

IxD – Course Assignment

Report: Letha e-commerce website

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Date: 22.03.20



Attachments:

Website: <http://www.tonnessen.com/noroff/semester-2/ixd/ca/>

GitHub Repository: https://github.com/Emizzari/interaction-design_ca_emilie-tonnessen

Adobe XD Prototype: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/ca8822d7-eeaa-4989-52ab-4993559e6a48-bcb9/>

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1. Introduction

In this report I will discuss the process of creating the e-commerce website called Letha, which is a shoe company that sells handmade leather shoes for men. I will look at everything from the research to development and testing. In the end I will reflect upon the final product.

2. Interaction Design – Understand the user

Interaction Design, IxD for short, is the moment of interaction between a human and a product. IxD requires us to use our imagination and empathy to understand the user, their goals, and how to best design a system for them. The goal is to make this process as smooth and beneficial as possible.

3. Research

3.1 Contextual inquiry

During the research phase I used a research method called contextual inquiry. Contextual inquiry is a user-centred design research method, where you interview and visit the user in the field and observe them in action, and then discusses those activities with the user.

To make this happen I created a list of questions that I wanted to ask each user that I interviewed. While the conversation was going, I asked other questions that popped in my mind that felt natural. I wrote this down during the conversation. Afterwards I made the user screenshare with me over Discord. This was a good method to observe how the user interacted with the website.

3.2 Personas

Personas are fictional characters, which you create based upon your research in order to represent the different user types that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way.

JOHN THE ENGINEER



Name: John Carlsen
Occupation: Engineer
Interests: Gaming, technology
Clothing style: Casual

Goals:

- I want shoes that lasts
- They need to look good
- Comfort is really important to me
- I want the shoes to match my clothes

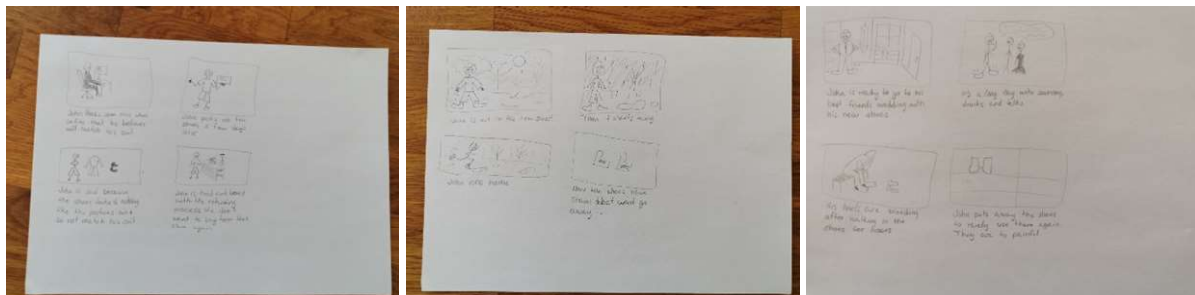
Concerns:

- I worry about the quality, if they get easily stained or water damaged
- I worry that the shoes does not fit or are comfortable to walk in
- I am worried that the colours in the picture does not match reality
- It feels like a hassle to return something you bought online

3.3 Storyboards

Scenarios and storyboards describe user and product behaviour in detail. They provide an understanding of design viability, cover end-to-end detail on interaction, and serve as a great communication tool.

The benefits of scenarios and storyboards are ensuing a design is workable, describing required interactions, uncovering error conditions, predicting user behaviour, and preventing rework later. Storyboards keep the focus on meeting the users' needs and project goals.



3.4 Using persuasive techniques to engage user

The easiest way to get people to your desired outcome, is to ensure it follows the path of least resistance. Persuading the user is an important part of interaction design. Users want to use satisfying products. This is the designer and developer job to provide. To persuade the user it is vital to show credibility. You can do this by having an updated product, having positive reviews and having clear goals.

People like to follow the crowd. This is called Social Proofing, and we can use this to our advantage by having testimonials, reviews, case studies, comment sections and “Users currently browsing same product” counters.

A persuading method you can use is the feeling you get of indebtedness to someone who has done nice things for us. You can do this by offer a free consultation or one-month free subscription. You can also use the Ben Franklin Effect, where you ask for a small favour, then thank the user immediately, and then waiting before returning the favour back.

Scarcity and time constraint are proven to be create techniques. The technique creates a fear of missing out, and thus making the product more desirable and instilling an urgency to act. The user has to act to secure the scarce item.

3.5 Analysing where and how the website will be used

We need to design products that meet the user in their specific context. It is our job to analyse the opportunities and limitation. Where is the user using the product? What goals are the user trying to achieve and how will they complete the task? Who is the user? When are the user going to be using the product?

We cannot control how the user will interact with us, so we need to build responsive sites that can meet the user's needs. It is important to decide what to do with content on each device when designing. We need to consider the different opportunities and limitations each device has. Laptops and Desktops has a mouse and keyboard. Tablets are better at consuming content and users will often read, browse or play games on it. Phones has different utilities that can be utilized, like GPS. It is important to consider how people will be holding the phone to create the best buttons and navigations as possible.

3.6 Creating a good information architecture

It is vital that the user easily understand what the site is about and how to interact with it. Having a clear information architecture helps the user decide to use your product. Information architecture is more than just navigation and encompasses how content is organised, labelled and displayed to users, including what terminology is used and which call-to-action are highlighted.

To create a good information architecture, it is important to learn from your users. You can do this by a doing a research method called card sorting. When you have analysed the users, you will start to see a trend. This can give clues on how to move forward. Once you have a basic outline, you can use reverse sorting to see if you have met the expectations. Remember, the main categories do not have to be the main menu items. The main categories should focus on how the user see the content.

3.7 Keeping the user in a state of flow as they explore the site

Flow is about immersion in a task and a commitment to achieve a goal. We easily move from one stage to another. It is as if you are in a meditate state. If the site has bad flow, the user is unlikely to stick around and achieve their goals.

To keep a good flow, it is important to have clarity and clear goals. Having clear descriptions and well thought out copy can help users quickly achieve their goals. We also need to keep the business goals in mind. How can we get the user to subscribe, purchase or continue browsing? Keep giving the user instant and consistent feedback to let the user know if they have completed or failed a task.

Thinking about what you are doing breaks your flow and moves the activity from being immersive, almost unconscious activity, to be a conscious activity. This can include if the user is unsure what to do, gets unclear error messages, get bored, gets too many obstacles, gets interrupted or has too much information to deal with.

4. Prototype

4.1 Paper Prototype

Paper Prototyping is a prototyping method in which paper models are used to simulate computer or web applications. After initial design, a paper prototype is drawn on plain or construction paper, sometimes with coloured markers. This is a cheap way of testing interaction design and making important changes before the development stage. Users are more comfortable to talk negative or come with suggestion to a cheap looking prototype rather than a picture-perfect illustration.

4.2 Adobe Experience Design (XD)

Adobe XD¹ is a UX design software. With this program you can create simple interactive click-through prototypes. In design mode, you can create various designs on artboards as you do with Sketch. In prototype mode you can wire the screens and preview the prototype, so the prototype behaves like a website.

You can perform user testing by uploading your prototype into Adobe Cloud and creating a sharable link that you can give to your user for testing.

In this phase I settled on the colour palette and creating a simple logo. As the company Letha distribute handmade leather shoes, I decided to give the website a warm and comfortable feeling. The idea is to make the user feel like home in a safe and warm environment.

The logo was chosen to be simple, with a font that would give the company an older and more respectable feeling.



5. Development

5.1 File path and GitHub

The first thing I did before starting coding was to create a file path that is clean and logical. It is important to have everything named correctly from the beginning, so you do not have to make a lot of changes later in the process. Secondly, I created a GitHub² repository to track my work and changes during the process.

5.2 Planning

In the planning stage I looked over my prototype and research, figuring out how many files I would have to create. I filled the different files with relevant notes like colour palette and typography. The plan was to start creating the main structure of every page first, which was the navigation and footer for this project. Then I am going to move on to the main content with a focus on creating a good flow for the user. In earlier projects I have been weak on my class naming skills, so this is something I am trying to improve on during this project. For icons I decided to use Font Awesome³ for quick and effective coding.

5.3 Creating flow

To create flow from start to finish I made sure to have a call-to-action button on my front page that would take the user directly to the shoes. On the shoe page I used JavaScript to loop through the products, but the details I hardcoded as an advice from the teacher, the same with the shopping cart. To let the user know they had succeeded in their goals, I used JavaScript to make alerts with relevant messages.

5.4 Responsive Design

The importance of responsive design can not be stressed enough, but in this project, this was not an priority. I did however use CSS Grid to make sure there were some responsiveness on the website.

6. Testing

The testing consisted of having different users with a goal of buying a pair of shoes and sending a message to the company. The users had no problem doing so and considered themselves done after the alert message gave them feedback that the goal was reached successfully.

7. Reflection

There is a lot going on before developing a page. I find the topics psychology, technology and design quite interesting just by themselves and are quite interesting to put all three together and see how it works. I think what I have learned the most is how different people perform tasks and how easy it is to be unclear or not being able to express your intention good enough through the design. It is important to test with users and get feedback early on. Personally, I have learned a lot and are positive to bring all the new tools and methods with me into future projects. Regarding my work it would be more effective if I could have planned out the whole process from the beginning and not taking bits and pieces from everywhere. It did not feel like one process, but more like broken pieces trying to fit together with silver tape.

I am looking forward to implementing everything I have learned and improve even more for the next project. It is good to get some fresh perspective on how you view designing for websites.

8. References

1. Adobe XD
<https://www.adobe.com/no/products/xd.html>
2. GitHub
<https://github.com/>
3. Font Awesome
<https://fontawesome.com/>

9. Resources

- “E-Commerce JavaScript Tutorial - Shopping Cart from Scratch”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=023Psne_-4
Watched: 16.03.20 (12:27)
- “How to Add Font Awesome Icons in HTML” – KodeBase
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHKjsqw0zw8>
Watched: 16.03.20 (12:54)
- Icons:
 - Shopping bag
<https://fontawesome.com/icons/shopping-bag?style=solid>
 - Facebook
<https://fontawesome.com/icons/facebook-f?style=brands>
 - Instagram
<https://fontawesome.com/icons/instagram?style=brands>
 - Twitter
<https://fontawesome.com/icons/twitter?style=brands>
 - Trash
<https://fontawesome.com/icons/trash-alt?style=solid>
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 - Unsplash
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