PharmaQuery Design Documentation

PharmaQuery User Experience/ User-Oriented Design Documentation

Processes

User-Centered Design is the methodology of focusing on the end-users' perceptions and habits to map the web application experience, in place of the vision of a single creative source.

The process of 'Participatory Design' is defined as including the user as part of the design process through iterative testing and feedback. This ensures that the end-product properly serves the end-user with the least amount of work, thought, and road-blocks.

We demonstrate the following processes to bring importance to the product we deliver and support.

Personas

> User profiles are identified and created by researching demographics of people most likely to use the particular application. Personas are created from those demographics and given relatable biographies and a humanized situation to comprehend their potential interaction with the app. This narrows down the user group to people who would gain the most benefits as a user. Each persona has a picture, biography, a tagline and a potential storyline. We use those personas to determine a potential interviewee. In the case of PharmaQuery, we targeted pharmacists, patients in pharmacy lines, journalists, and doctors for interviews.

User Interviews

> A basic list of questions is developed and used for interviews. The results of these interviews are then collected, and we make a determination if we need more information. We start with very broad questions like "What do you expect from this application that does [a particular task]?" These answers help us understand the motives and work patterns of our potential users. The PharmaQuery interviews gave us a great deal of insight to user requested features.

Workflow Determination

> We map our findings with flowcharts that demonstrate the most direct way to achieve the user end-goal. This then becomes the what we hope to achieve as the main workflow. It can be as simple as a straight line that points from A to B. This workflow is kept in mind as we create the actual product.

User Testing

We obtain confidence in our findings by assuring them with preliminary wireframe testing. AB testing is done with simple wireframe drawings or suggestions on paper or cards to confirm that the workflows are correct. If there are too many discrepancies among the users' initial reactions, we return to interviews to determine reasons for the inefficiency.

With the PharmaQuery testing, we quickly determined our users had two interests for the FDA API: search and browse. Users had also a number of ideas in addition to our main feature. Here we had to make a decision to limit the app's purpose and backlog optional features.

Prototyping with a Wireframe

We use the results from paper testing and translated those wireframes to an interactive wireframe prototype. The previous paper wireframes show little of the components or hint at a website design. The new wireframes add placeholders and content suggestions for users to regard while they navigate the preliminary design prototype. In this aspect, what the user sees is the pure website function, without the elements of color and imagery to distract from purpose. This should ultimately be the last stage of big workflow changes before implementation, to lessen the developer time. This final wireframe is thoroughly user tested and client tested before the front-end developer starts major implementation.

The Design Comp

The comp is based on the final wireframe. A big point not to ignore in User-Centered Design, is that the aesthetic details of the application do not detract from the product's mission. The comp may be delivered in the form of a detailed wireframe, or images. But whatever the medium, the wireframe and purpose should be instantly recognized, and the visual appeal comes second.

Accessibility and User-Oriented Design

At least ten percent of users have a kind of disability. Designing for all users takes into consideration users who are color-blind, mobility-impaired, deaf or other kind of impairment. We test to ensure that color contrasts, text size, and tabbing orders cater to include any potential application user.