UXPin

2020
DESIGN
TRENDS

2020

UXPin

2020 DESIGN TRENDS

UXPin

All-in-one design and prototyping tool

UXPin has everything you need to create prototypes that look and work like the end product. No more switching between a bunch of tools to take your design from static to interactive. Try for free.

Create the real experience

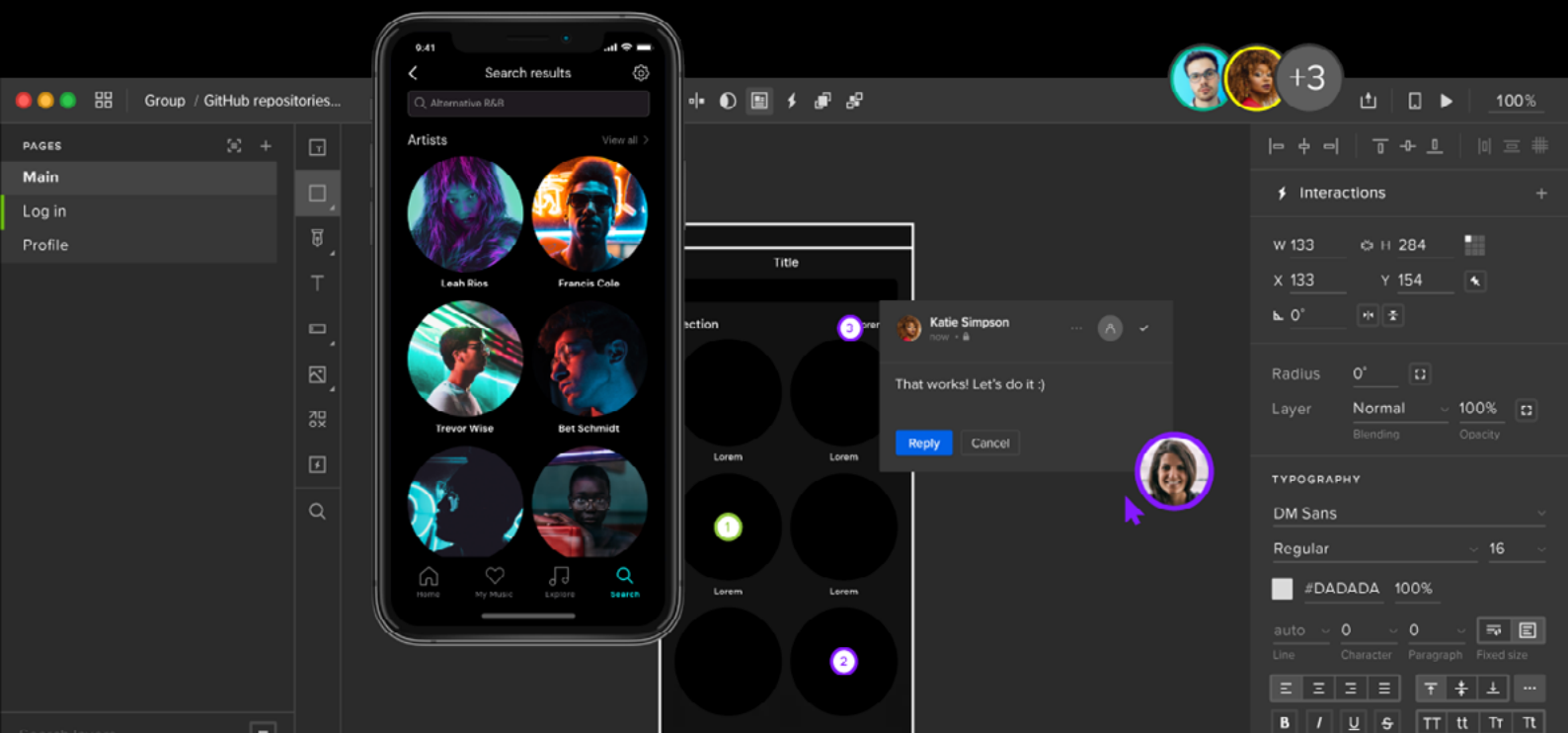Design life-like prototypes down to the last tiny detail using interactions, variables, or states.

Keep your team in the loop

Give everyone a truly interactive experience to help them understand how the product works.

Gather feedback and act on it

Test your prototypes with users and think through the product to a much greater degree.

INDEX

Interviews have been conducted
by Katarzyna Kempa.

GRACE
BREWER

- Designing healthcare software apps

- Minimalism versus maximalism in UX design

- Business-oriented design: how design can fit into the company business strategy

- Design leadership

01

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends for UXPin. We're here to talk a little bit about design trends for 2020. First of all, please tell us a bit about yourself.**

Grace Brewer   Hello, my name is Grace Brewer. I lead a small design team at a medium-sized healthcare IT company that's based out of Kansas City. Our team just started about four years ago. It's been really exciting to see the company become more design mature. We utilize UXPin and we're very big fans. We've spoken on behalf of it before because we find the tool to be really user-friendly and extremely powerful for what we need to do, particularly for designing healthcare software.

And then as far as usability testing we use some other tools for tracking metrics which is really important for what our team does, including validating moderated user testing. In our field it can be really hard to get face-to-face with our users since we're working with those in healthcare.

Because you work for the healthcare industry, I would like to ask you how the practice of inclusive design and accessibility will grow in 2020 in your opinion. Is this trend important to you?

Yes, definitely. I think being in healthcare software we need to think about that more so than other sectors. But the great thing about that trend is that we're beginning to understand how it applies to so many different types of technology. Overall, designers have more of an eye

on it, even for things that we might not have necessarily associated with accessibility. So it's important for us, especially because we get checked for whether we're meeting regulatory standards. It's been top of mind for us for quite a few years now. But I do think it's just going to become more and more common amongst those in other sectors as well, which is really exciting.
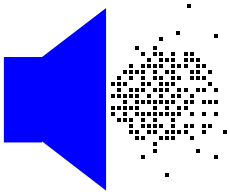
I read something a couple of days that had me thinking, which said, "when is the time companies will measure how many disabled people are using their app?" Because if only one person uses your app, you should be thinking about accessibility, right?

Yes. I think it goes beyond a change in mindset. If you go into it with the mentality that we have to account for 20 people who maybe have this sort of disability, versus 20 people who are different in another way, then you're always going to end up kind of excluding someone or just not doing it quite "right". It's more than just being creative in the way that you actually build your software – you need to allow for people who have different needs to be able to actually use it effectively. It's not necessarily, "Here's this group of people and here's this group of people." You can think of it in a more inclusive way overall, how to help people who might have different backgrounds – and not just disabilities. Of course, there are many things that can lead to design changes and approaching software differently. We focus on all the ways we can think of it in a more holistic way.

Do you think that 2020 is going to be the year that people are going to think holistically about that?

Goodness, it's so hard to say because every company moves at a different speed. If you look at today, there are so many different companies that are on different levels. So, like anything, it'll take time for different groups. Some will move more quickly towards that than others, but hopefully 2020 will be the year that it gets more traction.

More designers are advocating for accessibility, so I think the trend is going to be pretty huge in 2020. My next question to you would be: minimalism or maximalism? I can see that there are two versions of design and two sides of the trend. Which party would you consider yourself in?

I don't know. Once again, I think it's kind of hard to say because it just depends on the market you're in. Some types of software or some types of designers can get away with a little bit more. For healthcare, we don't get to try as many of the hot new trends because they move in and out very quickly, and healthcare software would not be able to keep up with that. But also, we are utili-ty-focused – people come into our software needing to get a job done.

For us, we are a little bit more on the side of minimalism. The more straightforward that we can make it, that's us

doing our jobs well. We're not trying to compete in a market where we're convincing people to download our app versus another app. We know that our users typically don't have a choice in the matter, because they're the ones who work at the hospital. The hospital is the one buying the software, but we want to make sure that the employees also enjoy the experience. So the simpler we can make it for them is usually the route that we have to take.

So it's not whether it sparks joy like Marie Kondo said, but it's about usability, right?

Yes, exactly. And to that point, for those who have more consumer-facing apps, it can be very joyous and very happy-inducing for users to actually see a minimalist design sometimes. But there's always a place for both routes.

Exactly. So my next question to you would be, I assumed that you are aware that Pantone said that Classic Blue is the 2020 color, but do you think that there will be another color that would be the new black of 2020?

I don't know. It's always hard to compete with blue. Obviously, if you look at the amount of logos that are blue, it is always something that's very accessible to a lot of people. There's a lot of psychology behind that. So I don't have any particular [color] in mind, but you know there's always something that comes out of left field. Obviously

when Material Design happened, nobody expected that pink was going to be the hot new thing.

There's this whole psychology of colors, right? And blue is connected with the intellectual sphere, etc. So I think that's why blue is connected with the tech industry. But as you said, you never know. What is your favorite emerging trend in your field of design and industry? Meaning healthcare, obviously, but also you are a UX designer. So please share anything that pops into your mind that would be what you are most excited to watch for in 2020.
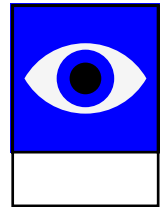
"

Something that I find particularly exciting is the fact that the lines between business and design are becoming a little bit fuzzy but in a very good way.

In recent years there's been a lot of teaching business leaders about design. There's been design thinking and trying to democratize design and make it more accessible to people. But I'm really excited for a little bit going the other way, with designers getting more involved with business decisions and understanding a little bit more of that side. It aligns with my passions because I also find the way that businesses are run to be very interesting.

But I do think it is becoming more prevalent because for so many years now, as designers, we've said, "We really want a seat at the table." That's a very common phrase. And we need to make sure that once we do get that seat at the table, we really understand what that means and switch from this mindset of, "Okay, what does the design team need?"

Because for so long we were really having to fight for just getting resources on design teams, but we need to switch that mentality to what the business needs and how can the design team help.

Usually designers are considered artistic souls who wouldn't know anything about business. And there are strict rules, how to design stuff, especially apps, and how to bring business value.

I completely agree. For so many years it was really easy to write us off as creative idealists. There's been a lot of trends that helped that. Big data and more focus on user research has helped people understand that we're not just making these decisions because we think they look pretty. But I think the next step will be us being able to speak the language as far as how businesses are run so that we can also understand how what we're doing fits into a bigger business strategy.

So you think design thinking is one of the ways to develop this kind of thinking in the whole company?

Yes, I think so. It's funny – for the past few weeks my team has been doing weekly UX research time for continued learning. And for the past several weeks, I've just been reading design-thinking articles – ones that are for design thinking and ones that are against design thinking. And it's really interesting because there are definitely arguments on both sides of the spectrum. Like anything, it can be used incorrectly and it can be used to say [a company is] really design mature, when really they aren't.

But there are also times where it can really help spread the word and help people understand that we need to not just make decisions to make decisions. We need to validate these assumptions. We need to iterate. So, like anything, of course there's a good and a bad way to apply it, but I think generally helping people better understand design and understand the value that it provides is a good thing.

I agree completely. So my last question is what are your professional goals for 2020? Are you following some kind of trend or going against it? What are your new year's resolutions?

I have a passion for the way businesses are run. So I think mine is learning more of the business side. I already listen to some business podcasts, but I think within my own company, especially now that I lead a team, I want to start being a little bit more proactive of going after those business conversations and trying to have more

understanding, and really making it known throughout the company. I want them to know that I want to listen in for things so that I can learn more about it.

I'm also very excited to see what UXPin has to offer because when you guys release a new feature, my team always says, "Did you see what they did? Did you see how it does this?" We always find that to be a really great part of our year as well.

Work faster with built-in libraries

Use one of the ready-to-use libraries, such as iOS, Material Design or Bootstrap full of interactive elements, colors, text styles, and icons.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. TRY FOR FREE.

UXPin

BENJAMIN
HERSH

- Device-dependent design

- Educational resources for
  learning designers

- New jobs in the design industry

- Cultural differences in designing on
  different sides of the planet

02

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends. Today I'm joined by Benjamin Hersh. Ben, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and your little friend there?**

(Ben is holding a small dog.)

Benjamin Hersh   I'm Ben, a Product Design lead at Dropbox. [The dog] is my associate creative director. I've been at Dropbox for a while now. Previously, I was a designer at Medium. Before that, I was designing karaoke apps and briefly worked at a zoo. It all comes together.

So we will talk a little bit about design trends for 2020. I'd like to hear your opinions about a few things. And first thing I would like to ask you is, what do you think about this discussion on AI in design, because I'm hearing about bridges being designed by AI, and they're 3D printed and put on rivers. That kind of scares me, but also really inspires me. What would you say?

I feel like AI and design is nothing new. I'm definitely not an AI expert, so I can't speak to the developments on that end. But in tech we've been using AI and machine learning for a long time, usually for purposes that are not entirely in service of the user − making products super addictive or hard to put down, and making feed suck up your attention. One of the things that's exciting now is that we're starting to see uses for these tools that are much more aligned with human needs. I'm thinking about some of the stuff that Dropbox is doing, because

that's very top of mind. We're doing things like making it much easier to stay focused and stay in flow when you're working. Meaning, using tools to make sure that your workspace knows which documents you're going to need when you're sending someone a bunch of stuff at the end of the call, or just being able to streamline a lot of very small processes to make it easier for you to actually pay attention to things.

And I'm really excited by the developments in AI that make it much, much easier for us to make the design a lot more seamless and disappear. And to address the very basic human need to feel effective in what you do, to feel in control of your work, and to connect with other people. I think it's exciting when AI facilitates these basic things that are ultimately the reason why anyone uses the tools that we make. So that's the stuff that I'm looking forward to seeing develop.

So do you see it just as a tool, and not nothing to get worried about?

Not yet. I'm sure that we'll get there. Right now, we're seeing things that make tools better, make them smarter – there might be a point in time when it gets out of control. And that's terrifying. I don't know how far away we are from that. But it also has a lot of upsides, and there's a lot of opportunity to use it responsibly and intelligently and to enhance design instead of seeming like it's in conflict with human
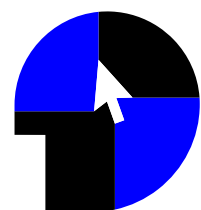
design, which I think sometimes happens in press coverage. It seems like a bridge is designed by either a human or a robot, and there's no middle ground. But the truth is that there are humans who are also working on [the design] and guiding the AI. And AI can help find creative patterns that humans may not be able to see. So, I see a lot of opportunities for collaboration with robots.

As long as we are the ones who hold the cards.

Yes. I was just thinking about Neuralink, the company that Elon Musk is putting together for brain-computer interfaces, where there can be very real integration between AI and human minds. And that certainly has its own scary science fiction-like scenarios. You can imagine a situation where computers can control our minds directly. But there's also a lot of opportunity for really interesting design work and what it would be like if the interface was literally just, you think something and the tool does what you want. It would be completely subconscious and seamless. That's kind of the holy grail for interaction design. I'm excited by the opportunities ahead.

Now we are starting talking about voice commands, or the UI design for voice directors like technology, but I think that's the next step for mind-directed stuff. But here's another question – a couple years ago, everybody was about making everything mobile first. Now it's about making everything voice first. In a couple of years, maybe the focus will be AI first. What

do you think is the brand's response to the demand of device-dependent design?

One of the things that I've been observing from where I stand is how even though a lot of things on the surface have changed as the tools we use change, a lot also hasn't changed. A lot of the core patterns and directions we use are the same as they've always been. I'm thinking about the basic stuff like URLs on websites and buttons—an interface—a thing that you press. With voice interfaces, you don't have that. But there's a lot of patterns that we carry with us through all the different iterations and form factors.
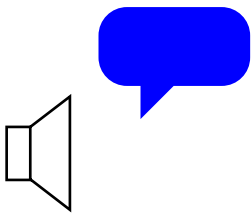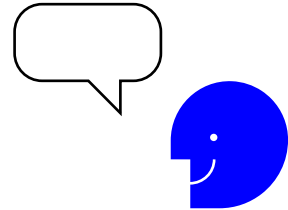
As an extreme example, I'm wearing a watch where the hour hand goes around [clockwise]. If you trace that design pattern back, it goes 500 years back to when we thought that the sun was moving around the Earth – we still have that exact same pattern in Apple watches. So, even as the tools we're using become a lot more powerful or distributed, or integrate with us in different ways, a lot of the design elements actually stay the same. And I think that's because there's more of a need for familiarity. So, with voice interfaces, we're supposed to talk to them like we talked to normal people. That's as basic and familiar as an interaction can be. That's the way we grew up interacting with the world. I see more continuity with the way things have always been done, as these tools enable us to let a lot of these interfaces sink back into the background

or become more seamlessly part of our everyday lives. I see the role of design, in many ways, keeping it super grounded in the familiar, and making sure that all these new experiences are packaged in a way that feels very old and tangible. In a way that any regular person can wrap their head around.

When you talk about things that are evergreen, like the basics, and new trends that are growing on top of that—design education, for example—do you think that new designers have the basics, and also already embrace new things?

I don't know if anyone is ever ready. The unfortunate truth is that we're all kind of figuring it out as we go along. Having new people with a new perspective is always good. But I do think there's never been a better time than now to get into this stuff. I've been marveling at a lot of the educational resources on the internet. There are couple different websites—I think one of them is growth.design—that have what are basically online comic books explaining the way interaction design works. I would have killed for something like that when I was getting started 10 years ago. It's inspiring to see that the design world is finally making itself a little bit more user friendly, and much more accessible and fun to get started. I'm excited by all that stuff happening now that's
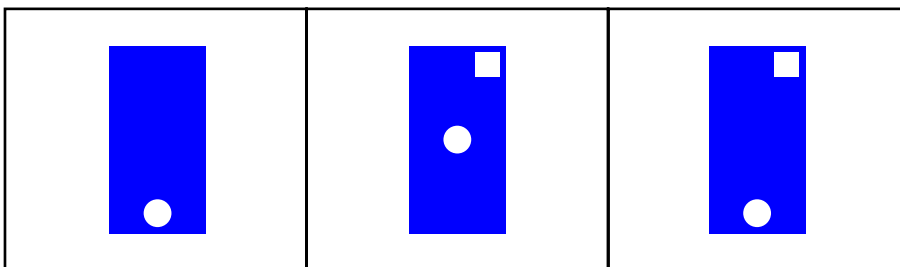
making it easier to understand the kind of work that we actually do.

Yes, I think the landscape of jobs in design is changing as well. So, you say you would kill for those resources. And maybe people from 10 years ago would kill for a job like you have now. What do you think, because I'm hearing that the UX designer job is disappearing?

I can't say whether the job is disappearing or not. It hasn't for me yet. I do think it's one that changes constantly. We used to have webmasters, and now we tend to talk about product designers, at least in San Francisco, and there's a lot of content annuity network. But the things you're accountable for have definitely shifted a little bit. And the skillsets that you would have needed 10 years ago are slightly different from what you need now. A lot of the work that I remember doing when I got started is now being automated or made very easy.

I remember, and I'm going to date myself here, there was a time when we used to manually round corners for UI and have a little asset that you'd take into photoshop and make a rounded corner. And then you'd have to manually position it on top of the UI to give it that appearance. But now it's so easy, you wouldn't ever think about that. In two clicks you have exactly that you handed off to the developer, and they know exactly what to do. It's not anyone's job to look at that level of the design. And as a result, we do spend a little bit more time being strategic about business
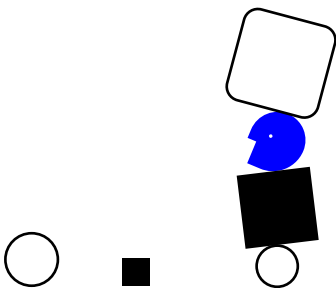
impacts, how to weigh the different tradeoffs between design options and a much bigger context.

Certainly, in my own career, I've been liberated to spend less time focusing on the details and more time being a little bit of a philosopher and thinking about, if we introduce this metaphor, what is this going to mean for our users? What kind of research can we do to validate these things? All that time that, at one point, would have been taken up with much more obscure and arcane details that, thankfully, I have not thought about for a long time.

When you talk about designing good UI, I'm thinking about the trend of the struggle of minimalism and maximalism. I strongly believe that 2020 is going to be like a big war because we've had this Marie Kondo-like trend to slowly delete everything and make it as simple as possible. And now we are experiencing more vintage stuff, like neon blue colors. But whenever I talk to UX or product designers, they always want minimalism. Would you say the same thing?

Honestly, yes. I enjoy maximalism, I don't begrudge anyone who does that. It's just not the kind of design that I happen to do. But that is culturally relative. There are parts of the world where people tend to prefer maximalist designs. There's been a lot written about web design in places like Japan where there are different expectations for what kind of information is available. I think for better or for worse, the mainstream web culture is minimalism.

And if you want a website to be really easily understood by a wide audience, that's usually the way to go. One thing that sometimes gets lost in these conversations is that it's really hard to pin down what minimalism actually is. You can have a screen that has two elements but it can still take 10 steps to do something. And often there's a tradeoff between the simplicity of the process and the simplicity of the basic elements on the surface. It's easy to have something that looks simple, but it's actually really complicated, and vice versa.

And sometimes when I see maximal stuff, I'm actually surprised when I look a little bit closer, and I see that it's actually very simple. It might hit you over the head when you first look at it, but once you engage with it, it's much more obvious and intuitive than expected. So, I kind of feel like you can do both, if you try.

In UI design, it is more about usability and intuitiveness, right?

Yes. And I think there are ways that you can get away with being a little bit maximalist. Look at the art direction on big websites right now, which are very filled with illustration with really lush, vibrant typography, and you could make the case that that's maximalist. It's definitely a lot of design detail that might have been ignored a few years ago. But for the most part, these things are still very simple to use. I think that's ultimately what matters.

SCOTT
RILEY

- Inclusive and holistic design

- Humanistic design and its role in AI and tech development

- Social impact of technology and design

03

UXPin   **Welcome to a 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Scott Riley. Scott, please tell us a bit about yourself.**

Scott Riley   I am an independent designer. I work with startups, usually in the early stage of the idea process to help them explore the problem space, do a lot of workshops and early stage design, early prototypes, iteration, and all that stuff.

What people generally used to call UX design, I still don't know what that fully involves after 10 years doing it. I'm also the author of a book called _Mindful Design_, which is all about un-derstanding how certain mental functions and properties of the mind and the brain work and how we can use them to design responsibly rather than take advantage of people. But generally I do lots of early stage stuff, let the process work, lots of early product explorations, etc.
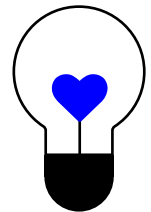
I'm assuming your book is a little bit about how you should be using your empathy in your designs, or maybe inclusive design, because I'm gathering that inclusive design and accessibility will be a very huge trend in 2020. What do you think − is it a thing for 2020?

It should have been a thing since about 1980. To be honest, when we talk about accessibility, it's always kind of been one of those things that people treated as an afterthought. After a certain point with the web when it hit a certain majority, people were like, "Oh, we can actually

do cool visual stuff." Now, rather than just pages with blue links and black text, it's fun. I think we've casually eroded accessibility a little bit. And that new, fun period where every website was glowing, and full of shadows and image backgrounds, and all that fun stuff. I think it's one of those things that is a give or take on the web − we hit a certain point with the super cool, trendy visual stuff that was a little bit absurd, but incredible, and then went the opposite direction with it. We've been going flat and minimal.

"

But I do think that generally, accessibility is criminally overlooked, and it's not so much a trend because it's something that should stay.

That's the thing with trends, they come and go. Accessibility needs to be baked into the process. If I'm getting feedback from a client, I pause that feedback process to check whether they think it's accessible or not. They should understand that I should be the one teaching that to clients. With the front-end developer, one of us should be able to talk to the other about accessibility without feeling like we're asking the other person to do too much work. It's a basic consideration. And design tools now are bringing accessibility more into the foreground, like UXPin, through plugins or immediate product features.

Things like colorblind generators are really useful. But they're really the basics to me.

People are talking more now, especially in front-end development, about people who prefer reduced motion. And so we've gone through this big kick of everyone really enjoying animations, with lots of tools being accessible for developers, not users. They're bringing things like spring physics to the web where you really can make native-feeling, incredibly responsive animations, but at what expense? Now we're discovering people who really do not need animations in their life. Maybe they give people migraines or ocular issues. And now we're looking at how we can design around that.

How do we now step back from cool animations and stuff like that? And I think that's a big thing. When we talk about interactive design and animation and people who've made their career through those things, it can seem like, "Oh shit, people exist that do not need my work in their face every time they try and send a message or read an email." So, there are just a lot of growing pains around accessibility. If you're fortunate enough to be able-bodied and neurotypical, and those things aren't immediately apparent to you, you won't notice them.

And then someone points out 12-pixel body copy in every design. You might ask what's going on and get a bit defensive, or you think, "Great, I'm getting asked to

do more work now." But there's not a lot of expected amount of pushback when people do talk about that stuff. It's about finding that balance between people and understanding why they're being asked about developing empathy – which is definitely a buzzword, but is also important for our design. We talk about it a lot, but get just enough for our process.

And accessibility isn't just about color blindness and the right kind of contrast, or people who need screen readers for whatever reason. There's a mental side to accessibility as well. If you take a step back and think about is accessibility as a way of trying to be as inclusive as possible, that needs to be taken into consideration.

"

You could design something that passes all the WCAG guidelines.

When the user needs motion reduced, we take care of all the visual stuff, all the motion-based stuff. But it can still be incredibly detrimental to someone with anxiety, or someone with limited cognitive faculties, or someone with depression. Understanding this is where a lot of my research comes from. A lot of the work that I do with clients is helping them understand those potential triggers and the mental systems that allow for someone to be anxious for a prolonged period of time, or for someone to not respond positively to something that someone with more

of a typical mind would − and I really hate the idea that one person has a "typical" brain and another doesn't.

So we're understanding that it's not just about the typical accessibility discussions. And there are no Lighthouse results for whether something causes or increases anxiety or not. They're very humanistic things that we need to be aware of. When you talk about accessibility and inclusivity, the global conversation around mental health opens up that conversation within our work as designers and developers, clients, product people, and everyone else who has a say in what a product does. And I think that's super important as well. It's not so much a trend, but an approach towards a more holistic, inclusive routine.

We look at accessibility as new features become available in browsers and on devices and to mainstream, able-bodied, able-minded general public first. And then we discover this is fucking people up who get migraines, and people who are partially sighted. And then we kind of scale back from there. There's movement towards understanding that with every new feature, every new device, or every new browser feature, there are people who may be excluded from them.

And to explore that as part of any kind of project explo-ration, if you want to explore empathy maps and include some technological or mental health-based accessibility issue, you're talking about it at the very early stages of

your process rather than handing something over to a front-end developer and just being like, "Cool. Make sure a screen reader can speak this thing." I hope that's what we're getting more towards. We're seeing a lot of people talk more about accessibility because people demand it more. And that's coming from all angles as well – developers want to develop accessible experiences and designers want to design with accessibility in mind. So as time goes on and these discussions carry on, it's something that will become front and center in everyone's process, I hope.

I think it's becoming a new trend that is not an extra but a necessity. But it is rooted deeply in the needs of humans, right? Historically, it's not very new. You mentioned that technology is helping us designers and product builders to be more accessible. But do you think that there's a whole other level of design with new needs or completely new possibilities for designers or product builders? Accessibility, or inclusive design, is something that we should have had years ago, because it's only human. But there's this whole new part, like AI design, or computational design, that people are afraid of. Maybe there's some link between what is new and what we need, right? What's your idea for like, cute AI in design?

I think there's been a lot of experiments and failed products that have revolved around completely automating the design process. Or at least, a lot of people think of AI

and they have this almost offensively libertarian outlook on it, where they think if computers can do everything for us then that's going to make us money, and we can sit back. Without getting preachy, I think that it's very difficult to talk about AI.

And to talk about something that intrudes on people's jobs or may potentially reduce the perceived value of someone's work while we're in a system of rampant capitalism − it's very difficult to talk about something that could potentially be a benefit to someone's process, while systematically removing jobs and affecting people's lives, just from a societal perspective. As a designer, and as someone who has a love-hate relationship with AI, I think that as a tool and embellishment to my process it could be really useful.

But at the same time, as something that is celebrated for the potential negative impacts on the perceived value of people's work, it's quite difficult to get excited about it, or to say that what we really need right now is ramping artificial intelligence that's going to take over all of our processes. The way that I've seen people benefit from AI is like an assistant to the design process.

So, rather than being, "Here's all my data and all the content I need to design around, now magic me up a layout, please. That's my job done," it's more about concept generation. As humans, we're really good at making a decision based on a limited data set. Whether it's looking

at pure data and deciding what's important and what's not, or whether it's looking at multiple design concepts and deciding what's best for a given scenario, I think the least efficient part of design is actually generating those concepts.

? So, I could be drawing a box and putting some text in it, and it looks great. That part's important. But part of the design process from there is asking, "Does this button fit with the visual style of the product, if it's an existing product? Is the color of this the background, the color of this button, something that I'm going to be able to propose as a primary brand color? And then what would it look like if it was green instead of blue? What would it look like if it used two pixel character spaces instead of one?"

All those questions and all those different versions of a button you produce – there's no decision making in there. It's a silly example, right? Because we don't sit there and make 500 variants of the button. But you think of logic components—a header, paragraph text, a button, an image, a standard media box component—it's very easy to just settle on one of the first couple because it looks cool.

I think there's value in artificial intelligence in the generation of those concepts. And it can look at stuff that has worked well before in specific contexts and spit out five or six different versions. But you still have an actual human designer make that decision.

Just as much as I wouldn't want the postal company to replace delivery people with drones, I don't want to empower bureaucrats and tech companies to replace developers or designers with artificial intelligence. But I think as tools, there's room for artificial intelligence in concept generation or comparison, or just assisting the worker rather than replacing the worker. That's my socialist rant out the way. AI worries me as a technology, but it worries me as a technology because of the system and not because of its capabilities, if that makes sense. It's more the intention behind its use rather than debating whether it's useful or not.

It's like that with every tool. We can do a lot of things with a hammer as well, right? AI is just basically the same. I'd like to ask you, what is your personal favorite emerging trend that you think is going to be really hip in 2020?

I think it's a pretty boring one. As we spoke about at the very start, it's just about more of a focus on inclusivity in design. Since writing my book, people I've worked with, whether it's designers, developers, clients, founders, or people who've hired me as an advisor, I've felt a bigger acceptance of systemic thinking and inclusive thinking. And something I've noticed in my career even as close as a few years ago, people weren't as aware of the social impact of technology as they are now. Because of the state of my work, I generally work with people for three to four months, and then they go off and build it with a

larger team. So I only work with people for about a year really at the very early stages. And I'm noticing people generally give more of a fuck when they start a project. So that's my favorite trend. Giving a fuck. There are a lot of examples of people going in the opposite direction, and I think it's because of technology. There's this discourse around inclusivity and the potential negative impacts of design. There's a lot more openness than I've seen previously for people who realize that we're not building something that's going to be positive for everyone – it could be harmful in some way.

"

What's the social impact of this? What if it's used incorrectly? How could that cause harm to people?

This is definitely a bit of confirmation bias because they're the questions I asked at the start of projects. But people seem to understand the social impact of their ideas or work. You're talking about people who've got tens of thousands of dollars to invest in a product, but are starting to understand that they might be investing in something that could cause harm. Whereas maybe five or six years ago, it was pure optimism. So, people now seem to be more aware of the potential negative impacts of technology. And I think that should continue. I think people should have a bit more cynicism in their early ideas. Anything that seems like a pure net positive probably isn't. There's

probably something they haven't explored with a feature idea based on their myopic view of a problem space. I think people are more open to exploring social impacts. It's not a hip trend. It's not variable fonts. It's not Pantone Color of the Year, but it's something I've seen that makes me happy. So, we're getting there.

At the end of the day, it is really optimistic what you said, as long as we stay human and keep technology in human hands and make it the most usable to humans. I think we're fine as long as we take care of each other, with design and technology as well.

Create inclusive designs

Accessibility in UI design leads to a better experience for all users, regardless of ability. With UXPin's built-in contrast checker and color blindness simulator, you will make your design more enjoyable for everyone.

UXPin

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

PIOTR MAKAREWICZ

- Computational design and how to prepare for AI revolution

- Coding designers

- VR and AR in product design

- Inclusive design and accessibility for healthcare software

04

UXPin   **Today I'm interviewing my dear friend Piotr. Piotr, will you tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Piotr Makarewicz   I am a graphic designer based in Poland − Gdańsk, actually. I've been designing for some 10 years. I'm a UX designer in CipherHealth, an American company. I started designing with branding designs, logos, pretty basic stuff. I was doing this while I was studying at Gdańsk University of Technology where I was studying programming, which is pretty weird for a designer. I was actually trying to go further and I started doing some web design, and after that, I went back to coding for a while. It was pretty interesting, but boring, because it wasn't that creative. At least at that moment. Now it's changed, so it's something new. And after that I became a full-fledged UX designer. But I don't like the term UX designer. I don't like terms at all. I think that we are all designers, so I call myself a designer with some hints and some knowledge of code.

Maybe you have something to tell us about the landscape of UX or designer jobs, because I'm hearing that job title of UX designer is disappearing. Do you have an opinion about that? What is going to be trending in design jobs in 2020?

Actually, I've been thinking about that. In the course of my career, I've been called many things. Sometimes it was designer, sometimes it was UI designer, sometimes it was UX designer. I know all those terms that we are using to call each other in the industry, but actually what we

are doing is designing stuff. And there is a separate part, which is research. It's a part of the UX designer's job. But I think that's the most separate part from the designer job – the UX researcher. So even though we as designers have to be UX researchers, UX designers, UI designers, and sometimes information architecture designers, we need to be motion designers.

"
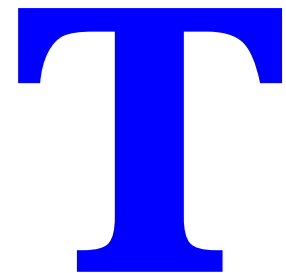
We can label people differently, but there isn't a company that focuses a person on only one job.

I think that the designer term is the most important one, and I would like to call everyone designers to be inclusive. But if I want to be specific for different terms, I think that a trending job will be typographers, because they have been a bit overlooked in recent years as we have moved to phones. For web, actually, it has been trending for five or six years now. It has changed a bit, of course – there was a big Helvetica craze, and everybody missed Arial. But we need more and more customized fonts. And actually companies are doing this all the time. Apple has its third typeface – it was San Francisco, New York, there is going to be another one.

They are focusing on this one very much and it is really a device-dependent typography. A lot of brands are creating their own typography, their own phones, their

own message hidden in the letters – and we need those people. Not every designer can also be typographer because it's a really hard job to do. Even though it's a bit easier than it was a while ago when you had to actually chisel the font – that was a lot harder. But now you need to take into account many alphabets, many people, and many sizes.

There was a very good trend a while back, I don't know what happened to it. But there was a responsive type of typography that meant if the font gets bigger, the width and height of the letters changed. So that was very interesting. I would like to see that come back sometime, because that was really cool, and this is the way we can use technology at its best right now. Motion designers are gaining more and more attention because we need more illustrations. But illustrations have become a bit dull because we are being attacked by illustrations all the time. They are really cool and awesome and we love them, but people need movement because our attention span is lowering day by day. So actually, using some of the motion animation, gifs, or movies to give life to illustrations is gaining a lot more traction. So I think that this is going to be the path. As we are speaking about UX designers, I think that using augmented intelligence or AI, which is normally called artificial intelligence, is going to be augmented intelligence for us. We will need a new job that is to work with AI to create new designs.
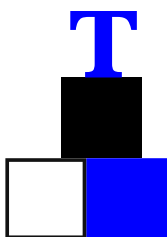
So in terms of typography, it's not anything new, but you anticipate something like a digital typographer or something like that. More animation and more AI. So while we're on the subject of AI, I would like to ask you one thing – what do you think about the whole discussion of AI designing things instead of real people, like computational design, AI-based design, usability testing, machine learning, or any use of machines and artificial intelligence in design?

So I'm going to start off with one thing. Everybody is scared of AI because they don't really understand it. I have to be honest, even people designing AI systems don't understand it fully, and that's a problem. It's like a big black box that gets you from point A to point B, but it's really good right now at prediction, getting data, and learning the best possible way to get the best possible result. But even though our imaginations run wild and we think that they can take a person and find the best soulmate for them, or maybe create art for this person specifically, it's not that simple. We need to take into account a lot of different factors and AI is not actually capable of doing this right now, because we need to provide the data to it.

We don't have the understanding of the human brain in this whole matter. We don't understand it fully; our understanding is in the single per-centages, even. So it's not possible for AI to create designs that will wow us. They can create millions of iterations

of design and create a lot of different variations of the design. But it's the human's job to pick out the ones that stand out and are the best. So actually, even though we are afraid of it, I think we should be glad that it's coming and it's going to be better. Just imagine, if we've got augmented intelligence in let's say, Sketch, and we have a possibility of actually clicking a button that says, "Create more variations of this design," that's going to be super helpful because you don't need to create 10 or 15 versions − it will iterate that quickly by itself.

So that's something that could help us, and take those small, meticulous tasks away from us. That could help us really much. If we are trying to say that AI is going to take our jobs, I think it's going to create new ones because we'll need someone who is going to work with the AI, and work with design, and with developers and other people, to actually deliver products with the help of AI; those people are going to be completely new. I think it's going to be the fourth category of trending jobs in 2020.

So we are not afraid of AI in design. You welcome it, embrace it with your arms wide open to help you with computing power, right?

In a general sense, yes. But I'm also a bit afraid. Most people watch *Black Mirror*. It's not that easy to not be afraid of AI. But still I try to embrace it. I try to understand it. I try to read papers about it. Actually, the predictive feature of it is super entertaining and really cool. You see

it with Netflix, see it with anything that has to do with your music − Spotify does it greatly, and it's like super awesome. So we have a lot of things that we can do, but when it comes to design, it's not that good yet. Actually, Airbnb created some kind of software that uses AI to create code out of design files, and it works really well. I think that they also do some kind of user research using AI.

That's really interesting because user research and the whole UX approach to do things is to understand the problem. You've got the insights, you understand the problem, you're trying to solve the problem and come up with different variations of the possible solutions. You're even trying to think of ideas that wouldn't be so easy to come up with. AI will be very good with that. It can help us when we need to iterate and then test, and as we need to test we can use AI to do it because that means presenting different variations. It means getting data.

I'm not saying that AI is going to do user research as in go and interview someone, but maybe in the future that could be possible. I'm using AI right now for transcribing interviews and helps me find categories in it. So in this way it's very helpful, and not scary yet.

We were talking a little bit about new technologies, but I'm really happy to talk to you about the technologies used in design because I know you are a little bit geeky. So would you say that VR and AR are just breaking into design from the gaming or social media

worlds? Are there business applications for real-life use of the technology?

That's really interesting actually. The use of VR and AR that I've seen so far is mostly fun. It's games, it's the thing with the AR kit that Apple is trying to do, to make gaming more fun. We are trying to use AR for something meaningful, but we are starting with measuring stuff. We are trying to place stuff inside of our homes like Ikea does with AR. But it's a bit clunky actually, because we need to watch through our phones at the world. We are not the youngest generation, who are used to sticking with their phones all the time and having this peripheral vision that helps them see stuff around the phone. And maybe for them, this is going to be something better.
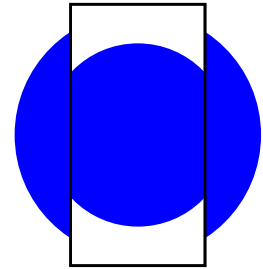
But for us right now, it's actually kind of awkward to just walk around with your phone, with the exception of *Pokémon Go*. But actually, it's a bit hard to use. VR in a sense, right now, it's a bit expensive. Not everybody can afford it. So it's the opposite of inclusive. The use that we have it for is mostly fun, but why? Because it's not precise. It's not meant to be used for a long period of time. It can give you headaches, dizziness, and other problems, and it's not for everybody. Also, we look weird. Did you see the Facebook picture of people with the new Oculus walking around? It looks weird.

So that's the whole problem with it. I was thinking, let's say SAP or Atlassian or another company that delivers software that is complicated and also really helpful, but it's meant to be fast and help teams. Do you imagine people sitting around with VR headsets and doing agile tasks, or maybe doing some retrospective? It's going to be hard and awkward. So I don't think it's going to jump into this kind of design. But on the other hand, we can use some stuff from VR and AR because then we have to add a bit of depth to the whole design perspective. You don't have to move your mouse up and down. You can go deep and you can pick stuff.
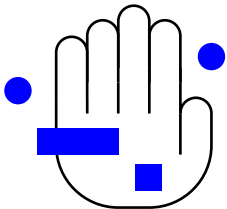
We are still far away from *Minority Report*. But we have some really cool apps that let you draw in 3d space. Those have really cool user interfaces. If you have, let's say, HTC, Vive, or Oculus, you can use your hand and actually just see the whole menu on your hand and pick out stuff. That's pretty futuristic for me, it's really cool. But until this goes into the real world, when we have real menus on our hands, it's not going to be a big help because we still have to face those basic problems like standing with the VR headset and having to use your whole room. We need to actually jump over some hurdles to do it now. On the other hand, there is something really cool for gamers that is coming out, *Half-Life*, which is going to be completely VR.

It's said to be *Half-Life* 3. It's like *Apex*—I don't really remember the name—but it's going to be completely

VR. They're betting on VR. So we'll see what's going to happen after that. Because if Steam, a huge company that has millions of dollars of revenue and actually knows what it does, is going to put out one of the biggest games in 2020 in VR only, that's saying something. I think it's going to go somewhere. And maybe more people could afford the VR headsets and the whole machinery, and maybe we will find some more uses for it. Maybe AI will help. Nobody knows.

So unless the hardware gets where our technology in terms of software is, it's still maybe not 2020, but definitely the 2020s, right?

Yes, I would say so.

So, tell me one more thing. What are your professional plans for 2020 and are you following a specific trend?

Oh, that's a broad question. At CipherHealth, we are focusing on outreach in the USA, which is getting into medicine and pharmaceutics, and just actually trying to help people. And this is also in the hospitals and for the nurses to do their patient rounds − we have a vast library of apps. I think that the next goal for me is going to include inclusive design. I was doing websites, let's say apps, that needed to have as many signups and as many customers as possible to improve the whole experience. It's something different right now because we do have the majority of people, 83%, that are fully capable. But

some of them in hospitals, are, by definition, not.

We actually deal with a lot of different disabilities and different problems for people. Those are mobility problems and problems with perception. Not only color, but also problems with the sizes and devices, because sometimes we are being used on devices that are provided by the hospital. If I'm going to say something about the design trends for 2020 for web designers, it's because I'm also a web designer in my spare time.

Okay. I'm so happy that you mentioned inclusive design because accessibility is something that we actually count on at UXPin. We have quite a few really awesome features at UXPin when it comes to accessibility. Some businesses, as you said, would count how many people in your target users are disabled. I say if it's only one person your design should be accessible, right?

Animate between states

Create different versions of your inputs, buttons, and plenty of other elements with powerful states. Then, animate between them using micro-interactions.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

UXPin

ADAM FERCH

- DesignOps and roles connected to design management

- T-shaped designer jobs

- Technology in the design world

- Ethics in design and technology

- Open design culture

05

UXPin **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Adam Ferch. Can you tell us more about yourself?**

Adam Ferch Currently, I am a designer at Cisco. Previously I was at Microsoft and other companies such as Amazon. I got to work for a cool startup in Kenya for a little bit building cookstoves. That was a blast. But at Cisco, right now, I work on a centralized creative team. And our goal is to help evangelize the brand, building cohesion across our design language, evolving our design language, and scaling and evolving our current design system momentum. So, that's where most of my day is spent.

Design systems are not really a trend, and we're supposed to talk about trends for 2020. But I think it's something that more and more companies are looking into, would you agree?

Yes, I think design systems are still a little niche. In the design bubble, they're really popular and seen as common. But if you engage with other disciplines like a product team, they're still seen as really new. A big thing is the value that they bring. How do you quantify and create qualitative results for a visual language? You can say that it speeds up a designer, or builds more coherence. But from a customer's or user's point of view, are they feeling the ramifications? Are they seeing improvements in the experience? Does it make your product more delightful? So yes, I think it's a total trend. In design, you're also seeing
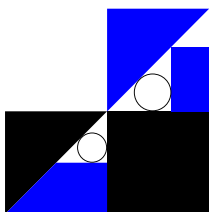
other organizations think about design terms of design thinking – I don't love that word, but it's something that's still relatively new. I could totally see it being a trend in 2020, with more small- to enterprise-scale organizations buying into it.

There's even the role of DesignOps.

Yes, DesignOps is huge. Producers, DesignOps, project managers – those organizationally-minded, systematic-minded individuals. It is so important to be able to take something, whether it's a design system or a product, and manage it through its lifecycle. When you're at a company like Cisco, there isn't just one design team. There are several. So designers and other disciplines have day jobs, and they go and do those things. But are they taking the time to connect the dots across the organization? Maybe, maybe not. But that's where operations can come in and really bring the picture that we all believe in. Is this a one-system-fits-all kind of idea? And they can make sure that we're moving in a direction and scaling it appropriately for everybody.

Speaking about the design job landscape, do you think that other than DesignOps, there's something emerging?

I do. The "design dot something" has been like a trend for a really long time, like, design-user experience, design-visual design. I think T-shape is going to be more of

a trend in 2020 – instead of focusing across areas, I will be really good at one thing.

Design technologist is one that's becoming more and more popular. You see engineers getting more excited about design, taking classes and getting educated, and fitting into those roles and vice versa. Designers want to have a little more control over their product or in the impact on their product or to help bridge the gap like in a design system. But engineering resources are always hard to find. So if a designer can take it to that next evolution, then it's easier for those types of handoffs. But it's hard to say. Maybe just design, right?

"

"Just designer" will be the trend. I'm not a visual designer, I can just do a little bit of everything – or I like to think I can, at least.

It's very funny that you say that, because most of the designers that I talked to in these interviews are saying that their jobs are going to be more niche, and people are going to be more specified in their fields. So, that's very interesting that you have the opposite view.

I think the work is going to be niche, but in terms of the interpretation, or what I call myself, or what another

designer calls themselves, it's not going to be so micro-scopic. It's not going to be like, "I am a designer who builds micro-experiences for blockchain this on this platform." Over here, it's just like, "I'm a designer," because other-wise its computer speak – our output gets non-human. It's really important for designers to maintain that empathy and that human side of what we do, because we are so close to technology now, and we get immersed in it. It's everywhere.

You mentioned design technologists, and now you talk about the technology that is coming into the design world. So, I'm hearing about computational design and an AI designing very important stuff. And what do you think about that? Is it really coming in 2020 or the 2020s?

I think so. I feel like we're starting to kick off with a lot of the tools that are available today, like releasing APIs so that designers or engineers can build tools for their discipline to improve their workflow. And because of that you're going to see roles change because a computer can automate, or an algorithm can automate, or we can automate some part of the workflow of design or research or engineering.

It doesn't mean that those jobs are going away. They're just going to shift. We're going to focus in different ways and create new areas of opportunity. And I think that's really exciting. There's a little bit of unknown there, and

I say embrace the fear. It sounds like fun. I couldn't put my finger on what that would be as a trend, though.

What I think the biggest trend you're going to see is the translation of designers putting something in a tool and being able to compute that out into a framework, whether it's for Swift or React, or all these other technology frameworks, I think that's going to be like a big trend in 2020, or the 2020s – being able to translate that, to maintain the design intent, and in space all the way through the process.

I don't know if you've heard about it, but they installed a bridge in Amsterdam on the canal that was fully designed by AI, and then 3d-printed.

What?

Yes, and I saw it. It reminds me of a design by nature, or Audi. it's not as "architectural" as we would think. And that makes me think that AI is something that we have to still explore, but also control a little bit, because there might be some computational power that we don't understand.

Yes, you hit the nail on the head there. There's so much ethics and confidence and discipline that goes into building those types of things. We'll never be able to think as fast as computers until we have computers in our head. And if that's the case, how do we stay relevant? And how do

we teach whatever we're building to maintain our relevancy? That's like a whole Elon Musk tangent we could go on there.

Like Neuralink...

Yes, there's all kinds of goodness that we could dive into. As a technologist, it's fascinating to dabble and think about those things and, you know, worry sometimes. Do we matter at any point, in terms of robots or the terminators of the world taking over and doing things for us? What do we become? I call it the Wall-E effect. We're on a spaceship and we sit in these chairs, and they feed us and change our clothes. Do we want to be designing for that? Or do we want to like, build that block where we can say, okay, we're too close to becoming that. So how do we work backwards?

Yes, but on the other hand, there's this whole new trend of inclusive design and being more human in designing. Meaning not calculating every business decision when you're designing it, but to focus on very small issues that might be good to acknowledge for only one user.

It's huge. We saw accessible and inclusive design really take off from 2018 to 2019. There are companies that are investing in really powerful ways on all ends of the spectrum, from hardware to software, which is awesome to see. As designers, because

we're visual creatures to begin with, we tend to focus on the things we can see. And that's why visual impairment is a big focus in that area. But there are so many other disabilities and abilities that exist in the world, whether it's mobility, vision, hearing, and so on. It's another one of those areas where artificial intelligence is an opportunity.

And not even an opportunity, it's more like we have to because there are so many people in the world today that get left out. Whether it's design, or working at McDonald's, or hustling on the street, we're all human at the end of the day. We should be affording for that as creatures of the earth. And so, I think it's more important than focusing on other areas. Because it's so cool – it's so easily attainable right now. It's a challenge to convince stakeholders that it's important. So we have to do it from the beginning. It's new, uncharted territory for some organizations. They are still figuring out how to accomplish those goals, but there has to be something that has to happen, right? Today. It's accessible, inclusive design.

"

We're not going to do a design sprint and then do another design sprint because now we think about inclusion or accessibility. It has to be built-in, not bolted on. That is not the solution.

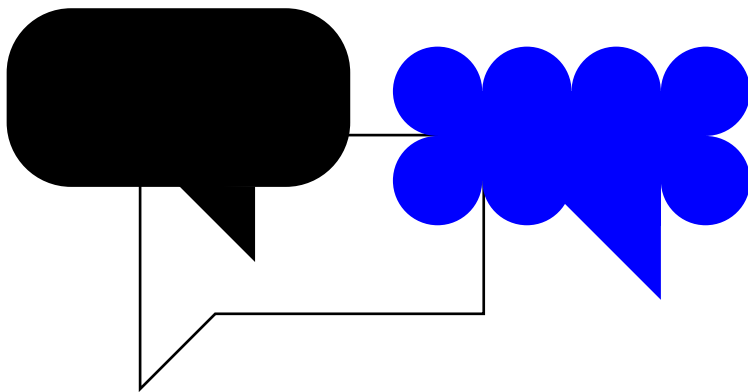**Yes. I think that it should become an evergreen trend.**

Yes, totally.

Do you have a favorite emerging trend, or something that you are really looking forward to in 2020?

My favorite is seeing that gap from design intent, like putting something like in a tool, and seeing the output and being able to handle the outputs, like in space. So not just building components, and then an engineer goes and puts them together, but a system to be able to spatially understand where my design is in space, and I'm excited about that right now.

Another one is open design culture. In the past, there's always been this ownership of "it's mine." It's special to build something as a designer. I think we've run into all these silos of design, and nobody can agree on anything or focus.

That's where design systems come in, and helps break down those barriers. But even further outside of that, there's open design culture in terms of knowing how to critique, the idea of nebulous feedback, and removing all those barriers to truly build something that's great. It's not that we're just building a product, but we're all in it together. I know that sounds super fluffy and "blue sky," but that's just the human being than I am. And I think it's really important.

It's more important to be able to trust the person next to you than to be able to compete or think, "They're good at what they do." If they're not as good as you, or if you think less of them in any way, you still have to work with them. So build them up and build the trust, because at the end of the day, you and all the rest of the people around you are pointed in the same direction. And it's super important to lean on the people next to you. So, I'd say my two [favorite trends] are open design culture and being able to output or build design intent in some technology frameworks. It would be awesome to see.

So bridging the gap between design and development.

It depends on whoever is doing it. Everybody's going to do it a little bit different, which is fun, right? And each side of the coin wants to have more ownership. If you talk to designers, they want the control; if you talk to engineers, they want the control. Unfortunately, sorry designers, but engineers have to build the thing unless you're gonna go and build it. So ultimately they'll figure out ways to have more control because they'll think about it first. So, we've got to catch up.

Yes, but if you switch this way of thinking, like, "It's mine, and I need to control it," to more like, "We are

a team and we're building this together," that might make their work more smooth.

Yes. I love that you just threw my previous point right back in my face. I think you're totally right. Maybe I was a little close minded in that last statement.

I was trying to agree with you!

You agreed with me, I disagreed with myself. You're like, "Hey, wait a second. Didn't you just say that?" Yes, I did.

Let devs inspect your designs

With just a few clicks, developers can access, copy, and even download all the specs they need before taking your work from design to development – from dimensions to colors to CSS code.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

UXPin

BREE WALTER

- Interdisciplinary collaboration between teams in the design process

- The concept of "tiger teams"

- Micro-communities and sharing knowledge

- Building a creative environment for your design team as a leader

06

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Bree Walter. Bree, please tell us a little bit about yourself.**

Bree Walter   I currently work at H&R Block as a lead user experience designer. We're headquartered in Kansas City. And for those who don't know, H&R block as a tax company, but we're trying to expand our horizons to fully embrace the financial world and personal finances. What I do is work on the products that serve our tax professionals in the field. So, we have a pretty large user experience team. We're broken up into client experience and employee experience. I lead up employee experience, which is specifically the applications in H&R Block offices used by all of our 80,000 tax pros across the country.

That's impressive. We're talking today about 2020 design trends. Can you tell me which of the emerging trends is your favorite one? What are you like really looking forward to?

I like to think of design not just in the visual and UI aspects. But being a designer or user experience leader of a team, we have to think about operations and business and strategy and testing and all of that. The trend that I think I'm looking forward to the most would be design ethics. I actually saw a really amazing speaker this last summer at the USP, a conference that I went to in Arizona, named Mike Monteiro. He has a book that is one of the best-selling design books this last year.
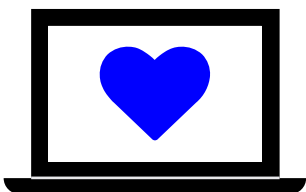
It's called *Ruined by Design*, and it's basically how the world has been ruined by design. But even with that kind of light-hearted title, it was a really serious talk about how we commonly get put into a position as designers where we have to somehow consider the user's needs while we're being asked to make decisions that go directly against those needs. A lot of times it's because a company is considering ROI or conversions, and their revenue. And sometimes we do things that are really deceitful, and really wrong, and not very morally or ethically right, because of revenue. And so, it was really empowering to see that talk this summer. I came back really excited because of a couple instances where there were questionable things that had been brought up, that didn't seem like a big deal. And it was neat, because I actually had this foundational knowledge now about design ethics, and could encourage the rest of my design team and my product managers, and some of my business leaders, instead of just making the best decision for our revenue to make the best decision for our client experience.

So, I'm really excited to see where that goes in 2020, specifically because I think we're at the cusp of the awareness of design ethics. Everybody has surface-level knowledge about it, but maybe not necessarily how to apply it in our day-to-day work.

The world of design ethics is going to erupt and people are going to be empowered and rally around it. And I'm really excited to see where that's going to go.

I'm excited about it too. We are actually preparing a few accessibility features that could help designers using our tool to embrace ethical design. But as you said, sometimes the design is here, and business is way over with money and ROI. But I strongly believe that specifically this year we're going to collaborate more so that designers get like a seat at the table. Not only caring about the pretty stuff, right? But business and ethics too.

Right. Collaboration is also a key part of what I'm kind of looking forward to in 2020 as well. Exactly what you said – it's not business versus design versus development, or us versus them.

How do we work better with developers, because we feel like we're totally siloed and segmented, and we don't get each other? But we've seen a trend over just the last couple years in these amazing articles and empowering speeches about how people can work together as a team, and not think of yourself even as a development designer, product owner, business leader, or IT director – but how can we truly think of ourselves as a team. And we're all in this together.

Speaking to collaboration, that is another trend that I'm looking forward to that I've seen grow immensely at H&R Block over the last year. We have done so many crazy awesome things in the collaboration space around doing workshops and strategy sessions together, and

we have people going out into the field, like developers, IT leaders, product owners, and shadowing together as a team and talking about it as a team. And we're doing collaborative road-mapping sessions.

What I think has been really huge that I've seen this last year, and that I think is going to keep growing across the whole industry, is that teams are embracing each other and doing it in ways to not position each other against one another. But, for example, in collaborative workshops everybody has an equal voice. And every single person on the team, regardless of your role or discipline, has a seat at the table and is able to contribute to the future of that product from the very beginning. That's something that H&R block has really grown in this last year, especially on my team. I think that's going to continue in 2020 as well for the rest of our industry.

Yes, I strongly believe that too. But would you say that this kind of approach needs a little bit of a change in mindset of how we think about teams? So, what are the responsibilities in the design team?

Absolutely. Whenever you get away from this idea of people having very specific titles and roles and responsibilities, and this person takes on this thing, and this other person takes on this thing, and you hand it off, and it's not really a collaboration. It's easy for you to have an "us versus them" mentality whenever you're in that kind of dynamic. But when you get to more collaborative methods,

it's funny because the lines actually start to blur a little around teams.

What H&R Block is seeing is that, back in the day you would have a product owner with very specific rules, and you would have very specific rules. And if you ever dabbled in each other's worlds and tried to help each other out, it would be like stepping on their toes. What I am seeing with my teams is that we're integrating this idea of feature teams or Tiger teams.

If you're not familiar with that concept, it's that instead of trying to tackle a gigantic product as a whole, we can create these micro-teams, or as we call them, feature teams. We create a self-sustainable team that can design and develop launch features completely autonomously. That means that you don't necessarily have specific roles or responsibilities. I actually have some VAs or business analysts, some UI developers, and product owners who are all helping make UX decisions. And I actually have some of my business analysts going into the prototype, updating content and putting in documentation nodes for our developers − they're getting really hands-on.

Sometimes the product owner might not always have time when we need to have a discussion to make decisions. So, I can actually step in and be a UX/product owner hybrid, and make some product decisions as well. I think it's neat because with this idea of a feature team or Tiger team, it

"

allows you to move so much more quickly. And people become multipurpose. I have really strong developers who are actually making design decisions and product decisions. I have UX and MBAs sometimes doing our QA work.

And so, I think whenever you allow people to not be seen as boxed-in to a role with certain responsibilities, we learn to help each other's strengths and weaknesses.

And whenever we see that a certain person is swamped we can step in and help them. It goes back to the fact that collaboration happens when you start to work together as one autonomous ecosystem, and not these separate siloed roles, and different people on the team can become extensions of you. I have many extensions of UX on my team, and I trust them because we've gone through all these collaborative workshops together. They're going to be making good decisions. You can give up some of your ownership because you know that you're all in it together as a team.

Nobody's out to get one another. Everybody understands the common goals that we're working towards because we've done vision mapping and workshops. I just get

super empowered and super excited about speaking about Tiger teams because it's such a new concept that I think is still new to the industry. But I know in the tech space, like here at H&R Block and in our tech industry, it's growing like wildfire because it allows you to get releases out so much quicker and so much more effectively.

Yes, and also, building a collaborative environment in your workplace helps you learn from each other. I think this will grow in 2020 – a lot of learning from each other like in smaller teams, and also in the communities. Do you think, where's that coming from? Or where's that going to occur, in your opinion?

Prior to the epiphany that we had about how we can act more synonymously and integrated, we were always trying to take on certain things here and there. And we weren't really understanding things holistically, or how we could all work together and how we could use agile methodologies, or collaborative workshops and methodologies, to create one kind of team working together.
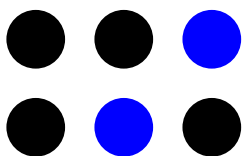
Some people point out this idea that feature teams create more disparate natures because they're smaller teams working in their own little areas. But actually it's really neat, because what I've seen on my teams is that you may have certain feature teams that are building features that are part of a bigger product. But everybody is so aware, because they are in a smaller group, of how to stay integrated and
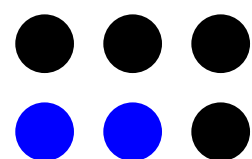
aligned and how the work that they're doing impacts other teams. We have had so many more alignment sessions and other sessions around how we can be better integrated, for example this team is developing a certain feature so let's utilize that, and that team is testing out this new technology, can we learn anything from that.

We're actually in the process of creating a company-wide design system right now. So, we just went through a really long process to get that designed and do user testing on it. And now we are using UXPin. So, our designers and developers are using that and referring to that. Whenever you go to the feature team model, design systems are so helpful, because that alleviates the concerns about consistencies and discrepancies, and how can teams stay aligned on design standards and paradigms. Whenever you have a really solid design system, that's your foundational level − all of the feature teams can just run really quickly, because we all know what our common design goal is.

And with design systems, and when you stop having to do the mundane work of repeating everything over and over again, you can jump onto another level of creativity.

Absolutely. You can finally focus on strategy, and not just pixel pushing. I think that's something my team has loved. And I know that my development team is utilizing a lot of crazy new technology, like an immense amount of new technology. I know that we can't get hung up on

these small, little design paper cuts, because we have really big things that we have to work on and consider. And it's not just like, "How does this one button display? And how can we build out the interaction just right, say, with only seven different prototypes?" Instead, we're using our design system. It's seamless, it's nice, and we get that extra time back to instead talk about how we're integrating this one application into all of our applications. And how we are getting everything on one platform. That's our bigger-picture technology goals right now. So yes, I think it's exactly what you – it empowers you think more strategically.

Create a Design System

Make sure all design assets are consistent across the entire organization. Keep creating a single source of truth for your team to design from when working on projects.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

UXPin

ADAM
RUF

- Device-dependent design in different industries

- User needs and accessibility challenges in design

- Essentialism in product design versus new trends

- No-code movement in designing

07

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today we are joined by Adam Ruf. Adam, can you tell us a bit about your field of design and a little bit about your experience?**

Adam Ruf   I'm currently a product designer at AngelList on the venture team. And I've been a product designer/ UX/ UI designer for the past seven or eight years, working in startups, medium-sized companies, large companies, across enterprise, and consumer products, largely. I'm super excited to chat with you today.

Thank you for making the time. I'd like to discuss a couple of trends with you. And the first would be AI design. What do you think about the whole discussion on AI in design, computational design, or AI-based usability testing and machine learning in UX research? What are your thoughts?

I have many thoughts. Mostly, I am excited and cautiously optimistic about AI and its ability to help me and people in roles like mine to get stuff done. When I think about computational design, as far as UI design and these kind of software products and apps−the kinds of things that I'm working on−I don't see computational design as really having a strong foothold yet, in terms of being able to deliver things. I think it's more about AI tools for design.

You mentioned usability testing. Or research. Just imagine AI chatbots with the ability to recruit people. That's a fairly

time-intensive process, as you might know from recruiting people to participate in this project.

One thing I would love is the ability to codify, or put into code, design guidelines or principles. So, for example, I'm working with a team where we have our portfolio of products, and we have rules around spacing, around use of colors, around this and that. I think engineers and developers have a lot of built-in tools with their coding that will say, "Hey, you violated a rule," or "You broke a rule." Whereas in design tools, we don't really have that. It's up to other people looking at it and saying, "I think there's something off right here," or "Hey, this doesn't really follow this guideline or this principle." How can we change that, or how can we get alignment? That's where I see the potential for AI to come in and help with some of those things.

Having said that, I don't see a lot of progress or momentum in building some of those tools − I see more of an opportunity. I'm excited to see if anyone's going to start doing some of those things in 2020. Maybe it's going to be one of the larger companies like Google or Facebook, or some of the companies that have resources and have done things like material design. So, I'm going to be watching those big players to see if they're starting to develop any AI assistant tools.

You said something about different roles, and opportunities that AI grows for us. What do you think about

jobs in the designer field because I'm hearing all over that the UX designer job is disappearing. What do you think the new titles are going to be? What are the new jobs offers for the 2020s?

I've seen a shift in things. Number one, I don't think UX design—the core problem-solving design role—is going away. We need it more than ever, and it's just becoming more and more important, especially to compete with people who are investing and adding those types of roles onto their teams. I definitely don't see it going away.

I do see quite a few changes. I'd say there are two big shifts. One is UX/UI designer, which I'm seeing in the San Francisco Bay Area quite a bit. It tends to be a little bit more focused on designers who do full stack UX design, from understanding research and doing user research, to bringing in familiar patterns and UI things all the way to coding. So they may be involved in some of the light front end, or will work very closely with front-end developers. It's kind of a designer/builder role.

The other title becoming very popular is mine – I currently have the title of product designer. And this is some-thing I'm seeing more and more first in larger companies. They're designers who have more experience, or skills, in terms of product thinking. They have some of the skills that we associate with product management, or even a founder – someone who's really thinking about the business
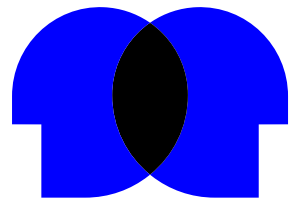
impacts, and not just the customer or user experience. But they think about how you can align these with things that are good for the business, because when you deliver value for the business then you have more resources, and you can deliver even more value for customers, and so on. It's kind of virtuous cycle. So those are the two titles, UX/UI designer and product designer, that I think we'll continue to see going into 2020.

I know for a fact that you are a huge advocate for empathy in design. And you mentioned that you don't see the UX/UI designer job disappearing. What are the skills needed in UX design, or design in general? What will be the secret to getting hired in the design industry in 2020?

That's interesting. I don't think it changes very much. Having a very clear story that aligns with an organization's mission is where some of the product design elements come in.

"

Even if you're not going to be a product designer, thinking like a product designer—at least for interviewing—makes a lot of sense.

You must really understand what this business needs. What are they trying to accomplish by hiring this particular role? And how can I align the story of my experiences,

accomplishments, and achievements to demonstrate that, "Hey, the things that I've been, the things that I've seen, the things that I've learned − I can apply those directly to helping customers and helping the business in this particular role." So, if anything, I would say it's all about storytelling, and connecting your story of what you can provide to the story of the business needs.

Do you think, because you said that design work is all about the business needs, at the end of the day, business needs are user needs? I can see more and more demand for device-dependent designing. What do you think about that? Do you do you think it will be one of the top trends for 2020 as well?

By device dependent, do you mean a specific and separate design, for example, for a mobile app? Or so somethings else?

"Yes" to your first example.

I think it probably depends, going back to the customers, on who is the audience. If you ask 10 designers in 10 different industries, they're probably going to give you 10 slightly different answers to this question. So let me take a stab at it from where I'm sitting, and thinking about the enterprise and consumer, like web app space. For me and for us, responsive and adaptive design still seems like a very good strategy.

There are no immediate thoughts of needing a native app for an experience − we're really trying to push on responsive design. And we're being thoughtful with that to make sure that we're delivering a good experience for people who are often switching between devices. Sometimes people are on their smartphone, sometimes people are on a computer. That's our user scenario.

I could imagine in other situations where if 90 percent of users, 90 percent of the time, are on a phone or some other device, then there may be a stronger need to invest resources and say, "Okay, is there something special that we can do? We know that this is the context for the experience. How do we really push this experience?"

I believe that focusing on each user's specific needs brings us to the topic of accessibility. In my opinion, that's a very important trend, and I think it is going to be a very big trend. And I can't believe that it's a trend, actually, because it should be like that all the time.

Yes. You're preaching to the choir here. It's interesting, I think there is still a big challenge with accessibility. I'm seeing it more and more on my current team, where we're using tools like React and different frameworks that are kind of shadow DOM that don't actually directly manipulate the DOM, and it's very easy to do things that don't apply to web standards. One of the things that's important for me and my team is to help our engineering partners understand why

accessibility is important. And that's usually pretty easy. At the end of the day, we really care about our users. It's very easy to explain why it's important.

We're also starting to see, in the past couple years, more lawsuits. So the business also is starting to get more sensitive about making sure that we're meeting legal requirements in terms of accessibility and giving that experience to everyone. I think this year it's really going to be a couple of things – it's going to be making sure that as designers, we're championing and helping educate people about the importance of accessibility and how we make it happen. And also making sure we have buy-in from the people who are prioritizing things.

It can be very easy, from a business perspective, to ask what the benefit of doing X is. If we didn't start with accessibility and standards, then we have to do some extra work to get there. How do we make the decision to invest in that versus something else?

I think getting there, and I'm hoping to see more examples in 2020 from teams who are using modern or cutting-edge technology in terms of their tech stack, especially for web apps, so that it's very easy for someone to grab a library, or borrow this, and have the accessibility that comes with it.

It's becoming more and more easy, right? Some designers should learn the accessibility standards. But

as you said, it's going to be so much easier in 2020, because of the resources that we have.

I hope so. I think it's still important to make sure that those are requirements.

"

Maybe my wish for 2020 is that accessibility will bridge a gap from, "Everyone agrees it's important and sometimes we invest in it," to "Accessibility is a hard requirement and we don't release anything until we've delivered an accessible feature or functionality."

Speaking of accessibility, especially in a UI design, minimalism is something that most designers pursue. At the end of the day, you want the app you design to be understandable and usable. Not to be beautiful, exactly. But there is a really strong trend of maximalism too. Do you think it has it's place in web design or product design as well? Or only in, for example, interior design or fashion?

In terms of the web, web products, and web experiences, I would say it's a little bit of both. Or maybe something different − maybe more like essentialism, right? I think

that's the goal in product design. I know that isn't a term or a word that we use around the team, but our behaviors tend to demonstrate essentialism. We're asking questions, like what's absolutely critical for this experience to work? Or is there anything unnecessary? We're always looking for, things to potentially remove, and ways to simplify things, which seems to tend towards minimalism.
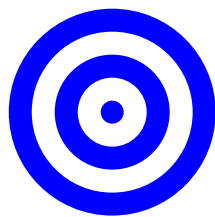
But we're also asking what's essential if we need to create a video or a PDF, or an illustrated story? If that's going to be the best way to communicate information, then doing that is cool, too. Everything doesn't have to have a white background and grayscale text. The key thing is really figuring out what's essential. In my experience, all designers, at least in the UI space, are working towards building apps and other things. That's what we want to do. We want to figure out what's essential—the minimal set of things—but in the right way so that content types could be more elaborate depending on what's going to make the experience the best it can be.

That's very insightful. Thank you. So, I'd like to ask you just two more questions. One, what is your absolute favorite emerging trend in your field of product design.

I love no code. I love the no-code movement.

Okay!

No-code tool. It's funny, right? All these tools are built with code. But these tools empower people who are maybe intimidated by code, or don't feel like they have the time or the energy to invest in learning code. The fact that there are increasing numbers of no-code tools that allow people to make and design products and experiences is super exciting. I think it helps democratize design and it creates more opportunities for designers, because a lot of these people are doing it without any sort of design background, which is perfectly fine. And we have a lot that we can share with people now, even more people that we can potentially share with and help bring along the journey. Now you can build things that are useful. How do you optimize the experience? How do you take your useful, functional idea and make it even better? I'm really excited by the no-code movement.

I'm so happy you say that, because that's exactly what we're advocating at UXPin for. It's amazing. And my last question for you is what are your professional goals for 2020? Are they aligned with the trends? Or do you have some new year's resolutions that are completely universal and evergreen?

Yes, a little bit of evergreen. I think the growth mindset is something that's fairly common on the team, and just looking at improving the team goals that we have for this year, and different metrics and goals that we want to hit, and targets. So, I think for me and the design team, it's really about increasing our impact. How do we increase the

positive impact we're having? How do we communicate that even more effectively? So if you ask anyone in the company, they can at least point to something the design team did that made a really big difference. And then tying those things to behaviors. Essentially what we're doing is this: the design team was only fully formed about a year ago when the third designer joined. We assembled a design team of three in about three months, from zero. So we're still learning and we're still writing our own design playbook. That's going to be the big thing for this year.

So, fingers crossed for you.

We've got great people on the design team. I'm really fortunate to work with some really great people. It's just a matter of being thoughtful and applying effort in the right places. I think we're going to be really successful.

I hope that this trend, or this mindset, never goes out of style.

Store information using variables

Let users go through the whole journey when they test your prototype. Build prototypes in which information transfers to other screens for a life-like experience.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. TRY FOR FREE.

UXPin

WOJTEK ALEKSANDER

- Inclusive language in UX writing and product-making

- UX language research and how it applies to business decisions

- Data-driven content strategies

- Content strategy consistency as an evergreen trend

08

UXPin **In today's interview I'm joined by Wojtek Aleksander. Wojtek, please tell us a bit about yourself.**

Wojtek Aleksander I'm a content strategist and content designer. I work currently for one of the largest banks in the Nordics, where I'm part of the CX and design department. Together with UX designers and content designers and service designers, we try to figure out solutions that will make millions of customers happy. Apart from that, I'm also a UX writing trainer here in Poland. So, you're free to join my course and find out more about UX writing, which is a discipline that is currently growing. And I'm happy to be part of that process.

Thank you. Not to, you know, tell everyone your age. But I know that you've been in this industry for a pretty long time.

Well, almost 20 years now. I began shortly after the Y2K crisis. So, I was happy to not worry about it at work. Since then, I've been wearing a lot of hats – information architecture, technical writing, type setting, DTP, usability and content design, and eventually account strategy.

Yes, but your career is pretty close to designers and product makers, right? Can you tell me a little bit about that? I am assuming you have this amazing perspective of how content writing or UX writing is changing. And can you tell me, what is your favorite trend that you anticipate for 2020?

Well, my favorite trend—or a wish—is the maturation of all of our disciplines. Because like you said, I'm going to be moving between product managers, UX designers, localization experts, customer support, and receiving perspectives from various designers. And all those disciplines working together can transform over the years. Also the huge writing discipline, or content design, which is getting more and more popular. So, maturation is one of the trends that I think will happen in many areas, especially as far as UX writing is concerned, because we already know that training is valuable. A lot of companies have already discovered that, and have started to invite people on board to help them with writing and communication with users.
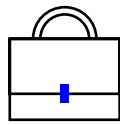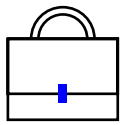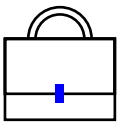
So, that already happened last year, like a bloom of job offers. So, we already have P, and they are basically a team of one supporting a lot, and have proven their value. And the team of one will become a team of many. They will be teams, or larger groups, working together with other disciplines—researchers, designers, UI designers, UX designers, maybe even service designers—to provide value and be involved in different stages of the product development process. So, that's what I think will happen this year and it will be very welcome.

Okay, so what you're saying is that companies are acknowledging the necessity of having a UX writer, and not maybe not only one, but more diverse teams, right? Because it's a pretty general trend. The whole

design industry to be more conscious about what the design is where and the design is going. Would you say inclusive language is something that is going to be a trend in 2020 as well?

Oh, I'm happy you mentioned that because yes, that's my next favorite trend or phenomenon, is being inclusive and working on inclusive language. Webster's Dictionary announced that the word of the year is "they," the personal pronoun used for the first person to be more inclusive and not gender biased. Inclusive language is something that we will be working on as a discipline. There are a lot of publications writing about it. I've also seen in forums, like Slack, that there are already separate channels related to inclusivity and accessibility. I'm really happy to see that we're putting words into action. Pun intended.

"

With language, we can build
a positive experience of people
being embraced and not excluded
from products and services,
or society in general.

That's a great trend, and I hope I will be working on it myself, and I will encourage everybody else to do that as well.

I hope that it's going to be a great trend in 2020, of course. But on the other hand, I have this thought that a really big number of companies still put business at the front of everything they do. And I guess it's one thing to be accessible and inclusive, and on the ethical side. But on the other hand, or business side, you have to somehow prove to the business high hats that this is what is really important. Do you plan on doing something like that? Or do you think that behavioral research is something that is going to be trending in UX writing as well?

Yes. Teams, or people, will become more mature and aware about what they do, and if what you're saying is actually aligned with what we do now. At the bank, we research together during usability tests, preparing specific scenarios to test and to research the language, and how language we use as a product affects people, whether they are corporate customers, or private customers. We look at how they are different and how to talk to them so that they don't feel overwhelmed or overlooked, or so that we don't sound condescending.

So, research will be a thing for some teams, especially those that have capacity or the need, like the designer's personal need, to be more aware and to the point with the language they use. The biggest trend that Sarah researches within her book and speeches about company design, is promoting awareness and using the language that people use in real life. And a lot of writers can. We

were taught to use a totally different language and we have to teach ourselves out of it. Understanding the language and how it works in the real world is a thing to help us be more precise and helpful, and to build the experience that people expect to get. Words are a really important part of that.

Researching, either behavioral research or usability testing, will help us do that. And I hope to see more people talking about it on the internet on forums, or publishing papers, or giving speeches at conferences. Sometimes you learn such unexpected things, like how specific words or phrases work and how you, for example, thought you were helpful, while people didn't expect you to be helpful.
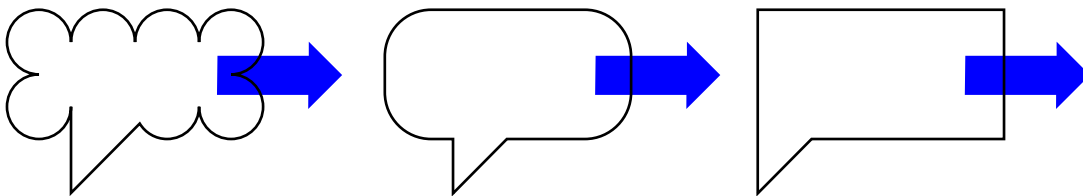
This will help us rule out assumptions, because a lot of our writing work is still based on assumptions. We know about readability and accessibility, and we care about it. But we will get more data to prove our point. And we will be able to use that data, as you said, to talk to a business and show them how we can help reach their business goals with language. This is not to say that the business is wrong, but to say, "We can do this and that to match your goal and help you and we will all be faster." That's where we want to be.

I hear all the time is that design teams are all about everything being nice and pretty. And I guess a UX writer is like, someone who is supposed to know a lot of words, and that's it. But it's good. It's getting closer to business, or data-influenced. So, I guess that the perspective of language design influences the business goals...

Because it's not poetry.

Yes.

It's all based and grounded on research and deep thinking.

You also mentioned that one of your goals is to not make people overwhelmed by the language, so they can get what they expect. But do you think similar to the trend of minimalism? Because there's this huge minimalism trend in design. Actually, people are going in either direction, minimalism or maximum. Do you think there's even a discussion like that in UX writing?

I think there's no discussion. I mean, we're always on the minimal side, where we can try to be concise and informative at the same time. For example, in mobile apps or responsive apps, we are really concerned about real estate on the screen, and how we all align all the elements, including words. Words or phrases become atoms in the whole design language or design system.
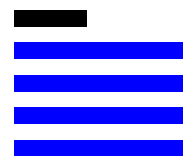
So that's probably not the case. And sometimes, obviously, you have to be a little more eloquent and say more, and use different UI elements to not overwhelm people but still show that there's enough information up front. If there's more, you can always reach out more. But being concise will probably still be a thing for UX writers for some time.

UX writing is supporting people on their tasks. We're not there to tell them stories − we're there to show them the way. We're there to help them understand something that is maybe less obvious to them, or some explain some peculiarities, or simply confirm that they are on the right track. We need to be a helpful friend who is not over talkative but gives just enough information at the right time. So, maximalism... probably no, in the sense that we will always say, "Less is more."

I think usability and being user-friendly is an evergreen trend, and it's going to be still trending in 2020.

It will be. It's the basis of what we do. If we don't do that right, then anything else that we do won't be that effective. The basis is the base. And there's no running away from that.

I think we've learned that some things evolve and mature and some things shouldn't change. Thank you very much for your time and for joining us today.

DAVE MALOUF

- Design job landscape from the hiring manager perspective

- Our level of readiness for AR and VR technologies adoption

- Designer education models

- Reimagining the design frameworks into more holistic

09

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 design trends from UXPin. Today I am joined by Dave Malouf. Could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Dave Malouf   I am currently the senior director of strategy and operations in the design organization at Northwestern Mutual. Northwestern Mutual is a planning investment and insurance organization in the United States. My role is to help the design team run ads optimally in highest value as possible.

Can you tell us a little bit about your education, because designers don't usually come from a design background.

I can confirm that statement as official. Many decades ago, I graduated with a degree in anthropology, very much with the spirit of going out into areas of the "other" and exploring and doing ethnography in that way, but I got into design accidentally. I was working as a research editor for books about cyberspace and email. Then they decided to turn the books into a website directory, and suddenly I found myself doing HTML. That meant I was a web designer. Then I just went from one web designer, producer, UI designer, information architect, UI designer, interaction designer role after another. So that is how I started, and how I became a designer.
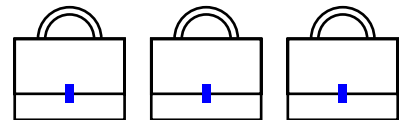
It seems like a long journey, but also kind of makes sense to me. Because when you're a designer, you need

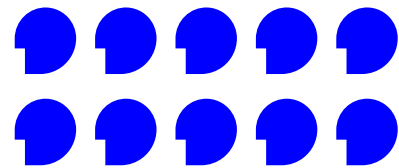**to have this sense of being curious about people. So that's anthropology.**

I mean, definitely have learned to make use of it over time, but it was not intentional.

So, could you tell me, what is your opinion of the design job landscape for 2020? We're supposed to be talking about trends for the current year and maybe the upcoming decade. Could you please tell me what you think, because there are a lot of different opinions of how the design job landscape will look in 2020.

I don't see that much of a difference between 2020 and 2019. The job landscape, I think all of the same confusions are there that have continued to be there for digital designers, or UX designers, what's a digital product designer, what's a visual designer, UI/UX – all these title issues are still the same. So, from that perspective, I see that being maintained from the perspective of more jobs, less jobs, the kind of jobs. I don't necessarily see a rise or fall in either the candidate pool or the number of opportunities. What I see is that the candidate pool has historically been growing rapidly, especially due to the bootcamp movement.

As a hiring manager, it's been harder to not just get applicants but to get quality applicants. That hasn't changed,

and I don't see it changing. But I think like one of the things in this time period, as opposed to a couple of decades ago, is that hiring managers are not just filling seats to fill seats. They are being conscientious about who they hire. So, it's not good enough to say, "I'm going to go get a bootcamp and pivot and I'm ready." You need to demonstrate quality as a candidate, which means that you're going to need to do something other than just do a 10-week bootcamp course.

"

If there is any trend that might be different, I think our critical eye towards candidates is only going to get tighter.

That's a very interesting perspective from a hiring point of view. You said that some things are changing in interaction and design. You used to be a web designer, so I would like to ask you now, I've heard that when it comes to logos, for example, a lot is going to change because of the way we think now and the way we are structured in web. And maybe logos will be more interactive or something, do you think that's a thing for 2020?

There have been some really interesting examples over the last five years of organizations trying to add some kind of dimensionality to their logos, whether that's just animated, or in 3d form. But I haven't seen them take.

I know that there are examples out there, but I can't think of a company that has one of these richer logos. It just hasn't been happening. So, I don't think anytime soon, even in a digital space, that logos are going to become more complex. What I have noticed is the way that some companies have been creating the animation in a logo, but then it's static after that. I haven't seen richness in a logo. I have my load screen on my phone. And while the loads screen is coming on, there's an animation of the logo, but it doesn't feel like the logo is changing. It's almost akin to when we go to the movies and see the production company's screen. It doesn't feel like that's the production company's logo. It feels like that's the production company's media.

Do you think that the technology has to catch up somehow? Because I believe we have more VR and AR tech coming from social media and the gaming world. Do you think that if it becomes common for us to use AR/VR technology in day-to-day apps, maybe that will change the approach?

Maybe, but I also don't. I don't think 2020 is going to be the year that AR/VR happens. We're at least three years off, if not five, before AR really happens on a regular scale. People aren't ready for it, and the equipment isn't ready. I don't think holding up my phone and looking at it and then seeing an augmented you on my phone is the way to experience extra layers of information over the real world. For gaming, when you wear a headset and you're

doing full VR, that environment makes sense. But it just makes me nauseous.

So I'm not going to be the first one to do it. For others, I understand the attraction. Some of it looks kind of compelling. But I think from a story perspective, it reminds me of the shift when *Dragon's Lair* came out, and laser discs, and changing the whole interactive story. That was awesome. It didn't require me to wear extra equipment to do it. But it did require me to think differently about a game.
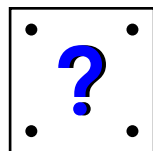
? What does it mean to level up? And what does it mean to do interactive storytelling? I sort of see that for gaming. I work in a financial institution, though, so I'm not quite seeing how I'm going to use VR or AR or MR or XR to enhance my customers' experiences while they're talking about how they're going to create financial stability for their families after they die. We can't say, "Here's an augmented reality of you on your deathbed." I'm not really seeing it for that. I do think that as the form factors of AR devices like Google Glass or HoloLens come down in price or, in the case of HoloLens having a form factor that's more presentable, that's going to change things a lot. I think what's interesting is about Alexa and what Amazon is trying to do with their wearable stuff. Instead of thinking about AR as a visual thing, they're thinking about AR as a hearing, a voice thing. One of the things that I've been really liking is having my AirPod Pros on. I just love getting my text

messages into my ear. They lower my music and just play my text message for me. And I can respond instantly to Siri to reply. That is another version of augmentation that I think is probably more viable and accessible than the visual kind.

I think with the Generation Alpha rising, they're so connected with touch screens and everything. It's so normal to them that I believe that augmented reality will be normal to them as well. Maybe not in 2020, like you said, but in 10 years it will probably kick in.

My four-year-old is in no position to ask for anything, though it doesn't stop him. But he has his iPad, and he plays with it. And that's all well and good, but I'm not going to get him an Oculus anytime soon. it's not going to happen. I happen to have two generations in my house, a Generation Z and a Generation Alpha, because they're eight years apart. Generally, I would see my son has almost no interest in VR at all, but he plays *Fortnight* incessantly. That'd be awesome as a VR. But then I think about it, and I would have to give him an entire room to do that in. Otherwise he's going to destroy my house. How do you even bring a game like *Fortnight* into VR without not just thinking about equipment, but space?

With Generation Alpha coming up in age, and the landscape of technology changing, do you think design education is ready? At the beginning of our interview, you said that you're looking for quality

applicants. So, do you think that maybe in like near future we can change something about how we educate young designers to be ready for the changes that technology is bringing?

I think there is no one education model that is going to work for everyone or every situation. There could be a context where a bootcamp would be fine for somebody. I used to teach a general assembly, and I've had some people I would hire straight out of general assembly. They're the top 10 percent of folks, but they were awesome before they took the class. And they were just really looking to understand theory for the most part – they already had the skill. There are issues with contemporary academic, accredited education, in terms of its inflexibility and its lack of adaptability.

However, there are some people in research institutions and those kinds of professional schools that are way ahead of the curve in terms of the work that they're doing. I had co-professors when I was at SCADS, who were at the bleeding edge of physical computing, digital art, and design, and teaching it to their students. But the work wasn't there. Sometimes it's about being too far ahead, and sometimes it's about not being responsive enough to industry needs and knowing where the right spot to be is. A really big challenge for educational institutions is finding the right spot. But I also think part of that problem is it's a moving, multi-phasing target. It could be anywhere at any moment, depending if you are looking at Google, or

are you looking at Citibank? Or are you looking at Pepsi? Or FedEx? What kind or Frogger?

Or idea like, what kind of design job are you looking for?

I used to tell people who would come to SCADS that we make really good agency designers. There was maybe 5-10 percent of students who could jump on a product team and do a really successful job, from the interaction program that I was teaching.

"

And that's great, but we need more product designers, more people in-house than we've ever needed before. It has a different kind of feel, a different kind of mindset, a different kind of mentality. So how do you hit multiples at the same time? It's not so easy.

Yes, it will take some time to adapt to the demand of hiring needs. I would like to ask you one more question, Dave, because we're talking about trends and what's coming up. Do you have something specific that you are really eager to see in 2020 when it comes to design trends?

I'll be incredibly controversial and say that I am looking forward to the end of Agile. It's been 20 years that Agile has existed. For being Agile, the manifesto itself has not changed. And we need to rewrite it, and we need to reevaluate it. We need to figure out what it means to not have a delivery-based philosophy, but to have a 100 percent value-based philosophy.
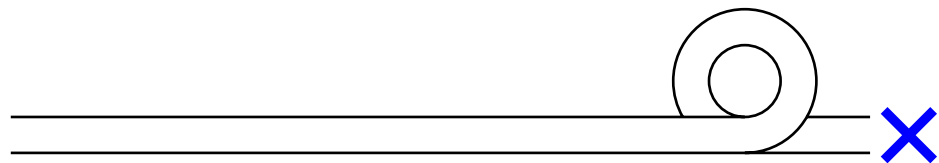
We need to figure out how we deliver things and why we deliver them. Some modern agile people say that's what we do. But they're still basing what they do on the old manifesto, and the old philosophy, the old principles. We need to come up with new ways of doing things. And it can't be created by 12 developers in a resort in Colorado. We're all white males, and it needs to include ethics, and it can't be developer- or product- or design-centric – it needs to be holistic.

So more collaboration and mindfulness of what you are actually doing so the product is usable, but also collective.

What's the value for both business and users? And how do we even understand how to achieve that. There are plenty of useful things in how Agile works and how Lean works in design thinking. But there's still trying to fit all of them into something old. And I think we need to reimagine

all of that. And not talk about scaled Agile framework, or scrum, or all these frameworks in that kind of way. I think we need to develop a new way of working.

Yes, so a reimagined, collaborative workflow, something like that? I'm looking forward to that as well. Thank you for joining us today.

CHIARA ALIOTTA

- Retro trends in branding

- Trends in typography

- The influence of print and classic design on web design

- Brands involvement in meaningful causes

10

UXPin   **Today I'm joined by Chiara Aliotta. Chiara, tell us a bit about yourself.**

Chiara Aliotta   Hello. Thank you, first of all, for inviting me. I am an Italian designer. I define myself as a brand keeper and I work under the name Until Sunday.

Can you share a little bit about your experience? What's your field of expertise?

What I mostly do is branding and brand consulting. I work with companies and startups to help define their brands, work on their core messages, and define their targets. And, of course, define their image and how they need to talk to their audience. I love typography. I love designing logos with a purpose and I love sharing my knowledge with other people.

I often participate in two conferences where I talk about my life as a designer and how design can influence everyday people, not just designers and developers. I like making people happy, using what I design. Actually, I found that my work is very interesting because it has touched so many people, and it may change their lives as well.
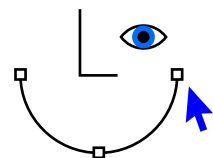
That's amazing. Speaking of design trends for 2020, you said that you like logos and you consult with new brands on designing logos. Can you share with us what will be hot in logo design in 2020?
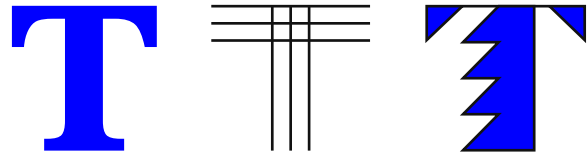
I hope that the eighties esthetics are coming back because I'm a millennial, so I'm moving to where my forte is. I see successful studios like Netflix, and the shows *Stranger Things* and *Dark*, and they are inspired by the eighties and they brought me back to my childhood. I think if brands want to engage more with my audience—millennials—one way to do it is by bringing back this kind of nostalgia. I can imagine logos to be inspired by neon lights or being pixelated or inspired by video games like *Super Mario*. I can imagine very fun logos.

Otherwise, another trend that could be very possible is animated logos. We are slowly moving away from structured logos that are printed and always need to be that way and never change. Right now, brands are spinning on the screen more often, and the brand experience actually happens on the screen of different devices. Logos can also be very interactive and interact with the user in different ways. Animated logos could be another trend that could happen in 2020. I am very curious to see how it would go. We are still in the beginning.

I'm wondering about the eighties and nineties nostalgia thing as well. A couple of days ago, I had this talk with another designer and they said that they never would have guessed that pink was going to be the next "it" color. I think it's because of the neon fluorescent color. You said things change and we're going from the structured logo to maybe animated logos, but a huge part of branding and logos is typography. We

had a year of Helvetica. We had a year of Comic Sans − maybe we'll experience the great comeback of Comic Sans. So which fonts will be, in your opinion, popular in the 2020s? Do you think custom typography will be a significant trend?

This brings me back to a talk that I gave in 2008 about the power of typography and the ability to be expressive without using images. The title of the talk was, "You just love me for my body." The title was very provocative because I was trying to ask developers to join a design talk. The talk was about expressive typography and that was also the year where the font Gotham was used to deliver a message of hope, change, and freedom in Barack Obama's campaign. So that moment, typography was starting to be a very strong element in design. Finally, people were recognizing typography as being an expressive tool, and an emotional tool.

In 2019, I saw how many websites and many applications were using a very type-only approach. What I expect for this year is that variable fonts will become mainstream on the web, and custom typography for brands would be the only viable way to deliver a message that is consistent and to the point.

For the second time you bring up the point of shifting from print to web, and of course it has a great value

and amazing opportunity, right? When it comes to logos or typography.

It's also my background, because I started as a print designer. Whatever I knew from print I brought into the web, when notebooks were telling you how to design for the web. Supreme was always my reference. There will always be this duality for me in my work.

Speaking of which, I think that design in general changes, obviously the trends are changing, but jobs are changing too. It is said that in about 20 years we're going to have 70% new jobs and positions that we don't even know about yet. But of course most of them will be in the development field or engineering. But in our environment and our industry, people are saying the UX designer job is disappearing. Would you agree with that? And if so, or if not, what are the new titles that are going to be trending?

It's funny because in 2016, the first company asked exactly the same questions to design leaders. And four years later we are still discussing if the UX designer job is going to die. I think it won't die as long as we need to create interaction between humans and technology.
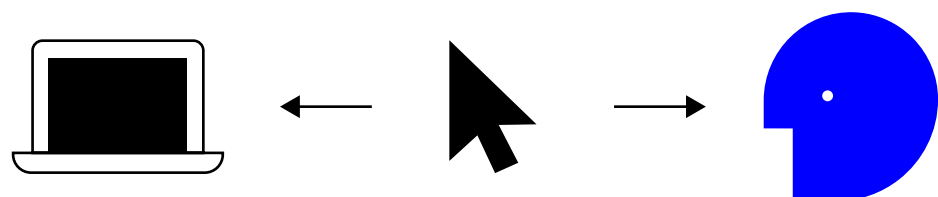
It will evolve because technology is evolving, and the words used for this year are specialization and diversification. So if you're asking for new job profiles that will be listed in 2020, I already wrote a few that could be very interesting.

So let me recall. One is the drone experience designer. The other one is emotional intelligence experience designer, or human empathy experience designer. As long as technology is going the way of VR and all these new tools that are appearing in our lives, there will be more of a need to create experiences that are close to the way humans actually work, so that we can teach these machines to actually communicate with us.

Yes, exactly. I agree with you that UX designers are not going to be needed. They just need to specialize, right? And maybe specialize to the technology that they work with.

They work with, yes.

So my next question to you would be, what is your favorite emerging trend in your field of design in 2020?

As a brand designer with a focus on branding, what I see right now is how brands are getting more involved in the real world we live in. And how the stories they tell us are more real and tangible. Brands that are getting involved in new trends like global warming, gender equality, sustainability, and so on, will be even stronger this year.

"

And what I like is that these brands are trying not to be meaningful just for you or me as individuals, but they're trying to be meaningful for communities, and be more powerful.

[Brands] are starting to understand they have power and that their message is going to be strong enough to dictate change.

I like that this is happening this year, and I hope they will invest even more funds to support the causes they believe in. This is going be a very interesting year in that sense. We're going to have a lot of interesting brands getting involved and making their voices heard.

Yes, exactly. Technology is developing and that is the reason why we need brands to be more human. That's why you have to have a story – not just for the sake of the story, but for the people who engage with your brand.

Exactly, yes. I agree. True connections.

So my last question to you would be, what are your professional goals for 2020?

A few days ago I finished writing a very long list of solutions, which I'm not going to share with you because time is short, but I'm going to share just one. I hope that behind every prediction that I just gave to you, I will be able to actually face the unpredictable with creativity and use my creativity to beat the odds. That's my solution.

Yes, creativity is like the evergreen trend, isn't it?

Yes, it is.

Thank you very much, Chiara, for joining us.

JOE CAHILL

- Changes in the design industry over the past 20 years

- Generation Alpha and the future needs for product design

- Technology versus intuition and skills in designer work

- Accessibility becoming a part of the initial design process

- A book – *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design* by Kat Holmes

11

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Joe Cahill. Joe, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Joe Cahill   I have been doing design and user experience for 20 years. I started out as a print designer. I've had the pleasure to work with some great clients over the years. Most recently with American Express, Saks Fifth Avenue, MasterCard, and I'm probably one of the most annoyingly happy people about doing design this whole time. I've never not loved what I've done and you're going to hear me talk a lot about it.

That's perfect because we're going to talk about your point of view on design trends for 2020. Since you have 20 years of experience, what would you say about Generation Alpha coming into the picture? These are the kids that don't even remember not having an iPhone or a smartphone with a touch screen. Do you think it's going to change the way people design stuff?

As Generation Alpha gets older and grows into this industry, their perspective is going to be so unique compared to how we've been doing it now. We had those flash websites that were super bulky and heavy, and they would take so long to load that we created loading screens for them. Now we're looking at mobile devices and getting annoyed after a three-second load. Looking for information instantaneously is going to be a key thing with how [Generation Alpha] interacts with devices and everything

that's going to go on around them. We don't even know yet, and that's the funniest part. I have a lot of friends who have kids that are on their iPhones or iPads all the time.
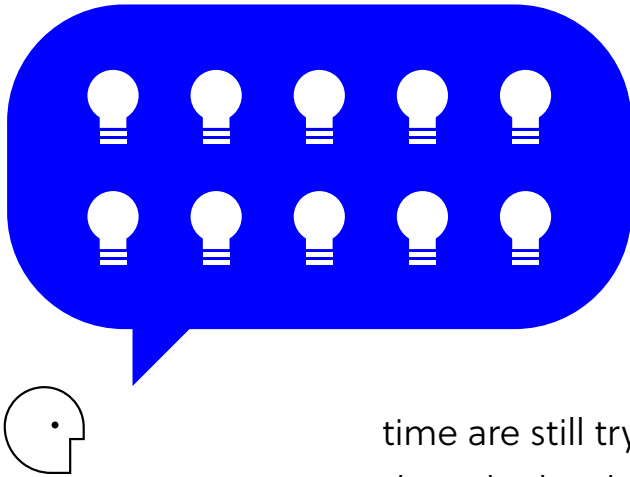
[The kids] tell me what they want inside of [their devices], and I say, "We're not there yet." I like the energy, but that's the thing – the world is going to be their oyster because this technology is going to be something they're used to. Some of us who have been doing this for a long time are still trying to figure out what we can do. Where does the hardware and the software meet? And they're going to be apt to knowing what the software is. A lot of them are learning coding now – it took me until I was 20 to learn coding and I was like, "What am I supposed to do with this? Let's build HTML sites and do MySpace updates." That just dated me. But they're going to learn coding as part of their regular curriculum.

**Like people in preschool learn coding now.**

Yes, they have that little toy, the Code-A-Pillar, that rides around and little kids can direct its action. It's amazing. English might not even be a language anymore. Kids will know code before they start talking, which I think is going to be amazing.

Do you think they will talk in ones and zeros?

No, they'll get super, super logical. They would be like, "If this, then that. Can you give me that ☐ FFFFFF shirt over there, please?"

So since we started talking about colors, what do you think about Pantone's Classic Blue for 2020 or, in general, having a color of the year?

The funniest thing about Pantone and knowing I'm some-body who has that Pantone book – fun fact, I'm actually colorblind. So when I was doing print design, I memorized the Pantone book. Any designer that's worked with me knows I would just yell out colors and people would be asking, "What?" and I'd say, "You know, that red," and they'd go, "Okay." But for them to pick out that blue, they were going to have to pick a regular color at one point. But they did also just have a year where they added a hundred and something new colors to their color portfolio, and none of those could be color of the year? I don't know. It's blue.
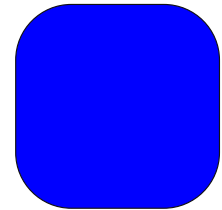
There's a story behind it, where they said that this specific shade of blue is very soothing and we're living in crazy times and everything is so hectic, so their statement is that maybe we should all just calm down.

Every year our color should be blue then. Anybody who's been doing design long enough knows it's never not hectic. One of my favorite things when you interview with

"

a company is them saying, "Are you used to a fast-paced environment?" What's the alternative?

Are there jobs out there that are not fast paced?

My version of fast paced is everybody else asking why I'm working so quickly. But guess what? All my layers are named, my files are tight. So no matter how fast we work, we still make sure that anybody could pick it up with no problem.

We started talking a little bit about technology and how it's going to change and influence the design world – what do you think about AI coming to the scene? Like AI technology not only helping designers, but also designing itself.
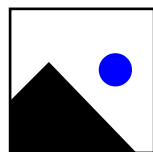
It's an interesting thing. So Adobe has Sensei—they built it into Photoshop—that uses machine learning to figure out how to better retouch photos and take out backgrounds, which is a great additional tool for us to use. When we're doing stuff, we can make it even quicker. We could load it with information about how users interact with the site. We can load it with information about how we expect people to react to it. But there's always going to have to be a human element – our influence has to be there. No matter how much AI

helps us out, there's going to have to be a person on the other end using their intuition.

We have to test hypotheses. If we just have AI running and making insights, and running and making experiences, everybody might have a unique experience, but how unique will it really be? Granted, the machines will probably be smarter than us and just take over. This MacBook might just attack me at any point right now. But it's still the idea and we need somebody behind it. Car manufacturing is now all automated, but there are still people in the factories working. There's no way that we can only have machines doing our jobs. Except for checkout, because those things kind of rock, and that Amazon Go store. If you haven't checked it out yet, you just scan a barcode, you walk in, you walk out. It's like stealing. It's amazing.

Is it though?

Yes, it really is. There's a clerk here and there, but nobody's bothering you, grab a water, grab a sandwich, walk out. Look it up. It's amazing.

That's so cool, but on the other hand we have this huge need for human contact or human touch when it comes to branding, or even in fashion. I don't know if you noticed that, but we now could have a huge billboard with a huge photo that is not Photoshopped, and that's crazy.

Who would do that to the poor photo re-touchers who are just sitting there waiting for something to come across their desk? Granted, our cameras are fly as hell now, but there's always going to be a need for somebody to breathe life into something. You don't have to go crazy. You don't have to take out all the wrinkles on my face, but at least make me look like I'm not sick.

Going back to how the iPhone, the Galaxy, the Pixel's technology of taking photos has grown exponentially in the last ten, fifteen years. If we look back to those Palm Trios and stuff that we used to take photos with – I still got really bad pictures from my Razr. It's all machine learning. It's all software that drives the quality. And even for real photographers, you'll look at it and you'll see a great image, but it still needs a little bit more to bring out the richness. You take a picture of a sunset, it's never actually what you see. It's always a little washed out or the colors aren't balanced correctly. You might not get those vivid colors that you want to get, and that's why you give it to a photographer to do some Photoshop and make sure it looks as picturesque as you want it to be.

I swear to you that I've recently seen fashion photos where girls had stretch marks and freckles and everything, which ten years ago wouldn't happen.

Oh no, definitely not. That stuff would definitely not fly ten years ago, maybe even five years ago. But I'm guaranteeing that there's still a little retouching. They

might take out other things. It's good for people to feel like we're looking at regular people, too.

That's where all human experience comes from. It's to want something that you're going to relate to. Even from a software end with apps that really bump up the personalization for me – when I say, "Oh man, I need laundry detergent" and then I see an ad for Tide on my Instagram, it's fine because I'm going to remember to order that, and then put it in my Amazon cart, and then Amazon would remind me that I also need dryer sheets. It still helps you out, like personal assistants in a way. So when you're saying these people look like real people, it's great because we can relate to it.

That's true. So that's a business decision, right? Because I strongly believe that this is a reaction to the fast pace that we live in, and technology is developing so fast that we need to balance stuff. We need a human touch in our life as well. So that's why I think businesses would choose to go that way.

That's the nature of business. Sometimes they'll make moves that we might question, and then we sit back and realize that it makes sense. We can go way back to when Apple decided to make the move from macOS 9.2. 4 to OS 10, which was a Unix-based system. It was the big move to a whole new UI, a whole new experience. What we're used to seeing now in a Mac was brand new at one point and developers were worried because it wasn't in

the codebase that they were working in. It wasn't built the same way it used to be. Developers wondered what they were going to do. At the time, they used QuarkXPress, a desktop publishing tool.

Yes.

And they said, "Listen Apple, I know this is what you're going to do, but we're not going to support it, so good luck." They disappeared, now we have InDesign. Adobe sat back and said "Listen, our people use this software, they're not going to support it. So we have to carry on with the times." It's a tough thing to change a code base for any developer who's had to migrate from old code to a react code. It's not easy. It's a big haul.

Well, people are talking more and more about designers learning to code and that maybe there's going to be a merge between design and development. For example, as you explained, we have those components that translate the design directly into HTML.

"

There's always going to be a divide.

There are always going to be people who are coders and people who are designers, but I feel like the understanding of what these people do will get better.

When we started out designing websites, I learned how to code. I learned HTML, Java scripting, Flash, and jQuery, because I felt it helped me understand how I was going to build a design. I think it's still true now for designers and especially the designers that I've worked with. I tell them you don't have to be a react developer, but understand how the component works and the parts around it. Go grab a drink with your developer and pick their brain about things.

They're going to pick your brain about user experience, because despite our best efforts, people still think UX designers are visual designers. They don't understand that there's psychology that comes with it. When we talk in a room, it's not because we want to, it's because we have to. Because somebody has to think about this. It's cool because if you do want to do both, it'll be a great opportunity. But it's tough to learn coding. You have to be in it to win it. But having the understanding of both ends is definitely the best part. My thing is always design development – you're partners in this. If we're using the analogy of a sports team, you guys have to work together for us to win.

You can't just have the quarterback take the ball back and then look for a running back who's over on the other side and say, "Oh, we're supposed to run this play together and you're not even here." You have to be there next to each other in the trenches and have that vocabulary. Back in the day when we did print design, you would

meet with your printer and you would talk to them and find out how the press works. How would you want your files? Does this run a little more blue on the blacks? Do I have to throw that in my spot colors? Just having that relationship changes the game across what we did 20 years ago and still do what we're doing now.

"

I love having developers iterate with us because they have great ideas, because they're just like us. We're all students of UX.

That's my favorite thing to say. All of us have phones, all of us browse the web, unless you're Amish and you don't do technology. But we've all downloaded an app and said it sucks and then deleted it or played a game and said the controls are wonky. So we have an opinion about it and it might not be the same, like a technical opinion from an actual UX designer, but it would still be, "Hey, I was on this and I saw this and it didn't work. But this worked really well and I enjoyed it. Can we use this?" And then it's yes, let's do it. Let's figure it out. Let's bring it to usability testing and then have a user tell us if they love it or hate it, you know?

Yes, and when you talk about how UX designers are the people who have to think about stuff, and I'm

pretty sure that accessibility and inclusive design is going to be a really strong trend in 2020. I hope it's not going to be a trend that comes and goes, but a necessity in the future because we have to be inclusive in our designs.
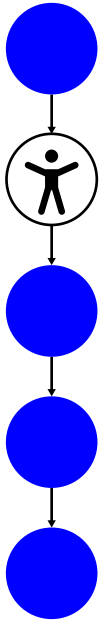
Yes. I think it's actually going to become way more a part of that initial process of design. The more we get used to having accessibility as part of our vernacular, the easier it'll be for us to just build experiences effortlessly. Like the idea of color contrast – that was never a thing until somebody started talking about it, and now you run everything through a plugin that checks your accessibility and makes sure your color contrast is good. Now we're going audible in using screen readers, by using sound. I just read a great article about using haptic feedback on phones for accessibility. It's so important.

It's got to be a part of it and the more I'm meeting designers, they're all telling me about the importance of accessibility. I just met a bunch of people last night and their job was accessibility for UX at a big corporate environment, and it's when companies get sued that they decide that they need accessibility. That's the trigger sometimes. People don't know that this is really important until something happens. We have to be an advocate and speak up when it's not going to pass accessibility checks. How's this going to work with a screen reader? Again, educating the development end so that they're coding in a way that's accessible, but is also part of our

design process. We can't build stuff just for the sake of building and we have to realize how everything works. A great book is *Mismatch*, it's all about inclusive design.

Cool. Thanks for the homework. I would love to talk to you more about your views on UX design and 2020, and what's it going to bring us. But for now, thank you very much, Joe.

Prototype using real data

Fill your prototypes with auto-generated names, cities or images. It just takes two clicks using UXPin's built-in data.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

UXPin

AGATA ORŁOWSKA

- Psychology background of being a UX designer

- How future generations will shape the design stage

- Empathy and ethical issues that come with AI

- Work-life balance while being a designer in 2020

12

UXPin **Welcome to the 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Agata Orlowska. Agata, would you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Agata Orłowska I've been working in the UX world for almost six years. Professionally, I'm a senior UX designer and a UX researcher. Basically, I'm a one-woman army of UX in my company, but I'm a design technologist too, and I'm a clinical psychologist. And what I find to be important now is educating young UX designers and submitting them into the English academy. And I think that it's enough. You can find me on LinkedIn and at a lot of UX industry events.

You said that you're a psychologist, so I think you would have to say a lot about trends when it comes to brands being more human and UX having a more human touch. So I would like to start with not exactly a UX question, but this is a very important trend as far as I'm concerned. I'm seeing more real life in design. Like real life beauty and fashion, for example, or trying to be as human as possible, as simple as possible in design in general. So what is your opinion on this trend, and do you think it's going to be taking off in 2020?

Yes, I think it's a kind of professional deviation. It's a huge, huge topic and a big influence. What's happening now is a big influence in our lives and we don't see it now, but maybe our children can live in totally other worlds. And I think that we are part of it now. Maybe you can say what

you mean first about this huge topic. What is the first part of this?

Where my thoughts come from is that we experienced digitalization and social media stuff on one hand, and on the other, brands want to be more human and build communities and have this customer-first approach. So, I think this is where this trend comes from – showing the real human face of brands. I'm sure it's showing in fashion and photography. Do you think this will stay in fashion and photography, but not in technology?

Yes. I think that this trend of real life beauty is something new and it's coming from artificial Instagram beauty. Research shows that social media is making people depressed. You know about it because it's popular. We see and we work and it's real – it's imperfect. This trend will develop because more and more people need it. I believe that this will stay and grow stronger. I believe [in it] because I want it!

That's the psychologist part of you.

Yes, it's my psychologist thinking. I think that for people, [the trend of showing the human face of brands] can be better for them than social media.

You said that what you also anticipate is that when our kids, or the kids of today grow up, the landscape of design will be totally different. How will Generation

Alpha shape this design? What are their expectations? What do you think?

New research says that 27% of adults said they asked for their kid's opinion before buying a new TV, laptop, tablet, or iPhone. And of course, it's a new landscape of design now because the older generation are changing the landscape of design.
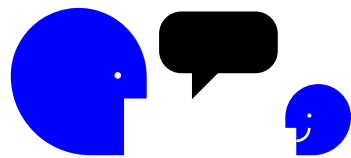
For example, take Apple products. There has been a huge change over the last 10 years in terms of design technology, even the size of screens. We have new keyboards and it's only been 10 years. And I think that the generation born in the year of the launch of Instagram and the iPad will expect more interaction than previous generations. VR will be a daily reality for them. Today, we see small children trying to touch and swipe the butterfly on the bus window. I think that these gestures are innate from birth. And the same situation, Generation Alpha has a different way of thinking about interaction. When you look at the development of home appliances, everyday automation will be obvious for them because, in maybe five or 10 years, you will come home and your smart home starts your coffee and turn off everything. I hope that's the future.

Do you remember the cartoon, the Jetsons?

Yes, of course.

That's what I imagined when you said that. That would be so cool to live in their world − fingers crossed it's going to happen like that. Have things done by robots. Speaking of robots and a Sci-Fi-like future, what is your view on AI and AR/VR in design?

I think that it certainly has lots of potential and I'm glad that we live in times that enable us to do so. I don't think that [AI] will take our jobs away from us − it's common to talk about, "[robots] are taking our jobs." No, no. I think that [AI] will make our jobs easier. And in this case, for me, the best part is the possibility to transform user interface design into HTML markup codes. AI is not our enemy. I think that it can make things easier. AI allows you to strengthen your search capabilities, improve visitor interaction, and provide personalized service.
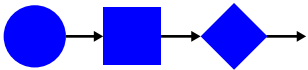
We have some successful companies using AI in design in new ways. For example, Wix or Squarespace. But for me, the most interesting thing is the human aspect. The human aspect of AI, for example, is a self-driving car that needs to make decisions during an accident, whether to rescue an older woman or a child. And this is the difficulty of ethical issues that we will face. The most interesting part of AI is that it sometimes needs to make decisions like people. But AI doesn't have empathy, and that will be our challenge over the next few years. It's not that hard to make businesses based on AI when you design websites and stuff like that. But the most interesting part is empathy. Because we need it to make decisions, for

example, to choose between rescuing an older woman or a child. If you're a mother you rescue the child, but if someone has only parents, maybe this person thinks that the older woman can do that. That's interesting to me.

I strongly believe that these are the tools that we are supposed to use, but use them wisely and learn to maintain them or shift them into what we as humans need them to do. So one more question to you, Agata. What are your professional goals for 2020? Because we talked about big trends and psychology AI, human touch and everything, but I'd like to know your personal role in it.

My individual part, for AR, is that I've been working on a mobile app for my company and now it's my own project. I'm at the same time a project owner and the designer for the same project. It's a big challenge and we want to finish it in the first half of this year. And that's my professional priority at the moment, but I have to admit that my last year was very intense for me, both professionally and privately. This is my second job. I would like to maintain my work-life balance and spend more time with loved ones. And I think that those goals are on the same level.

I wish you all the balance in the world to have your professional goals met, and also to be present with your loved ones. Thank you very much for joining us to share your insights.

CHERYL COURIS

- Curating a product designer talent set

- Advice for new designers from the hiring manager point of view

- Cross-team design process democratizing

- Mindful approach to designing with new technology and designing for good

13

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Cheryl Couris. Cheryl, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Cheryl Couris   I am currently a UX design manager at Cisco here in Seattle.
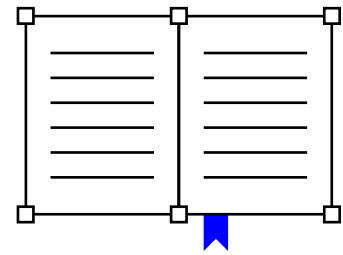
Could you tell me more about your work experience or education, or maybe some other stuff that you're doing? Because I know you have side projects as well.

I started as a traditional sort of graphic designer. I've done a lot of marketing and advertising campaigns. When I moved to Seattle, I sort of jumped into the world of UX because I really wanted to solve problems. Not just sell stuff, but solve problems for users. So, I started my UX career at Microsoft, I spent a year at Google, and now here I am at Cisco in Seattle working on some really cool collaboration apps in what we call "the future of how people work."

I know for a fact that you are so also teaching UX in Seattle. Today we are going to talk about design trends. Education and the landscape of design jobs is something that is going to change for sure. So, my question to you would be, what are the top design education programs for starters?

I'm super passionate about teaching. I am currently a UX instructor here at the School of Visual Concepts in

Seattle. And it's a really great program for people who are wanting to break into design. A lot of people are changing careers, so, coming from another field. To your point, I think the landscape of design, and design careers and opportunities, are changing. And I think now more than ever we're seeing people have a passion for problem solving, and connecting with people. Gone are the days that you have to absolutely be a formally design-trained person to be in the field. We're seeing folks coming from a variety of different industries and bringing that experience with them. That really represents user-centered design, right? I teach a lot of former accountants or baristas, or folks with really great experience dealing with people, and they make really great designers. And so, the landscape is opening up, and it's becoming more and more available and accessible to everyone. And that's why I got into teaching and why I just think it's really exciting.

Everyone has the opportunity now to put on that human-centered design thinking cap and start to solve problems in that way.

Yes, it's so much easier now than 10 years ago to get like proper education in UX, because whenever I talk

to people in UX design who have 10 plus years' experience, they didn't have the opportunity to have that education. And now we not only have tons of resources on the internet, but also schools and teachers like you.

I think that's what makes better products and us better designer is that we're all bringing different facets and different experiences to the table. And that makes sure that we're designing with everyone in mind and not just a subset of users. So yes, it's really exciting. I already see the landscape changing. I'm excited to see where it's going to go after that.

Do you think there are some jobs connected with design or UX that just emerging in 2020 that we have never heard of before?

On my team, I really try to curate a talent set that's product design as a whole. Certainly, that's a sort of job title that we all know. But I'm really trying to expand that beyond just pushing the pixels, but to also include writing content and strategy in that same way. And then what does it look like from the website, all the way to downloading the app to using the app to the help and support.

So, I think job titles may or may not change. It's more that our scope is growing.

As people expect now from beginning to end, the whole experience, I challenge folks that I work with to think

about it in that way. Again, I think job titles come and go, there's probably a whole subset of them that has been coming that I don't even know about yet.
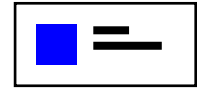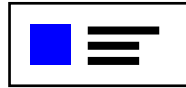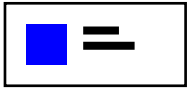
But for me, it's all about that scope growing. We're making sure we're thinking about it from the beginning, all the way to how anyone would experience a brand or a product in other ways, not just by using it.

A holistic approach to design?

Totally.

As a person who hires designers, do you have any words of advice for new designers, or people who are trying to find their first job?

I love this question. I'm carving this out as a specialty because I'm so passionate about giving everyone the opportunity to get their foot in the door. It's really hard, especially if you live somewhere like Seattle or in other cities where it's so saturated, and you really have to stand out from the crowd. If you're trying to get one of your first jobs in UX, my biggest thing I preach is sort of telling a story. And so that's your story.

As a designer, of course. It's not just about the work, but it's how you present the work and how you talk about the

problems that you're solving and their solutions. At the end of the day, I think the secret is that your solution almost doesn't matter. It's more about how you approach the problem, and your design thinking, and how you unpack the problem. It's something I work with my students all the time. They get so focused on whether they chose the right color for the button, and is the design itself right. But I'm actually more interested in how you picked apart the problem. And did you put the user's needs first? Tell me that story.
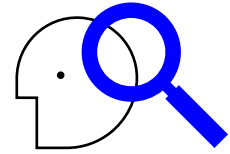
So I really work with folks to make sure that their portfolios and their websites and their presentations tell a story, not just about them, but about the users and problems. That, to me, is the difference between just pushing pixels and creating a holistic journey. It makes a huge difference.

I kind of observed this change in the approach of designers as well, because it used to be like, the designer is the artist. And now we're more user centered. We are more focused on empathy.

To be fair, that was me. I'm an artist, I'm a designer. Now we're starting to see design democratized and not with my PMS and my engineers. And yes, we hold the skillset that maybe produces the artifact to look at, like the mockup or the wireframe. But at the end of the day it's truly a team effort. It's coming from everywhere. I'm not necessarily a formally-trained designer, that's not my job title. But good ideas come from anywhere, and you

tell that story as a squad. And that's been working really well for the team that I'm on. I hope to carry that with me wherever I go.

We're looking at Generation Alpha coming into the picture, people who don't remember a time before touchscreens. Do you think that's something that young designers are ready for?

It's crazy. So full disclosure, I had to look up gen alpha. I am truly an elder millennial. I have two young children and they will not remember what it's like not to have technology available to them. We all remember having to sit through commercials on TV, yet my four-year-old just wants to fast forward right through them. It's a very different world with technology. And what really excites me about the next generation and that their expectations of technology are so high and they're also fearless.
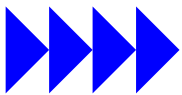
I watch my parents interact with technology. And often-times, they're scared about what will happen and what they'll do. The next generation is not scared, they are fearless. And they're going to really expect technology to take us to the next level, even beyond what we see today. And that, to me, is like the Wild West. There are so many opportunities, and they're not afraid to push it because it's available to them. Having no boundaries in that way is a really good thing, because I think we're going to push it. Also, we're starting to see designing for good. With ethics and changing the world, I think we're

seeing what's really important to everyone, but particularly younger generations are more aware of it than we were or our parents were. It's really cool to think about how design will complement changing the world for good. That's really exciting.

When you say fearless, I see my daughter. When she asks me a question I don't know, she's like, look it up.

They have no concept of boundaries with technology. The expectation is that it's there and it works for you. And they're not scared of it. It's really amazing to watch, particularly when you see really young kids interact with technology, they're already so fluent. Can imagine how they're going to really push it into the future? It could be scary if it weren't so exciting. Actually, I'm going to go with exciting, thinking about how I can design for good. I think we'll be in a really good place.

They have the basics of technology. There's nothing particularly new to them when it comes to technology, so they can build on top of that, like with ethics. We have to somehow balance the development of tech-nology, like AI, and inclusivity in the design field, too.

Absolutely. It's funny, I didn't even get my first cell phone until high school. If you're already thinking about kids and how they're going to take the technology available today, which is already amazing, and start to make it work to make their lives better, it's going to blow our minds.

I'm interested in seeing where that goes. We do need to balance that ethical piece of it, and AI and all of that. My hunch is that the younger generation already has that in mind, with the landscape and the world today − that idea is already out there. I think we learned as we went, and so we had some bumps. And they will too, but it's really exciting.

Speaking of inclusive and accessible design, for gen alpha kids, voice search is something obvious. But we didn't anticipate that when we developed it. But it's also making things easier for seniors as well. So that's the irony of going so fast forward with technology, but also having that in mind when designing technology to be accessible. We achieved things that we didn't even think of, right?

I'm glad you brought that up. At my time at Microsoft, I was involved in some of the accessibility work, and it put this new lens on it for me. You can think about designing a solution for someone who maybe doesn't have their extremities or has only one arm. But you're also solving a problem for a new mom who's holding a baby and can only use one arm, right?

"

So you're designing for one but you're solving that same problem for so many people in a variety of circumstantial or permanent circumstances.

It really is amazing. That really shifted my mindset and opened it up to thinking that this is not such a targeted problem we're trying to solve – this is a very common use case in many ways. So when you solve for one and think about it in terms of many, it's really powerful.

Yes. I hope this particular trend is going to be an evergreen.

I think so. I think we're seeing inclusivity. And I would say that across the board, everything from body positivity to other aspects as well. Unlike when some of us grew up, it's very much out there and accepted and that self-love and acceptance is very, I don't want to say it's on trend, but it's coming up as something big. That's the norm. And I think that's really important. Again, that's probably why the younger generation is already in better shape than we would have been, because they're thinking about that and how to solve for those types of things. Whereas that was not really on our radar, until more recently.

Fingers crossed that this empowerment is going to be trending for not only 2020, but the 2020s and beyond.

CHHAVI SHRIVASTAVA

- Creating a personal brand as a young designer

- Practical design and business-oriented design

- Building careers by merging creative work and managing talent

- Blending the skills of brand design and product design

14

UXPin **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Chhavi Shrivastava, all the way from Barcelona. Chhavi, would you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Chhavi Shrivastava I'm currently working as a product designer at N26. I come from India – I just moved here two months back, so I am pretty new to the city and to this company as well. Back in India, I was working as a UX designer with Nutanix. And before that I was studying design. I was completing my Bachelor of Design at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. So here I am.

I imagine that you bring all this new, fresh energy to N26. Not only are you a really young designer, but you're new to the city and have a whole new approach. So, good for them!

I came up with my expectations because it was a completely different culture. The design community in India is very mature, very closely knit. All of us know each other through somebody. So coming here, I wasn't expecting too much, to be honest. But I should say I'm generally surprised, by the crowd and N26 itself.

We are, I think presently, 86 nationalities working together. Even in our design team we have somebody from England, Switzerland, US. So it's like quite a different mix. So I would say, I do not feel like an alien coming from the other side of the world.

Everybody brings their own perspectives, which is very helpful for the field that we are in, which is dealing with banks and money. Everybody has their own perspective on it.

"

Simple things that somebody might take for granted is questioned by some other person from a completely different background, which I find really cool.

So that's one thing. And another thing is that all the teams here work quite closely with each other. We have to, we are just dealing with money and banks. There's nothing else to do, so we tend to do things really well.

The team picture is very small. I work in a team that handles localization for European markets. N26 is a global product, but how can they make it more localized for different markets? On my team, I'm the designer, and we have some back-end developers, front-end developers, and a product manager. We work very closely with other teams who are in the market domain.

We all work towards a common goal, so there's a lot of collaboration going on. A lot of in-depth knowledge that you gain over time. It's a fun place to be as a designer because it's not just about creating mockups. It's also

about a lot more about the product itself, the business, the market, development constraints, all those things. It is fun.

I'm really impressed by N26 myself. I find your designs very, very neat. So I figured that you would have to say a lot about fresh stuff, like really cool trends for 2020. I would like to ask you because you are a young designer yourself. I figure that you have to build your career still. You're in this building mode still, right? So what do you expect from the design market in 2020 when it comes to a designer's personal brand?

I consider myself a junior designer. I have a lot to learn, and that is why I was really surprised when you approached me for this. Coming from India, I've seen the market there, and there are a lot more design schools in India now compared five years ago, so definitely the field is opening up.

The market is also opening for roles like UX designers, UX writers, etc. So I would say the market has matured quite a lot in terms of roles and the value of design.

Maybe this is a naive perspective from a junior designer, but it's no longer about the coolest design or in-trend design. Here at N26 we are working with practical designing that can be shipped out to our customers in the shortest period of time We can't lose out on not shipping a feature just
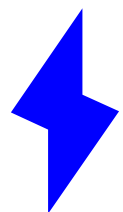
because we wanted to build something fancy. It should be practical, it should be part of the market fit. And when I say market fit, that's when, as a designer, you have to sit with your product managers and business people to understand where it is coming from.

For example, when I put the current project that I'm working on in my portfolio, a lot of people will look at it and say, "That's nothing groundbreaking. I could have done it in a week, it's not that complex, it's not something that changes the world that much." But the journey is taking all these different factors and making sure that you're at the right tables and understanding the perspectives of different people like developers, marketing people, business people, and making sure that your designs are delivered in time. That's something lot of designers will converge more and more towards.

"

You just cannot afford to work
in a silos anymore.

I think in the coming year, or next year, the role will start working with developers and product managers closely. I would say in future that will become a given. That's my prediction.

Let hope so, because when you talk about it, I envision all these "experienced" designers, and they are very

structured in their way of thinking, and having the design be all about the design and just nothing with the business.

I think that's the old school way of thinking, that design is just supposed to be pretty and maybe usable. But how it affects the product and the business, people didn't care before. So I think that's a very mature thing from you and it's a very "product designer" thing to say.
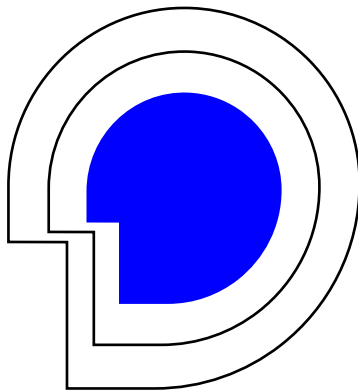
Now that you bring experienced designers into perspective, I'm curious how my career progresses as I go forward. Will I still have the freedom to be an individual contributor like a senior designer? Or will moving into a leadership position be my only way to grow?

I think this is one thing that the industry is currently figuring out. And I think it's like a really tricky gray area because as a designer, you want to have a seat at the table, but you don't really want to attend all the meetings because then it takes away your creative zone. But you want a voice. So you can't have a voice without being at the table, and you can't be at the table and be one hundred percent creative.

So that's like a sweet spot that experienced designers are trying to figure out right now. I would be really curious

to see in the future what part I'll have to take, or will I get to choose?

Right now, either you like to manage people and just know about your creative work, or be more and more and more experienced in your specific field of creative work. It's either this or that, right?

Yeah. We only have my manager and the person who's leading the team here. He is doing some work on the plan that we are talking about. He does have ownership of products and features and he's helping manage other teams as well. But it will be interesting how the industry matures to accommodate more and more senior designers and how much level of freedom do we get in choosing and carving out our roles.

I talked with different designers in different industries with different skillsets, and they all say that the landscape of designing jobs right now is so changing so much. A couple of years ago you would say I'm a designer or a graphic designer, but a few years after that, you'd say a UX designer or UI designer.

And now we have so many roles. This is a really interesting thing to see. And I am really impressed how you have this like openness and this open approach to this.

As much as I'm open to the idea of a generalist designer, I also truly appreciate the specialist, the people who

have mastered one field of design. For example, brand designers – this is one set of designers that I've recently worked with at N26. We didn't have this in our previous company, it was part of marketing. But here I think they're closely linked to the top product design team of...we don't call it a product design team, we call it a design team. It gives us the ability, as product designers, to have a certain amount of influence on how it's been communicated to our users at the end. It also makes sure of things like, the product looks all fancy, but then you see a banner completely out of sync with the product and it doesn't feel like the product at all. The brand designer, I feel they are super valuable and they have a skill set that is completely unique to what they are doing. It's like a mix of marketing and advanced design skills, like After Effects or Illustrator. And also a certain amount of voice and tone. It's a really unique blend of skills that they possess and something that they are really, really good at.

Even if I find it really hard to match up to that, I'm really happy that they're doing their job separately, so I can do mine. Even though we're talking about designers who will be a hybrid of a lot of things, I don't think designers will ever go out of market – they're a really skilled and appreciated part of the community.

Brand designers are appreciated as well because it's good to have someone to watch over the whole vision. So tell me, what are your professional goals for 2020? Do you have list of things that you want to accomplish?

To be honest, last year was really heavy for professional goals, because I was thinking about what was next, and took this job and then moved here. So, this year I thought, "Now that I'm here, how can I add value to where I am and add more skills?" So I would say my goals are not only professional, like updating my website or create an advertisement on my own. I think I've decided like give it a pause this year and focus more on myself. I was reading a tweet the other day and it said that if all the designers are going to Tokyo, following the same leaders on Twitter, and reading the same books, where will new ideas come from? As a design community, we are becoming more and more lean, but we also need to retain our individuality even more now.

And I thought that was interesting. What do I have as a standout hobby or skill that I really like, which if I go out into the market no other designer will have? It seems like a lot of us have common interests, which is good, but it's also something that scares me because everybody's liking this on Twitter, reading the books I read, etc.

So this year I've decided that I will go out of my comfort zone and try out new things completely unrelated to my work. It cannot include writing or reading. I started with something really tiny. In January I got like thousand-piece puzzle, and I'm trying to solve it, but it's really impossible so far, but that's what my goal is. To slowly find different things. I don't know, maybe crocheting, but I'm going to

try different things that are not related to my work. And maybe at the end of the year, I can go back and say that I tried out 5 or 6 things, and it was really nice to like get out of my zone.

Tell the story of your design with user flows

Show conditional flow logic, create flow diagrams, and build and present beautiful user flows that tell the story of your work.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. TRY FOR FREE.

UXPin

LEE SEAN HUANG

- The change in the role of UX and Product Designer

- Retro revival in current web and graphic design

- Design as a pendulum between the digital world and reality

- The importance of building design communities

- His new podcast: *Design Future Now*

15

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 design trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Lee Sean Huang. Lee, please tell us a bit about your experience.**

Lee Sean Huang   I am a designer based in New York City. And I split my time three ways between my own practice at a service design firm I started called Foossa. And I'm also an educator. So I teach part time at the School of Visual Arts here in New York, as well as at New York University and the Parsons School of Design. And then I'm also involved in the design community. I work with AIGA, which is the professional association for design here in the US. And I'm involved with the design podcast with AIGA and also supporting our community of design educators.

Because I knew that you're in design education, I would like to ask you about trends for design education.

I think we're talking about the next year coming up. But just to give a little bit of broader context, specific tools and technologies are changing all the time. I finished grad school myself 10 years ago and a lot of the things I learned are obsolete. I actually used to teach Flash animation and ActionScript five or six years ago, and now I like barely remember any of that stuff. It's like I never learned it at all. And it seems like ancient history.

There are still a lot of basic fundamentals that are un-changed, that are still the backbone of the web and mobile. I teach an intro class at New York University in

web design – introduction and fundamentals. It's basic HTML and CSS. Stuff like that, especially for beginners, is not really going to change that much. But in terms of trends, I think more and more we're seeing this convergence of designers going over to the coding side. But also, with design systems, we have more and more engineers essentially doing the work of design, even if these systems have been created by designers. The simple answer would be this kind of convergence in the middle. And we're still trying to figure it out in terms of in organizations, in teams, politically, how we deal with roles – because the tools themselves have become more democratic, in both ways.

I've had a lot of discussions about the landscape of jobs in design. And some people say that the UX designer job is like disappearing and new roles are going to be to start appearing on the stage. What are your views on that?

UX as a job title, and as a field, is really broad and expansive. I don't know exactly about the data to know if UX jobs are really disappearing or not. But anecdotally, I do see more and more designers working and being identified as product designers, for example. Product design certainly involves UX, but it also has more responsibilities on the business model side of things. But I think we see two things. One is hyper-specialization, and the other is the need for generalists.
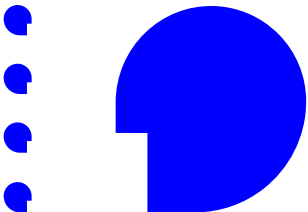
The fundamentals that you get as a generalist in UX or product design is looking at the whole scope of complexity of software and tech products today. But there's also hyper-specialization, as I mentioned in my previous answer, where the tech is moving so quickly that you also see a lot of jobs—especially entry-level and specialists—that are looking for very specific software programs or very specific frameworks, for example. So you kind of see a little bit of both. But the more senior you get, as a designer, there are demands to be more of a generalist, whatever that job title might be.

I like that you said that your approach to education is changing with time. And of course, there are some basics that we all have to know, or that designers have to know. But there are new things popping up all the time, right? And I have a vision of how Generation Alpha is going to change the design approach to products, or just the world in general.

Generation Alpha is still definitely still coming up in the world. From my perspective, just looking at my nieces and nephews, my nephew in particular who's only three-and-a-half or four years old, he has been able to figure out an iPad by himself and watch YouTube videos. And he has this expectation that all screens are touchscreens. At what point will a TV where you can't touch the screen is going to seem weird? I'm old enough to have had a landline phone. And that was the phone. And now like a landline is kind of weird and old fashioned. We have this

mobile-first kind of mindset. With Generation Alpha, there are going to be certain things that are just defaults for them, in terms of touchscreens or even voice interfaces, talking to Siri or Alexa.

I think this is more with Gen Z, because I see this with my undergraduate students − I'll introduce them to command lines or file paths, and things like that are kind of a struggle for them because they've grown up with GUI, these graphical user interfaces. They've grown up being able to search for anything. The idea of a structured path or command line is not natural for them, so they have to go back and learn it. I started with DOS with my first computer. It's something I grew up with and not something that I had to learn, as old technology. The starting points are different, but there are tradeoffs there.

I just get so histologic when you say DOS, or you know, Mario Bros, etc. But there's a strong trend of vintage and retro stuff. Do you think that's going to be something for 2020 as well?
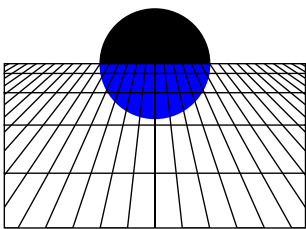
Definitely. I think we're already seeing stuff like that. I had this realization as we got into 2020 that the 1990s were 20, almost 30, years ago, if you go back to the early 90s. It's kind of the same perspective as being a teenager in the 90s thinking about the 70s. There was a 70s retro revival in the 90s. I think that's the equivalent, and I see it happening again, and not just with design aesthetic. Certainly, we see these GeoCities-inspired sites like the

Captain Marvel movie website, which had this 1990s retro aesthetic. Well, we see this in fashion as well. Some of my undergrads dress kind of like how we dressed in the 90s.

Except they have cell phones and some other accessories that are different, but fashion-wise, it's pretty much a lot of 90s throwback stuff. So, especially as web design and app design becomes more structured with design systems, and with "best practices," I think there's this retro aesthetic as a way of looking back at the GeoCities and MySpace era when the web was just weirder. And there was some room for quirkier expression. I think there's definitely space for that as a reaction against this sort of hyper-structured form of designing that's optimized.

You said something about the duality in education and trends, and you touched on fashion as well. I just started to realize that even in fashion, we are just trying to reach more real-life beauty. In my opinion, it's the reaction to the digitalization of the world. So, on one hand we are like, everything is digital. But on the other hand, we need it to be real.

Yes. I think that's a really interesting observation in terms of this pendulum that we see. Looking at Instagram, especially just doing some ethnography and seeing where some of these visual aesthetics are and how people are framing their photos, it's almost a democratization of these tools like beauty filters and Facetune, because almost everyone has access to that now. And it almost makes the

pendulum swing the other way because anyone can be a digital beauty, so people are valuing natural beauty more.

Also there is backlash against some of this stuff. I was reading about these trends in South Korea where these influencers, on their equivalent of YouTube, are taking off their makeup to show that, yes, this is artifice. But there's still a kind of natural authenticity behind it. I think this is a term that's been going on a trend for a while—authenticity—and how you live your life. So, it seems natural to see that reflected in visual aesthetics.

Yes. Authenticity. But I think there's something about communities around brands which comes from the need for realness and human touch in our digitized lives. Do you think this is something that will be trending in 2020 as well, design communities?

Yes, definitely, I think in both digital and physical and hybrid as well. It's easier than ever to start your own Slack group or Facebook group and connect with people that you've never met in person about shared interests, often in terms of having arguments with people online. But I think that's important as well, especially in a lot of design teams, where you're so focused on producing and shipping, where you're very much head-down a lot of the time. I think there's a need. It's also related to the rise in remote work, as more and more teams are remote, you don't have that same water cooler, coffee break time.

So maybe we're looking for that outside of our immediate coworkers and teams. People are also going to design events and meetups in their cities, or even traveling to conferences. I don't think that's going to change necessarily. But I'm thinking about it as a hybrid kind of thing; rather, you'll meet somebody online, and then you'll meet them in person at a local event or national conference.

And also vice versa. You're going to a conference, but you have a back channel on Twitter or a Slack group. That's a way of continuing the conversation, and that part is exciting. It's a great equalizer for people who may be less extroverted and have a harder time introducing themselves to somebody, but you can say to them, "Hey, I like your tweet, let's meet up at the coffee break." Things like that, I think are making these events and communities more inclusive, which I think is a good thing.
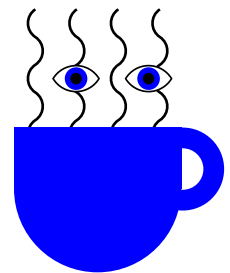
My last question to you because I know that you are with AIGA and we talked a little bit about communities. What are your career plans or resolutions for 2020?

I mentioned this at the top of the interview, but with AIGA I'm producing and hosting a podcast called _Design Future Now_. We are really looking at these conversations about designing the future and the future of design. And so, my aspiration for that is to just build that out, and bring in more diverse voices, maybe designers working in fields that are less obvious. Maybe not so super tech-focused

in the broader sense. And also bringing in voices that are less represented.

I think my other aspiration, personally in my own work and my own practice, is getting more into other forms of storytelling and film. Whether it's exploring and playing with VR/AR storytelling, or even just working in traditional film and video, which I had a background in, back in the day, and kind of moved away from. But as I'm getting older, it's kind of a return to roots in a way rather than actually just helping a friend with designing the credit sequence for his movie. Things like that, where I can take my design skills and my creative skills and bring them into some of these other media as well.

Share a single preview link

Share the results of your work using a single link that's always up to date. Let your team and stakeholders review your prototypes – leave no room for misunderstandings.

UXPin

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

TORREY PODMAJERSKY

- Decreasing the cognitive burden for the users with inclusive language

- The importance of localization in product design

- AI technology helping to design at scale (still with a need of human touch)

- Usability of the design decisions

- Her book: *Strategic Writing for UX*

16

UXPin   **Welcome to UXPin 2020 Design Trends. Today I'm joined by Torrey Podmajersky. Torrey, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Torrey Podmajersky   I am a UX writer at Google at the moment, and I have worked at Xbox, Microsoft Education, ended offer I have been a UX writer for about 10 years now, and that builds on my physics degree and my teaching background in a number of bizarre ways. It led me to write a book called *Strategic Writing for UX* that came out last year from O'Reilly. It has been a nontraditional path, but I find that's actually extremely common among UX writers and people who got into UX design 15 to 20 years ago. There didn't used to be degrees for this and there didn't used to be specific training. So we had to come into it from wherever we were.

But I would say that with your teaching background, writing a book was just the right thing to do, wasn't it? Because with your educational background, and the landscape of education of UX and UX writers – there are hardly any schools for that.

Yeah, it's hard to get training in it, although there are more and more available online and in person. I was trained as a UX writer. I got my first UX writing job because I had been a teacher, and the Xbox writing manager said, "You've explained things to teenagers in ways that they were successful with, and you were a chemistry teacher so you had to explain really abstract

concepts that they had to take tests on. So come work for me at Xbox."

And I did, and it was wonderful, but it was not scalable. I joined a terrific team of people who knew their jobs and helped me learn the craft. When I had been working there for a few years, another UX writer I worked with said, there should be a class in Seattle.

We started a class at the Seattle School for Visual Concepts and built the curriculum. After teaching for a few years and learning more about how to shape the argument for, and the descriptions of, the various tasks and how to integrate into design teams and product and engineering teams. I then went to a conference in 2018 and I realized, oh my God, people are making up this field all by themselves in all of these little isolated ways.

# These poor people – there should be a book!

I went back to my friend who had talked me into teaching, and I said there should be a book, and she told me to go write it. So here we are.
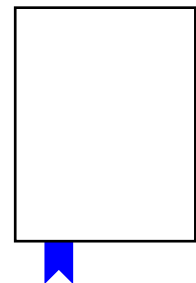
So, you experienced the changing of how the UX writing field was shaped previously, but could you

tell me what would be your favorite emerging trend in your field, for 2020 or the 2020s in general?

My favorite thing is that more and more people are recognizing the importance of words in interfaces, and that we actually design them and it's not just down to the gut feel of the people in the room, whether that's the engineers or the PMs or the designers. There can be a science and an art to it that we can learn and apply best practices to, and really develop it as its own discipline and do research around it. And we can have that skill integrated into the mix with visual design, with interaction design, with the prototyping skills, with all of those other skills.
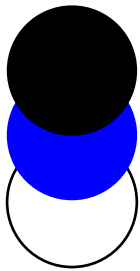
So the trend I'm really looking forward to is UX being thought of less as strictly UX design and graphic design and coming from a visual place, and more keeping the visual aspect but adding to it—the interaction, the writing, the research, the engineering—to make a full stack UX. I think it mirrors the evolution of computer science, computer engineering, and software engineering, where it used to be for "serious people only."

We've gone past that, and we have what we call full stack software engineers who are comfortable with back end and front end and all the different ways. And we have people who specialize. There's plenty of room in the industry for people who specialize and say they are a fantastic visual designer and have opinions about colors. Great, hallelujah, because I don't! The generalists and leaders

in this space understand they don't have to come from a visual background but can come from research and engineering and writing. So I'm looking forward to that.

I'm so happy that you said that, because I'm really looking forward to design in general being perceived more as a strategic field, not just drawing pretty things or writing. UX writing is not only about gut feelings, like you said.

It's not about the gut feeling or having good grammar. It's about getting the job done. Here's the way I see it: the strategic purpose is to bring the people and the people's behaviors together with software, so that people are doing what they're in the software to do. That's the whole reason the business exists.

The software engineers do all this work to get all of the silicon in the right places and all the electrons flying in the right way so that the right pretty things appear on the screens. But if they're not working on getting the computer to do the right thing, and we're not working on getting the people to do the right things, then it doesn't come together. We in UX get to work on enticing people, enabling people, unlocking those experiences so that they can really succeed. And that's just super exciting.

Exactly. I think one of the most important goals of UX writing, to me at least, is to really speak the language of the people you are addressing it to. So one of the

most exciting trends in UX writing would be inclusive writing as a part of inclusive design, or accessible design in general. Would you say that you're looking forward to it as well?

I am so looking forward to it. There are so many interfaces that have been built using the "gut feelings" of the developers and product owners who are very smart and very focused. And they think that sometimes simplifying language is like dumbing it down, but that's not what we're doing at all. What we're doing when we're making people deal with extremely formal and complex language (and sometimes complex concepts that they don't even need to deal with at that moment) is slowing them down and creating a cognitive burden, and they don't need that.

We need to do the work to be clear. When we use the same language that the user or customer would use, we are speaking directly to their hind brain, right? We're bypassing the reading centers. They don't have to feel like they're reading, they can just understand it, and then it feels easy.

"

The Holy Grail of accessibility
and inclusive design is reaching
people where they are, no
matter who they are.

That means doing a great job on localization and internationalization. If we're making products that are going to be used by people who have a native language other than our development language, then it's on us to reach them where they are, not to make them try to understand us. Why can't we just translate every word? That is not going to work, not even for the languages that English borrowed very heavily from. I'm referring to German mostly, but it just doesn't work that way. Sometimes we have to speak in local idioms because that's how people would say things. Our localization professionals might come in and say, the automated translation says this, but no person using this language would ever say it that way. We need to talk to them the way they are.

At the end of the day, people are not supposed to feel like they're speaking with an interface, right? There's someone out there, so empathize with them and consider them when you design and develop the whole thing.

That's exactly what we need to be doing, and I think about it all the time. I've studied several languages and I speak all of them very poorly. It's bad. And I get confused like, "Wait, I need the number 14, wait, that's it in Chinese. I needed in French. Nope. That was Italian, wait, that happens with my French." I believe your first language is Polish, is that correct?

Yes.

Thank you for conducting this interview in English. I really appreciate it.

It's my pleasure.

The attitude we should all have is that we are in this together and as UXers, we are reaching out to people wherever they are in their context. In the 2020s and beyond, I'm really looking forward to having AI models able to do that better and easier, because it's not easy to scale, like one to one, the interfaces.

But AI only gets us so far, and then we still need that human empathy and the human approach. And we need to know what it's like in that context and how it's different than our gut assumptions, being wherever we are. I'm in Seattle, Washington. There are different cultural expectations here, for example, of what colors I can dye my hair, than there are elsewhere.

I'm happy that you mentioned AI and the human touch, and how we should control technology. I'm sensing that there's this duality in the technology field in general, where one part goes straight to the technology and wants to make everything AI. But we also need real-life humans, whether they're in brand communications or design. And I'm so happy to see more and more, for example, fashion posters being less photoshopped. Would you say that this is something that we can call a trend for 2020 as well?

I don't know anything about fashion posters and those kinds of visual design and marketing elements other than as a consumer of them, and a person with very reactive opinions about them. But as a designer of the text that sometimes goes with such things, I'd follow the same idea of wanting to represent people as their beautiful, flawed, wonderful selves.

So we talked about grammar a little bit before, and it's a little bit facetious, right? I care quite a bit about the grammar, but I care not that it's the correct grammar of my third grade teacher, but that it's the grammar that will be easiest to understand and use in that moment and really make the person feel like they are part of that conversation.

The best way to do that, of course, is to include the people intended to use the products in the design process, listen deeply to the language they use, and make sure that's the language reflected in the product, even if it's ungrammatical as heck.

Because that's real. We don't need to dress that up. We don't need to make it fancy or formal or airbrush the language away. I go back to the *Mismatch* book by Kat Holmes that outlines the idea of inclusive design as including the people that it's for, whether it's people with disabilities or temporary abilities, because all we get in this world is temporary abilities. And someday they're all going to go away and that's the best-case scenario. So

sometimes I get tired, or I'm in an altered state. And I have to ask, "Wait, could you say that more slowly?" Maybe I just have a bad headache.

And I say, "This is hard for me to understand, can you simplify it for me? Can you make it easier for me to do the right thing?" That's what we're here for as UXers – for people, whether they're having a good day or a bad day, whether they are cognitively on tap or they're distracted, to be successful doing what they need to do with our products.

"

So when we can include people,
even when they're having a bad day,
that's the best.

I'm happy that you mentioned simplifying stuff, because whenever I talked to UXers about the huge battle between minimalism and maximalism, they always want to make everything minimal. I'm sensing that you're not exactly of this party, am I right?

One of the really important ways to make text usable is to make it concise and not include a bunch of stuff that isn't needed there. So in that sense, Roy West says short beats good. Except when clarity beats short. So really, instead of minimalism or maximalism, I'm all about utilitarianism. Does it work? When I get to the point where it's working,

then we can play with whether it still works when there's a little bit less. Or does it work a bit better when there's a little more? Sometimes you can change the entire feeling of a thing. We want to inspire good feelings about our products usually, and if we could change the entire feeling with one little adjective or adverb, maybe we should.

And other times, we shouldn't. But that's where the design comes in. We are not going to reduce those design positions or creative decisions. We can inform them with research or with AI modeling, but we're not going to eliminate how rapidly trained humans can make those decisions, and make those decisions well.

CHRISTIAN TRYLLER

- Roles and responsibilities between different design titles

- New technologies and tools for designers and the difference they bring

- Privacy and data management as an app designing and development issue

- Collaboration within bigger product-makers teams

17

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin. Today I'm joined by Christian Tryller. Christian, could you please tell us about yourself, your career, experience, and why you're a designer?**

Christian Tryller   I have about 18 years' worth of design experience. I started in the early 2000s with traditional design work, graphic design, branding design, and marketing design. And then in the late 2000s I made the transition to focus on UX and UI design. Specifically what caught my eye was the psychology behind the designs and analytics, and how the designs are really influenced by data. From there I just kept practicing and learning more about it, and taking different jobs, different roles, and different freelance opportunities. And then I was working with large organizations. I have worked with a number of different larger organizations, from healthcare organizations to product organizations. My last stint was with IBM for a number of years. Recently I made the transition to a biotechnology company based out of San Francisco.

You probably have to say a lot about trends in the job field of designer jobs, like UX designer, product designer. Because like whenever I talk to designers they have different opinions on how the field will like change. So do you think there's any specific trends? What's your vision of hiring?

It's important that organizations have a clear roadmap for designers and design practice within organizations.
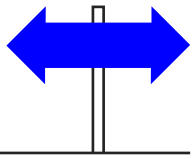
Whether organizations are hiring people as contractors or full-time employees, they should at least sort of groom or have conversations with designers in order to see where junior designers, mid-level designers, and even senior designers want to go. Specifically, whether they want to continue to be individual contributors and follow that roadmap for themselves because they're the type that want to always be designing and have their hands on projects, or they are designers that want to take on more of a leadership role from a management perspective.

In either case, either designer roadmap is essentially a leadership role. It just depends on what your focal area is going to be. I believe that it's important that organizations give designers those roadmaps and have conversations with them, rather than taking designers into organizations and then putting them in a production-work life.

So you wouldn't say that there's going to be a very specific shift in the design job landscape, but in more of an organizational approach?

Yes, and I think between UX research, UX design, information architecture, UI design, and prototyping—being a product designer, specifically—the roles and responsibilities between the different titles that are out there are going to eventually become very blurred. And you'll see that over the next five years, as teams are growing from two or three people to teams of 2000 designers, roles and responsibilities will shift. A typical designer who may get

"

hired to do UX research may end up doing some UX/UI design as well because of the needs of the organization.

As designers, we're always learning and we should always just be open to problem solving, whatever that opportunity may be.

There are new technologies coming into the design world, new tools that we can use. For example, in UX research, I'd say that AI is going to make a huge difference.

I think AI is going to be a helpful tool. I don't think it will replace UX research, because with UX research having that human touch and being able to be empathetic to individuals, actually understand their viewpoint, and having the same sort of tone and experiences of the individuals that you're interviewing is immensely important. I think we'll have tools that help expedite that actual process and help crunch that data as well. So it'll definitely be a useful asset along the way, but I don't foresee it fully replacing the job of the UX researcher.

Like you said, you were like kind of mesmerized by the psychology behind the UX job. So it's not something that computers can do, right?

At this point. I mean, who knows what may happen within the next 10 years. But today I don't think AI is at the point where it can completely replace UX research.

It's a huge help still, right? It helps to iterate and compute the data and stuff like that.

Yes. But let's think about it. We're an individual team of UX researchers. Let's say there are three UX researchers within a team and they split up a day of interviewing individuals. They interview anywhere from 15 to 20 individuals within a day. An AI system set up properly could probably interview a hundred individuals within that same day. The gathering of data can be expedited by using AI tools. So it's definitely there to help along the way.

But there still has to be a human who draws the conclusions, right?

Yes, definitely.

While we're speaking about technology trends, do you have a favorite trend or something that you are really looking forward to in the design field in 2020?

Yes, actually I'm looking past 2020 and over the next 10 years. Within this past decade, one of the big items that has come up is privacy and data. While we haven't completely solved the social media aspect of things, with people sharing their personal information and family photos and

stuff, I think within the next decade we're going to see another issue concerning privacy, privatization, and data being shared within the healthcare system, and how that problem's going to get solved. So an individual goes to, for example, get DNA testing. The results of that actual DNA testing – where's that information saved, where's it shared? How is it stored? Within the United States, I don't think we've solved that completely yet. I know Europe has handled that in a couple of different ways, but I think overall that's a bigger problem that we're going to see come along the way. That's going to be fun to try to solve with data and AI.

I don't know if you've heard about the 10-year challenge on social media. But I heard that they like started it only to get data on faces of people and how it changes in order to train AI, so it's gathering data. Maybe not violating, but playing with privacy.

Yes, I've heard that as well. I don't know how much truth there is to that, but you know, only time will tell.

And I think it's a huge issue, so designers or product makers have to approach that issue as well.

It's going to be a large design issue that we're going to have to try to solve across the board, but it's going to take everybody from engineering to product owners, to everybody involved from the top to the bottom to help solve that larger issue.

When I speak to designers in our interviews, I'm hearing that some of them like to be acknowledged as contributors to the business as well. So I think that collaborative workflows are going to be trending as well in 2020. Do you think so?

Yes, I do think so. It's important for designers, whether it be a freelance designer or a designer working within a larger organization, to establish relationships with their peers on teams. Once you're brought on board and you start to emerge onto a project, you've got to establish that conversation with the engineers. Establish that conversation with the content writers and the product owners and pull them to the side, have a one-on-one or go get a cup of coffee with them, and figure out how they like to work. Because from one designer to another, each designer works differently. That applies to all the other team members within organizations. So once you've had those conversations and established relationships with those individuals, that makes for a better product flow.

Exactly. And I think that resonates with what you said about blurred lines in job roles.
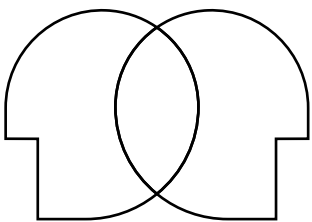
In my personal experience, I've had to learn how to become a content writer to a certain degree. Become a front end or back end developer and you'll have to read the language and understand the output and also be a project manager to make sure the project moves along. You have to wear a bunch of different hats. If you're

invested in a project and a product, and you want it to be successful, you have to do all these additional steps. It comes naturally to the individuals that are invested in these types of projects, so I don't think we're asking a lot of people.

Since we're talking about how you changed the course of your career, could you share your personal goals for 2020? Are they aligned with any specific trend in design? Or maybe not, maybe you're going evergreen. What are your goals?

I recently joined a new team, as I was saying earlier. I'm working in a new organization and that organization is starting to scale up and realize the importance of design within the organization. So my professional goal for design in 2020 is to work with this smaller team and help them grow, and help my team members out, but also help out the engineers and figure out how to work in a larger scale. I have experience, obviously. coming from a larger organization. So I have experience on how to juggle multiple projects and how to make sure that all those different projects have the right components to be successful. So I'm really looking to step into a leadership role within the organization for 2020.

Good for you. Fingers crossed!

ALEKS
SAFAROVA

- Trending titles and roles in the design field

- Hiring and empowering young designers as a leader

- Accessibility as a requirement not a trend

- More open and collaborative design processes

18

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends for UXPin. Today I'm joined by Aleks Safarova from KAYAK. Aleks, please tell us a bit about yourself.**

Aleks Safarova   I'm director of product design here at KAYAK. I started in traditional graphic design. I went to school at the Maryland Institute College of Art for branding, and then over the years moved into product design. I've been at KAYAK for about five years, then I left and came back as the director of product design.

The company must be awesome if you went back.

Yes. I love the challenges that we're solving. You know, being an international myself, travel is close to my heart, and the culture here is very invigorating. I guess a lot of people actually come back. I'm not the first boomerang, we call ourselves, to come back to KAYAK.

Today we will discuss your use of design trends for 2020, or the 2020s because you're entering a new decade, after all. You said that you started with branding and traditional graphic design. What would you say about the design job landscape right now? Because people are saying funny things, that UX designer jobs are disappearing or inventing design wizard jobs.

I think UX designer is a broad role. And while I feel it's not disappearing, I think it will be breaking down into a more specialized field. Right now, if you think about UX design,

that covers a wide range of skillsets including qualitative, quantitative, behavioral research, user mapping, flows, facilitation scales—the list could go on—interaction design. So I think what we'll start seeing is these responsibilities unbundle and become much more niche in the field of design.

Okay. Do you have any specific wishes that, as a leader, you're probably hiring for a very specific thing in mind?

At KAYAK, the way we approach roles and titles is we try to observe our designers and what they're interested in, and try to empower them to be more innovative and creative and use their skillsets as they see fit.
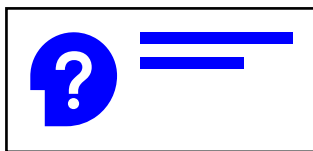
So honestly your title and your role could have a huge impact on the design of KAYAK; for example, on the front door, the price graph was designed by an intern, and it's one of our most successful features. So you know, titles are titles, but I don't think they should limit you or box you into something. Also, with new members coming in that are straight out of school or new to the industry, we actually prefer to give the title of designer and let them kind of see how they grow into a specific domain knowledge versus trying to pigeonhole them into UX design or brand design or product design.

Thank you for sharing, that's awesome. I would like to ask you one thing, because you're specifically product

design and close to technology, and I believe that you have a lot of smart things to say about that that area. My question is, because we have a whole digitalize/ social media thing going on in 2020, and AR/VR is a hot topic because I think it's going more from a social media and gaming world into more basic products. Would you say so?

I would say it's definitely moving towards that direction, but I will say personally, or as the brand KAYAK, we don't just innovate for the sake of innovation, just like we don't follow trends for the sake of trends. So we want to make sure that the features we're designing—if we are embracing technology—is actually useful for the users; for example, in 2019, we did actually release an AR bag measuring tool to help travelers understand if their luggage meets the overhead bin requirements across various airlines. That was a huge shift in a few years, helping passengers know whether you carry on, and if you have to pay extra, do you have to check in. So we did use that technology. But we didn't just say, "Okay, what can we do?" It really came from trying to figure out how to solve a problem. Then we used the AR application in iOS to do this. So I would say, we didn't do it just for the sake of it. Also, if you think about it, AR and VR are still pretty new and there are some accessibility challenges in education. VR does require additional hardware that not everyone has access to. So I think you need to know your users and whether it is something that they would have access to, whether or not you should invest in VR.

AR is still a very new technology, and we didn't grow up with it, and we're still trying to learn how to use it. I do think that's going to really shift for the younger generation ahead. It will become their go-to behavior. You're already seeing kids using Snapchat and Instagram, and little kids using AR technology and the filters. It's quite fascinating. They get it. So I see that changing actually quite a lot.

I see that too. I think Generation Alpha is rising up. It's amazing how we will have to change mindsets to make things usable for them.

Yes, for sure.

While we are talking about mobile devices and social media and Snapchat filters, I can see that there's a huge demand for device-dependent design. Would you say so?

I would say definitely, and again you really have to know what platforms your users are using and spending the most time on. For us, we're always looking for ways to make travel planning easier on the platforms that they spend the most time on. So when new platforms are introduced, KAYAK tries to consistently be among the early adapters. But again, you are looking at the use cases and the need. So for us, in 2017, we were the first company to introduce booking a hotel via voice, which

was pretty cool. Then in 2018 we enabled Siri shortcuts for travelers so they could pull up their travel information on their upcoming trip. And in September we were one of the first to do dark mode.

"

But again, you have to see where it makes sense to do it and ask yourself if it's actually going to be useful for your users embracing new technology on the platform and following the platform's specific design patterns.

Exactly. Well, at the end of the day, you are designing for the users. Always. No matter the trends. Is it new technology, or old technology? Never mind that, right?

For sure. I feel like you really have to look at new platforms and the new patterns. As designers working on technology, it's important for us to tailor the new user experience while also communicating our brand values in a unified way, without disrupting the platform-specific patterns that users are getting more and more used to. Like you said, Generation Alpha is going to be even more dependent on that in the future.

While we're talking about usability and patterns that the users are taking and are getting used to while we are designing, I'm sensing that we are becoming

more inclusive in this approach. So we talk about accessibility or inclusive design more and more, and I strongly believe and I really hope that this is going to be a serious trend in 2020. Would you agree with me on that?

I would take it even one step farther and say it will not be treated as a trend or even an afterthought, but it will be a requirement that will just need to be met. And actually it's going to be like a tool that helps designers to design for people. So it's not an afterthought, it's not just something you need, but it is a tool to help you design from the beginning of the process rather than investing in time in it later. Also, both accessible and inclusive designs are critical to creating great products for the greatest number of people and we do see more and more brands embracing it, which is I think amazing. I really hope that continues.

Yes, exactly. You said that you can kind of say something about your company culture with the design, and it says a lot.

Yes, for sure. And not only your company culture − it's more than just laws and compliances Isn't it just human to make sure that our products can be more widely used? I think that's really key. Not just the business goal, but do you want to reach a wider variety of audiences and users. That's it.

Me being in the design tool industry, I'm sensing that we, the design tool providers, are trying to make it more and more easy for the designers to design in that way.

Even in browsers like Google Chrome, you can easily see the contrast ratio now in code. If you click in spec mode, and then all these plugins that are both in Sketch and Figma, like the stark plugin for example, more and more tooling is available now to make it as seamless and part of the process as possible. But I think also, as a company, you need to really embrace inclusive design and shift your paradigm and the way you approach new feature development. It is an ongoing practice that draws from a full range of human diversity and emotional qualities. So to aid the shift, for example, we developed guidelines for our product managers and designers, from our engineers and quality assurance, making it a team responsibility. Everyone is accountable for it, rather than at the end of the process, for example, a QA catches it, or designers are like, "Oh wait, we forgot this."

Yeah, that wouldn't be a good process.

I know there are companies that have teams dedicated to just doing accessibility, but I believe there's going to be a shift. Everyone is going to be responsible for it, not just a team dedicated to this specific role.

Yes, fingers crossed. Aleks, would you share with us a trend for 2020 that you are really looking forward to, or your plans for 2020?

My favorite trend for 2020, and I think a lot of designers are already starting to talk about this, is less about anything specific to design and more about the design process. I'm super excited for the design process really opening up to the rest of the team so designers are not the only ones that own the design process or the final outcome. With tools like Figma and even Abstract, you can see the process throughout and I'm excited that more and more teams are embracing it. You're problem-solving together rather than being isolated, with just designers owning it and that's it. I'm really seeing that as a huge trend, and because of the new technology coming out, it's becoming easier and easier. It's restructuring the way that we are already working. Just thinking about when I first joined KAYAK to how it is now, it's so much more collaborative. And as our team grew it was important to keep people more aligned with what's going on. So I'm really excited for that trend of opening up the design process and designers becoming more facilitators and aligning in strategy rather than just pixel-perfect mocks or small interactions. It's becoming a different role, which I think is amazing, actually.

Thank you for mentioning that. As far as I remember, UXPin was one of the first design tools that actually had the collaborative feature, and we are really going

to look more into that in 2020. So that's a really good insight from you.

There were Google Docs, Google Drive and early processes that started pushing that collaboration in note taking or decks, and now it's opening up to other tools embracing this. I think it's amazing actually. I think you're getting better ideas. The quality of work is improving as more people are embracing the feedback loop early in the process. So I think it's really cool to see this and I'm excited to see what UXPin will come out with that drives collaboration.

Collaborate in real-time

UXPin gives you the power to build products as a team. When working together on a project, you'll see who's on the same prototype with you.

YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. SIMPLIFIED. <u>TRY FOR FREE</u>.

UXPin

KIM
LENOX

- Emerging trends in design jobs from the leadership perspective

- Hiring talented designers and setting them up for success

- How creative leadership roles mature in innovative organizations like Zendesk

- Product design and brand design being under one umbrella

- Designing with data and based on user experience research

19

UXPin   **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends by UXPin, today I'm joined by Kim Lenox. Kim, could you please tell us a little bit about yourself?**

Kim Lenox   I lead a product design, user research, and content strategy team as well as design systems at Zendesk. We have teams in nine offices, in eight countries, on four continents – we definitely have a globally-distributed team. I've been here for two years. Before this, I was at LinkedIn and did a little bit of design consulting at Adaptive Path and Lunar. I worked at POM, so I've gone back and forth in-house and consulting.

Because we're talking about 2020 design trends, as a leader could you tell me what emerging career trends for designers are coming up in 2020?

What I'm seeing are a couple of different things. Design operations has always been around, but I think they're finally wrangling what they are and what they do and how they can support designers, and those are coming up in different flavors.

You will see that even five years ago there wasn't a design operations conference, for example, and now there is and we rely heavily on them to be the glue. I think that that's an emerging trend. To be in that practice you could be coming from program management or project management, but also designers are moving in to make sure things run smoothly. That's an important part of

how you can actually enjoy what you do and also ship the products that you want to ship. So I think that's one big trend – design operations.

When I began my career we didn't have VPs of product design, so a growing trend is seeing design executives. It's no longer just directors reporting into product or a director of design reporting into engineering – there's a much bigger practice of design executives. The challenge is that there aren't many design MBA programs out there that are executive level. How does an executive in design have a conversation with the finance team and the global team, who are figuring out where our offices are placed, and things like that? It's a new muscle for design executives.

I report into the chief creative officer and Zendesk is very much ahead of the curve in having a chief creative officer and having a VP of product design. We also have an executive creative director of brand. So I think it's very nascent right now, but I'm starting to see more companies invest in product design and brand design being under one umbrella. We've been doing it for a while, from the very beginning. But what I'm seeing is that when the customer and the customer experience is wedded to the brand, then user experience also matters. You have to get them working together. Instead of brand being under marketing, and product design being under product or engineering, we have one discipline. That's actually worked really well for Zendesk and I'm starting
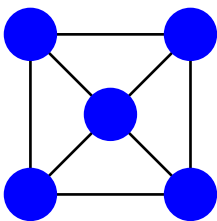
to see more companies doing that, but not necessarily at the scale that we're at. There are a few bigger companies that are doing it, but generally it doesn't happen.

I think it's going to happen more. That's another trend that's coming up. From an individual practice perspective, it depends on the maturity of the business. Small companies will have generalists that do product design, user experience research, content strategy. They'll do it all. As the company matures, they will start breaking out practices, and so when I arrived, I had a bunch of generalists for product designers. Some were better at visual, some were better at UX. Some were better at product strategy. Nobody was really exceptional with content strategy, so we hired in a practice of content strategy.
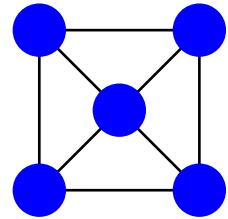
That's another emerging trend. I think you'll start seeing a lot more entire content strategy practices within groups. And user research has been around forever, but it's always been in another department, and a lot of companies have user research attached to product design. But in the case of Zendesk, we were talking to customers all the time – product management, customer success, sales, product design – but we didn't have a standard way of doing it. So I've also built out the user research practice at Zendesk – that's not trending new, that's us catching up, frankly. But that grouping of content strategy and design systems and user research, we call that our central design team. They work horizontally across all the

different practices. So I think that as companies mature, they shift their designers from generalists to specialists. So that's where we are now. We have a number of different specialists.

Because sometimes you get the whole design view and experience with marketing materials, and then you go into the product and it's entirely different, right? So you're keeping things consistent with the design ops and horizontal collaboration through whole creative departments.

Yes, exactly. And being able to have our brand designers and our product designers working together. We have a big conference coming up in March called Relate and it's in Miami this year. For all of the demos that our brand team is working on for this event, they're working directly with our product designers to make sure that they are representing the products correctly. I think that's really important. The reasons I joined Zendesk were that they had a chief creative officer, and that brand and product worked closely together.

But one of my reasons was that when I was at POM, we were acquired by HP. I was in charge of every single piece of software on the HP touchpad, which was a failed product. But at the time, we were going to launch and I'm walking down Market Street in San Francisco, and I see an ad on the bus shelter for my product with software that my team didn't design. Somebody in marketing at

HP thought it'd be a great idea to market this stuff, and somebody else at HP thought that they could just hire a design consulting firm to do the software, and I was terrified. I photographed it and brought it to my CTO and asked what was going on. It turns out that HP had hired somebody to do a bunch of music software, which makes sense. You want to have a music player on your tablet.
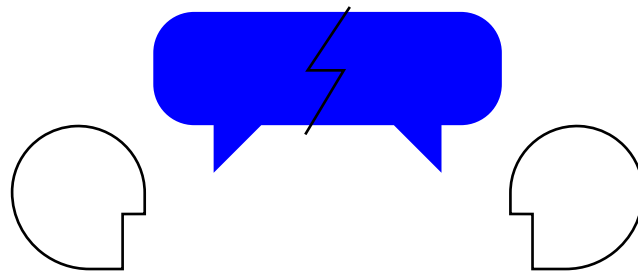
But it didn't work. They never talked to us. They never talked to the engineering team. They never talked to the design team, and so ultimately, it failed. There was a disconnect between POM and HP product and marketing and product design. The product failed because they weren't talking. I mean, there were a lot of other reasons that it failed, but from that very visceral moment on the streets of San Francisco, seeing that bus shelter showing this ad that I had no control over...from that moment on I sought out teams that had brand and product design working as one.

You said something about user experience being more drawn into decision-making with design teams, and that a few years ago business leaders thought designers were for painting and choosing colors. But

now as designers get a more solid seat at the table, I think designing with user data and user research is getting more and more important, right?

"

Absolutely. Because we have the data now, we can access it.

It's really important to be designing with data and that's something that my team is continuously looking at.

Zendesk does customer support software, so for example you send an email or maybe a tweet to a product that you want to have a conversation with. Maybe you're trying to return something, maybe a delivery didn't happen. We provide that software for a lot of major brands. So when you send that information, the agent needs to know who you are, where you live, is the return happening or not, where the product is, if it's actually something that's being delivered, where is it in the delivery process.

They need that data, and then we need to design that data in a way that is easy for them to digest. That's one way that we are designing with data – so that CRM is where Zendesk is headed, to provide a content management solution for all of our customers. The designer's job is representing the data in a meaningful way, and that's when it gets really interesting because you've got all these data points, but how do you distill it down to the

right information at the right time for the right audience? That's the fun part.

Yes. As you said with the HP product, you have got to know your end user really well to anticipate what they need and what they want, right?

Yes, exactly.

From the leadership point of view, I think that's a pretty huge challenge, to maintain everything under one umbrella, but also business-wise and management-wise.

It's definitely a challenge. I was saying before we started recording that my job is less designing products and more designing the organization so that the product teams are in a good position to build great products. I've got these nine offices, so my job is figuring out where the engineers are and our product partners are, and then placing designers, researchers, content strategists, and design systems folks so that we can actually do really good work.

I also have to consider careers for each and every person on my team. I want them to have a thoughtful career here and set them up for success for the next thing. So figuring out budgets, locations, levels of skills, product vision, and what's the right skill set that we need to get that done – that's what I do. I'm designing the organization.

That's a huge challenge. Do you have specific skills for the designer jobs at your company? What you are looking for in a designer? Can you give us some advice for people who are looking?

"

The best advice that I can offer for getting into product design is being adaptable, embracing ambiguity, and that fuzzy front end of, "We've got this problem that we need to solve for."

And we're not quite sure what that is. This came from a previous manager of mine, but I hire for the how and less for the what. The what is trainable in that you will be an expert in some tool or some particular skill, and then it will evolve. I was an expert at Flash. Totally irrelevant now, right? What does not matter? I don't put Flash on my resume anymore. The what is constantly evolving. The how, though, is the hardest part of the job. How you show up, how you present yourself, how you tell stories, how you persuade others to see your vision, not a chip on your shoulder, angry at the universe because engineering won't listen to you, but helping them see what you see. And then hiring for that, and grooming that.

The emotional intelligence piece is really important. I personally try to hire for the how, and then train up on

the what, because the what is just going to change. When I left using hands-on design tools, we were using Adobe Creative Suite. All the other tools I haven't touched at all − I have viewer licenses. The what changes. I spend a lot of time in Spreadsheets and Google Suite because that's where I'm at now.

Well, I think that's the perfect conclusion for a talk about trends, because some things are just in for a minute and some things are evergreen. I sincerely hope that all the design leaders are hiring like you, not for the what, but for the how. Having said that, thank you very much for your insights.

RAMSÉS CABELLO

- Titles and responsibilities in product design and development

- Curating the culture of customer experience in organizations

- Product design being closer to the real life of the user

- Accessibility-first product building

- Intentional design: challenging the complexity of apps

20

UXPin **Welcome to 2020 Design Trends with UXPin. Our guest today is Ramsés Cabello. Ramsés, can you tell us a bit about yourself, such as your work experience? What is your field of design?**

Ramsés Cabello I work at GAN Integrity in Copenhagen. My role in the company is UI engineer, but I mostly work throughout the whole design process. My main focus is prototyping ideas and concepts so that we can interact with them and validate them with the customers. So I've been working in design industry for around seven or eight years now.

I've hardly ever heard of your role, UI engineer. Can you tell us a little bit about it because I know you are a designer or product designer, and engineering is usually separate, right?

I feel this whole title thing is very difficult. For some companies, the same title might mean one thing and for other companies it means something else. I feel like a UI engineer is mostly related to working closely with the development team, and making sure that the designs and the prototypes you create are implemented as close to the design as possible. It's kind of interesting that you talk about this topic because I've felt for a while that we've been struggling to find out what my role and title are.
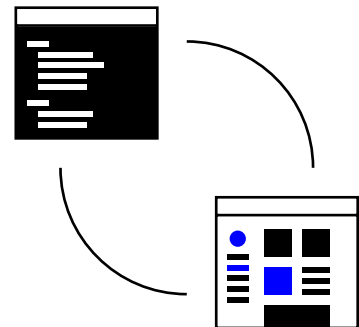
I think it changes a lot. Let's talk about the 2020 trends right now. I've heard that some jobs are going to disappear or evolve into something else. While we are speaking about your title—which is really rare—could you tell me your thoughts on the idea that UX designer jobs will be disappearing and new jobs will be emerging in 2020?

"

I think for a long time, as designers, we have been wearing too many hats.

I do this role, but in the end I also kind of do everything throughout the process. So I feel that as more specific roles will be appearing, I also sense that they will be sounding more like a "UX culture curator" in the company. Somebody who is responsible for all those different people. There's something about "curation," and I don't like the words "management" or "manager," but I feel designers have this responsibility to ensure that everybody in an organization knows that UX is everyone's responsibility. This is a feeling of curating the UX community within the organization. So I see the need for more roles like that.

So it's not going to be just speaking about users or talking about user experience, but actually going through the whole process, from making it the smoothest you can get—like throughout the whole organization—and making sure to collaborate each time.

I think there's a big need for curation and helping everyone in the organization understand that the UX designer can shape the design of the experience as an interactive point of view or service point of view. But at the end of the day, how sales sell their product, or how every different part of the company speaks about the product and how the customer and organization interact, there must be somebody curating these experiences. So I don't know, it sounds like a "design culture curator" or something related to that kind of concept, you know?

Yes. There's this whole new field of business called customer experience. But now people in business or marketing roles are expected to know a lot about customer experience, because I think we are switching the focus from brand and product to real people, and the more real the brand is the more authentic the relationship with the customer or user is, right? So I strongly believe that it's in the design as well, for example in photographs, real life beauty... it's no longer one type of model. But people are not photoshopping pictures as much. Do you think that this trend is like really holistic, like from the business side to the customer side, to real life people?

I love photography and I love street photography and for me, street photography is about capturing all these daily interactions in a very lighthearted way. I think also in this trend that you mentioned, of real life, how can we apply that to products, for example, or UX. It kind of

reduces the intermediaries between the product and the real people that are going to use it. For example, in the field I work, I would say that the most important thing is that people get to the data as soon as possible. So we try to cut all these things in between—how can we reduce that? How can we make the product more real and avoid putting in filters? I think it's about reducing complexity. Photoshop, at the end of the day, is like selling an idea that's not real; it's like retouching reality to fit a specific mindset, but there are several mindsets. There are too many. It must be diverse.

"

So I feel like if you put it out there and you don't sugarcoat it, if you don't put filters on it, then people can relate easily. It doesn't look like it's out of their reach.

And speaking of more diverse, I think especially UI design is shifting towards being more open to all kinds of people. It's not like, okay, this is the typical user and we are only focused on them. From what I gather, accessibility is a huge trend. It's not supposed to be a trend, but a must in our times. So I'm really hoping that in 2020, it will be a must—what do you think?

For a very long time, I've had these ideas how trends, like mobile first, all come and go. But there has never been

something like accessibility first. There has never been this whole idea of putting accessibility in the first row of this story. So I feel this year—and not only this year, but forever and ever—we should just have accessibility on top of everything. And I also get the feeling that when we think about accessibility, we tend to think it's kind of like so out of our everyday, right? So we don't tend to relate very much to it as a designer, but I think industries that have never thought that accessibility will be relevant are now suffering the pains of not having thought about that before.
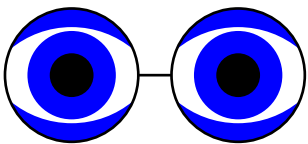
For example, I am also very close to the video game industry and many video games are struggling because they did not think about problems with eyesight. Some users with eyesight problems will be playing games where the subtitles or the text or the UI is very complex. Last year, I had to drop so many games because I could not play due to the text being very small. I hope that means more industries will wake up and see that accessibility is not just a trend—we have to be accessible. But it's also more about opening your product or whatever you're building to as many people as possible.

I was going to say that speaking from a design tool point of view, I think technology is making it so much easier for designers to really be able to design real life experience, or be accessible. Do you have an experience of how you would build this real life experience in your work?

Yes. Again, we're using UXPin and for me it's the tool that I use constantly, because it allows me to take accessibility on the go. Over the past year there was implementation of new features to check accessibility, like the tags, the textbook, the size of the text and the color contrast, and stuff like that. Because of all the small features that allow us to build a very high-fidelity prototypes, whatever we display to customers or colleagues is always as close to reality as possible. I see people in my company clicking around and, by mistake, they forget that this is not the real thing. Sometimes you need to remind them that this is just the prototype. Especially regarding accessibility, I would like to see tools and implementing, in context, accessibility tools. Very often for developers, you see plugins or consoles where you can check the accessibility of the site, but very rarely do we see design tools also take this approach.

I think we have a few features to come in 2020. So while we are speaking about your point of view and your experience, what will be your favorite emerging trend for 2020?

Maybe this is a little bit controversial, but I think during this year we need to take a minimalist approach. What do we actually need? And during this year, we're going to have to try to fix a lot of the mess we've created in the last decade. We've been making too many apps, too many products and just too many things or creating too complex designs in general. This year I would really like

"

to see more designers and product people taking new approaches. Do we actually need that thing?

I would love intentional design to be a trend. Why are we designing this?

That's a really good trend that I would like to see as well, because I think the design is not a good design unless it's usable. But the more we dive into business and money is taking part in it, the more we kind of drift off of the how—how are they supposed to use it and is it really necessary.

In my field, which is a compliance solution, it's kind of strict because it's regulated by law. But enterprise software has a very interesting take on design because until now, it has been enough to have a long list of features. We take the enterprise software, because we can do more or you can do less. But at the end of the day, the consumer products are getting better. They have good design, they are being exposed to really, really good applications or really good websites. So I don't feel it's enough for enterprise software to have a 'good list' of features. That is not enough. So I see enterprise software embracing design more into their everyday.

So even customers will pick one product or the other, even if some of the features are not available yet but the
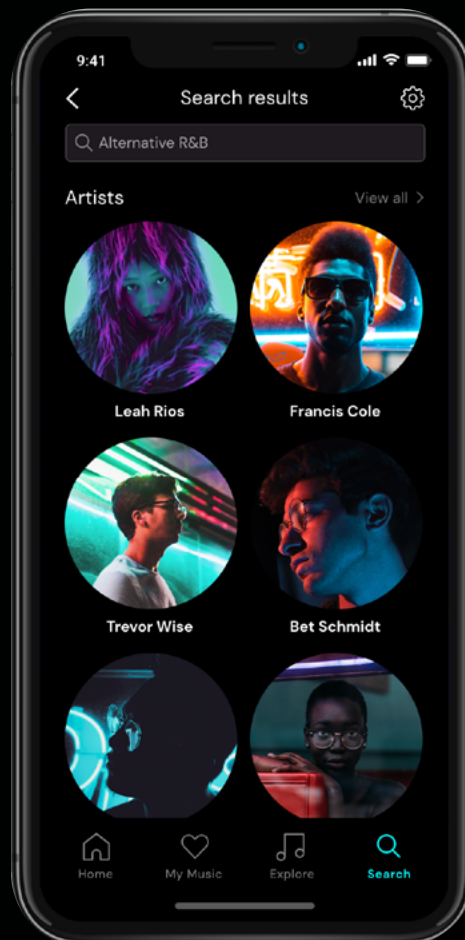
design and the experience is nicer. They'd think, "I might pick that one. Maybe I can do a little bit less, but this one can do it and perform it better and easier." That is something to think about this year in enterprise software. You can also see that thought process coming from a long time with Atlassian or others—they are embracing design a little bit more.

Fingers crossed that it is going to happen. You've given us some amazing insights on 2020 trends, and thank you very much for joining me today. I hope we can engage in this discussion with our community.

UXPin

Your whole team together

Bring your team together in the collaborative design platform and start building the best experiences today. From first ideas and mockups to prototypes and hand-off – stay connected and ship products faster. Manage your design process in context and in one place.

Start now