UX FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson 1 Handout

Welcome To UX Fundamentals

ABOUT THIS HANDOUT

This handout includes the following:

- A list of the core concepts covered in this lesson.
- The assignment(s) for this lesson.
- A list of readings and resources for this lesson including books, articles and websites mentioned in the videos by the instructor, plus bonus readings and resources hand-picked by the instructor.
- A transcript of the lecture videos for this lesson

CORE CONCEPTS

1. Web design is interactive design: what happens when your customers scroll, what happens when they move their mouse, what happens when they click, or swipe, or pinch. You have the ability to watch and measure what your users do with these interactions and then use that data to build a website or app that will make the customer happy (and allow your client to meet their goals!)
2. A user experience (UX) designer helps craft everything that a customer sees and does and learning UX means knowing how to use a lot of different tools: how to experiment, how to listen to people, how to solve problems analytically by collecting and using data.

ASSIGNMENTS

This assignment is a light introduction to designing with users in mind. You'll do a short sketching exercise, using pencil (or pen) and paper. If you're not a good draftsman, that's okay! The emphasis is on ideas, not drawing skills.

Take a sheet of paper and draw lines to divide it into quadrants (four equal-sized boxes). You'll have four minutes to sketch up to four ideas in those boxes. This sketch exercise is for a product, not for a website; that's okay, and we'll apply the same principles to websites in future lessons.

Your 4-minute sketch exercise is to design a better television remote control. The sky is the limit, and again, the exercise is meant to test your ideas, not your drawing skills. It's most important to get the ideas down on paper rather than render them perfectly (or even well).

Set a timer for four minutes (or use the video) and get going!

When you're done, scan or photograph your sketch and type your answers to the following:
- Write a short sentence describing the idea in each sketch. What makes it a better remote control?
- Overall, what did the process feel like? (A sentence or two is fine.)

Post your image and text to the forum, and please comment on others' work!

Use the template below:

UX FUNDAMENTALS ASSIGNMENT #1

Your name   _____

What's the idea in each sketch:

- Sketch #1:

- Sketch #2:

- Sketch #3:

- Sketch #4:

How the process felt (what was easy or hard):

Note: Attach or paste a scan or photograph of your sketch to this message.

(This can be done by using an image hosting service like *Dropbox* or *Imgur* and pasting the URL to your specific image, or by attaching the image to this message in the Gymnasium forum.)

Bonus: Do another four-minute sketch, but this time you're designing a better remote control for a particular audience. Choose one of the following audiences for your remote:
- Senior citizens
- Left-handed people
- Sports nuts
- Young child
- Deaf people
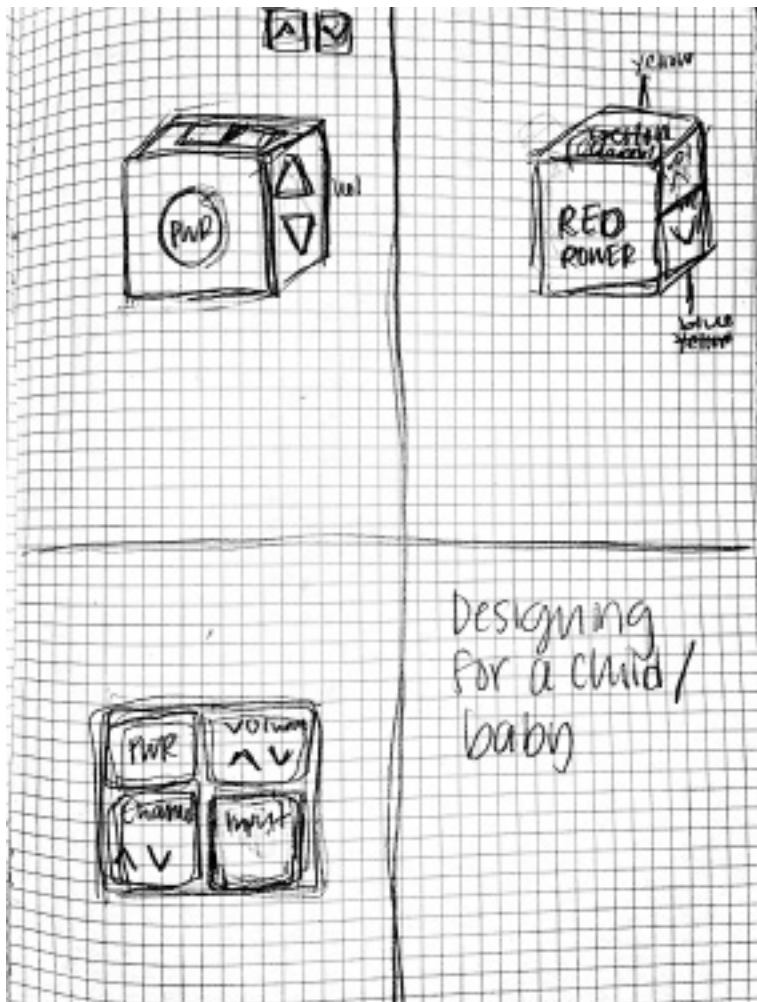- Professional designers
- Bar (or restaurant) owners

Follow the same procedure: four minutes for four sketches; scan and answer the above questions; and post both to the forum.

ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

Here's an example of this assignment, from a student who completed the course:

Assignment #1: A Better Remote Control (Example)
*TARGET AUDIENCE: YOUNG CHILD

Sketches:

Top Left: This is a three-dimensional square remote (like a child's toy block). Each side has different shapes on it. The power button would be a circle, the volume buttons would be two triangles, and the channel buttons are two squares that have up and down arrows on them.

Top Right: This is also a three-dimensional square remote. The difference with this one would be each side is color coded. Ex: The Power side is red, the volume side is blue (one half of that side would be a darker blue for louder and the other half a lighter blue for quieter), and the channel side is yellow (dark yellow for up and light yellow for down).

Bottom Left: This would be almost like an ipad screen. Separated into touchable color coded squares representing different functions (power, channel, volume, input, etc).

Bottom Right: (My four minutes were up before I could do this sketch.)

The second sketching assignment, designing a product for my randomly assigned target audience, was definitely harder. I think no matter what audience I got, it would have been more challenging because you have to try and think like that person.

I had to think like a child and that's why I chose to focus on shapes and colors to represent the function of the remote. In early stages of development this is what we are first learning and interacting with. I thought it might be easier for a child/baby to understand and use something it is familiar with.

RESOURCES

- (Site) UX is not UI: the differences between a UX designer and a visual/interface designer: http://www.uxisnotui.com/
- (Slides) Great presentation by Whitney Hess about the philosophy of UX design, with lots of examples: http://www.slideshare.net/whitneyhess/design-principles-the-philosophy-of-ux

INTRODUCTION

(Note: This is an edited transcript of the UX Fundamentals lecture videos. Some students work better with written material than by watching videos alone, so we're offering this to you as an optional, helpful resource. Some elements of the instruction, like live coding, can't be recreated in a document like this one.)

My name's Jim, and I'm a teacher. I have three minutes to tell you how to make better design decisions, how to win arguments with your clients, how to be worth more money through user-experience design, and about my free class from Aquent Gymnasium—User Experience or UX Fundamentals—for graphic designers like you. But I only have three minutes, so let's go.

For many of us, designing a website means of making a comp and handing it off to a developer. It's kind of like designing a book. A book designer is concerned with layout, color, and typography; how the book looks, but not how it works. I mean, everybody knows how to use a book.

But that's not true with the website or an app. You can design what happens when your customers scroll: what happens when they move their mouse; what happens when they click, or swipe, or pinch; what happens on a small screen, or on a big one; the steps needed to buy a product or service. You get to watch what your users do with concrete data, all in the aim of making that customer happy so that your client can meet their goals.

Here's an example. Popular books on Amazon.com get lots of reviews-- hundreds of them, sometimes thousands. Amazon added this function allowing customers to say which reviews are helpful. That lets Amazon filter the best reviews to the top. That design change boosted sales, which, in Amazon's case, amounts to billions of dollars.

Whose job was it to think of that button? It went beyond just layout typography and color. It required researching and understanding the customer, understanding and watching sales, and paying attention to the way it's written. It was almost certainly tested with real people. And it made the customer happy while focusing on business goals.
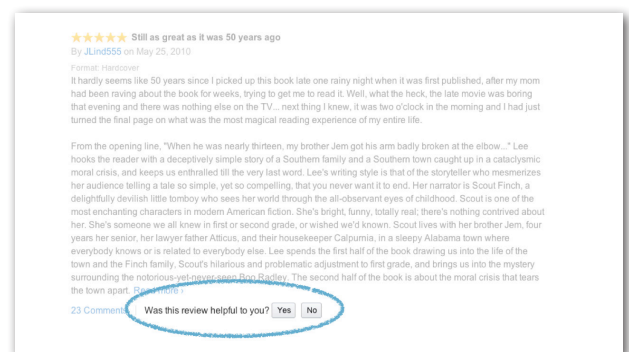
A user experience designer has their fingers in all of these pots. They craft everything that a customer sees and does. And they don't just use one process or piece of software-- they use a bunch of different tools. Some of them you may have already used, like site maps or wire frames. In fact, you might be using wire frames right now without really knowing why. WHY-reframes, am I right?

Learning UX means knowing how to use a lot of different tools such as how to experiment, how to listen to people, and how to solve problems analytically by collecting and using data. Oh, and by the way, web designers make good money. But user experience designers do better.

This course is an introduction to the tools of user experience design. It's quick. It's five sessions, and it's got useful techniques that you can start using today. Best of all, it's free. It's sponsored by Aquent.

You'll have new tools that will help you make better design decisions. You'll win arguments with your clients because you'll know how to get data to back it up. You'll be worth more money, because you'll help your clients make more money. Sign up for the course and start the first assignment, which will take about 10 minutes. Speaking of which, that's three minutes. Whew, I made it. See you in the classroom.

ASSIGNMENT

I'm glad you're here for UX Fundamentals. This is your first assignment. It's a brainstorming exercise. It'll be easy, fun, require no technical knowledge,
and because it's a brainstorming assignment—has no wrong answers. I'll guide you through the assignment here in this video. It'll take about 10 minutes.

You will need a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Make it a big, normal size sheet of paper, not some little tiny notebook thing. You'll also need a camera. If you've got a camera on a smartphone, that's fine. Another digital camera is fine, or a scanner is fine too.

Take your sheet of paper right now with me. Draw two lines, and label each of the four sections, making four boxes. You're going to draw a sketch in each of these boxes: four boxes for four sketches. This assignment has three parts. First will be the sketching part. I'll give you a few minutes, and we'll time you to sketch an assignment. I'll tell you what the assignment is in a minute.
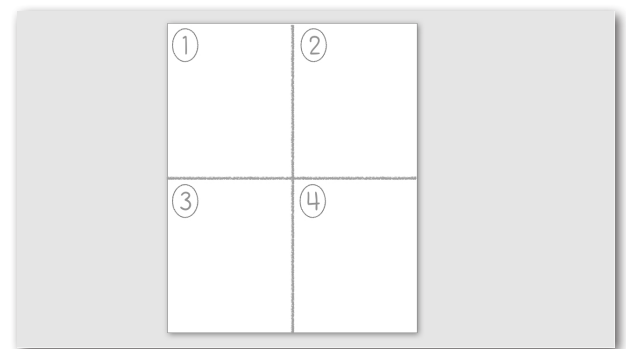
The second part will be taking a picture of that sketch and uploading it to the classroom forum. The third part will be critiquing someone else's sketches. The idea is that we all upload sketches, and we all critique each other's. You will get a critique of yours as well.

Part one is sketching. You'll have four minutes to sketch ideas. I'll tell you what they are, and you're not going to have a lot of time to think about it. So you're going to have to go from your gut. I'll time you here in the video. If you're not a good draftsman, it's a-okay. Ideas are more important than execution.

Then you'll take a photo of it, or scan it. Upload it to the forum, along with a one-liner of each of the ideas. I'll give you an example after our sketch time is done. After you upload it, you'll critique someone else's. So sketch, upload, and critique. That's what this assignment is.

Now, let's get to the actual sketching. Here's what we're brainstorming about. Television remote controls have long been seen as overly complex. Well, now's your chance to change that. Your assignment is to sketch a better remote control. You have four minutes to come up with four ideas. As with many client projects, we're pressed on time. We don't have a lot of time to think about the details. So they don't have to be practical. They just have to be ideas. Are you ready? Get set. Go.

(Four minutes passes)

OK, time's up. That went fast, huh? So listen. It's a brainstorming exercise, so there are no wrong answers. The next step is to upload your work to the forum. For instance, here's an example of sketches of four remote controls.

Number one, here on the left is a cylindrical sort of remote control, where your fingers wrap around, and it's kind of like a toilet paper tube. I guess. Number two is a voice-activated remote control where you yell at it to change the channel. You get the idea.

So now, you're going to scan yours and upload it to the forum. Along with that, you'll need to post a description of what each of the four things are. For instance, for this example, this is the image that would get uploaded to the forum. And then you'd write a description-- like number one is a cylindrical remote control that the user's hand curls over, sort of like a roll of toilet paper. It can be that informal. That's okay.

1. A cylindrical remote control that the user's hand curls over, sort of like a roll of toilet paper.

2. A voice activated remote control. Yell at your TV to make it do things, like "Change the channel!"

3. A remote that lets you skip ads by pressing a button. And you can

You do the same for numbers two, three, and four, and so on. That's what you post to the forum. After you've posted it, the assignment's not over. You need to critique someone else's. That means finding another student's posting on the forum board.

Find one that doesn't have a critique, and make your own. Design critiques are very special things. If you've not done one before, here are a couple of guidelines. When you're critiquing, you want to critique the work, not the person. You also want to avoid value opinions.

So instead of saying, that's amazing-- or, that's really stinks-- instead, talk about whether the idea is useful, and if so, to who? For instance, that seems great for people who eat while watching TV. Or, that wouldn't work for left-handed people. But it's useful for righties. Those are fine critiques. This entire assignment with critique should take about 10 minutes.

I can't wait to see what you put up. See you in the forum.