

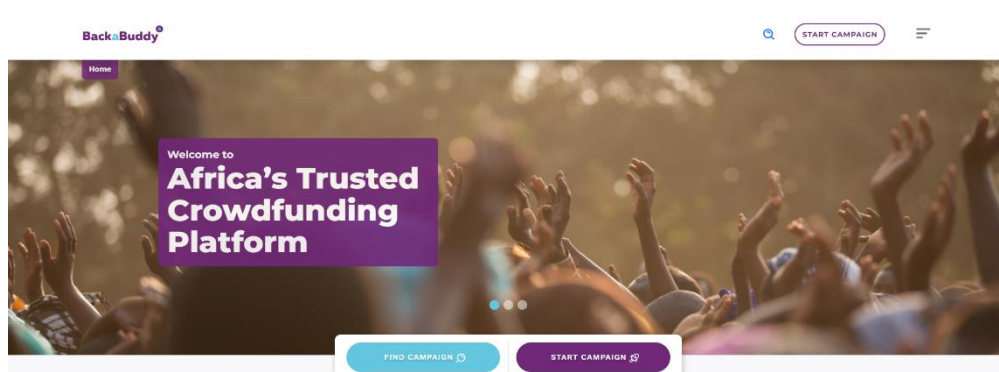
The Human-Centered Approach to UI/UX: Designing with Empathy and Purpose.

The world of web design has always captivated my interest, I found it compelling how the user interface and user experience always had more than meets the eye behind its design. The pivotal role each play in shaping how a person interacts with the platform shows how even though it is the simplest thing as choosing a colour, it can make or break how effective the website can be at conveying what the company/person wants their consumer to feel. The following analysis will focus on investigating UI, UX and how the ethical considerations must be addressed within their respective fields, using the context of South African crowdfunding website backabuddy.co.za.

Balancing Aesthetics and Functionality

User Interface and User Experience go hand in hand in creating intuitive, engaging experiences for the users. When exploring UI, the visual elements of the website take the forefront of the conversation. The layout has a purposeful design which include, typography, menus, buttons, colours all those intricate details that you as a user take for granted has thought and effort put behind it to match the overall aesthetic. While UX encompasses the overall experience the user undergoes, there is still a derivative for the satisfaction of the interaction with the product or service. It is how the user feels when they open your website , when they click a button does it do what they expect , does the website feel like how they expect it to feel , if so why?

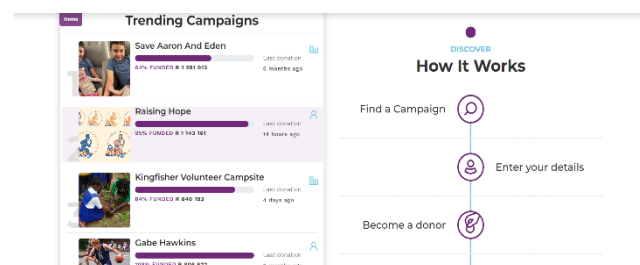
Well it all comes down to the overarching narrative of the interaction design , the one and only place a company has one on one time with their consumer is on the website as it speaks directly to the consumer , they get to put what they want you to see , they get to make you feel how they want you to feel. Over the years this technology and this process has been developed and deployed, but over the years a higher emphasis has been put on it being done in a responsible manner (Stevens, E. 2022), whereby prioritizing the user's well-being, privacy and being inclusive has been pushed as a must for all websites.



Navigating the Ethics of UI

Taking a look at the chosen website for the analysis backabuddy.co.za we can explore a couple different avenues in its UI and UX design. Initially when you enter the website the first two buttons you see are *find a campaign* or *start a campaign*. This is purposefully done with the focus obviously being the facilitation of crowdfunding for various causes. The homepage engages you with these causes even if you just pass by the website you are met with compelling stories and impactful campaigns wherein you don't feel like you are there to give money away, it feels more like you are there to help make the world a better place even by just giving the campaign attention. The buttons placed as a call to action to encourage the user interaction with the use of colours that are not only brand recognisable but also inviting and comforting that foster that sense of community and trust. The layout is clean, organised and does not throw unwanted information at you, it features campaign which are prominent and there are search functionalities to further expand the reach of the user if they are feeling generous.

One of the main features on Back a Buddy which it excels at is providing detailed information about each campaign in a manner that is positive for the beneficiary and the overall fundraising. It includes the purpose of the fundraising, the persons personal story and just what it means to having to ask for help in this sense. This is where the website is compelling in its ethical interaction design, this format, this transparency is what builds trust amongst users and helps them to make informed decisions about which causes to support. Additionally, the website does do safety check to make sure there are no fraud fundraisers which are taking advantage of good-natured people while doing its main job of maintaining the social hierarchy they have the power to control.



When taking this into account the privacy of the person involved and all those donating is important, they highly advised that you as a beneficiary put as much information about yourself as possible but they don't force that, you as a donor can also choose the amount, alias (anonymous or not) and a message to them, this safeguards sensitive information while also creating a barriers for trust worthy interactions. Additionally, the use of visual cues like progress bars and donation counters, which provide real time feedback to donor which helps to enhance the platforms engagement and once again transparency.

Designing for Good: Ethical Principles in UX

When you think of the word user experience the main offshoot from that for me is user-centric, empowering both donors and campaigners is the focus. The interface has been designed so that even if it is your first time there it is so simplistic, and the clarity is so intuitive its hard to get lost. They promote being there and reading up on more than one cause as they want you to feel like you are in a community rather than a website. If you create an account, it feeds into this even more with personalized recommendations for cause which you might be interested in based of your previous searches or donations.

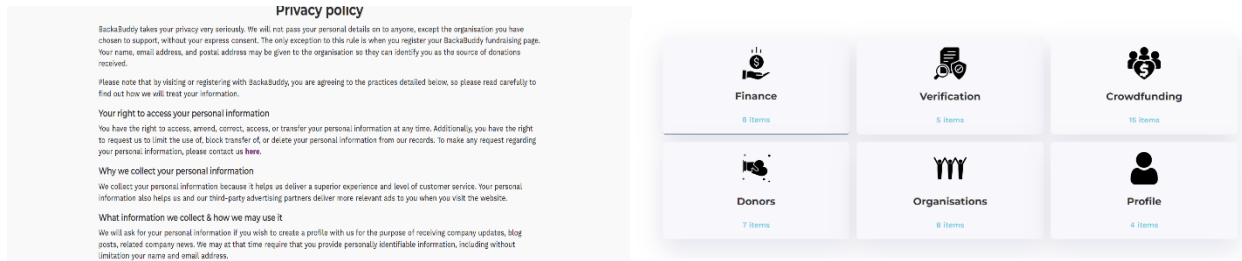
Additionally, they build on the ability to access the community with built in social sharing features which add to the collective impact that they are trying to push. As I have been preaching and repeating this entire time , but I have done so because it is so integral to how Back A Buddy keeps its image they way it does is through inclusivity , no matter who you're , where you come from , your cause , you are welcome. UX design encompass inclusivity and user empowerment. Back A Buddy ensures that their website is accessible to all those, by implementing features like text resizing for the visually impaired, in tandem with alt text for images. Moreover it provides tools for storytelling and engagement with supporters like spell checks , AI writers , and AI quality checks for your campaign which will tell you if people are more or less likely to donate due to machine pattern learning , amplifying the user experience through responsible measures taken to keep these in mind.

Integrity by Design: Navigating Ethical Frontiers"

I have briefly focused on ethical considerations in UI and UX, but it is a whole topic within itself breaking it down Back A Buddy upholds an ethical standard in several key areas, data privacy and security, user empowerment, Inclusivity.

- Firstly, the platform has its user's data and security at the forefront of its responsibilities, with strict and clear policies which are effectively communicated to the user which promises safe handling of their personal information. This transparency and understanding that information is important to its users builds a confidence and trust among doners and encourages them to return to the platform.
- Secondly, user empowerment is a main focus on a lot of websites as it aligns with a lot of the ethical principles inherited from UX design. By provided tools and support that are needed to effectively communicate the causes, it empowers individuals and organizations to the best of their ability to make a positive difference in their communities.

- Inclusivity is another prominent consideration address on the platform. The website highlights a diverse range of causes and beneficiaries which ensures a range of representation and enables doners and campaigners from various backgrounds, and cultures, races, ages, and genders to provide values which can resonate in a meaningful and compelling manner.



Personal Thoughts

Taking in the notes on Geyer, H. (2024) "Interaction Design - IA, UI and UX". It is my firm belief that if a company wants you to believe something about them, they can quite easily and effectively communicate this through this UI and UX design. As humans, we have been conditioned to feel certain ways about certain design principles, and it is inherently clear that companies have no obligation not to use that to compel us to use their platform. At its core, interactive design has no reason to be ethical, but it has to be due to the world that we live in where taking advantage of people, irrespective of who they are, seems to be the only way to get ahead in life. I wholeheartedly disagree with this. I believe that if there was even just a single ounce of ethical blood left in the online world, the internet wouldn't be such a bad place, but the unfortunate reality is that is not the world we live in, but one we have to endure.

Conclusion

Overall, this analysis emphasizes the relevance of ethical considerations in Backabuddy's UI/UX design, as it implements such principles as transparency, data privacy, user empowerment, inclusivity, and community. This manner of design not only improves the users' experience but also aims to forward a more responsible and effective direction regarding UI/UX design in digital engagement with the activism and crowdfunding spheres. Ethical interaction benefits the users, the campaigners, and the platform's overall credibility, thus ensuring the continuity of support for the important cases for the South African community.

References

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2. Geyer, H. (2024) "Interaction Design - IA, UI and UX".
3. Stevens, E. (2022) "What is UI design? A complete introductory guide".
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