

Assignment 3

DESIGN A NEW CODE

When you hear bells in a campanile, in the city or the countryside, you are experiencing 'tele-communication' ('communication from afar'). You are also experiencing a code: a kind of language which communicates information by representing a set of things (A) by another set of things (B). The logic of coding permeates the field of computing.

'Natural language' (spoken or written words) is a very sophisticated code; before electricity, however, verbal telecommunication was slow. Bells, by contrast, use a very limited code (one sound sequence means 'Come to Mass', another 'Enemies are approaching') but the telecommunication is fast.

This assignment asks you to find or invent a communicating system or device, and – more important – design a code for it.

- 1 Identify something existing, or invent something new, which could communicate a limited set of meanings, not necessarily from afar. It can use any technology, ancient or modern – but not telegraphy, telephony, radio, etc.
- 2 Decide what sort of information it communicates
- 3 Design a code for communicating that information. The code must not use – nor even, like morse code, represent – alphabetic or numerical characters
- 4 On one or more A3 sheets, draw a picture and/or diagram of a) the communicating device or system, and b) the code and its meanings
- 5 Write your full name (*nome e cognome*) on your display
- 6 When you arrive at the next lesson, immediately fix the display to the wall and be prepared to explain it to everyone.

This is primarily a design assignment, not a research assignment. You are a designer – so you will want to invent things which see the world in a surprising, maybe witty, way.