Who Says You Can't Judge a Book by its Cover?

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Abstract: They say that first impressions are everything, so what impression do our books give us by the cover they have? Can we make a generalisation or gain a basic understanding of the content of a book from this first impression? There is much debate over the future of the book, with much of our understanding of how an electronic book should look and feel coming from generalisations about what a 'book' is and assumptions about the needs of those that read them. Little evidence exists regarding the physical properties or the use of a book to support these generalisations and to guide the development of future books. The printed book comes in an almost infinite number of proportions, sizes and variations, depending on the content which it must hold, or maybe depending on the whim of the designer. With hundreds of thousands of new printed books being published each year it is hard to generalise about what the 'average' book might be with the current paucity of research to support this. The data used in this research is sourced from a wider data collection sampled to give a broad impression of what our books "look like" and how we use them. Based on this audit of 880 books we are able to examine the age-old adage that one cannot judge a book by its cover. The design elements of type, image and colour all play a role in conveying an initial impression to the potential reader about what the volume may hold. Thus we ask, what does a book's cover tell us about its use, its audience, and how it fits within an academic library classification system?

Keywords: Book Design, Cover Design, Typography, Illustration

Introduction

From a practical standpoint a book cover serves two purposes, to protect the pages inside it and to hint at what it might contain. The latter purpose forms the hypothesis of the investigation that this paper endeavours to explore. It is often said that first impressions are everything, so what impression do we get from the covers of our books? Are we, or our audiences, able to make a generalisation or gain a basic understanding of the content of a book from this first impression?

The visual impact of the front cover of a book is used to entice the reader to open the book to explore the content inside. Andrew Haslam, a respected graphic design practitioner and teacher, boldly proclaims that "the old adage about not judging a book by its cover is inherently critical of designers' and illustrators' abilities to communicate content within a miniature poster" (Haslam 2006, 160). Halsam also states that the designer of a book cover needs to be aware of how its style reflects its readership, with differences between age, gender and stereotypical characteristics reflecting the book's content. "A cover is a marketing device, an aesthetic production, and a representation that may relate to a book's content" (Kratz 1994, 179). In practice, these design parameters discussed by Kratz should be used to assist in determining the aesthetic appearance of the cover a book. "The business section of a bookshop will feature very different covers from the classical literature of poetry sections" (Haslam 2006, 162). Haslam has made this observation, but there is a lack of solid evidence to support this claim. Thus this investigation explores the following questions of: what does a book's cover tell us about its use, its audience, and how it fits within a library classification system and from this what can designers and publishers learn for future book design?

Strikingly, much of the literature on book covers and their design and the influence this has on purchasing and use decisions is predominantly related to the design, illustration and use of trade books. There is a paucity of literature in either the media or the scholarly literature with

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discussion on decision making in academic or non-trade environments. This study is unique in that it specifically investigates this question not with regard to trade publishing, instead with regard to the academic bookshelf and the academic library. When viewed within the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system, are books designed in such a way that they specifically target their intended audience? To study this we inspected cover material, cover binding, use of colour and image as well as typographic presentation of information in books across a LCC categorised academic library.

Of further concern to the design of book covers is the increasing availability of ebooks, for which Drew & Sternberger (2005) ask if the marketing and purchase of books will change in digital formats. With the cover of a book having such a crucial role in the purchasing process, how will the design for book covers change with the development of ebook design and distribution? Understanding the current situation will help to inform good design practice in the future.

The goal of this investigation is not to understand if one can identify a book and its classification system. Rather, can one make assumptions about where a book falls within the classification system based on design features of the cover of a book. *Do the assumptions or first impressions gained by the visual appearance of a book match the section in the LCC where an academic book is categorised? Are there key identifying characteristics in certain categories?* With this knowledge it is hypothesised that publishers will be able to make sound decisions for the design of covers of academic texts that fit visually within the spectrum of similar manuscripts on the academic library shelf. Similarities in the design of books with similar content may assist with selection of books by readers. It may also improve navigation of complex library sections due to visual markers or identifiers provided by books of similar content and context.

Related Work

Cormac & Mazzios' (2005) paint a fascinating picture of the history of books thorough historical discussions. The shape, format and cover of a book have long been important considerations for book owners and readers. Early books often had multiple uses, such as a paperweight or a flower press, and were also considered to be objects to exchange, and were prized and used as gifts regardless of their content. They were often bought unbound, and the binding of a book was seen as a status piece and often reflected its owner's personal relationship to the book or its content. Books without a practical purpose were considered to be frivolous and useless. In the early development of books the illustrations they contained were related to natural science were also considered dangerous and suspicious because illustrations and content could be interpreted in different ways (Cormack and Mazzio, 2005).

For some time, the format of a book also depended on its purpose. Books that were simply theoretical were often large and intricate while a book with a more practical purpose, such as a medical diagnostics or reference book, that may be carried around by the doctor, were often smaller with sturdy leather wallets or folios to contain them in (Cormack and Mazzio, 2005).

The history of placing type and imagery onto the outside of the book began as early as 1820 with book jackets, and became more common over time. The jacket was initially created for the purpose of being a protective wrap for the book until the purchaser took it home, when it would be discarded (Powers 2001). Early decoration on the outside of the book was either as blocking directly onto the binding cloth or paper sheets that were pasted onto the front and back (Powers 2001). With the evolution of the paperback, jacket designs were transferred to the cover of the book and were no longer discarded once the reader was home. Kratz (1994) believes that books can be told by their covers, which helps to distinguish both genre and market. There are three ways to understand a book cover and what it tells or the way it sells; through allegorical narrative, by categorising it, or by using it's identity to lure the reader (Kratz 1994).

The related work most prevalent to this study is discussed below with consideration of the importance of cover design and the design process of trade books. Most evident in this related work is the limited literature regarding the design of academic or scholarly works. This we

consider troublesome due to recent work in the digital library literature which considers the impact of library search and book selection through browsing and searching in the stacks of academic libraries (Hinze et al. 2012; D. McKay et al. 2012; Vanderschantz et al. 2011; Stieve and Schoen 2006). This literature discussed the interactions of academics and students in the stacks and the importance of visual features of books during the selection and location of books and provides a context for the need for our study described here.

The Importance of Cover Design

Haslam (2006), Weedon (2007), Sonzogni (2011) and Phillips (2007) all discuss the need of a book cover to advertise, entice and sell the book, all the while attracting attention to the text conveying essential information such as title and author and perhaps also publisher information, blurbs etc. Weedon (2007, 117) describes book covers as "a doorway through which we glimpse the text" and Sonzogni (2011, 4) writes "the book cover provides the (potential) reader with a visual summary of the book's contents." Books, like any other product in today's visually rich commercial arena have just a few seconds to catch your eye.

It is thoroughly considered in the literature that the cover of a novel or trade book has an impact on its sales and its success (Mullan 2003; A. Phillips 2007). Kean (2005) discusses covers as requiring attention due to the fact that 125,000 new titles are published each year and thus each cover must seduce the reader into picking up a copy and purchasing it.

Kean (2005) discusses consistency in trade book cover design as necessary, where books must look consistent within a genre, and yet must not appear to be cut from the same cloth. This is supported by Dychkhoff (2001) who discussed bookshops as being "almost colour-coded to make selection easier" (2001, para. 2). Dychkhoff continues, describing this as "design shorthand."

It is evident however that the same considerations and capital dedicated to the design of academic or scholarly books is not equal to that of the novel. Phillips (2004) states that the publishers claim to be unable to justify excessive expenditures for the production of academic books because prices and sales do not increase with relation to the design or production quality of such books. This is due to the fact that publishers believe readers in this market are unlikely to be swayed by appearance. The authors of this paper argue that the nature of purchasing in an academic library environment is often driven by the needs of individual courses run by the university. We suggest that libraries make acquisitions based on the needs of the research interests within the institution and this is supportive of the notion that Phillips discusses. Thus insights gained from this research, and research that builds upon this, may offer both time and capital savings to publishers, while still assisting library users and book purchasers.

The Design Process of Trade Books

Today, trade book cover design is heavily influenced by retailers, end users and publishers. Sonzogni (2001, 6) states "in the practical world, covers are chosen for reasons unconnected with the book's text (editorial guidelines, marketing research, promotion strategies and the personal tastes of individual staff members of the publisher)." In 2007 Phillips described the approval process for new cover designs being influenced by the opinions the publisher's own editorial, sales and marketing staff as well as key retailers. Kean (2005) notes supermarkets are a common source of book cover design influence. This notion that retailers and marketing staff may influence cover design for trade books, and therefore that cover design is perhaps not directed by content, genre, or target market seems at odds with Dyckoff's (2001) observations. Dyckoff notes the visual similarities of books within market segments, suggesting specific design features relating to content, genre and target market. On the other hand, the topic or subject of an academic book may be less able to be easily determined by looking at the cover than a trade book. As Kratz (1994) explains this may be due to the academic authors having more

involvement in the design of their book covers because reviews, word-of-mouth and strategic advertising are considered important within this type of publishing.

The cover design of trade and academic books is treated differently. "Distinctions in cover designs for the two are paralleled by differences in expected sales volumes, marketing strategies, policies on advances, and authors' use of literary agents" (Kratz 1994, 184). The same level of discussion in the literature regarding the design of academic or scholarly books compared to discussion regarding trade books was not available at the time of review for this paper. In fact, Phillips (2004) states that the design of academic and scholarly books may well come by way of the author supplying the cover image.

Methodology

In this investigation we audited the collection of shelved books in the University of Waikato (UoW) libraries.

Forty titles from each classification section in the UoW *Library of Congress Classification (LCC)* collection were sampled via a random selection. We used truly random data provided by Haahr (2006) throughout our study to make our random selection. Because random data may produce duplicates we selected the first 40 non duplicate results from each of the 21 LCC sections. This gave a total sample of 840 books. All 840 books were retrieved from the shelves, measured, weighed, and analysed according to their physical dimensions, binding, colour, image and typography use within the book and on the cover. This paper details the findings of this investigation with sole reference to the visual properties of the book covers.

All titles were physically pulled and audited by a single researcher. This ensured consistency of measurement and analysis. Type size was measured using an International Depth Scale provided with *Type Survival Kit* (Yelland 2003). While much of this information may have been available from a combination of digital libraries and repositories, for example the UoW OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), Amazon.com etc, it was discovered in this study that there are discrepancies in this data between sources. Therefore a single source was unable to provide a full audit of the randomly selected sample. This phenomenon is noted by McKay et al. (2012) who note that within a single digital library discrepancies are present between reported metadata and physically counted metadata.

Sample

The University of Waikato (UoW) in Hamilton, New Zealand has an academic staff of 654 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff members and a student body of 12,642 FTE students, 617 of which are studying at MPhil or Doctoral level. The university serves courses in seven academic faculties; Arts & Social Sciences, Computing & Mathematical Sciences, Education, Law, Management, Maori & Pacific Development and Science & Engineering. The university has three libraries in two separate library buildings containing accessible library stacks of 79,197 physical books. All three libraries, General Collection, Education Collection and Law Collection were audited. While the library also retains a collection of ebooks and a collection of books housed in offsite storage, both of which are accessible by students and staff through the OPAC, these two facets of the collection were not audited for this study.

The UoW collection uses the LCC system detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Library of Congress Classification System

A	General Works	**H**	Social Sciences	**Q**	Science
B	Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion	**J**	Political Science	**R**	Medicine
C	Auxiliary Sciences of History	**K**	Law	**S**	Agriculture
D	General and Old World History	**L**	Education	**T**	Technology
E	History of America	**M**	Music	**U**	Military Science
F	History of the United States and British, Dutch, French, and Latin America	**N**	Fine Arts	**V**	Naval Science
G	Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation	**P**	Language and Literature	**Z**	Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources

Results

Data from the sample was collated and analysed in two ways, the physical properties of the cover and the contents of the cover. Physical properties included the use of a dust jacket and the type of binding. The contents of the cover included analysis of the background colour or most predominant colour on the cover, the imagery used and the use of typography.

Table 2: Most Common Book Cover Features According to LCC Section

	Binding	**Colour**	**Image**	**Typeface**	**Type Size**
A	Case	White	Illustration	Sans Serif	55-65
B	Case	Black	Illustration	Serif	45-55
C	Case	Blue	Illustration	Serif	55-65
D	Perfect	Red	Illustration	Serif	25-35
E	Perfect	White	Illustration	Serif	35-45
F	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	45-55
G	Perfect	Red	Photograph	Serif	35-45
H	Perfect	Black	Illustration	Serif	35-45
J	Perfect	Blue OR White	Illustration	Serif	45-55
K	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	25-35
L	Perfect	White	Illustration	Sans Serif	55-65
M	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	35-45
N	Perfect	Orange OR Blue OR White	Illustration	Serif	45-55
P	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	45-55
Q	Case	Green	Illustration	Sans Serif	35-45
R	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Sans Serif	35-45
S	Perfect	Blue	Photograph	Serif	35-45
T	Case	Blue	Illustration	Serif	25-35
U	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	45-55
V	Perfect	Blue	Illustration	Serif	45-55
Z	Case	Red OR White	Illustration	Serif	15-25

Table 2 above shows the most commonly occurring features in each of the 21 LCC classifications. In reading this table we can see that a book found in LCC category A is most likely to be Case bound, if it has an image on the cover it is likely to be an Illustration and if the cover has a predominant colour this is likely to be White, and if it has a title on the cover, this is most likely to be Sans Serif typeface at 55-65 points in size. The table we present does not

suggest that we found individual books fulfilling all of these parameters, but can be taken to suggest that a book containing all of these variables may be considered appropriate within this category.

Table 2, above, seems to suggest that the most common design parameters for an academic book would be:

- perfect bound,
- with an illustration,
- with a cover background colour of blue,
- set with a Serif typeface
- and have type that was between 45 & 55 points in size.

This appears to be the case in four of the 21 categories (F, P, U, V). We have termed this the "perfect academic book" design. While Perfect bound, illustrated, blue, and Serif typeface use was found in seven categories, or eight categories if we simply consider the use of binding, image and colour.

Discussion

The results provided some interesting insights that when considered as a representative sample of a much larger population can be used to help understand how we might judge a book by it's cover. We are also able to analyse the representative sample to garner the impressions that these design features give and how this relates to the LCC section in which books fall in relation to the binding, imagery, colour and type. We thus break our discussion into two parts, *When Judging a Book means Identifying a Book* and *When Judging a Book means Perceiving a Books Content.*

When Judging a Book <u>Means Identifying</u> a Book

Upon discovering this "perfect academic book", it would seem to suggest that many books in the LCC will have very similar overall design parameters and therefore prove correct the adage, you can't judge a book by it's cover. This has suggested to the authors, that it is in fact difficult to judge a book by its cover *if* judging a book is to identify its place within the categorization system using its' *overall* design features. This is because many books when classified according to the LCC are designed in ways that are very similar from one category to the next.

To attempt to understand the characteristics of books in each category and thus how one might distinguish books in one category from another we have noted that one must analyse the differences rather than the similarities based on individual design parameters. This is because, aside from these noted four categories where books were most likely to have all of the most common design parameters of the "perfect academic book", no other LCC category showed this trend. As can be seen in Table 2 above, all other categories were distinct in 1 or more of the analysed visual aspects of their design. These findings imply that the design of book covers in certain subject areas are more distinct than in others.

There are however certain characteristics that are most commonly found within certain subject areas. To further understand these results we can carefully analyse the points of difference of individual design features and what these tell us. For example, case binding was found in only 6 of 21 categories, so we can use this to identify that books which fall in A, B, C, Q, T & Z as most likely to be case bound rather than perfect bound. Photography only appeared in G & S as most common for the cover image. White was the most common cover colour only in A, E, J, N and Z. Sans Serif type appeared most commonly only in A, L, Q and R. The least common type size was 15-25 points, comparatively very small type and was the most common size only in Z. Comparatively large type was found commonly only in A, C and L with 55-65 point type sizes. When we view the results in this way patterns appear to emerge that would aid in considering the first impressions of a book according to the LCC section that it falls within.

Inferences can be drawn from these results about what a book cover in a specific category would most likely look like by assessing the features of cover design that set books apart. For example:

- a book in A would most likely use Case binding, White background colour, Sans Serif type and comparatively large type sizes
- a book in C would most likely use Case binding and relatively large type
- a book in Q would most likely use case binding, Green background colour,
- with Sans Serif type that is slightly smaller than the most commonly occurring size
- a book in Z would most likely use case binding, white, with very small type
- a book in G or S would likely be illustrated with photography
- a book in L would most likely use relatively large Sans Serif text

From our list above we can identify that categories A (General Works) and Q (Science) show the most features of a book that differ from our most commonly occurring "perfect academic book" (perfect bound, with an illustration, a cover background colour of blue, set with a Serif typeface that was between 45 & 55 points in size). Books in these two categories are perhaps therefore the most unique as compared to what we have defined as the perfect academic book and may well be the most easy to identify.

When analysing the fourth column of Table 2 above we can see that image is the least likely indicator of what category a book falls within. This is because all categories showed the most common use of image on the cover was illustration except for G (Geography, Anthropology and Recreation) and S (Agriculture) which both showed use of photography most often.

Colour was shown to be the most likely determinant for classification identification as 11 of the 21 classification categories showed a predominant colour other than blue.

When Judging a Book <u>Means Perceiving</u> a Books Content

Physical Features of the Cover—Jackets & Binding

We investigated the physical design considerations of the covers of books and the impressions that these gave. A jacket on a book can convey strong ideas about the publication itself, and implications associated with the binding of a book give impressions of the book's value.

Jacket

When considering the physical format of the book and its cover, the first parameter of note was whether the book had a dust jacket or not.

Use of Jackets Identified

Table 3: Use of Jacket According to LCC Section

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	Z
Jacket	3	2	8	11	12	8	2	6	6	4	2	17	14	10	3	6	3	6	7	17	6

Categories M (Music) and V (Naval Science) were found to be most likely to have a jacket cover. These two classifications showed 42% of the sample as having jackets with 58% not having jackets. Next most likely to have jackets were N (Fine Arts - 35%), E (History of America - 30%), D (General and Old World History - 27%) and P (Language and Literature - 25%). Least likely to have a jacket were categories B (Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion), G (Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation) and L (Education). However, as these numbers show, all sections of the LCC showed less than 50% of the sample as having jackets. Only 153 books of 840 were found to have a jacket. This may be a result of the books being housed in a library, where collection management policies often mean that jackets are removed before circulation. Not all

books with a case binding (hard cover) were found to have a jacket and many of the perfect bound books had a jacket.

Impression Given by a Jacket

A dust jacket was originally used to protect the book from when it left the publishers until when the purchaser finally gets the book home (Powers 2001). The function of the jacket has now evolved to be something that is more likely to be retained as a decorative exterior to the book. Due to the low numbers of jackets present in the sample it is difficult to draw clear hypothesis as to the impression that a jacket may give and how this relates to the LCC classification where jackets are predominantly found.

Binding

Closely related to whether a book has a jacket or not is how a book is bound. However, the categories where jackets were most likely to be found were not those where case binding was most commonly used.

Use of Bindings Identified

Table 4: Types of Binding Identified in our Sample

Perfect	Case	Saddle Stitch	Ring	Spiral	Velo	Stapled	Wire Bound
508	281	30	3	3	2	2	1

Predominantly books were found to be perfect bound, with the second most commonly found binding to be case binding. Interestingly in A, B, C, Q, T and Z, case binding was found to be more prominently used than perfect binding. Perfect Binding was the more likely binding in all other categories (15/21).
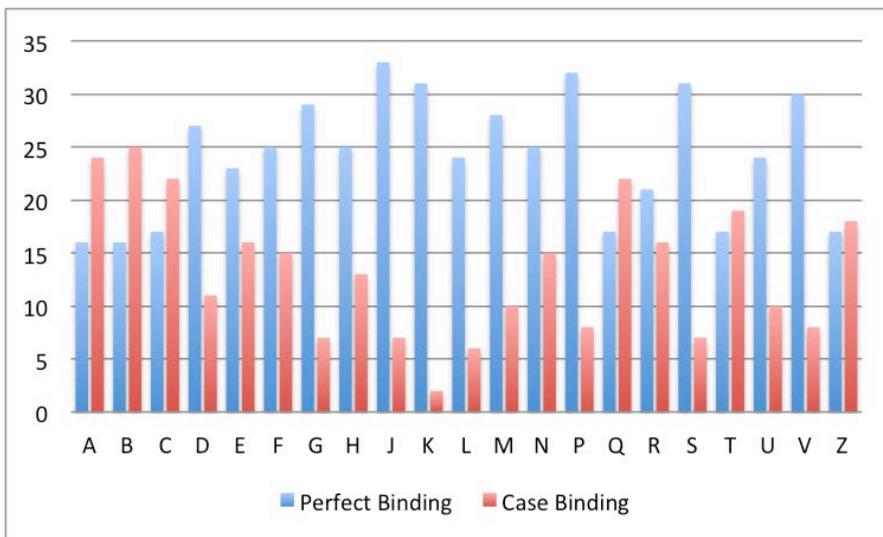

Figure 1: Perfect Binding vs Case Binding

In only sections T & Z did neither Case nor Perfect binding reach 50% of the sample. In both of these categories the next most common binding was Saddle Stitch (three and four instances respectively) and Ring binding one instance each.

Impression Given by Binding

The type of binding used for a book is heavily dependant on the durability required and the relative cost, as well as whether the spine can be printed and whether the book will lie flat. "The fact the serious book lovers prefer hardcover books to paperbacks (they last longer and look more impressive in one's library) is simply icing on the cake and merely adds to the perceived value of the hardcover" (Baker 2010, 61).

Perfect binding is traditionally used for soft cover books or paperbacks and is where a melted adhesive is applied to the spine edge of the signatures to hold them together and a cover is then wrapped around the book when the glue is still hot (Campbell 1983; Evans 2004). Case binding or edition binding is the traditional, method for binding hardcover books. In case binding, signatures are sewn together and encased in a hard outer cover made from board covered in paper, cloth or leather, which is manufactured separately and glued to the pages using endpapers (Campbell 1983; Evans 2004). Saddle Stitch binding is where the signature and cover is 'wire stitched' or stapled along the back fold.

Each binding style has its relative advantages and limitations, and the costs and durability associated with it, each binding style having an impact on how the book is perceived. Because of the relatively high cost associated with a case bound book and the high durability of it, a certain impression is given to the viewer it has a "look of quality" (Evans 2004, 72). In contrast a perfect binding has a low relative cost and therefore the impression given by this binding is different to that of case binding.

The books that most often showed case binding were found in A (General Works), B (Philosophy, Psychology and Religion), C (Auxiliary Sciences of History), Q (Science), T (Technology) & Z (Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources). These categories perhaps are the older categories, more steadfast, "harder" categories in the list. It could be argued that Philosophy, Science, Technology and Bibliography are those subjects more steeped in tradition and requiring a look of authenticity, strength and robustness as perceived by such a hard binding and cover material.

Visual Features of the Cover—Image & Background Colour

We investigated the distribution of covers that contained images, illustrations or flat colours. Of the ones that contained an image we also asked whether that image was a photograph or illustration and if it was a photograph, whether it was a black and white or colour photograph. When considering the covers that have images we also considered the size of the image and whether it was dominant on the cover, or whether the image was supplementary.

Use of Flat Colour Compared to Use of Image Identified

This table shows the number of books in each category that contained an image on the cover compared to covers that contained a flat colour and typography only. Table 5 shows totals for all images whether predominant or supplementary and photographic or illustrative. Z was the only section where more than 50% of its sample had covers displaying no image, while L was the only category that was evenly split.

Table 5: Flat Colour vs Use of Image on Cover

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	Z
Flat Colour	16	19	14	11	11	14	12	16	14	18	20	13	9	16	14	17	12	9	11	10	23
Image	24	21	26	29	29	26	28	24	26	22	20	27	31	24	26	23	28	31	29	30	17

To determine the most commonly occurring book colour, we considered books that had no dominant image (an image taking up less than 50% of the cover surface) to have a predominant flat colour. Thus books that had only supplementary images and books with no image were

sampled for their colour. The colours identified in the total sample were black, blue, brown, green, grey, orange, pink, purple, red and yellow. While the majority of books in most categories had a dominant image, there were still many that did not, and when you take this away it makes the colour used even more crucial in how the cover is perceived.

Blue was discovered to be the most predominant book cover colour in 12 of 21 categories with white next in 6 of 21 categories.

Table 6: Most Commonly Occurring Background Colour

A	White	**H**	Black	**Q**	Green
B	Black	**J**	Blue OR White	**R**	Blue
C	Blue	**K**	Blue	**S**	Blue
D	Red	**L**	White	**T**	Blue
E	White	**M**	Blue	**U**	Blue
F	Blue	**N**	Orange OR Blue OR White	**V**	Blue
G	Red	**P**	Blue	**Z**	Red OR White

Impression Given by Colour

Colour is associated with emotions and can have a significant effect on the mind. A viewer's subconscious associations with certain colours will influence the initial perception of a design. These impressions and associations are considered to come from deep within the human psyche and their influence on the mind cannot be easily changed. Marks (2006) describes colour as communicating to a viewer even before they have an opportunity to read, interpret, or analyse words, images and objects and therefore could have a significant influence on how a reader perceives that content of a book, based on the cover alone. Marks continues stating that colours can enhance meaning and improve communication when used appropriately. This can be done to create emotional connections through sociological and cultural perceptions of colour or through the use of colour for emphasis, attention and impact. Therefore, on a book cover the effect of colour could have an impression on how a book is perceived. This being said, these perceptions of colour are from a western perspective and cultural differences can have a significant effect on perception of colours, as observed in research by Ou et al. (2004).

Marks (2006) describes 21 categories in a classification system for colours and the emotions that are associated with these. Marks classifications and discussions are referred to throughout this section as these are helpful in describing some of the potential impressions created through colour use on the cover of books.

The associations with the colour blue, the most common book cover colour across categories, are varied; it is generally considered to be a negative colour, it is powerful, but has contradictions between excitement and calm (Marks 2006). Blue appears to retire from us and draw us towards it, but also gives the feeling of cold (Von Goethe 1970). Blue falls into many of Marks' (2006) classifications, most notably *regal*, *calm*, *classic*, and *professional.*

Black, most common in B (Philosophy, Psychology & Religion) and H (Social Sciences), by definition is the absence of colour. Marks (2006) places black within both the *professional* and *graphic* classifications, describing black as "no-nonsense", "humourless" (p. 206) and "demanding respect" (p. 226).

Red, most frequently found in D (General and Old World History) or G (Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation), conveys the impressions of both gravity and dignity in its deeper

shades as well as grace and attractiveness in its lighter tints (Von Goethe 1970). Marks (2006) describes Red as central in his *powerful* classification, a colour that can "neither be denied nor ignored", while dark reds fall into his *rich* classification and are described as conveying strength and affluence.

Green, the most frequent colour for Q (Science), is the balance between yellow (positivity and light) and blue (Von Goethe 1970). Forest greens are also attributed by Marks (2006) as falling within the *rich* classification. Greens also fall into Marks' *fresh* and *trendy* classifications and are seen to be healthy and youthful.

Use of Image Identified

When we break down the use of image into photographic image compared to illustrative image we can see that only G & S are likely to include a photographic image more often than illustrative image on the cover, just two of 21 categories.
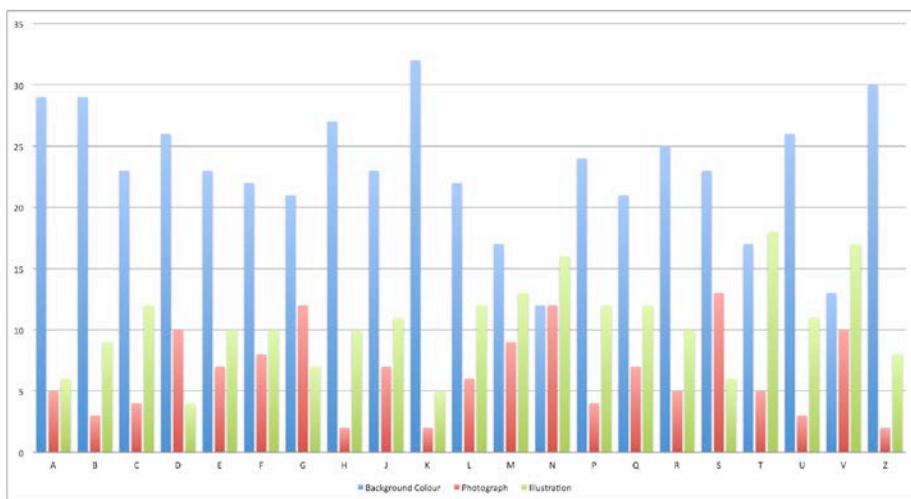

Figure 2: Flat Colour compared to Photographic and Illustrative Image Use

In most categories an illustration was most likely to be found on the cover of a book. Exceptions to this were in categories G and S, where the cover was more likely to have a photograph, in category Z where it was most likely that there would be no image and L where it was equally likely to find no image as it was to find an illustration.

Impression of Photography versus Illustration

A photograph, as described by Langford (2000) and Dondis (1974), has a truthfulness, whether it is the communication of factual or fictional information. This method of recording an image seen in a single instant is in contrast to an illustration, which is an artist's representation through a painting or drawing. The artist's impression is a result of their interpretation onto a substrate of the image that they have perceived on their retina, the image on the retina, is not the same as the image in the mind (Gombrich 1960), and different still to what appears in the artist's image. This contrast in methods associated with image making mediums implies that the type of image on the cover of the book can infer different impressions on the content within. The books that most often showed photography were G (Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation) and S (Agriculture), this may be because the detail and clarity of a photograph can make it ideal for conveying accurate reality and scientific evidence (Langford 2000).
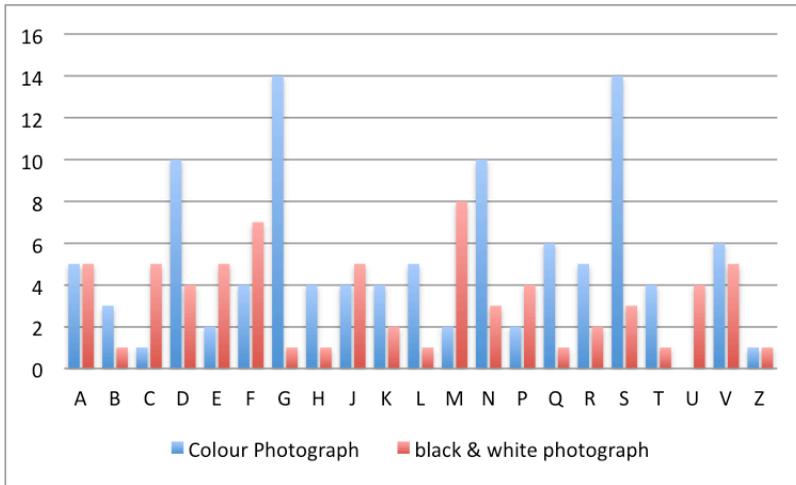
Figure 3: Colour Compared to Black & White Photographic Images

While the numbers of photographic images on covers was relatively low across the sample compared to illustration or flat colour we did consider the breakdown of colour images as compared to black & white images. We found that 12 LCC sections contained colour photographs most often, while seven contained black & white photographs most often and 2 sections where colour and black & white appeared equally. The seven sections containing more black & white than colour photographic images were C (Auxiliary Science of History), E (History of America), F (History of the United States and British, Dutch, French, and Latin America), J (Political Science), M (Music), P (Language and Literature), and U (Military Science). Interestingly U (Military Science) contained no colour photographs on the cover in this entire sample. This was the only classification to contain no colour photographs. We highlight these because black & white photography is most often associated with a stronger truthfulness than colour photography. According to Wells (2004) black and white film and subject matter in documentary photography were considered essential in depicting a "serious" documentary photographer. Colour was deemed to be only used in commerce and was often regarded as something that was a technically less sophisticated art form. Squires (in Bolton 1992) discussed black and white images as likely to be interpreted by an audience as having more truth than a colour photograph and thus we see black and white used to emote integrity, austerity and truthfulness in corporate manuals, annual reports, newspapers etc.

Typographic Features of the Cover—Typeface & Size

When analysing the typography that was used on the covers it was first assessed whether type was present or not, then whether the typeface was a Serif or a Sans Serif font.

Use of Typeface Identified

Figure 4. Typeface use on the Cover shows the use of Serif vs Sans Serif typefaces on the covers of books in our sample. Books that contained no type on the cover of the books were also found within the sample and are represented in this graph also.
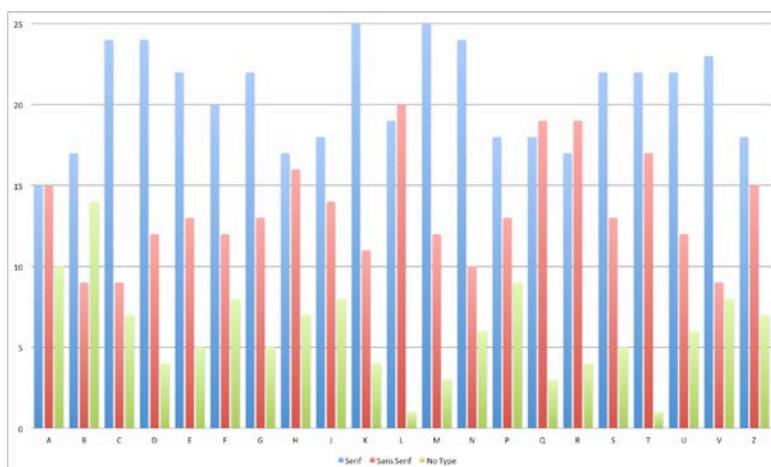
Figure 4: Typeface use on the Cover

Unsurprisingly Serif is the most commonly used typeface for the book title across 17 of the 21 LCC categories. In LCC categories C, D, K, M & N, more than 60% of the books had a Serif as the predominant typeface. Only three LCC categories (L, Q & R) used a Sans Serif more than a Serif and in category A, Sans Serif and Serif were used equally. Surprisingly there was a portion of the sample that contained no type on the cover of the book. 125 of 840 books (14.88%) contained no type on the cover of the book, this was most common in category B, which was the only category that had more books with no type on the cover than had a Sans Serif. Just two books of the 840 surveyed contained both Serif and Sans Serif typefaces on the cover. Of these two books one was in category C and one book was in D.

Impression Given by Typeface

Typeface choice can be very influential in regards to perception, as Hochuli (2008, 10) explains "The reception of everything written - including typography takes place in two ways: firstly, in the act of reading itself, that is the conversion in the brain of the perceived succession of letters, and secondly as a (mostly unconscious) visual perception, that triggers associations with what has previously been seen and arouses feelings." Spiekermann & Ginger (2003) suggest that if you look closely at a typeface or letter you can assess the personality expressed by the physical characteristics of this type. According to Garfield (2010, 42) the finishing stroke (Serif) of a letter often makes Serif typefaces appear grounded to the page and he further describes these letters as "traditional, square, honest and carved" with a "lineage [that] can be traced back as far as the Roman emperor Trajan, whose Column in Rome, completed in 113, bears an inscription in his honour". This suggests that the books in B (Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion), C (Auxiliary Sciences of History), D (General and Old World History), E (History of America), F (History of the United States and British, Dutch, French, and Latin America), G (Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation), H (Social Sciences), J (Political Science), K (Law), M (Music), N (Fine Arts), P (Language and Literature), S (Agriculture), T (Technology), U (Military Science), V (Naval Science), Z (Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources) should all appear to have this tradition and history associated with them and seem formal and strengthened.

Garfield (2010) goes on to discuss Sans Serif faces as less formal and more contemporary, although durable and monumental due to their shape and minimalism. Sans Serif was only found predominantly in L (Education), Q (Science), and R (Medicine) and equally presently in A (General Works). These categories while steeped in tradition could well be argued as forward facing and evolutionary and thus many books produced in this category we would argue are in fact modern and contemporary and thus arguably fit this use of Sans Serif rather than Serif typeface.

Use of Type Size Identified

Table 7 shows the most commonly occurring type size for each LCC section.

Table 7: Most Common Type Sizes by LCC Section

A	55-65	H	35-45	Q	35-45
B	45-55	J	45-55	R	35-45
C	55-65	K	25-35	S	35-45
D	25-35	L	55-65	T	25-35
E	35-45	M	35-45	U	45-55
F	45-55	N	45-55	V	45-55
G	35-45	P	45-55	Z	15-25

From this table we can see that the most commonly occurring type sizes were 35-45 points and 45-55 points with 7 categories showing this as the most predominant type size. The variance from the very small 15-25 points to the largest 55-65 points. Average type sizes varied greatly across categories and this can probably partly be attributed to books being a wide range of sizes. Thus type size, particularly in the majority of books appearing commonly between 35-55 points on its own may not give a significant first impression.

Impression Given by Type Size

Z (Bibliography, Library Science, and General Information Resources) had the most common type size as 15-25 points – the smallest most frequently occurring type size of the sample. Interestingly Yelland (2003) advises that type sizes 14 point and above is recommended for headlines or display type, while 14 point is suggested as the maximum point size for setting body text. This suggests that these books that appear at the smallest type sizes in the sample of 15-25 points verge on the side of being considered body copy as opposed to title or display copy. We were also able to identify 23 books out of the 840 that used type sizes smaller than 14 points, 4 of which appeared in K (Law).

A (General Works), C (Auxiliary Sciences of History) and L (Education) had the largest type sizes of 55-65 points being most common. These comparatively very large type sizes appeared across three quite broad categories and perhaps again would be interesting to investigate the relationship of text size to book size. There were 39 books out of 840 that were identified as being larger than 100 points, 5 of which appeared in V (Naval Science).

It will be interesting for future studies to contrast type size against book size, something that was outside the scope of this study. We believe size will be most telling when compared to the size of the book. Large type set on a small surface will generally appear heavy, dominating and imposing, while type set with large amounts of negative space around it will have a feeling of lightness, openness and cleanliness. At present type sizes will likely give some of these impressions when viewed on the covers of books however without further investigation of ratio's of space to type size these impressions are difficult to generalise.

Conclusion

The goal of this research was not to attempt to show what a book in each category of the LCC may look like from bind, to colour, to image to type; it was to understand what specific visual

features identify certain categories of the LCC. That is, what differences in the visual design of academic texts distinguish books from one classification to another.

Our goal was to identify impressions generated by features of books and how these impressions relate to the LCC classifications within which these books fall. The sample required to achieve more than this was outside the scope of this study. We have been able to see that certain features show interesting correlations to the types of books present in the classifications that they are found within and what first impressions colour, text, image and bind are able to provide to a reader.

We believe that these findings will help us to design considerately for books that will be housed within the LCC. Publishers may be able to identify ways in which they can design texts to fit within the LCC and that visually align books with others of a similar nature. Visual alignment of books will give the opportunity for readers to be able to judge a book by its cover in a way that is meaningful. These findings if implemented by publishers would provide assistance for library users and book purchasers to identify books of potential relationship and similarity to them in their browsing or searching needs.

What do the impressions given by the book features offer? The design decisions made by the designers of book covers can create semantic meanings that help to convey the ideas or content within the book. Can these findings be used to guide decision-making by designer, publisher or purchaser? Now that we have a picture of the trends in designing books according to the LCC further research can be conducted to gain a greater picture of how the design of a book cover can enhance design decision-making with the target reader in mind. Understanding of the design parameters and their variations across different subject areas can assist with accurately conveying the content of a book to the reader, as the initial impression of the outside of a book can have an effect on whether the reader delves further into the content.

In the discussion of this paper we briefly addressed some of the aesthetic features of book cover design and the potential first impressions that these would give readers. These impressions ranged across perceptions created by the use of binding, colour and typeface selection. Books were discussed showing heritage, prestige or robustness when case bound compared to perfect bound books which are cheaper to produce. Books using a Sans Serif typeface were described as showing a minimalist, forward facing and modern or contemporary first impression. The myriad of colours identified as predominant in each LCC classification was discussed with respect to the various psychological and emotional impressions that these colours may give according to psychology of colour literature. Colour has long been a controversial area of research and the literature here is thin and divided by ethnographics and demographics. The space that this paper allows us to dedicate to the subject is limited, however the potential for deeper analysis and empirical investigation is evident from our discussion. These visual and aesthetic impressions are tools that are used by skilful graphic designers to impart such an ideal when viewed by a reader. As Phillips (2007) points out these factors would be carefully considered by designers, publishers and decision makers for trade books. Here we have analysed and noted that impressions can be perceivably garnered from the current generalisations able to be made from our sample. It would seem thus publishers and authors must consider if the impressions we propose as perceivable are those desired by these decision makers.

This research has begun to show that there are some features that provide indications that we can judge a book by its cover and therefore what it contains by considering judgment from the perspective of either identification or impression.

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