Daniel R. Huron

✉ daniel.huron@outlook.com   📞 (281) 851-5004   👤 linkedin.com/in/drh/

I discoverd user experience research while attending a conference early in my design career. I was thrilled: "I don't have to guess which designs the audience will care about?" Thus began my decade-plus obsession with user research. I started small: interviewing the students, faculty, and staff at the college I worked at, learning to write and evaluate surveys. I read user research books, took online courses, and attended design jams. I integrated user experience into my design process more and more. In 2021, I joined AT&T as a User Experience Researcher. Whether influencing an internet purchase flow seen by millions or a promotional video viewed by hundreds, my goal has always been to respect the user. I strive to understand what makes them smile, what makes their fists clench, and what they'd rather be doing instead of interacting with our interface. Designs that respect users' realities will outperform those that don't each and every time. It's my mission to remind my colleagues of the humanity behind the digital solutions we build.

Shared Wireless Bill Payment Experience

Difficulties splitting and paying shared wireless bills leads to customer attrition, negatively impacting the organization's customer base.

Background

Our remote, seven-person Customer Experience Technology team was tasked with developing a best-in-class split payment system to address long-standing customer demands for simplified shared wireless bill management. The Design Technology division previously attempted to solve the issue but their solution remains unimplemented. A review of their work revealed a strong strategy lacking in customer-centric insights. During our initial briefing, we learned the User Experience division was on track to release an MVP split payment experience by summer. Upon consultation, we found their design was not grounded in research-based insights. While it was clear customers wanted help paying their shared bills, their current payment methods remained largely unknown to us.

Objectives

- Develop an optimal split payment experience that could launch in two to three years
- Enhance shared wireless payment experience, differentiating the organization from competitors.
- Influence the future of shared bill payments while aligning customer needs and business goals.

Work

To help the team understand the customer's current experience, I interviewed 11 account owners and members, gathering stories about the ups and downs of paying shared bills. Each participants engaged with the UX prototype, allowing for comparisons with their current payment experience. We shared this feedback with UX who implemented it into their design.

I synthesized the interviews into four pain points. After much consideration, the team decided to broaden the project scope to include profiles and permissions. This shift would better address our customer's needs, create new business opportunities for the organization, and give us the best chance to fulfill our mandate.

My research partner and I collaborated with analytics to examine our organization's existing permission features. We tested various prototypes, working with design to ensure accurate validation data. We alternated between moderated and unmoderated testing depending on prototype complexity. When possible, I seized opportunities for further discover research to enhance our understanding of shared billing.

Results

Our team proposed strategies and design solutions that would:
- Empower shared-plan members to pay their portion of the bill and troubleshoot issues without involving the account owner.
- Decrease late payments thus minimizing customer support interactions.
- Identify new customers for tailored content and cross-sale opportunities

Reflection

I initially recruited interview participants with only one additional member in their shared plan. Realizing I needed stories from people with three or more

members, I adjusted my screener with satisfactory results. Due to the unique nature of this project, gathering strong quantitative data from within the organization proved challenging. I missed the opportunity explore creative data collection methods. Going forward, I will not miss an opportunity to enrich our storytelling with additional insights and depth.

Conclusion

Through research and collaboration, our team pinpointed key issues and expanded our project scope to better serve our customers and the business. Our proposed strategies and designs seek to empower the customer, reduce customer support interactions and open new business opportunities.

Online Customer Support Chat

Identify the qualities of a chat platform that customers consider most attractive and helpful

Background

The Customer Experience research department was asked to evaluate customer sentiment towards Apple Messages for Business (AMB). Our stakeholder, who manages our organization's customer support chat features, wanted to assess the service's viability for broader organizational use. After discussing the project with the head of the research department, I proposed conducting a survey of various chat platforms to identify preferred features and develop heuristics for identifying platforms worthy of future investment.

Objectives

- Develop heuristics for evaluating chat platforms for future investment

Work

My first task was to understand how Apple Messages for Business works. I studied marketing materials, manuals and identified companies already using AMB. I used this information to create an interview guide and a screener for participants who'd recently used AMB to contact customer support. During interviews, I collected user stories on why they chose Apple Messages, their favorite features and comparisons

to past chat experiences. Using the findings, I wrote and distributed a survey to 200 people via UserZoom to gather quantitative data on preferred chat features.

And then plans changed. The head of our research department shifted me to a new project focused on virtual assistant chat experiences. Although I wouldn't be completing the survey of chat platforms as planned, the data I collected during the Apple Messages for Business project would prove beneficial.

Working under a tight deadline, I created and distributed a survey to 150 participants. Anticipating skepticism about chatbots, I designed the survey to identify opportunities to cultivate consumer trust in the technology. Using data from this survey and previous AMB work, I expanded existing personas to include more insights about chat. I also developed a set of heuristics for evaluating chat platforms, which I shared with our original stakeholder..

From the list below, select the top three factors you value most when interacting with customer support besides getting your problem solved.

(#1 is what you value most. #2 is what you value second most and so on.)

Instructions: Select and drag items into right column to order.

The quality of the information I received.		Most Valuable	1
The quality of care I received. (For example, the agent treated me with empathy.)			2
The time it takes to resolve a problem.		Valuable	3

Results
The Customer Experience Technology team I reported my findings to developed strategies to increase customer trust in virtual assistants and decrease reliance on human agents.

Our organization's customer chat division gained the ability to quickly evaluate chat platform, streamlining strategic investment decisions.

Reflection
Although I was disappointed I didn't finish my chat platform project, I was impressed with how smoothly I transitioned to the new project. I'm pleased with the widespread utilization of the personas I developed. Finally, while I'm satisfied with the surveys I wrote and the resulting data, I remain committed to improving my survey writing skills. Specifically, I want to craft questions that make the participants consider their answers thoughtfully, which should result in higher quality data.

Conclusion
Although I was unable to complete the project as planned, my efforts proved valuable in advocating for additional investment in Apple Messages for Business. The insights I delivered during my initial work proved instrumental in informing strategies to increase customer trust in virtual assistants. The personas I created continue to aid our research and strategic decisions. I take price in my adaptability and remain committed to improving my survey writing skills..

Internet Equipment Upgrade Experience

Develop an internet equipment upgrade experience within a home internet management app.

Background
Our company planned to introduce enhanced home internet equipment, with our current high-speed internet customers eligible for a free upgrade. However, the company decided against automatic upgrades. My team in the Customer Experience Technology division was tasked with developing an upgrade experience within the company's internet management app. Additionally, we were tasked with devising strategies for showcasing a premium equipment offering within this upgrade experience.

Objectives
- Improve customer satisfaction by providing free equipment upgrades to high-speed internet users.
- Drive marketing initiatives to shape consumer behavior.
- Increase company revenue through premium package subscriptions.

Work
After conducting stakeholder interviews and reviewing product documentation, my research partner and I questioned if customers would relate to the technical features the product
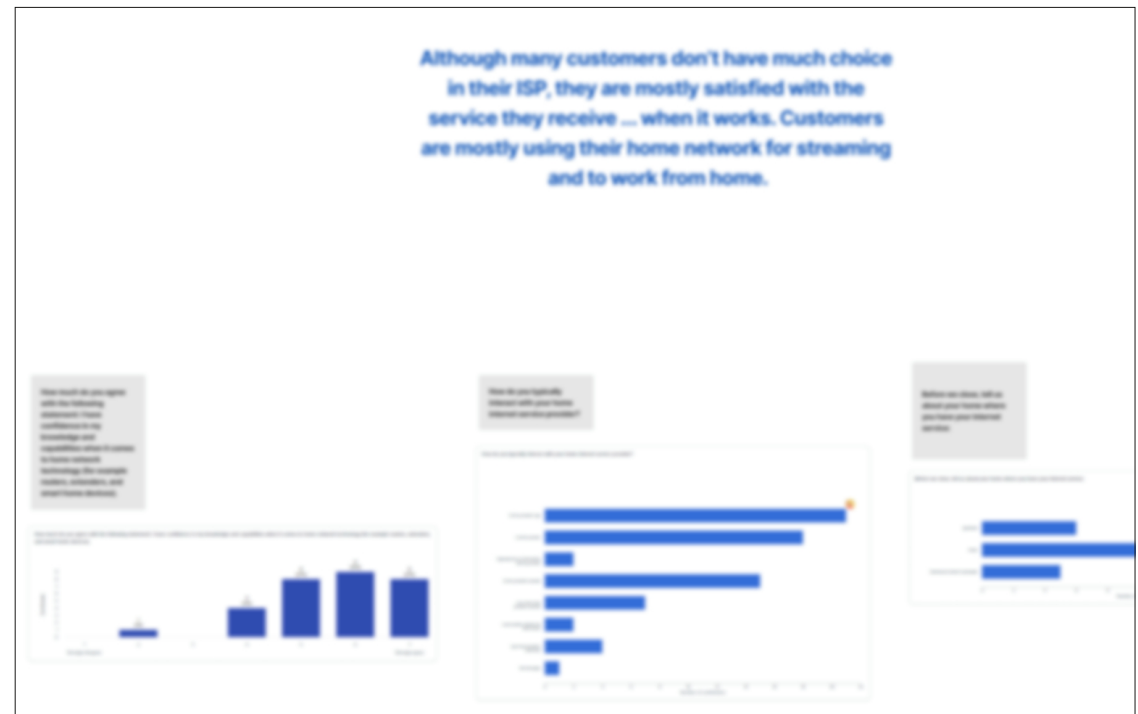
team wanted to highlight. To assess customer understanding and the perceived value of internet technology, I wrote and distributed a survey to 30 participants via UserTesting.com (see Reflection for more information).

We then partnered with our analytics team to analyze current upgrade experiences within our company's internet management app. As a researcher, my role involved scrutinizing the data, aligning it with the customer journey and deriving actionable insights to inform our strategy.

The insights gleamed from our survey and friction maps were instrumental in shaping our overarching strategy, guiding the team's designers and content strategist throughout prototype development.

During prototype testing, my aim was not only to assess our participants' ability to navigate the design but to also gather data on why features did or didn't work. These insights underscored the value of our strategies, aiding the refinement of subsequent iterations and providing compelling evidence for the product team to adopt our recommendations.

Results
The prototypes and strategies we presented to the product development team seek to:
  • Enhance understanding of how upgraded internet technology can optimize the home network experience.
  • Provide clear explanations of how the premium equipment package further enhances the capabilities of the customer's home network and maximizes its value.

Reflection
My research partner and I initially planned to conduct our survey on UserZoom to gather 200 to 300 responses. However, after launching it, we only received a

Customers appreciated information on how extenders help boost coverage across home and the amount of square feet it covers. However, more detail is needed to satisfy questions. During the upgrade equipment test, P1 mentioned she uses 3 eero Pro's in her home and probably needs 2 more to get the coverage she wants. The fact AT&T would give her up to five extenders is attractive to her, however, the prospect of ordering one extender at a time and slowly rebuilding her network frustrates her.

dozen responses. We revamped our screener, relaunched, but once again, the results were disappointing. We lost confidence in UserZoom's panels and decided to transfer our study to UserTesting. Although by no means a survey platform, we had more confidence in UserTesting's panels and appreciated the opportunity to gather verbal responses from participants. This experience taught me the importance of flexibility, of leveraging tools creatively and finding opportunities in less-than-ideal circumstances.
.
Conclusion
Our research and analysis unearthed insights into customer preferences and effective ways to convey technical information. We utilized creative methods to collect necessary data and continuously gathered insights that emphasized the importance of our efforts. In conclusion, I am confident our work will enhance the customer experience and contribute to the growth of our company.

Daniel R. Huron

✉ daniel.huron@outlook.com   📞 (281) 851-5004   👤 linkedin.com/in/drh/