Future Career Aspirations and Goals

Claire Smith

University of South Florida

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Prof. Long

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My major is Information Science with a concentration in Web Development. I hope to be in UX design in the future, with UX standing for User Experience. Some of the activities that would ensue include researching the users of a product, creating personas around them, researching and adhering to guidelines related to accessibility and other common usability needs, as well as creating low and high fidelity deliverables for the final product, which could be a website, an app, or another product. Information science has helped prepare me for this career path in a variety of ways including understanding the structures of a website and how to build one, information architecture and interactive design, the importance of security, and the organization of data and information. Even if I don't directly interact with one of these aspects, the job of the UX designer is to play an intermediary role between the different departments, the stakeholders, and the users needs. Web development in particular is important because a UX designer would be working closely with that team on the execution of website updates, or in a smaller company, might fulfill the role of both designer and developer. This career interested me because originally when I was on the path to becoming a graphic designer, I found that the product users and their needs were the most interesting aspect of product building for me. My older sister had switched careers into UX design and was experiencing a lot of success, and I came to talk with her about her job and it sounded like a good fit for me. A common issue in the industry is that there are many people coming from a wide background of majors, but there is not one singular major focused on UX design. I had a lot of artistic and design experience from high school, and my first year in the graphic design program, but felt I needed to

familiarize myself with the technological side that would be necessary for a career in UX design, therefore I changed majors to Information Science.

I do not have any job experience in UX, however, I am currently taking an internship in marketing and brand development. The issues related to marketing and branding are also issues that UX designers may face, as the mediator between the clients and stakeholders. They have similar deliverables such as researching users and their needs, and what the company can do to advertise to their target audience, as well as designing branding and marketing material with the client's needs, emotions, and experiences in mind. I have not visited the Career Services Website or attended Career Services events, but might attend an event in the future. My current internship is the only relevant job experience I have towards my chosen career, besides perhaps interpersonal skills developed as a photographer as well as some light editing and design skills also gained from that experience.

Last spring, I took a global tech class that focused on developing coding and web design skills, however there was a section devoted to UX design where discussions were led by an expert in the field. I've done some research on UX design both through the internet and with USF's library services, especially when I was researching what skills I would need to learn for my career. Through the USF libraries database, I mainly found informative videos such as "About 'UX Product Design'"[1] and "Ux Design Basics"[2] which explained that UX designers come from a variety of backgrounds, including social sciences, graphic design, and marketing, and that they focus on user research, usability testing, screen design, information architecture and communication with stakeholders.

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[1] Foster. (2018). *Software careers. UX product designer*. Makematic.
[2] *What Is Ux Design?* (n.d.). Howcast.

Research and prototyping are emphasized, with wireframes being the main prototype deliverable which consists of what the user will see through the website or app. Some common goals a UX deliverable may tackle include how a user navigates a site, their ability to interact in different environments or on different devices, or even their emotional responses to different content. Through the internet, I have researched what the difference is between UX, and other related topics such as User Interface, Human Computer Interaction, Information Architecture, and Web Design. In general, UX Design is a broad field that covers many of these topics, but might not be putting together the final product. That task of building is generally saved for the web designers and UI designers, though an understanding of how to do it is crucial. Instead, research, prototyping, testing, and analysis are the day to day activities of UX designers, but an understanding and application of these other fields is important, and indeed, may fall under UX design. There are a few websites and blogs that I have found helpful, such as Career Foundry, Coursera, UX Design Institute, and Branstation. Something new I learned from talking to my sister is that there are legal guidelines that a website must follow to adhere to accessibility laws that the UX designer makes sure are followed, such as colors being distinguishable enough that visually impaired users can view the company's website.

In order to apply for jobs, I am in the process of building a website portfolio to showcase any relevant projects I've done, and my coding skills. In addition to improving my coding, I also want to familiarize myself with the tools and applications I would use in the field such as Figma for prototyping and Google Analytics for research. There is also a Tampa UX meetup group that I would like to join in order to network. While at USF, I

am working toward a Studio Art minor and Art History certificate in order to make use of

the art classes I took when starting college. I hope to be well rounded so that I can be

competitive in the workforce after college.

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