HARRIS PROFILE

STAPLE			
--	-	+	++

Speed
Costs (variable + fixed) 100 reports
Amount of sheets per report
Durability
Looks
Environment / material use

BEST CONCEPT

PAPERCLIP			
--	-	+	++

WIRE-O			
--	-	+	++

Importance of criteria

STAPLE			
--	-	+	++

Environment / material use
Durability
Looks
Costs (variable + fixed) 100 reports
Amount of sheets per report
Speed

BEST CONCEPT

PAPERCLIP			
--	-	+	++

WIRE-O			
--	-	+	++

CLOSE SECOND

Importance of criteria

In a Harris profile, the main design requirements are ranked in order of importance with the most important one on top. An even number of possible scores are used to prevent neutral scoring. This way of evaluating is helpful when ideas and designs are still conceptual and not worked out in detail: imagine the black squares are building blocks of a tower. By viewing 'which way the tower of blocks would fall', a choice can be made. Colours should not be used and scores can not be added up. In general, all decision making methods are meant to initiate discussion within the development team and to structure the process of chosing. In the lower example, another design prevails because the design requirements are listed in another order. It shows how another team could have a different view on what is important.

A Harris Profile is a graphic representation of the strengths and weaknesses of design concepts with respect to predefined design requirements. It is used to evaluate design concepts and facilitate decisions on which concepts to continue with in a design process.

When can the method be used?
A Harris Profile is based on the design requirements for your design. Whenever a number of alternative product concepts need to be compared and evaluated, the Harris Profile can be used to make your – or your team's – evaluation explicit. As designers make some of their evaluations intuitively, the Harris Profile can help you to make those intuitions explicit so that you can discuss them with other stakeholders.

A Harris Profile can be useful during each phase of the design process, but typically it is used after an idea generation phase when ideas or concepts need to be eliminated.

How to use the method?
Create a Harris Profile for each alternative design concept. A Harris Profile consists of an assessment of how the concept meets each of the listed design requirements. The evaluations are relative, comparing the different concepts in terms of their performance in each criterion. A four-point scale is typically used to score the concepts. You should interpret the meaning of the scale positions: -2 = bad, -1 = moderate, et cetera. Thanks to the visual representation, decision makers can quickly view the overall score of each design alternative for all the criteria, and compare them easily.

An important role of the Harris Profile is to make your evaluation explicit and easy to understand: it can help to stimulate discussion with your project's stakeholders in the early phases of design, when design requirements typically change as the concepts evolve and you gain a greater shared understanding of the design problem.

Possible procedure
STEP 1
List the design requirements as fully as possible and rank them according to their importance for the design project.
STEP 2
Create a four-point scale matrix next to each requirement, coded -2, -1, +1, and +2.
STEP 3
Create a Harris Profile for each of the design alternatives by evaluating the relative performance of each alternative with respect to the requirements.
STEP 4
Draw the profile by marking the scores in the four-point scale matrix for all the criteria.
STEP 5
Present the profiles next to each other to allow discussion with stakeholders and to determine which design concept has the best overall score.
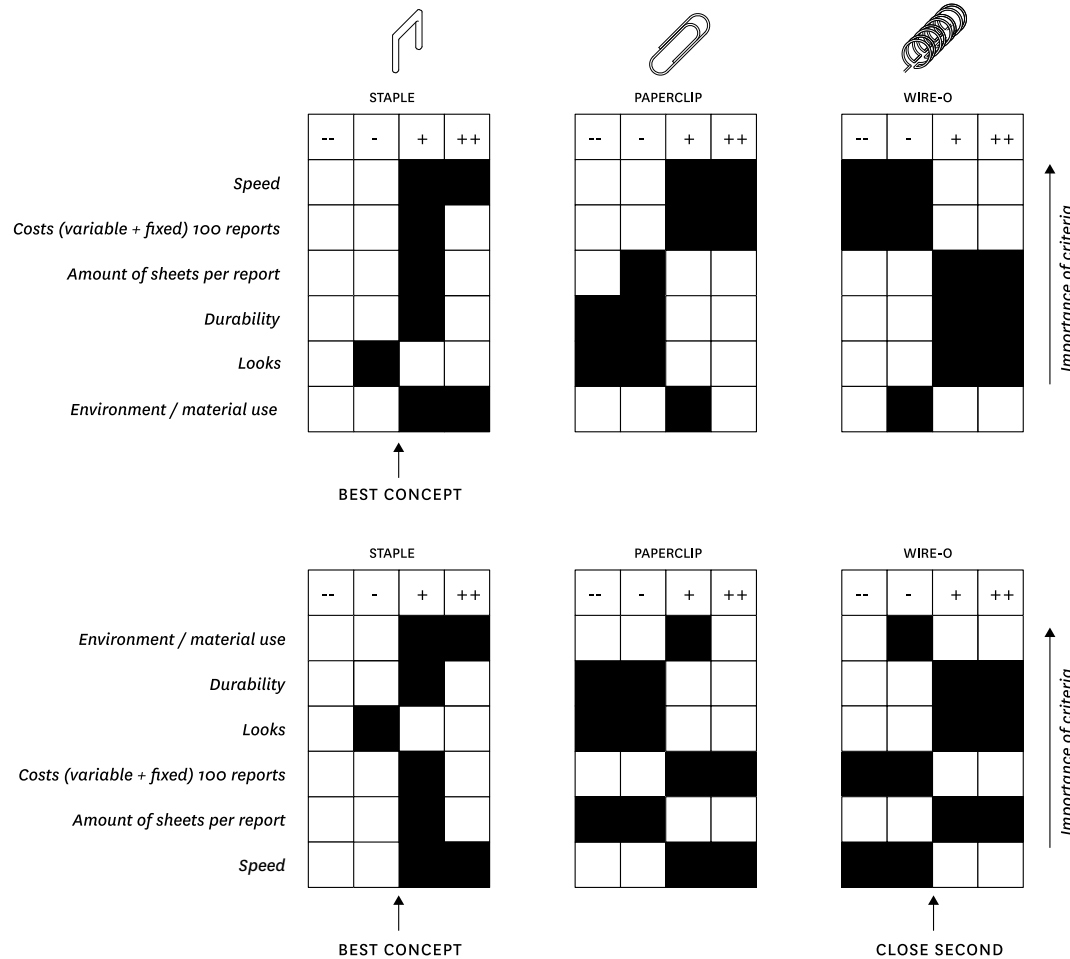
Limitations of the method
· The four-point scales should be interpreted differently for each requirement and are not necessarily comparable.

· It is tempting to interpret Harris Profiles as 'true' representations of the performance of design alternatives. However, it is important to realise that the performance assessment of design concepts is typically an intuitive prediction of performance, with low reliability.
· The primary function of the profile is to communicate the evaluations that you have made after careful discussions and deliberations, and if necessary to open up discussion to sharpen the definitions of requirements or improve design concepts.

Tips & Concerns
· Use drawings to represent concepts in each profile – this will enhance the communicability of your profiles.
· If possible, cluster the criteria.
· Design is not a linear process, so you might discover new design requirements while evaluating concepts. You can add those requirements to your Harris Profile and enhance the accuracy of your evaluation.
· When attributing the -2 or +2 values to a criterion, be sure to colour all the blocks in the Harris Profile. Only then can you create a quick visual overview of the overall score of a design alternative.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING: Harris, J.S., 1961. *New Product Profile Chart.* Chemical and Engineering News, 17 April, 39(16), pp.110-118. / Roozenburg, N.F.M. and Eekels, J.*, 1995. *Product Design: Fundamentals and Methods*. Utrecht: Lemma.