A

**Above the fold:** The content on a web page that doesn’t require scrolling to experience

**Accessibility:** The design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities

**Advertising agencies:** Teams of creatives hired by clients to build marketing campaigns

**Affinity:** A feeling of like-mindedness or compatibility toward something or someone

**Affinity diagram:** A method of synthesizing that organizes data into groups with common themes or relationships

**Aggregated empathy maps:** Represent a visualization of everything designers know about an entire segment or group of similar users

**Alternative text (alt text):** Text that helps translate something visual, such as an image or graph, into a description that can be read by screen readers

**Apprenticeships:** Long-term positions providing paid, on-the-job training to help you develop real skills

**Assets:** Everything from the text and images to the design specifications, like font style, color, size, and spacing

**Assistive technology:** Any products, equipment, or systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for people with disabilities

**Asymmetrical layout:** Having purposeful imbalance between different sides of a page

B

**Back-end developer:** Someone who writes code for the website’s architecture and data storage or retrieval, based on the sitemap and functionality

**Basic grid:** Intersecting lines that divide pages into small squares, which allows you to easily lay out elements in a design

**Bias**: Favoring or having prejudice against something based on limited information

**Big picture storyboard:** A series of visually rendered panels that focus on the user’s experience

**Brand Identity**: The visual appearance and voice of a company

**Borders**: A method of containment that uses continuous lines that often form shapes, like squares or rectangles, to break up sections of a page

**Box layout:** A web page layout that consists of boxes or squares of various sizes and proportions

**Budget estimate:** Details the expenses and profit margins that add up to an appropriate cost for services

C

**Call-to-action (CTA):** A visual prompt that tells the user to take action

**Cards:** Rectangle parts of a design that contain content and actions about a single subject, which are often used in mobile app design

**Carousels:** Scrolling feeds of images or cards on a UI that can be sifted through with a click or that automatically loop while you’re on the page

**Case study:** Leads the user through your design process from the beginning to the end

**Case studies:** Summarized presentation of a design project that typically includes

* Project goal and objectives
* Your role on the project
* Process your team followed
* Outcome of the project

**Close-up storyboard:** A series of visually rendered panels that focus on the product

**Color modification**: Features that increase the contrast of colors on a screen, like high-contrast mode or dark mode

**Common region:** The Gestalt Principle that describes how elements located within the same area are perceived to be grouped together

**Competitive audit:** An overview of your competitors’ strengths and weaknesses

**Complementary:** Taking into account how the product design on each device can make the overall user experience better

**Confirmation Bias**: Occurs when you start looking for evidence to prove a hypothesis you have

**Consistency:** Having a uniform design, so users can expect the design to feel familiar across devices and products

**Containment:** The use of visual barriers to keep elements of a design neat and organized; the four methods of containment are dividers, borders, fill, and shadow

**Context:** Designing for the needs of a specific device and the way in which the user will use that device in any given situation

**Continuity:** Providing users with a smooth and uninterrupted experience as they move between devices

**Conversion rate:** Measures the percentage of users who complete a desired action

**Corporation:** A company with thousands of employees working on lots of different projects

**Curb cut:** The slope of the sidewalk that creates a ramp with adjoining street

**Curb cut effect:** A phenomenon that describes how products and policies designed for people with disabilities often end up helping everyone

**Customizable text:** A feature that allows users to change how text is displayed in order to read the text more easily

D

**Database model:** A website structure that mixes a database, or an organized collection of information, with search functionality

**Deceptive patterns:** UX methods that trick users into doing or buying something they wouldn’t otherwise have done or bought

**Dedicated mobile app:** Built to live on the mobile device and is accessed through an icon on the phone's home screen

**Define**: The phase of Design Thinking that involves leveraging the insights gained during the empathize phase to identify the problem you’ll solve with your design

**Design agency:** Provides a one-stop shop for the look of brands, products, and services

**Design critique session:** A planned period of time where UX designers present their work to team members and listen to feedback

**Design research**: Answers the question: How should we build it?

**Design Sprint**: A time-bound process, with five phases typically spread over five full 8-hour days. The goal of design sprints is to answer critical business questions through designing, prototyping, and testing ideas with users

**Design system:** A series of reusable visual elements and guidelines that allow teams to design and develop a product following predetermined standards

**Design thinking**: A UX design framework that focuses on the user throughout all five phases: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test

**Digital literacy**: A user's level of ability related to using digital information and technologies

**Direct competitors:** Companies that have offerings similar to your product and focus on the same audience

**Dividers:** A method of containment that uses single lines to separate sections of a page

**Domain:** Address of your website

**Dopamine:** A natural chemical in the brain that’s released when something pleasurable happens, which makes us feel good or intrigued

E

**Edge case:** What happens when things go wrong that are beyond the user’s control

**Elements:** Building blocks for creating a design

**Elevator pitch:** A short, memorable description that explains a concept in an easy-to-understand way

**Empathize:** The phase of Design Thinking that involves getting to know your user through research

**Empathy:** The ability to understand someone else’s feelings or thoughts in a situation

**Empathy map:** An easily understood chart that explains everything designers have learned about a type of user

**Emphasis:** A way of attracting attention to text, a button, or another object in a design

**Entry-level job:** Roles that do not require prior experience in the field

**Equality:** Providing the same amount of opportunity and support

**Equity-focused design:** Designing for groups that have been historically underrepresented or ignored when building products

F

**F-shape layout:** A website layout that assumes that users will likely browse content on the page following an F-shaped pattern

**Facilitator:** Runs the critique session and guide the process

**False consensus bias:** The assumption that others will think the same way as you do

**Featured image layout:** A website layout that places the user’s focus on a single image or video that often takes up the entire page above-the-fold

**Feedback:** Asking for or receiving ideas about what is or isn't working

**Feedback loops:** The outcome a user gets at the end of a process

**Fidelity:** How closely a design matches the look and feel of the final product

**Fill**: A method of containment that assigns colors to borders and shapes

**First interview:** Introductory call with a recruiter or hiring manager to determine whether a candidate meets the minimum set of requirements for the role

**Focal point:** A specific and distinct area that sticks out on a web page or mobile screen design, to guide the users’ attention

**Font:** The size, thickness, and emphasis of characters of text

**Foundational research:** Helps designers understand why or if they should build the product and to better understand the user problem they are trying to solve

**Framework:** Creates the basic structure that focuses and supports the problem you’re trying to solve

**Freelancers:** UX designers who work for themselves and market their services to businesses to find customers

**Friendliness bias:** The tendency of people to agree with those they like in order to maintain a non-confrontational conversation

**Front-end developer:** Someone who writes code for all the user-facing interface, based on the UX designer’s specifications

G

**Generalist:** A UX designer with a broad number of responsibilities

**Gestalt Principles:** Describe how humans group similar elements, recognize patterns, and simplify complex images when we perceive objects

**Gesture:** Any method of interaction a user has with information on their device using touch

**Goal statement:** One or two sentences that describe a product and its benefits for the user

**Graceful degradation (top-down designing):** A method of designing from the largest screen, with a lot of features and interactions, to smaller screens, where features and interactions are scaled back

**Graphic designers**: Create visuals that tell a story or message

**Grid of cards layout:** A website layout that features a series of cards, which are often square or rectangles, that provide previews of more detailed content

H

**Hamburger menus:** A nickname for the type of navigation menu that is represented by an icon with three lines. When you click on the icon, it unfolds by sliding in from the side or taking over the whole page, revealing a menu of options to navigate through pages

**Happy path:** A user story with a pleasant ending

**Heading:** Titles or subtitles that stand out at the beginning of a paragraph, article, section, or another area of a website

**Hierarchy:** A visual design principle that orders elements on a page and highlights them by their importance

**Hierarchical model:** A top-down approach to structure that starts with broader categories of information (parent) and narrows into more detailed information (child)

**High-fidelity (hi-fi):** A design that closely matches the look and feel of the final product and is more refined or polished; called “hi-fi” for short

**High-fidelity prototypes:** Polished designs that exhibit functionality and closely match the look and feel of the final product

**Hypothesis statement:** Our best educated guess on what we think the solution to a design problem might be

I

**Iconography:** A system of graphic images or symbols associated with a subject or an idea

**Ideate**: The phase of Design Thinking that involves brainstorming all potential solutions to the user’s problem

**Ideation:** The process of generating a broad set of ideas on a given topic, with no attempt to judge or evaluate them

**Implicit bias:** The collection of attitudes and stereotypes associated with people, without one’s conscious knowledge

**Impostor syndrome:** The belief that you're unskilled, inferior to others, or bad at your job, despite your successes

**Inclusive design**: Making design choices that take into account personal identifiers like ability, race, economic status, language, age, and gender

**Indirect competitors:** Have a similar set of offerings but focus on a different audience, or have a different set of offerings and focus on the same audience

**Information architecture (IA):** Organizes content to help users understand where they are in a product and where the information they want is

**Initial focus:** How you attract a user's attention to help them accomplish a task

**Insight:** An observation about people that helps you understand the user or their needs from a new perspective

**Interaction designers:** Focus on designing the experience of a product and how it functions

**Interactivity:** Makes the prototype function

**Internship:** A short-term role with limited responsibility

**Interviews**: A research method used to collect in-depth information on people’s opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings

**Iterate:** Revise the original design to create a new and improved version

**Iteration:** Doing something again, by building on previous versions and making tweaks

K

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Critical measures of progress toward an end goal

**Key terms:** Important words in a job posting that tell you the specifics about the role

L

**Landmarks:** Features — like navigation bars, search boxes, fixed sidebars, and footers — used to break up a lot of text on a web page and help improve the use of assistive technology

**Layout:** The structure that supports how visual components on a page are arranged

**Layout grid:** A series of columns and alleys that allow you to organize elements in a design

**Lorem ipsum**: Meaningless placeholder text written in Latin that you can use to show where content will go and how a page will be laid out

**Low fidelity (lo-fi):** A design that has a lower amount of complexity and is less refined or polished; called “lo-fi” for short

**Low-fidelity prototypes:** Simple interactive structures that provide a basic idea of how products will look and behave

M

**Matrix model:** A website structure that allows users to determine their own path, since content is linked in several ways

**Mental models:** Internal maps that allow humans to predict how something will work

**Methodology:** The steps to take to conduct research, collect data, and analyze data

**Mobile-first philosophy:** A method of design that starts by designing the mobile version of a product and later adapts it to fit larger screens

**Mockup:** A static, high-fidelity design that’s used as a representation of a final product

**Motion:** A way to animate static design elements to focus the user’s attention and tell stories

**Motion designers:** Think about what it feels like for a user to move through a product

**Multi-column layout:** A web page layout that uses two or more columns for content

N

**Navigation:** The way users get from page to page on a website

**Negative (white) space:** The gaps between elements in a design

**Networking:** Interacting with other people to develop professional contacts and learn more about a job industry

**Next Billion Users (NBU):** The billion people around the world who are accessing the web for the first time

**Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA):** A contract that gives one party legal protection against another party stealing their ideas or revealing proprietary information before a product is launched

**Notetaker:** The person who captures all of the ideas and feedback from the reviewers during a design critique

P

**Pain points:** UX issues that frustrate the user and block the user from getting what they need

**Panel interview:** A group of people meet a job candidate at the same time to assess the candidate’s skills

**Payment schedule:** A list of expected payment dates, including upfront costs and contingencies

**Peer reviews:** Assignments that enable learners to provide feedback on each other’s assignment submissions

**Persona:** A fictional user whose goals and characteristics represent the needs of a larger group of users

**Personal brand:** The way in which your personality, unique skills, and values as a designer intersect with your public persona

**Personal statement:** A one- or two-sentence phrase that describes what you do and what you stand for

**Personally Identifiable information (PII):** Specific details that could be used to identify a user

**Platform**: The medium that users experience your product on

**Portfolio:** A collection of work you’ve created that shows your skills in a certain area

**Post-launch research:** Helps designers understand if the product worked as expected

**Presentation:** A group of slides, where each slide has new information to share and promote insights

**Presenter:** The designer who is sharing their work with others in the session

**Primacy bias:** Remembering the first user more than others

**Primary research:** Research you conduct yourself

**Problem statement:** A clear description of the user’s need that should be addressed

**Product**: A good, service, or feature

**Product designer:** Someone who is responsible for figuring out how the whole product comes together

**Product goal statement:** One or two sentences that describe a product and its benefits for the user

**Production designers:** Make sure first and final designs match in the finished project materials and that the assets are ready to be handed off to engineering team

**Progressive enhancement (bottom-up designing):** Designing from the smallest screen, with the basic capabilities of the product design, to the largest screen, where more advanced features and interactions are added

**Project background:** provides a description about the background of the study, including why the insights were needed and what impact they will have on decisions being made

**Project stakeholders:** People who are involved in the project or who will be impacted by its results

**Proportion:** The balance or harmony between elements that are scaled

**Proposal:** Outline of an approach to successfully deliver work that is scoped with a client, including timeline and budget estimates

**Prototype:** An early model of a product that demonstrates functionality

**Proximity:** The Gestalt Principle describing how elements that are close together appear to be more related than those that are spaced apart

Q

**Qualitative research:** Focuses on observations about why and how things happen

**Quantitative research:** Focuses on data that can be gathered by counting or measuring

R

**Recency bias**: Most easily remembering the last thing you heard

**Representative sample:** A subset of the target population that seeks to accurately reflect the characteristics of the larger group

**Research report:** A document with fewer visuals containing the same information as a presentation to share and promote insights

**Research study:** A step-by-step examination of a group of users and their needs, which adds realistic context to the design process

**Responsive web app:** An actual website that adapts to the device the user is on and is accessed through a mobile phone's web browser

**Responsive web design:** Allows a website to change automatically depending on the size of the device

**Retrospective**: A collaborative critique of the team’s design sprint

**Reviewier:** Gives feedback about the design and offers clear actions to take

S

**Scale:** Concept that’s used to explain the size relationship between a given element and the other elements in the design

**Scalable:** Describes a system that’s able to maintain performance levels when workload increases

**Scope creep:** This is when the details of a project you're planning, or scoping, slowly increase until the project is much more complex than what was originally planned

**Scope of work:** A document that outlines the project that will be completed with a client

**Screen reader**: Software that reads aloud any on-screen text, interactive elements, or alternative text

**Screener survey:** A detailed list of questions that helps researchers determine if potential participants meet the requirements of the research study

**Second round of interviews:** Interviewers explore a job candidate’s experience in more depth, often in person, so that the team can understand how the candidate’s background fits the role

**Secondary research**: Research that uses information someone else has put together

**Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information:** Data that if lost, compromised, or stolen, could cause your users financial harm, embarrassment, or discrimination

**Serial position effect:** When given a list of items, people are more likely to remember the first few and the last few, while the items in the middle tend to blur

**Shadows**: A method of containment that creates dimension in combination with borders or fill

**Similarity:** The Gestalt Principle describing how elements that look similar are perceived to have the same function

**Single column layout:** A web page layout that has only one column for content

**Sitemap:** A diagram of a website or application that shows how pages are prioritized, linked, and labeled

**Social desirability bias:** The tendency for people to answer questions in a way that will be viewed favorably by others

**Specialist:** A UX designer that dives deep into one particular UX design role, like interaction, visual, or motion design

**Speech to text**: Software that allows users to compose text by speaking into their device

**Spreadsheet note-taking:** A simple and easy method to keep your notes organized using a spreadsheet

**Sprint Brief**: A document that you share with all your attendees to help them prepare for the sprint

**Startup:** A new business that wants to develop a unique product or service and disrupt the market

**Statement of Work:** A legally binding document that includes a list of detailed deliverables, their due dates, and a payment schedule

**Storyboard:** A series of panels or frames that visually describes and explores a user’s experience with a product

**Sunk cost fallacy:** The idea that the deeper we get into a project we’ve invested in, the harder it is to change course

**Surveys:** An activity where many people are asked the same questions in order to understand what most people think about a product

**Switch device:** An assistive technology device that replaces the need to use a computer keyboard or a mouse

**System Usability Scale (SUS):** A questionnaire to measure the usability of designs

T

**T-shaped designer:** A designer who specializes in one kind of user experience (e.g., interaction, visual, motion) and has a breadth of knowledge in other areas

**Test:** The phase of Design Thinking that involves facilitating and observing user tests with your design prototypes

**The human factor**: Describes the range of variables humans bring to their product interactions

**Tiered layer cake layout:** A web page layout where individual rows, or layers, are stacked on top of one another, and within each row, there can be different numbers of columns

**Time on task:** The amount of time it takes for a user to complete a task

**Traversal order:** The navigation flow for a user on an app or a website

**Typography:** The technique of arranging letters and text to make the language readable, clear, and visually appealing

**Typographic hierarchy:** The ordering of typefaces and fonts in a layout to create divisions that show users where to focus and how to find information

**Typeface:** The overall style of the characters

**Type classification:** A general system to describe styles of type, like serif and sans serif

U

**Unity:** Measures how well elements of your design work together to communicate an idea

**Universal design:** The process of creating one product for users with the widest range of abilities and in the widest range of situations

**Usability study:** A research method that assesses how easy it is for participants to complete core tasks in a design

**Use of navigation vs. search:** The number of people who use a website or app’s navigation compared to the number of people who use the search functionality

**User:** Any person who uses a product

**User-centered design:** Puts the user front-and-center

**User error rates:** Indicate the parts of a design that cause users to make errors

**User experience:** How a person, the user, feels about interacting with, or experiencing, a product

**User flow:** The path taken by a typical user on an app or a website, so they can complete a task from start to finish

**User group:** A set of people who have similar interests, goals, or concerns

**User interface (UI) designer:** Someone who is concerned with how a digital product’s interface looks and functions

**User journey:** The series of experiences a user has as they interact with a product

**User story:** Fictional one-sentence story told from a persona’s point of view to inspire and inform design decisions

**UX designers:** Focus on how users interact with a product

**UX engineers:** Translate the design’s intent into a functioning experience

**UX program managers:** Ensure clear and timely communication so that the process of building a useful product moves smoothly from start to finish

**UX research:** Understand users and learn about their backgrounds, demographics**,** motivations, pain points, emotions, and life goals

**UX researchers:** A type of researcher that conducts studies or interviews to learn about the users of a product and how people use a product

**UX writers**: Create the language that appears throughout a digital product, like websites or mobile apps

V

**Value proposition**: The reason why a consumer should use a product or service

**Variety:** Differentiating the elements in your design to add visual interest

**Visual balance:** The sense that a design is equally weighted on both sides of its emphasized center

**Visual design:** How a product or technology appears to users

**Visual designer:** Someone who focuses on how the product or technology looks

**Visual weight:** A measure of the force that an element exerts to attract the eye

**Vulnerable populations:** Groups of people who have limited ability to provide their consent or have special privacy concerns

W

**WCAG:** Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

**WebAIM:** Web Accessibility in Mind

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG):** A set of rules that explain how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities

**Whiteboard interview:** Includes a practical demonstration of a job candidate’s skills in real time for interviewers

**Wireframe:** An outline or a sketch of a product or a screen

Z

**Z-shape layout:** A website layout that assumes that users will skim information starting left to right, then move diagonally to the left, before scanning to the right again, in the shape of a Z