

# INFORMATION VISUALIZATION

*Student work at the School of Information, Pratt Institute*

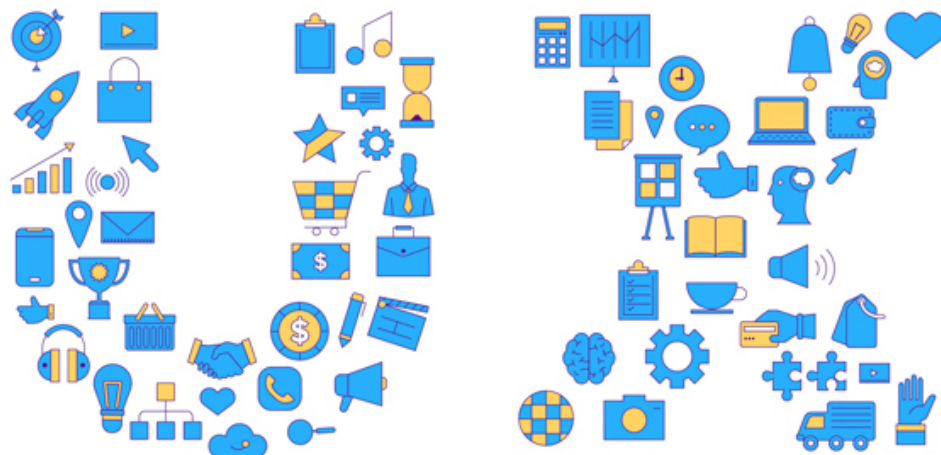
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## THE HISTORY OF USER EXPERIENCE

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Lab Reports, Timelines

## USER EXPERIENCE



*Image Credit: Reach First*

# Introduction

The history of User Experience is a rich history that includes a lot more than just the computer industry. Most things we use as a human has evolved to be simpler and easier for us to use. Even without realizing it the practice of User Experience has been put into everything we create. The goal of User Experience is to create products that are easy for a human to use. This is true whether in the physical or digital realm. This project attempts to explore some of the key historic events that showcase the evolution of User Experience from the early ages of China and Greece to the modern age of Donald Norman keying the terminology that has created a booming profession.

## Material

To demonstrate the history of User Experience as a simple to interpret timeline a tool called [Timeline.JS](#) was utilized. This is an open source JavaScript library that is maintained by a team at [Northwestern University](#). This tool is simple to use and takes in a [Google Sheets](#) document; which is a spreadsheet style document, to render the timeline.



The material presented was sourced from the different places, however the majority of the content came from articles reviewing the evolution and history of User Experience. Sites like [CareerFoundry](#) and [Fast Company](#) both offered useful reviews on the subject and their information was used to create a timeline based on the history presented of User

## Process

**Timeline Data**

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
	Year	Month	Day	Time	End Year	End Month	End Day	End Time	Display Date	Headline	Text	Media	Media Credit	Media Caption	Media Thumbnail	Type
1																
2										The History of User Experience	The history of User Experience is a rich, ever-evolving field that has ties back to ancient China and Greece. This timeline explores how User Experience was used even before a name for it existed and the evolution of it from physical items to digital items in the modern time have evolved over the last 6000 years.	<a href="https://www.reachfirst.com/how-user-experience-can-improve-your-digital-marketing-strategy/">https://www.reachfirst.com/how-user-experience-can-improve-your-digital-marketing-strategy/</a>	Reach First	<a href="https://www.reachfirst.com/how-user-experience-can-improve-your-digital-marketing-strategy/" title="How User Experience Can Impact Your Digital Marketing Strategy">How User Experience Can Impact Your Digital Marketing Strategy</a>		title
3	-4000								4000 BC	Feng Shui and the importance of space	Dating back some 6,000 years, Feng Shui literally translates as "wind" and "water", and refers to the spatial arrangement of objects (e.g. furniture) in relation to the flow of energy (chi). In practice, Feng Shui is all about arranging your surroundings in the most optimal, harmonious or user-friendly way—be it an office, bedroom or entire building. It concerns everything from layout and framework to materials and colors. According to the International Ergonomics Association, ergonomics—or human factors—is "the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design and optimize human well-being and overall system performance."	<a href="https://l.pining.com/">https://l.pining.com/</a>	Tess Cabarrubias, Pinterest	<a href="https://www.pinterest.com/pin/357051076683907334/" title="Learn All About Your Feng Shui Bagua Area for Your Home or Office">Learn All About Your Feng Shui Bagua Area for Your Home or Office</a>	<a href="https://www.dictionary.com/terms/feng-shui">https://www.dictionary.com/terms/feng-shui</a>	title
4											One of the strongest indications that the Ancient Greeks were well aware of ergonomic principles is the way that Hippocrates described how a					

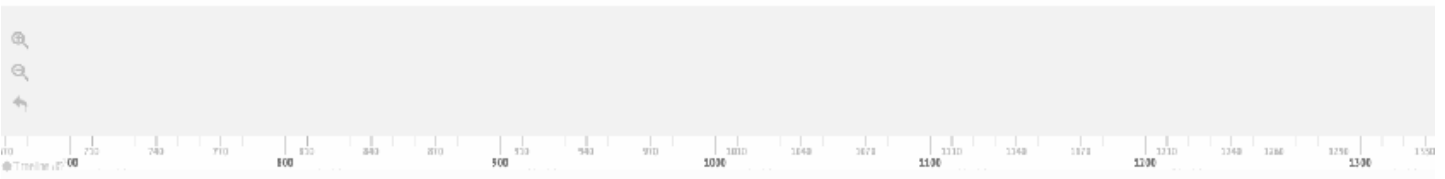
With the core data in the system the timeline was rendered and validated. Some finetuning of the options were done to get a better initial zoom level to match the data ranges used. After the data was defined, images on the topic were searched for from across the Internet. The goal was to find an image for each entry that was visually appealing within the TimelineJS system and represented the topic appropriately and had the closes support to trigger instant recognition to the end user using this timeline.

## Outcome



Leonardo's Da Vinci engineering drawing from 1501 on textured background

Linda Dornasani: Shutterstock



*[The final project can be viewed here.](#)*

The final outcome yielded a simple to follow timeline going from ancient China with the use of layout to alter the feeling and usability of a user's environment to the current use of User Experience in social media to help users understand real verse fake information. As the timeline approaches the modern age the influence of Donald Norman becomes more and more notable as User Experience applies to the digital age.

While User Experience has been used throughout history, even without realizing it, the digital realm required more research and process to create a usable product. For example, creating a kitchen table that is the height a user needs to be able to sit comfortably at it and use items on it seems like an obvious requirement; it is still utilizing User Experience principles and research. However, in the digital realm these requirements are not as clear since the user will use a computer or other device to perform the interactions meaning no ergonomic principles are defined.

## Reflections

Reviewing the history of User Experience was an interesting topic and uncovered many aspects showing that User Experience design has been around for centuries even if it did not

yet have a name. While this timeline ended up being a bit skewed toward the modern age it still introduced the use of User Experience in the ancient times and the industrial revolution. Although I am certain that many innovations during the industrial revolution would qualify for user experience this timeline only covered a few. With more time a more detailed timeline could be crafted showcasing the inventions that simplified the life of either the workers at factories or the final consumer.

There are many speculations about where User Experience will go and with the current trend of artificial intelligence, self-driving cars and virtual reality the future of User Experience should be rich with innovations leading to better and simplified lives for humanity.

## Works Cited

- [Nielsen Norman Group – Don Norman on the term “UX”](#)
- [Fast Company – A Brief History of User Experience Design](#)
- [CareerFoundry – The Fascinating History of UX Design – A Definitive Timeline](#)
- [PBS – Who Made America? – Frederick Winslow Taylor](#)
- [Toyota – Toyota Production System](#)
- [Industrial Designers Society of America – Henry Dreyfuss](#)
- [Nielsen Norman Group – Design of Everyday Things](#)

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