

What's in a Nametag?

Graphic design is about asking questions. Do do so, we create templates for gathering content from our audiences. Templates and forms have traditionally formed the quiet underside of communication. Think grids, blog interfaces, website forms. Today, in a fast-paced world of quick reads and structured time, templates are moving front and center. One of the most basic templates, used to announce oneself at gatherings, is a name tag. What if a name tag could reflect more than just the basics? If by seeing it, we learned not just the name, but also the personality of its wearer?

The Brief Your challenge is to create a flexible name tag system for a fictional *speed dating* event that will invite users to render their name in a unique way. The way you design your template will affect how it will be used. Your test audience is your classmates; each one of them will fill out one of your tags. How can you get the most out of them on your template?

Phase One Study the readings and test out various grids. Determine size and content as you create preliminary layouts in Adobe Illustrator. Consider the physicality of the object: lanyards, clips, etc. Only two fonts are allowed for this project: Univers and Century Schoolbook. **Phase Two** Choose a direction and revise it further. Test usability to find out how to improve your templates. Focus on what the user needs, more so than on your own assumptions. **Phase Three** Distribute copies of your tag to 9 other classmates and let them fill them out. Photograph the whole set. Make sure your photos are sharp, well-cropped and to-the-point. Finally, we will stage a mock speed-dating event to try them out!



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GOALS

- > Learn to format
- > Gather user-generated content
- > Learn Adobe Illustrator

READING

- > Dmitri Siegel, *Designing Our Own Graves*, on Design Observer, observatory.designobserver.com/entry.html?entry=4307
- > Mike Industries on good and bad nametag design. Blog entry: www.mikeindustries.com/blog/archive/2007/04/building-a-better-conference-badge
- > Matt Cutts on what a good badge should look like. Blog entry: www.matcutts.com/blog/ideal-conference-badge/
- > Jason Santa Maria on conference badges. Blog entry: 4.jasonsantamaria.com/articles/hello-my-name-is/
- > Jason Kottke on the AIGA conference badge. Blog entry: www.kottke.org/05/09/aiga-conference-badges-and-programs
- > Josef Muller Brockmann, *Grid Systems*. Santa Monica: Ram Publications, 1996 (pp. 60 – 70)

EXAMPLES

- > Daniel Eatock, Utilitarian Poster eatock.com/projects/utilitarian-poster
- > Paul Burgess, Delarge Sticker Machine delarge.co.uk/stickermachine
- > Swiss posters (Hoffman, Müller-Brockmann, Weingart)

CRITERIA

- > Well organized information with a grid structure
- > Typography that reads well and looks right
- > Clear and fun to the user
- > Compelling concept
- > Coherent overall look and feel