

A black and white profile photograph of a woman with long, straight hair, smiling and looking towards the right. She is wearing a dark-colored top. The background is solid black.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

COLLEGE of TECHNOLOGY
Digital Media

Women In Digital Media

**Featuring the First Digital
Media Graduate –**

Ishrat Khan

DIGITAL MEDIA PROGRAM

Scan the QR code to
watch a video about the
Digital Media Program.

“Getting the right message, to the right person,
at the right time, with the right media.”



– Dr. Jerry Waite

Digital Media is the creative convergence of digital arts, science, technology, and business for human expression, communication, social interaction, and education. The Digital Media Program provides its students with a broad overview of all digital media technologies from social media to motion media, the web, and print media. It also provides instruction in key leadership responsibilities such as sales, information systems, supervisory roles, project and team leadership, and quality control. Additionally, students can choose an emphasis which includes eCommerce, eMedia, motion media, gaming and simulation, packaging, and print media. This provides students with more targeted instruction so that they can focus on a particular area of Digital Media. In reality, all the fields within Digital Media are intertwined, like a fine tapestry. One cannot exist effectively without the others.







Monika Alters

“Dr. Waite and I created the Digital Media Program”

Between the years 2001 to 2003, Professor Alters was a masters student at the University of Houston. The Digital Media Program stemmed from her masters thesis that looked at the benefits of a multimedia minor. Creating this program with Dr. Waite was not easy as Monika stated “it took time to get everything approved.” “We wanted to work with different colleges, like communication and arts, but it did not work out that way, so [we decided] hey let’s just make our own major.”

From the time the Digital Media Program was established in 2009 to now, it has grown tremendously. There were no areas of emphasis when it first began, and now there are six: eCommerce, eMedia, gaming and simulation, print, packaging, and motion media. It started with 6-8 majors and now has over 500 majors, with minors included. To Professor Alters, this program had always been predominantly women, although the work field has many males. She is “happy to see women being leaders.” This program combines many elements such as design, technology, and creativity. Professor Alters’ favorite thing about being a professor is her students, “I love my students, especially those who were challenged at first but then they come back, ask questions, and get the job done.”

Future of Digital Media

Professor Alters believes the program will definitely grow but will need more staff. Since 2013, enrollment in the program has grown 52 percent.



Words of Wisdom

- Get a Masters degree.
- Enjoy and love what you do. You need a drive.
- Apply yourself, work hard, and be on time.
- Network with people and start applying for jobs six months in advance.



“Digital Media prepared me to learn, lead, and solve problems.”

The first alumni from the Digital Media Program Ishrat Khan shares her experience after graduation. Upon receiving her diploma, Ishrat began her career in a security software company. “I think one of my biggest challenges was understanding the field and how the company worked.” Ishrat stated that when starting, she was a bit shy but soon found out that asking questions was the main way to learn and become comfortable in her environment. “As my career advanced, I started seeing things in a different light and started thinking about larger problems and pinpointing exactly how to solve these problems while capturing the audience.” These were all skills that she picked up in the Digital Media Program, “my classes allowed me to learn how to solve problems and work with my peers.”

Aside from learning about colors, layouts, design, and prints, Ishrat found her passion for technology which lead her to pursue a career as a UX designer. As her career advanced, she became the head of teams and got to interview and choose new members to come on board. Today, Ishrat continues to fearlessly face challenges and sharpen her software skills as she grows in her field and finds better opportunities.

Words of Wisdom

- Mistakes are a learning opportunity, don't let them get you down.
- Don't be afraid to try new things, because there is nothing that you can't do.



Ishrat Khan– UI/UX Designer





April Cantwell— Multimedia Specialist

“Don’t put yourself in a
pigeon-hole.”

From a print emphasis in Digital Media to managing content creation for 32 monitors in three different cities, April Cantwell is a Multimedia Specialist for Amegy Bank. As an alumni of the University of Houston Digital Media Program, she emphasized in print but went into a non-print emphasis to expand her job horizons. “In our field we must make ourselves marketable, meaning we must wear multiple hats.” She stated that since the beginning of her career she has had to break down stereotype of “just being a graphic designer.” “I had to learn things very fast” she admitted, but through her hard work she is now a content creator, hardware manager, liaison between clients and the company, and scheduler for her digital signage content.

The Digital Media Program allowed her to build up skills in technology software as well as skills in time and project management. “We must be well rounded not only in creating beautiful content but in meeting deadlines and communicating.” April mentions that she is grateful for her organizational leadership classes that helped her “work in the business world and maintain positive relationships.”



Words of Wisdom

- Network and always stay true to yourself.
- When applying for jobs make sure that you do your research and find a place that suits your personality.
- Search in places you wouldn’t usually think of. For example, the Government is always looking for people in our field, “I found the post for my current job on the City of Houston site.”



Kristin Hines— Category Marketing Senior Specialist

“You can be a leader in
anything you do.”

Kristin Hines is a University of Houston Alumni who graduated in 2008, before the Digital Media Program was established. At the time, the program was called Technology Leadership and Supervision with an emphasis in Graphic Communications Technology. When she graduated it was a tough time for job searching because “the economy was terrible.” There weren’t many job opportunities, but there was one at Consolidated Graphics, a print plant that is now owned by RR Donnelley. She joined the

leadership development program and went to work for one of their print locations. She states, “You will be in a printing company and you worked in different rotations. You are thrown in and it is hands on. All of sudden you are a shipping manager, and I even learned to drive a fork lift. I was not happy in sales and was looking for new opportunities”. She wanted to get into marketing, so now she works at Academy Sports and Outdoors. She is a part of the marketing department as a Category Marketing Senior Specialist with a focus on athletic apparel. She takes the buyers information and works with marketing and all of the other channels as the hub of information. Kristin enjoyed her experience with the leadership development program as she states, “It’s a really powerful thing to be able to take on a new role and master it as quickly as you can, it makes you a diverse person.”

Words of Wisdom

- Whenever you start a new career, have the mentality of absorbing everything you possibly can.
- In job interviews, the more personable you become, the better it is.
- Always be confident, with a willingness to learn.
- Research the role as much as you can, have an idea of how you will approach the role. Don’t just answer questions.



Current Students in Digital Media



Rosa Cornejo

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

I emphasized in print and packaging because I like that the end product of the process is something tangible. Print and packaging are what connect companies with customers through touch and interaction of a tangible promotional piece.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

The diversity of students and their various skills. It is a very family like atmosphere, and you can tell that professors really care for their students. We also get to learn a little bit about other areas of emphasis so that we know how a transmedia project is done in each area of emphasis.

What challenges have you faced?

The projects we do are challenging, as we have to work with others in a team. But it is a great experience because we combine our various skills to create a great project.

What are your plans upon graduation?

To work in the digital media industry to help companies connect with their audiences through print, packaging, and eMedia.



Kristin Gilbert

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

My major emphasis is Media Production, while my minor has been Package Technology. I chose these fields in order to gain greater communication skills and focus on designing packages to unite them as one.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

Even as a minor, it has had a huge impact on my discipline, passion for design, as well as a huge focus on print, a world I knew nothing about.

What challenges have you faced?

My challenge has actually been balancing a full-time job and the workload of a full-time student. It has taken much dedication and sleepless nights to make this all come together.

What are your plans upon graduation?

I have been thankful to accept the opportunity with my company, H-E-B, as a department manager in the beer and wine section. I hope to move forward from my position to work with data analysis.



Kim Le

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

I emphasize in print and packaging. I chose it because I want to design packaging for cosmetics and skincare companies. Before joining the Digital Media Program, I was a business student at Bauer. I realized that business was not for me and my passion for design is something that I should follow.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

My favorite thing about this program is that we get to learn a little bit of everything. Between video, photography, emedia, and packaging, I've become very well-rounded and versatile in the multiple fields of digital media.

What challenges have you faced?

Even though learning a bit about everything is unique and beneficial in its own way, sometimes my emphasis gets lost among it all.

What are your plans upon graduation?

Obtain a job that will further my career where I can learn and improve my design skills.



Alicia Porras

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

Packaging has always been something that I found fascinating. The way that it has to communicate with the audience and the variation that it has to have depending on where its displayed is something that keeps me wanting to learn more about.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

Digital media has a lot of things to offer, but I personally love the variety in it all. I have been able to learn things from video to page layout and I think that it will help me after graduation.

What challenges have you faced?

During my time in the program, I think the biggest challenge I have faced is being able to execute my vision with the programs due to my skill level. I realized that although one knows the software itself, there is still a lot to learn and improve on.

What are your plans upon graduation?

Obtain a stable job within the digital media field where I can broaden my skill set and make connections. I would love to get involved in the entertainment industry and design albums.



Ada Chan

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

My emphasis is in packaging. I chose it because I enjoy being hands-on with my work and the tactile feeling that it brings. I can actually see my finished products in person right in front of me.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

My favorite thing about this program is learning the broad range of things in digital media. I am able to experience every single industry and what it has to offer even if it's just a little bit.

What challenges have you faced?

One challenge I had when I first began in the program, and still do, is learning the technology such as the Adobe Creative Suite. Since I have always been a hands-on arts and crafts type of person, I found it difficult to utilize software to create my designs.

What are your plans upon graduation?

Find a good job at a place that will help me learn and grow from others and network with people. However, one of my ultimate goals would be to work with the beauty industry in creating unique skincare and cosmetic packaging.



Angel Melendez

What is your emphasis and why did you choose it?

My emphasis is Packaging and I choose it because I liked the idea of having a physical product you could pick up and mess when it's all said and done.

What is your favorite thing about this program?

I like that it is a great middle ground between being an art program and a business school. I knew when I was coming to college that I was interested in working in an artistic field, but was not interested in being a starving artist. This program presented me with exactly what I wanted.

What challenges have you faced?

In high school I had managed to do very well without putting in much effort. I assumed I could do the same in college when I started but I learned very quickly that this was not the case, and as a result I had to develop a better work ethic very quickly.

What are your plans upon graduation?

I hope to get a good job and then pay back my parents for all the hard work they put in so that I could go to school.

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*To learn more about the Digital Media
Program, scan the QR code below.*

