Introduction to User Experience

slide 1: Introduction

Hi guys! Welcome to [Fundamentals of User Experience Design ], a Tuts+ premium course. I’m [Sarah Kahn] and today we’re going to have an introduction to User Experience.

slide 2:

Here’s the agenda for what we’re going to cover:

* + Instructor Introduction
  + User Experience defined
  + A bit of history
  + Why is this important?
  + How does it apply to websites?
  + Assignment

slide 3: who are you anyway?

Since you’re about to invest a few hours of your life listening to me talk, I thought you might like to know what my qualifications are.

slide 4

[me]

I’m the user experience engineer at adzerk, which is a software as a service startup based in north carolina. I studied information science at the university of north carolina at chapel hill, and have been practicing in the field for almost 5 years. So, I’ve had a bit of real-world experience at this you might say. Hopefully enough to pass on a few good tips at least.

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[what is user experience?]

First, what is User Experience?

slide 6

[definition]

Here’s a formal definition:

User Experience is the way a person feels about using a [product](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_(business)), [system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System) or service.

slide7

[infographic]

In a nutshell, people have an experience when they use something. Whether that something is a physical artifact, a software application, or a website. Interaction design is the art and science of making that experience effective and satisfying.

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[a day in the life of]

What does this look like in practice?

It’s worth mentioning that **User experience is commonly abbreviated to UX**. For example, you may have noticed in the intro slide that my job title is UX Engineer. What this means to my company is that I am responsible for taking requirements from our VP of product and incorporating new features into our application in a way that makes the most sense and will make them the easiest for our users.

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[persona wall]

I do this by incorporating information that we’re gathering about our users in a variety of ways, as well as incorporating knowledge that I have about human-computer behavior in general. I mix all that information up together and use a variety of techniques to plan out the feature and get it added to the application. We’ll go into that in more depth in some later lessons.

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[a brief history]

A brief history

The study of human computer interaction first came about in the late 70s with the advent of the GUI- or, the graphic user interface. Before then, most computer people were computer scienctists, programmers, and enthusiasts who didn’t mind that computers weren’t easy to use. They used the command line to do what they needed to do.

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[apple]

With the GUI, there was a rise in the idea of “PCs” or Personal Computers. That meant anyone could have and use a computer. That began to mean that a computer should be ideally easy enough to use so that anyone \*could\* have and use one. In the early days, UXers were mostly known as Human-Computer Interaction designers, and they worked with enterprise level software on big industrial systems. The field has grown and evolved from there, always with the goal of making computers easy to use for humans.

slide 12

[why this matters to you]

Why should you care about User Experience Design?

slide 13

[feelings]

Think about any object that you use on a daily basis.

slide 14

[coffee maker]

I’m going to pick on my company’s coffee maker for a moment. It has 2 separate on switches, it beeps before it’s done, and basically people have a hard time figuring out how to use it.

slide 15

[angry]

slide 16

[french press]

Contrast that with my french press:<http://www.google.com/products/catalog?q=frieling+french+press&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=shop&cid=10841888848004713914&sa=X&ei=RkB2Tq-rGOXY0QGpt6C8DQ&ved=0CI4BEPMCMAE>

I pour in water and coffee, and press down the lever. Voila, coffee!

These two objects are accomplishing the same thing, brewing coffee. They are doing it very differently, and the user (in this case, me) has a different reaction when using each. The stakes are pretty high when you’re talking about user experience. In the very best cases, users will experience satisfaction or even outright happiness through interaction. The worst case on the other hand, can be frustration, confusion, or even the user making the decision to stop using the object. If they’re unhappy enough, they might tell their friends. If they love it enough, they also might tell their friends.

slide 17

[apple website]

Customer loyalty is often inversely proportional to how easy your product is to use. An easy to use product or website results in more money- whether you’re counting in signups, conversions, or page views. It’s really that simple. If you have any doubts, think about Apple. This is a company that has staked their entire business model on making beautiful, easy to use things. They might not always have the most features, or even be the best quality on the market. But the Apple product will always be the sleekest and the simplest, and that translates to market share.

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[how des this apply]

This is all well and good, but how does it apply to my website, you say?

1.) Websites are just like any other artifact that people need to have interactions with. If it’s difficult and unpleasant, they won’t come back. Your website is competing not only with the websites of your direct competitors, but with search engines, news aggregators, social media sites, video sites, photo gallery sites. . . the list goes on and on. In short, you’ve got approximately 6 seconds to prove to your users that your site is easy to use and will help them achieve their end goal with a minimum of resources. The time of your users is your most precious resource.

slide 19

[craigslist]

2.) A pretty website is not always a usable website. Let me repeat that, if you get nothing else out of this screencast, I want you to walk away with this point. A pretty website is not always a usable website.

Consider the following:

[craigslist.com](http://craigslist.com/)

highly usable, ugly as anything. Craigslist has a cult-like following of extremely enthusiastic users.

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[trails]

<http://tntrailsandbyways.com/>

This site features loads of pretty graphics, the latest javascript animations, and I personally find it a bit confusing. if you need to give your users a pictograph on how to use your site before the page loads, you might have a problem.

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[assignment]

Now, time to go play around and try this out!

Assignment: Go to<http://www.simpleandusable.com/simplify-this>

Have a look at the gallery, and take a stab at it yourself. Can you make an easier to use remote control? Is there value in this? What lessons can you apply to your own product?

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[After reviewing and assigning Next Step]

Next time on [Fundamentals of User Experience Design], we’re going to cover [Lesson 2: The Anatomy of a User Experience]. This is [Sarah Kahn], and from all of us here at Tuts+, thanks for listening!