

Assessment

# Introduction to UX

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## USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. The product (MAPS.ME)

### What is the purpose of this product for the user?

**MAPS.ME** is a mobile application for Android, iOS and Blackberry that provides offline maps of the whole world with several functions to use.

### What are the functions and features the product offers to fulfil its purpose?

- Driving, walking, and cycle **navigation** with voice directions
- Search for **points of interest (POI)** or **other different categories**
- Booking accommodation (provided by [booking.com](https://www.booking.com))
- Saving locations as **Bookmarks**
- Share locations with other MAPS.ME users or social media
- **Traffic information** while using MAPS.ME online

### How does the user interact with the product (and the system)?

After downloading the application the user just needs to open the app and download the area, in which he/she is going to use it. Travellers or people who don't know the area will find useful and handy locations around them by swiping over the map or searching for specific locations in the search box.

## 1.2. The user (Traveller)

### How would you describe a typical user of this product?

MAPS.ME is mainly designed for travellers. The typical traveller could be in any age except the age of a very young child.

### What (be, do, motor) goals does this user have? What are relevant characteristics that influence how they use and experience the product? Explain how

The traveller is a person who wants to **feel independent and avoid feeling lost (BE-goals)**. The user travels by walking, cycling driving or public transport. This could be e.g. a backpacker, business traveller or touring cyclist.

The user might find him-/herself in a new environment, for example in a city on another continent where he doesn't know anything. He/she don't knows where to go and might feel a bit lost. The user now needs to know where he is and where he can find the locations he's looking for. He also needs to get the directions to this places **(DO-goals)**. No matter if he is travelling by car, walking, cycling or public transport.

The user already knows how to use his mobile device and maybe he also already used a map-service like google maps or at least he already saw something like that. The person is busy with adapting, managing and maybe exploring all those new impressions of the unknown place. So usually the user doesn't want to spend a lot of time learning a new system. He should immediately understand how MAPS.ME works and how to reach his DO-goals. He will find a hotel, an ATM, food and attractions by pressing the search button and the navigation will lead him with or without voice directions to those places **(MOTOR-goals)**.

### 1.3. The context

**In what situations (use DETAILS) would the user use this product? What characteristics of the context influence the user experience? Explain how**

*Example scenario:*

A backpacker is sitting in the bus before arriving in the country he wants to visit. There is still some time left and he is worried about where he's going to sleep after this long and tiring journey. There is no internet-reception, but no problem for the backpacker, cause he already managed to get the offline maps of MAPS.ME. He can search for accommodations in the area, which he will reach soon. Luckily there are a few different hotels close to the bus station. He feels comfortable and doesn't need to worry about a bed for tonight anymore.

In the bus, a nice local told him about a cosy cafe in the city. He wanted to save the place somehow, cause it's not easy to remember the long description. He never used the bookmark function of the app before. Just by clicking on one place on the map he saw that he can add a bookmark. The user is pretty happy, because he knows where he will drink a good cafe next morning.

After reaching the city and leaving the bus late in the evening the backpacker could easily get to his hotel, cause he just had to start the navigation in MAPS.ME. He avoided pain like walking around in the empty streets while he's very tired of that long journey in the bus.

The hotel complied with the user-ratings of the MAPS.ME app, so the backpacker feels happy and is looking forward for the cosy cafe which he will visit on the next morning.

## 2. Critiquing Usefulness

### 2.1. Usefulness of MAPS.ME

**How well does the product fulfil its purpose? Explain your rating referring to the user needs.**

MAPS.ME helps the user to **avoid psychological and physical pain**, as his journey/ journey planning becomes much easier. He doesn't need to worry about getting lost without internet-reception. He can find all those things that he otherwise has to organise in another way just by using this mobile application.



MAPS.ME fits the needs of the user very well. It saves him organising a few different things.

**In what situation is the product most useful for the user? Explain**

He doesn't need to buy and carry paper maps which provide this kind of information. He doesn't need to have internet-reception to use other mobile map-services like google maps. He will always know the direction and never feel lost, so a lot of stress and pain is avoided.

The user avoids asking around people for directions or locations, which might be helpful if he is e.g. in a hurry, if there are no people close by, if people can not help, or also if he is just lazy.

So, MAPS.ME fulfils the DO-goals very well.

## 3. Critiquing Usability

### 3.1. Ease-of-use

#### How do you explain this usability factor (in general) to others?

Ease-of-use describes how effortlessly the user can understand and operate a product or service.

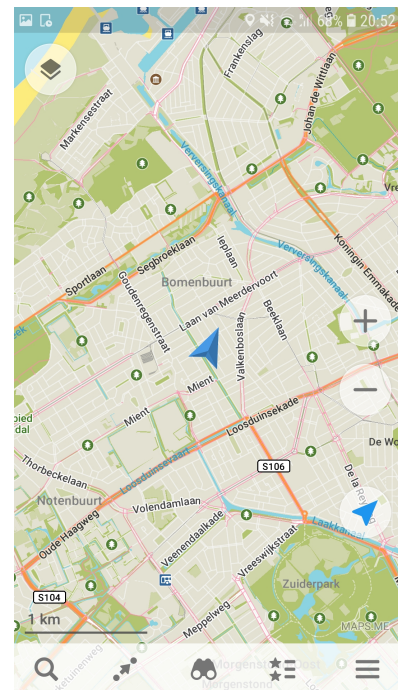
#### How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics



In general, the operation of this application is pretty intuitive and easy.

On this screenshot, you can see the main screen of the application. It is a minimalistic design, so the user is not overwhelmed by thousands of functions and buttons. Anyways, most of the functions can directly be initiated from this main screen. The user can directly search for locations with the search button, start a navigation with the navigation button, discover the area with the binoculars button, check his bookmarks and go to the menu for changing settings and the rest of the functions. So, the findability of the functions is very good. This makes it easy for the user to fulfil his MOTOR-goals.

The reason why MAPS.ME did not get 5 stars is that some functions are still “hidden”. For example, if the user wants to add a new place to the map (for sharing with other users), he first has to press the menu button. This is not really self explanatory.



### 3.2. Efficiency

#### How do you explain this usability factor (in general) to others?

Efficiency is about how much resources the users need to invest to use a product after they learned how to use it.

#### How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics



MAPS.ME scores with 4 stars in this factor, because the user does almost not waste any time while using it. Most of the functions go straight to the point, there is no interruption or annoying waiting time, when using the navigation or looking for locations (MOTOR-goals). Anyways, there is some room for improvement. For example, if the user wants to know which offline maps he already downloaded, he

has to go to the menu, where he will get a written list of the downloaded country's/ areas. I think it would be more efficient if the user could see the downloaded country's as coloured areas when zooming out on the map screen.

### 3.3. Learnability

#### How do you explain this usability factor (in general) to others?

Learnability, in general, is the quality of how easily and quickly a user can learn and understand a system.

#### How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics



MAPS.ME gets 4 stars in this factor, because new users can easily learn how to use it. For example, if a new user wants to use the navigation, he will see the navigation button on the bottom of the main screen. After clicking on it the user gets guided through the process. Apart from that, the user has to learn most other functions on his own. Most users are probably familiar (existing mental models) with this kind of functions.

After all, I think it would still be better, if the user would get a quick interactive tutorial about the functions, when starting the application the first time.

## 4. Critiquing Engagement

### 4.1. Flow

#### How do you explain this engagement factor (in general) to others?

The “flow”-factor of a product indicates, if the user can easily and smoothly follow a seamless path of interactions.

#### How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics



The user can easily and smoothly follow a seamless path of interactions, because the order of the sequences is logical and the user has control over the process. For example, when the user is looking for an ATM, he presses the search button, then he can choose the category and then view this category on the map. The user can still change his mind during the process and look for something else (Control-feeling).

### 4.2. Aesthetics

#### How do you explain this engagement factor (in general) to others?

Well-designed aesthetics means, that a product appeals to the user's senses and is considered to be attractive.

**How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics**



The application has a recognisable, consistent and qualitative design. The meaning of all used icons is clear. The app also uses general design patterns of navigation and map-services. For example, the plus/minus icon for zooming in/out the map. The style is consistent because the same colours, fonts and tones are used in every part of the application.

### 4.3. Adaptivity

**How do you explain this engagement factor (in general) to others?**

This factor describes, if a product is aware of the user, the situation and the context and changes its behaviour to fit the user needs.

**How do you rate your product on this factor? Explain your rating using product, user and context characteristics**



The application always has to adjust to the user. For example, when using the navigation function in the night, the app automatically turns on the night-mode. It also responds quickly to user-“mistakes”, for example, when the user takes the wrong road when navigating. Anyways, there are some small issues, for example, when the user uses cycling or walking navigation, it would be handy to show the current altitude or at least an option to show the altitude.

## 5. Critiquing Meaning

### 5.1. Autonomy

**Why does this factor fit this product (for the intended user group)?**

“Autonomy” fits with MAPS.ME, because the BE-goal of a typical MAPS.ME user is to feel independent. —> Autonomy is about feeling independent and experiencing freedom or self-actualising.

**How does this product cause the user to experience this meaning?**

The user does not need to carry paper maps or other information sources, as he can always check on MAPS.ME where to find accommodation, an ATM, grocery stores and more. The user doesn't need to ask around for the way, he does not depend on other people or internet reception.

**How might this product and its meaning impact the user's life?**

This makes the life of a traveller much easier. It saves time and effort. The user also doesn't need to worry about getting and feeling lost. Instead of looking for the way or asking around where the closest accommodation is, the user can do other things. MAPS.ME basically improves the whole travel experience.



## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1. Overall quality of the User Experience

#### **Do you think your product is usable to the user? Why / why not?**

The **usability** is good, but there is some room for improvement. Some details like an interactive tutorial to improve the learnability and a better findability of some small functions would be useful to improve ease-of-use and efficiency.

#### **Do you think your product is engaging to the user? Why / why not?**

The product is **engaging** to the user, because it has a good flow, nice aesthetics and a solid adaptivity. The adaptivity only lacks a little bit, because it could adapt better to users which use the walking and cycling navigation.

#### **Do you think your product is meaningful to the user? Why / why not?**

MAPS.ME is definitely **meaningful** to the user. The user experiences independence and feels autonomous. The application might improve the whole travel experience of a user and has a big impact on the daily life of a traveller.

#### **What is your overall judgement of the UX quality of your product and the experience it offers the user?**

The overall quality of the User Experience of MAPS.ME is quite good. I give it a 4.5/5 rating

### 6.2. Great UX design(ers)

#### **What is good UX design to you?**

In my opinion, **good User Experience Design** needs to be holistic. It is about the whole process of experiencing a product and the context always needs to be taken into account. The whole design focuses on the users BE, DO and MOTOR-goals. A product with good UX design is useful, usable, engaging and meaningful. Those things can only be reached if the design decisions were based on the user's previous experience, actual behaviour, perception and expectations. Furthermore, the design needs to be intuitive and the interactions should feel natural to the user.

#### **What do you think it takes to be a great UX designer?**

I think a **great User Experience Designer** needs to understand how people interact with technology and how this technology is going to help the user. A great UX designer knows the user, because he/she did research or used research data to know the characteristics of the user. A great UX designer always applies a design process to get the best possible solution. Furthermore, a great UX designer has a creative mind and understands that User Experience is holistic. The designer does not only look at the interface, the visuals, or any other single things, because he/she needs to pay attention to all the aspects of a holistic experience. Also, a great UX designer needs some general soft skills like good communication skills, curiosity, ability to empathise and active collaboration.



## 7. Literature

- Lecture slides of “Introduction to UX” course of 2018
- <https://maps.me>
- <https://blog.prototypr.io/what-is-user-experience-what-makes-a-good-ux-design-b404bb933bd0>
- <https://uxdesign.cc/what-makes-a-good-ux-designer-d6d26dc777bc>