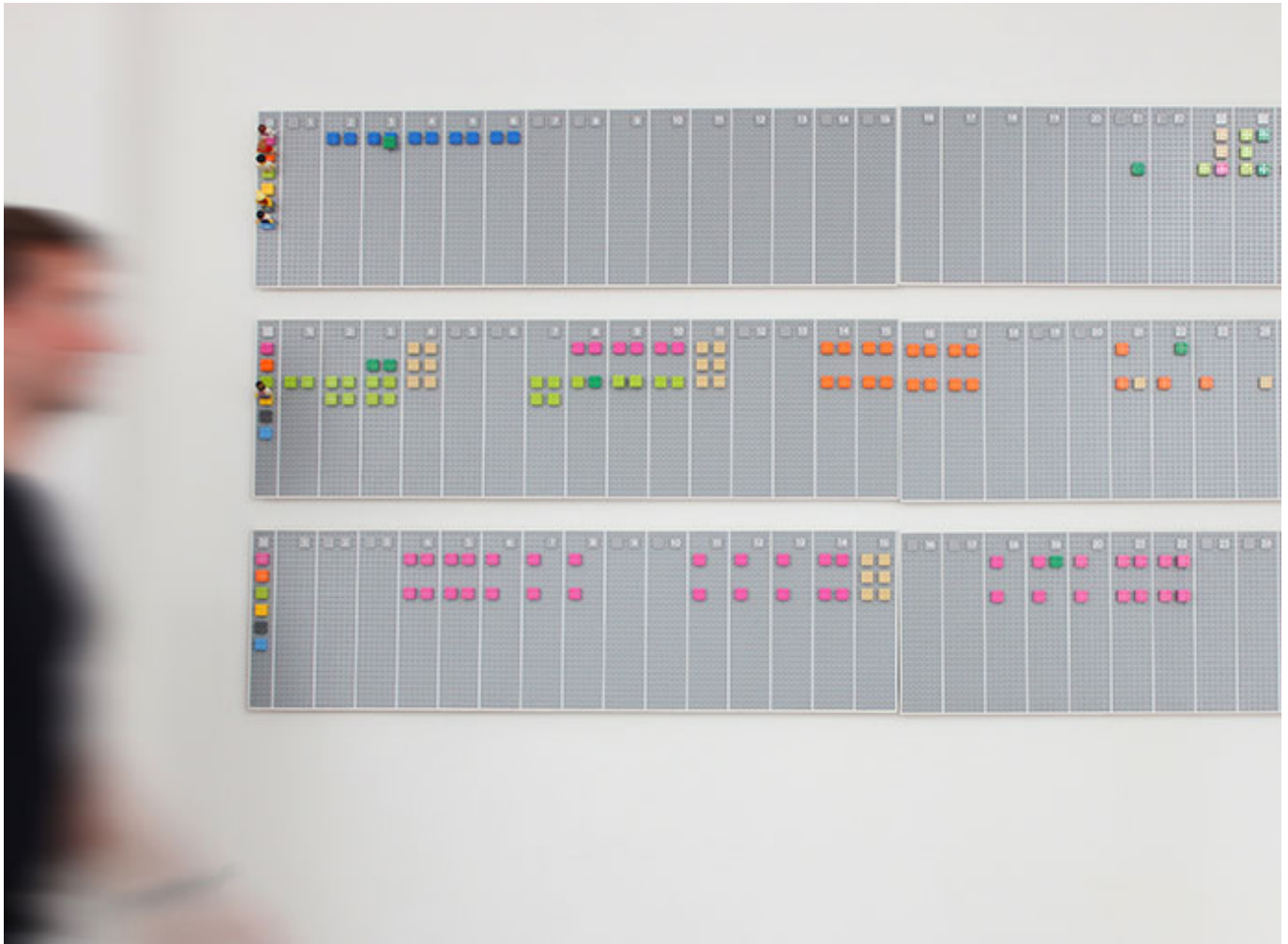


LEGO CALENDAR



The lego calendar is a wall mounted time planner that we invented for our studio. It's made entirely of lego, but if you take a photo of it with a smartphone all of the events and timings will be magically synchronised to an online, digital calendar. It makes the most of the tangibility of physical objects, and the ubiquity of digital platforms, and it's also puts a smile on our faces when we use it! Scroll on for more details. [Press images](#)
[Pdf description](#)

<http://vimeo.com/75500464>

One thing we always talk about in the studio is how to organise ourselves - it's something we always think we can improve. So we started looking at all the different ways people organise things; from post-it notes on computer screens, diaries, to-do lists and some really complex project planning software.

We noticed some really interesting things, and made a dream manifesto for our ultimate organisation system:

It had to be big and visible: looking at a computer monitor or smartphone screen just doesn't help you see months ahead into the future

It had to be tactile: we loved the idea of being able to hold a bit of time, and to see and feel the size of time

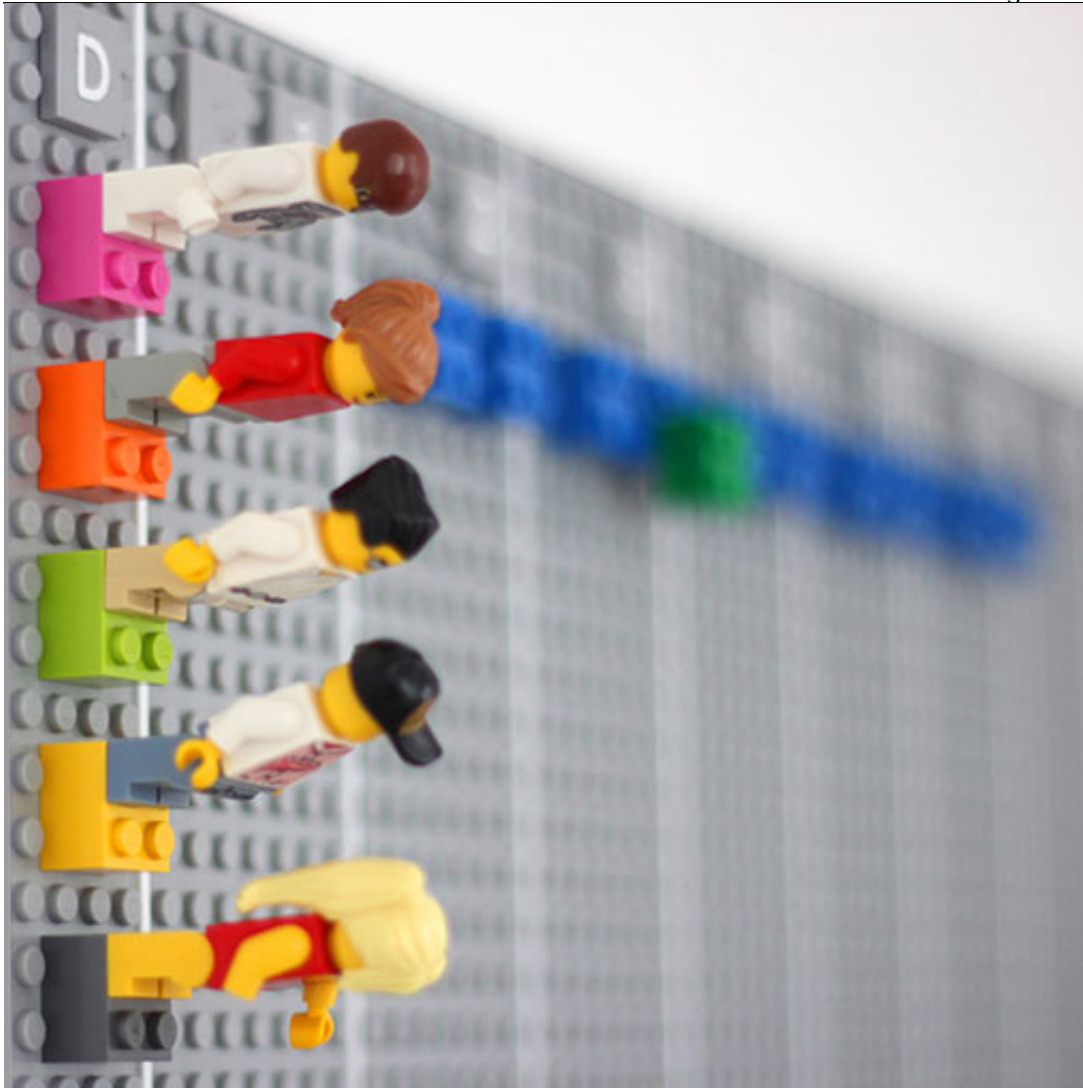
It had to work both online and offline: because we travel a lot and want to be able to see what's going on wherever we are.

It had to be flexible: everyone in our studio uses their own method for organising themselves, so our solution needed to work regardless of which smartphone, notebook or pen you used.

It had to look neat and tidy: we loved the idea of structures and grids that can take a mess out of your head and effortlessly force it to be clean and organised.

Secure: We can't talk about a lot of our client work, so we needed something that we could put up on the wall without revealing our client names, or project information to casual passers by

In exploring what we could do, we were tempted by all sorts of interactive tech-centered solutions - but the more we put technology at the forefront, the more restrictive the system became. We needed something that anyone could use, in any way they felt, and we had read about [other companies who had used lego](#) to visualise complex logistics systems in a simple and tangible way. We loved lego could be used to make complex information tangible, and after much experimenting we created a calendar on our wall which is made entirely out of Lego bricks.



Here's how it works:

Every row represents a month - we have three on our wall

Every column represents a day of the week

Every project has its own colour, and we keep a little index hidden away to remember which colour represents which project.

Each brick represents a half day spent on that particular project.

We've placed this on the wall in full view of the studio, because it means we can instantly look up and get a really quick overview of what we're working on and what's coming up.



In our wish list we wanted something that we could access from everywhere So, every time you change something on the calendar, all you need to do it take a photo of it with any smartphone. Then, you just email the photo to a special address we created. A couple of seconds later you'll receive an email letting you know that all of the information on the lego calendar has been synchronised to your digital calendar. We use google calendar at the moment, but this would work with any cloud based calendar.

We've written software that scans the image, and searches for the position and colour of every brick. It then connects to our google calendar and updates the information. We tried to make the technology as invisible as possible, and it was really important to us that it could work with any phone.



We've been using this for almost a year now, and it's incredible how everyone in the studio has been able to make use of it so quickly. We've evolved a new understanding of what a lego brick means to us - sometimes people hide emergency blocks of "time" in their drawers in case we need extra work done last minute, and we've started using double height bricks to represent deadlines and important meetings.



Its power is in its the immediacy and tangibility. Rather than recording minute details about what to do each day, it shows you an immediate overview of how your time is allocated spent in relation to the rest of the studio. We're also working on what happens when someone remotely wants to change a date, perhaps they're abroad and need to modify something. Well the next time somebody in the studio uploads a photo of the calendar, they will get an email back immediately, asking them to actually move the bricks that have been modified. It sounds crazy, but this way you actually notice when something has changed, and you need to physically find a place to put the bricks you have removed - rather than a digital square quietly vanishing in the background on your computer screen.

We'll be uploading our computer code online (currently written using the brilliant openFrameworks) , so you can start playing with it too, and we'd love to hear from anyone who plays with this idea - do let us know what you get up to!

Some interesting links:

<http://www.pinata.fi/blog/lego-calendar-revisited/>

<http://statigr.am/tag/legocalendar>

#legoplanner Programming: First prototype Simon Emberton, Second prototype Julia Eichler

