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# Digital Design and its Prospects in Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

Digital design has emerged as a transformative force in higher education, reshaping the way students learn and educators teach. This abstract highlights the significance of digital design in higher education and its potential prospects for the future of learning. Digital design encompasses a wide range of visual content creation using digital tools, such as graphic design, web design, animation, and multimedia production. Digital design offers personalized learning opportunities, enhances engagement, and prepares students for success in a technology-driven world. Despite its potential, challenges remain. Digital literacy among faculty and students, technological infrastructure, quality assurance, and data security are critical considerations for successful implementation in higher education. In conclusion, digital design holds tremendous promise for higher education, offering opportunities for innovation, cost-effectiveness, and improved learning outcomes. Embracing digital design can prepare students for a technology-driven world and equip them with essential skills to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market. As higher education institutions invest in digital design, they can create the way for a transformative and inclusive learning landscape, shaping a brighter future for learners and educators alike. In this study, we will use critical and content analysis to uncover challenges and opportunities in higher education for digital design course implementation. Using a questionnaire of 200 students taking this course at their university and 200 students not taking the digital design course, the study will aim to identify the advantages and disadvantages of both two. We also explored the advantages of universities that have this course in them

**Keywords:** higher education, digital art, design, creativity, technology, innovative

## 1. Introduction

Digital design is becoming a fundamental component of higher education, providing students with a distinctive combination of creativity, technology, and practical skills. Integrating digital design into higher education gives students the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in a variety of industries as the world grows more and more digital-centric. Digital design is not just used in the visual arts or graphic design. It has uses in many different academic fields, including marketing, business, communication, computer science, engineering, and more. Higher education institutions are aware of its multidisciplinary importance and frequently and often offer digital design courses as electives or core components of programs. Digital design education encourages students to think innovatively and explore entrepreneurial ventures. With the skills learned, Students can launch design studios, produce their own digital goods, or participate in technological firms using the skills they have learnt. Online learning platforms have made digital design education more accessible to a global audience. Students from various backgrounds and locations can enroll in courses offered by reputable institutions and industry professionals, democratizing education in this field.

In conclusion, higher education in digital design gives students a dynamic and adaptable skill set that goes beyond the bounds of conventional fields. The principles and abilities acquired in digital design classes will be essential to students' success, regardless of whether they want to pursue careers as designers, marketers, entrepreneurs, engineers, or in any other field.



**Figure 1: Digital Design in different fields**

## **2. Methodology:**

Both an online Google Form and an in-person direct interview with the students are used for the student survey. Students were asked more than 30 relevant questions concerning the digital design course. More than 94% of students believe that taking a digital design course is crucial for advancement in higher education. Less than 6% of students believe they can succeed in a competitive atmosphere without taking a digital design course. These come from a variety of districts in India's Karnataka, both urban and rural. Students between the ages of 19 and 24 from both genders participated in this survey.

## **3. Analysis**

I employed critical and content analysis for this study. This includes examining, interpreting, and assessing data from the students, college administrators, and industrialists from an in-depth and analytical standpoint. A digital design course survey will gather valuable insights about the effectiveness of the course, the students' learning experiences, and their opinions about the curriculum. Moreover, the viewpoint of the college administration and relevant industry support for the program I have set the questions that encourage respondents to provide detailed and thoughtful responses. I have avoided questions that only elicit yes/no answers. Instead, used open-ended questions that require participants to explain their viewpoints. Noted how the course has improved student practical skills in using design software and creating digital assets. also considered the special advantages that this course provided for students and the modifications or additions that they recommended to improve the overall learning experience.

### **3.1 students' perspectives on the course on digital design**

When asked to share their impressions regarding the course in digital design, students provided a variety of responses, both favorable and negative. These key viewpoints are listed below.

#### **3.1.1 Positive Opinions:**

- **Creativity and Expression:** Many students feel that they enjoy digital design courses because they provide a platform to express their creativity and artistic talents using modern technology.

- **Relevance to Modern World:** Students often appreciate courses that teach skills directly applicable to today's digital and technology-driven world. Digital design is seen as highly relevant and valuable.
- **Career Opportunities:** Students recognize that digital design skills are in demand across various industries, and a course in this field can open up diverse and well-paying career opportunities.
- **Hands-On Learning:** Digital design courses often involve practical, hands-on projects. Students enjoy the opportunity to work on real-world design assignments and build a portfolio.
- **Interdisciplinary Learning:** Digital design courses can involve elements of both art and technology, appealing to students with diverse interests and facilitating interdisciplinary learning.
- **Personal and Professional Growth:** Learning digital design can boost students' confidence in their creative abilities and contribute to their personal and professional growth.

### **3.1.2 Mixed Opinions:**

- **Technical Learning Curve:** Some students, particularly those who are unfamiliar with design tools or technology, feel that the technical components of digital design are difficult for them.
- **Time-Intensive:** Digital design projects can be time-consuming and require attention to detail. While some students enjoy the process, others might find it overwhelming.
- **Subjective Evaluation:** Design is often subjective, and students' work might be evaluated based on artistic and creative criteria, which can lead to varying levels of satisfaction.

### **3.1.3 Negative Opinions:**

- **Lack of interest:** Some students feel they lack an inherent interest in design or artistic projects, and they may find a course in digital design to be less interesting than others.
- **Mismatched Expectations:** Some students joined the digital design course without a clear understanding of its content, they found themselves uninterested or frustrated.
- **Technical Challenges:** Some students struggled with the technical intricacies of design software and felt overwhelmed by the learning curve.
- **Limited Resources:** Some students said that poorly designed or under-resourced courses contributed to student frustration since they didn't feel well-supported in their academic endeavours. It's important to note that student opinions about a digital design course can vary widely even within the same course or program. A well-structured course, supportive instructors, engaging projects, and clear learning objectives can contribute significantly to positive student experiences. To accurately gauge student opinions, it's valuable for colleges to gather feedback through surveys, discussions, and evaluations to continuously improve the quality of their digital design courses.

## **3.2. The view of college officials about the course Digital Design**

I've interviewed few college administrators who don't offer a digital design course in their curriculum. When we inquired as to why they had chosen not to enroll in such advanced courses, they provided a variety of responses. Here is a list of some significant points of view.

- **Faculty Expertise:** Offering a digital design course requires faculty members with expertise in the field. Universities are having difficulty finding qualified professors to conduct these courses.
- **Resources:** Teaching digital design often requires specialized software, hardware, and facilities. Universities are having trouble obtaining the resources they need to satisfy these demands.
- **Curriculum Focus:** Due to their particular academic concentration or the demands of their student body, universities place a higher priority on other subjects of study than digital design.
- **Market Demand:** If there is low demand from students for digital design courses, universities might not see the need to allocate resources for these courses.
- **Evolution of Technology:** The digital design field is rapidly evolving, and universities might struggle to keep up with the latest tools and techniques required to teach the subject effectively.
- **Interdisciplinary Nature:** Digital design often involves a blend of artistic and technical skills. Some universities might find it challenging to integrate these interdisciplinary aspects into their curriculum.

- Lack of Awareness: Some universities did not realize the importance of digital design in various industries and therefore they will not prioritize offering related courses.
- Space Constraints: Some colleges are unable to offer courses that call for specific labs or equipment due to physical space restrictions.
- Partnerships with Industry: Universities that have weak relationships to sectors of the economy that deal with digital design struggle to offer their students chances and experiences in the real world.
- Competing Priorities: Universities have limited resources and need to make decisions about which courses to offer based on a variety of factors, including student interest, faculty expertise, and available resources.

It's important to note that the availability of digital design courses can vary widely among universities. Some universities might indeed offer robust digital design programs, while others might not. As the demand for digital design skills continues to grow in various industries, more universities might consider adding these courses to their curriculum

In addition, I conducted interviews with some designing companies. They have certain demands on the colleges. Digital design companies have specific expectations from colleges when it comes to the curriculum they offer. These expectations are aimed at producing graduates who are well-prepared to meet the demands of the digital design industry. Here are some key expectations that digital design companies may have from college curriculum.

### 3.3. Industry expectations from the digital design students:

- Strong Design Fundamentals: Digital design companies expect graduates to have a solid foundation in design principles, including layout, typography, color theory, and composition. A strong understanding of these fundamentals forms the basis of effective digital design.
- Proficiency in Design Software: Graduates should be proficient in using industry-standard design software such as Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), CorelDraw Sketch, Figma, or other relevant tools.

This study led me to the conclusion that incorporating a digital design course into a college curriculum can offer numerous advantages and benefits for the institution itself. As for my study here are some key advantages that colleges can gain by adding a digital design course to their program offerings

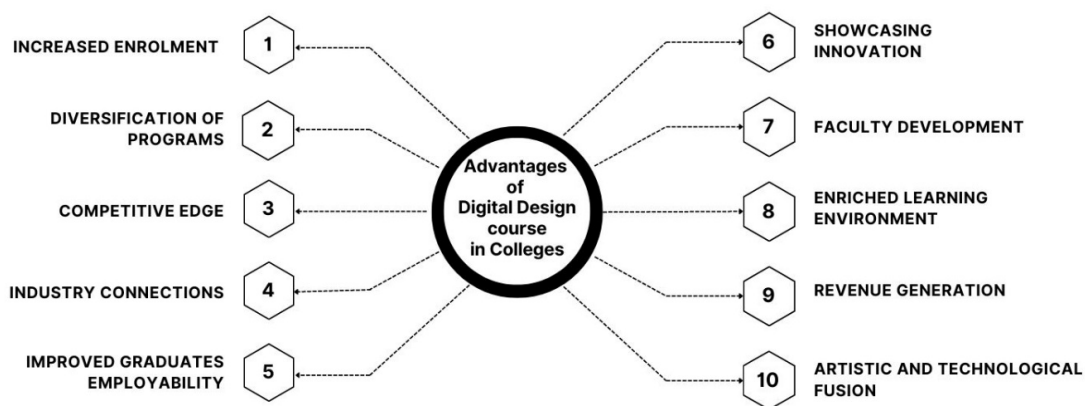


Figure 2: Advantages of digital design course in colleges

### 4. benefits of adding a digital design course to universities

- Increased Enrolment: Digital design is a popular and dynamic field. Offering a digital design course can attract a larger pool of prospective students, leading to increased enrolment and potentially boosting the college's reputation.

- **Diversification of Programs:** Adding a digital design course diversifies the college's program offerings, catering to students with varied interests and career goals. This can attract a broader range of students and create a more inclusive learning environment.
- **Competitive Edge:** Colleges that offer a digital design course gain a competitive edge over institutions that do not provide such specialized courses. This can help attract students who specifically seek out colleges with a strong focus on digital design education.
- **Industry Connections:** Offering a digital design course can facilitate collaborations and partnerships with local digital design companies, studios, and agencies. These industry connections can lead to internship opportunities, guest lectures, and potential job placements for students.
- **Improved Graduates' Employability:** Graduates with digital design skills are more attractive to employers, which enhances the college's reputation for producing job-ready graduates. This can lead to higher job placement rates and increased alumni satisfaction.
- **Showcasing Innovation:** Offering a digital design course showcases the college's commitment to innovation and staying ahead of educational trends. It demonstrates that the institution is responsive to the changing needs of students and industries.
- **Faculty Development:** Introducing a digital design course encourages faculty members to enhance their expertise and knowledge in the field. This can lead to professional development opportunities, research collaborations, and improved teaching methods.
- **Enriched Learning Environment:** Incorporating a digital design course brings diversity to the academic environment, fostering a community of students and faculty with varied interests and skill sets.
- **Revenue Generation:** Increased enrolment due to the inclusion of a digital design course can lead to additional tuition revenue for the college, contributing to its financial stability and growth.
- **Artistic and Technological Fusion:** A digital design course combines artistic creativity with technological skills. This fusion promotes interdisciplinary learning, enriching the overall educational experience for students.

By adding a digital design course to their curriculum, colleges can position themselves as forward-thinking institutions that prioritize the needs of students and industries. This can lead to a range of benefits that positively impact the college's reputation, enrolment, and overall educational mission.

### **5. Role of the industry to build digital design course in colleges**

The role of the industry in a digital design course offered by colleges can be quite significant and impactful. Additionally, colleges anticipate assistance from the business community in implementing these courses. The following are some crucial ways that the sector may support and improve college courses on digital design:

- **Guest Lectures and Workshops:** Industry professionals can be invited as guest lecturers or workshop facilitators. They can share their real-world experiences, insights, and practical knowledge with students. This exposure helps bridging the gap between theoretical concepts explained in the classroom and their practical application in the industry.
- **Project Collaboration:** Industry partnerships can lead to collaborative projects. Students can work on real projects provided by companies, gaining hands-on experience in tackling industry challenges. This helps them develop their portfolios while also enhancing their talents.
- **Internships and Placements:** Establishing relationships with companies can lead to internship opportunities for students. This provides them with a chance to work in a professional environment, apply their skills, and learn from experienced designers. Successful internships can also lead to job placements after graduation.
- **Curriculum Design:** Industry input can help shape the curriculum to align with current industry trends and demands. Digital design is a rapidly evolving field, and having industry professionals contribute to curriculum design ensures that students learn the most relevant and up-to-date skills.

- **Feedback and Evaluation:** Industry professionals can be involved in evaluating student work, providing valuable feedback, and even participating in student presentations. This helps students understand the expectations of the industry and improve their work accordingly.
  - **Technology and Tools:** Industry partnerships can provide colleges with access to the latest design software, tools, and technologies that are used in the professional world. This ensures that students are familiar with the tools they are likely to encounter in their careers.
  - **Networking Opportunities:** Industry events, conferences, and networking sessions can be organized for students to interact with professionals. These interactions can lead to mentorship, job opportunities, and a better understanding of the industry landscape.
  - **Industry Insights:** Industry professionals can offer insights into emerging design trends, user experience (UX) principles, and design thinking methodologies. This helps students stay ahead of the curve and develop a deep understanding of the field.
  - **Portfolio Review:** Industry experts can review students' portfolios and provide guidance on how to showcase their work effectively to potential employers. This advice is invaluable for students as they enter the job market.
  - **Soft Skills Development:** Besides technical skills, industry professionals can also contribute to the development of students' soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. These skills are essential for success in any professional setting.
- Incorporating the industry's involvement in a digital design course enriches the learning experience, makes students more job-ready, and fosters a stronger connection between academia and the professional world. It's a win-win situation for students, colleges, and the industry alike.

## CONCLUSION

The digital design course holds a paramount position in higher education due to its profound impact on students' academic and professional growth in our digitally-driven society. The evolving landscape of technology and communication necessitates a comprehensive understanding of design principles, user experience, and visual communication. As evidenced by the increasing demand for skilled digital designers across industries, the importance of integrating digital design education within higher education becomes evident. Several compelling reasons affirm the necessity of such courses.

Firstly, A digital design course gives students the skills to create visually engaging content, ensuring effective communication in an era where visual aesthetics play a pivotal role in conveying messages. Secondly, digital design courses foster creativity and critical thinking. Through hands-on projects and exposure to industry-standard tools, students are encouraged to innovate and find unique solutions to complex design challenges. This cultivates a mindset that is adaptable, innovative, and well-suited for the dynamic nature of contemporary design requirements. Furthermore, the practical nature of digital design courses contributes to the development of a professional portfolio. Students emerge not only with theoretical knowledge but also with tangible examples of their creative work, facilitating a smoother transition into the job market. The portfolio showcases their skills to potential employers, enhancing their employability. Lastly, the interdisciplinary nature of digital design allows students from various academic backgrounds to explore and benefit from the course. From business and marketing to technology and art, digital design bridges gaps between diverse fields, creating well-rounded individuals equipped to tackle the complexities of the modern world.

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, higher education institutions must acknowledge the vital role that digital design plays in nurturing skills that are pertinent to the demands of the present and future. The convergence of technology and design is not just a trend but an essential aspect of our interconnected global society. Embracing digital design education in higher education curricula is not merely an option but a necessity that empowers students to excel in their academic journey and contribute meaningfully to a world driven by innovation and creativity.



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