) located within urban and rural settlements is determined according to DBN B.2.2-12:2019 (*2019*).

Structurally, consumers of external visual communications within urban areas include:

- City residents in districts or neighbourhoods, both those living close to the area and those who are visiting from farther locations;
- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who require rapid and comfortable orientation in the city, including locating administrative buildings, infrastructure facilities, and recreational areas;
- Organized local tourist groups or individual visitors;
- Foreign organised tourist groups or individual foreign visitors.
- Signs and informational indicators should be easy to visually perceive and understand, accommodating both local citizens and foreign visitors (achieved through universal design and multilingual information). Placement systems must be standardised and mutually coordinated to suit the urban space. Sign locations should be logical and intuitively accessible, providing easy and convenient navigation across the cityscape. When positioning signs, they should harmoniously blend with the existing historical or surrounding environment, considering stylistic elements, transportation infrastructure, and engineering networks. The structural design, textual content, and imagery should comply with DBN B.2.2-40:2019, particularly regarding inclusivity and universality (*2019*).

The system of general spatial orientation within the external urban environment – visual communications – consists of navigation elements such as:

- Orientation signs: provide information on the current location or nearby points of interest;
- Directional indicators;
- Identification markers and signs.

According to the typology of visual communication elements, the following types can be distinguished:

- Entrance informational pylons;
- Informational structures (e.g., city lights);
- Pedestrian signs;
- Address indicators;
- Tourist direction signs.
- Since city parks serve as functional elements within the urban spatial framework, their visual communications should align with citywide standards, adapting to the park's functional zoning.

- Contact points where park areas intersect with urban spaces – entrances, exits, access roads, parking zones, and landscaping – should feature visual elements like entrance informational light pylons or portals. These elements should prominently display the park's name and logo (if available). Additionally, they may include a park map that provides graphical information about the general functional layout and primary structural components (*Figure 1*).

Park alleys should, in addition to essential park amenities – such as benches, waste bins, and lighting systems – include pedestrian signs that provide directional information and distances to key park infrastructure, including civil defence shelters. These paths should also be equipped with public address systems and wireless internet access to enhance accessibility and connectivity for visitors (*Figure 2*; *Figure 3*).

The park area can be equipped with information structures that provide general content, such as announcements for upcoming events, interesting historical facts about the park's creation, information on citywide events, and QR codes for more detailed information. Each location within the park should also display specific information on the rules for using services and the guidelines for that particular area.

For visitor safety, the parking area should feature surveillance systems and emergency call devices for contacting security or park staff, with signage indicating the location and use of these systems.

Establishing this kind of informational visual communication in park spaces will make the area more accessible, logical, and safe, ultimately creating an open and comfortable environment.

Discussion

The study of visual communications in urban environments faces several challenges. First, there is a lack of standardised methodologies for analysing and optimising visual elements in diverse urban settings, as each city has unique cultural, historical, and spatial characteristics. Second, the rapid evolution of digital technologies complicates the integration of traditional and digital visual systems, requiring adaptive approaches. Third, insufficient collaboration between urban planners, graphic designers, and sociologists hinders the creation of cohesive visual systems that meet functional and aesthetic demands. Additionally, limited data on public perception of urban visual communications makes it difficult to assess their effectiveness and adjust them to societal needs. Finally, financial and regulatory constraints often prevent the implementation of innovative visual solutions in public spaces.

(1) How can digital and interactive visual technologies be effectively integrated into traditional urban visual systems?
(2) What methodologies can be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of visual communications in urban environments?
(3) How do cultural and historical factors influence the design and perception of visual communications in different cities?
(4) What role do environmental sustainability and energy efficiency play in the future of urban visual systems?
(5) How can urban visual systems be adapted to enhance accessibility for people with disabilities?

(6) What are the most effective strategies for engaging the public in designing and implementing urban visual elements?
(7) How can interdisciplinary collaboration between designers, planners, and policymakers be improved to create more cohesive urban visual systems?

Conclusion

Visual communications in park environments are essential for the larger urban space, contributing to its functionality and aesthetic appeal. They guide movement, convey information, and create a cohesive identity for the area. Improving visual communications in urban parks enhances the overall structural harmony of the city and strengthens its cultural and social fabric. Additionally, well-designed visual elements in parks improve accessibility and the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Figure 1. Graphical information about the general functional layout and main structural components

Figure 2. Public address systems and wireless internet access to enhance accessibility and connectivity for visitors

Figure 3. Public address systems and wireless internet access to enhance accessibility and connectivity for visitors