Example-Finding in the Creative Design Process
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Objectives
- To understand the methods in which designers search for examples on the internet
- To generate a comparison/analysis of web-based example-finding methods used by graphic, web, and industrial/product designers
- To understand both the benefits and challenges encountered during the example-finding process
- To understand the role of web-based examples and example-finding methods in the idea generation phase
- To understand the specific types of web examples (logos, color palettes, news articles, etc.) used in the idea generation phase

Overview
Designers use examples to generate new and novel ideas that allow them to create innovative products and designs. This study focuses on understanding how designers use the web to obtain examples. We conducted a study with both novice and expert designers in the product, web, and graphic domains. By observing how the designers utilized the web to obtain examples and the roles of these examples in their ideation process, we were able to gain insight into how designers gain inspiration and re-appropriate existing designs to create new ones.

Web Resources
“Just in general, I feel like I have in my memory, a list of sites that I can go to grab new ideas.” – Web Designer, Expert

Re-Appropriation of Similar Designs
“I think from each one you take some aspect that you like: color; or message. You take different stuff from each and take the best ones.” – Graphic Designer, Novice

Trends
“If I’m doing a client site project, I will go straight to the top… and look at trends and how people are designing sites.” – Web Designer, Expert

“...[O]nly by looking at what is can you come up with what can be...” – Product Designer, Expert