Creaxess Configurator user interface analysis

Author: Natalia Smoroń

TOC

Introduction

The main idea behind this project is to show the importance of content, user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) and their value in a business area.

In today's digital age, content, UI and UX are crucial elements that can make or break a product's success in the business world. Effective content and UI can enhance user engagement, increase customer satisfaction, and drive revenue growth for businesses. Therefore, investing in these areas is essential for businesses to provide a better user experience and achieve successful growth.

Theory

User interface definition

In technical terms, the **user interface** (**UI**) is a space where human-machine interaction takes place.The primary objective of this interaction is to allow a human to operate and control the machine effectively. Simultaneously, the machine feeds back information to assist the operator's decision-making process.

The goal

Generally, the main goal of creating a UI is to design an interface that is simple, efficient, and enjoyable for users to operate a machine in a manner that maximizes usability. This typically implies minimizing the amount of input required from the operator to achieve the desired output, while also ensuring that the machine minimizes any unintended outputs or undesirable outcomes for the user.

From a technical point of view

The UI design process is **technical**, which means its designers must have a good understanding of **information architecture**. The UI designer creates the **design** and **graphics** of the user interface. The designer starts with a sitemap or builds wireframes that prioritize content. Then the designer should communicate this hierarchy with visual design elements.

In short, the design of the user interface includes the look and feel of the software. This makes the user interface intuitive considering all the visual and interactive elements on the page.

From a business point of view

UI is one of the tools that can be used to **maximize profits**. UI is often "**the face**" of a product, which refers to the design of the visual elements and interactive components of a product that enables users to interact with it.

Conclusion: UI focuses on the aesthetics and functionality of the interface.

An example of UI as the face of the product - *Spotify* UI (Spotify is a digital music service that gives access to music and podcasts).
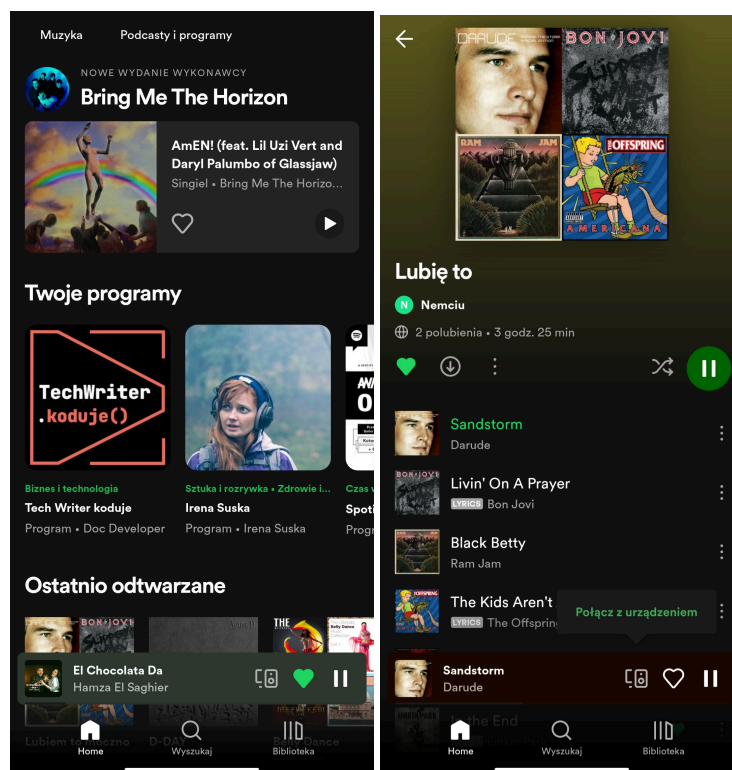
User experience definition

User experience (**UX**) refers to the way how a user interacts with and experiences a product. UX is all about interactive elements and responsive design of the user journey. According to Nielsen Norman Group, 'user experience' includes all the aspects of the interaction between the end-user with the company, its services, and its products.

The goal

The primary goal of UX design is to design and continuously improve the user experience. UX designers work closely with marketers and product teams to understand the ultimate needs of customers. The design process usually includes user research to help understand the experience of users. It's not uncommon for UX design to continue even after the project is launched.

This topic is beyond basic design capabilities. The user journey and creating a positive experience is the top priority. UX designers employ a methodology known as user-centric design.

User experience design can be successfully applied not only to software but also to overall customer service in marketing.
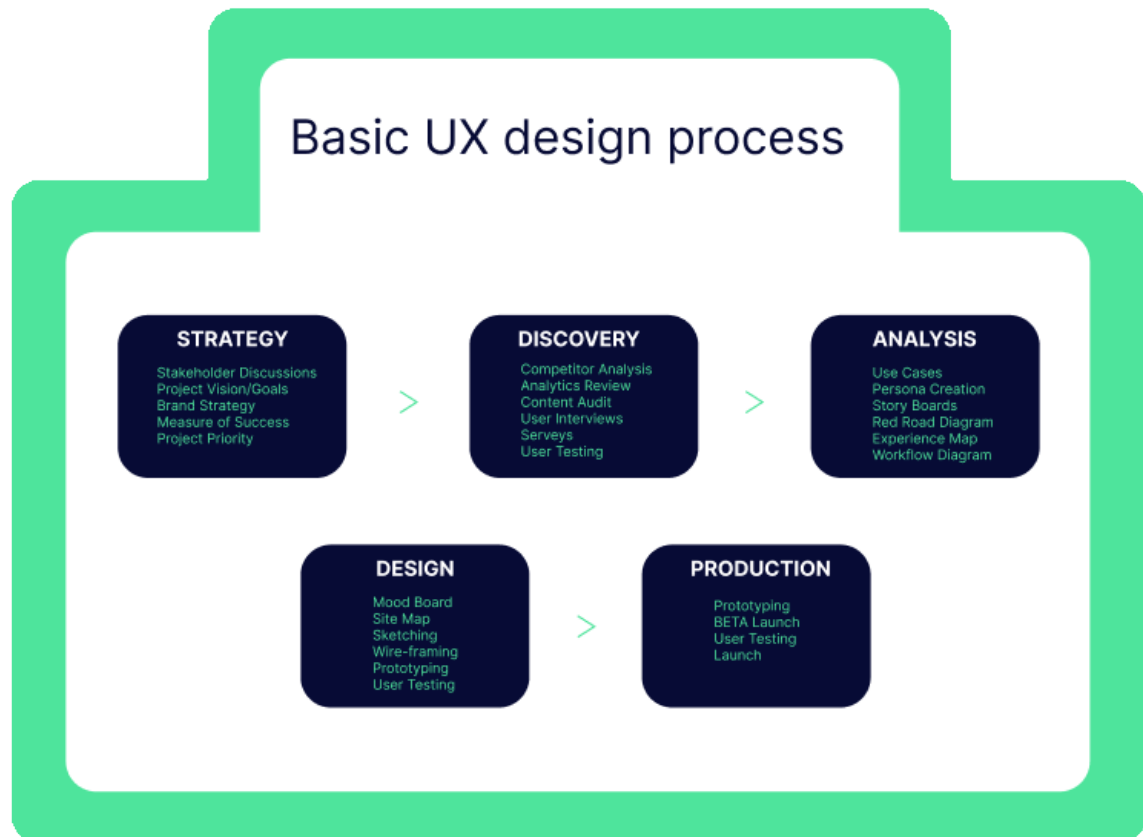
UX tries to answer the following questions:

- What do people do?

- How do they do it?

It is important for the research process to focus on the user, which is why small research samples are used, based on observations, and the main goal is to thoroughly understand the user's behaviour.

Conclusion: Design decisions in UX design are driven by research, data analysis, and test results rather than aesthetic preferences and opinions.

An example of a typical UX design process:

Basic UX design process

STRATEGY

Stakeholder Discussions
Project Vision/Goals
Brand Strategy
Measure of Success
Project Priority

>

DISCOVERY

Competitor Analysis
Analytics Review
Content Audit
User Interviews
Serveys
User Testing

>

ANALYSIS

Use Cases
Persona Creation
Story Boards
Red Road Diagram
Experience Map
Workflow Diagram

DESIGN

Mood Board
Site Map
Sketching
Wire-framing
Prototyping
User Testing

>

PRODUCTION

Prototyping
BETA Launch
User Testing
Launch

UI & UX differences

Generally, UX design is about overall user experience, while UI design concerns interface look and function. Although UI and UX have a lot in common, they have the following differences:

Description	UI	UX
Goals and tasks	UI focuses on the aesthetics and functionality of the interface.	UX focuses on researching the needs of users and designing solutions that improve their experience with the product.
Design process	UI design includes interface design and its implementation.	UX design includes researching user needs, prototyping and testing.
Impact on user experience	UI is responsible for making the product aesthetic and pleasant to use.	UX is responsible for making the product easy to use and meeting the needs of users.

UI & UX similarities

Both UX and UI are focused on the user. Especially interaction design, customer analytics, mobile app design tools and any aspect of software design that involves the user journey. UX and UI are crucial elements in the design process. Although the UI designer concentrates on the technical elements of the UI, UX designers still contribute significantly to the UI designer's tasks.

UX and UI are closely related as they both refer to user interface design and aim to improve user experience.

UI and UX are related in the areas of:

- **Collaboration** - Designing a good UI is impossible without a good UX understanding of users' needs. UX deals with the study and understanding of user needs, and the results of this research serve as the basis for designing an interface that is user-friendly.

- **Complementing** - UX and UI complement each other. UX deals with how the product works and which needs of the user it satisfies, while UI focuses on how the product looks and interacts.

- **Impact on user experience** - UX and UI together affect the user experience. UX is responsible for making the product easy to use and meeting the needs of users, while UI is responsible for making the product aesthetic and pleasant to use.

Impact of UI and UX on business

"People ignore design that ignores people."
— Frank Chimero, Designer

UI and UX are closely related as they both refer to user interface design and aim to improve user experience. The quality of user interaction with a product can be heavily influenced by UI and UX, making them crucial aspects for the success of a business.

- Attracting and retaining customers - Customers are attracted and retained by well-crafted UI and UX as they enhance the user's contentment with the product.

- Increased efficiency - Well-crafted UI and UX enhance user efficiency, enabling them to perform tasks more quickly and easily.

- Increasing revenue - Well-designed UI and UX attract and retain customers, which translates into increased revenue.

- Cost savings - Excellent UI and UX help to prevent errors and reduce costs associated with customer service.

- Competitive advantage - Wonderful UI and UX allow the company to stand out in the market and gain a competitive advantage.

- Reputation improvement - Enhancing the UI and UX of the product can boost the company's reputation by increasing customer satisfaction and the likelihood of them recommending it to others.

Conclusion: Overall, a successful UI and UX design should provide a seamless experience for users, balancing functionality with aesthetics to create an enjoyable and efficient user experience. Both UI and UX are significant factors in the business because they are related to the user. The biggest part of the process of improving the ux and increasing the company's revenue is done by improving the UI.

Audit

Usability

Usability definition

Usability means the degree of adaptation to the needs of users, measured by the ease of learning and use, the effectiveness and efficiency of the results of work and the perceived satisfaction from easily obtaining the expected result.

The concept of usability pertains to how easily an individual can complete a particular task using a product.

The level of usability of the product determines the emotional attitude of the user, the results of work and the willingness to use a given system or service again.

Bringing usability to user experience, it can be seen that usability is a combination of factors shaping the user's perceived experience of working with the product.

Usability and user experience (UX) are not the same thing. Usability is a critical part of good UX, but these are two different concepts that guide us to consider different aspects of the design process.

Purpose of the usability check

Usability is important from several points of view (POV):

- Designer POV

Usability plays a significant role in the success or failure of the product. It depends on whether people will be happy with the product, use it and recommend it to others.

- Manager POV

Poor usability of the system that employees use causes them irritation, lowers their productivity, causes mistakes, errors and complaints, worsening the image of the company in the eyes of customers especially in enterprise solutions.

- Salesman POV

Usability is a factor well-known to users when choosing a product. It's about how easy and satisfying it is to use. Good usability means the product works well and makes users happy, while poor usability can lead to frustration and disappointment.

Conclusion: In all cases, the shortcomings of the product's usability cause unjustified costs of improving functionality and usability defects, deteriorate the image of the company and to a large extent determine the commercial success or failure of the product.

How to asses usability?

User interface usability check can be done in several fields. Among others it can be an analysis of UI and UX that complement each other perfectly. The best solution will be to conduct a UI and UX audit that will answer many questions about the usability of the product.

UI audit

UI audit definition

The UI is built on the basis of consistent components that create certain design patterns so that the user feels comfortable using it. The purpose of the **UI audit** is to check the correctness of these patterns and connect them to the UX. In that case, it can be said that UI audit is related to UX audit and complements it, giving a full picture of the user interface analysis.

The main benefits of conducting a UI audit are:

- improved usability,

- identified potential product design issues,

- help in understanding users and their needs.

UI audit process

The UI audit can be performed in the following steps:

1. **Defining objectives** - these should be based on the product experience analysis.

2. **User testing** - through surveys and tests.

3. **Analysis of user flow** - there are some tools for extracting behavioural insights.

4. **Selection of metrics to track** - right metrics are related to user flow analysis and defined goals and objectives.

5. **UI evaluation** - gauge and study the effect of chosen metrics and assess if they adhere to the common UI standards.

6. **UI audit report** - prepare documentation based on the results of the previous steps, which contains highlighted problems and recommendations to resolve them.

UX audit

UX audit definition

The **UX audit** is an evaluation of the user experience delivered by a digital product. Its objective is to collate data that identifies areas where users encounter difficulties, in order to generate recommendations that eliminate these issues.

As businesses and digital trends evolve, products can sometimes fail to meet their original business objectives as effectively as before. When faced with problems such as reduced sales, failure to retain users, or users overlooking key pieces of information, it can be challenging to determine the root cause. This is why a UX audit proves beneficial. It serves as a tool to identify which parts of the user experience work well and which don't, while also providing guidance on how to address product issues.

The success of a UX audit depends on its goals. However, it can help enhance the user experience by boosting conversion rates and sales, lowering customer acquisition costs, and improving customer retention, satisfaction, and loyalty.

UX audit process

The UX audit can be performed in the following steps:

1. **Highlighting business objectives** - the best way to clarify business goals is to interview stakeholders within the company.

2. **Focusing on users and their objectives** - getting to know users and their goals.

3. **Gathering data** - relevant product analytics and information such as heat-maps, click tracking and other interaction data.

4. **Reviewing the analytics** - analyze data.

5. **Evaluating usability heuristics** - it's the most widely used approach to identi-fying any design flaws in the user interface.

6. **UX evaluation** - evaluate the overall user experience, consider how well the interface supports user goals and how easy it is for users to complete tasks and identify any areas where the user experience could be improved.

7. **Creating the UX audit report** - preparing documentation and recom-mendations based on the results of the previous steps.

UI & UX audit diferences

An important aspect of usability assessment is to correctly distinguish audits from UI and UX perspectives.

Here are the differences between the three main audit fields:

Description	UI audit	UX audit
Analysis	User interface visual presentation analysis.	Analysis of the performance and usability of a product.
Identification	Identification of user flow obstacles.	Identification of functional obstacles.
Optimization	Design optimization.	Optimization of difficult points in the user's journey.

UI & UX audit report

The **UI and UX audit report** provides an analysis and summary of the approach, research, data, and insights used in the evaluation of the user interface and user experience.

The audit report should provide clear recommendations for action based on its findings. Each recommendation should explain how it can be implemented and how it will help achieve business goals.

When the audit report is prepared, it should include specific suggestions for action that come from the findings. It's important to explain how each suggestion can be put into practice and how it will benefit the business and users.

A good audit report is one that clearly communicates the objectives, scope, and findings of the audit engagement, thereby motivating readers to take the actions recommended by the audit.

As a communication tool, the report should be non-judgmental, written in a tone that speaks to the reader, not accusing.

The report should be short, concise and to the point. It should not have long descriptions and sublime adjectives. It is good practice to use short summaries and takeaways.

There is no prescribed template for an audit report. Metrics will change based on requirements and project specifications.

An example audit report may have the following structure:

I. Introduction

1. Audit objectives
2. Audit methodology
3. Summary of the audit

II. Audit process

1. UI audit
    a. UI check
    b. UI design and usability testing
    c. UI analysis
2. UX audit
    a. User research
    b. UX check
    c. Usability review
    d. Accessibility review
    e. UX analysis

III. Findings and recommendations

1. Findings

2. Advantages

3. Disadvantages

4. Aspects that need improvement

5. Ideas, suggested actions or recommendations

Analysis

General information about the Creaxess Configurator

Creaxess Configurator is a web-based application that allows companies to create customizable products - aluminium structures like access steps, stationary and mobile platforms, platform stairways and others. Creaxess helps to simplify the sales process by allowing customers to view and customize products online.

The application can be integrated with a website and enables customers to select different product features. At each stage, after selecting a feature, a visual preview of the product is displayed.

The Creaxess Configurator is designed to be flexible and can help customers make more informed purchase decisions.

In business, the main purpose of the configurator is to help companies streamline the sales process. Creaxess Configurator can help reduce errors and improve customer satisfaction by allowing them to configure their own products online. Companies can reduce the risk of errors and ensure that the final product meets customer expectations.

Overall, the Creaxess Configurator is a useful tool for both - end users and companies, which can help provide more personalized experience.
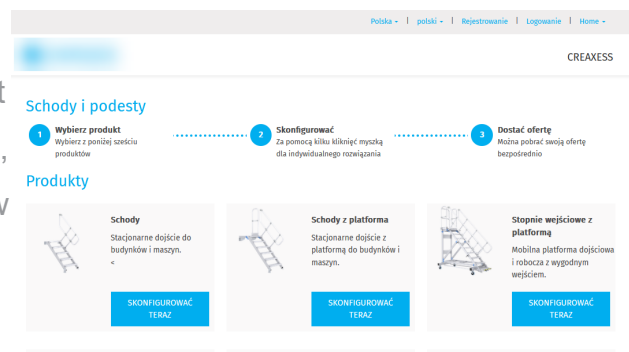
Creaxess Configurator UI & UX report template

Click on the image below to download the UI & UX report template.

Summary

An attracting content and a well-designed user interface have the power to influence the user's experience. Undoubtedly, they are associated with benefits in the business field. It is not always easy to show this relationship but one of the helpful tools may be the UI and UX audit. However, the audit involves a lot of engagement of users, employees and stakeholders. It is obvious that it entails considerable costs. In this case, it's important to paint the picture of how design and UX impact the business. This may not be clear until the impact of this is shown in the context of business objectives.

Conducting the UI and UX audit service for mature products that have already found their product-market fit and a defined business model is recommended. This is crucial because the UI and UX audit is supposed to be an optimization, so the company should be prepared for the impact of these optimizations.

In some cases, it doesn't pay to do a big audit of an old product that works. It is necessary to convince stakeholders that it is worth investing in its update.

An example can be a product - the Creaxess configurator, which has been operating for over 10 years and is not developed. It has many shortcomings, and it is mainly used by company employees. Not end business customers.

Improving a product requires assessing various important aspects through an initial audit. This audit can be based on key factors such as defining business goals, identifying areas of concern, evaluating visual elements, checking usability, and reviewing the customer journey.

Already at this stage, it is possible to determine whether an audit is needed at all and, for example, an external entity should be involved.

In the case of the Creaxess configurator, a minimalist version of the audit was used to communicate problems and opportunities. The customizable audit template was the best way to achieve this type of goal.