



Computer-generated image using 3-D modelling software, Nottingham

1.5 Hand-drawn and computer graphics

Most of the methods of graphical communication shown in this book can be created by traditional hand-drawn methods or computer graphics.

Computer-generated graphics are generally turned to when either a level of accuracy is required that cannot be achieved by hand, or when complex tools are needed to speed the design process.

Selecting the most appropriate medium is not always straightforward. Whether hand-drawn, computer-generated or a combination of both, first identify the purpose and desired character of the image to be created. The technique or technology should not be allowed to dominate the message to be conveyed.



Hand-drawn sketch using pencil crayon and ink, Urban Realm Strategy, Aberdeen

Hand-drawn images make use of traditional media such as pencil, crayon, felt pen, marker pen, ink and watercolour. These mediums can convey a lively impression without being too definitive. They are easily shared by a group, involving all in developing ideas. They are familiar to non-professionals, encouraging their participation. They can be used anywhere.

Computer graphics provide an enormous range of communication techniques and devices. Data can be converted to image very quickly. Ideas can be easily saved, duplicated, transmitted and displayed.

With the increasing availability and utility of computers and design software, the immediacy and uniqueness of the bespoke hand-drawn image is once again a symbol of quality and distinctiveness.

Organisations and individuals develop their own preferences and abilities. While it is always good to explore new ways of communicating, it is best to be comfortable with any technique before using it in public. Don't be driven by fashion or dazzled by technology. Choose the medium most appropriate to the audience.