DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF STORYTELLING AT THE DESIGN PITCH:
RELATING APPROACH TO IMPACT

DAVID ANTHONY PARKINSON

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Abstract

This research study builds an understanding of the relationship between storytelling approaches and their impacts at a design pitch, where concepts are presented to external clients. Storytelling is an integral part of design, with evidence of storytelling techniques found throughout the design process: from the use of digital media such as videos and animation during design pitches, to the use of personas and scenarios during research and evaluative phases.

In building this understanding, a literature review was conducted to explore storytelling from a broad societal perspective and more specific organisational and design perspectives. A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees from Unilever’s Household Care and Laundry departments, and Accenture’s Innovation Centre. Discussion centred on identifying storytelling approaches used by designers when pitching product and service concepts, and their relationships to various impacts, with student projects (at Unilever) and consultancy work (for Accenture) focusing the interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to establish themes in approach, building a framework of relationships with their determined impacts.

The study’s contribution to knowledge is the presentation of a framework, entitled ‘Design Pitch Storytelling: The Impact-Approach Framework’. It builds on the current understanding of storytelling in design theory by identifying the important role that storytelling approaches play in the presentation of design concepts whilst offering insights into how designers use storytelling approaches in a design pitch. It serves as a descriptive tool offering an alternative viewpoint of the cases that may have a wider relevance to comparable large scale, internationally facing organisations and designers involved in similar design projects. In terms of an analytical process, this research study contributes further original knowledge in that it can be replicated to better understand existing working relationships between organisations and designers working on design projects in different contexts.
Acknowledgements

My transition from design practitioner to design researcher came about when working as a Liaison Officer. Managing the relationship between designer and client got me wondering exactly how designers can have such significant impacts on organisations. It was this question that started me on my doctoral journey. Since then, my research has been guided and influenced by so many: review committees from the Design Research Society (who also presented me with a Scholarship in order to attend their conference), the Design Management Institute and the annual Engineering and Product Design Education conference, and also family and very patient friends (Laura Warwick, Joanne Pickard and Nicholas Todd in particular).

I would also like to thank my diverse, ever-changing supervisory team; Neil Smith – for all your encouragement, Erik Bohemia – for challenging me and growing my research, John Stevens – for your positive influence and last but by no means least Joyce Yee – for all your feedback throughout the entire process.

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to Michael Parker for believing in me.
Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the University Ethics Committee on 01/09/2012.

Name:

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Section 1

Description of the study, its context and its rationale
Introduction
1. Introduction

Whilst working as a designer in the service industry, I was frequently required to pitch intangible concepts to clients. I believed that viewing this communication as a storytelling exercise helped me to construct meaningful experiences for clients. More recently, when working as a designer on product development projects I also applied this strategy, focusing on telling a story about product experiences in order to contextualise new design features. As well as working as a designer, I have also worked as an industrial liaison, managing the relationships between different design teams and their clients. I began to observe that concepts pitched to clients in a storytelling format were more likely to be developed by the client, whether internally or through further collaborations.

It was a combination of these experiences throughout my career that inspired the focus of this research study. I felt motivated to better understand and explore the validity of my intuitions, and felt that sharing this knowledge would be beneficial to design practitioners charged with pitching concepts to clients.

This chapter will introduce the research aim, its objectives and related questions that the research study will answer. The rationale for the research study and the original contribution will be stated. The specific parameters of the research study will be defined and described and then a short overview of the thesis will be given, summarising the content of each chapter and its purpose.

1.1. The Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research study is to develop an understanding of storytelling approaches used by designers during a design pitch, by relating these approaches to their consequential impacts on the project team present at the design pitch. To
fulfil this aim, the research has been divided into the following objectives with the following outcomes:

- Literature discussing approaches and impacts of storytelling has been reviewed with particular focus on design and organisational perspectives. Areas of literature that have analogous relevance to the storytelling that occurs at the design pitch (such as Film Theory and Transformative Learning) have also been reviewed to provide a contextual background to the review.

- Through the literature review, relationships between approaches and impacts of storytelling have been identified in relation to the context of this research study; specifically when designers tell stories during a design pitch to an audience made of employees from the organisation that they work for or are working with.

- Working relationships between designers and organisations are used as case studies to establish and develop a framework of relationships that can build upon those inferred from the literature. The main source of data collected and analysed comprised of semi-structured interviews with employees of the organisations (focusing on the impacts of the design stories told by the designers at the design pitch).

Key questions that this research study explores in order to construct the framework are as follows:

- What storytelling approaches deliver an understanding of a design concept and how do they do this?
- What storytelling approaches demonstrate the value of a design concept and how do they do this?
- What storytelling approaches stimulate critique of a design concept and how do they do this?
- What storytelling approaches encourage more holistic thinking around a design concept and/or project and how do they do this?
1.2. Rationale

In terms of research in its broadest sense, the design pitch is an under-examined territory. For example, searching for the term ‘design pitch’ in the title of a book or journal article in the British Library’s full catalogue shows no results (bl.uk, 2014). Similarly, searching for the words ‘design’ and ‘storytelling’ in the title of a book or journal article shows only three results, all of which are books and none of which focus on the design pitch. If we include all items in the search, rather than simply books and journals, ‘design pitch’ shows only three results, none of which are relevant to this research study, and ‘design’ with ‘storytelling’ shows only fifty-nine results, of which only a handful have relevance to this research study, but do not specifically focus on the design pitch. The lack of academic attention to this area of research indicates that there are few cognate studies with which to compare the findings of this research. Therefore, areas of secondary research have been paralleled to this research study. Some of these areas include transformative learning, film theory and digital theory, and will be examined in more depth later in the thesis.

McDonnell, Lloyd and Valkenburg (2004: 509) propose that storytelling is a useful perspective to adopt when examining collaborative processes as stories represent ‘a powerful and an accessible means of sharing knowledge and their value and pervasiveness in conveying knowledge is well-recognised’ (Nonaka and Takeushi, 1995, Davenport and Prusak, 1998, Collison and Mackenzie, 1999). Consequently, it stands to reason that during a collaborative process, such as those that occur between designers and organisations, storytelling will occur in some form during the conveyance of knowledge from one party to another (Leonardi and Bailey, 2008). In the context of this research study’s focus, designers are conveying knowledge to an organisation’s employees during a design pitch.

When observing the landscape of design research that considers storytelling, it becomes apparent that there are many who use a storytelling perspective with
which to build an understanding of a given focus. For example, Lloyd (2000) observes conversations that take place during the engineering design process in order to extrapolate the stories exchanged and understand how they have influenced a final design concept. He is motivated to do so as he believes that the design process is a social activity. Schön and Wiggins (2006) examine the visual artefacts that designers produce when designing, as they believe that a series of artefacts can communicate a story of the critical conversations that ensue between designers in a design team. When considering these diverse examples of adopting a storytelling perspective, it can be seen that within the field of design research it is regarded as a justifiable endeavour. However although many have used a storytelling perspective with which to consider an aspect of design, there has not yet been a specific focus placed on design pitches and the impacts they have on the employees of an organisation. Other research studies with similar standpoints to this are discussed in greater depth in chapters 2, 3 and 4, to expand this point further.

When considering literature that holds relevance to the context of a design pitch, it becomes apparent that there is still much ground to cover. For example, Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) propose that when a designer tells the story of a design concept, they should base that story on a real life perspective as this will allow the audience to understand the proposition more easily. However, within the remit of design management, DeLarge (2004) who recommends a more abstract approach when telling stories, believes creative mediums can allow new concepts to resonate greatly with an audience. When considering how to pitch a concept these two seemingly appropriate theories are in direct contradiction with one another: consequently when pitching a design concept it could be very difficult to extrapolate a best method for approaching storytelling. This is just one example of many conflicting ideas, all of which are discussed throughout chapters 2, 3 and 4.

To summarise, it is apparent that there is a gap in knowledge with respect to understanding storytelling at the design pitch. Although other similar research has
implications for strategies that can be taken when approaching storytelling at the design pitch to foster certain impacts, often ideas seem contradictory. This could perhaps be due to the fact that the design pitch, and its consequential impacts, has not before received a specific focus.

1.3. Original Contribution

The original contribution of this research is delivered in several ways. Firstly, as proposed in the rationale, there is a gap in knowledge with respect to understanding the best approach to take when storytelling during a design pitch in order to elicit a certain impact. Although there is research within this area that has implications for storytelling approaches that could be adopted, the ideas often seem to be contradictory. With the design pitch receiving specific focus, this study will develop this understanding of appropriate storytelling approaches to adopt with regards to the impacts they have.

More specifically, the analysis of this research study is brought together in a set of relationships between various approaches of storytelling, the qualities that these approaches give to a design pitch and the pre-determined impacts that they fostered in a framework entitled ‘Design Pitch Storytelling: The Impact-Approach Framework’. This original framework will have a number of practical applications for several groups of people as detailed below.

Designers and design consultancies working with organisations on projects similar to the cases examined will benefit through reflecting on the implications of this framework. They can be mindful of the impacts that storytelling approaches can have on the people in an organisation that they work with. This knowledge may influence how they tell the stories of their concepts during a design pitch, when considering their own desired or undesired impacts on the people in the organisation that they work with.
People involved in these projects on an organisational level will also benefit: through reflecting on the findings of this framework, they can be mindful of the impacts that storytelling approaches can have on themselves and other people in the organisation. This may influence the ways in which designers that work with them are guided in terms of the storytelling approaches adopted at the design pitch, and possibly their decision regarding whether or not to employ the use of designers or a design consultancy in the project.

Design educators will also benefit from this research as it examines cases where design students have worked with organisations on live projects. Hence, the findings may also be used to inform and develop pedagogical practice within educational institutions relating to the teaching of storytelling approaches used at a design pitch, through being mindful of the impacts that these can have on the people in an organisation.

This research study aims to build this framework through analysing the experiences of several project teams who have observed design pitches during many different design projects across several industries. In doing this, the framework will reveal insights into how designers currently use storytelling in such projects and the expectations of their collaborators with respect to the design pitch. As the cases chosen examine projects run by large, internationally facing organisations, this framework will represent much applicable knowledge with respect to the specific insights gained. However, should the individual projects discussed bear little or no relation to the interested party, the research methodology can be replicated to construct a framework with more specific relevance to the projects undertaken by that person.

To summarise, the original contribution of this study is the presentation of ‘Design Pitch Storytelling: The Impact-Approach Framework’, which supports a deeper understanding of storytelling approaches employed during the design pitch with
respect to their consequential impacts. There is also originality in the insights revealed with respect to the specific storytelling approaches adopted by designers in the cases examined. More generally, in developing this understanding through the construction of this framework, the importance of storytelling and its role within design is identified in an original way.

1.4. Defining the Parameters

1.4.1. Storytelling

Storytelling exists in many different forms, for which there are many different definitions. Therefore, it is crucially important to define exactly what type of storytelling this research study is interested in, and the criteria that define that type of storytelling.

Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1990) proposes that storytelling is an activity in which all people partake. Bruner (1990) supports this claim with the following set of criteria for storytelling:

- Action directed towards goal
- Order established between events and states
- Sensitivity towards what is canonical in human interaction
- The revealing of a narrator’s perspective

According to Bruner (1990), these criteria are fulfilled by every occurrence of storytelling and therefore, will also be fulfilled by a design pitch if it does in fact constitute a story. Typically during a design pitch, design concepts are delivered verbally with the aid of visual tools such as: printed images, models, prototypes, PowerPoint presentations and various other multi-media presentations. In order to
further refine the criteria for defining storytelling relative to this research study other models more closely related to this context must be examined.

Design researcher Peter Lloyd (2000) examines dialogue between members of design teams in order to extrapolate the stories that they tell. In doing this, he has established the following criteria for what he believes constitutes a story:

- It can be interpreted or read
- Different narrative viewpoints can be included
- There is a sense of closure; a definite ending
- A name can be invented that references the complex of action

When examining Lloyd’s (2000) proposed criteria, it is important to be critical about certain aspects in order to ascertain their relevance to this study. The first criterion suggests that a story can be interpreted or read. With respect to a design pitch, as well as something being read, it might also be heard or watched, all of which require interpretation. Therefore relating this to a design pitch the criterion might be adapted to state simply that ‘it can be interpreted’. The third criterion suggests that there is a sense of closure; however, as a pitch is suggesting a concept, which by all intentions may require further development, a story told at a design pitch may not have a sense of closure. Therefore, this criterion is not necessarily going to be met when telling a story at a design pitch. Finally, the last criterion suggests that a name can be invented to reference the content of a story. In the context of a design pitch, this ‘name’ could act not only as a reference to help someone recall the physical representation of the concept but also its purpose, revealed through the telling of a story. Therefore, to add a bit more clarity to this criterion, it may be adapted to state that ‘a reference can be made to the purpose of a design concept in mentioning its name, after the telling of a story about it’.

When comparing these criteria to Bruner’s (1990), it can be seen that there are some similarities: both agree that a story must reveal a perspective or viewpoint;
Bruner (1990) suggests that there must be an order of either events or states and Lloyd (2000) proposes that there must be a definite ending suggesting an order of events or states. However, in addition to Bruner’s (1990) criteria, Lloyd (2000) also suggests that a story must be interpretable, meaning that an understanding of something can be gained from it and that a name can constitute a reference to the story’s meaning.

Combining these theorists’ models for storytelling, and relating their proposed criteria to the context of this research study, has helped define the type of storytelling that this research study will examine and the specific criteria it must fulfil.

Firstly, as already established, the storytelling must be circumstantial to a design pitch, meaning that a designer employed in a collaborative project delivers it to a client. With this in mind the relevant criteria can be contextualised as follows:

- The goal is to present a design concept or series of design concepts
- Events of the design concept in use, OR states of the design concepts development must be ordered
- The design concept must have a human user who the story is privy to
- The design concept must reflect the interpretation(s)/perspective(s) of the designer or design team

1.4.2. The Design Pitch

As the design pitch represents a stage during the process of designing where many stories are told, coupled with the fact that it has received a lack of academic attention, it will act as the unit of analysis for this research study. Existing viewpoints on the relationship between storytelling and design, and the implications this has for the stories told when pitching design concepts are explored
later in the thesis (Chapter 2). However, firstly it is important to clearly define the parameters of a design pitch in relation to this research study.

A design pitch simply put is when a designer or team of designers propose a concept or concepts. As this is not the reveal of a finalised design solution, the proposition of the concept or concepts describes an intended direction of development, or later intended changes in direction of development for design. Designers can pitch at various stages of designing, to various groups of people and these pitches can take various forms of formality. Therefore, it is important to set the parameters for the type of design pitch that this research study will focus on.

Firstly, with respect to the stage of designing at which the design pitch takes place it is important to state that the only parameter is that the proposition being presented must be conceptual, meaning that aspects of its design can be altered by the team charged with its development if they desire. The reason for this is to ensure that when exploring how storytelling approaches have consequential impacts during the design pitch, discoveries will have purposeful implications for the further development of design concepts.

Secondly, with respect to the group of people that the design pitch is being presented to, there is also only one parameter: they must be part of the organisation’s project team charged with the development of the design concept that the designers are presenting. The reason for this is that part of the data collection involves conducting semi-structured interviews with the audience of the storytelling, and therefore they must have invested interest in the design concepts to be able to consider the relationship between storytelling approaches and their consequential impacts, in terms of the development of design concepts.

Finally, with respect to the level of formality, there is also only one parameter: the design pitch must be an organised event designed for the purpose of designers presenting the design concept to an organisation. The reason for this is that the
presentations of design concepts can take place on an ad hoc basis where stories are told conversationally and possibly with the aid of visual materials such as models and sketches. However, during a more formally organised situation, a designer becomes conscious that they are presenting and therefore will, to some degree, strategise an approach to storytelling. It is also during these more formally organised presentations that more employees from the organisation charged with the design concepts development will attend. Therefore, richer data can be gathered and there is the potential to interview more members of the storytelling audience.

1.4.3. Storytelling Approach

As this research study relates storytelling approaches to consequential impacts, a stage of the literature review and a stage of the data analysis will be to determine various storytelling approaches. In order to do this, a clear description of what constitutes an approach to storytelling has to be set out.

In some circumstances it is appropriate to distinguish between story and storytelling. For example, Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) distinguish between the two when proposing strategies with regards to storytelling throughout the user experience design process. They differentiate between approaches relating to the performance elements in storytelling and the crafting of a story, focusing on the latter. However, when relating different approaches to storytelling to an impact, the performance elements of storytelling cannot be ruled out.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research study a storytelling approach can take several forms: a tangible component with regards to the construction of a story; such as the use of a storyboard or a prop, or an intangible component with regards to decisions about the content of a story; the use of a metaphor or a particular
focus on one aspect of the design concept or even a belief of what should be included or should not.

1.4.4. Consequential Impact

As this research study relates storytelling approaches to consequential impacts, a stage of the literature review was used to determine various consequential impacts attributed to storytelling approaches. The consequential impacts that the analysis related storytelling approaches to was determined prior to data collection to bring focus to the semi-structured interviews, ensuring the collection of comparable data.

The specific definitions and parameters of the consequential impacts will therefore be introduced and discussed later in chapter 6 of the thesis, each one representing an area of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews.

1.5. Thesis Structure/Guide to the Thesis

The following section will summarise the content of the subsequent chapters of this thesis, providing a brief structure and guide to reading.

1.5.1. Chapters 2, 3 & 4: Literature Review

The first chapter of the literature review positions this study in the landscape of design research in terms of its philosophy, its focus and its purpose. With regards to philosophy, both macro and micro arguments will be examined including models for generating knowledge and definitions of design philosophies respectively. In terms of focus, both the positioning and form of storytelling in comparative research will be examined and related to this research study. Similarly, the
purposes of comparative research will also be examined and related to this research study.

The subsequent chapters of the literature review focus on what is understood about how designers tell stories, and elements of story content. These areas are examined in order to establish relationships proposed between storytelling approaches and their consequential impacts.

The literature explored in these chapters mainly comprises of societal, organisational and design perspectives that hold relevance or analogous relevance to the context of this research study. Within the societal perspective, particular focus is given to Transformative Learning, Film Theory and Digital Storytelling. Transformative Learning holds relevance as literature surrounding it discusses storytelling as a performance in relation to personal reflection and alterations of worldview. Film Theory holds relevance as literature surrounding it reflects on individuality and perceptions of reality, relating these to the interpretations of story. Finally, Digital Storytelling has relevance as literature surrounding it relates new methods of communication to people’s digital, global and visual literacy skills.

These analogous examples underpin the notions that exist around storytelling from both the organisational and design perspectives, of which all relevant concepts to the context of this research study are detailed. Essentially, with respect to design, storytelling is inspected through the perceptions made of verbal and visual communication such as sketching and conversations among designers that ensue during the development of a design concept. Literature from an ‘Experience Design’ perspective is particularly explicit in terms of proposing strategies when approaching storytelling. Literature that focuses on storytelling from an organisational perspective is most commonly related to branding, marketing, leadership and management.

The conclusions at the end of these chapters draw specific implications to the design pitch and condense the discoveries made into tables that detail all the
relevant relationships made between that storytelling approach and its consequential impacts.

1.5.2. Chapter 5: Methodology

Section 5.1 of the methodology chapter positions the epistemology and ontology of the research, these belonging to the Interpretivist paradigm. This is essentially due to the data collection focusing on the individual interview participant’s interpretations of from each of the cases.

Section 5.2 of the methodology discusses the selection of the case study research method, detailing the type of case study method and why it is appropriate for this research study.

Section 5.3 and 5.4 presents the stages of the Thematic Analysis methodology used to analyse the data collected. The impacts explored by the areas of inquiry in the interviews are also introduced.

Section 5.4 discusses the research technique, or more precisely, the data required for each case and the methods used for data collection. Data collected includes: documentation providing information on design projects and briefs; archival records providing information on project dates and participants; interview recordings and transcriptions with participants and finally, where possible artefacts from the design pitches used to aid storytelling. The specific questions used to conduct the semi-structured interviews are also stated and deliberated.

Section 5.6 details the sampling criteria used to select the cases of this research study. Each of the criteria are then deliberated in terms of the consequences should they be or not be met in terms of the implications this will have with regards to the data analysis and conclusion.
Section 5.7 of the methodology chapter explores the limitations of the research study and its proposed method. Limitations are discussed on a macro level, related to the Interpretivist stance and then on a micro level with regards to specific choices made such as the areas of inquiry used to interrogate interview participants.

1.5.3. Chapter 6: Areas of Inquiry

This chapter is divided into four sections. Each section examines an area of inquiry, these being the impacts: Delivering Understanding, Demonstrating Value, Stimulating Critique and Encouraging More Holistic Thinking. For each impact a clear definition is presented with regards to the context of this research study with specific parameters being set out. In addition to this, a rationale is provided for each area including: the supporting literature that suggests its importance with regards to the context of the research study, and where appropriate the particular experiences of the researcher that also suggest importance with regards to the context of the research study.

1.5.4. Chapter 7: Pilot Study

Chapter 7 of the thesis introduces the pilot study, with sections 7.1 to 7.4 detailing: information around the research unit; the collaboration between designer and client, the storytellers; designers presenting concepts at the design pitch, the stories themselves and how the design pitch met the criteria set out in section 1.4.1 for storytelling and finally, the interview participants.

Section 7.5 states the questions used in the pilot study (the questions used in the pilot study were at an earlier stage of development than those used in the cases). It
is then explained how conducting the pilot study helped to develop these original set of questions in response to misinterpretation during the interviews and the practicality in conducting them. Subsequent sections detail and summarise how the pilot study also helped to determine the areas of inquiry and familiarise the researcher with the coding process.

1.5.5. Chapter 8: Case Introductions

Chapter 8 introduces each of the cases used in this research study for data collection. The case studies include: Unilever Household Care, Unilever Laundry and Accenture.

The chapter is divided into three sections, one for each case and these sections are further divided into four sections. Similar to the pilot study these four sections detail information around the research unit, the storytellers, the design stories told during the design pitch and the interview participants. More specifically, the research unit section provides background information on the organisation and contextual information on the projects that they commissioned involving collaboration with the designers. The ‘Storytellers’ section provides background and contextual information on the designers that collaborated with the organisation and delivered the design pitches comprising of stories surrounding the proposed design concepts. The design stories section provides information on the stories told during the design pitch, firstly with regards to how the design pitch met the criteria for storytelling and secondly when possible, more specific information on the content of the stories and the design concepts presented. Finally, the interview participant section provides information on the interview participants, the audience of the design pitch. This information includes a brief explanation of their role and history at the organisation and instances where they have worked with designers prior to the projects being discussed.
1.5.6. Chapter 9: Thematic Analysis

This chapter details the stages of the thematic analysis including the coding process, the grouping process, establishing themes and validation process undertaken in order to ensure rigour. The final section introduces a model for constructing frameworks from the analysis, which essentially illustrates how using various storytelling approaches give design pitches certain qualities that in turn foster an impact.

1.5.7. Chapter 10: Influences on Delivering Understanding

This chapter introduces the themes that emerged in the interview participant’s transcriptions relating storytelling approach to impact. A framework is constructed taking into account all instances where a storytelling approach gave a design pitch a quality or qualities that led to the delivery of an understanding. The final section of this chapter summarises the themes that were recurrent across all cases. Throughout the discussion, relevant examples from all cases are provided, evidencing the findings.

1.5.8. Chapter 11: Influences on Demonstrating Value

This chapter is structured in very much the same way as chapter 10, however instead of having the delivery of understanding as its focus it has the demonstration of value.
1.5.9. Chapter 12: Influences on Stimulating Critique

As with the previous chapter, this chapter is structured in very much the same way as chapter 10, however instead of having the delivery of understanding as its focus, it has the stimulation of critique.

1.5.10. Chapter 13: Influences on Encouraging More Holistic Thinking

Again, this chapter is structured in the same way as chapter 10, but with the encouragement of more holistic thinking as its focus rather than the delivery of an understanding.

1.5.11. Chapter 14: The Final Framework and its Implications

This chapter concludes the thematic analysis by creating a framework from the recurrent themes detailed in the previous four chapters. The storytelling approaches are clearly defined and examples are provided as to how they can be achieved. Implications of each of these storytelling approaches are detailed as a checklist of considerations for a designer when pitching their work and a series of questions that a client can ask when viewing a design pitch.

1.5.12. Chapter 15: Original Contribution to Knowledge

The original contribution to knowledge chapter rearticulates the specific ways in which this research study develops an understanding of storytelling at the design pitch. Specifically focusing on the framework and its application for designers, project teams working with designers and design educators. It also highlights the
value of adopting the research methodology and the way in which a higher degree of consciousness when storytelling at a design pitch can be achieved.

1.5.13. Chapter 16: Further Work

The further work chapter proposes strategies that can be taken to continue and develop this research undertaken in this study.

Firstly, in continuing this research alternative areas of inquiry are proposed that could be used to add to the framework. These include an exploration of the impacts, ‘Aligning Perspectives’ and ‘Building Literacy’, both of which have been related to storytelling in various ways. Secondly, alternative criteria for sampling are proposed that could be used to focus the construction of a framework for a specific area of design such as ‘fashion’. Essentially, the research methodology could be replicated with cases that belong specifically to certain types of industries. This may reveal insights into the different characteristics of different industries with respect to the ways in which designers pitch their work.

Secondly, alternative directions for this research is proposed on reflection of discoveries made that were secondary to this research study’s focus. Primarily, this involves considering the degree of consciousness with which designers adopt storytelling approaches when pitching their concepts.

1.5.14. The Appendix

The appendix presents a series of conference papers, tables and interview transcriptions, supporting the arguments made in this research study.
The conference papers were written and published during the course of this research study, surrounding various aspects of the discoveries made. ‘Design Process and Organisational Strategy: A Storytelling Perspective’ focuses on the literature review of this research study and concludes with the various implications this has for collaborating designers and organisations. ‘Design Storytelling’ looks at the literature review and aspects of the pilot study concluding with the implications this has for design education and finally ‘Developing the Design Storytelling Impact-Approach Framework’ details an early iteration of the thematic analysis part way through data collection.

The tables represent the coding and grouping of codes, generated through a line-by-line examination of the case interview transcriptions, used to determine themes.

The interview transcriptions provide a coded, written dialogue of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the participants of the pilot study and each case
The Research Landscape of Design Storytelling
2. The Research Landscape of Design Storytelling

This research study’s overarching aim is to understand the relationships between storytelling approaches and consequential impacts in the context of a design pitch. A literature review should therefore examine accounts and theory surrounding storytelling approaches and consequential impacts from analogous societal, organisational and design perspectives. A paper entitled ‘Design Process and Organisational Strategy: A Storytelling Perspective’ (Parkinson et al., 2012) was written by the researcher, which captures an initial appraisal of the literature reviewed in this research study. It can be viewed in the appendix.

In order to provide a context to the literature review, it is important to briefly examine the landscape of design research and state where this study sits within it in terms of its philosophy, focus and purpose. Therefore, this chapter will highlight specific similarities and differences between authors who have similar philosophical stances to this research study, and authors who have conducted research with comparable focuses and purposes to this research study.

2.1. Aligned Philosophies

When adopting a broad perspective, a relationship can be drawn between Young’s (2001) description of art as inquiry and the philosophical approach taken in this research study. Young (2001) argues that art is a source of knowledge through inquiry, but that it is so in a different way to science. More specifically he points out that the key difference between art and science as inquiry is due to the forms of representation used within each; with ‘semantic’ representations used in science and ‘illustrative’ representations used in art. Focusing on the examples of ‘illustrative’ representations that Young (2001) provides, the relationship to this research study can be seen. Young (2001: 88-89) suggests that ‘the affective illustrations of artists can present perspectives. They can direct the attention of
audience members and nudge them into a position from where they can recognise the rightness of a perspective on some object or objects’. In essence a design concept is represented by a designer through illustration and can be presented to an audience during a design pitch using storytelling. Similarly to Young’s (2001) description of illustrations, storytelling at a design pitch can also direct the attention of audience members, helping them to recognise the rightness of a perspective on some object, in this instance a design concept. Young (2001) suggests that retrieving the responses of audience members can be a good guide to understanding how things are. It is through gathering the responses of audience members of a design pitch that this research study hopes to develop understanding.

Similarly to Young (2001), Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 260) ‘differentiate between philosophy, science and the arts – seeing each as a means of confronting chaos’. In Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) description of what philosophy is, they suggest that it requires the simultaneous use of ‘concepts’ and ‘planes’, where concepts represent concrete notions and planes represent contextual abstract notions, with concepts existing on planes. When relating this proposition to this research study, concrete notions are represented by the body of approaches taken when storytelling and the consequential impacts that they each can have, and the plane is represented by the context of a design pitch. Therefore, it is arguable that this research study adopts Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) vision of philosophy.

As well as these broad relationships to visions of philosophy, more specific relationships exist between this research study and certain philosophies of design, or more simply put, the way design and design research is defined.

Latour (2008: 2) argues that the meaning of the word design ‘has grown in what logicians refer to as “comprehension” and “extension”’. By comprehension, he means that verbs such as ‘planned, calculated, arrayed, arranged, packed, packaged, defined, projected, tinkered, written down in code, disposed of’ (2008: 2)
and so on, can all mean design. By extension, he means that design is now applicable to ‘ever larger assemblages of production’ (2008: 2), meaning that the range of things that can be designed has grown from simple product. When considering the cases examined in this research study, as described in chapter 8, it can be seen that design takes the forms of ‘arranged’, ‘packaged’, ‘projected’ and ‘defined’ comprehensions of ‘product’, ‘service’ and ‘short movie’ extensions. Therefore, it is apparent that Latour’s (2008) view of design corresponds with that of this research study’s, as many of the verbs he uses to describe the growing comprehension of design are applicable, and services and short movies are also designed in extension of simple products.

Finally, Fallman (2008) produces a model for design research, which can be used to position this research study amongst others. Fallman’s (2008) model proposes that design research activity can take three extremes; design practice, design studies and design exploration, and that what distinguishes the three are different traditions and perspectives. Firstly, concerning design practice research activity, Fallman (2008: 7) states that it is ‘synthetic to its character [meaning that] the researcher becomes involved and engaged in a particular design practice, but does so with an appropriate research question in mind’. Secondly, concerning design exploration research activity, Fallman (2008: 8) states that it ‘relies heavily on synthetic processes but in doing so extensively uses the theories and foundations for design [where] artefacts coming out of design exploration are societal in character, and sometimes even subversive’. Finally, concerning design studies research activity, Fallman (2008: 9) states that it, ‘unlike design practice, seeks the general rather than the particular, aims to describe and understand rather than create and change [and that] unlike both other activity areas, generally strive to form a cumulative body of knowledge’. Fallman (2008: 7) produces the following figure to illustrate these different approaches, suggesting that all design research activity can sit somewhere within it.
Point X represents the positioning of this research study in relation to Fallman’s (2008) model. As can be seen, it combines design exploration and design studies research activity; design exploration research activity in that existing theory is observed that relates design to storytelling. The intended outcome also has societal implications, a framework that may influence how designers and employees of an organisation interact. However, it is more closely related to and typical of design studies, as it looks to build a cumulative body of knowledge; a framework relating approaches taken when storytelling to their consequential impacts, designed not to generalise but to build understanding.

2.2. Storytelling Focus

The following two sections give examples of comparative research to demonstrate the numerous ways in which storytelling has been related to design, concentrating on similarities between focus and purpose. In order to ensure that relevant examples are given, the stories examined within comparative research must meet
the storytelling criteria set out at the end of section 1.4.1 of the introduction. The following table will detail the authors of such work, a description of the stories they examine, and how they meet these criteria.

Table 1: Comparative Research Storytelling Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Story Description</th>
<th>Meeting the Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross (2006) and Schön and Wiggins (2006)</td>
<td>Artefacts produced such as sketches, renderings, and models, argued to have stories embedded within them</td>
<td>Artefacts produced during a design project are to illustrate a design concept or aspect of a design concept. A series of artefacts represent an order of the states of development of a design concept. The user of the design concept is human. The designer that produced the artefact is interpreting a solution to a design brief. Sketches may be referred to by the name given to the particular design concept they illustrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeLARGE (2004), Lawson (2005), and Lloyd (2000)</td>
<td>Stories extrapolated from recorded dialogue between designers in a design team and designers and clients</td>
<td>Stories exchanged verbally during a design concept are told in order to explain a design concept or aspect of a design concept. In their telling, these stories put events and or states in an order. The user of the design concept is human. The designer telling the story is sharing a perspective on or interpreting a solution to a design brief. Short phrases are assigned to these stories and then referred to later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madsen and Nielsen (2010)</td>
<td>The persona scenario, a</td>
<td>A persona scenario presents a design concept in terms of its benefit to a user.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Comparative Research Storytelling Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particular Technique Dictating the Structure and Content of a Story Creation</th>
<th>The persona scenario has a particular structure that orders events; the introduction of a user and their character, a dilemma they face, the introduction of the design concept and then how it is used to overcome the dilemma. The user of the design concept is human. The designer creating the persona scenario is sharing a perspective on the character of a typical user of the design concept. The name of the character described in the persona scenario can be used when referring to the persona scenario.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philmlee (2005) The entire design process likened to a story</td>
<td>The design concept is of primary focus in a design project. The occurrences of the design project in chronological order resemble the order of events. The user of the design concept is human. Viewing the design project in this way resembles an interpretation of it. The title of the design project can be used in reference to its story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of focus, one way in which this research study can be related to these comparative examples is by plotting when the considered instances of storytelling occur on a typical design project timeline. The following numbered paragraphs introduce the standpoints of these comparative examples of literature, in order to position the considered instances of storytelling.
Standpoint 1: Cross (2006) and Schön and Wiggins (2006) examine the stories that are embedded within design artefacts such as sketches, renderings, models and prototypes. Cross (2006) suggests that it is within these artefacts that stories are told about the construction and function of the design concepts. For example, a blueprint of a building when observed by an architect can communicate a visual story about the construction of a building and how people will live in it. Schön and Wiggins (2006) suggest that a series of sketches showing the evolution of a design concept can communicate a visual story of the critical discourse that occurred during its development. In both of these instances, the artefacts are produced during the development of the design concept, up to the point of pitching. However, they deliver stories when viewed and so this storytelling can occur at any time throughout the project and afterwards.

Standpoint 2: DeLarge (2004), Lawson (2005), and Lloyd (2000) examine recorded dialogue between designers in a design team and designers and clients. They all profess that during this discourse, stories are exchanged. However, each of them emphasise the different roles stories play. DeLarge (2004) focuses on their use in design management, whereas Lawson (2005) and Lloyd (2000) focus on the various short hand exchanges between designers that are used to encapsulate stories when debating within design teams. In all instances, these recorded stories are told during the development of the design concept, before the point of pitching.

Standpoint 3: Madsen and Nielsen (2010) discuss the use of a persona scenario, which when defined, is described as a story that involves a user, a dilemma, and a design concept with which the dilemma is overcome. It is intended that designers tell this story early in the design project, in order to agree on an understanding of the dilemma and the consequent criteria that a design concept will need to meet in order to resolve it. This story is told in the first stages of the design project before initial ideas are generated.
Standpoint 4: There are also researchers who observe the entire design project process and liken it to a story in its entirety (Philmlee, 2005). Therefore, the design project is the story in this instance, with all the different occurrences and or components communicating a story when observed and or told in a chronological order, after the design process has occurred.

The following figure plots the positioning of the above mentioned instances of storytelling along a project timeline simplified from Cooper’s (1995) model of the design process.

*Figure 2: A simplified model of the design process, adapted from Cooper (1995).*

Points 1 position the stories told through viewing artefacts (sketches, renderings, models, prototypes), which Cross (2006), and Schön and Wiggins (2006) examine. Points 2 position the stories exchanged between designers in a design team and designers and clients throughout the development of concepts, which DeLarge (2004), Lawson (2005), and Lloyd (2000) examine. Point 3 positions the story delivered as a persona scenario that Madsen and Nielsen (2010) examine. Point 4 positions the story of the entire project process examined by Philmlee (2005).
The storytelling that this research study focuses on takes place at point X, where designers pitch concepts to the employees of an organisation. When considering research focusing on storytelling, this phase of the design process has not received as much attention as other phases in comparative examples.

Another way this research study can be related to comparative examples in terms of focus is by considering the form of delivery for each considered instance of storytelling: written, verbal, visual or a combination.

It is discernible that stories embedded within artefacts such as sketches, renderings and models are delivered visually to the observer (Cross 2006, Schön and Wiggins (2006), whilst the stories that DeLarge (2004), Lawson (2005), and Lloyd (2000) discovered, through recording dialogue between designers and clients, were communicated verbally. However, there is the potential for Madsen and Nielsen’s (2010) persona scenario to be told in several ways; it could be written, it could be delivered verbally and visual aids such as drawings, photographs and film could all help to communicate this story. This is similar to viewing the design project in its entirety as a story, where many components that could take any of the three forms have the potential to be used in delivering its story. The following figure illustrates these various forms of storytelling in a matrix.
Point 1 represents the visually communicated stories told through viewing artefacts (sketches, renderings, models, prototypes), which Cross (2006) and Schön and Wiggins (2006) examine. Point 2 represents the verbally exchanged stories between designers in a design team and designers and clients throughout the development of concepts, which DeLarge (2004), Lawson (2005), and Lloyd (2000) examine. Point 3 represents the persona scenario delivered in written formats, verbally, and visually, which Madsen and Nielsen (2010) describe. Point 4 represents the story of the entire project process examined by Philmlee (2005).

The storytelling that this research focuses on, where designers pitch concepts to the employees of an organisation, is delivered both verbally and visually and is represented by point X. Aspects of storytelling accounts and theory that relate specifically to written forms of storytelling are therefore less relevant to this research study than those which focus on verbally and visually delivered storytelling.
2.3. Research Purposes

The differently identified focuses on storytelling, in the comparative examples of research, have been studied for various purposes. This section will explore these purposes, and their similarities and differences to the purpose of this research study’s focus on storytelling.

Cross (2006), and Schön and Wiggins (2006) examine artefacts produced by designers during many different design processes, in order to better understand how designers think. Storytelling has a focus within their research, as they believe that in its extrapolation from artefacts, an understanding of how designers think can be rationalised. Similarly to the purpose of this research study’s focus on storytelling, it aims to build an understanding. However, what they are trying to understand is different; the characteristics of how designers think rather than the impacts that they can have.

Similarly to Cross (2006) and Schön and Wiggins (2006), Lawson (2005) also wants to better understand how designers think. However, he approaches this by examining recordings of dialogue between architects during the architectural design project process. He believes that an understanding of how designers think can be rationalised through the extrapolation of stories from these recordings. Again, similarly to this research study, he examines stories to build an understanding, but rather than understanding the impact of these stories on an organisational level, he wants to understand how telling these stories aids design thinking during the process of designing.

DeLarge (2004) also examines stories captured within recorded dialogue. However, the recorded dialogue is between design management and strategic staff and other employees within organisations. In terms of purpose, DeLarge’s (2004) research is the most closely related to this research study as it seeks to understand the impact that these stories have on the employees of an organisation. However, there are
contextual differences, as this research study concentrates on cases of service and product design, rather than cases of design management and strategic planning.

Like Lawson (2005) and DeLarge (2004), Lloyd (2000) examines recordings of dialogue. In his examination, Lloyd (2000) discovers instances of storytelling exchanged between engineers during the engineering design project process. With this discovery he challenges the perception that engineering design is a technical activity, proposing that it coheres as a social activity. The purpose of Lloyd’s (2000) research is different to this research study in several ways. Firstly, it seeks to uncover proof of a proposition made, rather than to build an understanding and also, contextually his research study concentrates on cases involving engineers rather than designers, whose similarities and differences are often debated.

Madsen and Nielsen (2010) believe that a story told in the form of a persona scenario can achieve shared understandings between a design team, with respect to the issues surrounding a design brief. Therefore, they believe that getting this story correct is essential in aiding the design team’s generation of concepts. For this purpose, they focus on story construction through testing a method of best practice from their own experiences of constructing persona scenarios. In comparison to this research study, Madsen and Nielsen (2010) are trying to refine a method of practice, rather than build an understanding and also, contextually their research concentrates on improving the creation of concepts, rather than the presentation of them to organisations.

Finally, Philmlee (2005) likens design project processes to stories in an attempt to redefine design practice. The purpose of his research is to present an alternative view of design, rather than to observe the impacts of designer’s storytelling.
2.4. Summary

When considering the aims and objectives of this research study, in terms of a philosophy for research, Young’s (2001) notion of ‘art as inquiry’ and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) notion of ‘concepts’ and ‘planes’ offer compatible stances. In terms of design research more specifically, design is defined in a similar way to Latour (2008) and can be placed on Fallman’s (2008) model of design research activity.

As can be seen from the brief overview of comparative examples of research, storytelling is a popular method of interrogation within design research. The focuses on storytelling explored in this chapter include, the extrapolation of stories from artefacts, stories captured in recorded dialogue exchanged between people during the process of designing, and stories constructed to describe an overview of the process of designing. The purposes of these studies include building understandings of how designers think, refining specific techniques of storytelling within the process of designing, and building understandings of the design process in its entirety. It is therefore evident that there is a significant gap in the literature with respect to research that has a focus on storytelling at the design pitch, for the purpose of understanding designers’ impact on employees from an organisation, demonstrating the originality of this research study.

The discoveries made in this chapter also have certain implications for how the questions that this research study asks (stated in section 1.1 of chapter 1) can be explored. Firstly, due to the typical form of storytelling delivery at a design pitch, it is apparent that the aspects of accounts and theory relating to verbal and visual storytelling hold greater relevance than those relating to written storytelling. Secondly, due to the originality of the focus and purpose of this research study, analogous examples in literature have to be sought that do not directly correspond to design. The following two chapters explore these analogous examples of literature and the comparative examples of design research in more depth.
How Designers Tell Stories
3. How Designers Tell Stories

It is important to examine literature that is preoccupied with how designers tell stories, in order to understand which approaches are favoured and for what intentions, if any. However, as determined in the introduction, the design pitch (and more specifically: storytelling at the design pitch) is an under-explored territory within research. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that analogous areas of research deemed to be relevant will also have to be examined.

When looking at research that relates to storytelling in some capacity, it can be seen that there are many areas of literature to draw from. There are many contextual factors governing the storytelling that occurs during a design pitch; it is through the identification of these that the irrelevant and relevant literatures can be determined. Throughout the following two chapters, theories have been selected and explored from a range of different areas of literature that discuss storytelling and its impact on people. The following section will discuss which areas of literature were included and which were not, providing a rationale for each decision.

Perhaps the most recognisable form of storytelling is reading a storybook. Therefore, it stands to reason that the most widely explored mode of storytelling within research is the written word. Literary Theory is an umbrella term for research that looks to the written word in order to make sense of how human beings create meaning, and so encompasses these explorations of storytelling within the written word (Barry, 2009). However, Literary Theory is not relevant to this research study as the design pitches being examined are delivered both verbally and visually; the written word does not manifest as part of a pitch.

Similarly, literature dealing with Narratology has little relevance to this research study. In essence Narratology is the study of narrative and narrative structure, and how they influence perspective (Bal, 1997). Typically, Narratology is allied with
Literary Theory and Literary Criticism, rather than non-written narrative such as those delivered during a design pitch. Further to this, when devising a narrative for a design pitch there can be a predetermined structure. For example, when demonstrating how a concept for a kitchen utensil changes a cooking process, the central structure of a narrative is already set (this being the stages of a recipe’s method that requires the use of the utensil). Therefore, the theories surrounding narrative structure are rarely useful when pitching design concepts.

Literature that explores storytelling whose mode of delivery is verbal and visual is more likely to have relevance to this research study. Transformative Learning is one such area of literature that does this. Essentially, theorists working in this area believe that the goal of transformative learning is to alter worldview through developing autonomous thinking (Mezirow, 1997). It is arguable that autonomous thinking is beneficial for concept development, and so the promotion of it during a design pitch may be desirable.

Similarly to Transformative Learning, Digital Theory is an area of research that also has a focus within it on stories delivered verbally and visually. Digital Theory is preoccupied with understanding the uses of digital medias, addressing anything from ‘the role of CGI in Hollywood blockbusters to new systems of communication (the Net)’ (Stam, 2002: 315). Much research dealing with Digital Theory explores the benefits it has in an educational setting, specifically in building global and visual literacy (Robin, 2006). Again, it is arguable that a designer may wish to build global and visual literacy in their client, and so Digital Theory may have particular relevance to the context of this research study. Further to this, digital formats are more commonly used during design pitches due to their increased accessibility through creative software development.

Film Theory is another area of literature that has a focus on visual and verbal storytelling (Stam, 2002). Although much research conducted in this area focuses on the impact of different narrative structures (hence an association to
Narratology), many ideas relating to other factors affecting an individual’s interpretation of a story are also explored, which can be related to the context of a design pitch.

Finally, Organisational Theory has a significant relevance to this research study. Specifically within Organisational Theory, leadership, marketing, and branding strategies all deal with visual and verbal storytelling in some capacity (Christensen, 2001, Denning, 2011). It is important to understand theories in this territory, not only due to the fact that they may deal with contextually relevant storytelling scenarios (the verbal and visual presentation of ideas), but also because many members of a design pitch’s audience may be familiar with these perspectives and could potentially be influenced by them.

The areas of literature mentioned here are explored in the following two chapters, through considering the theories they promote and relating them to the focus of this research study.

3.1. The Production of Artefacts

With respect to the forms of visualisation that designers use, it is important to acknowledge that there has been a shift from the production of more traditional artefacts such as sketches, renderings and models, to a growing frequency of using media formats including photography, storyboarding, film and animation. This phenomenon has been explicated as designers being part of a societal shift in response to a more visually rich world (Cross, 2006). When considering the design pitch, it is reasonable to suggest that artefacts produced during the design process are often used as visual aids, becoming part of the storytelling that can occur. Therefore, explorations of artefact(s) and how they have impact are of high importance to this research study.
Studies of stories told through non-traditional media formats are prolific in design research (Haesen, 2010, McDonnell et al., 2003, McDonnell et al., 2004, Strickfaden and Rodgers, 2001). For example, McDonnell et al. (2003) commissioned industrial design students to produce films telling stories about their activity, in order to develop an understanding of the design process. Stories told by more traditional forms of visualisation are easiest to recognise in sketches and drawings that communicate how a design concept is constructed and or how it works (Cross, 2006). For example, an architect may produce a drawing of a home, arguably proposing a story of the way a family utilises the different spaces during the course of a day. He might also produce a blueprint, arguably communicating a story of the buildings construction to a contractor. Therefore when pitching a design concept, showing this type of artefact could be beneficial in delivering an understanding of how a product is both used and made.

Perhaps less obvious are the stories communicated by a series of visual artefacts, such as a series of sketches. Schön and Wiggins (2006) propose that a series of visual artefacts taken from various stages of a design process can communicate the story of a critically reflective dialogue exchanged between designers that led to the development of the design concept. In this instance it is assumed that the changes made in each subsequent artefact are the responses to critique, through the reflection of the designer producing the artefact after their critical conversations with other members of the design team. Showing a series of design artefacts during a design pitch could therefore demonstrate the critical dialogue exchanged between designers during the design process to the audience. Engaging the audience in this critical dialogue has the potential to encourage their own critical reflection on the design concept. However, depending on the type of critique this stimulates, and the individual attitudes of the audience, this could either hinder or aid the process of development.

The following table summarises the potential impacts that the use of artefacts can have when used during the storytelling that occurs at the design pitch.
Table 2: Artefacts in Storytelling and their potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using an individual artefact (such as a sketch or render)</td>
<td>Deliver an understanding of how a concept is used and or is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a series of artefacts (such as sketches, renderings, models or a combination)</td>
<td>Engages the audience in a critical dialogue surrounding the concepts development (whether positive or negative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Digital Storytelling

When considering Cross’ (2006) suggestion that designers’ methods of visualisation have shifted in response to a more visually rich world to include other mediums such as photography, film and animation, it is no surprise that Digital Theory holds some relevance when considering storytelling and its relationship with design. It has been identified that similarly to the previously explored physical artefacts, digital artefacts can also embed qualities that trigger storytelling (Viégas et al., 2004). However, digital platforms can also be used to tell stories in a more explicit way.

In the exploration of story, ‘Digital Theory may address anything from the role of CGI special effects in Hollywood blockbusters to new systems of communication (the Net), new genres of entertainment (the computer game), new styles of music (techno) or new systems of representation (digital photography or virtual reality)’ (Stam, 2002: 315). In defining the unique criteria with which digital storytelling can be identified, Paul and Fiebich (2005) propose several conditions of particular importance; ‘1) a combination of different medias, 2) user centred action, and 3) multimodal communication’. Therefore, combining these criteria for digital storytelling, with the criteria for storytelling set out in chapter 1, section 1.4.1, we
can define what constitutes an example of digital storytelling in the context of this research study.

Considering the shift that Cross (2006) describes in a designer’s approach to visualisation, it is easy to recognise that many stories designers’ tell about design concepts can therefore be classified as digital stories when using this definition. For example, a persona-scenario such as those described by Madsen and Neilsen (2010) could be presented using a series of photographs and video diaries telling the story of the day in the life of a typical user. In this case, different media have been used (photography and film), user centred action is of primary concern (the persona) and multimodal forms of communication are present (visually in photography and film, verbally in film and possibly through music in film - sound).

In much literature describing digital storytelling, there is advocacy in its use as an instructional tool within education (Blas et al., 2012, Jenkins and Lonsdale, 2007, Signes, 2010, Simondson, 2009). Signes (2010: 2-3) exclaims that this point is ‘argued by some researchers and educators - mainly from primary and secondary schools - who have been analysing the impact of digital storytelling in the classroom’. In particular, Signes (2010: 4) highlights the benefits that digital storytelling can provide for different literacy skills, summarising Robin’s (2006) findings that working with digital stories can improve and/or build:

- **Digital Literacy** - the ability to communicate with an ever-expanding community to discuss issues, gather information, and seek help;
- **Global Literacy** - the capacity to read, interpret, respond and contextualize messages from a global perspective [...];
- **Visual Literacy** - the ability to understand, produce and communicate through visual images.

When considering the context of the design pitch, it is explicitly obvious that digital storytelling can be used, and in many instances most probably already is. Therefore,
it stands to reason that the audience of a design pitch employing the use of digital stories could potentially develop their own digital, global, and visual literacy skills.

When looking at the benefits of using digital storytelling in an educational context, proposed by Robin (2006), it can be reasoned why it may also be a favourable mode of communication to use during a design pitch. With regards to digital literacy in general, Robin (2006) suggests that viewing digital stories has proven to develop the ability to communicate with an ever-expanding community. As there is a growing frequency of organisations that employ the use of design consultancies, it can be argued that within these organisations there is an expanding community. If designers use digital stories to pitch their concepts in these situations, it is possible that this could constitute an example of how digital storytelling may be contributing to developing communication, within this context.

More specifically, with regards to global literacy, Robin (2006) suggests that viewing digital stories can improve the capacity to read, interpret, respond, and contextualise information on a global level. Therefore, should a design pitch be presented using digital stories, it stands to reason that it may be easier for the audience to discuss the design concept more holistically and grasp an understanding of the wider implications it might have.

Finally, with regards to visual literacy, Robin (2006) suggests that digital stories can increase the ability to understand and use visual images in communication. If we take an instance where designers are pitching to people from a non-creative background where perhaps visual communication seldom happens, using a digital story may increase their ability to understand the visual presentation of a design and consequently aid their ability to discuss ideas critically using these visual presentations. This development of visual literacy could also potentially enable them in gain more out of further collaborations with designers, who traditionally communicate their ideas in visual ways.
The following table summarises the literature reviewed on the potential impacts that digital stories could have when used as an approach for storytelling at the design pitch.

**Table 3: Digital Storytelling and its potential impacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using digital stories</td>
<td>Improve communication between designers and organisations they work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allow the discussion of a design concept on a more holistic level, including the wider implications it might have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the ability to understand visual presentations of design concepts and talk about them critically through these presentations, consequently aiding further collaborations with designers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3. Conversational Storytelling

As mentioned previously, Schön and Wiggins (2006) suggest that a story can be deduced that details the critical conversations that occurred between designers during the process of designing, when observing a series of artefacts (such as sketches, renderings, models, or a combination of all three). The differences between iterations of the visualisation of a design concept are suggested to be the result of the designer’s reflection on the critique that occurred. The conversations that occur between designers during the process of designing have also been analysed in other ways. Lawson (2005), Lloyd (2000) and DeLarge (2004) in particular, have all analysed recordings of the conversations that occur between designers during the process of designing. With these recordings, they have
extrapolated the stories that designers tell for the purposes of understanding the impacts that this form of communication has within the particular contexts they are concerned with.

Lloyd (2000) has examined recordings of the conversations surrounding the engineering design process in particular. Lloyd (2000: 357) describes a motivation for conducting this research as having a belief that design can be viewed as a social activity where storytelling acts as ‘a central mechanism in the development of a common language’. The observations made that reinforced this idea were instances where designers communicated stories surrounding particular concepts, or aspects of particular concepts, and then established a phrase or word to use as a reference to that story in further discussion. For example, when describing one particular concept for a soap dish that uses mosaic, a designer might tell a story about how he had drawn inspiration from his holiday to Barcelona when visiting Gaudi’s cathedral. From then on in, the word ‘Gaudi’ has a story attached to it that implies the use of mosaic and could potentially be used as short hand when discussing further concepts for a full range of bathroom products. Lloyd (2000: 357) proposes that if a design team develops a common language in this way, it can be an indicator of ‘good design’. It is reasoned that these short hand words and phrases are ‘used to negotiate the factors influencing the final design’ (Lloyd, 2000: 271). Therefore, it is crucially important for each member of the design team to be familiar with these stories in order to negotiate their input, hence why it is believed that the ability to engage in this way is an indicator for ‘good design’. When considering the context of a design pitch, there may still be a further stage of development the concept has to undergo within the organisation employing the designers. Therefore, it may be beneficial to tell the stories used in developing this language during a pitch, to aid the organisation in negotiating factors of the design for themselves. However, this may require a heightened degree of consciousness in designers when communicating verbally during the process of designing.
Prior to this, Lawson (1994) carried out similar research that also involved examining recorded examples of design conversations, coming to very much the same conclusion; that design teams created a common language amongst themselves through establishing words and phrases used as short hand in reference to larger bodies of information. When summarising this research at a later date, Lawson (2005: 92) stated that ‘words are selected carefully to evoke and communicate subtleties of design concepts which would take many words and drawings to explain to an outsider’. In reference to Schön (1988), Lawson (2005: 92) also suggests that ‘experienced designers use design archetypes during their design process often in the form of very evocative words’ proposing the idea that stories attached to iconic designs can be condensed into short words and phrases that are mutually understood by experienced designers. When considering the ideas that Lawson (2005) establishes, it can be reasoned that due to the development of a short hand vocabulary, design teams are able to work more efficiently due to the fact that they are able to communicate large amounts of information relatively quickly. However, an outsider may struggle to understand some of the short hand that designers use, and if this outsider is an inexperienced designer who is required to contribute to the development of a design concept, this could pose a problem.

When considering the design pitch specifically, if this common language has become second nature to the design team, it may filter into their presentation. If the same stories are not attached to the short hand words and phrases for the audience of the design pitch, some of the subtleties in the design may become lost, or worse still the purpose behind aspects of the design may simply be misunderstood. Therefore, designers must take care not to alienate the audience with the common language they have become used to communicating with.

As well as the proposition that design teams use conversational storytelling to develop a common language, other attributed impacts have been explicated as highly beneficial. For example, part of DeLarge’s (2004) examination of storytelling within design management included listening to recorded protocols of conversations. In reference to this context, DeLarge (2004: 77) suggested that
‘stories are used most beneficially to build trust, achieve shared understanding, simplify what is complex, and offer examples and models’ between the designer and client. Both Lloyd (2000) and Lawson (2005) also recognise the importance of storytelling’s ability to cement a design team together, echoing DeLarge’s notion that it builds trust, believing this is achieved through the development of a common language as previously described. It is reasonable to suggest that sharing these stories with the audience of a design pitch has the potential to build trust between the designers and clients, promote shared understandings surrounding particular design concepts and simplify some of the more complicated aspects of design concepts presented to them.

A common theme among these examples of conversational storytelling is that they all take place on an informal basis. When discussing storytelling on a more general level (in terms of form i.e. conversational, visual and other mediums) for the purposes of fostering change, Denning (2007b: 110) proposes that; ‘indirect Methods are more likely to be effective than direct methods, because indirect methods leave it up to the audience to make up their own minds rather than having opinions forced upon them’. To a degree, during the informal settings of the stories that Lloyd (2000) and Lawson (2005) describe, it could be argued that designers are trying to foster changes in each other about how the design concept should look or function, or even what the important issue is that it should be addressing. Therefore, considering the point Denning (2007b) makes suggesting that indirect stories are suited to fostering change; this could present an explanation as to why designers have adopted conversational storytelling whilst communicating with each other during the informal stages in a process of designing.

However, in spite of this claim, Denning (2007b: xxi) is careful to point out that storytelling in itself is not ‘a panacea for eliciting change in organisations. It can only be as good as the underlying idea being conveyed’. Therefore, considering the context of a designer, it is important to understand that an idea can still get rejected in spite of a compelling story that might be told about it. When relating

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this to the notion that each individual has a different relationship with reality, explored further in chapter 4, section 4.2, whilst discussing film theory, it can be seen why this is the case. For example, the idea of using mosaic as a technique in styling a range of bathroom products may be introduced to a designer through the use of a story about an experience of being in Gaudi’s Cathedral in Barcelona. However, the person who hears this story may already associate mosaic with substandard bathroom wall tiles and so in spite of the convincing story, the idea may still be rejected. Essentially, a resolved design solution can be viewed as an agreement reached between different persons perceptions of reality.

The following table summarises insights from the literature reviewed of the potential impacts that sharing stories, exchanged in conversations that take place during a process of designing, can have in a design pitch.

Table 4: Sharing Conversational Stories and its potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the stories exchanged in conversation during the process of designing (in particular, those which have led to the use of short hand words and phrases)</td>
<td>Enables clients to take part in the negotiation of a designs final stages of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build trust between designers and clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote shared understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplify complex aspects of a design concept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. A Creative Approach

There are many existing theories surrounding how designers should approach designing. McDonnell et al. (2003) provide a succinct description of these summarised as follows: there exists a notion that design should be undertaken in a
series of ordered phases that can be reiterated (Phal and Beitz, 1995); a series of activities to encourage divergent and convergent thinking (Jones, 1992); co-evolving requirements and solution ideas (Cross, 2000); a constructive and participative decision making process (Rittel and Webber, 1973); a solution centred inquiry (Lawson, 1997), and so on. However, the relevant implications for this study reside in the following observations of the inherent ways in which designers approach their work and the comparison of this to other disciplines.

Strickfaden and Rodgers (2001) compare the approaches that designers take when working, to scientific communities, suggesting that they are closely linked in their use of futuristic language as both are preoccupied with concepts that present alternative versions of the future world. However, in spite of this similarity in their use of language, Cross (2006) highlights a difference in their approaches of visualising these concepts. He set up a simple experiment where designers’ and scientists’ approaches to visualisation could be compared. In the experiment, groups of designers and scientists were asked to arrange 3D blocks into possible constructs. In his observation of each group carrying out this task, Cross (2006) concluded that scientists favoured an analytical approach whereas designers favoured a synthesising approach. The scientists’ approach was deemed as analytical because they tried to recreate all possible iterations starting with the simplest construct to the most complex. The designers’ approach was deemed as synthesising because they presented solutions in no particular order and then reiterated them. Cross (2006) offers two reasons why the designers approached the task in a more creative way. Firstly, he suggests that during a designer’s education, feasible concepts are demanded within specific time limits and so rather than undertaking the time consuming task of exploring all possibilities, freedom is given to create a possible solution and then reiterate it accordingly. Secondly, he suggests that due to the complex nature of design issues, there is rarely a thorough analysis available and so to a certain degree, creativity must be used in proposing resolutions of the issue.
A creative approach, specifically in relation to storytelling is often linked to eliciting change. Tufts (1990) highlights one such example when she interviews filmmakers Robin J. Hood and Penny Joy. Hood and Joy believe that film can be used as a vehicle for eliciting social change; consequently the settings used in their films are areas experiencing difficult socio-political situations. ‘Creating Bridges’ was a film they created with the purpose of raising awareness of refugee and immigrant women living in Canada, aiding their integration into the local community. Hood and Joy invited community members to take part in a theatre production that used the experiential perspectives of the community members when structuring the story. Essentially, ‘Creating Bridges’ was a film that documented this process. When posed the question, ‘what is the value of this as a tool for social change?’ Hood quotes Dante, an Italian poet, as saying ‘beauty awakens the soul to act’, and then elaborates by explaining that by this she means ‘creativity is the source of empowerment’ (Tufts, 1990). With this in mind, it is no surprise that film theorists recognise that historically films have been designed as strategic instruments for projecting ‘national imaginarie’ (Stam, 2002: 19).

When taking an organisational perspective, certain theorists who strategise approaches to storytelling echo the proposition that creativity in storytelling can foster change. For example, Saunders and Stewart (1990) who study leadership and management strategy believe that an exemplar leader or manager will disseminate information in diverse ways, and in particular are visually creative in doing this. Looking back at the list of tips proposed by DeLarge (2004: 78) for the successful management of design, the following recommendation also supports this idea; ‘offer stories, both verbally and non-verbally and in various creative media, to improve consulting relationships’. Similarly to Hood and Joy, DeLarge (2004) is suggesting that creative media can act as a stimulus for social change within an organisation, in particular improving the designer-client consulting relationships.

An example which supports DeLarge’s (2004) recommendation is Adamson et al. (2006) observations of storytelling in healthcare, and how they helped to positively
impact the San Juan Regional Medical Centre. Essentially, a story was created that paralleled the working roles of the medical centre to character’s roles within a Stephen Spielberg film; Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark. Management level staff were likened to characters whose responsibilities were operational (those hiring archaeologists to find the lost ark on behalf of the English and German governments). Less senior members of staff were likened to characters whose responsibilities were preoccupied with the day-to-day operations of working in an organisation (Indiana Jones and rival archaeologists hunting down the location of the lost ark for these governments). Indiana Jones empathised with the people he was working for, understanding that the ark was dangerous and should be recovered for the safety of humanity; ultimately he was successful in his endeavour. The rival archaeologist had an ulterior motive, this being to use the mysterious power of the ark for world domination. In essence, the story told by this film served a metaphorical message to employees; if people working together are empathetic to one another and work towards a common goal rather than ulterior motives, they can more easily achieve success. When engaged with this story, ‘the connection between management and employee changed’ (Adamson et al., 2006, Denning, 2007a) and as a result of these improved internal relationships, the medical centre began to perform competitively whilst previously it had not.

When considering the context of a design pitch, it may be necessary to align the attitudes of the audience in terms of their understandings of the issues a design concept addresses. Doing this will unite their thinking on a direction for the development of a design concept (Quesenbery and Brooks, 2010). When looking at the examples of conflict resolution presented in this section by Tufts (1990) and Adamson et al. (2006), it can be seen that creativity is believed to have facilitated an alignment of different perspectives, and therefore could be considered an approach to employ when storytelling at a design pitch.

Further to this, it is necessary to acknowledge that creativity is often described as a natural attribute of a designer (Cross, 2006). Therefore, a story they tell during a
design pitch could hold the potential to elicit a social change within the client organisation without the intention or consciousness of doing so. Case study examples where design is suggested to have elicited this type of change are detailed in Tim Brown’s (2009) book entitled ‘Change by Design’.

Storytelling is linked to aiding social change in a range of different contexts. Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010) describe how storytelling resolved cultural conflicts within society, DeLarge (2004) and Denning (2007b) describe how storytelling was used to facilitate change management within organisations, and Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) describe how storytelling was used to align understandings around design concepts and the issues they dealt with. However, in these cases alternative qualities of storytelling are highlighted as eliciting change and are explored later in this, and the following chapter.

The following table summarises impacts relevant to the design pitch identified in the literature reviewed that could result from applying a creative approach to storytelling.

Table 5: Creativity in Storytelling and its potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, beauty</td>
<td>Aligning different understandings of design concepts and the issues they deal with, fostering its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and creative media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity in an analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5. Summary

When exploring artefacts, and how they deliver stories, it has been established that many different impacts can be achieved. For example, Cross (2006) discusses how sketches and renderings can explain to different people how a concept is used or how a concept is made. Perhaps less obvious is Schön and Wiggins’ (2006)
proposition that a series of artefacts can deliver a story of the critical dialogue that ensued between a team of designers. When considering a design pitch, this impact could be both positive and negative. To a degree, it is important to engage in critical dialogue around a design concept, as an organisation may want to take it on a further journey of development. However, stimulating critique can also highlight the more undeveloped or negative aspects of a design concept that a designer may not wish to draw attention to.

When exploring the use of digital storytelling it can be seen that relative to society, it is a phenomenon inferred by the development of technologies, and as a facet of society designers too have begun to tell digital stories. Currently, the majority of research into digital storytelling’s impact when used as a presentational tool resides in primary and secondary school education (Signes, 2010). It is suggested that the overarching benefits of digital storytelling are that it develops individual’s digital, global and visual literacy (Robin, 2006). Should it have similar impacts during a design pitch, it has the potential to improve communication, allow more holistic discussion around design concepts, and potentially lead to increased engagement for design consultancies, as the benefits of working with them may be better understood.

When considering the conversational storytelling that occurs during the process of designing, it appears that there may be some benefit in including it in some form during a design pitch. Firstly, these types of stories are used in design teams to build a common language, where short words and phrases are adopted that have stories attached to them (Lloyd, 2000, Lawson, 2005). These words and phrases may mean little to an outsider, or even an inexperienced designer (Lawson, 2005). Therefore, it may be crucial to explain these stories during a design pitch as some subtleties of a design concept’s development may be lost. Also, as DeLarge (2004) points out, these types of stories can build trust, promote shared understandings and simplify complex issues. However, it is suggested that these stories operate in this way is due to the fact that they are informal (Denning, 2007b). Therefore, it
may be difficult to achieve the same benefits from them when told in the more formal setting of a design pitch.
Elements of Story

Content
4. Elements of Story Content

Literature exploring elements of story content not specifically related to design can still reveal relationships between storytelling approaches and their impacts, which hold analogous relevance to the context of a design pitch.

4.1. Central Characters in Stories

Storytelling has been examined in many areas of literature with a view that it is a facet of society through which people form worldviews and establish cultural beliefs, and that knowing the stories of a culture is the same as knowing that culture (Hesselgrave, 1997). Storytelling is often discussed in terms of how it contributes to adult education within many diverse settings; teaching and research institutes (Voogt and Haamer, 2011), organisational collaborations (Triantafyllakos et al., 2008) and when reading autobiographical writings (Rossiter, 2002) to name but a few. Instances when storytelling has been related to Transformative Learning are of particular interest when considering characterisation.

In essence, Transformative Learning can be defined as the personal development of people within society, through critical reflection on belief systems and subsequent conscious alterations of worldview (Mezirow, 1997). A preoccupation within the field of Transformative Learning is attempts at adult education (Mezirow, 1997, Boyd and Myers, 1988, Taylor, 2000). It is in the examination of Transformative Learning that exists some of the earliest examples of characterisation and its appreciation as an approach to storytelling within adult education. An example of particular interest is the ‘morality play’ (Turner, 2008: 68). The ‘morality play’ was devised by the Catholic Church in the Middle-Ages as a more effective way, than the traditional mass, of instilling the audience with their religion’s moral code (Turner, 2008). The ‘morality play’ was delivered through the use of central characters whose journeys, full of trials and tribulations, would demonstrate the
necessary steps for the audience to take in order to lead a Catholic lifestyle (Turner, 2008). In this instance of storytelling, using central characters was seen as necessary in stimulating critical self-reflection in the audience and subsequent alterations of behaviour.

In the example provided by Turner (2008), it can be seen that a central purpose in using the trials and tribulations of characters in a play, is to instil moral codes through encouraging critical reflection. Characterisation is still seen as an important part of storytelling today, for example, Sykes et al. (2012) consider the identification of an appropriate character as one of four key steps in creating a persuasive story. When considering the context of a design pitch, a goal may also be to encourage critical reflection. For example, if a design concept provides an easier way to clean the dishes, the audience of the design pitch may need to be convinced that the current ways of cleaning dishes are unsatisfactory. Getting the audience to critically reflect on their experiences of cleaning dishes could potentially be achieved through using a central character that encounters difficulty when cleaning dishes. As well as encouraging critical reflection for the purposes of establishing the need for a design concept, it may also be useful for the development of a design concept. For example, design consultancies may be invited by an organisation to provide design concepts that resolve a particular problem. However, there may be certain restrictions on a project, such as a budget for material, which the design consultancies are purposefully not made aware of by the organisation, as they believe that this knowledge may restrict creativity. If this were the case, finalised concepts provided by the design consultancies may need to be developed further by the organisation and so being able to discuss them critically is important.

Encouraging the organisation to critically reflect on how to develop the design concept could also potentially be achieved through using central characters during a design pitch. A more up to date example of the preferment of using central characters when approaching storytelling can be found in literature examining the
communication of brand. For example, Herskovitz and Crystal (2010: 21) propose that when approaching storytelling, it is important to use ‘a central character with which people can identify and create a long-lasting emotional bond: the brand persona’. In this instance of storytelling, using central characters is seen as necessary in fostering an emotional connection with the audience and furthermore, should a character be underdeveloped and the approach focus more on plot, the communication of the brand may become convoluted.

When considering Herskovitz and Crystal’s (2010) descriptions of building characters based on archetypal personas in the communication of brand stories, the central purpose is to foster an emotional connection with the audience. Considering the context of a design pitch, it would also be beneficial to try and foster an emotional connection between the design concept and the audience. In the previous example provided, where design consultancies are invited by an organisation to provide design concepts that resolve a particular problem, the design concept that successfully emotionally connects to the audience of the design pitch may well be the one selected for development, leading to repeat employment of the design consultancy that produced it. Fostering an emotional connection between an audience and a design concept could potentially be achieved through using central characters based on archetypal personas during a design pitch.

The construction of personas and persona scenarios is an area looked at by design researchers (Madsen and Nielsen, 2010, Wong and Khong, 2007). Madsen and Nielsen (2010) advocate the use of persona-scenarios for the purposes of developing design ideas during conceptualisation. When defining a persona-scenario in this context, Madsen and Neilsen (2010) suggest that a persona is a character constructed from the data gathered during user research for a particular design project. For example, when working on a project that looks to develop a new product concept for household cleaning, data gathered from user research may establish that women between the ages of 25 and 50 purchase a higher number of household cleaning products than any other demographic. Therefore, if a persona
were to be constructed during that design project, the character should be a 
woman aged between 25 and 50. When looking to define a scenario in this context, 
Madsen and Nielsen (2010) exclaim that there is no mutual definition, but it is not 
disputed that a scenario is a story that the persona exists in.

In their observations of various design projects that have employed the use of 
persona-scenarios, Madsen and Neilsen (2010: 57) suggest that storytelling in this 
way can ‘generate many, new and shared understandings and design ideas’ within a 
design team during a process of designing. Shifting focus to that of this research 
study, the relevance can be seen in that a central purpose of a design pitch is to 
deliver an understanding of the design concept to the audience. Therefore, it can 
be reasoned that using persona scenarios could also help to achieve this in this 
context.

In their quest to determine the optimum way of constructing a persona-scenario, 
Madsen and Neilsen (2010: 63) produced guidelines with the key tenets being; ‘the 
persona is the protagonist ... [and that a] problem should be solved and the goal 
should always be reached’. However, when they tested these guidelines on current 
design projects, outcomes were inconclusive and this has highlighted that there is a 
theoretical gap in understanding how to create persona-scenarios (Madsen and 
Nielsen, 2010).

The summarised examples of using central characters in approaching storytelling, 
and the potential impacts they could have on the audience of a design pitch, are 
illustrated in the table below.

*Table 6: Central Characters as an Approach to Storytelling and its Potential Impacts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the trials and tribulations of central characters</td>
<td>Encouraging critical reflection on self and design concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters based on</td>
<td>Fostering emotional connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Central Characters as an Approach to Storytelling and its Potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetypal Personas</th>
<th>Between Audience and Design Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters as protagonists, solving problems and reaching goals</td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Experiential Perspectives in Stories

It is widely acknowledged that it is a human predisposition to tell stories in order to make sense of one’s own experiences (Mateas and Sengers, 1999, Weick, 1995, Gottschall, 2012, Maguire, 1998, Lipman, 1999). Researchers have captured stories by asking people to recall experiences for many purposes, including; to better understand design practices (Geven et al., 2006, Wright and McCarthy, 2005). Uncovering important ideas that underpin film theory and cinema can help to understand how experiences can influence the creation of stories, and consequently, the impacts that stories can have on people (Duarte, 2010). In general terms, Film Theory is an academic discipline that explores cinema through providing conceptual frameworks for understanding film’s relationship to society, it has been proposed that films are worlds which are organised in terms of stories (Lapsley and Westlake, 1988: 76). Subsequently, Film Theory holds great relevance when exploring storytelling approaches and their consequential impacts on society.

Of paramount significance here, is the film theorists’ preoccupation with reality. The underpinning idea that supports this exploration in Film Theory is the ‘mirror-stage’ of a humans development; this is the acknowledgement that during the life of a human there will be a stage where they begin to understand, often by looking in a mirror, that they are observing a reality in which they exist (Easthope, 1993). When observing a film, the story that is being relayed comes into being through individual interpretation, and once an interpretation has been constructed ‘it has the ideological force conferred by its apparent representation of reality’ (Lapsley and Westlake, 1988: 130). Therefore, everybody that observes a film will own an
individual interpretation of it, constructed through his or her individual relationship with reality. With this in mind, it stands to reason that it is difficult to predict how someone might interpret a film, or indeed any story (Plantinga, 2009). Therefore, when a certain impact is desired, the author of the story must consider the audience, their relationship with reality, and try to empathise with them (Duarte, 2012).

An example of this type of consideration in the construction of stories is apparent when looking at modern day attempts at adult education through Transformative Learning. For example Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010) devised a model with which a story is created by members of a community to educate that community about a certain issue. The model is called ‘Dramatic Problem Solving’ (DPS) and is so named as the story constructed is told by members of the community through a theatre production. In their description of stories produced using the DPS model, Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010: 546) state they are ‘interactive theatre plays designed to educate the audience on different issues of importance to the community’. In essence, the DPS model provides a structure for a story, with which the community has to attach the specific detail of a story. Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010: 546) outline the structure as follows; the community must ‘identify a problem, look at the root causes of it, design a plan of actions to transform conflict, implement the plan, and imagine and plan the next steps for an on-going process of community action’. When observing these structural requirements placed on a story by the DPS model, it can be seen that an issue and its potential resolution are explicit components of the story and will be grounded in the experiential perspectives of the community. Duarte (2012: 67) suggests a similar strategy by asserting that a story should represent ‘what is’ and ‘what could be’, whilst remaining empathetic to an audience, in order to persuade them.

One particularly successful deployment of the DPS model that Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010) governed was in Nicaraguan migrant communities in San Jose, Costa Rica. In this instance, different cultures that were juxtaposed came
together to experience theatre productions. When this happened the conflicting needs of different cultures were able to focus on the larger needs of the community, resolving previous conflicts. On reflection of the DPS model, Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010) look to the field of Performance Studies, drawing particular reference to Schechner’s (2003) work; ‘communitas, the spontaneous moment when the individual members of the group become focused on the larger needs of the group and new, unforeseen actions are created via that energy’. It is their belief that, ‘communitas’ is achieved through the DPS model. When considering the design pitch, it is reasonable to suggest that different members of the audience may hold conflicting attitudes towards a design concept, bringing these attitudes in line with one another will resolve these conflicts and allow progression. Similarly to the DPS model, this could be achieved through using the experiences and perspectives of the intended audience of the design pitch, to create stories around the design concept.

Analogous to this example of different cultures being juxtaposed is when designers work for organisations with a non-design background. DeLarge (2004) in particular, focuses on the design client-consultant relationship. He explores this relationship through observing the stories exchanged between designers, design managers and clients in their place of work. In these scenarios, design consultants are acting towards the strategic development of an organisation, dealing with things such as change management, strategy presentation, team building and innovation seeking. From his observations, DeLarge (2004: 78) compiles a list of tips for approaching storytelling that he believes are important in the designers’ endeavours, of particular interest are the following points;

- Be sure your stories are relevant to the context and situation, in which they are used, ... [to] distinguish yourself as a good storyteller.
- Use “experiential” stories as evidence of the “intangible” commodity we trade in – design. Doing so can compellingly demonstrate the results produced by good design.
When observing these points, it can be seen that similarly to Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010), DeLarge (2004) also believes that stories should be grounded in the experiential perspectives of their audience members, and that it is in fact this approach that defines a good storyteller and aids them in achieving their endeavours in this particular context. As the design pitch acts as a platform for designer-client interaction, it is arguable that DeLarge’s (2004) propositions also extend to the context of a design pitch.

Similarly to DeLarge (2004), Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) also look at storytelling and design simultaneously; however they are preoccupied with the ‘Experience Design’ process. In general terms, Quesenbery and Brooks (2010: 5) highlight certain characteristics of stories that they have observed that pertain to certain impacts, of particular interest are the following points:

- *Stories describing a real life context or situation help us to understand the world better.*
- *Stories that detail the experience of a new idea or concept can help develop that new idea or concept, particularly if all details are not stated.*

Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) suggest a number of strategies in approaching these types of storytelling, by considering the viewpoint of the audience. Firstly, they suggest that when someone judges a design concept, they have to imagine the experience of using that design concept, which can be described to them using a story. However, as they will not have experience of using the design concept the context provided by the story should be familiar to them in order to help them imagine more easily. If for example, we consider a new design concept for an easy spray nozzle on a container of cleaning solution, a short film demonstrating its use could be set in a workshop if being presented to car mechanics, or a kitchen if being presented to chefs. Based on the logic of Quesenbery and Brooks (2010), it would be easier for the two different audiences to connect with this new concept because it was communicated to them was in a context they are familiar with. Again, by
extension this is relevant to the context of a design pitch, where the understanding of a design concept and its development are both of primary concern.

The second point they make is that if a design concept is being shown to someone who is not the intended user, they have to understand the needs of the intended users, in order to appreciate the need for the design concept. Again, this can be described using a story. Therefore, in order for a story to be believable in this context, it should be constructed using user research. However, information gathered from user research may demonstrate that within a set of users for a particular design concept, many different perspectives may exist. Therefore, it is important to know which users are considered important to the audiences of the stories, and that they are told from the various viewpoints of those users. Relating this back to the example of a concept for an easy spray nozzle, it may be appropriate to tell the story of its use from the perspectives of both a chef and cleaner if the audience is made up of housewives/husbands, as they may cook and clean on a regular basis, and therefore might consider the perspectives of a chef and a cleaner important.

Shifting attention to organisational strategy, there is a growing frequency of theorists who relate a mastery of storytelling to several fields including: leadership and management (Lapp and Carr, 2007, Heugens, 2002, Sametz and Maydoney, 2003, Simmons, 2007, Smith, 2012, Jones, 2012, Denning, 2011), change management (Denning, 2007b, Denning, 2007a, Forman, 2013), and training and knowledge transfer (Reissner, 2004, Vance, 1991, Simmons, 2002) - all of which acknowledge storytelling’s power to persuade. In particular, Denning (2007b: 110) promotes the use of experiential perspectives when devising stories intended to foster organisational change, stating that, ‘Narratives are more likely to be effective than abstract communications, because this is how human beings think and make decisions’. Denning (2007b) is suggesting that it is easier for a human to identify with the perspectives of another human as the simple fact that they are both human links them intrinsically. An example supporting this proclamation, of how
best to foster organisational change can be seen when looking at the storytelling exercise employed at Juniper Networks, a global IT company. Essentially, a three-part storytelling initiative was implemented in an attempt to impart a deep understanding of company culture to unite its disparate employees (Ohara and Cherniss, 2010). Firstly, sessions where employees presented individual experiences to one another were organised, secondly, several employee’s stories were selected against a set of criteria and then filmed, and thirdly, a website was designed as a story repository tool so that the entire company had access to them. Ohara and Cherniss (2010: 38) assert that in harnessing storytelling’s power, the company was able to ‘adapt, scale and build alignment around core values’.

The following table illustrates the examples of using experiential perspectives in approaching storytelling and their potential impacts on the audience of a design pitch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on the experiential perspectives of audience members</td>
<td>Aligning attitudes and resolving conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on experiential perspectives, relevant to audience members</td>
<td>Influencing perspectives, and fostering innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept and fostering its development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Consistency and Stories

It is an accepted notion that successful brands have stories attached to them and that it is through telling these stories that brand exists (Fog et al., 2010, Pulizzi, 2012). More specifically, there is a dominant belief that brand storytelling should be consistent, ‘one story about one company, which can be told creatively different’
(Christensen, 2001: 39). Essentially, this means that it is acceptable to tell stories in different mediums, but in order to build a successful brand the core message needs to remain the same. Marketing and branding can be both internal (within the leadership and management of a company) and external (within the publicly facing activity of the company), with the difference between the two being distinguished as informal and formal respectively (Nymark, 2000). The informal storytelling relates to the development of a sub-culture within an organisation influenced by the leadership and management of it, whereas the formal storytelling relates to the marketing and branding strategy design that formalises the visions of an organisation’s basic values.

Herskovitz and Crystal (2010: 21) are concerned with the externally facing marketing and branding of companies, and reinforce the idea that there should be a consistent brand story. In achieving this consistency, they propose that all stories told about a brand should include the same ‘central character with which people can identify and create a long-lasting emotional bond: the brand persona’ (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010: 21). In constructing this brand persona they recommend the following:

- **Draw on archetypal personas (protagonist, antagonist, mentor and so on) and their characteristics (honesty, curiosity, flexibility and so on) to reinforce brand values and for quick and easy recognition**
- **Do not focus on plot before persona when placing it in a story as it may overshadow the characteristics, which essentially represent the brand**

*(Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010: 21)*

As well as the preferment of using a central character in a story, it can also be seen that using this character in all stories surrounding a brand can provide an identity with consistency, and that it is this level of consistency that makes the brand recognisable. It is the repetition of this consistent story that makes the emotional connection to the brand long lasting.
When applied to the context of the design pitch, consistency in a story becomes significant. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) assert that consistency can lead to easy recognition of a brand and that further to this, the repetition of a consistent story over time can make the emotional connection people have with brands long lasting. When pitching a design concept, it is obviously desirable to establish a positive emotional connection between the design concept and the audience. Therefore, if a pitch is made up of several stories surrounding a design concept, then it may be beneficial to ensure that they have a consistent message, establishing a brand for the design concept with which an audience can recognise.

Additionally when considering a design concept for an already established brand, it can be seen that there is a benefit to keeping the story in its design pitch consistent with the brand values of the company. As employees will already associate with, and easily recognise, the values being communicated, the longevity of the emotional connection they have to that brand is fostered, which now relates to the design concept (Park et al., 1991).

Within research focused on organisational strategy, it has been acknowledged that storytelling also has a role in the management of knowledge during internal communications (Christensen, 2001, Gill, 2011a, Gill, 2011b, Hannabuss, 2000, Kalid and Mahmud, 2008). Christensen (2001) is concerned with marketing from an internal leadership and management perspective, and discusses storytelling in relation to how it can impact recruitment. Christensen suggests that on platforms such as websites, companies should share the stories of different employee perspectives so that an impression of the sub-culture can be identified. In the selection of these stories, as with external marketing and branding, a level of consistency can establish a stronger, more recognisable identity, which in turn can attract the sort of employee that would suit the company’s culture.

Concerning the design of experiences, which looks at the experiential perspectives of others as a base for storytelling, it appears that Quesenbery and Brooks (2010: 5)
agree with the idea that different employee’s perspectives can communicate a sub-culture when they state that; ‘Stories describing a real life context or situation help us to understand the world better’. However, in this context it may not always be appropriate to maintain a level of consistency and provide a strong sense of identity, as Quesenbery and Brooks (2010: 5) suggest; ‘Half-finished stories without endings can help launch discussion’. When designing, discussion needs to ensue for the purpose of concept development and therefore, if the stories of a design concept are presented in such a consistent way, there could be a risk that people may not feel comfortable in challenging an aspect of the design that may need to change.

As well as consistency with respect to building brand through story or aligning a design concept to a brand through story, we must consider a more macro perspective of consistency.

A macro perspective of consistency has been explored in relation to creating ‘worlds’ consistently and/or inconsistently with the ‘real world’, within literature exploring fictional writing (Jones, 2006, Ochoa and Osier, 1993). The tenets of these explorations are outlined as follows. Everybody accepts that there are certain limitations to living in the real world (for example, we cannot fly of our own accord), and that factual stories are consistent with these rules. However, fictional storytelling can provide an alternative set of rules with which a story can take place. Consistency is still important in a fictional story because all the occurrences in that story still need to be consistent with the alternative set of rules provided by the context of the story. For example, in a factual story about the life of a famous literary figure, if Superman came to their rescue during a dilemma, this would be inconsistent with the rules of the real world and so the story becomes less credible. However, in a story about the life of Spiderman, if Superman came to his rescue during a dilemma, this would remain consistent with the alternative rules set out by the context of the story (a world in which superheroes exist) and so would remain credible due to its internal logic.
Adopting a macro perspective of consistency within storytelling, it can be seen how consistency affects credibility. It is important to consider the implications that this has for storytelling during a design pitch. Obviously, if a story told during a design pitch is factual or fictional, it has to be consistent with the rules of the real world or the alternative rules set out by the context of the fictional story for its message to remain credible. However, this highlights a potential issue; if a design concept is being developed for a real life situation, yet the design pitch uses the context of a story to position an alternative set of rules to remain truthful to, it may appear to be credible when in fact it is not. If we take for example, a design concept for a piece of furniture that can be adapted to suit the needs of a teenager and an adult, we may tell a story showing how as a teenager grows into an adult, the furniture adapts and still has a use, allowing that particular individual to keep the piece of furniture for an extended period of time. From this story, it appears credible that the user can keep the piece of furniture for an extended period of time due to its adaptive quality. However, the particular material that the furniture is made from might deteriorate quickly making it useless by the time the user may want to adapt it. Therefore, in the real world this design concept is not credible and needs rethinking. When pitching design concepts, it can be reasoned that credibility is not as much of an issue, as there is still much scope for development before the design concept exists in the real world. Therefore, an appropriate ‘truth to position’ must be mutually understood between the designer and client if a story at the design pitch makes an unsubstantiated claim.

The following table summarises the different approaches to consistency within storytelling and their potential impacts during a design pitch.

Table 8: Consistency in storytelling and its potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories consistent (micro-level) with a company’s brand stories, and being consistent within individual stories</td>
<td>Instil an emotional connection to the design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy recognition of the design concept’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Consistency in storytelling and its potential Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories inconsistent (micro-level) with a company’s brand stories</td>
<td>Stimulate discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appear to be consistent (macro) with the rules of the real world, when in fact only consistent with the alternative set of rules set by the context of a story</td>
<td>Gives design concepts credibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4. Summary

When exploring the use of central characters as an approach to storytelling, Turner (2008) suggests that demonstrating the trials and tribulations of a central character encourages critical reflection in the audience in his examination of historical examples of transformative learning. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010) suggest that basing these characters on archetypal personas such as the protagonist can foster an emotional connection when constructing brand stories. These assertions relate to Madsen and Nielsen’s (2010) suggestion of telling a story where a protagonist encounters a problem scenario in order to develop design concepts. However, in the context of constructing persona-scenarios their explorations of best practice were inconclusive.

When exploring the use of experiential perspectives in constructing stories, there appears to be a debate between using abstract or real life settings. This contradiction has been highlighted in literature dealing with storytelling in organisational settings for change management, where Denning (2007a, 2007b) proposes that real life situations are more effective at achieving common understandings between employees, and Adamson et al. (2006) demonstrate how abstract analogies can be required in some instances to alter disparate perspectives and unite employees thinking. This contradiction is also echoed in literature
discussing storytelling strategies in design industries with Quesenbery and Brookes (2010) advocating Denning’s (2007a, 2007b) approach and DeLarge (2004) advocating Adamson et al. (2006). Therefore, with respect to a design pitch it remains unclear if using an abstract setting in a story could be detrimental to the clients understanding of the design concept.

Finally, it is apparent that there are also conflicting ideas with respect to consistency. This is highlighted when reflecting on the viewpoints of; Herskovitz and Crystal (2010), who propose that a story consistent with a brand can be effective in engaging employees, and Quesenbery and Brookes (2010), who propose that stories that are unfinished or inconsistent with others are more likely to challenge perceptions. Therefore, with respect to a design pitch these two ideas are in contention as you may be fearful of disengaging a client by introducing a message inconsistent with their brand, but at the same time believe it to be something that needs challenging.

4.5. The Implications of the Literature Review Chapters (2, 3 & 4)

To conclude, as stated previously there is little scholarly research that focuses on storytelling at the design pitch, and therefore one has to look at seemingly relevant literature (film theory, branding and marketing and storytelling in design processes for example) in order to theorise a model of best practice. The summaries concluding chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate that in doing this there are still unanswered questions, with arguments to suggest approaches that are in contention with one another (in particular with regards to employing real vs. abstract approaches, and being consistent vs. inconsistent with existing brand stories). This discovery vindicates a focus on storytelling at the design pitch in order to determine a better understanding of this context.
Combining all the tables from the sections of the previous three chapters can give an overview of the different approaches to storytelling that can be employed at a design pitch and the impacts that they potentially could have.

**Table 9: Storytelling Approaches and their potential Impacts at the Design Pitch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the trials and tribulations of central characters</td>
<td>Encouraging critical reflection on self and design concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters based on archetypal personas</td>
<td>Fostering emotional connections between audience and design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters as protagonists, solving problems and reaching goals</td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on the experiential perspectives of audience members</td>
<td>Aligning attitudes and resolving conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on experiential perspectives, relevant to audience members</td>
<td>Influencing perspectives, and fostering innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept and fostering its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, beauty</td>
<td>Aligning different understandings of design concepts and the issues they deal with, fostering its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and creative media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity in an analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using individual artefacts (such as a sketch or rendering)</td>
<td>Deliver an understanding of how a concept is used and or is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a series of artefacts (such as sketches, renderings, models or a combination)</td>
<td>Engages the audience in a critical dialogue surrounding the concept’s development (whether positive or negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using digital stories</td>
<td>Improve communication between designers and organisations they work with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9: Storytelling Approaches and their potential Impacts at the Design Pitch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storytelling Approach</th>
<th>Potential Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow the discussion of a design concept on a more holistic level, including the wider implications it might have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the ability to understand visual presentations of design concepts and talk about them critically through these presentations, consequently aiding further collaborations with designers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the stories exchanged in conversation during the process of designing (in particular, those which have led to the use of short hand words and phrases)</td>
<td>Enables clients to take part in the negotiation of a designs final stages of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build trust between designers and clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote shared understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplify complex aspects of a design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories consistent (micro-level) with a company’s brand stories, and being consistent within individual stories</td>
<td>Instil an emotional connection to the design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy recognition of the design concept’s value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories inconsistent (micro-level) with a company’s brand stories</td>
<td>Stimulate discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearing to be consistent (macro) with the rules of the real world, when in fact only consistent with the alternative set of rules set by the context of a story</td>
<td>Makes design concepts appear credible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is through the examination of this table that the four research questions stated in chapter 1, section 1.1 were determined. When looking at the proposed impacts of each storytelling approach it is arguable that they each concern one of these areas
of inquiry. Therefore, they have been used to guide the analysis of this research study. The justification and implications the table provides for each area of inquiry are explored in more depth in chapter 6 (The Areas of Inquiry).
Methodology
5. Methodology

5.1. Interpretivist Research Paradigm

This research study’s overarching aim is to develop an understanding of storytelling approaches relative to consequential impacts, in the context of designers pitching their concepts to clients from collaborating organisations. As the main source of data collected and analysed will be the individual interpretations of people involved in these social interactions, this research study adopts an Interpretivist philosophical stance.

Ontology deals with reality and the nature of being, Interpretivist ontology suggests that many realities can exist at once, and that there is no direct access to the real world (Carson et al., 2001, Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). As established in chapter 4, section 4.2, where film theorists’ preoccupation with reality is explored, there exists a belief that everyone develops a relationship with the real world and that when they observe a film or indeed any other type of story, their interpretation of it will be uniquely synonymous to their individual relationship with the real world. Therefore, people’s varied interpretations of the film or story in question may represent the various realities that co-exist, representing the story belonging to the real world. When considering the design pitch, the employees of an organisation can also interpret a story delivered about a concept differently, suggesting the existence of multiple realities representing that story.

Epistemology deals with the grounds of knowledge or the ‘relationship between reality and research’, Interpretivist epistemology suggests that the researcher develops an understanding through perceived knowledge, that they seek to understand a specific context and that in doing this they focus on what is specific or concrete (Carson et al., 2001: 6). Using perceived knowledge developed through the review of literature, this research study seeks to develop an understanding of storytelling approaches relative to consequential impacts in the specific context of
designers pitching to a collaborating organisation, focusing on individual interpretations of specific case examples.

When considering the Positivist philosophical stance, it is clear that this approach is not closely allied to the research topic and would limit its validity. Positivist ontology proposes that there exists a single reality in the external and objective world and therefore human actions can be explained as a result of real causes that lead their behaviours (Carson et al., 2001, Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Positivist epistemology therefore centres on producing generalisations and abstractions through the creation, development and testing of hypothesis obtaining hard, objective knowledge (Carson et al., 2001: 6). If this stance was adopted in this research study, every cause of the apparent impacts on organisations collaborating with designers, post pitch, would have to be determined, in order to produce hard objective knowledge solely relating the storytelling approaches designers take during a design pitch to the consequential impacts on collaborating organisations. This represents a logistical impossibility as all causes may not be discoverable and are likely to be inseparable.

More specifically, of the many approaches identified within Interpretivism, this research study is closely allied to Symbolic Interactionism. Gray (2009: 22) holds the belief that the essential tenets of symbolic interactionism are that:

- *People interpret the meaning of objects and actions in the world and then act upon those interpretations.*

- *Meanings arise from the process of social interaction.*

- *Meanings are handled in, and are modified by, an interactive process used by people in dealing with the phenomena that are encountered.*
In relating these principles to this research study, objects and actions represent designers’ stories and telling of the stories at the design pitch, interpretation and action upon interpretation represents the consequential impacts on collaborating organisations. In general, storytelling fits within the broader category of social interaction, and therefore can indeed be described as an interactive process.

When considering the work of Schutz (1967, 1970, 1973), which focuses on social phenomenology, further justification can be found for adopting an interpretative stance. Schutz’s (1967, 1970, 1973) theory emphasizes the spatial and temporal aspects of experience and social relationships. Social phenomenology takes the view that people living in the world of daily life are able to ascribe meaning to a situation and then make judgements’ (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006: 2). This research study also accepts the idea that people can make sense of situations they experience; hence the primary source of data collection is the interpretations of individual’s experiences viewing design pitches, gathered through semi-structured interviews.

5.2. Case Study Research Method

Gray (2009: 249) adapts the following table from Yin (2003), with which a researcher can determine the most effective research strategy to employ through examining contextual characteristics of their research study.

Table 10: Determining Research Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>FORM OF RESEARCH QUESTION</th>
<th>REQUIRES CONTROL OVER BEHAVIOURAL EVENTS</th>
<th>FOCUSES ON CONTEMPORARY EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unobtrusive</td>
<td>Who, what, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Determining Research Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>measures</th>
<th>where, how many, how much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering contextual characteristics of this research study, defined in the column headings of this table, it can be stated that:

- Firstly, the form of the research question is how, how do storytelling approaches have consequential impacts in the given context?
- Secondly, it is not possible to control behavioural events within the research context, as approaches to storytelling are inherent to an individual, as is the interpretation of a story and what is believed to be its consequential impact.
- Finally, the focus is on a contemporary event; instances where organisations collaborate with designers, who use storytelling to pitch their concepts.

These characteristics all lay in the row that suggests using a case study research strategy; no other strategy fits the research holistically when judging against this criteria set. In the instance of this research study, each case will represent an organisation that has collaborated with designers, who use storytelling to pitch their concepts. Therefore, within each case there will exist several employees that can reveal interpretations of their design pitch experiences (with the design pitch being the unit of analysis).

After identifying that a case study research strategy is an appropriate method for data collection, it is important to determine the appropriate case study design. Yin (1993: 46) describes four basic types of case study design in the following figure:
When considering the types of case study design appropriate for this research study, it becomes apparent that Type 4 represents the best fit. Herriot and Firestone (1983) state that ‘evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust’. Yin (1993: 44) states that ‘single-case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions - where the case represents a critical test of existing theory, where the case is a rare or unique event, or where the case serves a revelatory purpose’.

When considering the literature, existing theory relating storytelling approaches to impact is at times contradictory and not directly applicable to the specific context of the research study; therefore it cannot be tested, merely developed and added to. The cases would not be considered rare or unique as organisations often collaborate with designers, who often use storytelling to pitch their concepts. Access to several cases has been achievable and there is no anticipation that the study will serve a revelatory purpose, rather a deeper understanding. Therefore it is obvious that a multiple-case design is required.

5.3. Thematic Analysis Methodology

In spite of a qualitative research strategy being viewed with scepticism by scientific communities (Laubschagnes, 2003), having an Interpretivist philosophical stance
suggests the use of a qualitative research methodology. Traditionally qualitative research is regarded as diverse and complex (Holloway and Todres, 2003), therefore, seeking to theme data is appropriate (Saldaña, 2013). In Thematic Analysis, themes are patterns that can be induced from data collected, which provide descriptions of the phenomena associated with the specific context of the research question (Daly et al., 1997). In this research study the phenomena is the storytelling that occurs in the context of designers pitching concepts to organisations, and the themes will describe storytelling approaches that influence certain impacts. It is important to point out that thematic analysis is often described as a poorly defined method (Roulston, 2001). Other types of methodology associated with the philosophical stance of this research study and the qualitative data it collects include Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992, Strauss and Corbin, 1998), Discourse Analysis (Burman and Parker, 1993, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Willig, 2003) and Narrative Analysis (Murray, 2003, Riessman, 1993). Often, Thematic Analysis is viewed as part of the process of other methodologies such as Grounded Theory rather than a method in its own right (Ryan and Bernard, 2000). However, Braun et al. (2006) argue its use as a research method that has the flexibility required to analyse qualitative data, suggesting that Thematic Analysis is widely used and often mistaken for another methodology such as Discourse Analysis or even Content Analysis (Meehan et al., 2000) and in some circumstances is not identified at all and simply described as ‘qualitative analysis for common themes’ (Braun and Wilkinson, 2003: 30). An example where the flexibility of Thematic Analysis has been profited from when exploring phenomena exists in Fereday’s and Muir-Cochrane’s (2006) research.

Although Thematic Analysis is widely used, there is no unified strategy with which to employ this methodology (Tuckett, 2005). In spite of this, the following table has been adapted from Braun et al. (2006) description of the various phases of Thematic Analysis, and represents the process of analysis undertaken in this research study.
Table 11: The Phases of Thematic Analysis in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Familiarisation with the Data</td>
<td>Read and re-read data in order to become familiar with what the data entails, paying specific attention to patterns that occur.</td>
<td>Preliminary &quot;start&quot; codes and detailed notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Generating Initial Codes</td>
<td>Generate the initial codes by documenting where and how patterns occur. This happens through data reduction where the researcher collapses data into labels in order to create categories for more efficient analysis. Data complication is also completed here. This involves the researcher making inferences about what the codes mean.</td>
<td>Comprehensive codes of how data answers research question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Searching for Themes</td>
<td>Combine codes into overarching themes that accurately depict the data. It is important in developing themes that the researcher describes exactly what the themes mean, even if the theme does not seem to &quot;fit&quot;.</td>
<td>List of candidate themes for further analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 11: The Phases of Thematic Analysis in this Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: <strong>The researcher should also describe what is missing from the analysis.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: <strong>Reviewing Themes</strong></td>
<td>In this stage, the researcher looks at how the themes support the data and the overarching theoretical perspective. If the analysis seems incomplete, the researcher needs to go back and find what is missing.</td>
<td>Coherent recognition of how themes are patterned to tell an accurate story about the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: <strong>Defining and Naming the Themes</strong></td>
<td>The researcher needs to define what each theme is, which aspects of data are being captured, and what is interesting about the themes.</td>
<td>A comprehensive analysis of what the themes contribute to understanding the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: <strong>Producing the Report</strong></td>
<td>When the researchers write the report, they must decide which themes make meaningful contributions to understanding what is going on within the data. Researchers should also conduct ‘member checking’. This is where the researchers go back to A thick description of the results.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to mention that the generation and development of codes, as described in stage 2 of the Thematic Analysis process, represents an area of controversy (Saldaña, 2013). Patton (2002: 403) asserts that because ‘each qualitative study is unique, the analytical approach used will be unique’. In reference to this Saldaña (2013: 60) suggests that therefore no one ‘can claim final authority on the “best” way to code qualitative data’. Therefore, the researcher will have to judge what is right, and there is every chance that different people may disagree with the choices made. In terms of the way one should go about selecting appropriate coding methods, there are many different views. Saldaña (2013: 60) discusses several different views; DeWalt and DeWalt’s (2011) who believe that coding should be ‘prefaced and accompanied with careful reading and rereading of your data’ and Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2005) and Mello’s (2002) who believe that two different coding approaches should be employed to ‘enhance accountability and the depth and breadth of findings’. This research study takes the view that coding methods should be prefaced and taken into consideration when reading and rereading data. Consequently, instances where storytelling approach, as defined in section 1.4.1, is mentioned will be used to establish code, and paraphrased if necessary. As Trede and Higgs (2009: 18) suggest, ‘questions embed the values, world view and direction of inquiry’ and therefore as the research aim seeks to build an understanding of storytelling at the design pitch, through relating approach to impact, this method seems appropriate. With regards, to theming data Saldaña (2013) suggests that this is an appropriate technique to use when addressing questions which seek to understand a phenomenon of interest, which essentially is what this research study aims to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: The Phases of Thematic Analysis in this Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the sample at hand to see if their description is an accurate representation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The collection of data against each case study and the analysis of each case occurred over a year and a half, and included a pilot study at the start and a validation exercise at the end. The various cases, methods of data collection, and influences of the pilot study and validation exercises are described in greater detail later in the thesis. However, the following figure gives an overview of the research study’s process to illustrate the timescale of these events.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study</td>
<td>Unilever Household Care</td>
<td>Unilever Laundry</td>
<td>Accenture</td>
<td>Testing and Validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 11 design pitches were observed.</td>
<td>• 10 design pitches were observed.</td>
<td>• 14 design pitches were observed.</td>
<td>• 4 design pitches were observed.</td>
<td>• The framework was critiqued by interview participants, practicing designers and appropriate academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted.</td>
<td>• 3 semi-structured interviews were conducted.</td>
<td>• 2 semi-structured interviews were conducted.</td>
<td>• 2 semi-structured interviews were conducted.</td>
<td>• A set of cards was produced to communicate the framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transcriptions were analysed producing a set of codes, which were then grouped.</td>
<td>• Transcriptions were analysed, producing an initial set of codes, which were then grouped to establish themes in the data (this process was iterative, re-examining data several times).</td>
<td>• Transcriptions were analysed, and synthesised with the first set of interviews producing developed groups of code and themes (this process was iterative, re-examining data several times).</td>
<td>• Transcriptions were analysed, and synthesised with the first and second sets of interviews producing further developed groups of code and themes (this process was iterative, re-examining data several times).</td>
<td>• The cards were used by designers during a design project in order to test the framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher reordered the questions and changed the wording. A feel for conducting a thematic analysis was gained</td>
<td>The themes were used to construct the first iteration of the framework relating approach to impact</td>
<td>The themes were used to construct a second iteration of the framework</td>
<td>The themes were used to construct a third iteration of the framework</td>
<td>The knowledge communicated by the cards proved useful in helping designers construct design pitches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this research study coding the data with respect to storytelling approaches is undertaken in order to uncover themes relating them to the impacts that they foster, therefore the impacts that they can have must be established prior to a discussion about them. As the potential impacts influenced by storytelling are vast, it is important to predetermine desired impacts from a design pitch in order to focus the semi-structured interviews.

Using deduction in this way before undertaking the inductive process of analysis is consistent with Schutz’s (1967) notion of safeguarding the subjective viewpoints of interview participants in studies such as this from a ‘non-existent world’ that could potentially be constructed by the researcher’s subjective viewpoint. Schutz (1967) proposes a deductive method of constructing a template for codes (Crabtree and Miller, 1999, Hayes, 1997), paralleling the construction of predetermined impacts which will be explored by the areas of inquiry used to structure the code generated in this research study. Schutz (1967) matches this with an inductive data-driven approach, adapted from Boyatzis (1998), paralleling the thematic analysis strategy employed in this research study. Fereday (2006: 3) emphasises that ‘when Schutz commenced writing his theories (1930s), he was mindful of the “natural” versus “social” science debate in relation to “valid” methods of research’ important in developing research methodologies with an interpretative stance such as this one. However, Fereday (2006) also emphasise that ‘this debate is now thought to be redundant (Crotty, 1998, Emden and Sandelowski, 1998, Patton, 2002)’.

In using deduction to construct a template for coding, the researcher is acknowledging that in representing the individual interpretations of interview participants, they are also representing their own interpretation (Ely et al., 1997). Unlike the goal of Grounded Theory, which looks to represent a phenomenon grounded in data (McLeod, 2001), Thematic Analysis acknowledges the fact that conclusions drawn from analysis will not represent a passive account of the data (Fine, 2002, Taylor and Ussher, 2001). Braun (2006) draws attention to Singer and Hunter’s (1999) and Rubin and Rubin’s (1995) standpoints which claim themes
emerge from data, stating that a more accurate description would be that themes emerge from the researchers interpretation of the data, emphasising that the process is not passive. This standpoint echoes that of this research study.

Reviewing the literature has helped determine the following impacts that will be explored by the areas of inquiry in the semi-structured interviews in this research study; in chapter 6 each of these areas of inquiry will be discussed in more depth, providing a clear definition and rationale for their use with respect to the literature review and augmentation of the pilot study.

5.3.1. Delivering Understanding

An obvious purpose of a design pitch is to deliver an understanding of the design concept to the client. Should a client not understand the design concept, they would not have the capacity to develop it for production. Therefore, understanding how storytelling approaches can deliver an understanding of a design concept is an obvious area of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews. As such, it is a focus within many other areas of literature examining the storytelling that occurs during a design process (Cross, 2006, Lloyd, 2000, Schön and Wiggins, 2006).

5.3.2. Demonstrating Value

Similarly, demonstrating the value of a design concept to a client is an obvious purpose of the design pitch. If a client understands a design concept but cannot see any value in it, then they would be reluctant to develop it for production. Understanding how storytelling approaches can demonstrate value in a design concept is also an obvious area of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews. During the conduct of the pilot study, it also proved to be a natural progression of the discussions surrounding the delivery of an understanding.
5.3.3. Stimulating Critique

When a designer pitches a design concept to a collaborating organisation, it is likely that the design concept will need to go through further stages of development before going into production. A team in the organisation will be charged with this development. The critical discussion of design concepts is described as being crucial for their development (Quesenbery and Brooks, 2010, Schön and Wiggins, 2006). Therefore a purpose of the design pitch should be to stimulate critical dialogue surrounding the design concept, critical dialogue for the purpose of debating further developments before the production of the product or service. Therefore the third area of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews looks at how storytelling approaches can stimulate critique.

5.3.4. Encouraging More Holistic Thinking

Historically, storytelling throughout society has been used to encourage critical reflection and in doing so promote behavioural change, the stories in holy texts retold at religious ceremonies provide a good example of this (Turner, 2008). Influences of ‘Design Thinking’ are often proclaimed to promote organisational change in case descriptions of organisations that have undergone changes due to the holistic thinking that working with designers has encouraged (Brown, 2009). As storytelling can take the form of a design pitch, it is therefore possible that the design pitch is a contributing factor to organisational change through this proclaimed encouragement of more holistic thinking. Therefore, the fourth and final area of inquiry for the semi-structured interviews will look at how storytelling approaches can encourage more holistic thinking around design concepts and projects.
5.4. Thematic Analysis Process

The outcome of the thematic analysis process is described later in the thesis, explaining how interview transcripts have been used to generate a framework of relationships between storytelling approach and impact in a design pitch setting. For the purpose of clarity, the terms ‘areas of inquiry’, ‘codes’, ‘themes’, ‘frameworks’, and ‘final framework’ will now be described in terms of how they manifest in this research study.

The ‘areas of inquiry’ have two functions. Firstly, they represent the desired impacts on the audience of a design pitch. Secondly, they represent the four discreet areas of questioning in the semi-structured interviews, and thus the categories that the ‘codes’ sit beneath. The ‘areas of inquiry’ are ‘Delivering Understanding’, ‘Demonstrating Value’, ‘Stimulating Critique’, and ‘Encouraging Different Thinking’. The rationale for using these exists in the review of literature and the augmentation of the pilot study and is described in detail later in the thesis. For example, ‘Stimulating Critique’ was defined as an appropriate ‘area of inquiry’ as it is often linked to successful concept development (Schön and Wiggins, 2006). Table 9, shown at the end of chapter 4 summarises the relationships between storytelling approaches and impacts that have been determined through a literature review. Chapter 6 breaks this table down into the various sections that provide a rationale and indicate the importance of each of the established ‘areas of inquiry’.

The ‘codes’, represent the words (either direct quotes or truncated prose from the semi-structured interview transcripts) that participants use to describe storytelling approaches that led to a particular impact (‘area of inquiry’). Collecting a set of ‘codes’ for each category (‘area of inquiry’) and within in each case allowed a re-read of the transcriptions with prior knowledge of existing ‘codes’, ensuring nothing had been overlooked. The rationale for using quotes and truncated prose from interview transcriptions in order to generate code is that it will ensure the

The ‘themes’, are titles given to grouped ‘codes’. In many circumstances different words (‘codes’) are used to describe the same or similar storytelling approach. These words (‘codes’) are grouped together and a title that satisfies all descriptions is awarded to the group. Groups were determined within each case and across cases to ensure that no potential ‘themes’ were left out. The rationale for grouping ‘codes’ and establishing ‘themes’ is that it is an important reductionist stage of the thematic analysis process, required in order to make sense of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An example of grouped ‘codes’ for the category (area of inquiry) ‘Delivering Understanding’ is as follows: ‘Cartoon images of an imaginary person or object’, ‘Diversity’, ‘Dynamic’, ‘Flip-book, frame by frame’, ‘More than just PowerPoint’, ‘Videos’, ‘Not bound by convention’, ‘Varied Approach’. The title awarded to this group was ‘Diversity/Difference’ as all these ‘codes’ were used in a description of how something that is diverse or different in a design pitch engages the audience, helping to deliver an understanding.

For each ‘area of inquiry’ (impact), a ‘framework’ has been constructed (four in total). The framework has three rows. Along the bottom are the ‘themes’ (storytelling approaches), in the middle are the qualities described by participants that these storytelling approaches attribute to the design pitch, and along the top is the effect (impact or ‘area of inquiry’). Every single storytelling approach (‘theme’) discovered, and the qualities described that led to the impact (‘area of inquiry’), are included in these frameworks. For example, one pathway up the rows of the framework constructed for the ‘area of inquiry’ ‘Delivering Understanding’ reads: ‘Diversity/Difference’ – ‘Engaging’ – ‘Delivering Understanding’. The ‘final framework’ has the same structure as the other frameworks. However, it includes all effects (impacts or ‘areas of inquiry’), and excludes storytelling approaches (‘themes’) that were not found to exist in all three cases. The construction of a
framework, and the synthesis of a final framework is a useful way to illustrate findings in a digestible format, especially as an output of the thematic analysis process (Bryman, 1988). In various circumstances, the terminology has been altered in the final framework. This is due to one of two reasons, either an interview participant felt a different word would better describe the quality given to a design pitch by a particular storytelling approach ‘theme’, or a validation exercise demonstrated that observers of the framework misinterpreted a term. For example, the pathway ‘Diversity/Difference’ – ‘Engaging’ – ‘Delivering Understanding’ became ‘Diversity/Difference’ – ‘Attention Holding & Memorable’ – ‘Delivering Understanding’ in the final framework as interview participants felt this better described the situation they had explained.

5.5. Research Techniques

Having established what constitutes a case, the basic case study design, and method of analysis, it was important to determine the data required to carry out this research study and the specific techniques with which it was obtained.

The following table shows the strengths and weaknesses that Gray (2009: 259) attributes to Yin’s (2003) list of the sources of evidence in case study data collection:

Table 12: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Evidence:</th>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study</td>
<td>Access – problems of confidentiality in many organisations Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Records</td>
<td>Exact – contains precise details of names, positions, events</td>
<td>document author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broad coverage – long span of time, events and settings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>(Same as above for documentation) Precise and quantitative</td>
<td>(Same as above for documentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeted – focus directly on case study topic</td>
<td>Danger of bias due to poorly constructed questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insightful – provide original and illuminating data</td>
<td>Response bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inaccuracies due to poor recall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Observation</td>
<td>Reality – covers events in real time</td>
<td>Time-consuming and costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contextual – covers context of events</td>
<td>Narrow focus – unless broad coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexivity – event may proceed differently because it is being observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>(Same as for direct observation)</td>
<td>(Same as for direct observation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insightful into interpersonal behaviour</td>
<td>Bias because investigator unwittingly manipulates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods
Table 12: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>and motives</th>
<th>events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Artefacts</td>
<td>Insightful into cultural features</td>
<td>Selectivity – may be based upon idiosyncratic choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insightful into technical operations</td>
<td>Availability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was important to obtain details of the organisation, the design project titles and the design project briefs. This information provided a context to the analysis crucially important in assuring accurate judgments. Details of design project titles and briefs were obtained through collecting documentation provided by the organisations to the designers. Organisation details were obtained through internal and external facing documentation, including online content such as a company website, which presented an identity for the organisation to employees and the general public. It is important to consider the weaknesses of information provided through such documentation, as highlighted in Table 12. Concerning access, documentation building an organisation’s identity is often publicly available as it is part of a company’s externally facing marketing and brand strategy, however, details of design project titles and briefs may reveal strategies that an organisation may wish to protect. Therefore, it was vitally important to ask, when requesting this type of documentation, what details the organisation wished to keep private. With regards to bias, it was important to understand that in some cases an organisation can project an inaccurate identity with internal and external documentation, however, as it was being used to provide contextual information against which to analyse, rather than being analysed in relation to the specific areas of inquiry set out by the research study, this was not of great concern.

It was also crucial to collect certain archival records. Firstly, it was important to be aware of design project dates as occasionally interview participants needed help in remembering certain events, knowing these dates helped serve as a reminder. Also, it was easier for interview participants to recall the events of more recent projects.
Secondly, it was important to be aware of the names and contact details of the organisation’s employees who were involved in design projects in order to contact them, arrange interviews and to acquire the necessary signatures on informed consent forms. Finally, it was important to be aware of the designers or design consultancies involved, as this provided further contextual information against which to analyse. In Table 12, the weaknesses attributed to archival records are the same as for documentation. However, access did not provide an issue as this data was only required to conduct the study and will not be disclosed. Regarding bias, again as the data was only used to provide contextual information and information necessary to carry out the research study, rather than being analysed in relation to the areas of inquiry set out by the research study; this was not of great concern.

After archival records were obtained from potential case organisations, contact was made with relevant employees to ensure that they had worked on design projects where designers pitched using storytelling and to establish that they were happy to participate in an interview. After it was established that they had worked on relevant design projects and that they were happy to participate in an interview, arrangements were made to conduct the interview, whether in person or via video calling.

Transcriptions from the recordings of the semi-structured interviews formed the main part of data collection for analysis. The following table reveals: the design projects belonging to each case and the year they ran, the groups of designers pitching against each project, and the interview participants that observed the pitches.

Table 13: Case Projects, Pitches and Observers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case and Design Projects</th>
<th>Design Pitches Observed</th>
<th>Design Pitch Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Unilever Household Care:** Beautifully Clean 2011 | DFI 2011 Cohort: | Hannah
| Student Group 1 | Henry |
| DFI 2011 Cohort: | | |
Table 13: Case Projects, Pitches and Observers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Project</th>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>MDI Cohort</th>
<th>Observer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilever Household Care:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low LSM</td>
<td>Student Group 2</td>
<td>MDI Cohort</td>
<td>Henry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilever Household Care:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>MDI Cohort</td>
<td>Harry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powered by Light</td>
<td>Student Group 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilever Laundry:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Bull</td>
<td>Student Group 4</td>
<td>DFI 2012 Cohort</td>
<td>Laura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Group 1</td>
<td>Lucy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Group 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Group 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Group 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Group 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 13: Case Projects, Pitches and Observers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DFI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 6</th>
<th>DFI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 7</th>
<th>DFI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unilever Laundry:</strong> Easy Jet 2012</td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 1</td>
<td>Laura Lucy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MDI 2012 Cohort: Student Group 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accenture:</strong> Campaign Identity 2012</td>
<td>SomeOne</td>
<td>Amanda Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage Replay Films Tag Worldwide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was deemed appropriate to conduct face-to-face interviews for several reasons, either in person or via video calling. Gillham (2000: 11) believes the use of face-to-face interviews appropriate under several conditions. Firstly and most obviously are the circumstantial factors where; ‘Small numbers of people are involved’, ‘People are accessible’ and ‘everyone is key’. With regards to the cases introduced in
In the construction of research questions, Gillham (2000: 22) advises trialling questions as this can: give the researcher a feel for the interviewing process, alert the researcher to important factors that give the interview flavour and direction, focus the researcher on what makes questions productive and highlight the key questions and those which can be dropped. For the purpose of developing this research study’s questions, among other things, a pilot study was conducted. This was a useful time to trial questions and indeed, the original list of questions was pruned, adapted and re-ordered. The specific ways in which this pilot study had impact are described in the following chapter.

The areas of inquiry determined from the literature review introduced in sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.4, in combination with the above-mentioned literature and analysis of the pilot study shaped the interview questions as follows:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

A: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

1. How long have you worked for …?

2. In what roles have you worked for …?

3. Have you ever worked with designers before?

4. If yes, for how long, who with, where, and on what projects?

B: SPECIFIC DESIGN STORIES (show design story/stories now)

5. Concerning the ‘design story/stories’ from project …’s pitch in isolation:
   a) How clearly did it/they project an understanding of the design concept?
      How did it do this?
   b) How clearly did it/they project the value of the design concept?
      How did it do this?
   c) Did it/they stimulate critique of the design concept?
      How did it do this?
   d) Did it/they stimulate critique of the design project?
      How did it do this?
   e) Did the story/stories allow you to view the design concept in a different light?
      How did it do this?
   f) Did the story/stories allow you to view the design project in a different light?
      How did it do this?
C: DESIGN STORIES IN GENERAL

6. Concerning ‘design stories’ in isolation from all project pitches, what factors do you believe influence their impact (in terms of):
   a) Delivering an Understanding of the Concept
   b) Demonstrating the Concept/Project Value
   c) Stimulating Critique (not necessarily negative)
   d) Changing Perspectives (about the specific concept or project in general)

7. Concerning working with designers in general, what other factors do you believe influence:
   a) Delivering an Understanding of the Concept
   b) Demonstrating the Concept/Project Value
   c) Stimulating Critique (not necessarily negative)
   d) Changing Perspectives (about the specific concept or project in general)

Section A ‘Participant Profile’ of the semi-structured interview has several purposes; firstly to establish a context to the participant’s position in the organisation, to confirm their involvement in relevant design projects and to put them at ease before continuing with more crucial lines of questioning.

Section B, ‘Specific Design Stories’, focuses questioning on relating designer’s storytelling to the various themes of impact established as the units of analysis. This will be done relating specifically to one design project’s pitch and the storytelling that occurred there. The specific project will be determined at the start of the interview by asking the participant which they can recall most accurately. Should an artefact such as a recording, multi-media presentation, visual or model used during the designer’s pitch be obtained, the participant will be shown it before this section
of questioning begins, to refresh their memory. Using a specific project more familiar to the participant will help to put focus on understanding the questions rather than recalling different stories from various projects. However, questions in section C ‘Design Stories in General’ ask the participant the same set of questions in relation to their experiences of all design projects they have been involved in, so as not to limit the data collected and to ensure that all the relationships they believe to exist between storytelling approaches and the units of analysis/themes in impact, are explored.

Finally, the second part of section C repeats the lines of questioning in relation to other factors participants believe influenced the units of analysis/themes of impact, irrespective of the design stories, ensuring that no overriding circumstances existed making the design stories irrelevant in terms of their relation to the units of analysis/themes of impact, or that if they did they are considered in the analysis.

When considering the weaknesses outlined in Table 12 relating to semi-structured interviews as a method for data collection several precautions have been taken. Although the areas of inquiry relate to predetermined impacts that storytelling can have, participants are first asked if they believe the story to have had this impact and then asked to describe how it did this, therefore the question is less leading as they have been given an opportunity to disagree with the interpretation of the literature review. Response bias is likely to occur due to the participants’ individual characteristics and their closeness to the design projects; although unavoidable, seeking several perspectives of the same project when possible will help keep this to a minimum. Inaccuracies due to recall will be avoided where possible through the recapping of design stories upon a viewing of any available artefacts used in the designer’s storytelling prior to the questioning. Instances where this is not possible may provide less accurate data, however as sections in the interview focus on projects that are more recent or better recalled, determined through a selection by the participant, this is not of great concern. Finally, questions are left open simply stating ‘How did it do this?’ in order to encourage the participant to explore the
various reasons they believe storytelling influenced the various impacts, with no
prompts or suggestions. Therefore reflexivity is unlikely to occur, as they will not
have a preconception of how they might be expected to respond.

Artefacts used during the designer’s storytelling that occurred at the design pitch
will be collected if possible. This could constitute a recording, a multi-media
presentation, and visual or physical props. As it is likely that these artefacts will
contain commercially sensitive information and want to be kept private by the
organisations, descriptions of them will be limited to storytelling approaches taken
by designers or how props were used in the storytelling, to provide contextual
information for the interview transcriptions. They will also serve as a memory recap
for participants should they need it. Considering the weaknesses of this form of
data in Table 12; only a small number of artefacts will be available for each design
project and so choices based on idiosyncrasy are not possible, however availability
may cause some issue.

5.6. Sampling Criteria

Organisations selected as cases for this research study must adhere to the following
criteria in order to have relevance in answering the research question:

- The designer or design team working with the organisation must be
  required to create or develop concepts.
- The designer or design team working with the organisation must have
  pitched the concepts to employees of the organisation during a design pitch
  using storytelling, as defined in section 1.4.1.

A potential case study was ruled out if it did not meet these two criteria.
Additionally, the following criteria are desirable rather than required:

- The organisation operates on a large scale and is internationally facing.
- The designer or design team operates on a large scale and is internationally facing.
- The organisation has collaborated with several external designers or design teams for the purposes outlined in the first set of criteria across a broad range of projects.
- It is possible to collect artefacts such as; audio recordings, multi-media presentations, visual and physical props used during the design pitch in telling the story.

It is desirable for the organisations and design teams in the chosen cases to operate on a large scale and be internationally facing, as it is more likely that the projects discussed will be comparable to those run by other large and internationally facing organisations and design teams. Small to medium sized organisations that have limited budgets in relation to investing in such projects can reflect on the outcome of this research and direct their investments more wisely. However, should these criteria not be met data collection would still be possible but it would be less likely that a larger scale organisation can draw from the outcomes of the study due to the differences in scale.

It is also desirable that the organisations have experience collaborating with designers or design teams on several projects across a broad range of projects to offer the research a range of possible cases to draw from. It is assumed that a case with a higher number of instances where organisations have collaborated with designers implies that designers will have used a higher number, and broader range, of approaches to storytelling. In turn, this will mean that employees are able to relate more approaches to the units of analysis/themes of impact.
Finally, it is desirable for organisations to grant access to artefacts such as recordings, multi-media presentations, visual and physical props used during the design pitch in telling the story. This is because should a participant’s memory need refreshing before answering the questions during the interview, the artefact can serve as a reminder of the story. Also, when carrying out the data analysis, the availability of artefacts used during the storytelling will allow more accurate interpretations of the descriptions given by the interview participants. Should these criteria not be met, it is likely that some information that has the potential to be useful may be forgotten by the interview participant and therefore not discussed. Also, when an interview participant discusses an aspect of the design pitch that would benefit from the observation of an artefact used in the storytelling, again this information may be lost or interpreted inaccurately.

5.7. Limitations

With regards to the specific approach of this research study, adopting the Interpretivist philosophical stance dictates that an understanding of a particular context is being developed by the researcher through perceived knowledge, in the instance of this research study perceived knowledge gathered through a literature review and the thematic analysis of case study data. Access to the real world is not possible and consequently, merely an interpretation of it can be presented, therefore the researcher represents the first limitation of the study, in that the reader has to rely on the competency of the researcher and is free to judge the methods they employ (Carson et al., 2001, Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

Secondly, the human element of the research study denotes a limitation. As reasoned in the methodology chapter, the interpretation of a story can be unique to an individual depending on various factors outside the control of this research study. Due to this, descriptions of the relationships found between approaches to storytelling and the units of analysis/themes of impact can only be definitely true of
the specific cases examined, and will not necessarily apply to others. Therefore, it is crucial to try and ensure as wide relevance as is possible with the selected cases, as discussed in the methodology chapter.

Finally, the predetermined areas of inquiry don’t include all possible areas of inquiry, meaning that there is a potential for the exploration of other important impacts. However, this research study does not claim to provide a complete set of storytelling approaches and their relationship to all consequential impacts. It merely attempts to establish an alternative way in which a storytelling perspective can be applied for the benefit of understanding the design pitch, and uses specific case examples with which to demonstrate this, and generate insights that may have a wider relevance in terms of the relationships between storytelling approach and impact.

More generally, Bonoma (1985) suggests that when undertaking research there is often a compromise between data currency and data integrity. In demonstrating this point, Bonoma (1985: 200) provides the ‘knowledge-accrual triangle’:
A high level of data integrity implies that discoveries are regarded as having reliability and a high level of data currency implies that discoveries are regarded as being contextually grounded. A study seeking high degrees of data integrity dictates a quantitative sample where variables must be controlled and precise to ensure reliability, whereas a study seeking high levels of data currency dictates a qualitative sample, often from an uncontrolled environment to ensure contextual relevance (Bonoma, 1985). It can be reasoned that when defining precise variables many other important factors can be left out and therefore data with high integrity can be regarded as ‘thin’. However, it can also be reasoned that when gathering qualitative data from an uncontrolled environment, generalisability is limited. Therefore, the researcher will compromise either integrity or currency when judging an appropriate method; hence the downward slope from left to right in the ‘knowledge accrual triangle’.
When considering a research aim that looks to build an understanding of a complex phenomenon such as the one in this research study, it would seem inappropriate to seek a high level of data integrity, as defining precise variables within it would considerably limit this understanding. Also, as suggested previously when looking at Carson et al. (2001) exploration of epistemology, it is unfeasible to discover every single variable in a complex phenomenon as it represents a near logistical impossibility. Using a case study approach, characteristic of high data currency, would ensure a richer, contextual grounding. However, this prescribes a trade-off with generalisability. In spite of this compromise, Gumesson (2000) suggests that generalisability should be of less concern when dealing with the evolutionary nature of complex phenomena. The storytelling at a design pitch can be regarded as one such complex phenomenon.

5.8. Summary

To recap, this chapter establishes an Interpretivist philosophical stance, allying this research study with the tenets of Symbolic Interactionism. In seeking to understand a relationship between storytelling approach and consequential impact at the Design Pitch, a stance that considers action to be influenced by interpretations of social interaction is seemingly appropriate.

This stance dictates a qualitative analytical strategy, hence the employment of a Thematic Analysis. A Thematic Analysis codes descriptions of phenomena (storytelling at the design pitch), in the instance of this research study these descriptions are garnered through conducting semi-structured interviews. A case study method has been employed to identify a number of appropriate participants belonging to three separate cases. The cases have been determined through establishing suitable criteria in order to ensure high levels of data currency. Of primary importance here was securing the involvement of organisations that work with designers who pitch concepts using storytelling. Seeking the involvement of
large, internationally facing organisations ensured that many potential audiences of this thesis are able to draw relevance.

In using a case study design an appropriate trade off was made, electing data currency over integrity and generalisability. This trade-off is typical when studying complex phenomena such as storytelling, where there are multiple external influences that are immeasurable and uncontrollable. In spite of this trade off, the stance and methodology of this research study promotes a valuable perspective to adopt, underutilised when viewing the design pitch.
Areas of Inquiry
6. Areas of Inquiry

In sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.4 of the methodology, four areas of inquiry were introduced in order to give the semi-structured interviews focus: ‘Delivering Understanding’, ‘Demonstrating Value’, ‘Stimulating Critique’, and ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’. The following chapter will provide a clear definition for each of these areas of inquiry and a rationale for using them over others, with respect to the literature review and where appropriate, augmentation of the pilot study.

6.1. Delivering Understanding

6.1.1. Definition

Having an understanding of something can be defined as being ‘sympathetically or knowledgeably aware of the character or nature’ of something (oxforddictionaries.com, 2013e). In the context of the storytelling that this research study focuses on, the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ refers to the understanding of a design concept. Therefore, this may be in terms of: how the design concept functions or is used, its character, and indeed how the design concept came to be (its nature). So for example, in order to have delivered an understanding, the storytelling that occurs at the design pitch must leave its audience with the knowledge of how and why someone may use the design concept and/or how the design team designed it. Either or both of these facets of knowledge will constitute an understanding of the design concept to some capacity.
6.1.2. Literature

When looking at Table 9 from the conclusion of the literature review chapters, it can be seen that many of the potential impacts connected to different storytelling approaches relate to the delivery of an understanding in some format. The following table extracts the relevant information from Table 9, as a short hand reference for this section.

**Table 14: Approach and Potential Impact, Delivering Understanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters as protagonists, solving problems and reaching goals</td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on experiential perspectives, relevant to audience members</td>
<td>Delivering an understanding of a design concept and fostering its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, beauty</td>
<td>Aligning different understandings of design concepts and the issues they deal with, fostering their development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and creative media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity in an analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using individual artefacts (such as a sketch or rendering)</td>
<td>Deliver an understanding of how a concept is used and or is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Digital Stories</td>
<td>Increase the ability to understand visual presentations of design concepts and talk about them critically through these presentations, consequently aiding further collaborations with designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the stories exchanged in conversation during the process of designing (in particular, those which have led to the use of shorthand words and phrases)</td>
<td>Promote shared understandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplify complex aspects of a design concept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Firstly, as mentioned previously, Madsen and Nielsen (2010) propose that a benefit of using a persona scenario when developing a design concept is that it can promote shared understandings; understandings of the issues a design concept should confront, the way in which it should confront them and the aesthetics of the design concept. From this, it was reasoned that by association, the use of a persona scenario also has the potential to aid in the achievement of these understandings in the audience of a design pitch. The suggestion that the promotion of shared understandings is beneficial to the development of a design concept indicates that it should be a preoccupation when considering the impacts of a design pitch, as the organisation employing the designer(s) are also charged with the design concept’s development.

Similarly, Quesenbery and Brooks (2010) propose that a benefit of using the experiential perspectives of audience members to inform a story is that it can align understandings; again in terms of the issues a concept should confront, the way in which it should confront them and the aesthetics of the design concept. They too argue that this is useful when fostering a design concept’s development whilst designing experiences, providing further justification for a preoccupation with ‘Delivering Understanding’ in the semi-structured interviews.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, Cross (2006) proposes that designers respond to a more visually rich world by adopting visualisation techniques such as photography, film and animation. With this expanded skillset, there is a potential for designers to tell stories digitally (as defined in section 3.2 of the literature review). When considering Robin’s (2006) assertion that digital stories can improve visual literacy; the ability to understand, produce and communicate through visual images, we can see that the design pitch has again been linked to having benefit in terms of the understanding it can embed, in this case through fostering a higher degree of visual literacy.
From these digests of the literature examined in chapters 2, 3, and 4, it can be seen that a preoccupation with ‘Delivering Understanding’ is justifiable, as it appears to help in the development of a design concept, and also to distil any misunderstandings surrounding it through improved visual literacy.

Further justification for having an area of inquiry to explore ‘Delivering Understanding’ in a design pitch can be seen when taking a broader psychological view. Noted psychologist Carl Bereiter (2002) states that having an understanding of an object implies an ability to think and use concepts to deal adequately with that object. In the instance of a design pitch, the object is a concept, therefore it can be reasoned that a presentation of a concept is in fact a presentation of an understanding.

Finally, vindication for using ‘Delivering Understanding’ as an area of inquiry is also apparent when looking at literature that suggests storytelling conflicting approaches for achieving this impact. As discussed in chapter 4, section 4.4, there are sources to suggest grounding stories in experiences based on real life situations to promote understanding (Madsen and Nielsen, 2010, Quesenbery and Brooks, 2010) and those which arguably favour a more creative, abstract approach in promoting understanding (Adamson et al., 2006, DeLarge, 2004). Exploring this area of inquiry in the context of a design pitch will uncover a better understanding of how one might achieve this impact and when one approach may be favoured over the other.

6.2. Demonstrating Value

6.2.1. Definition

It can be defined that value is identified when people ‘consider (someone or something) to be important or beneficial; have a high opinion of’
With regards to storytelling at a design pitch, the area of inquiry ‘Demonstrating Value’ refers to the benefit that a proposed design concept may encompass, and its importance. So for example, in order to have demonstrated value the storytelling that occurs during the design pitch must leave its audience with an understanding of the benefit of the design concept to the user, and a belief that this benefit is important. The transference of this belief will constitute the demonstration of value.

6.2.2. Literature

It can be seen that ‘Demonstrating Value’ is justifiable as an area of inquiry within this research study when considering philosophies surrounding the term value. Of paramount interest is the notion of instrumental and intrinsic value, a concept first written about by Plato in his Socratic dialogue ‘The Republic’ in the year 380 BC (2003).

To summarise; something that has instrumental value can be used to acquire something of value and something that has intrinsic value is judged to be valuable in itself (Debreu, 1972). So for example, a million pounds has instrumental value as it can be used to obtain things and experiences that potentially have a value, whether those things or experiences have value is a matter of judgment; for example, if someone desires the ability to play the piano, then they may view the ability that others have to play the piano as intrinsically valuable and therefore they may decide to pay for piano lessons. If we consider products and services, it becomes apparent that they can have both instrumental and intrinsic value, for example; a wedding ring has intrinsic value as it signifies a commitment to another person but it is also necessary to perform the act of marriage and so has instrumental value in that the wedding ceremony cannot take place without it. Similarly, an airline service for a business class flight can have intrinsic value as it provides a relaxing experience for a passenger during their travels, but it can also
have instrumental value if they are being transported to their holiday destination. Smith (2007) proposes that when developing new products and services, the creation of value is a critical task. It can therefore be reasoned that when a design pitch is observed, value judgements will be made both instrumentally and intrinsically; does its function serve a purpose (instrumental value), is its form desirable (intrinsic value).

When looking at Table 9 from the conclusion of the literature review, it can be seen that many of the potential impacts connected to different storytelling approaches relate to the demonstration of value in some format. The following table extracts the relevant information from Table 9, as a shorthand reference for this section.

**Table 15: Approach and Potential Impact, Demonstrating Value**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using central characters based on archetypal personas</td>
<td>Fostering emotional connections between audience and design concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on experiential perspectives, relevant to audience members</td>
<td>Influencing perspectives, and fostering innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using digital stories</td>
<td>Allow the discussion of a design concept on a more holistic level, including the wider implications it might have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being consistent with a company’s brand stories, and being consistent within individual stories</td>
<td>Easy recognition of the design concept’s value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly for the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, the persona scenario discussed by Madsen and Neilsen (2010) also has the potential to have impact in terms of ‘Demonstrating Value’. As stated earlier, a persona scenario has a specific structure; the story is written and describes a persona’s character (the user of the design concept), their dilemma and how the design concept helps them to
overcome it. As well as delivering shared understandings around various aspects of the design concept; an understanding of the benefit of the design concept is also communicated through the overcoming of a dilemma. Should this dilemma resonate with its audience, the persona scenario has the potential to foster an emotional connection to the design concept, and will have demonstrated the apparent value of the design concept. This constitutes a clear attempt at the communication of instrumental value.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, DeLarge (2004) reinforces the use of experiential stories when discussing design concepts as he believes that they demonstrate the results of ‘good’ design; influencing perspectives and enabling innovations. If something is said to have value because it is ‘good’, value has been attributed intrinsically. For example, it can be seen as ‘good’ to be happy, and so if a design concept embodies happiness it has intrinsic value. Therefore, discussing experiential stories have the potential to communicate intrinsic values.

From these digests of the literature examined in chapters 2, 3 and 4, it can be seen that a preoccupation with ‘Demonstrating Value’ is justifiable as it appears that there is a tendency to discuss design concepts in terms of instrumental and intrinsic value, a pattern that by logical reasoning will be apparent during the delivery and observation of a design pitch.

6.3. Stimulating Critique

6.3.1. Definition

The ability to critique can be defined as being able to ‘evaluate (a theory or practice) in a detailed and analytical way’ (oxforddictionaries.com, 2013b). In extension of this, Butler (2002: 4) proposes that ‘the primary task of critique will not be to evaluate whether its objects […] are good or bad, valued highly or
demeaned, but to bring into relief the very framework of evaluation itself’. This is a useful definition to adopt with respect to the critique of design concepts as critique is not simply a ‘fault-finding’ exercise (Williams, 1976, Spool, 2008).

In his discussion towards a philosophy of critique, Foucault (1997) proposes that it ‘only exists in relation to something other than itself’. Therefore, critique ‘will be dependent on its objects, but its objects will in turn define the very meaning of critique’ (Butler, 2002). With respect to this research study, when considering Butler’s (2002) proposition in conjunction with the fact that the motivation to critique is for the development of design concepts, it can be reasoned that critique may take a different form in each of the design pitches explored in the case studies. Therefore ‘Stimulating Critique’ can only be defined in as much as; the storytelling must engage the audience in critical discussion around the design concept.

6.3.2. Literature

When looking at Table 9 from the conclusion of the literature review, it can be seen that many of the potential impacts connected to different storytelling approaches relate to the stimulation of critique in some format. The following table extracts the relevant information from Table 9, as a short hand reference for this section.

Table 16: Approach and Potential Impact, Stimulating Critique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using the trials and tribulations of central characters</td>
<td>Encouraging critical reflection on self and design concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a series of artefacts (such as sketches, renderings, models, or a combination)</td>
<td>Engages the audience in a critical dialogue surrounding the concept’s development (whether positive or negative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the stories exchanged in</td>
<td>Enables clients to take part in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 16: Approach and Potential Impact, Stimulating Critique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>conversation during the process of designing (in particular, those which have led to the use of short hand words and phrases)</th>
<th>negotiation of a designs final stages of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling stories inconsistent (micro-level) with a company’s brand stories</td>
<td>Stimulate discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firstly, as mentioned previously, Schön and Wiggins (2006) propose that a series of artefacts demonstrate the evolution between each iteration of the design concept, and in effect communicate the critical dialogue that occurred between the design team developing the concept. Therefore, should a series of design artefacts be presented during the storytelling that occurs at the design pitch, the audience can gain an awareness of the critical dialogue that ensued between designers during the design concept’s development. It can be reasoned that this awareness will allow the audience of a design pitch to access these critical dialogues and therefore engage in them. As Schön and Wiggins (2006) discuss this type of communication as beneficial for the development of a design concept, it can be inferred that ‘Stimulating Critique’ should be a preoccupation when considering the impacts of a design pitch, as the organisation employing the designer(s) are also charged with the design concept’s development.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, Madsen and Neilsen (2010) propose using persona scenarios during a design project in order to develop design concepts, and as alluded to previously, persona scenarios can form part of the storytelling that occurs at a design pitch. Constructing a persona scenario involves defining the characteristics of a typical user (persona), and when empathising with a character, critique can occur (Turner, 2008). It can be reasoned that critique stimulated in this way enables a decision making process that allows a concept to develop. Therefore, as Madsen and Nielsen (2010) suggest that persona scenarios are useful in the development of a design concept, it can be inferred that this is partly due to the
fact that they stimulate critique. Therefore, ‘Stimulating Critique’ should be an area of inquiry when discussing the impacts of a design pitch, as the organisation employing the designer(s) are charged with the design concept’s development.

From these digests of the literature examined in chapters 2, 3, and 4, it is proposed that a focus on ‘Stimulating Critique’ is justifiable, as it appears to help in the development of a design concept.

Similarly, to the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, there are ideas being expressed which are in contention with others. It seems that being inconsistent with existing brand stories when pitching design concepts can be a useful way to stimulate debate and discussion (Quesenbery and Brooks, 2010). However, when looking at section 4.3 it can be seen that this may come at the price of devaluing the design concepts credibility (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010). Therefore, this provides further vindication for using ‘Demonstrating Value’ and ‘Stimulating Critique’ as areas of inquiry, as exploring these may help to uncover when it is and is not appropriate to be inconsistent with an organisations brand story.

6.4. Encouraging More Holistic Thinking

6.4.1. Definition

The adjective holistic is characterised as ‘the belief that the parts of something are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole’ (oxforddictionaries.com, 2013c). Therefore, it stands to reason that thinking more holistically about an issue is allows a universal or ‘whole’ solution to be realised more easily. With respect to developing a design concept, there are many different relevant ways of thinking. For example: you might develop a concept for a power drill by thinking about ergonomics, you might also think about styling, and you might also think about the different tasks it needs to perform. It is obvious that
there are benefits to all these different ways of thinking when developing a concept for a power drill, and so thinking about them all may be considered holistic thinking. Therefore, in the context of the storytelling that this research study is concerned with, ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ refers to inspiring new considerations in the audience of the design pitch (the organisation’s employees) with regards to the design concept itself and/or the design project. For example, storytelling at a design pitch may encourage more holistic thinking if it inspires the audience to consider a new notion of; the issue a design concept should focus on resolving, how a design concept should look aesthetically, how it should function and potentially many more things project specific. This in turn may lead to a perception that the design project should continue with different motivations.

6.4.2. Literature

When looking at Table 9 from the conclusion of the literature review, it can be seen that many of the potential impacts connected to different storytelling approaches relate to the encouragement of more holistic thinking in some format. The following table extracts the relevant information from Table 9, as a short hand reference for this section.

*Table 17: Approach and Potential Impact, Encouraging More Holistic Thinking*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on the experiential perspectives of audience members</td>
<td>Aligning attitudes and resolving conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basing stories on experiential perspectives, relevant to audience members</td>
<td>Influencing perspectives, and fostering innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity, beauty</td>
<td>Aligning different understandings of design concepts and the issues they deal with, fostering its development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and creative media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity in an analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As mentioned previously, Denning (2007b: 110-111) suggests that storytelling is a vehicle for eliciting cultural change by getting people to think alternatively about their job roles, mentioning specifically that:

- **Narratives are more likely to be effective than abstract communications, because this is how human beings think and make decisions, and because it simulates the emotional significance of experiential learning.**
- **Indirect Methods are more likely to be effective than direct methods, because indirect methods leave it up to the audience to make up their own minds rather than having opinions forced upon them.**

When considering the context of this research study, these declarations have some interesting implications. Firstly, the design pitch of a proposed product or service may require abstract communication on some level, as real human narrative surrounding the product or service will not yet exist. This therefore may pose a difficulty in challenging a belief of an audience member about a particular aspect of a design concept, such as what its primary purpose should be. Secondly, a design pitch is an organised gathering where storytelling is pre-empted and therefore direct, again a quality that Denning (2007b) professes to inhibit the chances of getting people to think in alternative ways.

Contrary to this, are Adamson et al. (2006) observations of storytelling in healthcare, and in particular how this helped to positively impact the San Juan Regional Medical Centre. As detailed previously, an abstract analogy of the medical centre’s infrastructure helped to stimulate a change in employees’ attitudes towards their job roles, consequently improving internal relationships. Considering the context of this research study, abstract communication, in particular analogies are often used during a design pitch to represent qualities of the design concept that are not yet apparent as the product or service does not yet exist. This would seem to suggest that storytelling at the design pitch is therefore well placed for encouraging people to think in alternative ways.
As demonstrated, the capacity that stories have in encouraging more holistic thinking is acknowledged by organisational strategists such as Denning (2007b) and Adamson et al. (2006), in spite of presenting different viewpoints. Therefore, it is justifiable to make ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ an area of inquiry because designers can tell stories in organisations whilst pitching designs.

6.5. Summary

In defining each of the areas of inquiry, and detailing literature that examines them on both a philosophical and practical level, much justification can be found for exploring their relationships to storytelling approaches taken during the delivery of design pitches.

Firstly, ‘Delivering Understanding’ and ‘Demonstrating Value’ are predispositions of the storytelling in the given context of this research study; further to this the audience of a design pitch will naturally arbitrate the identification of instrumental and intrinsic values. Therefore, it would be difficult to engage a participant in conversation around a design pitch without considering these topics, as they represent natural constructs with which to support discussion. This has not only been reasoned through an exploration of relevant literature, but also discovered when conducting the pilot study, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Specifically, as can be seen from the conclusions of the literature review in Table 9, these impacts are associated with many different approaches to storytelling, reinforcing the justification in adopting them as areas of inquiry. More generally, when looking at the definitions of impact explored by the areas of inquiry, their relevance to design becomes apparent. In order to construct a design concept, it is necessary understand how it came to be and the steps required in making it. In order to have the desire to do so, an appreciation of the value in its benefit must be demonstrated. In order to develop a design concept, a client must be able to
engage in critical discussion surrounding it and finally, organisations that work with designers need to be encouraged to think more holistically in order to innovate.
Pilot Study
7. Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out to refine the methodology and to reflect on the discovery of the themes identified in the literature review. In particular, a pilot study represents a chance to trial questions in order to give the researcher a feel for the interviewing process, alert the researcher to important factors that give the interview flavour and direction, focus the researcher on what makes questions productive and distinguish between the more crucial questions and those which can be left out (Gillham, 2000: 22). A paper entitled ‘Developing the Design Storytelling Impact-Approach Framework’ (Parkinson and Bohemia, 2012b) was written by the researcher after conducting this pilot study which represents an initial phase of analysis associated with this research study. It can be viewed in the appendix.

It is important to mention that prior to the pilot study, certain aspects of the methodology were not set in stone and how they have been presented in the previous chapters is as a direct result of this pilot study. In particular, the pilot study has had repercussions for the development of the areas of inquiry used to semi-structure the interviews, and the design and order of the questions used within the interviews. This chapter will describe the case used for the pilot study, detailing both its appropriateness and limitations and then the specific ways in which it has impacted the rest of the research study in terms of the methodology and the thematic analysis process employed.

7.1. The Research Unit

As stated in the methodology, the research unit represents an organisation acting as client to a designer(s). In the instance of the case used for the pilot study this unit exists in the relationship between international groups of design students, where each act as designer and client to one another during the course of a design
project. Projects such as these have been managed by a research organisation called the Global Studio.

The Global Studio is an international design education platform, involving the collaboration of design schools in universities across the world. Essentially, its purpose is to provide design students with skills such as building virtual relationships with other designers and coping with the dispersal of a design process. The Global Studio deems these as new non-traditional skills required by designers working in an economy with changing trends in the manufacturing industry. In order to accomplish this, collaborative projects are run between different universities across the world, therefore virtual relationships must be sustained between the design teams, and they must contribute to projects at different stages of a design process.

*It is difficult to ignore the shifts that have taken place over the past two decades in the way that products are developed, produced, distributed and consumed. It is these changing trends in manufacturing, and the related emergence of globally networked organisations, that stimulated the development of The Global Studio.*

*(Bohemia, 2010)*

In December 2012, The Global Studio ran one such project entitled ‘Festivals’, which involved designing product concepts. The work produced for this six week long project, by the student groups from the universities involved, was assessed by their lecturers and contributed to the grade awarded for their second year of undergraduate study. Peer assessment was also provided through partnering student groups, for example a group of students from Northumbria University, based in the U.K. were partnered with a group of students from Parsons Paris, based in France.

An overview of the design brief ‘Festivals’ is as follows:
Context:

Festivals are events that can represent significant aspects of many diverse cultures. For example, ‘Mardi Gras’ is a Jazz Festival that originates from New Orleans, celebrating their cultural heritage of music. ‘Eat’ is a Newcastle upon Tyne based festival that promotes locally produced foods and culturally diverse culinary. Each festival has its own unique identity with which affiliated product, service, campaign and brand all fit into.

Assignment:

You are to produce and develop a product design concept for use in a festival native to the country of origin from your partnered group. As well as this, during the course of the project each team must provide feedback on their partnered group’s work at several interim stages acting in the role of client. Once finalised concepts have been agreed you must tell a story about your partnered group’s design concept through the use of multi-media (animation, edited film or a combination of both). Partnered groups, focusing on the stories produced, will give a final stage of feedback.

Work Requirements:

You are required to provide your partnered group with the following information about your design concept; the festival it is intended to be used at, how it is used, how it should look (through rendered drawings and/or prototypes with a clear scale) and how it is made (including detailed information regarding materials). The story you produce should be in the format of a multi-media presentation and demonstrate an understanding of your partnered team’s concept through placing it in a story.

As can be seen, due to several factors this case is appropriate for a pilot study. Firstly, the crucial criteria provided in section 6.5 of the methodology are partially met; design teams are required to produce design concepts for their partnered teams acting as clients, and design teams must pitch their partnered group’s
concept through the use of a story. Also, one of the desirable criteria is met as
design groups are made up from universities across the world and so The Global
Studio is internationally facing. In spite of partially meeting these criteria, there are
still limitations regarding its validity; these will be explored in more depth in section
7.8 of this chapter.

7.2. Storytellers

For the purposes of this pilot study, teams from Northumbria University are acting
as the client (the audience to the stories). Their partnered groups are acting as the
storytellers and come from a range of different courses from different universities
described as follows:

- **Hong-ik University in Korea: Product Design Majors**
  Students studying on this course train in product design, material analysis,
  manufacturing techniques and industrial production. The curriculum mainly
  consists of furniture design and product design projects.
  
  (hongik.ac.kr, 2002)

- **Chiba University in Japan: Product Development Students**
  Students studying on this course are encouraged to view design as a
  practical science, which can be used to explore the human environment and
  improve it through resolving issues and/or enhancing experiences.

  (Chiba-u.ac.jp, 2002)

- **Tongji University in China: Industrial Design Students**
  Students studying on this course are encouraged to take a very practical
  skills based approach to develop their skills as a designer. In particular they
  have the facilities to practice product modelling, carpentry, metalworking,
  and use various digital media technology software platforms.
The Ohio State University in the USA: Industrial Design Majors

Students studying on this course are looking to specialise in a particular area of design. Options include: consumer appliances, tools, safety equipment, business machines, furniture, medical equipment, architectural products, and transportation devices.

(undergrad.osu.edu, 2011)

Parsons Paris in France: Product Design Students

Students studying on this course are introduced to a culture of making and thinking in order to create products and services. There is a heavy emphasis on using the environment around you as a stimulus for creativity.

(newschool.edu, 2012)

7.3. Design Stories

Section 1.4.1 in chapter 1 sets out the criteria with which a design pitch can be judged, in order to establish that it comprises an occurrence of storytelling as defined by this research study. This criteria has been set out in the left hand column of the following table, with the right hand column describing how this case’s design pitches fulfill the criteria for storytelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORYTELLING CRITERIA</th>
<th>FESTIVALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal is to present a design concept or series of design concepts</td>
<td>A requirement of the brief was that groups presented their partnered group’s design concept back to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events of the design concept in use, OR states of the design concepts</td>
<td>Many groups presented either events taking place during a festival involving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18: Meeting the Storytelling Criteria in the Pilot Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>development must be ordered</td>
<td>the use of the design concept, or the stages of development of the design concept, all groups placed these events and/or states in a chronological order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must have a human user of which the story is privy to</td>
<td>The design concepts were intended to be used by people attending a particular festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must reflect the interpretation(s)/perspective(s) of the designer or design team</td>
<td>A response to a design brief is always a representation of a designer(s) interpretation/perspective as design by nature is subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept may have a name (acting as a reference to the story) attached to it</td>
<td>When groups discussed the design stories, they often referred to them by the names given to the design concepts, or names they’d created for the design concepts should they not have been assigned names in the stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To give an indication of story content, the following example provides a detailed description of a typical submission with supporting screenshots of the multi-media presentation.
This particular story was submitted by a group from Parsons Paris University, in response to a design concept provided by a group of students from Northumbria University. Essentially, the design concept was intended to be used during the Les Arcs cinematic festival in Paris, it comprised of many different graphical designs for masks constructed with card. Each design represented an iconic character from a fairy tale. In telling their story, the student group used text that animated onto the screen to divide the story into stages (Figure 7). Various pieces of classical music were used as a soundtrack.
Early stages of the story showed the various steps in making the design concept (Figure 8). Initially, these were interspersed with imagery depicting illustrations of various fairy tales, such as ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ (Figure 9).

Other stages of making that were shown included an early prototype being tested (Figure 10).
The later stages of the story showed various members of their group wearing the mask they had made and saying a sentence about their experience of Les Arcs (Figure 11).
The final stage of the story showed ripped footage of ballet recitals, representing common events that take place during the Les Arcs festival (Figure 12). The total running time of the story was approximately 2 minutes.

Figure 12: Borrowed Footage in the Story, Pilot Study

7.4. Interview Participants

The semi-structured interviews for the pilot study were conducted with student groups from the BA (Hons) Design for Industry (DFI) course ran at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne. They were interviewed about their partnered group’s story, using their viewpoint as client. The DFI course houses undergraduate students studying to become industrial designers. As part of the syllabus, in their second year students are required to work in groups on live, internationally facing, design projects, functioning as a design consultancy. Therefore, all interview participants have had prior experience of working collaboratively with a client. Typically, the course houses thirty students working in 6 to 8 teams of 4 or 5. Historically, this course is well renowned for the creativity of its students and has long standing relationships with many organisations such as Unilever, Mars and Diageo.
The DFI students were chosen as the interview participants for the pilot study as the researcher was also studying at the university, making the organisation of the interviews easier. As the pilot study was used to develop and familiarise the researcher with the data gathering process the integrity of the data was not compromised.

7.5. Interview Questions

As mentioned previously, the interview questions created for use in the semi-structured interviews went through a series of developments. Firstly, as already described in section 5.4 of the methodology they evolved in response to the insights gained through the literature review. The questions were also reordered and rephrased after the pilot study to avoid misdirection and misinterpretation. The following original set of questions was asked to the DFI students (acting in the client’s capacity) during the pilot study:

1. Did the story allow you to view your design concept in a different light or think about it in a different way?
   a) If yes how?
   b) Provide a rating of 1 to 5 (1 meaning it did not at all, 5 meaning it did).

2. How easy was it to grasp an understanding of your design concept from the story?
   a) If it was easy, why?
   b) Provide a rating of 1 to 5 (1 meaning it was not easy, 5 it was easy).

3. Upon viewing the story, did it get you to critique your design concept; were there questions about it that you felt compelled to ask?
   a) If yes how?
b) Provide a rating of 1 to 5 (1 meaning it did not at all, 5 meaning it did).

4. After watching the story, did it make you consider an alternative approach to the project if it were to run again?
   a) If yes how?
   b) Provide a rating of 1 to 5 (1 meaning it did not at all, 5 meaning it did).

After conducting the semi-structured interviews with this original set of questions, three major changes were implemented for several different reasons; the following paragraph will detail these changes and the specific reasons.

Firstly, when listening to responses given during the interviews and upon examining the transcriptions, it was clear that the first question exploring the area of inquiry ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ was either misinterpreted or misunderstood. Participants often asked, ‘What do you mean by that?’ or started talking generally about whether or not they believed their partnered team had told a good story. It seemed that starting with a question to stimulate discussion around ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ was perhaps disorienting, as participants seemed naturally to want to discuss the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’. Based on how participants responded to the first question, the order of the questions was changed and groups that were interviewed later, after this change was implemented, did not misinterpret or misunderstand that question. Beginning with the question that explored the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ also proved to focus participants on the impacts of the design pitch, rather than speaking generally about whether or not they believed their partnered team had told a good story.

Secondly, the rating system proved to be superfluous. Often the ratings given by participants did not correspond to the discussion that ensued; for example some
participants awarded a design pitch with a low score for delivering a clear understanding of the design concept, but then found that when discussing this in more depth later, could detail many examples of how it had actually achieved this. It seemed that there was a tendency to judge the story on the overall production quality when thinking in terms of rating, in spite of the clear criteria set out. Although a rating system would not provide any data that could be implemented in the thematic analysis process, it was believed initially that this may help to stimulate discussion and thinking around the particular areas of inquiry. As the result of the pilot study has shown it was deemed unnecessary and in some circumstances counterproductive, and so it was dropped.

Finally, questions 1 and 4, exploring the area of inquiry ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ were often answered in the same way within each group. When asked if the story had inspired different thinking about the design concept, participants often discussed the consideration of a different approach. As answers given for these questions seldom varied within each group interview it was clear that only one question was needed to stimulate a discussion on the area of inquiry ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’. In response to this observation, questions 1 and 4 were merged into the question, ‘Did the design pitch encourage more holistic thinking around the design concept or project? If yes, how did it do this?’

### 7.6. Areas of Inquiry

After conducting the literature review, provisional areas of inquiry had evolved; ‘Delivering Understanding’, ‘Stimulating Critique’ and ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’. However, when asking question 2 exploring the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, on occasion participants discussed whether or not the story had demonstrated the value of their design concept. Firstly, if a design concept is relatively simple, delivering an understanding of how it is used or is made can be relatively easy; for example one design concept was a paper mask and
simply seeing a model or visual image of it in the story instantly communicated an understanding of how it would be made and used. In instances such as these, participants felt necessary to elaborate their answers and started to discuss whether or not they believed the story had demonstrated the value of the design concept. Understanding and value are closely related, as without an understanding of how a design concept is used it can be difficult to see whether or not it has a value.

After observing a common tendency to discuss the story in terms of its demonstration of the design concept’s value, the literature was revisited and justification sought for defining ‘Demonstration of Value’ as a new area of inquiry. After validating its presence from the literature and the pilot study where there was a natural tendency to discuss this area of inquiry, it seemed appropriate to explore this theme in a more explicit manner in future interviews.

7.7. Potential Initial Codes

As well as developing clearer questions to improve the practicality of running the interview and minimise the possibility of misinterpretation, and introducing a new area of inquiry based on the discussions that emerged, the pilot study was also used to develop a set of codes to help with the thematic analysis.

The questions in the interviews are designed to explore the four areas of inquiry in terms of impact. Therefore, thematic analysis seeks to determine an understanding of how storytelling approaches relate to these areas of inquiry. In achieving this, a line-by-line examination of the transcribed pilot study interviews was conducted, highlighting every mention of a storytelling approach, as defined in section 1.4.1 of the introduction. In the appendix, all the codes gathered from the pilot study are listed, and organised into each relative area of inquiry. The following paragraphs
state the recurrent themes within these codes, providing examples of case evidence for each of them.

When relating storytelling approaches to the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, three recurrent themes emerged from the coding. Firstly, many groups discussed whether or not the setting of a festival had been explored in the story. For example, one group stated, ‘there wasn’t enough background on the festival itself’ when discussing the shortcomings of their partnered group’s story in relation to delivering an understanding of the design concept. From this section of transcript the code ‘setting’ was generated. Similar code was discovered in many other transcripts and in most cases represented a discussion that suggested either; using a festival setting aided the understanding of the design concept, or not using a festival setting hindered the understanding of the design concept. From this discovery it can be reasoned that using an appropriate setting for a design concept in a story can provide contextualisation necessary for its understanding.

The second storytelling approach that several groups related to the impact ‘Delivering Understanding’ was using stages of the design concept’s development as a structure for the stages of the story. For example, one group proposed that an understanding of the design concept was delivered because ‘all three stages of the final product’ were presented in the story and also because it ‘recapped the brief’. From this section of transcript the code ‘concept development stages’ was generated. Instances of similar code were found in several other interview transcripts, and all were rooted in an observation made by the students that it had enabled a clear understanding of the design concept. From this discovery it can be reasoned that detailing aspects of a design concept’s development in a story can aid in the delivery of an understanding of that design concept.

The final aspect of storytelling approach that several groups related to the impact ‘Delivering Understanding’ was the pacing of the story. For example, one group highlights ‘speed’ as an important factor with regards to delivering an
understanding of the design concept. They found it difficult to gain an understanding of the design concept from the presentation that they viewed as ‘it just flies through each component’. From this transcription the code ‘speed’ was generated. When pace was discussed in other interviews, similar insights were gained; a pace that was too fast was proposed to adversely affect the story’s ability in delivering an understanding of the design concept. From this discovery it can be reasoned that a story with a pace that is too fast can hinder the understanding of a design concept.

When relating storytelling approaches to the impact ‘Stimulating critique’, two recurrent themes emerged from the coding. Firstly, similarly to the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ many groups discussed the stages of a concept’s development, suggesting that knowing these would help to stimulate critical dialogue. For example, when considering if they could engage in a critical dialogue around their design concept after viewing the story, one group stated that if ‘you look at a story like start, middle, end they don’t really have that, just middle’. Similarly, another group stated that it was difficult to think critically about the design concept, as the ‘actual process’ wasn’t shown. In both instances the groups were proposing that it was difficult to engage in critical dialogue around the design concept, because the stages of the concept’s development were not shown. The code ‘concept development stages’ was used to discover other instances of this type of discussion. As several groups proposed similar ideas it can be reasoned that detailing the stages of a concept’s development in a story is necessary to engage the audience in a critical dialogue around that concept.

The other storytelling approach that several groups related to the impact ‘Stimulating Critique’ was the use of a user scenario. For example, one group proposed that they found it difficult to think critically around their design concept of a board game to be played during a festival because the presentation had not actually shown ‘people playing the game’. From this transcription, the code ‘user scenario’ was generated. Other examples where similar code was found
demonstrated equivalent suggestions, for example one group proposed that it was easy to think critically around their design concept due to the way the presentation had ‘shown it in use’. From this discovery it can be reasoned that the contextualisation provided by the use of a user scenario can foster an engagement in critical dialogue around a design concept.

When relating storytelling approaches to the impact ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’, three recurrent themes emerged from the coding. Firstly, several groups discussed the use of music in the stories. For example, when asked what it was about the story that encouraged them to see the design concept in a different light, a participant from group 1 suggested, ‘I think it was the music; like it was pretty emotive’. The code word ‘music’ was generated from this transcript and discovered in several others, all representing instances suggesting that its use had encouraged different thinking around the design concept. It was demonstrated the emotional connections that groups from the pilot study had with music were capable of simulating emotional connections with their design concepts, emotional connections that before viewing the story, had not been made and therefore led to viewing the design concept in a different light.

Similarly to the area of inquiry ‘Stimulating Critique’, several groups related the use of user scenarios to the impact ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’. For example, one group proclaimed that they began to see their design concept in a different light when the presentation ‘contextualised it in more than one place’. Comparable code to ‘user scenario’ was discovered in other transcripts surrounding similar suggestions made by other groups. One group explained this as ‘the way that they took our idea and they kind of changed it, but in their eyes it might have been what they thought that we sent them’. From this discovery it can be reasoned that using a user scenario in a story that is not familiar to the audience can encourage more holistic thinking around the design concept.
Finally, another storytelling approach related to the impact ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ by several groups was including all details of concept development. For example, one group proclaimed that it was seeing ‘everything together’ that encouraged more holistic thinking around the design concept as previously stages of their design concept’s development had only been viewed in isolation. From this transcript the code ‘all concept development stages’ was generated. Another instance of this code represented a discussion by a group, who suggested that the group presenting to them, had not shared with them the ‘process along the way’, and as a result, seeing the process in the presentation encouraged them to think more holistically about the design concept. Therefore, it can be reasoned that detailing all stages of concept development can encourage more holistic thinking around a design concept. However, it is important to mention that this may only be the case if the audience of the presentation is not aware of all the stages of the design concept’s development.

The following table names the grouped codes for each area of inquiry, presenting potential initial codes to look for when beginning the actual case analysis.

Table 19: Potential Initial Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Potential Initial Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Understanding</td>
<td>Concept development stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating Critique</td>
<td>Concept development stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging More Holistic Thinking</td>
<td>All concept development stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User scenario</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.8. Limitations of the Pilot Study

When examining the case study sampling criteria set out in section 5.6 of the methodology, it can be seen that there are some limitations to the use of this pilot study.

The following criterion; ‘the designer or design team working with the organisation must have presented the concepts to employees of the organisation during a design pitch using storytelling, as defined in section 1.4.1’, is only partially met. The design group presenting the concept uses storytelling as defined in section 1.4.1 however; they are merely presenting to a partnered design group acting as an organisation and played a more prominent role in the development of the design concept than a client would have. Therefore, with regards to the areas of inquiry; ‘Delivering Understanding’ and ‘Demonstrating Value’, it is likely that they will already possess an in depth understanding of the design concept and will therefore comprehend its value; potentially making achieving these impacts a lot easier during the presentation. With regards to the areas of inquiry; ‘Stimulating Critique’ and ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’, as the design team acting as the organisation has greater ownership over the development of the design concept, they may be reluctant to think critically about it and may potentially find it difficult to see the concept more holistically.

When examining the parameters set out in section 1.4.2 of the introduction, it can also be seen that the relevance of the pilot study is compromised. If we look specifically at the following sentence; ‘with respect to the group of people that the design pitch is being presented to, there is also only one parameter; they must be employees of the organisation charged with the development of the design concept that the designers are presenting’ it can be seen that this is only partially true. The group of people presented with the story are only acting as an organisation and they are not charged with the development of the design concept as this presentation represented the very final stage of the project. Therefore, with
respect to the area of inquiry: ‘Stimulating Critique’, there may be less motivation to do this during the observation of the story.

However, these minor drawbacks only limited the validity of the data for the purposes of analysis, but in no way compromised the pilot study’s usefulness in developing and familiarising the researcher with the methodology employed.

7.9. Summary

To summarise, conducting the pilot study has had several uses. Firstly, it has helped to determine several issues with regards to the semi-structured interviews. Secondly, it has helped to identify a further area of inquiry and finally, it has informed on initial codes that might be used at the start of the thematic analysis process.

The order of the questions was changed as a result of what was learnt from the pilot study. Originally, questioning started with the inquiry on ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’; however it seemed more practical to discuss this last and to start with questions surrounding the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’. It is reasonable to suggest that it is easier for a participant to discuss whether a story has delivered an understanding of the design concept than it is to consider if a story has encouraged different thinking around a design concept. Additionally, two questions were merged as most groups answered them in the similar way. As the interviews were semi-structured only one of these questions was required in order to open this topic of conversation. Finally, the rating system proved to be superfluous, as it presented no usable data and often contradicted what was discussed subsequently.

With regards to the areas of inquiry specifically, it transpired that when discussing ‘Delivering Understanding’ there was also a tendency to discuss value, in terms of
the value that is attributed to a design concept. This was because value can only be identified if an understanding is gained. As this was a natural topic of discussion with most groups, it was reasonable to determine ‘Demonstrating Value’ as a further area of inquiry, and literature was revisited to justify this decision.

Finally, several potential initial codes were identified to inform the thematic analysis of the actual cases. They included; ‘Concept development stages’, ‘Setting’ and ‘Speed’ for the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, ‘Concept development stages’ and ‘User scenario’ for the area of inquiry ‘Stimulating Critique’ and finally ‘All concept development stages’, ‘Music’ and ‘User scenario’ for the area of inquiry ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’.
Section 2

Descriptions of the data collection and analytical process, introduction of the storytelling approaches, their related qualities and their influences on the impacts explored by the areas of inquiry
Case Introductions
8. Case Introductions

The following chapter introduces three commercial case studies selected for this research study. The research unit, defined as a relationship between an organisation’s department and designers, will be introduced explaining the context of their relationship and the details of specific projects that they have worked on collaboratively. Also, the designers acting as storytellers involved in the projects will be introduced, providing a contextual background to their working practices. The design stories delivered during the design pitches will also be discussed in terms of how they meet the criteria set out for storytelling in section 1.4.1. It is important to point out that certain details regarding the design stories cannot be disclosed as they represent commercially sensitive information, however examples of the design stories viewed will be given where possible. Finally, a contextual background will also be provided for each of the interview participants from the organisation’s department, detailing information about their roles in the organisation and any previous work they have taken part in that included the involvement of designers. Each participant has been given a pseudonym for confidentiality reasons.

8.1. Case Study 1: Unilever Household Care

8.1.1. The Research Unit

Unilever is a multi-national organisation that houses over four hundred brands. Essentially, their brands promote health and wellbeing, providing products in the food and hygiene market sectors. Their brands include Lipton, Knorr, Persil and Dove amongst other household names. They have 6 research and development centres distributed throughout the world helping them to innovate and remain competitive.
Unilever’s Household Care department, in their Port Sunlight based Research and Development Centre, has a long standing relationship with Northumbria University, continually employing designers from their various courses to work on different design projects. During these projects, designers from Northumbria University have used storytelling as a way to communicate their design concepts in various formats to employees at Unilever’s Household Care department during design pitches. The following paragraphs detail information about the design projects, focusing on the semi-structured interviews with participants from this case study.

The first project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Low LSM’ (Living Standards Measure); it ran for a period of six weeks in 2011. Unilever’s Household Care department briefed design students from Northumbria University’s Multidisciplinary Design Innovation MA course (MDI). An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  
  *In general, communities residing in India and China have a lower living standard than western areas. Rituals and traditions surrounding hygiene in these areas can be very diverse when compared to western rituals and traditions. Therefore, certain cultural attributes of these communities present an entirely different challenge when designing and marketing household care products.*

- **Assignment:**
  
  *You are required to develop a product or service design concept based on an existing Unilever Household Care brand, focusing on one of these low LSM markets.*

- **Work Requirements:**
  
  *You are required to pitch your finalised design concepts to a small group of Unilever employees at their research and development plant based in Port*
Sunlight. In addition to this you are required to submit an illustrated report showing the development of your ideas and renderings and/or models of the finalised concepts.

At this time, the MDI course housed fifteen students operating as a design consultancy. 4 of these students visited Unilever to pitch their design concepts. Specific details about this course will be elaborated in the following section.

The second project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Beautifully Clean’; it ran for a period of 6 weeks in 2011. Unilever’s Household Care department briefed design students from Northumbria University’s Design for Industry BA (Hons) course (DFI). An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  *Unilever’s Cif brand has presence in many markets around the world. Every brand underneath the Unilever umbrella has a strong identity with the consumer. This is achieved through establishing a set of brand values and then ensuring that they are communicated whenever a consumer interacts with the product or service, including its advertising as well as its use.*

- **Assignment:**
  *Using the brand value ‘Beautifully Clean’ as inspiration, you are to design product or service concept for Unilever’s Cif brand. ‘Beautifully Clean’ can be interpreted in any way you believe fit and, your concept can be targeted at any market in which the brand currently has a presence.*

- **Work Requirements:**
  *You are required to pitch your design concept to an audience at Unilever’s research and development plant in Port Sunlight.*
At this time, the DFI course housed approximately thirty students who worked in 8 groups of 3 or 4 members. All the groups pitched their concepts at the conclusion of the project. Specific details about this course will be elaborated in the following section.

The final project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Powered by Light’; it ran for a period of 6 weeks in the year 2012. Unilever’s Household Care department briefed design students from Northumbria University’s MDI course. An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  
  Research scientists working at Unilever often make discoveries that lead to technological developments. For example, one such discovery was a chemical formula that when activated by light, cleaned the surface it touched. This chemical formula is now used in several Household Care brands.

- **Assignment:**
  
  Using the phrase ‘Powered by Light’ as inspiration, you are to design product or service concepts that either promotes better use of this technology, or clearly communicates the benefits of this technology in either the way it works or the way it is marketed.

- **Work Requirements:**
  
  You are required to pitch your finalised design concepts to a small group of Unilever employees at that will visit Northumbria University. In addition to this you are required to submit an illustrated report showing the development of your ideas and renderings and/or models of the finalised concepts.
At this time, the MDI course housed thirty students operating as a design consultancy - 5 of these students delivered the pitch to the group of visiting Unilever staff, and the other twenty five students were also part of the audience. As stated previously, specific details about this course will be elaborated in the following section.

When considering the suitability of this case study, it can be seen that all the sampling criteria stated in section 5.6 of the methodology was met; the designers from Northumbria University were required to develop concepts for each project and then pitch them to Unilever, both Unilever and the designers have operated internationally, and Unilever in particular operates on a very large scale.

8.1.2. Storytellers

8.1.2.1. MA Multidisciplinary Design Innovation (MDI)

The MDI course at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne has students coming from Business, Engineering and Design backgrounds. As part of the course syllabus, students are required to work in groups on live, internationally facing design projects, functioning as a design consultancy. Typically, the course houses fifteen to thirty students working in five or more groups of three. Groups are organised so that each member has a different disciplinary background. In some instances they work as one large group. With expertise from a variety of backgrounds, a holistic approach to designing is usually encouraged and adopted by each of the student groups. Due to this holistic skill set and the more modest cost in comparison to design consultancies, Unilever have on a number of occasion worked with the course on similar projects. Unilever acknowledges that they consider the work produced by the students to be on par with a majority of design consultancies that the organisation has worked with.
Design School thinking has provided us with a new set of tools to bring to life our technical challenges and more importantly the potential solutions.

(Steve Singleton, 2008: Science Area Leader, Unilever R&D Port Sunlight)

8.1.2.2. BA (Hons) Design for Industry (DFI)

The BA (Hons) DFI course is offered at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne, and houses undergraduate students aspiring to be industrial designers. As part of the syllabus, second and third year students are required to work in teams on live, internationally facing design projects, functioning as a design consultancy. Typically, each year group has 30 students working in 6 to 8 groups of four or five members. Historically, this course is well renowned for the creativity of its students and has long standing relationships with many organisations such as Unilever, who have repeatedly commissioned design projects such as ‘Beautifully Clean’.

It is important to mention that the DFI and MDI staffs at Northumbria University’s Design School have several agendas established in relation to the student’s learning experience, which centre on building skills in pitching design concepts through using storytelling approaches as a means of communication.

8.1.3. Design Stories

Section 1.4.1 sets out the criteria with which a design pitch can be judged in order to establish if it is suitable for this study. The following table matches the criteria with each of the three projects considered in this first case study.
**Table 20: Meeting the Storytelling Criteria in the Unilever Household Care Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>LOW LSM</th>
<th>BEAUTIFULLY CLEAN</th>
<th>POWERED BY LIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal is to present a design concept or series of design concepts</td>
<td>A series of product design concepts were presented providing different household cleaning experiences to the Indian and Chinese markets</td>
<td>Packaging, product and service design concepts were presented providing different household cleaning experiences to the English and Chinese markets</td>
<td>Product design concepts were presented providing different household cleaning experiences that promoted the benefits of a new technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events of the design concept in use, OR states of the design concepts</td>
<td>The pitch detailed various states of the design concepts’ development and then placed it in several events surrounding its use</td>
<td>The design pitches either; detailed various states of the design concept’s development and in others, detailed events surrounding its use, or both</td>
<td>The pitch detailed various states of the design concepts’ development and then placed it in several events surrounding its use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must have a human user of which the story is privy to</td>
<td>The design concepts were intended to be used by people wanting to clean their homes</td>
<td>The design concepts were intended to be used by people wanting to clean their homes</td>
<td>The design concepts were intended to be used by people wanting to clean their homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design</td>
<td>The design</td>
<td>Each team</td>
<td>The design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.1.4. Interview Participants

8.1.4.1. Hannah

Hannah has worked at Unilever, Port Sunlight for a total of 21 years. During the first 14 years two thirds of this time she has worked as a Chemist in a technical role. However, in the seven years she has begun to work as a Consumer Scientist, focusing on user insights for Unilever’s Household Care brands.

Prior to working as a Consumer Scientist, Hannah had no involvement in design project work. During her time as a Consumer Scientist she has seen outputs from design projects but up until the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project, has had no more
involvement than this. During the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project Hannah was part of a team from Unilever that liaised with designers from Northumbria University’s DFI course.

8.1.4.2. Harry

Harry has worked at Unilever, Port Sunlight for a total of 12 years. During this time he has worked towards developing technologies for the Laundry and Household Care brands.

Harry was part of a team from Unilever that liaised with designers from Northumbria University’s MDI course during the ‘Power by Light’ project. Other than this, he has only had minimal involvement in one other project where designers from the Royal College of Art collaborated with Unilever’s Laundry department.

8.1.4.3. Henry

Henry has worked at Unilever, Port Sunlight for a total of 25 years. Initially he worked in the Oral Care department measuring fluoride in saliva. Gradually he was promoted within this department where eventually he was responsible for the ‘Whitening’ project, concerned with developing teeth whitening technologies. After this, he moved to the Laundry department where he was charged with running the ‘Colour Care’ program. This was a science-based role that was concerned with textile finishes and dyes. Subsequently he took on a role that focused on understanding the importance of design. He has been in this role for both the ‘Laundry’ and ‘Household Care’ departments for the last 8 years.
Henry has worked on design projects since 2005. During this time he has worked with designers at Northumbria University on many projects including ‘Beautifully Clean’ and ‘Low LSM’, The Royal College of Art, Cambridge Design and various other London based design consultancies. The majority of these projects have focused on the question ‘How do we reinforce benefit through visual cues in the design of products and services?’.

The following table organises interview participants and the design projects that they discussed during the semi-structure interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant</th>
<th>Design Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Beautifully Clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Powered by Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Low LSM and Beautifully Clean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2. Case Study 2: Unilever Laundry

8.2.1. The Research Unit

Similarly to their Household Care department, Unilever’s Laundry department, in their Port Sunlight based Research and Development Centre, also has a long standing relationship with Northumbria University, continually employing designers from their various courses to work on different design projects. During these projects, designers from Northumbria University have used storytelling during design pitches to communicate design concepts in various formats to employees at Unilever’s Laundry department. The following paragraphs detail information about the design projects, focusing on the semi-structured interviews with participants from this case study.
The first project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Black Bull’; it ran for a period of 6 weeks in 2012. Unilever’s Laundry department briefed design students from Northumbria University’s DFI course. An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  Advertising campaigns for cleaning products can often demonstrate how the technology works, promoting its superior quality. This does not always have to be done in a literal way.

- **Assignment:**
  The chemical formula in Unilever’s laundry brands is designed to disperse more easily and faster than its competitors, quickly lifting dirt from every area of the garments in a wash. You are to tell the story of this technology at work in an innovative way; you are free to interpret this in whichever way you see fit. It is intended that your creativity will help marketing staff to form advertising strategies that are novel.

- **Work Requirements:**
  You are to pitch your design concepts in a presentation format, of which staff from Unilever’s Laundry department will make up the audience.

At this time, the DFI course housed approximately thirty students who worked in 8 groups of 3 or 4 members. All the groups pitched their concepts through a multimedia presentation at the conclusion of their involvement in the project.

The second project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Easy Jet’; it ran for a period of 6 weeks in the year 2012. Unilever’s Laundry department briefed design students from Northumbria University’s MDI course. An overview of the design brief given was as follows:
• **Context:**

*Omo* is the brand name for a laundry detergent product in Brazil. The same product has the brand identity *Persil* in the U.K. Often, different cultures of the world dictate different marketing strategies, for example as Brazil has a much warmer climate than the U.K., Brazilian’s place greater value the freshness of laundered cloths.

• **Assignment:**

Often, in store demonstrations are a useful way to demonstrate the benefits of a particular product. However, this presents a problem with regards to laundry, as people do not have several hours to wait around and see the results from a wash. You are required to think of an alternative product demonstration that communicates the benefit of freshness to the Brazilian market for the brand *Omo*.

• **Work Requirements:**

You are to pitch your design concepts through a multi-media presentation, of which staff from Unilever’s Laundry department will make up the audience.

At this time, the MDI course housed 30 students operating as a design consultancy, working in 6 groups of 5 members. All the groups pitched their concepts through a multimedia presentation at the conclusion of their involvement in the project.

As with the first case study, this second case study fulfils the sampling criteria stated in section 5.6 of the methodology. The designers from Northumbria University were required to develop concepts for each project, and then pitch them to Unilever, both Unilever, and the designers have operated internationally and Unilever in particular operates on a global scale.
8.2.2. Storytellers

Design students from both MDI and DFI worked on these projects, however in comparison to the Unilever Household Care case study it is important to point out that a different cohort of students were employed from the first case study.

8.2.3. Design Stories

Section 1.4.1 sets out the criteria with which a design pitch can be judged in order to establish that it comprises an occurrence of storytelling as defined by this research study. This criteria has been set out in the left hand column of the following table, with the right hand columns describing how the design pitches from each project within the case study fulfill the criteria for storytelling.

Table 22: Meeting the Storytelling Criteria in the Unilever Laundry Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>BLACK BULL</th>
<th>EASY JET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal is to present a design concept or series of design concepts</td>
<td>Different design concepts for a story to demonstrate the way a technology works were pitched</td>
<td>Different design concepts for a product demonstration were pitched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events of the design concept in use, OR states of the design concepts development must be ordered</td>
<td>The events represented in the story demonstrated the different stages of the products function</td>
<td>The events represented in the story showed the various stages of a product demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must have a human user of which the story is privy to</td>
<td>The stories were created to inspire Unilever’s staff and involved the use of a</td>
<td>The product demonstrations were created to showcase the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 22: Meeting the Storytelling Criteria in the Unilever Laundry Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The design concept must reflect the interpretation(s)/perspective(s) of the designer or design team</th>
<th>Each team presented a differently interpreted story, yet all stories communicated the same core message; how the technology worked, demonstrating their individual interpretations/perspectives</th>
<th>Each team presented a different product demonstration, yet all demonstrations communicated the same core message; freshness, demonstrating their individual interpretations/perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>product designed for people to wash their clothes with</td>
<td>benefits of Omo to potential customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8.2.4. Interview Participants

#### 8.2.4.1. Laura

Laura has worked at Unilever, Port Sunlight for a total of 4 years. During this time she has worked solely in the Laundry department. Initially her role was a qualitative researcher but she has recently moved into a capability building area of product claims. Currently, she is also been working as a Project Coordinator for the research element of projects.

The only design projects that Laura has worked on are ‘Black Bull’ and ‘Easy Jet’, where she was part of a team that liaised with Northumbria University’s MDI and DFI courses.
8.2.4.2. Lucy

Prior to working for Unilever, Lucy worked as a Chemical Engineer. She has worked at Unilever for a total of 15 years. Initially, Lucy worked in marketing at their site in Brazil. In Brazil, Lucy worked for the Laundry department as a Project Leader, aiding in the building of a regional team. Eventually, this team developed its global reach to South America and eventually Latin America. Currently, Lucy works as a Project Leader in the Consumer Insight area of the Laundry department at the Port Sunlight based research and development centre.

Lucy has a lot of experience working on design projects. She has worked with designers from Northumbria University on projects such as ‘Black Bull’ and ‘Easy Jet’, The Royal College of Art, a fashion designer based in London, and many design consultancies. The range of projects that she has been involved in include straightforward packaging design through to holistic product and service design. In all instances, she liaised with designers, communicating briefs and providing feedback at various stages.

8.3. Case Study 3: Accenture Innovation Centre

8.3.1. The Research Unit

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 275,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$28.6 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013.

(accenture.com, 2013)
The Innovation Centre based in Accenture’s Fenchurch Street offices opened in 2012, serving as a venue for Accenture employees to host workshops aimed at teaching their clients how to innovate to meet the changing needs of the consumer. For each workshop or series of workshops that are run, Accenture employs design consultancies to provide them with brand identities; this can include commissioning products, films, illustrations or a whole series of touch points throughout a client workshop experience. The following paragraphs detail information about the design projects, focusing the semi-structured interviews with participants from this case.

The first project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Campaign Identity’, and it ran in 2012. Accenture briefed a London based design consultancy called ‘Someone’. An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  Accenture runs many series of workshops for different clients, in order to help them understand how to adapt to the changing needs of the consumer and remain competitive. Larger scale series of workshops need to have an identity that all client touch points are aligned to.

- **Assignment:**
  You are required to design a concept for the identity of one such series of workshops; this will include a name for the series of workshops, criteria for its identity (with which all other designed outputs can adhere to) and any relevant products or services that require use or delivery during the series of workshops.

- **Work Requirements:**
  You are required to pitch the concepts to Accenture on the given date.

Specific details about ‘Someone’ will be given in the following section.
The second project discussed in this case study was entitled ‘Digital Justice’, and it also ran in the year 2012. Accenture briefed several London based design consultancies called ‘Engage’, ‘Replay Films’ and ‘Tag Worldwide’. An overview of the design brief given was as follows:

- **Context:**
  Accenture has been made aware of the design concept for a new service entitled ‘Digital Justice’. We want to tell the story of this service in an innovative and engaging way, in order to help our client develop and market it.

- **Assignment:**
  You are required to develop a design concept for a story describing the ‘Digital Justice’ service in an innovative and engaging way.

- **Work Requirements:**
  You are required to pitch the concepts to Accenture on the given date, in the form of a multi-media presentation.

Specific details about ‘Engage’, ‘Replay Films’ and ‘Tag Worldwide’ will be given in the following section.

As with the first two case studies, the Accenture projects meets the study’s sampling criteria as stated in section 5.6 of the methodology. The designers from the various design consultancies were required to develop concepts for each project, and then pitch them to Accenture, both Accenture, and the design consultancies operate internationally and on a large scale.
8.3.2. Storytellers

The following paragraphs have been adapted from the design consultancy websites to provide an accurate background to the storytellers belonging to this case.

- **SomeOne**
  SomeOne is an award-winning London based design practice that strategically launches and protects brands worldwide. They work in many sectors, internationally, inventing and re-inventing brands for their client’s business challenges. They believe that through their work they shape the future, add value and signal change for their clients and in doing so are viewed as an asset rather than a cost. They believe that through their creativity they help organisations, products and services profit from changes creating monopolies for brands.

  *(someoneinlondon.com, 2011)*

- **Engage**
  Engage was established in 2007. It is preoccupied with digital landscapes, in particular making ‘the web’ more engaging, enjoyable and ultimately effective for all who use it. Over a five-year period their company grew to house eleven designers and win clients from a broad range well known organisations throughout the U.K. They have been awarded numerous times for their work and pride themselves on being highly committed and enthusiastic about every project they undertake.

  *(engageinteractive.co.uk, 2013)*

- **Replay Films**
  Ten years ago Replay Films operated as a television production company, whose programmes were broadcast worldwide. As interactive technologies developed so did their business proposition, now they describe themselves as communication designers. Essentially they adapted their production
values, storytelling abilities and communication skills for new Medias, enhancing their previous work. They have studios in Marseille and London’s West End. Their clients often describe them as having ‘the best of the old the best of the new’.

(replayfilms.co.uk, 2013)

- Tag Worldwide

Tag Worldwide partners some of the world’s most recognised brands in over 180 countries and in over 200 languages. Their clients include over 150,000 brand marketers, procurement specialists, and agency partners. They have identified themselves as a global leader in the brand services sector. They originally operated as a supplier to the advertising industry, and believe that due to this they have an inherent understanding of the creative processes and challenges facing many brands. Their integration with the world’s largest procurer of print, Williams Lea, has given them the global capacity and breadth of service to provide clients with greater marketing efficiency. Being a subsidiary of Deutsche Post DHL has also expanded their capabilities in terms of offering all the benefits of a global logistics leader.

(tagworldwide.com, 2013)

8.3.3. Design Stories

Again, the criteria set out in section 1.4.1 has been used to judge the design pitches belonging to this case in order to establish that they comprise an occurrence of storytelling as defined by this research study. As before, this criteria has been set out in the left hand column of the following table, with the right hand column describes how the design pitches from each project within the case study fulfill the criteria for storytelling.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>CAMPAIGN IDENTITY</th>
<th>DIGITAL JUSTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The goal is to present a design concept or series of design concepts</td>
<td>A series of design concepts aimed towards delivering an overall experience were presented</td>
<td>Design concepts for a story were presented as films and multi-media presentations, detailing the stages of a digital justice experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events of the design concept in use, OR states of the design concepts development must be ordered</td>
<td>States of concept developments were presented, culminating in finalised design concepts, and events of a client experience interacting with the concepts was also presented in a chronological order</td>
<td>The events represented the different stages of a digital justice experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must have a human user of which the story is privy to</td>
<td>The design concepts were intended to enhance the (human) user experience during attendance of Accenture’s workshop series</td>
<td>A human user is intended to go through a digital justice experience, and therefore each presentation was delivered from the perspective of a human character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The design concept must reflect the interpretation(s)/perspective(s) of the designer or design team</td>
<td>The design concepts presented represented the negotiation of the interpretations and perspectives of individual members of the group</td>
<td>Each design consultancy presented a different solution to the same design brief, demonstrating their individual interpretations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 23: Meeting the Storytelling Criteria in the Accenture Case Study

| The design concept may have a name (acting as a reference to the story) attached to it | n/a | The clients created names for each presentation in order to reference the design pitches |

#### 8.3.4. Interview Participants

#### 8.3.4.1. Amanda

Amanda has worked as an Analyst for Accenture since May 2011. Prior to working for Accenture, Amanda worked as a Project Manager in media, gas and oil companies.

Whilst working as an Analyst at Accenture, Amanda has been involved in three projects heavily related to design where she has liaised with many creative agencies. Prior to working at Accenture she had only been involved in one other design project where a digital advertising agency was looking to create a better user interface for their website, however, her involvement in this was minimal. ‘Digital Justice’ was the design project that focused much of Amanda’s interview.

#### 8.3.4.2. Anna

Anna has worked for Accenture since January 2008. For the majority of her time at Accenture, Anna was aligned to financial services working on IT projects specifically. However, over the last eighteen months she has been part of a small team task forced with setting up the Innovation Centre.
Anna has had no previous experience of working on design projects before those that were run with the Innovation Centre. ‘Campaign Identity’ was the design project that focused much of Anna’s interview; where she liaised with the design consultancies on behalf of Accenture, providing the brief and feedback at various stages.

8.4. Summary

Chapter 1 has introduced the cases used in this research study: Unilever Household Care, Unilever Laundry and Accenture. Each case’s research unit represents a working relationship between an organisation’s project team and a group of designers. Each project team is made up of different people with different experiences and backgrounds detailed in the ‘Interview Participants’ sections. Similarly each group of designers working with these project teams also come from varying experiences and backgrounds and are detailed in the ‘Storytellers’ sections. The design projects described represent a broad range of design briefs centred on the communication of service and product offerings. For each design project, designers pitched their concepts to the project teams using storytelling that meets the criteria set out in section 1.4.1. Although the specific details of these stories cannot be revealed due to commercially sensitive information, the researcher has viewed the relevant artefacts used to support the design pitches and in some circumstances the multimedia presentations and recordings of pitches described.
Thematic Analysis
9. Thematic Analysis

In all circumstances of qualitative data analysis it is important to demonstrate rigour through demonstrating a trail through the analytical process (Aroni et al., 1999, Koch, 1994, Attride-Stirling, 2001, Reicher and Taylor, 2005). The following chapter briefly describes the stages of the thematic analysis process carried out on the participant interview transcriptions. The stages described include how the transcripts were coded, how these codes were then grouped, and the validation exercises employed to ensure rigour in the analysis of data. The proceeding chapters detail the development of themes within the interview transcriptions, derived from the grouped code, drawing on specific examples within each area of inquiry. From these analyses, frameworks are constructed that relate storytelling approaches taken at the design pitch to the various impacts explored within each area of inquiry. The construction of these frameworks and their components are detailed in the final section of this chapter.

It is important to mention before detailing the coding process that the transcription of interviews was done by the researcher. Bird (2005) suggests that transcribing is a key stage of the analysis process in terms of familiarising the researcher with the data. Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) claim that it is necessary in order to develop the interpretative skills needed to analyse the data. Although many advanced strategies can be adopted when transcribing, such as those discussed by Atkinson and Heritage (1984) and Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998), for Thematic Analysis the primary concern is simply representing a true account of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Punctuation can play a significant role here as a misplaced full stop or comma has the potential to change the meaning of a sentence (Poland, 2002, Edwards and Lampert, 1993).
9.1. The Coding Process

Coding is also viewed as a key stage in the analytical process in terms of familiarising the researcher with the data (Miles and Huberman, 2002). Therefore, a manual coding strategy involving reading and rereading the transcriptions was employed rather than using available coding software (Kelle, 2004, Seale, 2000). As with the pilot study, every time during the interviews that storytelling approach was mentioned, code was generated using either direct quotation or truncated prose. Using direct quotation to generate codes will ensure the preservation of the participant’s points of view when analysing the data (Horsfall et al., 2001, Leininger, 1994). The following table illustrates the code generated when discussing each area of inquiry for the first case study, Unilever Household Care.

Table 24: Initial Code from Unilever Household Care Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Initial Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Understanding</td>
<td>A play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cartoon images of an imaginary person or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filming live action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flip-book, frame by frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humour distracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than just PowerPoint videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not bound by convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking about it as a performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using humour to make typically dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 24: Initial Code from Unilever Household Care Case Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demosntrating Value</td>
<td>Cartoon images of an imaginary person or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filming live action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flip-book, frame by frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using humour in an un-distracting way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More semiotics than just words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than just PowerPoint videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using humour to make typically dull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tasks seem more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varied Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating Critique</td>
<td>Experience driven, but different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having a believable background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imagery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life journey of the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People interacting with the product more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing the scenario of a problem that the product resolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is its aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where has it evolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging More Holistic Thinking</td>
<td>Being different but also meeting the company’s expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than just a storyboard –</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24: Initial Code from Unilever Household Care Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>something less linear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting yourself in the role of the consumer in a play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of different approach seeming comical and therefore of little value (with marketing audience)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-playing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing evolution from an insight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing something the company could not produce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each code represents a storytelling approach that contributed towards the impact explored by an area of inquiry. For example, the code ‘A play’ categorised in the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ highlights an instance where a participant suggested that using a play as an approach to storytelling delivered an understanding of the design concept. This does not mean however, that responses suggesting an approach to storytelling was detrimental to a certain impact have been left out. In these instances the code presented is expressed inversely. For example, when a participant suggested that the value of a design concept was less obvious due to a storytelling approach solely reliant on words, the code ‘More than just words’ was generated, expressing that more than just words were required to demonstrate value.

When comparing the sets of code generated from each case study, it can be seen that parallel code has been produced within all areas of inquiry, meaning that many of the same approaches to storytelling were related to the impacts explored by the areas of inquiry across all cases. To ensure a rigorous process, the transcriptions from each case study were reread looking for code generated by the other two case studies. This coding process was undertaken over a six month period where a constant rereading of case transcriptions occurred to ensure that all relevant
instances of the discussion, where storytelling approach had been related to an area of inquiry, had been used to generate appropriate codes with a consistent method across all three cases. A full set of tables detailing the initial codes generated from each case study can be found in the appendix.

9.2. Grouping Code for Potential Themes

During the coding exercise, for each case and within each area of inquiry, codes were sorted and resorted into groups exploring potential themes in the discussion of storytelling approach. The following table groups the code generated from the first case study, Unilever Household Care, into a set of potential themes.

Table 25: Grouped Code from Unilever Household Care Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Potential Theme</th>
<th>Sorted Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Understanding</td>
<td>Diverse/Different</td>
<td>Cartoon images of an imaginary person or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flip-book, frame by frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than just PowerPoint Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not bound by convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varied Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Humour Distracting</td>
<td>Using humour to make typically dull tasks seem more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Demonstration</td>
<td>A play</td>
<td>Filming Live Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating Value</td>
<td>Diverse/Different</td>
<td>Thinking about it as a performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More semiotics than just words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More than just PowerPoint videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varied Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cartoon images of an imaginary person or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flip-book, frame by frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filming Live Action</td>
<td>Filming live action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Humour distracting</td>
<td>Using humour to make typically dull tasks seem more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating Critique</td>
<td>Detailing Concept Development</td>
<td>Life journey of the product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is its aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is the benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Where has it evolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User’s Perspective/Experience</td>
<td>Experience driven, but different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having a believable background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People interacting with the product more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing the scenario of a problem that the product resolves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging More Holistic Thinking</td>
<td>Detailing Concept Development</td>
<td>Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing evolution from an insight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse/Different</td>
<td>Being different but also meeting the company’s expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sections of transcription used to generate codes and the discussion accompanying them were reread to establish groups of codes that related storytelling approaches to the areas of inquiry in similar ways. For example, in the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, ‘Diverse/Different’ was established as a potential theme, meaning that diversity or difference in storytelling approach had led to the delivery of an understanding of the design concept in many instances. In some instances this link had been made explicitly where participants stated that diversity was paramount to the delivery of understanding. In other instances it was implicit, for example when a participant stated that a novel approach to storytelling such as using a flipbook had enabled the delivery of an understanding. Both of these codes suggest that diversity and difference are related to the delivery of an understanding.

As before, to ensure a rigorous approach, each of the case studies was revisited to see if alternative groups could be formed with potential themes connecting with the other two cases. This grouping exercise was also undertaken over a six-month period where a constant revisiting of each case’s set of codes was conducted in order to ensure all similarities and differences between the cases had been explored. The finalised themes for each case with specific examples from the

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**Table 25: Grouped Code from Unilever Household Care Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role-play</th>
<th>Risk of different approach seeming comical and therefore of little value (with marketing audience)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeing something the company could not produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than just a storyboard – something less linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>Putting yourself in the role of the consumer in a play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role-playing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interview transcriptions are detailed in the proceeding chapters. A full set of tables detailing the different code groupings codes for each case study can be found in the appendix.

9.3. Development and Validation

Rereading the transcriptions in light of devising potential codes and revisiting exercises in light of potential themes allowed the development of the analysis along several different lines.

Firstly, it became clear that some code did not relate to a storytelling approach and therefore was omitted, such as ‘Professionalism’ sorted into the theme ‘Not Confused’ for the area of inquiry ‘Demonstrating Value’ in the Accenture case study. Upon closer inspection, it transpired that this was mentioned in relation to the appearance of a designer delivering the pitch rather than a specific approach taken with regards to the delivery of a story. Secondly, it became clear that after code had been grouped into a particular theme it was discovered to fit into another. For example, code belonging to the theme ‘Creativity’ within the area of inquiry ‘Stimulating Critique’ for the Accenture case study could also fit into the theme ‘Diverse/Different’, established for the area of inquiry ‘Stimulating Critique’ in the Unilever Laundry Case Study. Discoveries such as these helped to understand which themes had the strongest presence across multiple cases. Finally, some code had been incorrectly sorted into a particular theme. For example, the code ‘Putting concepts into scenarios’ was sorted in the theme ‘Full Journey’ for the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ in the Accenture Case Study. When rereading the transcription that this code had come from, it was clear that it related to an acknowledgement of ‘User’s Perspectives and Culture’, a theme established for the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’ in the Unilever Household Care Case Study.
This constant rereading of transcriptions and revisiting of analysis exercises was also supplemented by two other validation exercises.

Firstly, the interview transcriptions and a summary of the coding and potential themes was sent to each interview participant for feedback to eradicate any misunderstandings and misinterpretations and also to ensure that all the information discussed covered all the points they had wished to make in response to the questioning. All reasonable additions and changes to the transcriptions, codes and themes suggested by the interview participants were included, ensuring a higher degree of accuracy in the analysis. As well as the transcriptions, the conclusions drawn from the analysis was shared with the interview participants to check that they represented accurate descriptions of the interpretations shared. Checking back with participants in this way reinforces a rigorous analytical process (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2002).

Secondly, the method with which code was created and a copy of the interview transcripts was given to a person impartial to the research study, so that they could produce a set of initial codes. Comparing the two sets of coding gave validation that the coding exercise had been carried out accurately and was free from bias. The following paragraph is the instruction that was given to this impartial person, along with a copy of the interview transcriptions.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR GENERATING CODE:**

1. **Read through the transcripts to familiarise yourself with the data.**

2. **Highlight all instances where an approach to storytelling is related to an area of inquiry** (Delivering Understanding, Demonstrating Value, Stimulating Critique and Encouraging More Holistic Thinking). **Approach to storytelling in the instance of this research study is defined as; a tangible technique with regards to the construction of a story; such as the use of a storyboard or an**
edited film, or an intangible technique with regards to decisions about the content of a story; such as the use of a metaphor or a particular focus on one aspect of the design concept or even a belief of what should be included and what should not.

3. Use direct quotation or truncated prose to produce code that describes the approach to storytelling being discussed.

After this exercise had been completed, it was apparent that coding had been carried out accurately as there were only small differences between the two sets of code. In almost all circumstances the same passages in each of the interview transcripts had been highlighted with only minor differences between the wordings of the code. There were no instances where the impartial person had highlighted passages and generated code in addition to what had already been found, however there were several instances where they had not highlighted passages to generate code that had previously been used to do so. In each of these instances the previously generated code was scrutinised, judging whether or not an approach to storytelling was being related to an impact and whether or not it was appropriate to the context of the research study. The following table gives an example of the differences and similarities found between the developed code for Harry’s interview transcript from the Unilever Household Care case study and the impartially generated code:

Table 26: A Comparison of Code to Impartially Generated Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Developed Coding</th>
<th>Impartially Produced Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivering Understanding</td>
<td>Not starting with an unveiling of the product</td>
<td>Not jumping straight in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using the end user and their belief systems to provide a context to the story</td>
<td>User belief systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describing cultural moments in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Table 26: A Comparison of Code to Impartially Generated Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Generated Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>- Props to the story</td>
<td>- Cultural moments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Realism</td>
<td>- Physical representations rather than PowerPoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Demos and mock-ups as part of the story</td>
<td>- Images/models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Touch and smell</td>
<td>- n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Interactive and real</td>
<td>- Demos and mock ups of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thinking about it as a performance</td>
<td>- n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dynamic</td>
<td>- As interactive and as real as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A play</td>
<td>- Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating Value</td>
<td>- Using home environment</td>
<td>- n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Visual representations and imagery</td>
<td>- Visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Different to standard practice at Unilever</td>
<td>- Less business PowerPoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- More semiotics than just words</td>
<td>- More physical interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulating Critique</td>
<td>- Using traditional and cultural celebration from the end user</td>
<td>- Concept of using a relevant setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community as scenarios in the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lifestyle</td>
<td>- Life journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Life journey of the product</td>
<td>- n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging More Holistic Thinking</td>
<td>- Role-playing</td>
<td>- Role-playing and daft things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Putting yourself in the role of the consumer in a play</td>
<td>- Put yourself in the place of a type of consumer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 26: A Comparison of Code to Impartially Generated Code

| More than just a storyboard – something less linear | Not conventional or linear |

As can be seen, almost all code is paralleled and in some instances, the very same wording or quotations have been used. However, instances where the impartial code reads ‘n/a’ demonstrate times where code was not paralleled. For example, for the area of inquiry ‘Delivering Understanding’, one unparalleled code reads ‘Touch and smell’. As this code was generated from a passage that elaborated the previous point, which had generated the code ‘Demos and mock-ups as part of the story’, it is possible that the impartially generated code had simply overlooked this description of storytelling approaches. As it was said as just one example of the qualities that a demo and or mock-up could bring to a story it was therefore important to include, as the interview participant was suggesting that giving the audience an experience of the touch and smell of a product can aid in delivering an understanding of it. The circumstances where the wording is different, simply demonstrates a deeper insight in the developed code. For example, for the area of inquiry ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’, a developed code reads ‘More than just a storyboard’ whereas the parallel impartial code reads ‘Not conventional’. Although the impartial code more closely represents the written transcript, the interview participant was pointing to a storyboard at the time he was making the point about being less conventional; therefore enabling the developed code to be more specific.

9.4. Constructing the Frameworks

Using this thematic analysis, a series of five frameworks has been constructed - One for each area of inquiry (Delivering Understanding, Demonstrating Value, Stimulating Critique and Encouraging More Holistic Thinking) and one all-
encompassing framework focusing on the themes in storytelling approach that were found in multiple cases.

Each framework has been constructed in the same way:

1. The top row states the impact(s), explored by each area of inquiry, which the framework has as its focus (Delivering Understanding, Demonstrating Value, Stimulating Critique, Encouraging More Holistic Thinking or all four).
2. The bottom row states the themes in storytelling approaches that were discussed in reference to the stated impact(s).
3. The middle row states the qualities given to a design pitch by a storytelling approach that has led to the stated impact. These qualities have been interpreted from the discussions captured by the interview transcripts.

For example, using a diverse/different approach to storytelling in terms of mode (i.e. a flip book rather than a PowerPoint presentation) was suggested to make a design pitch more memorable and in doing so helped to establish a clear understanding of the design concept being presented. Therefore, ‘Diverse/Different Mode’ is placed in the bottom row with a line drawn from it to ‘Memorable’ in the middle row, with a line drawn from it to ‘Delivering Understanding’ in the top row.

The following chapters discuss the themes in storytelling approach for each case, in relation to each area of inquiry. By exploring specific examples within each case, the qualities given to the various design pitches by the storytelling approaches used, which led to the impact being explored, are determined. All examples discussed provide the relevant quotation from interview transcripts to evidence the analysis, in accordance with Rice and Ezzy’s (1999) and Foster and Parker’s (1995) perception of ensuring validity in research. Each chapter deals with a specific area of inquiry and culminates in the generation of a framework.
Influences on Delivering Understanding
10. Influences on Delivering Understanding

When considering the successful delivery of an understanding of a design concept, participants discussed many different storytelling approaches used at the design pitch. During the analysis of the Unilever Household Care case study transcriptions, many different themes began to emerge within these discussions.

Firstly, a theme that came through during this case study was the benefit of using a diverse or different approach. When asked about the delivery of an understanding of a design concept, all participants were compelled to highlight the interest in a design pitch that a diverse or different approach to storytelling could provide.

In Henry’s discussion, he considers why some design pitches are more memorable than others and then states quite simply, ‘In Unilever, we are PowerPoint videos. In design you are everything’. It is his belief that presentations must be memorable to foster an understanding and that the more alternative the format for storytelling, the more memorable it will be. Harry alludes to the same point in his discussion as well, suggesting that designers should ‘Move away as much as you can from just showing slides or videos’. This suggestion is made in particular reference to the design pitch he observed from the ‘Powered by Light’ project. In this instance students presented their concepts in the format of a PowerPoint presentation and a series of videos. The PowerPoint focused on communicating research around the advances in chemical engineering relevant to cleaning, and then displayed sketchwork around initial design concepts for applicators. Small videos were used to reinforce the emotional references they believed were associated with the cleaning experiences that their design concepts for applicators delivered. When considering how successfully this delivered an understanding of the design concepts, Harry felt it might have been more successful in the format of ‘a play’ as this would have been more ‘dynamic’. When considering the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project, Hannah makes a similar observation. When talking about the formats of the various design pitches, she states that ‘a lot of the groups did video
presentations, which I thought was a fantastic idea. Because it was so much more engaging for the audience than somebody stood there actually talking about what they’d done’. In all these examples, it is explicit that each participant is looking for a diverse or different approach when it comes to the delivery of a story at the design pitch, and in all instances this is related to the successful delivery of understanding because an alternative format is believed to be more engaging and therefore more memorable. However, it is important to acknowledge that diversity and difference can have different meanings to different people, depending on their previous experiences. At the design pitch for the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project, Hannah found the video presentations engaging. Whereas at the design pitch for the ‘Powered by Light’ project, Harry found the video presentations uninspired and thought that a play may have been more appropriate. When looking to their professional backgrounds, this could be explained due to the fact that Harry has greater experience of working with designers and so a design pitch delivered using a video may not seem as diverse or different to him. Therefore, in wanting to take an approach perceived as diverse or different when delivering a design pitch, it is crucial to have an understanding of the audience’s prior experiences of design pitches.

Using physical demonstration was another storytelling approach that became a theme in the participants’ discussions on the delivery of an understanding of a design concept. As outlined previously, Harry suggests that a play could have represented a more dynamic format with which to deliver the pitch of the ‘Powered by Light’ project. As well as suggesting that this would have been more dynamic, he also suggests that ‘there is a lot of power in doing small demos or mock-ups’ as making the experience physically ‘real’ will aid the delivery of an understanding. Whilst discussing the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project, Hannah also draws attention to the physical artefacts created by the designers. She explains that in spite of having preferences for certain concepts, there was a clear value in having physical artefacts to support the storytelling at the design pitch, in terms of delivering an understanding of the design concepts. Henry also briefly mentions ‘filming live
*action*’ as one way in which a story can deliver an understanding of a design concept more successfully. As evidenced, at some stage in their discussions, all participants draw reference to approaches to storytelling that showcase ‘real’ experience, whether this be a demonstration of interaction with an actual physical object during the pitch or presenting a film of this interaction, and all reference this in relation to the successful delivery of an understanding of the design concept.

Finally, simplicity and humour are also related to the delivery of an understanding of the design concept. This occurs only in Henry’s discussion, however, due to the amount of experience Henry has of observing design pitches spanning over a fifteen year period, it is worthwhile highlighting the conclusions he came to in relation to these themes. Firstly, he introduces simplicity as an overarching requirement for a design pitch in relation to his discussion of other approaches to storytelling that foster understanding, stating that *‘it has got to be simple, because if it is too complex, or uses too many different things, it can be confusing as to what is the message’*. Secondly, in relation to humour he discusses the negative and positive influences this can have on the delivery of an understanding of the design concept. He recalled a design pitch that presented a concept for a clothes tag that could measure levels of dirt when attached to the belt buckle of trousers or jeans. A film was used to put this concept in a user scenario where a couple wearing these tags were separated during an excursion to a city. When they were reunited, the tag line ‘get together dirty’ appeared on screen. Henry recalls that this made him laugh out loud, but that ultimately the humour was distracting, countering an understanding of the concept. After considering this, he suggests that washing clothes is a typically dull task and that humour can be a useful way in which to make a design pitch more engaging and memorable but that it is important to use humour to support the message of the story rather than as a distracting addition.

Whilst analysing the Unilever Laundry case study transcriptions, an alternative set of themes was established within the discussions that related storytelling approaches to the delivery of an understanding of a design concept. Firstly, there
was great emphasis placed on using semiotic environments to create an appropriate mood. In Lucy’s discussion of the ‘Easy Jet’ project, she suggests that a story told at a design pitch is more successful in delivering an understanding of the design concept if the mood of the story is aligned with the mood of the brand, in this instance Surf. As this was a failing of the ‘Easy Jet’ project, when asked how to create this mood, Lucy begins to explain that different layers of semiotic environments should be considered such as music and colours in visual imagery. She believes that through doing this, designers can produce a ‘Completeness of the picture’, and that it is due to their abilities to do this that she employs them. Laura discusses an example of a design pitch from the ‘Black Bull’ project where the analogy of a children’s football match is used to describe how particles of the detergent spread across a garment, covering much ground at great speed. Reasons that she recalls for this particular story delivering a clear understanding are: the use of a voice over (delivered in the style of football commentary), and the visual imagery of a washing machine used to make it appear that the football match is taking place inside. Similarly to Lucy, she suggests that relating the story to the context of Laundry, through manipulating semiotic environments in this way, contributed to the successful delivery of an understanding of the design concept.

Further to the idea that semiotic environments must be manipulated to create appropriate moods, there is reason to suggest that it is also important to simultaneously create a distinct style. As stated previously, Lucy suggests that the design pitch delivered during the ‘Easy Jet’ project failed to deliver a clear understanding of the design concept because semiotic environments such as music and colour in visual imagery were not used to create an appropriate mood. However, she also offers further reasoning stating that the use of semiotic environments was simply ‘flat’, meaning that they lacked a sense of style. On reflection of the ‘Black Bull’ project, Laura makes a similar point stating that ‘they have the capability, or the ability, to make something look a lot prettier’. However, it is important to mention that using a distinct style is not enough to convey a clear understanding on its own, as Laura states, ‘People are clever, you can’t bamboozle
them with pretty’. Therefore, having a distinct style can only enhance the clear delivery of an understanding of the design concept; if the concept is fundamentally flawed, this would be obvious in spite of a distinct style.

Another theme that emerged within the discussions of this case study, relating storytelling approach to delivering an understanding of the design concept, was the acknowledgment of users’ perspectives and culture in the design pitch. Laura suggests that although she believed the design pitches belonging to the ‘Black Bull’ project delivered a clear understanding, this could still have been enhanced if they were more compelling. When she suggests how to make stories more compelling, she discusses the use of cultural references. She explains that it is important to her that she can understand how a concept relates to the culture of its market, and whether or not she believes the design concept’s proposition would be understood by that market: ‘The football analogy probably will, especially in Brazil’. As Unilever are a global company, they have to consider the many cultures of their users; Laura believes Unilever are more likely to gain a clearer understanding of a design concept if a story told about it explicitly relates to the culture of its market. Similarly, Lucy suggests that one way in which she judges the story of a design pitch is to gain an understanding of how aligned she is with the designers, in terms of an understanding of context. By context she means either the brand, the challenge set by a brief, or the theme set by the design brief. As design briefs constructed by Unilever can describe particular markets, this constitutes part of the context of which she wants to evolve her understanding.

Building on the previous points, we can see that the design pitch using the football analogy is mentioned several times by Laura as delivering a clear understanding of the design concept because it explicitly relates to the culture of the Brazilian market and uses semiotic environments to create both an appropriate mood and distinct style. So it must not be ignored that the use of an analogy can be a useful tool in terms of delivering an understanding. Lucy explains when reflecting on the design pitches using analogy from the ‘Black Bull’ project, that if she were to describe the
design concepts ‘without a video, its far more difficult’. Similarly to the previous case study, Lucy also draws attention to the diverse or different approach of the designer. In summarising the points that she makes in relation to the design pitches and how they deliver an understanding of the design concept, she proposes, ‘when I see something, that not necessarily I could create myself, it really helps us’. This would indicate that whether through using semiotic environments to create an appropriate mood and a distinct style, using cultural references or analogy, she expects designers to be original. That originality then helps to foster her understanding of the design concept because, in her own words, she is a ‘technical’, ‘boxed-up’ person.

When analysing the interview transcriptions from Accenture, the final case study, another set of themes emerged relating storytelling approaches to the delivery of an understanding of a design concept. Firstly, there was much discussion around the inclusion of the design brief in the design pitch. In Amanda’s discussion she suggests that the story ‘has to relate back to what the objective of the commission was’. By ‘objective of the commission’, she means the design brief. She goes on to describe that drawing these relations throughout the story can convey an understanding of the design concept as it reveals the designers interpretation of the brief that was set. Similarly, Anna also stresses the importance of making this relation. She describes that during the project ‘Campaign Identity’, it was the relations made to how particular aspects of design concepts fulfilled different criteria of the brief that conveyed a clear understanding of the design concept to her when observing the brief. Part of the reason that both Amanda and Anna suggest this is necessary, is that designers may have an alternative interpretation of a brief, and so it is important to understand what this interpretation is in order to understand the value of the design concept.

Developing the previous point, both Amanda and Anna explain that a diverse or different approach taken by designers is also linked to the delivery of an understanding of the design concept. In showing a unique interpretation of a brief,
and then explaining how a design concept fulfils this, is one way in which diversity or difference can be embedded in the story told at the design pitch. Amanda explains that she believes designers should see things in a different way to Accenture, and therefore judges the value that they add to Accenture through their originality. Consequently, when she observes a design pitch, she asks, ‘why are they distinctly different’? If she cannot see originality, she is less likely to understand the design concept as she cannot appreciate how value is being added. When explaining this further, she discusses how many design agencies fail to do this, and that it is those that can which are more likely to gain her repeat employment. Anna, in her discussion of the ‘Campaign Identity’ project, makes a similar point. When discussing how successful the design pitch was in delivering an understanding of the design concept, she kept reiterating the point that it was, ‘not the sort of thing you’d expect from Accenture’. When designers used the story to highlight diversity and difference, this conveyed an understanding of the design concept and its proposition to Anna.

To build further on the idea that the brief needs to be included in the pitch to convey an understanding of the design concept, it could be suggested that ‘signposting’ in general should be included in a design pitch. The example given by both Amanda and Anna of signposting is when an interpretation of a brief is delivered at the beginning of a pitch and then referenced at various stages throughout the design pitch, revealing how certain aspects of a design concept respond to the interpreted criteria. However, this is only one way in which signposting can be used; an overall structure to the design pitch could be introduced and then referenced later on, a timescale could be introduced and then used to reference stages of a design concept’s deployment or an overall budget could be introduced and then different aspects of a design concept could be related to cost. Anna states simply that the designers she has worked with ‘always start off their presentations by outlining what they are going to tell us’. Organising the story of the design pitch in this way allows a clear understanding of the design concept, through revealing an understanding of what the designers believe the expectations
of the client are. This could be the criteria of a brief, the restrictions of a budget, and the boundaries of timescale or various elements of them all.

Another theme that emerged in this case study that contributed to the successful delivery of an understanding of the design concept was detailing the development of concepts. Anna explains that for the ‘Campaign Identity’ project, designers clearly demonstrated how they had ‘built upon ideas’. The concept she discusses specifically is that Accenture employees holding a series of workshops during the campaign should send out invitations that reinforce the message of the workshops. This idea developed into the proposition of a wooden box with a hole in it, and then later - various components sent separately for each workshop that could fit together. The discussion of various stages of this idea’s development conveyed a clear understanding of the design concept to Anna.

In reference to the design concept for an invitation, Anna also stated that physical props were used to establish the ‘look’ and ‘feel’ of the concept and that these tactile elements were useful in delivering an understanding because they demonstrated the emotional benefit to the user. When reflecting more generally on design pitches, Anna suggests that a focus on the ‘look’ and ‘feel’ of a design concept can ensure the delivery of a clear understanding. When describing how ‘look’ and ‘feel’ are conveyed, she reiterates that it is through user interaction, and suggests putting concepts into scenarios that can reveal the emotional value of the interaction to the user. This was done during the ‘Campaign Identity’ project through having physical props available for the audience to interact with, and imagine how they would feel when receiving such an invitation. Another element discussed by Anna concerning the invite was that a range of visualisations for what the invitation could be were represented, and that the proposition of these ‘options’ meant that she started to consider which would be more appropriate and why. Therefore, due to an inquisitive nature, presenting options in this way willed the client to develop an understanding of how each concept could work in order to judge one against the other.
The themes in storytelling approach discussed in this section and the qualities that these have bestowed on the design pitches which have fostered the delivery of an understanding of a design concept is illustrated in the figure overleaf.
Figure 13: Storytelling Approach – Impact, Delivering Understanding
10.1. Recurrent Themes

After establishing potential themes, each case study was revisited with the other cases’ themes in mind. When examining the relationships drawn between storytelling approach and the delivery of an understanding of the design concept across all the cases, several overarching themes emerged. They are summarised below with the relevant examples.

10.1.1. Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and/or Culture

When discussing how design storytelling delivers an understanding of a design concept, participants from two cases highlighted the importance of ‘Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and Culture’.

Interview participant Harry, from the Unilever Household Care case study, proposed that explanations of users’ ‘belief systems’ inherent to their culture, has provided a valuable context to the story of design concepts in projects that he has been involved in, delivering a better understanding of them. The specific example he provides is when designers who worked on the project ‘Powered by Light’, began their pitch with a summary of insights, detailing the unique aspects of Chinese culture that steered the decision making whilst developing their concept for the Chinese market.

Similarly to this, interview participant Laura from the Unilever Laundry case study, proposed that when a design concept is pitched to a client, a judgement is made on its suitability for the market it is aimed at. Therefore, a design story that highlights an understanding of a particular user’s perspective or culture can provide confidence in the fact that the design concept will have relevance in the context of the market that the user belongs to. In turn, this wills the client to understand why the concept has been designed in such a way.
When relating this discovery to relevant literature, it can be seen that the contextualisation of a character’s perspective or culture is a technique that exists in many facets of storytelling. Turner (2008) discusses storytelling as a tool for achieving Transformative Learning, with a principal aim among other things to deliver an understanding to an audience. One example he provides of successful Transformative Learning is when during the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church used the perspectives of central characters in morality plays to distil an understanding of how to live a Catholic lifestyle. When looking more specifically at design storytelling, there is evidence of an appreciation of the value in acknowledging users’ perspectives and culture. Madsen and Nielsen (2010) have carried out much work in perfecting the construction of a persona-scenario, which in essence creates a character that uses a design concept with a specific set of perspectives. So this is stressed as an important story to tell during the design process in order to aid concept development, rather than during the pitch to aid the delivery of understanding.

10.1.2. Being Diverse/Different

Storytelling approaches that were ‘Diverse/Different’ also proved to be central in delivering an understanding of the design concept to the client, with participants from each of the three cases emphasising its significance.

When discussing the delivery of an understanding of a design concept, Henry from the Unilever Household Care case study makes the point that a design story is ‘diverse in terms of its ability to communicate’. In his explanation of this idea, he states that the designers he has worked with have presented their concepts in ways that Unilever employees could not. He describes a particular example where a designer used stop frame animation in their presentation, and whilst comparing this to a standard format of presentation between Unilever employees such as
PowerPoint, the designer’s approach was diverse. Due to this diversity, he found that the design story intrigued him making it a memorable pitch and so an understanding of it became embedded in his mind.

Lucy, from the Unilever Laundry case study makes a similar point. She describes an instance where designers presented in a ‘flat’ way, suggesting that this detracted from their capability of delivering an understanding of their design concept. When asked to describe what she meant by flat, she explained that she had seen so many presentations in this format. Therefore it is arguable that her attention was not held, and so an understanding of the design concept was not delivered. This would suggest that a storytelling approach that was different to the norm would have held Lucy’s attention during the presentation, allowing the delivery of an understanding of the design concept.

Furthermore, Amanda from the Accenture case study reinforces the idea that a diverse/different approach to storytelling will aid in the delivery of an understanding of the design concept. During the ‘Digital Justice’ project, Amanda observed multiple design pitches, where designers had been asked to produce an illustrative video of a service design concept for a digital justice system. She simply stated that the more diverse/different the approach to storytelling was the more engaged she was in the presentation. A higher level of engagement directly resulted in a higher level of understanding, and in the instance of this project that was a primary concern of the design brief.

When relating this discovery to relevant literature it is difficult to find any reinforcement that a diverse or different approach to storytelling will aid in delivering understanding. Diverse and different approaches to storytelling are more closely linked to eliciting organisational change (Denning, 2007b, Brown, 2009).
10.1.3. Detailing Concept Development

‘Detailing Concept Development’ emerged as another approach to storytelling that was central to delivering an understanding of a design concept in this research study, with participants from all three cases stressing its importance.

 Whilst discussing the project ‘Beautifully Clean’ from the Unilever Household Care case study, in response to being asked how the design pitch delivered an understanding of the design concept, interview participant Hannah stated that ‘firstly, it was the way that they talked about the background of it to begin with, and their journey through’. Similarly, in the Unilever Laundry case study, Lucy suggests that knowing the ‘evolution of ideas’ is valuable in delivering an understanding of a design concept and that it is in fact something she expects to see. Design concepts can go through a journey of development with the design team, before they are pitched to the client. Hannah and Lucy believe that having this journey explicitly part of the pitch contributed towards their understanding of the design concepts in terms of how they came to be.

 In her discussion of the project ‘Campaign Identity’ from the Accenture case study, Anna describes a design pitch where developmental stages of a design concept were presented and linked to the criteria of the original brief in order to demonstrate how it had influenced design choices that were made by the design team. When observing this, she was able to develop a clearer understanding of the design concept.

 Achieving transparency in a design process is currently a common concern among designers and design researchers. In a collaborative setting transparency can help establish a shared understanding between designers and clients during the design process (Causby, 2013). It therefore stands to reason that a design pitch should reveal aspects of the design process in a transparent way, as often people who have
not gone through the collaborative process from the client’s organisation may still observe its design pitch.

10.2. Summary

Upon analysing the cases in this research study, certain approaches to storytelling have given qualities to the stories told during the design pitches, which have reinforced the delivery of an understanding of the design concept to the interview participants.

Having a story that is ‘Attention Holding’ has proven to aid the delivery of an understanding of the design concept in the cases of this research study. It is logical that this should be the case and therefore as demonstrated previously, it is easy to attain evidence of this when looking at other secondary examples in literature. It appears that the characteristic ‘Attention Holding’ can be given to a story by using a ‘Different/Diverse’ approach in its telling. It is important to note that the approach must be ‘Different/Diverse’ in comparison to the approaches that the client is used to seeing in the context of their job. Linking a ‘Diverse/Different’ approach to storytelling and the impact ‘Delivering Understanding’ would seem less logical than linking ‘Attention Holding’ to ‘Delivering Understanding’, however ‘Diverse/Different’ and ‘Attention Holding’ can be one in the same with regards to story.

A story that has an element of ‘Intrigue’ has also proven to aid the delivery of an understanding of the design concept in the cases of this research study. A story with an element of ‘Intrigue’ appears to be easier to recall at a later date. So the characteristic of being ‘Memorable’ can be directly linked to the characteristic of having ‘Intrigue’. When a design story is memorable an understanding of it can become embedded in the client’s mind. This is due to the fact that an understanding can develop over time and therefore the ability to recall a story
becomes important for ‘Delivering Understanding’. The characteristic of ‘Intrigue’
can be given to a story through employing a ‘Diverse/Different’ approach in its
telling.

Having a story that is ‘Contextualising’ has also proven to aid in the delivery of an
understanding of the design concept in the cases of this research study. When a
story provides contextual information the client is given confidence in the
assumption that the designer has used appropriate criteria in developing a design
concept. With this knowledge, the client is willed to understand the design concept
as they can use the context provided in the story to rationalise why it is the way it
is. It appears that the characteristic of ‘Contextualising’ can be given to a story by
‘Acknowledging the User’s Perspective or Culture’ in the way it is told.

Being ‘Transparent’ about the design process in the design pitch has also proven to
aid in the delivery of an understanding of the design concept. Transparency can be
achieved through ‘Detailing Concept Development’ in the telling of the story. With
this knowledge, the client gains an understanding of what decisions were made and
why, during the process of developing the design concept.
Influences on Demonstrating Value
11. Influences on Demonstrating Value

Many different approaches to storytelling were linked to the demonstration of a design concept’s value. When analysing the interview transcriptions within each case, many potential themes began to emerge.

Concerning the Unilever Household Care case study specifically, there was much discussion that related acknowledging the user’s perspective in the story to the demonstration of value. When listing questions that a design pitch should explicitly answer in order to demonstrate the value of the design concept, Henry begins by stating, ‘What is the relationship to the marketplace’? By this, Henry means that the relationship between the users and the design concept need to be demonstrated. By relationship, he means more than just the function, for example a spray cleaner destroys the bacteria on the kitchen surfaces of the user, but in terms of a relationship, the user perceives the spray cleaner as making their house look beautiful. In this instance it is the intangible value of beauty that represents the relationship between the user and the design concept. Both Hannah and Harry also raised this point. Hannah explains that the design pitches that were more successful in demonstrating value during the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project had attempted to ‘translate it [the design concept] into a wider household care type audience’. When discussing how value was demonstrated in the ‘Powered by Light’ project’s design pitch, Harry states, ‘they got the idea about cleaning the home, and that this is about making the home a more pleasurable place’. In this instance, it is the intangible value of pleasure that represents the relationship between the user and the design concept.

Developing this revelation, it is clear that participants in the Unilever Household Care case study are judging the demonstration of value in an emotional rather than functional context. These emotional values were also preconceived for the specific brands that the design concept belongs to. ‘Beauty’ and ‘Pleasure’ were already established as valuable in Henry’s and Harry’s mind, and they judged the
demonstration of value within the design pitches against whether or not they had explicitly acknowledged these qualities. Therefore, this would suggest that in order to successfully demonstrate the value of a design concept, it should be tied to a particular brand and the value to the consumer already associated with that brand needs to be acknowledged. Henry summarises by saying, ‘ultimately the value for us is the value to the consumer’. In general, Henry believes that the value of the design concepts were demonstrated during the design pitches for the ‘Low LSM’ project because they didn’t move ‘into a space that wasn’t relevant to Unilever’.

Similarly to delivering an understanding, a relationship drawn between demonstrating value and storytelling approach was diversity and difference. When suggesting how further value could have been demonstrated during the ‘Powered by Light’ project’s design pitch, Harry states, ‘Again I come back to maybe; it was a bit too much PowerPoint presentation-y’. He goes on to describe how it could have demonstrated more value if rather than being a PowerPoint presentation, it was a play, with different scenes being acted out by the designers. As the message of the emotional benefit would not change, but simply be delivered in a different format, it is reasonable to suggest that extra value is being added simply because of a more diverse or different approach to storytelling. Therefore, value is also attributed to diverse and different approaches to storytelling as well as the communication of emotional benefits. Again, it is important to point out that for a design pitch to be diverse and different, an understanding of what would be perceived as diverse and different by the audience must be known.

Finally, the last relationship drawn between storytelling approach and the demonstration of value during this case study was detailing the journey of the products development in the design pitch. As Henry points out, a design concept develops against a set of criteria focusing on how to resolve issues for the consumer. For cleaning, these issues might be bad odour, spread of bacteria and so on. Hopefully, aspects of the design concept will have developed in response to the discovery of these issues. A scent may be added to mask bad odour, a spray nozzle
may be added to cover a greater surface area and destroy more bacteria. Each of these developments during the design process should be part of the story of the design pitch, in order for the client to see a complete picture of the value that the design concept represents. Henry emphasises the importance of this approach by stating, ‘what it shows is the journey. So the documentation that we see, this is the final thing, but prior to that, this is a hybrid of about four ideas’. This highlights the fact that when presented with the final concept, it can be more difficult to understand the values it represents without knowing how it has developed. In this example, Henry is referencing a document that presents the final design concept for a cleaning applicator. He acknowledges that the complete picture of value that this design concept offers was not delivered by this document, but through the design pitch which focused on telling the story of the design concept’s development and how aspects of four other concepts that tackled different issues were merged.

When analysing the Unilever Laundry case study transcriptions, an alternative set of themes relating storytelling approach to the demonstration of value began to emerge. Similarly, to the first case study, the relation to the consumer was highlighted as important.

When describing how a design pitch from the ‘Black Bull’ project demonstrated value, Laura states that ‘it was how it related to the market, mums, for children, stains, dirt’. Again, this relationship drawn was showcasing emotional qualities defined by the brand that the design concept sits within. However, developing this point, Laura begins to discuss value in relation to the perceived quality of a brand, rather than the emotional benefit it has for the consumer. ‘I think as well the brand is a premium brand. [...] So it has always got to reinforce that premium-ness, you have got to have an element of professionalism’. This indicates that Laura also judges value against the quality of the design pitch, not that a high quality design pitch automatically means a high level of perceived value, but that the quality of the design pitch has to match the quality of the brand for her to perceive value. She goes on to explain that this translates into to having highly ‘polished’ and ‘neat’
videos for the ‘Black Bull’ project, which represents a brand that she believes is premium.

Lucy reinforces both these points as well. She highlights the ‘Black Bull’ project’s design pitches as being particularly successful in demonstrating value, because when comparing them to the ‘Easy Jet’ project’s design pitches, there was a higher quality of finish. She describes this higher quality as including ‘soundtrack’, establishing ‘mood’ and including elements that were ‘funny’, rather than simply having a man stating, ‘you do this’, ‘you do that’ and so on. This would indicate that quality of finish is also better placed to demonstrate the value of a design concept to Lucy. She expands this point by stating, in reference to a design pitch from the ‘Black Bull’ project, ‘Whoever put that video on thought about it – thought that it was for a brand’. Again, this reinforces the idea that demonstrating value through quality of finish is not necessarily just about having a higher quality of finish, but having an appropriate finish for the particular brand that the design concept sits within.

Finally, when analysing the transcriptions from the Accenture case study, more themes emerged relating storytelling approaches to the demonstration of value. Unlike the other two cases, there is a link established between the value of a design concept and budget. Much discussion around the design pitches was about acknowledging budgets and using this acknowledgment to underpin the propositions being made at various stages of the pitch.

As Anna explains about the ‘Campaign Identity’ project, ‘we were planning on having around sixty workshops in the innovation centre under this theme, so although we didn’t want to cap their creativity, we needed to be sensible about cost’. Here, Anna is highlighting that she wants to see creativity in the design concepts, but that in order for her to appreciate the value of whatever this creativity might be, during the design pitch, the design concept must be related to cost. So returning to the example of the invitation, three different concepts might
be shown but in terms of a story, there needs to be a running theme, where each design concept for the invitation is discussed in terms of budget. Amanda raises a similar point in reference to the ‘Digital Justice’ project, although she could see some value in all the design concepts, the design pitch which related the concept to budget was ultimately the one that was chosen, as the value was more apparent.

As alluded to by Anna already, value was also judged against the level of creativity. Amanda reinforces this point when she was asked to consider the demonstration of value within each design pitch for the ‘Digital Justice’ project, irrespective of budget. When considering this, she begins to discuss the design pitch which used a very distinct style stating that they ‘had an amazing creative thing with a Sin City spin, but it was kind of one - too expensive and two - they might have gone too creative’. Building on the idea that value can relate to creativity when considering the format for storytelling at a design pitch, Amanda explains that although there is a desire for creativity you have to judge this against the end user (in this case a government client of Accenture). Ultimately, the ‘Sin City’ styled concept was deemed too ‘out there’ for this client, indicating that preconceived ideas about the user’s expectations also impact on the judgement of value.

The final point that Anna makes, relating the demonstration of value to the story told at a design pitch is the acknowledgment of wider implications. So for example, a design brief might set criteria for a design concept and an understanding of the design concept can be gained when relating the design concept to this set of criteria throughout the design pitch. However, the value of a design concept can be demonstrated if the design pitch also includes wider implications that are not necessarily covered in the brief. This demonstrates a level of understanding that the client may not have considered or thought to make explicit and can therefore be perceived as valuable. However, as Anna points out, in one circumstance a design concept ‘didn’t fit with our [Accenture’s] aspirations [...] as a client’. This demonstrates that although value can be perceived through demonstrating a consideration of wider implications during a design pitch, if the client has a notion
of these already and they don’t complement one another, there is a risk of that
design concept being disregarded.

The themes in storytelling approach discussed in this section and the qualities that
these have bestowed on the design pitches which have fostered the demonstration
of the value of a design concept is illustrated in the figure overleaf.
Figure 14: Storytelling Approach – Impact, Demonstrating Value
11.1. Recurrent Themes

After establishing potential themes, each case study was revisited with the other cases’ themes in mind. When examining the relationships drawn between storytelling approach and the demonstration of value of the design concept across all the cases, several overarching themes emerged. They are summarised below with the relevant examples.

11.1.1. Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and/or Culture

When discussing how design storytelling demonstrates the value of a design concept, participants from all three cases discussed the importance of ‘Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and/or Culture’.

When asked how the design pitch demonstrated the value of the design concept, Hannah from the Unilever Household Care case study explained that this was achieved when the points of the story describing features of the design concept were related to different users. An example she detailed was when an aspect of a packaging design concept in the project ‘Beautifully Clean’ demonstrated value in the fact that it was easier to press the trigger that sprayed the cleaner, and that this value became apparent when describing the use of the product from the perspective of an older person with arthritis. When a particular feature of a design concept is not explained in terms of how it relates to a particular user, its value might not be apparent, particularly if the observer of the story does not belong to the specific demographic of the user. Therefore, acknowledging the perspective of the user can provide contextual information, key in demonstrating the value of a design concept.

Lucy made a similar point to this from the Unilever Laundry case study, when discussing the demonstration of value in the design pitches from the project ‘Black...
Bull’. Lucy made a comparison between two separate design pitches that presented multi-media movies designed to communicate the way a laundry product worked. Each movie used an analogy representing the way particles of formula travelled through the clothing, lifting the dirt; the first used the analogy of children running around a football pitch and the second used the analogy of liquid travelling through a network of straws. Lucy believed that the value of the laundry product’s formula was demonstrated more effectively by the analogy of children playing football, as it related to the context of a particular user; a parent washing their child’s football kit.

Finally, Anna also reinforces this point from the Accenture case study. Rather than highlighting a specific example, Anna put simply that she believes that the value of design concepts is demonstrated when their design pitches demonstrate ‘an understanding of the client circumstance’. As the intended user in the projects she is discussing are Accenture employees, when she said ‘client circumstance’ she was referring to the context of Accenture employees.

In these examples, the placement of a user in the story of the design pitch can be described as introducing a character, with their unique perspective and culture ascribing characteristics. Relevant literature examining the creation of characters when telling stories about design concepts agrees with this method. For example, in Madsen and Nielsen’s (2010) description of a persona scenario, they state that the persona should be a typical user of the design concept, devised from user research. However, the function of the story that Madsen and Nielsen (2010) are discussing is to aid the design process, where the characteristics of a persona can help make decisions about the development of a design concept through the generation of ideas and shared understandings in a design team. With respect to the case evidence, it also appears that using stories with this approach to characterisation is effective in communicating the value of a design concept to the client.

When looking at literature exploring character generation, analogous to the context of a design pitch, it can be seen that the link to communicating value is more
apparent. For example, in Herskovitz and Crystal’s (2010) description of building a successful brand, they proclaim that brand value is communicated through establishing a central character with which a user can associate.

11.1.2. Being Diverse/Different

When discussing how design storytelling demonstrates the value of a design concept, participants from two cases discussed the importance of being ‘Diverse/Different’.

Harry from the Household Care case study discusses the design pitch from the ‘Powered by Light’ project stating that the value of the design concept did not shine through due to the fact that the presentation encompassed a ‘business PowerPoint presentation [that was] very wordy’. In his explanation of why this inhibited the demonstration of the design concept’s value it was clear that he wanted to see something more diverse, different from the standard forms of presentation delivered internally at Unilever. As a diverse and/or different approach to storytelling would be perceived as rare, as the form of the presentation is not standard in the context of the audience, this would suggest that value is associated with rarity and is therefore synonymous with the design concept that the diverse and/or different approach to storytelling is describing.

This also seems to be a preconception when looking at the Accenture case study. Amanda explains that in general, when Accenture is looking to commission a design consultancy they look for those that present work in a way that is ‘different from the millions of other agencies that are out there’. She is given the confidence that this diversity in approach is what will demonstrate value to Accenture. This reinforces the idea that rarity has an association with value and that a design concept presented in a diverse or different way will, by proxy, also be perceived as valuable.
It is difficult to find examples in literature that specifically tie diverse/different approaches of storytelling to demonstrating value with regards to a design pitch. However, in more general terms there is an acceptance that the more diverse/different the approach in disseminating information, the more effective it will be in achieving any desired impact (Denning, 2007b, Saunders and Stewart, 1990).

11.2. Summary

When analysing the cases in this research study, it appears that two approaches to storytelling have given certain characteristics to the stories told during the design pitches, which have been invaluable in demonstrating the value of the design concept to the interview participants.

Firstly, stories that are ‘Contextualising’ have proven to demonstrate the value of a design concept. From the point of view of interview participants across all cases, design pitches ‘Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and/or Culture’ provide circumstantial information with regards to a specific area of the user’s life that the proposed design concept will benefit: such as an easy to use trigger for an arthritis sufferer or an effective laundry detergent for a parent with active children. It would appear that this information is seen as critical in demonstrating value.

Secondly, storytelling approaches perceived as ‘Rare’ have also proven to indicate value. However, the evidence for this is entirely based on preconception. Participants from the Unilever Laundry case and the Accenture case suggest that a ‘Diverse/Different’ approach is desired when storytelling, and that the rarity of a ‘Diverse/Different’ approach would demonstrate value to them. However, in both cases, this was reasoned based on the fact that presentations they had viewed were similar to standard formats of presentations they saw on a regular basis, quashing their potential to demonstrate value.
Influences on

Stimulating Critique
12. Influences on Stimulating Critique

In relation to the stimulation of critique, participants discussed many different storytelling approaches across the three cases. Considering the Unilever Household Care case study, several themes began to emerge. Firstly, there was much discussion about the use of cultural references within a story for stimulating critical thinking.

Harry explains that during the ‘Powered by Light’ project, part of the design pitch referenced Diwali, a festival that is part of Indian culture. As the design concept being proposed was targeted at an Indian market, this cultural reference was introduced because there was a relationship between the design concept and the festival, this being that they both celebrated light. After explaining this, Harry stated, ‘That opened up a whole area to talk about, and you could see that moving forward’. Henry appears to make a similar point where he suggests that having a ‘believable background’ can help to open up areas for discussion. However he elaborates this point, not by discussing cultural references made within each story, but the stages of development for each concept that the designers presented. This suggests that for Henry to think critically around a design concept it is important for him to understand how the design concept has evolved. He goes on to explain that it is the revealing of the rationale behind each development of the design concept that communicates an insight and that these insights essentially represent the topics for critical discussion that are important to that design concept and possibly, other related products and services.

Harry discusses the design process that was undertaken by the designers during the ‘Powered by Light’ project and states that this was also a stimulus for critical thinking. He explains that the way his team used the design project was as a stimulus for discussion, and that rather than the end product, it was the process that highlighted important areas for him and his team to think about. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the design pitch would have stimulated critical
thinking in Harry if it had detailed stages of the design process, in very much the same way as the ‘Low LSM’ project did for Henry. As Henry points out, after the designers have pitched, that pitch is a ‘standalone’ output that will be used by the company, and so should incorporate all the key insights of the designers and their implications on the development of a design concept. Similarly, when Hannah discusses the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project, she suggests that certain pitches that discussed their insights got her thinking ‘it could be that, or it could be that’ and that it was looking at things ‘in a different light’ that represented a value to her as she was able to think critically around products due to these insights, rather than looking solely at the final design concept.

Finally, Henry also makes a connection between using imagery, such as analogy in a story and the critical thinking this can stimulate. When discussing the ‘Low LSM’ brief, he describes a design concept that was likened to an eagle; due to the superior quality over other spray applicators and because the shape of the spray vaguely represented the shape of an eagle’s beak. He said that when this analogy was introduced he began asking questions such as ‘what does the Eagle stand for, strength and all these things?’ Henry explains that these sorts of questions would have been stimulated had it been a ‘pigeon’, it was not the fact that it was an eagle specifically that got him to think critically, it was the fact that an analogy had been used. This indicates that using an analogy awakens a natural curiosity in Henry that invites him to think critically.

When analysing the transcriptions from the Unilever Laundry case study, themes also began to emerge in the discussions relating storytelling approach to the stimulation of critique.

Firstly, similarly to the Unilever Household Care case study, there was much discussion about detailing the developmental journey of the design concepts. When discussing the design pitches (a series of short videos) from the ‘Black Bull’ project, Laura explains that it would have been easier to start thinking critically around the
territory of the design concept had ‘cuts that didn’t make it’ been included in the design pitch. She explains that she expects to watch a video and then be able to discuss it critically, and that if she cannot do this and the video has to be explained to her, and then essentially it is not doing what it is supposed to. She thinks that knowing how the videos developed and were constructed would ultimately open up important areas for discussion. Although she believes that getting ‘spontaneous’ reactions to a design pitch with no explanation of its development can be interesting, ultimately a failing of the design pitches was not showing the development of the design concepts allowing her to compare her own critical thinking around associated issues to the designers.

Secondly, and also similarly to the Unilever Household Care case study is the relation made between using an analogy and the stimulation of critique. In her discussion of the ‘Black Bull’ project’s design pitches, Lucy emphasises the fact that an analogy of the washing process (where particles of detergent moving around garments were represented by a shoal of fish moving around a coral reef) got her to think critically about the design concept. ‘I’m never going to use that. But our mind-set is like, okay, where can I fit that? Because maybe I can’t offer you that, technically speaking, but I can use that for a presentation that we have with marketing that I want to explain’. This example demonstrates that even unrealistic ideas can introduce critical thinking that can lead to an output with some value. However, Lucy is also keen to point out that, it isn’t necessarily this analogy that stimulated critical thinking; it just directed an already critical mind-set.

Finally, Lucy also suggests that it is diversity in approach to storytelling that truly stimulates critique in her. When she elaborates this point, she explains that being diverse can mean any number of things for different people, supporting the idea that in order to use a diverse approach you must be aware of the experiences of the audience. She points out that something diverse is simply ‘engaging’ and unless you engage the audience, you will not be able to elicit any response, positive or negative.
A set of themes also began to emerge within the interview transcriptions from the Accenture case study. Firstly, similarly to the Unilever Laundry case study, there was emphasis placed on challenging the brief. Amanda states that she has never truly been inspired to think critically around a concept or project because design agencies she has worked with are ‘very scared that if they go too creative and do their own thing, that it’s not what you want, and we’ll go to somebody else for the commission’. It is her belief that design pitches that push the boundaries of the brief will inspire critical thinking, and essentially, this is what she desires from working with designers. Anna supports this proposition when discussing the ‘Campaign Identity’ project. She describes how elements of the design pitch were ‘add-ons’ and that they had not been requested during the briefing. However, she points out that it was due to these components of the design pitch, which pushed the boundaries of the brief, which allowed her to think more critically around the design concept, as there was now a series of options she had to consider. Anna also highlights that these ‘add-ons’ do not have to be feasible, for example, she explains that it was useful to consider the design concept for a wooden invite in terms of the qualities it represented, however it would not have been feasible to produce it. Although not experienced by Amanda, she too suggests that thinking about many options rather than one refined design concept would allow her to think more critically around a project. She suggests that when initial ideas are created they may not be developed in relation to thinking about the restrictions of a brief, however, she still sees a value in observing these as they may acknowledge certain insights that become lost when presenting a final concept. This supports the idea that developments of the design concept should be communicated during a design pitch, to highlight the insights leading to its development, and in doing so open up critical dialogue around important issues related to the project.

As well as these general proclamations about presenting options and earlier iterations of design concepts, Amanda discusses some more specific issues relating to storytelling approaches that have influence on their ability to stimulate critical thinking. Firstly, she suggests that a design pitch using Accenture’s corporate
terminology would make it easier for her to engage in a critical discussion around a design concept or project simply because that is how she is used to discussing things. Secondly, she also suggests that it can be inspirational when design concepts (if possible) relate to current trends in technology, such as ‘Google Glass’ being mentioned during the ‘Digital Justice’ project, because there already exists an interest in terms of critical discussion surrounding the latest technological developments relative to her area of work.

The themes in storytelling approach discussed in this section and the qualities that these have bestowed on the design pitches which have stimulated critique of the design concept is illustrated in the figure overleaf.
Figure 15: Storytelling Approach – Impact, Stimulating Critique
12.1. Recurrent Themes in Storytelling Approach

After establishing potential themes, each case study was revisited with the other cases’ themes in mind. When examining the relationships drawn between storytelling approach and the stimulation of critique about the design concept across all the cases, several overarching themes emerged. They are summarised below with the relevant examples.

12.1.1. Detailing Concept Development

‘Detailing Concept Development’ proved to be an approach to storytelling that was central in stimulating the critique of a design concept in this research study, with participants from all three cases emphasising its importance.

In the Unilever Household Care case study, when discussing the ‘Low LSM’ project, Henry explains that each design concept is discussed in terms of its evolution. He believed that this approach allowed a critical dialogue to flow as insights made by the design team surrounding the territory of the product were related to particular features of the design concept, providing a set of judgements he could agree or disagree with. For example, when the designers discussed the evolution of the packaging design, they explained that the colour red had been chosen due to the fact that red symbolises good fortune and joy in Chinese culture. Harry reinforces this idea by suggesting that in order to discuss something critically ‘the life journey of the product’ has to be known, including; the evolution of the concepts development, then how it is used once it is produced, and then even how it is disposed of. It would appear that in this case, the more that is known about a design concept, in particular its origin, the more comfortable participants felt about discussing it critically. Familiarity with the design process appears central in allowing critical discussion.
When comparing this to the Accenture case study, a similar discovery was made. When discussing the project ‘Campaign Identity’, Anna explained that she was more able to think critically about the design concepts when evolutionary stages of the designs were presented, no matter how unrealistic. For example, a wooden box with compartments for hidden messages was proposed as a concept for an invitation to Accenture’s workshops, although this was unrealistic in terms of cost, Anna felt that the message it delivered (this being that you may find out something you did not expect to) communicated an understanding of what they were trying to achieve and that it represented an important part of the evolution of the overall design. Therefore it would appear that familiarity with the design process, in particular the origins of ideas, was central in allowing critical discussion in this case as well.

In the Unilever Laundry case study, details of concept development were not shown as frequently in the design pitches. However, when discussing the ability to critique design concepts, Lucy suggests that the inclusion of ‘cuts that didn’t make it’, or in other words; earlier ideas during the evolution of the design concept, would help to stimulate critique.

Literature exploring the critique surrounding design concepts places an importance on the production of artefacts throughout a design process. Schön and Wiggins (2006) describe multiple artefacts such as a series of sketches or models as a representation of the critical reflective dialogue shared by the design team. It would appear that the presentation of these artefacts during a design pitch invites clients to engage in the critical dialogue surrounding these design concepts, which the design team had during their development. Previously, approaches to storytelling concentrating on a design concept’s development have been suggested to enhance the process of designing (Demian and Fruchter, 2009, Garcia et al., 2002), now it can also be appreciated that they too have the ability to engage clients in a critical dialogue.
12.1.2. Imagery, in particular Analogy

‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ also proved to be an approach to storytelling that was useful in stimulating the critique of a design concept in this research study, with participants from two cases emphasising its importance.

In the Unilever Household care case study, Henry describes a situation where an internal team at Unilever revisited the design pitch from the project ‘Low LSM’ in order to think critically about each design concept in order to further develop them. In his description he explains how the analogy of an eagle, used to represent the trigger application of a cleaner, was useful in stimulating critique. However, he was unable to articulate clearly why this was the case, he was just aware that this imagery had been useful in getting the internal team to start thinking critically about the design concept. When trying to bring reason to this insight it seems logical to suggest that when you are presented with imagery, there is a natural curiosity to work out why it has been used. So for example, the members of Henry’s team may have looked at the eagle with this curiosity and for example; likened the shape of its beak to the nozzle of the trigger, or the way it flies to the spray emitted from the trigger, or simply it’s poise to the shape of the bottle and its presence on the supermarket shelf. In doing this, the brain has begun to think abstractedly and in turn, critical dialogue has ensued.

This idea is reinforced in the Unliever Laundry case study where Lucy discusses the design project ‘Black Bull’. Similarly to Henry, she highlights an example of an analogy in a design pitch and explains that it was useful in stimulating the critique of a design concept. In this particular example, the design pitch uses footage of a shoal of fish to demonstrate the way a laundry detergent moves through a wash cycle, and an internal marketing team watched this in order to aid them in a critical dialogue geared towards developing a concept or a finalised television advert.
When looking at literature relative to this research study’s context, analogy is not specifically linked to critical dialogue surrounding design concepts. However, in the more general remit of storytelling in society many examples exist of stories told using analogy to inspire critical reflection, particularly in religion (Bleyl, 2007).

12.2. Summary

To summarise, with regards to this research study’s cases it appears that two key approaches to storytelling have equipped the design pitches with characteristics indispensable for stimulating critique around the design concepts in the interview participants.

Firstly, storytelling approaches that bring ‘Familiarity’ to the design process allowed interview participants from all cases to think more critically around the design concepts. This ‘Familiarity’ was achieved through ‘Detailing Concept Development’. Traditionally a design pitch will demonstrate a proposed design concept in use, however it appears that it’s own evolutionary back story is just as important in terms of thinking critically around it.

Secondly, ‘Curiosity’ stimulated by the use of ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ can also result in critical dialogue surrounding a design concept. In trying to make sense of an analogy due to a naturally curious disposition, ‘Abstracted Thought’ is required, which in turn alludes to a critical dialogue surrounding the design concept that the analogy represen
Influences on Encouraging More Holistic Thinking
13. Influences on Encouraging More Holistic Thinking

During the interviews, many associations were made between different storytelling approaches and the more holistic thinking this encouraged around the design concepts and projects that ran across all three cases. Focusing on the Unilever Household Care case study specifically, several themes began to emerge.

Firstly, and rather unsurprisingly, there was much conversation that highlighted the importance of using diverse or different approaches to telling a story at the design pitch. Harry states that ‘It always comes down to just new or different ideas about how we would talk about the project. New and different ways […] it is not cleaning you want to talk about, something completely else’. Harry is suggesting here that a story about a design concept for a cleaning product could use a scenario where something needs to be cleaned, but in order to start thinking more holistically about the concept; it would have to use an alternative scenario that would not necessarily be as obvious. The difference or diversity of approach here is the alternative scenario in which the story is told, rather than the mode of communication. Hannah makes a similar point, when she describes a design pitch presented during the ‘Beautifully Clean’ project. She explains that one pitch that stood out in terms of getting her to think more holistically presented a series of stories told through ‘non-traditional’ forms of advertising. Although it was a diversity and difference in approach to storytelling that encouraged her to think more holistically about the design concepts, this was due to the alternative mode in which the story was told, rather than the scenario in which it was told. In Henry’s discussion, he supports both Harry’s and Hannah’s points about different and diverse approaches to storytelling. He explains that more holistic thinking is encouraged because designers simply ‘come at it from a different angle’. In his descriptions, he highlights examples of design pitches that use different modes of storytelling such as stop frame animation, and alternative scenarios in which to tell stories, such as celebrations in people’s homes.
Elaborating this point, Henry explains that during the ‘Low LSM’ project, the use of imagery in the design pitches got him to think more holistically; as stated previously, they encouraged him to think critically about the design concept as a natural curiosity got him to consider why particular analogies had been used. He later explains that as well as stimulating him to think critically, it also encouraged him to think about new territories that he had not previously considered. The example he gives here was when the imagery he associated with birds got him to think more holistically by considering the cultural associations of colour, and its use in respect to the product and service offer, something he had not yet considered.

Finally, Henry also explains that thinking more holistically occurs when details of a design concept’s development are revealed. As explained earlier, he believes that designer’s ‘come at it from a different angle’; therefore, key insights made by the designers that steer the development of a concept will not necessarily reinforce insights made by the client. Therefore, ensuring that these are detailed at the design pitch can bring awareness of different territories that may not have previously been considered.

When considering the Unilever Laundry case study, another set of themes emerged in the discussions relating storytelling approach to the encouragement of more holistic thinking. Unsurprisingly again, there was much discussion of using a diverse or different approach. Laura explains that during the ‘Black Bull’ project she wanted to be encouraged to think more holistically after viewing the design pitches, and so she had an expectation that the design pitches should be ‘something more creative or different than what you could do internally’. Similarly, Lucy affirms that the ‘Black Bull’ project also presented very diverse and different design pitches and so encouraged more holistic thinking.

In elaborating this point, Laura explains that in one particular design pitch an obstacle course was created from hanging laundry and different people had to navigate through it from one end of a corridor to the next. She explains that this
was a ‘fun’ idea but that the design pitch lacked professionalism and so ultimately was limited in terms of encouraging more holistic thinking. This observation suggests that the diversity and difference cannot come at the expense of professionalism, or the design pitch will not be taken seriously enough for it to have any real impact in terms of encouraging more holistic thinking.

Lucy explains another situation in which she was encouraged to think more holistically. She describes an instance where a design consultancy presented a piece of work against a set of restrictions stated at the point of briefing. The design consultancy after delivering this pitch, asked if they could deliver an alternative pitch that went against these restrictions. In doing this, Lucy started to think more holistically about the design project wondering, ‘are all these restrictions necessary’. In this instance, it was a direct challenge of the brief which resulted in thinking more holistically, however it is important to point out that the design consultancy had prepared a pitch which did not challenge the brief and delivered this first. Whether or not their alternative pitch would have been met with the same enthusiasm without their original pitch remains unknown.

Within the Accenture case study interview transcriptions, many associations were made between the encouragement of more holistic thinking and certain storytelling approaches taken at the design pitch. Similarly to the Unilever Laundry case study, there was much discussion around presenting ideas outside of the requirements of the brief. Amanda states that when ‘you ask them for something, they give you something completely different that blows your mind away’. Anna proposes a similar idea but with a word of caution, suggesting that ‘you don’t want to sit through a design agency pitch if they stray too far from the brief’ but that at the same time, you have to push the boundaries of a brief when telling the story in order to encourage more holistic thinking, she describes getting this balance right as a ‘fine line’.
When explaining her previous experiences of working with designers, Amanda states that, ‘they tend to interpret things very literally’. She believes that in order to encourage more holistic thinking, the design pitch needs to demonstrate and present an alternative interpretation of the brief, it is her belief that designers should always strive to do this but that it shouldn’t come at the expense of failing to meet the original criteria set. Anna expands this point by suggesting that a design agency ‘needs to be able to test with their client before they present their brief back’, meaning that to encourage more holistic thinking a designer must reinterpret the brief but with the knowledge that the audience (in this instance Accenture) would benefit from this. In Anna’s experience, she believes that the more senior an employee of Accenture is, and the more clients they have as stakeholders associated with the project, the more risky it would be to reinterpret the brief.

Finally, Anna explains how detailing an ‘end-to-end journey’ of a product or service experience in a design pitch can encourage more holistic thinking around that particular design concept or service. She explains that during a project she has to consider many different aspects of services or products, but that these aspects are often considered in isolation. During a design pitch, the design agency has the opportunity to bring all of these different aspects together. Anna explains that during the ‘Campaign Identity’ project, when the service they were proposing was presented, she was taken through the experience of a user from start to finish, with every single detail explained. When this occurred she was able to think ‘holistically at the end-to-end journey’ and consequently it encouraged her to ‘re-think some of the more siloed design conversations’ that she’d had with other employees of Accenture.

The themes in storytelling approach discussed in this section and the qualities they bestowed on the design pitches that encouraged more holistic thinking around the design concept and/or project are illustrated in the figure below.
Figure 16: Storytelling Approach – Impact, Encouraging More Holistic Thinking
13.1. Recurrent Themes

After establishing potential themes, each case study was revisited with the other case’s themes in mind. When examining the relationships drawn between storytelling approach and the encouragement of more holistic thinking about the design concept and project across all the cases, several overarching themes emerged. They are summarised below with the relevant examples.

13.1.1. Being Diverse/Different

‘Being Diverse/Different’ when storytelling during a design pitch was believed to encourage more holistic thinking around design concepts and design projects in this research study, with participants from all three cases discussing examples of this.

In the Unilever Household Care case study, Henry discusses how a designer’s approach in terms of presentation is vastly different to his or indeed any other employee at Unilever that has presented to him. He believes that being involved in collaborative design projects where designers implement their diverse/different ways of communicating concepts expands his mind, allowing him to think more holistically about design concepts and projects on a continual basis, simply because he had not previously seen work done in this way before. Hannah reinforces this idea by highlighting a specific example where a group of designers presented a design concept using non-traditional advertising techniques that were entirely new to her. It seems that the element of surprise in viewing something entirely novel can result in the encouragement of more holistic thinking with regards to design concepts and projects.

When looking at the Accenture case study, this situation repeats itself. When Anna describes the project ‘Campaign Identity’ in terms of how it encouraged more holistic thinking, she explains that it was down to the designer’s different way of
interpreting things and it being vastly different to her own. She proclaims that the presentation of the designer’s interpretation of the brief during the design pitch was when this different way of interpreting things became most apparent to her, and it was then that more holistic thinking around the design project was triggered.

In the Unilever Laundry case study Lucy compares the ‘Black Bull’ project to the ‘Easy Jet’ project. For each project, design teams pitched multi-media presentations demonstrating their concepts for how best to represent the workings of the laundry detergent. Upon viewing the presentations for ‘Black Bull’ Lucy was unmoved, she explained that this was because she saw something that was within the capability of her own internal team to produce. In comparison, the ‘Easy Jet’ project presented her with techniques that she had not seen before, for example one team presented a stop-frame animation of particles going through an assault course similar to that of a Nintendo platform game. Seeing this novel interpretation, accompanied by a technique inaccessible to her internal team (stop-frame animation) allowed her to view the product in an entirely different light.

As mentioned previously, generally there is an acceptance that the more diverse/different the approach in disseminating information, the more effective it will be in achieving any desired impact. However, more specifically than this, Denning (2007b) reinforces the idea that diverse methods of storytelling can aid in fostering social change within organisations in his book ‘The Springboard, How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organisations’. A prime example of how a diverse story changed the thinking of an organisation was presented by Adamson et al. (2006) in their observations of a storytelling exercise at the San Juan Regional Healthcare Centre. Essentially, they believed that when employees were exposed to a story that provided an analogy of the human resources in the centre (likening it to the Steven Spielberg film: Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark), management and employee connections were enhanced through being given an alternative way of viewing their relationships, and in doing so allowed them to gain a more holistic view of their job roles within the wider operations of the
organisation. Through examining the case evidence, it would appear that the novelty and diversity of a design pitch could also stimulate more holistic thinking, around design concepts and projects. However, with more organisations being exposed to design consultancy pitching continually, remaining novel could represent a challenge for future design practice.

13.1.2. Imagery, in particular Analogy

‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ also proved to be an approach to storytelling that closely related to encouraging more holistic thinking around a design concept or project in this research study, with participants from both cases discussing its role.

As mentioned previously, in the Unilever Laundry case study, Lucy discusses the analogies used in the ‘Easy Jet’ project, describing them as diverse, which in turn encouraged more holistic thinking around the product. Alternative reasoning for this encouragement of more holistic thinking, other than the fact that she had been exposed to something novel, could be that being presented with an analogy elicits abstracted thinking synonymous with thinking about something differently. Similar reasoning exists in section 1.1.1 where a curiosity to make sense of an analogy requires abstracted thought, alluding to critical dialogue.

When relating this to the Accenture case study, a similar example can be found. Amanda explains that in order for her to be encouraged to think more holistically about a design concept, it helps if the interpretation presented to her is non-literal, or in other words, an analogy. She appreciates that when you are forced to think in abstracted terms about something, you are encouraged to think differently about it. Specifically, she is referring to the project ‘Digital Justice’, where a design team used the analogy of ‘Sin City’, presenting different scenes for the phases of the digital justice service. In doing this, elements of the design concept she had not
previously considered were highlighted and encouraged her to think more holistically about what the overall service should encompass.

Analogy may not always be an appropriate way to present a design concept, particularly if it is a product. However, if a service or experience, and indeed an experience surrounding a product, is being presented, an analogy may prove to encourage more holistic thinking around it. Analogy, if original, can be viewed as diverse or different as it is an alternative way of representing something. Therefore it stands to reason that an analogy can represent a diverse or different approach to telling a story, encouraging more holistic thinking in the ways discussed previously. Again, with a prime example being Adamson et al. (2006) observations made at the San Juan Regional Healthcare Centre. However, similarly to the discovery made in section 1.1.1, analogy in a design pitch could encourage more holistic thinking due to the ‘Abstract Thought’ required in rationalising why an analogy is appropriate and the natural ‘Curiosity’ to do this.

13.2. Summary

Upon analysis of the cases in this research study, it appears that two related approaches to storytelling have given characteristics to the stories told during the design pitches, which have contributed to the encouragement of more holistic thinking around design concepts and projects in the interview participants.

Firstly, stories that encompass ‘Novelty’ for their audience can encourage more holistic thinking. ‘Novelty’ is of course achieved through being deliberately ‘Diverse/Different’ in your approach, such as using stop frame animation in the context of an environment where only PowerPoint is used, or using a completely new analogy for the purposes of presenting a design concept. However, maintaining originality presents a challenge for designers, especially in terms of presentational techniques that are finite.
Secondly, stories that elicit ‘Abstracted Thought’ encourage thinking more holistically and can be achieved in a design pitch through utilising analogies. A natural ‘Curiosity’ provokes the audience to relate the analogy to the design concept, which requires ‘Abstracted Thought’; in turn this can uncover aspects of the design concept previously discarded, such as in the example provided by the Accenture case study.
Section 3

Conclusions drawn from the analysis and how these contribute original knowledge, and how this knowledge can be built upon
The Final Framework and its Implications
14. The Final Framework and its Implications

14.1. The Development of the Final Framework

At the end of chapters 10 to 13 are four figures illustrating the relationships between storytelling approaches (established themes) and effects (impacts/areas of inquiry). Every relationship discovered in the cases is included in these figures, giving a complete overview of the findings. Synthesising these frameworks and conducting validation exercises has led to a final framework that encapsulates the key discoveries made. In this chapter, the development of this final framework will be detailed.

Firstly, only recurring themes (storytelling approaches) across all three cases were included in the final framework. This left only four: ‘Acknowledging User Perspectives and/or Cultural Beliefs’, ‘Being Diverse/Different’, ‘Detailing Concept Development’, and ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’. All other themes were omitted as they only represented examples of relationships between storytelling approaches and impacts that existed in one or two of the cases rather than all three. Therefore, the first iteration of the final framework was as follows:
Figure 17: First iteration of the final framework
For the purposes of validation, the interview participants and academics working in related fields viewed the initial iteration of the framework. Overall, the response was positive, interview participants believed that it was an accurate representation of what they had described in their semi-structured interviews. However, several suggestions were made to expand several of the pathways, and alter the terminology of certain qualities attributed to the design pitches by the storytelling approaches. The suggestions were as follows:

- ‘Acknowledging User Perspectives and/or Cultural Beliefs’ provided contextualisation that both delivered understanding and demonstrated value. Therefore, the term ‘emotional relationship’ should be replaced with ‘contextualisation’ in the pathway linking this storytelling approach to ‘Demonstrating Value’.
- ‘Being Diverse/Different’ provided a memorable design pitch as this made it intriguing. Therefore, ‘intriguing’ should be added to the pathway linking this storytelling approach to ‘Delivering Understanding’.
- ‘Being Diverse/Different’ in the telling of a story provided the organisations with something that was rare, and that it is this association with rarity that is particularly useful in demonstrating value. Therefore, ‘rare’ should be added to the pathway linking this storytelling approach to ‘Demonstrating Value’.
- ‘Being Diverse/Different’, which included using ‘Imagery, in particular analogy’, was novel, and that this novelty could be responsible for encouraging more holistic thinking. Therefore, ‘novel’ should be added to the pathways linking these storytelling approaches to ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’.
- Becoming familiar with the rationale and insights used to develop a concept gave permission for critical discussion. Revealing a rationale and detailing insights is in fact an alternative way of saying ‘Detailing Concept Development’. Therefore, ‘familiar’ should replace ‘revealing rationale’ and ‘communicating insights’ in the pathway linking ‘Detailing Concept Development’ to ‘Stimulating Critique’.

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Finally, the curiosity caused by using ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ stimulated critique and encouraged more holistic thinking due to the abstract thinking it promoted. Therefore, ‘abstract’ should be included in the pathway linking this storytelling approach to both ‘Stimulating Critique’ and ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’.

After incorporating these changes, the final framework is as follows:
Figure 18: Storytelling Approach – Impact Framework, Design Pitch
As well as the recommendation of these changes, discussions with academics working in this area highlighted a limitation of the framework. Although it accurately summarised the salient relationships discovered between storytelling approach and impact in the cases explored, an understanding of the theory suggested was still difficult to achieve without the accompaniment of examples from the cases. Therefore, it was suggested that a card tool, illustrating each pathway and with the accompaniment of a case example, would be a useful addition to the framework. The rationale given for this suggestion was that it would make the information more accessible and understandable for designers wishing to reflect on the discoveries of this research study when constructing their own design pitches.

In light of this critique, the advice was taken and a card tool was constructed. Each pathway was assigned a single card, and each card was assigned a relevant case example. Therefore, the individual relationships presented in the framework could be viewed in isolation (making them more accessible), and understood in relation to a real example (rather than on a purely theoretical basis). It was considered during a discussion between the author and the academics partaking in the critique that a card tool was the most suitable way with which to communicate the theory presented in the framework for two reasons. Firstly, as not all information in the framework may be relevant to an individual constructing a design pitch, and the card tool would allow the individual to select the information most relevant to them (based on the impact they may wish to elicit). Secondly, because a card tool would provide a practical means to facilitate discussion amongst a small group of designers (the likely audience of this tool). The first iteration of the card tool is shown overleaf.
Figure 19: Card Tool, Framework Accompaniment

THE STORYTELLING APPROACH IS STATED

Pathway description: It is explained how the qualities given to a design pitch, by using the storytelling approach stated, can lead to the effect.

An example is provided to illustrate an instance when using the storytelling approach stated gave a design pitch the qualities described, leading to the effect.

This section poses questions to help you think about how you might incorporate the storytelling approach stated in your design pitch.

DETAILING CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT IN A STORY

Transparent:
Knowing the stages of a design concept's development brings transparency to the design process undertaken.

Delivery of an understanding:
The nature of the design concept is exposed and a holistic understanding of it is gained.

e.g. user research activities, sketching and model making/prototyping may have all contributed to the development of a design concept. Artifacts such as these are often used as props during a design pitch or represented visually.

Think about your design process. What activities did you carry out and how did they inform decisions about the development of the design concept?

BEING DIVERSE/DIFFERENT IN A STORY

Intriguing:
If something is diverse/different it can be intriguing.

Memorable:
Due to this intrigue, attention is held and information is transferred into memory.

Delivery of an understanding:
This information is retrievable and comparable to other learned experience past and present.

e.g. a pitch delivered using edited film was perceived as diverse and different by a company used to viewing presentations in the format of PowerPoint.

Consider your audience, what would they perceive as diverse/different? You may have to be aware of the types of communication they are used to.
ACKNOWLEDGING USER PERSPECTIVES AND/OR CULTURAL BELIEFS IN A STORY

Contextualising:
User’s circumstances are described relating to a perspective or belief.

Delivery of an understanding:
These circumstances may have informed the design concept and can reveal its nature.

E.g. a single parent who needs to look after their children whilst cooking could provide a useful perspective to tell the story of a design concept for a saucepan agitator.

Who is the user of your design concept? What are their perspectives and cultures, and how do these relate to your ideas? You may have already considered these when designing.

ACKNOWLEDGING USER PERSPECTIVES AND/OR CULTURAL BELIEFS IN A STORY

Contextualising:
User’s circumstances are described relating to a perspective or belief.

Demonstrating values:
A relationship can be drawn between the user’s circumstances and the purpose of the design concept.

E.g. when pitching a design concept for a red Chinese lantern, picking out the colour red by making all other imagery black and white will emphasise the significance of choosing this colour – it represents ‘happiness’ and ‘good luck’ in Chinese culture.

Who is the user of your design concept? What are their perspectives and cultures, and how do these relate to your ideas? You may have already considered these when designing.

BEING DIVERSE/DIFFERENT IN A STORY

Rare:
A story that is diverse/different can provide an audience with an experience that is rare.

Demonstrating values:
Rarity can be an indicator of value (paragone), and through this association value can also be attributed to a story.

E.g. a pitch delivered using stop-frame animation was perceived as diverse and different by a company used to viewing presentations in the format of edited film.

Consider your audience, what would they perceive as diverse/different? You may have to be aware of the types of communication they are used to.
**DETAILING CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT IN A STORY**

**Familiar:**
Knowing the stages of a design concept's development brings a familiarity to the design process undertaken.

**Stimulating critiques:**
With this familiarity, the audience is enabled to critically discuss aspects of the design concept.

e.g. user research activities, sketching and model making, prototyping may have all contributed to the development of a design concept. Artefacts such as these are often used as props during a design pitch or represented visually.

Think about your design process. What activities did you carry out and how did they inform decisions about the development of the design concept?

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**USING IMAGERY, IN PARTICULAR ANALOGY, IN A STORY**

**Curious:**
A natural curiosity seeks to find reasoning for the use of an analogy.

**Abstract:**
Finding reason may involve thinking about the design concept in abstracted terms.

**Stimulating critiques:**
Thinking in this way can provoke critical discussion around the intangible qualities a design concept should embed.

e.g. an eagle's head was likened to a design concept for a household cleaner's spray applicator. It was reasoned that this analogy was used to reinforce a quality of superiority.

Are there any aspects of your design concept (a motivation, a function, the aesthetics) that can be parallelled to something else?

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**ENCOURAGING MORE HOLISTIC THINKING**

**Abstract:**
Finding reason may involve thinking about the design concept in abstracted terms.

**More holistic thinking:**
Thinking in this way can help to identify intangible qualities a design concept has the potential to embed.

e.g. an eagle's head was likened to a design concept for a household cleaner's spray applicator. It was reasoned that this analogy was used to reinforce a quality of superiority.

Are there any aspects of your design concept (a motivation, a function, the aesthetics) that can be parallelled to something else?
A further stage of validation was conducted. The final framework and first iteration of the card tool was deployed during a design project run by Northumbria University’s Multidisciplinary Design Innovation MA programme, to guide designers when constructing their pitches.

Four groups of three students each (groups A, B, C and D) were asked to conceptualise with one, or a combination of the following three motivations:

- Making music-making more accessible to everyone
- Creating a platform for independent musicians
- Develop a signature product with innovative features that embed Medeli’s brand values

They had one week to deliver their pitch to the client.

A further two groups of four students each (groups E and F) were asked to consider a business plan and a brand strategy for urban vertical farming, taking into account a number of aspects such as: whether there should be a focus on selling to wholesalers or setting up a new kind of store, identifying the factors that matter to consumers (such as food security, food safety, ecological vegetables, price and origin) and so on. They also had one week to pitch their concepts to the client.

The card tool was disseminated to the groups. The researcher was present during three days of this project to observe how the designers were implementing the storytelling approaches introduced by the card tool and their understanding of it.

The following record provides a brief description of the researcher’s observations:

The groups had conducted research into various disparate areas highlighted as important by the client. They were arranging meetings via Skype to discuss findings and determine directions for further in-depth research and then conceptualisation (conceptualisation in terms of using the research insights to devise potential opportunities). After deciding on the content of the pitch, they selected which cards from the tool would be appropriate for them.

Group A believes that they were communicating concepts about product and service motivations that should encourage more holistic thinking around the project’s territory. Due to this, they decided to implement storytelling approaches linked to the effect ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’, these being: ‘Being Diverse/Different’ and ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’.
Group C also believed that they were communicating concepts about product and service motivations that should encourage more holistic thinking around the project’s territory. They decided that it was crucial for them to demonstrate the value of thinking in this way. Due to this belief they decided to implement storytelling approaches linked to the effects ‘Encouraging More Holistic Thinking’ and ‘Demonstrating Value’, in particular: ‘Acknowledging Users' Perspectives or Cultural Beliefs’ and ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’.

Group F believed that they were communicating concepts about product and service motivations that should stimulate critical thinking around the project territory and in doing so, encourage more holistic thinking. Therefore, they concentrated on implementing the storytelling approach ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ as this was been related to both effects.

The majority of students sent their design pitches to the client, groups E and F also presented their pitches verbally via Skype. The following paragraphs describe the mode of the design pitches and highlight aspects of the design pitches that implemented the storytelling approaches suggested by the framework.

(With respect to the storytelling criteria described in section 1.4.1, groups A and E did not use storytelling in their design pitches. This was due to the fact that they had not managed their time spent on the project in order to accommodate this element in their design pitches).

Group B’s pitch comprised of a large scrolling PDF including: graphics, visual imagery and text produced using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. To demonstrate the value in considering what an organic vegetable shopping experience should be, this group used photographic imagery in the format of a storyboard depicting the customer experience of ‘Market Street’ (an event put on by Morrisons supermarket where goods are sold in the format of a traditional British market to enrich a visit to
their supermarket). This story provided an analogous example of the experience they believed should be created when shopping for organic vegetables.

Group C’s design pitch was presented in the format of a word document including text and imagery. This group tried to ensure that they acknowledged user perspectives throughout their report to support the statistics that they were presenting. In particular, they discussed the ‘Jamie Generation’ in the UK (under thirty-fives interested in healthy eating), explaining the various perspectives of a persona as a running narrative in between the presentation of factual information.

Group D’s design pitch was presented in the form of a series of PDFs including text and imagery produced using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. This group proposed that it is critical to explore biographical information on packaging. They referenced the analogous example of when Waitrose introduced a Smartphone app that could be used to scan QR codes on meat and dairy produce to collect information on animal welfare. Similarly to group B, this was done with photographic imagery in the format of a storyboard depicting a customer’s experience.

Finally, Group F’s design pitch was presented verbally as a story about their journey through different research activities and the conclusions they came to, a PowerPoint presentation including text and imagery produced using Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop supported this verbal storytelling. This group wanted to make the point that Medeli do not portray a consistent brand story, and that their brand values are not explicit in their public facing activity. To support this message they used imagery of a cat looking in a mirror and seeing a lion staring back. They also acknowledged the different perspectives of Medeli’s potential user’s by including: a photograph of each, their age, their musical instrument of choice and their motivations for pursuing a musical experience.

The observation made during this validation exercise confirms that the card tool is useful in aiding designers construct pitches. However, it also implies two alterations
that could be made to the cards accompanying the framework, in order to improve
their effectiveness.

Firstly, it became clear that when using the storytelling criteria as defined in section 1.4.1, groups A’s and E’s design pitches would not have been classified as stories and therefore could not implement any of the approaches suggested by the cards. In light of this, it is reasonable to suggest that understanding the criteria that must be met in order for something to be classified as a story would be beneficial in order to help contextualise how certain approaches illustrated by the cards might be implemented. Therefore the card tool should include an introductory card that outlines a general specification for a story.

Secondly, it became clear to the researcher that in order for groups to commit to using a storytelling approach illustrated by a card, they had to consider which effect they wanted to try and facilitate. The majority of groups needed prompting to have a discussion of this nature by the researcher. Therefore it also transpired that the pack of cards should include an introductory card to prompt this type of consideration. The construction of the additional cards, as prompted by the validation exercise, was undertaken (overleaf).

*Figure 20: Additions to the Card Tool*
The following sections in this chapter provide an in depth description of the storytelling approaches used in the framework and a series of implications for designers constructing a design pitch, and organisations employing the use of designers.

14.2. Acknowledging Users’ Perspectives and/or Cultural Beliefs

Acknowledging users’ perspectives and/or cultural beliefs when approaching storytelling is fairly self-explanatory. However, it is important to point out that these acknowledgements must have a clear relation to the design concept or an aspect of it. For example, a story of a design concept for a saucepan agitator, when told from the viewpoint of a single parent who needs to keep a watchful eye on her children whilst preparing dinner, acknowledges a user’s perspective. Discussing the symbolism of the colour red in China, and then using a filter on an edited film to emphasise the fact that this colour has been used on a design concept for a Chinese lantern acknowledges the user’s cultural beliefs. In each instance, the perspective and cultural belief is linked to the design concept: simply explaining that a single parent needs to save time or that the colour red symbolises strength in China, and then showing a rendering of a saucepan agitator or a black and white line drawing of a Chinese lantern would not demonstrate how this perspective or cultural belief relates to the design concept.

Within the case examples provided in the previous chapters, acknowledging the user’s perspectives and/or cultural beliefs when approaching storytelling has proven to provide contextualisation in the stories told at the design pitch. This is due to the fact that aspects of the user’s circumstances and how they have influenced features of the design concept becomes explicit. Unsurprisingly, it is the contextualisation provided through acknowledging users’ perspectives and/or
cultural beliefs that has proven to be crucial in delivering an understanding of a design concept and demonstrating its value.

14.2.1. Implications

There are several implications that this discovery has for designers setting out to pitch a design concept.

- Firstly, the designer should consider the benefit of their design concept. For example, when fulfilling a brief that asks a designer to consider how to make life easier in the kitchen, their output may be a concept for a saucepan agitator so that a person making a meal has more time to do other tasks when previously they had to stir a sauce. In this instance the benefit is ‘saving time’.

- Next, the benefit of ‘saving time’ should be related to a user for example: a single parent who has to keep a watchful eye on children whilst cooking, a chef who is creating several different meals at once, or even a novice cook who may require extra time to organise other components of a meal. In each of these scenarios a particular user’s perspective is identified, contextualising the benefit of ‘saving time’.

- When creating these scenarios that relate the benefit of a design concept to a user’s perspective or cultural belief, a designer may want to consider their audience and identify a particular user they may empathise with. If a user were identified by a design brief, it would be appropriate to use them.

In following these steps an understanding of how a design concept benefits the user will be delivered to the client, and an understanding of a key insight belonging to the designer that may have helped them to develop the concept in the first place. It is also the relation of the benefit to a particular user that demonstrates how the design concept has a value.
In order to judge the quality of a design pitch in terms of fostering a clear understanding of the design concept and a deeper appreciation of its value, a client should be able to provide an answer to the following questions:

1. What is the benefit of the design concept?
2. How is this benefit contextualised as a value to individual users?
3. Are these users appropriate or relevant?

14.3. Being Diverse/Different

In order to be diverse or different in an approach to storytelling, the audience must be considered, as it is the audience that must perceive the story to be diverse or different. The perception of a diverse or different story can be achieved through introducing something unfamiliar or that seems out of context to the audience. For example, stop frame animation may be unfamiliar to a young child. Therefore, that young child may perceive watching a children’s television programme using this technique as diverse or different. Likewise, in a business meeting, a standard technique of presentation may be PowerPoint, and although an edited film is a known technique to business people, an edited film in this environment may appear out of context and therefore be perceived as diverse or different. It is important to mention that in the context of being diverse or different in an approach to storytelling, this can also extend to the content of the story and the choices the storyteller makes with regards to how a design concept is discussed. For example, using a technique such as analogy can also introduce unfamiliar or out-of-context ideas to an audience, allowing them to perceive the story as diverse or different.

Through observing the case examples provided in the previous chapters, it could be seen that being diverse or different in an approach to storytelling can give many
different qualities to the story told at a design pitch and consequently lead to
various different impacts. Firstly, being diverse or different can intrigue an audience
and due to this intrigue the audience can find it easier to recall the design concept
at a later date. Being memorable in this way can foster an understanding of the
design concept as understandings develop over time. Here, the diversity or
difference is simply a cue to memory. Secondly and similarly, being diverse or
different can hold the attention of the audience, aiding the delivery of an
understanding of the design concept, as their minds are less likely to wonder during
the design pitch. Here, the diversity or difference is safeguarding against
distraction. Thirdly, something diverse or different can be described as rare, and by
association something that is rare is often perceived as valuable. In the cases of this
research study it has been suggested that a storytelling approach that is diverse or
different can attribute value to the design pitch through this association. In such
instances the diversity or difference is attributing value to the story as a piece of
communication belonging to the organisation. Finally, being diverse or different can
also introduce something completely new to an audience, the novelty of which can
encourage more holistic thinking around the design concept and in some
circumstances the design project. In such instances the diversity or difference is
inspiring new considerations that have the potential to shape the development of a
design concept.

14.3.1. Implications

The implications this discovery has for designers pitching their design concepts are
also many:

- When working with designers, it appears that there is an expectation of the
  client that the way in which they communicate their work should be diverse
  or different. Therefore, it is important for designers to always try and strive
to do this. A client has to see a benefit in employing designers, therefore if
they feel like they could have produced a piece of communication presented by a designer, the benefit of employing a designer is less obvious.

- In order to perceive what may be considered diverse or different in terms of storytelling modes, it is important to be aware of standard communication practices at the client organisation. For example, if they always present work using PowerPoint presentations, it may be necessary to avoid this medium.

- In order to perceive what may be considered diverse or different in terms of storytelling content, it is important to be aware of how key notions around the territory of the product or service concept have been expressed in the past. One way to achieve originality here may be to use analogies when describing these key notions.

- In some circumstances it may not be appropriate to present using a diverse or different mode, and in others it may not be appropriate to include diverse or different story content. However, diversity or difference in communication should be sought to some capacity and so the designer will have to judge the appropriate way in which to achieve this.

- In some circumstances, being diverse or different may feel like going against the client’s wishes. When faced with this situation, a ‘safe’ pitch that does not strive to communicate in a diverse or different way can also be produced and presented prior to an alternative pitch that does.

Following these steps will capture the attention of the client and intrigue them, making the design pitch more memorable and fostering an understanding of the design concept. Something diverse and different in terms of a design pitch may add to a catalogue of previous work done on the project, therefore a value will be attached to it. If the design pitch is not seen as diverse or different, then it may not be viewed as an addition; more a replication of ideas previously identified in a catalogue of work. Finally, in understanding the novelty of such an approach different thinking around a design concept will occur.
For the client to judge how successful a design pitch was in terms of delivering understanding, demonstrating value and encouraging more holistic thinking, they may wish to ask the following questions of the design pitch:

1. Does the design pitch offer a diverse or different mode of communication?
2. Does the design pitch offer a diverse or different interpretation of a well-established notion?

14.4. Detailing Concept Development

In order to have detailed concept development in an approach to storytelling, the stages in the process of designing used in the creation of the concept must be acknowledged. For example, a typical design process may constitute: conducting primary research to determine an issue, sketching initial ideas, debating amongst the design team to determine the preferred ideas, the generation of models, further debate amongst the design team and then the production of a final prototype. During each of these stages key decisions were made and agreed upon by the design team that allowed the concept to develop; discussing this, providing imagery of these stages, or both during a design pitch, constitutes detailing concept development.

With respect to the examples provided in the previous chapters, detailing concept development in stories has brought an element of transparency to the design process undertaken by the design team. It appears that this has aided the delivery of an understanding of the design concept as decisions made during its development are rationalised. Detailing concept development also familiarises the audience with the design process, a familiarity such as this has proven to empower critical dialogue surrounding the design concept.
14.4.1. Implications

Again, the implications for a designer who is pitching their concept are multiple:

- Firstly, it may be beneficial to record or document in some capacity the stages of development of the design concept. This could be done photographically, through keeping a diary, or by any other means that will help to commit decisions made during the process of designing to memory.

- Each decision that was made that developed the design concept represents a stage of its development. Acknowledge these stages during the design pitch, demonstrating what was decided and how. For example, it may have been decided to use the colour red on a design concept for a Chinese lantern as after research was conducted it was discovered that red represents strength in Chinese culture, and strength is a theme of the festival where the lantern would be used.

- Many decisions are made during a design process and there may not be time to acknowledge them all. Therefore, the designer must judge the most important decisions to acknowledge.

Through providing this information in the design pitch the client will gain a better understanding of how a design concept came to be, and feel more capable in terms of discussing it critically with a view for its development.

The client may wish to consider the following after viewing a design pitch in order to judge how clearly an understanding of the design concept was delivered and to stimulate critical discussion surrounding the design concept:

1. What were the key decisions made during the development of the design concept?
2. What was the rationale for these key decisions?
3. Were you aware of this information?
4. Do you agree with all the decisions made?

14.5. Imagery, in particular Analogy

Using imagery in a storytelling approach is being ‘visually descriptive or [using] figurative language’ (oxforddictionaries.com, 2013d). Analogy is simply using ‘a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purposes of explanation or clarification’ (oxforddictionaries.com, 2013a). In the context of this research study, ‘Imagery, in particular Analogy’ as a storytelling approach is therefore using visual description as a comparison for an aspect of a design concept. For example, showing a shoal of fish swimming through coral to represent laundry detergent passing through the garments in a washing machine uses imagery that provides an analogy.

Regarding the case evidence presented in the previous chapters, using imagery with analogy in an approach to storytelling at the design pitch has incited a curiosity in the audience, a curiosity to rationalise the analogy and understand its appropriation. In order to do this, abstracted thought is required meaning that an intangible link must be made between two concepts in order to make sense of comparing one to the other. In doing this, critical dialogue surrounding design concepts has been encouraged and also different thinking surrounding design concepts and projects. Also, as mentioned previously an analogy can be synonymous with a diverse or different approach and the novelty that this provides the story with can also allow different thinking surrounding design concepts and projects.
14.5.1. Implications

The implications that this has for a designer pitching a design concept are as follows:

- Firstly, it is important to consider all aspects of the design concept. This could include, the way it looks as a whole, the way various components look separately, how the product or service functions, the key issues the design concept resolves and so on. After identifying all these aspects, consider if any of them may be communicated through an analogy. For example, a spray applicator for a cleaner may look like an eagle’s head providing an analogy between the superiority of an eagle in the animal kingdom and the superiority of the spray amongst similar products.

- Next, consider the originality of the analogy. Is it already familiar with the client or society in general? If so, it may be important to try and think of an analogy that is more original. However, care must be taken not to compromise on the appropriateness – it must still make sense.

Following these steps when pitching an aspect of a design concept will appeal to a client’s curiosity. When rationalising an analogy the client will be engaged in critical discussion and if the analogy is novel, they may even start to think differently about a design concept or project.

In order to judge the success of a design pitch in terms of its stimulation of critical discussion and encouragement of different thinking, and to engage in both, a client may ask the following:

1. Are any analogous examples provided highlighting an aspect of a design concept?
2. What was the relevance in using these analogies?
3. Why might this analogy be appropriate?
14.6. Summary

This final framework and its discussion highlights a strategy with which a designer can shape their pitch, and a series of questions that a client can ask when judging a design pitch and developing thinking around what has been presented. The card tool puts this information in an accessible format that can be used to prompt designers, when constructing design pitches, to use a storytelling format with the consideration of impact on the client.

Firstly, should a designer be preoccupied with the successful delivery of an understanding of their design concept, it is important to acknowledge the user’s perspectives and cultural beliefs, employ a diverse or different mode of communication or include diverse or different content, and detail stages of a design concept’s development when pitching. Should they be preoccupied with the demonstration of a design concept’s value, acknowledging users’ perspectives and cultural beliefs, and employing a diverse or different mode of communication or including diverse or different content, should be of primary concern. If wanting to ensure that a client is engaged in critical discussion surrounding a design concept they should detail key stages of the design concept’s development and consider the use of imagery, in particular analogy. Finally, if they want to encourage more holistic thinking around the design concept or project, employing a diverse or different mode of communication or including diverse or different content such as the use of an analogy would be beneficial.
Original

Contribution to

Knowledge
15. Original Contribution to Knowledge

As stated previously, the original contribution to knowledge that this research study makes is delivered in several ways. Firstly, the key findings making up the framework describe storytelling approaches that can be employed during a design pitch to elicit certain impacts. Secondly, there is originality in the insights revealed with respect to the specific storytelling approaches adopted by designers in the cases examined. Finally, in developing this understanding through constructing this framework, the importance of storytelling and its role within design is identified in an original way.

As established in the rationale for this research study (section 1.2) there is a gap in knowledge with respect to understanding the design pitch and the impact that storytelling can have in this context. This gap is apparent for several reasons. As evidenced in section 1.2 through data gathered from literature search engines, there is little literature about the design pitch, and even less about storytelling and the design pitch. Also, research that explores storytelling and its relationship to design predominantly focuses on storytelling that occurs during the process of designing, theorising ways in which ideas can be developed through the exchange of stories between designers. Further to this, when drawing relevance from theories in other areas of literature, conflicting ideas are implied with respect to the approaches to take when storytelling and the impacts they can have. The framework and card tool resulting from this research culminates the knowledge acquired from conducting a research study focusing specifically on storytelling at the design pitch, allowing designers who wish to adopt a storytelling approach when delivering a pitch to make more considered decisions. The key findings of the framework are that:

- Acknowledging user perspectives and cultural beliefs in a story told during a design pitch can help to deliver an understanding of a design concept and also demonstrate its value through providing contextualisation.
- Using a diverse or different mode when telling a story during a design pitch can intrigue and therefore aid memory in order to help deliver an understanding of a design concept over time. It can also attribute a value of rarity, allowing it to be viewed as a valuable piece of communication for the organisation. Using diverse or different content in telling a story (such as an original analogy) can also achieve the above, but may also introduce novelty that encourages more holistic thinking about a design concept.

- Detailing concept development in telling a story during a design pitch can bring familiarity to a design process allowing the audience to engage in critical discussion around the design concept. The transparency to the design process that this storytelling approach can bring can also encourage more holistic thinking around the design concept.

- Using imagery, in particular analogy when telling a story during a design pitch invites a curiosity to understand the appropriateness of said analogy. Often this requires thinking about the design concept in an abstracted way that has proven to help stimulate critique and encourage more holistic thinking around a design concept.

When designers are pitching their concepts to clients, it is likely that they will want to elicit some of the impacts explored in the framework and so can use the storytelling approaches to tailor their stories. Of particular importance here is considering ways in which to: acknowledge users’ perspectives and cultural beliefs in a story; bring a diverse or different approach to their storytelling; reveal the stages of concept development in the story and include imagery, in particular analogy.

Project teams from organisations working with designers can also use the key findings in the framework to an extent. It is likely that they will desire or want to avoid certain impacts when working with designers, therefore understanding what elements of a design pitch foster these impacts can provide them with knowledge that can be used to steer designers or even rationalise employing them. In the
previous chapter’s descriptions of the pathways illustrated in the framework, a series of questions are presented that project teams may wish to ask themselves when considering design pitches they have been involved in or intend to be involved in. Asking these questions can help them to judge the merits of the design pitches they have viewed in terms of eliciting the impacts explored, and perhaps more usefully to stimulate critical discussions and encourage more holistic thinking around design concepts and projects, if so desired.

As stated previously, design educators will also benefit from this research as it examines cases where design students have worked with organisations on live projects. A paper entitled ‘Designer Storytelling’ (Parkinson and Bohemia, 2012a) was written by the researcher during this research study that explores the implications of this research in terms of pedagogical practices. It can be viewed in the appendix.

Focusing a storytelling perspective on the design pitch in this way has identified the importance of the role that storytelling at the design pitch has, whilst developing an understanding of the working relationship between designers and organisations in terms of impact. Therefore, a higher degree of consciousness has been promoted when pitching design concepts, in terms of understanding the impact that they can have on the project team of an organisation.
Further Work
16. Limitations of the Study and Further Work

16.1. Further Work Implied by Limitations

As described in section 5.7 of the methodology, there are several limitations to the study that further work could rectify. Firstly, it was established that the interpretation of a story is unique to an individual and is affected by their relationship with reality. This research study interviews multiple participants, collecting their interpretations of different sets of stories delivered during design pitches belonging to each case. It could be argued that if a participant from one case observed the design pitches from another, a different interpretation could have been collected. Therefore, in order to test the framework, multiple participants could be asked to observe the same set of design pitches and then be interviewed about the stories they observed.

Secondly, another limitation highlighted in section 5.6 of the methodology was that the framework focuses on only four areas of inquiry. Re-examining literature with the knowledge gained from conducting the research study has the potential to uncover further areas of inquiry that may be used to develop the framework established. The following two paragraphs make suggestions for further areas of inquiry.

Detailing individual perspectives and/or experiences as a basis for a story has been found to foster conflict resolution through bringing diverse opinions in line with one another. As discussed previously, Hawkins and Georgakopolous (2010) found that when using theatre productions to highlight social issues, it was the stories told from the perspectives of community members that were the most impactful in aiding conflict resolutions, as community members began to appreciate wider social issues. Similarly, Ohara and Cherniss (2010) found that it was the stories told from the experiences of employees within an organisation that had the power to align people’s opinions and improve working relations at Juniper Networks, a global IT
company. Relating this discovery to the context of this research study, it could be proposed that stories told during the design pitch could bring diverse attitudes towards a design concept in line with one another, aiding its development. Therefore an area of inquiry could have been ‘Aligning Diverse Opinions’ and a question used to interrogate this area of inquiry in a semi-structured interview could have been, ‘did the story told during the design pitch help to align diverse opinions of the design concept among audience members, and if so, how?’ This area of inquiry may be appropriate when considering a case where there have been many disagreements on how a particular product or service should be developed.

Using Digital Storytelling, defined as: using different media, making the story user focused and adopting multimodal forms of communication, has also been found to improve, digital, global and visual literacy (for example, the capacity to contextualise and the ability to understand, produce and communicate through visual images)(Robin, 2006). Relating this discovery to the context of this research study, it could be proposed that stories told during the design pitch will improve the digital, global and visual literacy of the organisation’s employees comprising the audience of the pitch. Therefore an area of inquiry could also have been ‘Building Literacy’ and a question interrogating this area of inquiry could have been, ‘did the story told during the design pitch improve your digital/global/visual literacy, and if so, how?’ However, with this line of questioning, clear definitions of the different forms of literacy may need to be provided. This area of inquiry may be appropriate when considering a case where it has already been established that working with designers has developed the thinking of the organisation.

16.2. Other Further Work

As well as addressing ways to combat the limitations of the study, shifting its focus to areas or types of design other than those looked at in this research study’s cases also represents an opportunity for further work.
For example, an additional criteria when selecting cases could be that the organisation requiring the creation or development of design concepts must belong to a particular industry such as fashion or automotive. Such focuses could be used to compare results between different industries and see if there are any differences between them in relation to how certain approaches to storytelling elicit particular impacts. A particular industry may wish to use past projects as cases to better understand current working relations between them and the design team’s that they employ, in terms of learning the different ways in which they have had impact in the past.

As well as continuing this research through adopting alternative areas of inquiry and using different cases within other industries, there is also an opportunity to conduct research that compliments the knowledge obtained by this case study. It is in no doubt that the storytelling approach taken by a designer can influence certain impacts with respect to the clients understanding, appreciation of value, and ability to critique and even think more holistically around a design concept. Therefore, in order to establish an understanding of these relationships, it was necessary to examine the perspectives of clients. Gaining the designers’ perspectives with respect to the information obtained through this research study would be useful in determining the degree of consciousness with which they used storytelling approaches. This could highlight storytelling approaches that are better understood by designers and those which are not as well understood, when considering the potential impacts they have on clients.

As demonstrated by the original contribution of this research study, and through highlighting further ways in which this research could continue and develop in this final section, it is evident that storytelling is a useful lens through which design can be interrogated.
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