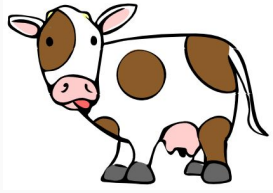# 1.2 History of UX Design

Vicky Hoang

Evolution of Currency

From a usability standpoint

Livestock, Bartering

Coins

Credit Cards, Mobile Banking, Electronic Funds, Digital Wallets, Cryptocurrency

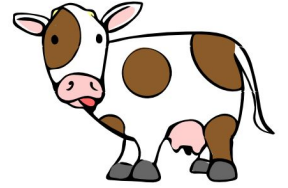| BEGINNING | 1100 BC | 600 BC | 900 | 1946+ |

Small Tools

Paper Money

Livestock, Bartering

Early social and cultural development was dependent on bartering. Typical commodities were grain or livestock.

The value of a service or product (I'll trade you this cow if you help me build a house) was determined by the parties involved.

From a usability standpoint, these transactions were time consuming and inefficient. If the parties didn't agree the trade was fair, then they would have to go find someone else.

Tools, Replicas, Small Goods

In China, people began using tools and weapons as a form of currency at around 1100 BC. Eventually this practice shifted to using smaller bronze-made replicas of the tools such as knives, daggers, or spades.

This shift was due to usability. It was much more practical to carry smaller replicas of tools to exchange for goods.

Coins

From the previously mentioned small replicas of goods that China used to trade, the progression led to coins. However it was Lydia that minted the first coins in 600 BC.

At first, the coins were spade shaped but then transitioned to rounded coins with a square hole in the middle.

The holes served a utility purpose: they were used to string together the coins.

From a UX perspective, it makes sense that rounded coins would be easier to stack and carry around as opposed to tools and different shaped coins.

Paper Currency

Around the 9th century, the Chinese moved from coins to paper money.

This shift in design was once again to improve usability and user experience. Paper was easier to transport. It was thinner, stacked nicely, and weighless.

As opposed to coins being made of bronze, silver, gold or other raw material, paper was easily mass produced and costed almost nothing.

The tricky part was regulation and inflation.

Today's Advancements...
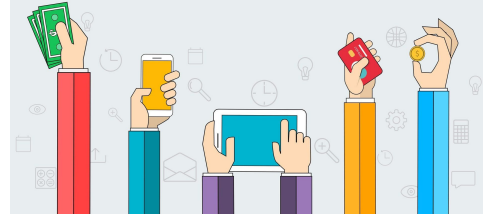
The first credit card was invented in 1946. From a usability standpoint, this invention was revolutionary. Not having to carry cash or valuables on you at all times but being able to keep your entire wealth at your fingertips is a huge design improvement for the process of using money.

Technology takes it even further and constantly strives to improve user experience. Today we have electronic payments such as Paypal or Venmo that can be used to purchase or transfer money no matter how far the distance.

Mobile banking and digital wallets (Samsung Pay, Chase Pay, Apple Pay...) has made strides in user experience by incorporating things such as card-free ATM withdraw, or being able to keep your cards in your digital wallet on your phone and using the NFC chip to pay. This has personally saved me countless times when I forget my wallet at home.

In 2009 the invention of bitcoin, the first decentralized cryptocurrency has paved the way to yet another form of currency and method of transaction.

Thoughts

Currency/exchange of goods/financial transactions have been around since the beginning of civilization. Its evolution has come about solely to improve user experience.

Even in today's market when the stability of currencies has settled, companies are constantly designing new innovative ways that would make transactions easier. Not only are companies focusing on intuitiveness and usefulness, but also advancements in security and protection as well.

It's interesting to see UX Design in action, especially on such a global scale!

Resources

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https://www.nbbmuseum.be/en/2007/09/chinese-invention.htm

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