

- **How do your products represent social groups or issues?**
- **How do the elements of your production work together to create a sense of ‘branding’?**
- **How do your products engage with the audience?**
- **How did your research inform your products and the way they use or challenge conventions?**

Intro

Cambridge gave a variety of briefs that I could do, I chose the music promotion package brief because it was interesting to do because the music would already be available and my group can do our own interpretation. The brief given to me was a promotion package for the release of an album, to include a music video (major task), together with an official social media page for the band or artiste(s) and a digipak for the album’s release (minor tasks). I decided to choose the genre electro pop/pop because the song we chose was very upbeat and interesting to storyboard. Specifically “my strange addiction by Billie Eilish. In this project I worked as a group of two, my partner was Kanna. You can find links to her blog on my blog.

How do your products represent social groups or issues?

The main social group my team was targeting for this project are teenagers around the ages of 13-18. Specifically those who don’t fall under the norm or are loners in their school environment. During the process of storyboarding I decided to make our main character neurodiverse in some way but I did not make it too obvious as to leave it to audience interpretation. The social issue I tried to convey while creating the storyboard for the music video is how it may feel to live life while having undiagnosed or overlooked neurodivergent conditions. Many young individuals who are neurodiverse often go their entire childhood and through adulthood not knowing they are atypical. Often those who do not have a diagnosis feel weird, isolated, alone, and out of the loop at school and usually feel “crazy” or living in their own head.

To do this we used animation to visually represent eve’s mental health as a separation between the real world and the world eve has in her head. This can be seen as use of Levi Strauss’ binary opposites as eve is constantly in a strange inbetween of the real world and her imaginary one. Where she tries to live her life like a “normal” person but bits of her imagination bleed into it and take up most of her thinking. How we visualized this is showing many instances where she’s always thinking about her imagination via her art and her cork board.

The representation in the video is neither negative nor positive, it’s simply a neutral artistic display of what it feels to be neurodivergent in a neurotypical world. Kanna edited the video to make it look like it was filmed on a

early 2000s camcorder and it made the colors look very muted and dull. This can be seen as a more neutral color scheme because most music videos conveying happy stories are bright while depressing ones are often monotone. Meanwhile more neutral or bitter sweet music videos keep the color scheme somewhere in between which is what we did. We kept EVE's clothes black and white and left her environment with color as a subtle symbolic/thematic coding. That she doesn't quite fit in. We kept the representation neutral via the colors and viewing the perspective from eve directly instead of an outside observer.

While storyboarding I had the idea to include animated characters interacting with the environment. This was a partial nod to a very common stereotype used for neurodivergent characters in media, specifically schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and sometimes ADHD when used to convey an overactive imagination/ mind. This stereotype is almost always used negatively but I wanted to subvert it so it's seen as just a thing that some neurodiverse people have. Keeping it as neutral as possible leaving the reading to audience interpretation. I used many wide shots when both eve and the animated characters were on screen simultaneously. I did this because I wanted to show how eve reacts and interacts with her hallucinations. Which is overall calm and curious instead of scared or repulsed.

How do the elements of your production work together to create a sense of 'Branding'?

For our digipak we decided to put a link in order for listeners of the physical disc to access the lyrics of the song. The link would then lead the audience to a website where not only they can access the lyrics but other social media platforms. It would act as a link tree of some sorts. All aspects of the project such as our social media page and digipak have the same basic color scheme and theme. The dominant color in both being shades of lavender and the theme being early 2000s aesthetics like old window layouts, VHS effects, and poppy graphics. We chose this style because recently teenagers have taken a liking to this trend in style. For our artist 'eve' her name is always typed in lowercase and in a 8-bit style font. This is used across all platforms to keep her name recognizable and iconic. We chose lavender as our main color scheme because it represents tranquility and calmness, which are the emotions we want people to associate with eve.

For the music video itself we made the entire video look like it's been filmed on an early 2000s camcorder. This style of video would hypothetically be consistent throughout all her videos as it is part of her brand. Using the style of video production eve would post to her platform, her brand would be that of early 2000s nostalgia. Along with being an "artsy" person. Most music artists are known just for their music so if our hypothetical artist eve would be known as an artist alongside a singer that would be considered her brand.

On her social media she would talk in the first person, she would address her fans directly when talking about merch launches, album drops, or tour tickets. According to personal identity from uses and gratifications, people consume media to seek role models. Eve's ideology is that of "embrace who your brain wants you to be". Because we had established that she is neurodivergent and proud to be, some people may find that inspiring and would want to follow her platforms and see her as a role model or someone they can relate to.

How do your products engage with the audience?

On our social media platform we have posts about an art contest and a tour. The art contest is about eve announcing to her fans that for her next project (music video) she will have animated segments and characters. Even though she is an artist herself and could do the drawings on her own, she would want to boost engagement with her followers by allowing the winner the chance to work with her. For the post about the tour, eve is going on a tour across Indonesia where she would originally be from. The Indonesian music fandom is known to be very hype and loyal so the engagement for this tour announcement would theoretically be very high. Using Barthes' five codes of conventions, as a little cultural reference eve refers to Indonesia as 'tanah air' in her post, which only locals ever use to address the country.

Merchandise is also a very big thing for music artists as fans almost always flock at the chance to buy products that show their love for an artist. To give fans an opportunity to buy merchandise of eve's work her website would also include a page dedicated to apparel. Things such as shirts or jackets. Since eve is a visual artist as well she would most likely sell prints or posters of her official artwork that goes alongside her albums. According to the theory of fandom's enunciative productivity by Henry Jenkins, fans like to show off and represent their preferences.

Our target audience uses new media everyday since the way they communicate and consume media is almost always through the internet. Through new media, fans are able to interact with our products just by using their phone. Since eve is a social media presence it would be very easy for fans of her work to share her music, videos, art, posts, and etc through the share feature on Instagram. Along with all her links like spotify, her merchandise, ticket sales and her own website being accessible through a single link tree in her instagram bio. An audience may also benefit from this, for example the contest being a direct interaction with the fans. The winner of the contest will get great amounts of exposure for their work by having either their name or online handle present in the credits of the video. Alongside that they will also receive monetary compensation for

helping eve with her project. Thanks to new media the process of cross media convergence across social media, film, and music is able to be achieved.

How did your research inform your products and the way they use or challenge conventions?

For my research I did a variety of different music videos from different genres. I noticed that recently even though two music videos can be of the same music genre, the way the music video looks can be extremely different depending on the artist. For example both mxmtoon and billie eilish have similar styles of pop music but their music videos are very different. Eilish tends to use subtle symbolism in her work while Maia uses literal visual storytelling to convey a story or feeling. This influenced me to storyboard in a similar way due to genre theory, because people are able to enjoy content more if they understand the genre and the conventions typically associated. I storyboarded the symbolic conventions to be more subtle to allow audience interpretation and to make the visuals more interesting.

Our genre for the song my strange addiction is that of electro pop. So I looked through a few of Billie Eilish's work alongside other artists to get a better feel of how their music videos correspond to their songs. The research made the process of storyboarding a lot easier because I knew what conventions to stick to in order to make it fit the song. Those conventions are focusing on fluid movement and action. Lip syncing is also very common in pop music videos but for this project we decided to not do lip syncing to make the music video more immersive rather than commercial.

For the most part I conformed to the typical tropes of pop songs targeted at teenagers. I kept the vibe fairly 'edgy' and 'quirky' while still being upbeat. Which is very popular to the 13-18 year old target audience I set up beforehand. My group decided on keeping the color scheme of the music video desaturated to display a calm and tired feeling for our artist. And the animated hallucinations are another factor to making the music video more appealing to teenagers as those traits can be seen as quirky. Overall I stuck to most conventions to electro pop and the styles found most appealing to teenagers.