Portfolio project guide checklist

Empathize with users

- ☐ Recruit a representative sample of interview participants.
- ☐ Plan interview questions that are relevant, open-ended, clear, neutral, and conversational.
- ☐ Conduct interviews to gather key information and build rapport with participants.
- ☐ Distill each interview into an empathy map.
- ☐ Divide users into user groups based on shared characteristics, goals, or needs.
- ☐ Create a user persona to represent each user group.
- ☐ Include a compelling one-sentence user story in each persona.
- ☐ Map out a user journey for each persona.

Pro Tip

Review your user stories, personas, and journey maps and ensure they are free of biases or assumptions. All should be firmly based on your interviews and any other forms of user research.

Define user needs

- ☐ Craft problem statements for each user persona.

- ☐ Craft hypothesis statements for each problem statement.

- ☐ Craft goal statements for each hypothesis statement.

- ☐ Ensure your goal statements align with any relevant business requirements.

Pro Tip

Review your problem, hypothesis, and goal statements to ensure they are free of biases or assumptions. All should be firmly grounded in the information you gathered while interviewing users and crafting user personas.

Ideate design solutions

- ☐ Identify direct and indirect competitors for your product.

- ☐ Research relevant aspects of those competitors' products.

- ☐ Summarize your research findings in a formal or informal audit report.

- ☐ Conduct a How might we (HMW) exercise to reframe problems as opportunities.

- ☐ Sketch ideas for solutions with Rapid sketching.

Pro Tip
Save evidence of your ideation work for your portfolios and job interviews.

Create lo-fi prototypes

- ☐ Review your work from the empathize and define phases to ensure your wireframes and prototype address key user needs, problems, and goals.

- ☐ Create user flow diagrams, storyboards, and sitemaps to plan your product's user flow and information architecture.

- ☐ Design paper and digital wireframes for each of the key screens you want to include in your lo-fi prototype, using industry-standard symbols to showcase key elements.

- ☐ Connect elements in your digital wireframes so users can simulate what will happen when they interact with key screens, calls to action, and other interactive features.

- ☐ Compare your wireframe connections to your user flow diagrams, storyboards, and sitemaps, making updates and refinements as needed.

Pro Tip
Save your prototype as well as your paper and digital wireframes so you can draw on them for examples of your design work in your portfolios.

Test prototypes

- ☐ Plan a usability study about user experiences with your lo-fi prototype.

- ☐ Conduct that usability study using best practices.

- ☐ Synthesize your usability study results using affinity diagrams.

- ☐ Translate those results into actionable insights.

- ☐ Prioritize those insights into P0, P1, and P2 buckets.

- ☐ Implement your P0 and P1 insights and as many P2 insights as possible.

Pro Tip
Retest and further refine your prototype as needed. Save evidence of your prototyping and testing work for your portfolios and job interviews!

Create hi-fi prototypes

- ☐ Build mockups for each screen you want to include in your prototype.

- ☐ Include typography, color, containment, and other fundamental design elements.

- ☐ Refine your prototypes with visual design principles and Gestalt principles.

- ☐ Add navigational and interactive features, such as buttons, icons, and menus.

- ☐ Connect your mockup screens in a logical and user-friendly order.

☐ Add animations to simulate interactions.

Pro Tip
Save evidence of your prototyping work for your portfolios and job interviews!

Build a professional brand and prepare for UX design jobs

☐ Identify mockups or other design assets to include in your portfolio.

☐ Create a case study from your most recent project.

Pro Tip
Update your design portfolio or start building a new case study. The best UX designers typically keep their portfolios and case studies as up-to-date as possible. This way, they'll be ready to go when you need them!

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