Coulter Designs Presents **Gamma Node** An everyday carry trifecta







Designer Statement

Thesis Proposal:

People commonly used to carry vastly different basic tools and objects with them daily that would be useful for the everyday scenarios of the time, but over time those tools changed based not only on the views of society of the age, but also by merit of individual decision and opinion. I want to figure out why the mentality around the tools people carry everyday changes, and how the items people take with them today reflect a changing attitude of the needs and wants of the modern individual so I can design better products for them.

How does this make the field of design better?

By understanding the reasoning behind what people currently choose to carry everyday on their person, designers can gain insight into the mentality, thought processes, and priorities of the world at large, allowing them to make improved and more thoughtful designs that incorporate this knowledge.

How does this make me a better designer?

I have a strong interest in what others choose to carry on their person everyday due to my own opinions on what I have on my person daily. By learning more about the things people value having on their person at all times, I can gain insight into the way people form decisions on what they deem as necessities to get through the everyday ordeals of life. This will allow me to improve my designs now and in the future so I can create more thoughtful tools for people to carry and use in the modern day.

Finding a Sponsor

I contacted many companys inquiring about sponsorship from either the company as a whole or just an individual member. Some of the companies I contacted include but arent limited to:

-Big Idea Design -The James Brand -Tactile Turn -Tactile Knife Co. -Griffon Knife and Tool -WESN

There were mixed results between all brands when it came to responses. Some companies simply did not respond in any way, some just added me to an email list, some sent back automated responses. However one company, specifically one person, responded back to me.

JAMES TACTILE



Sponsor Spot



Ryan Coulter

Ryan Coulter is the Founder and Chief Creative Officer of The James Brand, a Portland, Oregon based everyday carry company that was started in 2012. Their goal was simple: "products made with premium materials, a minimalist design aesthetic, and clear attention to the details."

Ryan agreed to help me out with my project shortly after contacting him. Our weekly meetings helped this project immensly by providing valuable insight into the design process of a real everyday carry designer and his process and knowledge gained through years of design.



Sponsor Spot

Some of the helpful information he gave me included: -A recommendation for the book Revenge of the Analog. -Try building a persona backwards based on a laydown of their EDC. -All EDC gear can be split into the catergories of knives/tools, carry, and communication. -When designing a product, ask yourself what is the form, what are the 1 to 3 core details that make it interesting, and how does it work as a system? -Material can determine colors of a product.

-Push the fun color to something great and polarizing.

-Pops of color should be approxiametly 1/100th of the visual mass.



Gantt Chart

Nicholas Coulter Everyday Carry Thesis				Week 1		Week 2		Week 3		Week 4		Week 5		Week 6		Week 7
Tasks	Start	Finish	Duration	1/14/25	1/16/25	1/21/25	1/23/25	1/28/25	1/30/25	2/4/25	2/6/25	2/11/25	2/13/25	2/18/25	2/20/25	2/25/25
Thesis Proposal	1/14/25	1/23/25	9 Days					с 2								2
Sponsor Chosen	1/30/25	2/4/25	5 Days							1						1
Generate list of Potential Sponsors	1/30/25	2/4/25	5 Days					ļ į								
Gantt Chart	1/30/25	2/6/25	7 Days													
Create Gant Chart	1/30/25	2/6/25	7 Days													
Research																
Create Survey	1/28/25	1/30/25	3 Days													
Send out survey	1/30/25	2/4/25	5 Days													
Compile Survey Results	2/4/25	2/6/25	3 Days					,								
Ideation	2/6/25	2/20/25	14 Days													
Concept Creation	2/13/25	3/20/25	6 Weeks													
Designer Statement								1								
Concept+Research Presentation	2/11/25	3/4/25														
Spring Break	3/11/25	3/13/25														
Final Concept Review	3/18/25	4/8/25														
Thesis Project Progress Book																
Surplus Gallery Installation	5/11/25	5/12/25														

This gantt chart was done for organization purposes to ensure that there was deliverable schedule for the entire design process of the thesis work. This gantt chart was one of the very first things done for this project, right after the thesis statement. I followed this chart throughout and was consistent on making sure I stayed on top of deadlines. This chart also helped avoid negative behaviors like procrastination by ensuring that I always had a clear idea of what to be getting done.

Nicholas Coulter Everyday Carry The		Week 8		Week 9		Week 10		Week 11		Week 12		Week 13		Week 14		Week15		Week16
Tasks	2/27/25	3/4/25	3/6/25	3/11/25	3/13/25	3/18/25	3/20/25	3/25/25	3/27	4/1/25	4/3/25	4/8/25	4/10	4/15/25	4/17/25	4/29/25	5/1/25	5/6/25
Thesis Proposal																		
Sponsor Chosen										-								
Generate list of Potential Sponsors																		
Gantt Chart											-							
Create Gant Chart																		
Research																		
Create Survey																		
Send out survey																		
Compile Survey Results																		
Ideation																		
Concept Creation																		
Designer Statement																		
Concept+Research Presentation																		
Spring Break																		
Final Concept Review				-														
Thesis Project Progress Book																		
Surplus Gallery Installation																		

Initial Surveys

My initial surveys into the edc realm included questions such as "what things do you use to carry around your stuff all day?", "What kind of things do you carry around with you all day?", "What is the most important item you carry around with you everyday?", and "What is the most unique thing you carry on you everyday?". I also asked questions to try and get into the psyche of why people actually carry what they do, such as "How stringent are you in making an item justify its usefulness before being willing to carry it on your person? Does an item have to be

Count of What things do you use to carry around your stuff all day?



useful for you to even be willing to carry it, or does it just need to fulfill some other requirement?", "How much do external factors like societal opinions affect what you carry everyday?", and "How much do your internal opinions like your own worldview and ideology affect what you carry everyday?". Some of the results came back fairly in line with what I was expecting, such as most people using their pockets or some kind of bag and purse to carry their stuff if it was to large, while some results skewed in wildly different directions. For important and unique items, some people went with very sentimental objects, or they would go with a rare or specially made object that was excellent in some kind of function. Some of the results did get skewed by an unfortunate spam attack by some kind of bot, making showing the data like the one below very difficult to do in any meaningful way. However, by reading all of the results I was able to ascertain that on a base level everyone carrys a phone, wallet, and keys. After this the most common edc items included a flashlight, some form of pen or pencil, and a knife or multitool. However only about half of participants carried one of these items or more. After that the results were mostly one offs of very specific things to the individual that they carry on their person everyday.

Count of What kind of things do you carry with you everyday? If not on the list you can list as many things as you want in the



Count of What kind of things do you carry with you everyday? If not on the list you can list as many

Mind Map

I used a mind map to organize my thoughts on what the real problems with peoples everyday carry were, and then to try and figure out what I could do to help them. Ultimately based on the survey responses and this mind map I came up with a concept idea.



Concept Idea

Create an everyday carry trio of items consisting of a pen, flashlight, and pocket knife that will have cohesive form and styling.

Write, Light, and Slice

Color Survey Results

A survey was conducted in which participants were asked to provide feeback on many different aspects, which included questions on color theming. The Different sets of color combonations were presented to participants for feedback on their favorites. When asked simply what people felt were good overall color combinations the overall winners were the Black+Raw Steel along with the Mint Green+Off White color combos. When asked what their favorite overall combo was overall the winner was the Flat Dark Earth and Black color combo. This along with the feedback from Ryan Coulter about color combos in the EDC space gave me three overall color combos to use for my EDC objects.



Which of these color combos do you feel are good color combos?

16 responses



Which of these color combos is your favorite color combo?

16 responses







G-10 and FRN are both strong, lightweight materials known for their durability. G-10 is tough, rigid, and resistant to moisture, impact, and chemicals, providing a solid grip. FRN is lighter and more flexible but still very durable, offering good impact resistance and wear resistance. Both materials are low-maintenance, reliable, and perform well in tough conditions without adding extra weight.



Micarta

Micarta is a strong, durable material made by layering fabric or paper with resin and pressing it into sheets. It's lightweight, yet tough, with excellent resistance to moisture, impact, and heat. Micarta has a textured surface that provides a solid grip, making it ideal for use in tough conditions. It's also low-maintenance and reliable, with a unique, natural look that improves with age.

It's known for their resistance to wear and corrosion. They offer excellent strength, with each material providing a reliable performance in tough conditions. While aluminum is lighter and titanium is more resistant to extreme environments, steel offers exceptional toughness. All three are versatile, long-lasting materials, commonly used in high-performance applications, and each can be treated or alloyed to enhance specific properties like strength,

flexibility, or resistance to heat.

Aluminum, Titanium, Steel

Aluminum, titanium, and steel are all strong, durable metals

Which of these materials would you prefer to have everyday carry tools made of

16 responses



In the same survey used to ask participants about color combinations they preffered, participants were also asked questions about what materials they would prefer that the EDC objects would be made of. They were presented with multiple options with short descriptions of the pros and cons of each material. Overall the results had both plastics and Micartas tying for first with 25% each, however when combined all of the metal options of aluminum, titanium, and steel accounted for half of the overall votes. This meant that the majority of people wanted a metal. Since titanium and steel tied within the metals I decided upon the use of titanium over steel as it seemed to better overall fit the material needs of EDC items.



-31 Female -Pharmacy Tech -Lives in Bloomington, Illinois -Hangs out with her cat and friends -Dating Jack Melson -Rents a small ranch style house

Current Brand Affinity



Style Preferences:
-Loves pretty colors
-Wants her things to be
whimsical and funky

Current EDC





-28 Male
-Social media manager
-Lives in Santa Cruz, CA
-Spends his free time out and about
-Single Bachelor
-Lives in a minimalist
apartment

Current Brand Affinity



- Style Preferences:
- -Black on Black
- -Sleek and Minimal
- -Likes premium materials

Current EDC



Concept Ideation

Ideation of each tool began with a copius amount of sketching, some of which are provided here. This is where some of the overall ideas that would later carry on into the final concept began.



Colors and Material



I prefer the black and raw steel option. It looks really sleek and modern and will fit in perfectly with my current everyday carry items!







Which of these materials would you prefer to have everyday carry tools made of 16 responses





I love the mint green one! Its super fun and will look really pretty with all my other stuff!

When combined together, a metal body was the most popular material in the survey. After ruminating on it, Titanium was chosen as the handle material as it would be the lightest and most durable of the three.

Concept Sketches

After compiling multiple ideas from previous sketches I narrowed the final concept down to two possible concepts. The first concept was called the "Coffin Shaped" concept, that had these diamond or sarcophagus shapes, grooves, and a pointy pocket clip.



Concept Sketches

The second final concept was deemed the "flat rectilinear" concept and involved the main ideas of very block forms with chamfers, flat rectangular pocket clips, and proud potruding buttons. At this point I could not choose between concepts, so both moved on.

n et retti L'herr Thyrm Miern Milling Mitri Mintharite



Creating models is one of the quickest ways to get a feel for how a product will actually be when its finished. Its quick, fast, and easily redone. In this case I chose to take my concepts into the real world with foam models, as I was quickly able to sandwich pieces together to be able to get an idea of where things like the pivot would be on the knife so it would fold properly. This was also a way for me to test things like button placement on the flashlights and make sure that they were in an ergonomically correct spot for users. Not only did these models show me what I did right in the concepts, but they showed me what was wrong and needed to be improved. Because of the quickness of remaking foam models, I was then able to quickly fix errors and flaws in my models.









Foam Models

Concept exploration through foam led to these final foam models. While both were still very valid concepts to continue with after allowing many individuals to handle each set and choose their favorite the majority felt that the Flat Rectilinear concept was the preferred concept.



Foam Models

The Flat Rectilinear concept also seemed to be the concept that would work better for Jessica Sanky and Nathan Bourscome This ultimately led to the final decision to move forward with only the Flat Rectilinear concept.



Knife CAD Drawings

After taking all of my concepts into the CAD stage via Solidworks, all concepts were hammered out into final forms based on the foam models. From this stage all concepts were then resin printed and then tweaked until the final resin print prototypes were made that would eventually become used later on in the exhibition.









All measurements in inches unless otherwise noted

Flashlight CAD Drawings



All measurements in inches unless otherwise stated



Renders

Each concept was rendered together in each color combination to give a better idea of what the final product might look like in real life via Solidworks Visualize rendering software.



Renders



Renders



Physical creation and sourcing

Using the CAD models I made in Solidworks, I proceeded to resin print prototypes of the knife, pen, and flashlight. Each prototype went through a few rounds of tweaking and reprinting before they were finally fitting together and working correctly. I also had to source some bits of hardware from multiple places. I was able to source the thumbstuds and washers from one source, the t5 torx screws from another source, and a t6 and t8 screw kit for all the knife hardware from another. Once I had all my prototype parts I was able to assemble them to check for final fitment before I began painting all of the pieces in the Black, Steel, and Mustard Yellow colors. I chose these colors as they were the easiest to color match to the real colors.



Physical creation and sourcing



Posters

I created these posters for the final exhibition. I wanted a poster for each of the three colorways, that way people would be able to quickly choose what their favorite one was. These posters were made using renders from Solidworks Visualize, and then with a combination of Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator to make the final posters. Each poster shows the render, the name of the project, and the three colors comprising each colorway. The three colors are split into a 60/30/10% split to give an idea to the user of how much of the visual mass this color might occupy. Each poster was printed on quality 12x18 glossy paper and then framed.





Posters



Third letter in the greek alphabet, denotes a third of something or set of three A part of a larger system or a converging point of a hub

Beachwood Ultrabold Secret Service Typewriter

Exhibition

An exhibition was required to properly show off everything done for this project. All three posters were hung on the wall to show off the different variants of the products. I also included painted prototypes of the black and mustard yellow variant so that exhibit visitors would be able to see the actual item in their hand. This thesis project book was also included in the exhibit for visitors to look through. This is the culmination of months of effort, time, and research into the everyday carry space.



Programs used for thesis project: Adobe Photoshop Adobe Illustrator Adobe InDesign Solidworks Solidworks Visualize

I would like to thank **Ryan Coulter** for his sponsorship of my project and abundance of support and knowledge provided.

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