

CS130(0) - FIGMA LAB

[Presentation Slides](#)

INTRO

Figma is a browser-based design tool (started by Brown alumni!) that lets you focus on designing UI elements. The main aspect that sets it apart from other design tools is the collaboration — think Google Docs, but for designing! You can see where other people are moving their mouse, you can see real time edits to objects, and you can collaborate very cleanly on the same document.

SETTING UP (5 minutes)

Go to <http://figma.com> and sign up for an account with your Brown or RISD gmail, or login if you already have an account. Note that if your existing account is not associated with an educational email address, you will only be able to collaborate with one other person on a file. For this lab we will be working in groups of 3 or 4, so you need to use your .edu email! Further instructions are located in the [software guide](#).

QUICK DEMO (15 minutes)

Follow along for a few minutes as we go over the basics of making shapes, creating color palettes, making frames (aka artboards), and sharing documents.

MAIN PROJECT

1. Group Brainstorm (10 minutes)

- Get into groups of 3 or 4 students.
- Your team's task is to design one of those "x for y" apps -- e.g. Tinder for Whales, Uber for Refrigerators, Netflix for Trees, etc. In terms of structure and layout, you can heavily lean on the design of the original, because the point of this lab is to learn Figma, not design something perfect on the spot. Have fun!
- As a group, form an idea, name it (can just be "x for y"), then start brainstorming ideas for screens that are central to your app. Your team should end up brainstorming at least 5 screens altogether.

2. Single-Player Mode (20 minutes)

- At this point, team members should branch off to work independently and make their own ideas on their own Figma files. Each member should create a prototype of each

of the 5 screens you brainstormed as a team. This is your chance for each team member to visually interpret the ideas you came up with in the brainstorm!

- b. Feel free to explore and play around with Figma's interface features!
 - i. Creating frames (aka artboards) at different pre-specified phone sizes
 - ii. Leveraging the existing Google material design doc, which you can find in your files by default, to copy and paste common elements such as form inputs and buttons
 - iii. Using grids and constraints to design responsively:
<https://blog.figma.com/grid-systems-for-screen-design-46d86ea9fd48>
- c. Go wild! In a few minutes you will be rejoining your team and consolidating all your best ideas into a final design.

3. Group Discussion (10 minutes)

- a. One member of your team shares their Figma file with the other members.
- b. Each person copies and pastes the work they've done so far into the shared doc.
- c. Take your hands off of keyboards and mice for a few minutes while you have a group discussion! What's cool, what works well? Figure out your best ideas as a group and decide on final design choices, such as color palette, layout, and flow of the different screens.

4. Team work! (45 minutes)

- a. Create a new Figma file and share it with your group members so that you have a clean slate to work with.
- b. Now, as a team, use a consistent branding and style to design five or more screens that combine everyone's ideas. Each screen should look like a part of a cohesive whole (same fonts, colors, button styles, etc.).
- c. Use some advanced features, including interactive prototyping!
- d. Try not to split up the work too much — everyone should be talking and working together!

TEAM DEMO! (15 minutes)

Once you're finished making your final prototype of your app, each group will do a quick presentation of their app to the rest of the lab!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Article about using constraints in Figma to design responsively:
<https://blog.figma.com/5-essential-ways-to-use-design-constraints-29fb21cbcf40>
- A collection of pre-made resources that you can copy and paste straight into your Figma files as a baseline: <https://www.figmaresources.com/>

- A fun game to help you master the pen tool: <http://bezier.method.ac/>
- Blog post from the Figma team about the differences between their pen and the classic Adobe Illustrator pen: <https://blog.figma.com/introducing-vector-networks-3b877d2b864f>