



Ruining the User Experience

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Defining User Experience



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User experience is a term used to describe the overall experience and satisfaction a user has when using a product or system. It most commonly refers to a combination of software and business topics, such as selling over the web, but it applies to any result of interaction design.

User Experience (UX) Design defines a sequence of screen presentations, user interactions, and system responses that meet user goals and tasks while satisfying business and functional requirements.

Typical outputs include

- Wireframes (screen blueprints or storyboards)
- Prototypes
- Written specifications that describe the design

Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Interactive voice response systems

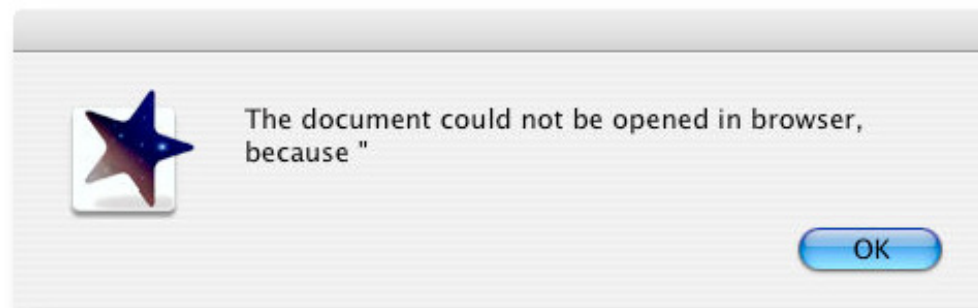
Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Error Messages



Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Error Messages



Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Error Messages



Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Small buttons or “live” areas



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Examples of poor User Experience



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Surprisingly, it's not difficult

- Non-scalable font sizes

Text as default; no size at all.

Text as default with base 100%.

Text as 12 pixels.

Text as 12 pixels with base 100%.

Text as 80%

Text as 80% with base 100%

Text as 0.8em.

Text as 0.8em with base 100%

Text as keyword small.

Root causes



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- Not knowing your audience
- Following trends
- **Not knowing the technology**

Enter DOM Scripting and Ajax



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- Idea was to create more responsive and “interactive” web applications
- Some examples:
 - Auto-generated glossaries
 - Footnote Links
 - Resorting tables
 - Inline Editing

JavaScript *can* ruin the User Experience



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- when it's required
 - lala.com
 - [Backpack](#)
- when it is unstable/gets in the way
 - [early Brown University Homepage](#)

Unobtrusive Scripting



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DHTML

```
<a href="#" onclick="newWin('path/to/somewhere');">link</a>
```

```
<a href="javascript:void(null);" onclick="newWin('path/to/somewhere');">link</a>
```

Unobtrusive Scripting



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DHTML (Advanced)

```
<a href="path/to/somewhere" onclick="return newWin(this.href) ;">link</a>
```

Unobtrusive Scripting



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DOM Scripting/Unobtrusive Scripting/Progressive Enhancement

```
function newWinSetup() {  
    // create a storage array  
    var arr = [];  
  
    // collect the links in the content block  
    var links = document.getElementsByTagName( 'a' );  
  
    // loop through each  
    for( var i=0; i<links.length; i++){  
        // collect the href  
        links[i].onclick = function() {  
            return newWin( this.href );  
        };  
    }  
}  
addEvent( window, 'load', newWinSetup );
```

Unobtrusive Scripting



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- Example 1: Style Sheet Switching
- Example 2: Floating Media Player
- Example 3: Whatever you like



- Progressive enhancement for Ajax
- Basically:



1. First, build an old-fashioned website that uses hyperlinks and forms to pass information to the server. The server returns whole new pages with each request.
2. Now, use JavaScript to intercept those links and form submissions and pass the information via **XMLHttpRequest** instead. You can then select which parts of the page need to be updated instead of updating the whole page.

Hijax – Offsite Link Alert



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Offsite Link in action

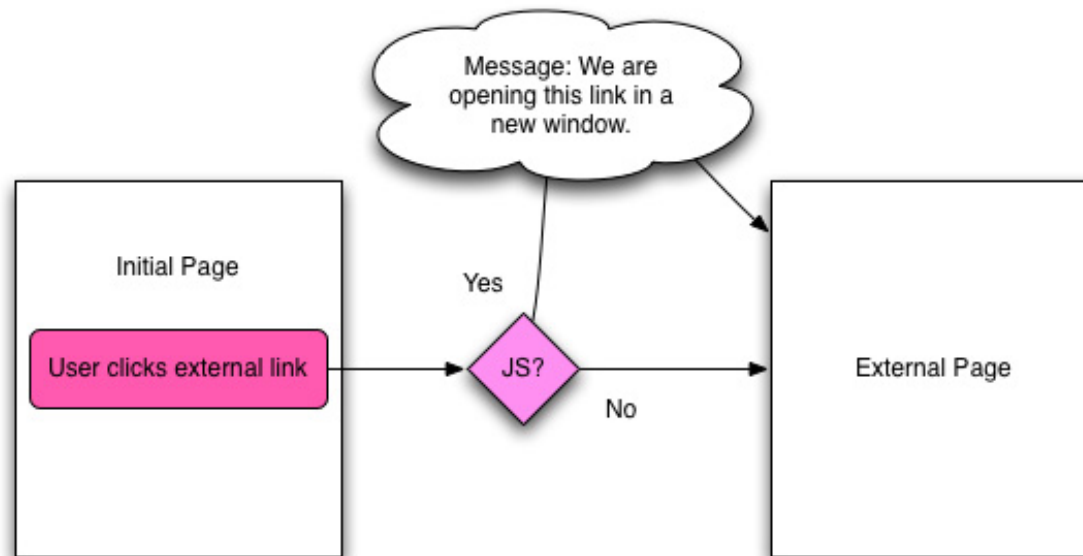
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Hijax – Offsite Link Alert (flow)



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Hijax – Product Page



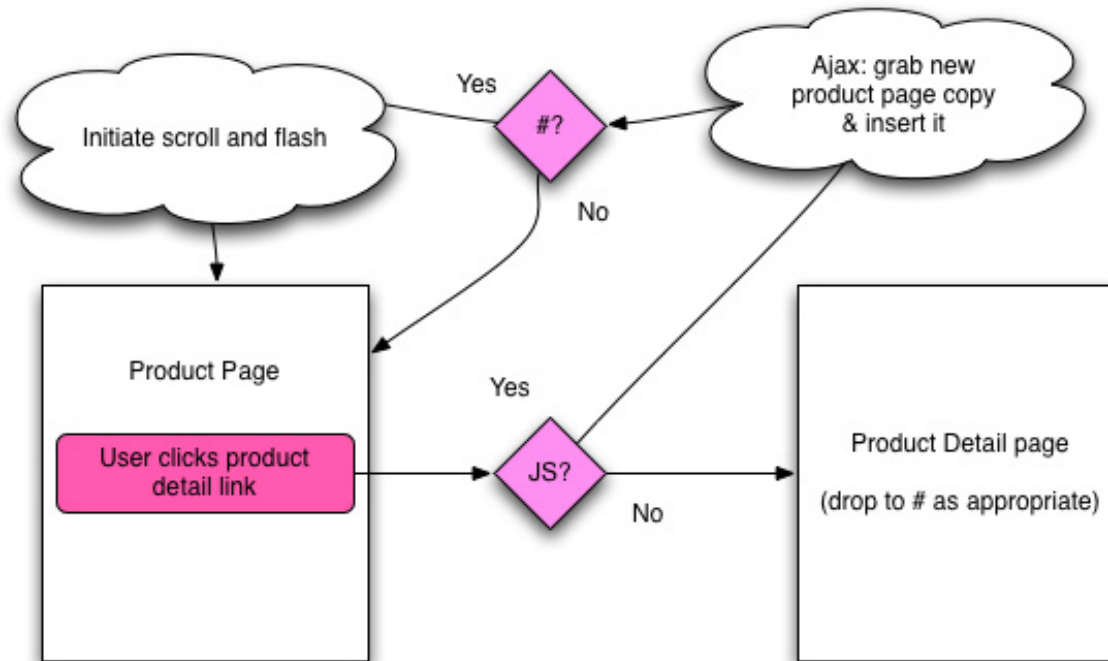
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Product Page in action

Hijax – Product Page (flow)



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Hijax – FAQ



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FAQ in action

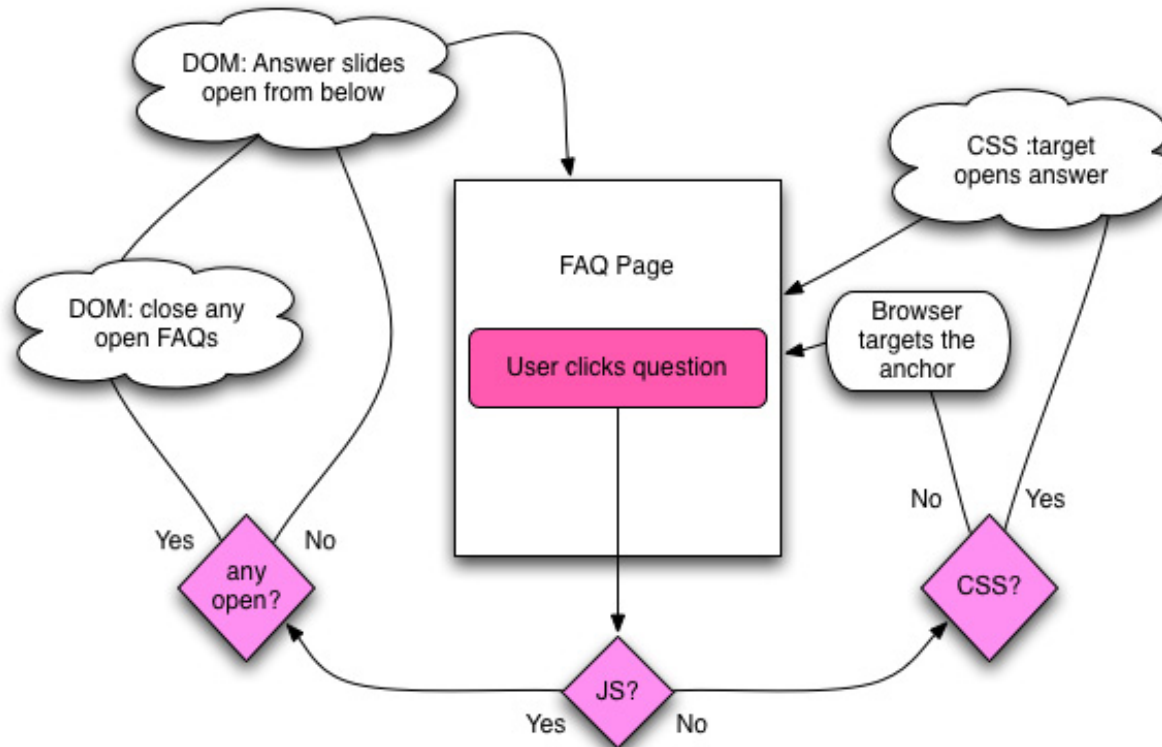
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Hijax – FAQ (flow)



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Common Sense



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- Experiment
- Test your ideas
- Solicit Feedback
- [Brown University Homepage revisited](#)

Think before you leap



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- Know your audience
- Don't get caught up in fads
- Learn the technology

Additional Resources



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- *DOM Scripting* by Jeremy Keith
- *The JavaScript Anthology* by James Edwards & Cameron Adams
- *DHTML Utopia* by Stuart Langridge
- *A List Apart*
- *Digital Web Magazine*
- The Web Standards Project (WaSP)