

# A "Silly" craze... ... or not?



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Orleans Foundation with a portion of sales from every pack of sea-themed Silly Bandz.

Also, Wall Street Journal writes that Silly Bandz owner Robert Croak is selling Silly Necklaces and Silly Buttons, further increasing the range of products available to catch the attention of consumers.

Elon's associate professor of entrepreneurship, Richard "Barth" Strempek said, "Sometimes these [fads] just happen, and companies go along for the ride by gearing up production to meet the demand." Silly Bandz' continued elongation of their fad through making new products perfectly exemplifies this.

Elon students credit the phenomenon to more psychological reasons.

"The mix of a commonly known object with bright colors and groovy shapes attracts a child's attention," said first-year student Matthew Barger.

First-year student Kelly Brand agreed, saying, "It's a collection-type of thing; kids tend to get really obsessed with it. Plus, [Silly Bandz] are brightly colored and shaped really cool. It's like a competition basically."

There have been numerous studies on the psychology associated with the connections between

children and bright colors. Munir Moosa Sewani on articlebase.com writes that toy companies use this connection to their advantage.

"They are quite aware of children's color preferences and use color to attract children's attention and sell their products," said Sewani.

According to Sewani, even companies working for the interests of adults use the same strategies by using "color characteristics of the trade mark and emphasizing certain features with the help of colors."

Still, Wall Street Journal writes that skeptics say the Silly Bandz brand isn't strong enough to last.

Murtha, now serving as chief executive of the toy company Gund, compares the bracelets to Slap Wraps, a fad Main Street Toy Co. developed in 1990 that served as "both a fashion accessory and a bartering chip on the playground." Unfortunately, the popularity of Slap Wraps plunged a year later, so Murtha advises Silly Bandz to continue making "Silly" products to keep the brand from becoming a one-hit wonder.

The question remains about whether Silly Bandz will continue to stand at the top of the toy food chain within the next few months or even years. But, whether the brand grows strong and establishes itself as a permanent product or if it becomes just another one-time fad, the economic and psychological precedents will continue to fuel many other future toy phenomena.

## Things to consider when choosing a major

### Is it more important to have a paycheck or passion?

erin.bucksbaum

By the middle of sophomore year in college, many students have a good idea about what direction they want to take their education. Despite their instincts, some are still hesitant to officially declare a major.

It is often hard to decide whether it is more important to have a passion for your work or if that line of business is better suited as a hobby. Considering whether it would be more beneficial to receive a degree in something that will allow you to bring home a good paycheck and be financially stable causes us to question our motivations.

A lot of the time, students have trouble because they do not know what options are available to them. Senior finance major Matthew Gillette has changed his major three times since coming to Elon because he was not originally aware of the options available to him.

"I wish I had planned my classes better," he said, "There have been times when I really had to overload."

One way to avoid academic stress and still graduate within four years is to meet with academic advising or visit the academic advising page on Elon's website.

According to Troy Martin, who has had eight years of experience in the academic advising office at Elon, picking a major should be more about studying something that has value to you now than doing something that may end up somewhere down the road.

Martin has taught the exploring majors class at Elon for several semesters and said he believes in the importance of self-evaluation. He said a good fit and an academic home are important things to have.

"I can't come up with a list of the best majors and say everyone needs to be doing this," he said.

For students who already have an idea of what they want to pursue, there are other resources to help them better plan out their course schedules and make the most of their Elon experience. Links on Elon's website can provide students with a complete overview of the expectations and courses for each major and minor, simplifying the process of figuring out which ones will

coordinate well with each other.

"Many people are finding about majors in other ways besides academic advising," Martin said. "They often hear about things through friends."

When trying to decide on a major, it is important to ask questions not only of yourself but of others because you can get valuable information from people with the same interests.

Since Elon has a requirement of 58 general study credits, students also have the opportunity to take classes and figure things out before officially declaring their majors.

"I haven't declared my major yet because I wanted to take an intro class and make sure that it was something I actually liked," said sophomore Bari Sisson.

Elon has many opportunities for students to consider something they are passionate about as well as something they find will be beneficial in the business world. Once you are finally ready to declare, visit the academic advising office in Duke 108 to fill out a form and make it official.

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