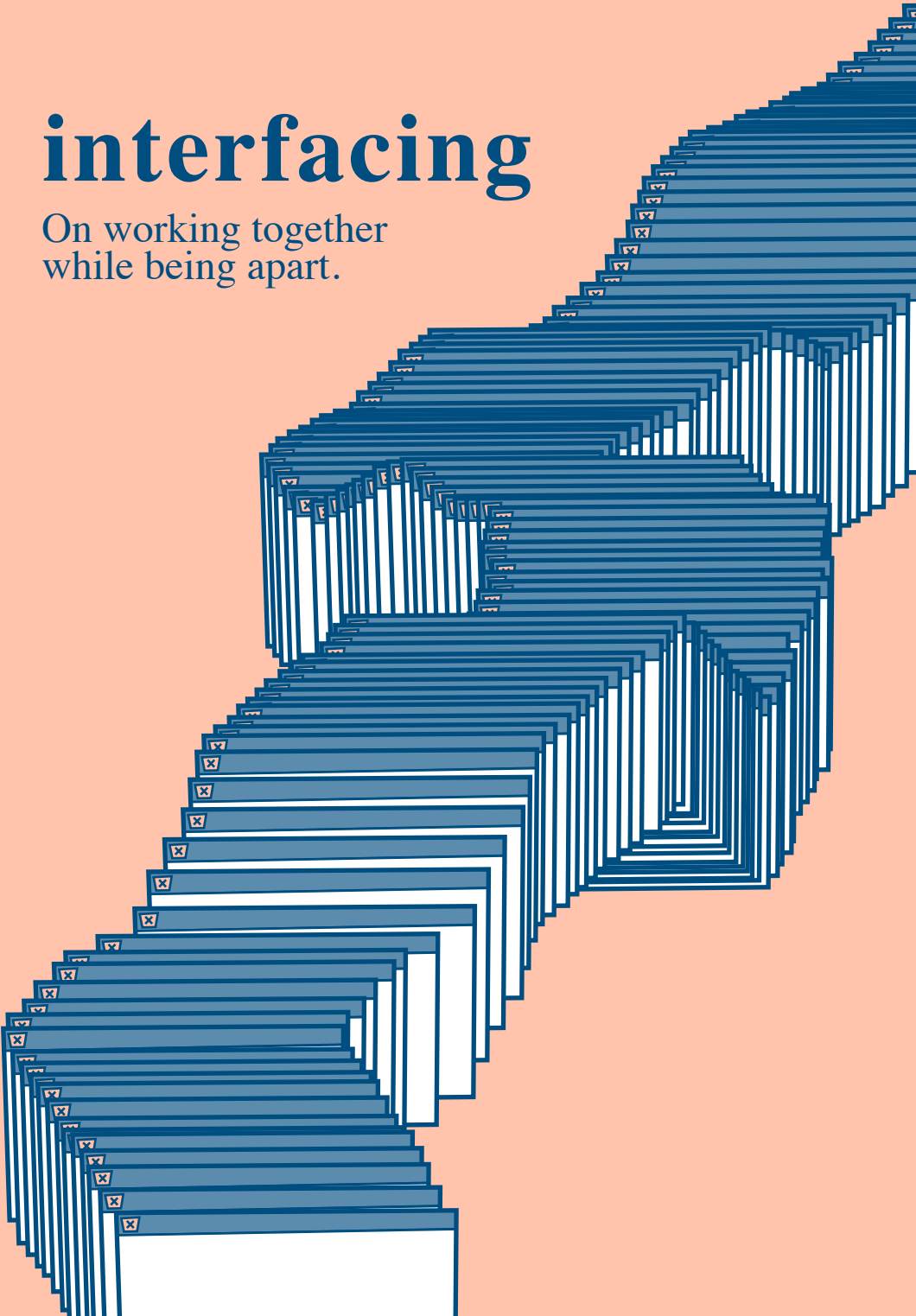


interfacing

On working together
while being apart.



in·ter·fac·ing

verb (used with object):

to bring together; connect or mesh

Rectangular space as a portal

Online collaboration is different to that in the physical world.
We move from face-to-face to inter-face.

We see and hear each other in... rectangular space.

In 3D space there are natural pauses when socialising,
and our body language says more than our words.

In rectangular space how do we:

Make a joke with the person next to us?

Nip to the toilet?

Have thinking silences?

Start with the why

Ask yourselves...

Why are we collaborating?

Defining the purpose of the interaction will help inform the nature of the meeting.

Can you use physical world contexts as reference points to help answer this?

Is it a quick coffee meet?

A formal presentation?

A network mixer?

An ideas generation session?

A messy planning meeting with post-its everywhere?

Or are you just catching up and saying hello?

Context informs content

The tools you use will inform what you do and how you do it.
Consider how the platforms you use determines your work.

Do you need to video call, create a shared doc,
or actually, just send an email?

Make sure you use the right tools for the job.
Would you use a spoon to chop an onion?

Just because it can be done online,
doesn't mean it should be.

The space-time contingency

Do a recce of the places in which you will be meeting
and do a dress rehearsal before going public.

Do you know how to let others share their screen?

Do the slides need to be formatted in a certain way?

Are all the links working?

Who will monitor the questions in the chat?

Is there a back-up if the WiFi drops?

The meeting might be shorter,
but the planning may take longer.

Making connections

Take it in turns to lead the way.

Shared experiences help form bonds within a group.

Think about how best to communicate yourself and your work.

There's no need to talk through your CV over some slides.

Tell us what you are excited about at the moment,

and share it in a way that reflects your creative process.

Get lost online and go to a new space/platform together.

How can you create pockets of play that turn into inside jokes?

Being well

Being plugged in to rectangular space requires stillness.
Make time to move.

Shake your legs and flap your hands.
Lean backwards and turn your head.
Take breaks to look out the window.

S t r e t c h .

Rectangular time

In rectangular space there is rectangular time.
It is fast paced and instantaneous.

A 1hr talk in 3D space may take half as long on a video call.
Face-to-face interjections take up time.

What can you do with those extra 30 minutes?
More work? Pfft.
Make a salad? Go for a walk?

Exclusive but inclusive

Speaking in a video call puts you in the spotlight.
Offer alternative ways for people to communicate ideas.

Try to create low pressure, collaborative spaces
with opportunities for anonymity.

Large group calls can be overwhelming,
and don't always allow for good collaboration.

Consider your call size capacity.
When/how do you organise break out rooms?

Call etiquette

How do we start and end video calls?

Can we avoid awkwardness and anti-climaxes with rituals?

When people join:

Have music playing to keep it casual.

Or wave and cheer to make it special.

Before leaving:

Replicate 3D space and move out of sight.

Or plan a 10 second silence and leave together.

Manage mic muting when people are presenting.

Are cameras compulsory, and always on?

Too much sound can cause distortion and confusion.

Why not develop your own visual cues

or signs of appreciation.

Work in 4D

Rectangular space is a portal to other worlds,
not a replacement of our own and our surroundings.

There is no binary of physical/digital,
they are happening simultaneously.

How can you make the most of both?

Get comfortable at your desk, AND on your desktop.
Rearrange the digital furniture to suit your needs.

Create moments of contrast by moving between
group/independent, online/offline, small group/larger group.

Digital movement

How long do you spend on each platform?

How do you move between them as a group?

Hyperlinks are the doors to MORE that help us find our way forward.

And they are the digital breadcrumbs that help us find our way back.

Create them wisely.

Check in and make sure your links aren't out of date.

Is that site still there? Has that video been taken down?

Expired links should go in the compost and be replaced with fresh ones.

Be conscious of how people navigate digital spaces.

Not everyone will be familiar with these platforms.

Can you set up clear pathways that create movement,
to prevent boredom and screen fatigue?

Being critical

Be aware and critical of the tools you use.

Who makes them?

How does this relate to your work?

Understand the difference between open source and “free”.

How many web searches does it take to boil a kettle?

What’s the point in turning the lights off when you leave a room,
if you stream HD videos just for background noise?

Online organising

Do you know your .mov from your .mp3?
Or your .jpg from your .tiff?

Digital media and information come in various formats.
Is the work you make compatible for the tools you use?
Can it be sent to others via email, or will it need a heftier tool?

To store our resources, materials and ideas in rectangular space
we move away from shelves and cupboards to files and folders.

Are you labelling work clearly?
That photo saved as IMG089858684.png is going to be hard to find.

Learn how to turn things into a .pdf.
But always keep the original.

How do you make a shared whiteboard for all to see and add to?
Make use of shared cloud drives and collaborative docs.

Being messy

Digital media always feels finished.
But what if your studio was online?
Where can you sketch, test and make mess?

Use spaces and tools like they are:
Blank walls and sticky notes.
Brown paper and markers.
Sketchbooks, scraps and glue stick.

Don't be so precious about your digital spaces all the time.
Sometimes your account is a mess, and that's okay.
You can tidy it up on Sunday, after you've done the laundry.

Show your process as well as the product.
If you don't show your working,
how do we know how you got the answer?

Consider the legacy

As the project comes to an end,
revisit those files and folders.

Make a plan for your project legacy.
Know when to update, archive and delete.

Decide which bits are for you to keep,
and which bits you want to share with the world.

Do you leave things where they are?
To be rediscovered like digital fossils.

Or... could you make something new?
Something that lives beyond the project.

Sign out

Make sure you all know when to stop.
Don't let your cosy environment fool you;
working on the sofa is still working.

Leave the day on a high rather than pushing to exhaustion.

Schedule in social moments separate to your meeting.
Staying on a video call is not the same as going to the pub.

Decide if/how you will maintain relationships.
At the end of the project, celebrate.

This guide was commissioned by Site Sit
in response to the digital art lab *Plugged In*, 2020.

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