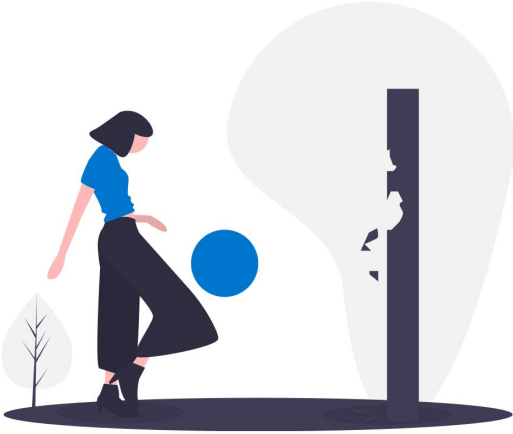


# What bootcamps don't teach you about UX Research

**Jiaorui Jiang** | *Senior UX Researcher @ Dell Technologies*  
(jyow-ray)

# Who is this talk for?



## Career Switchers

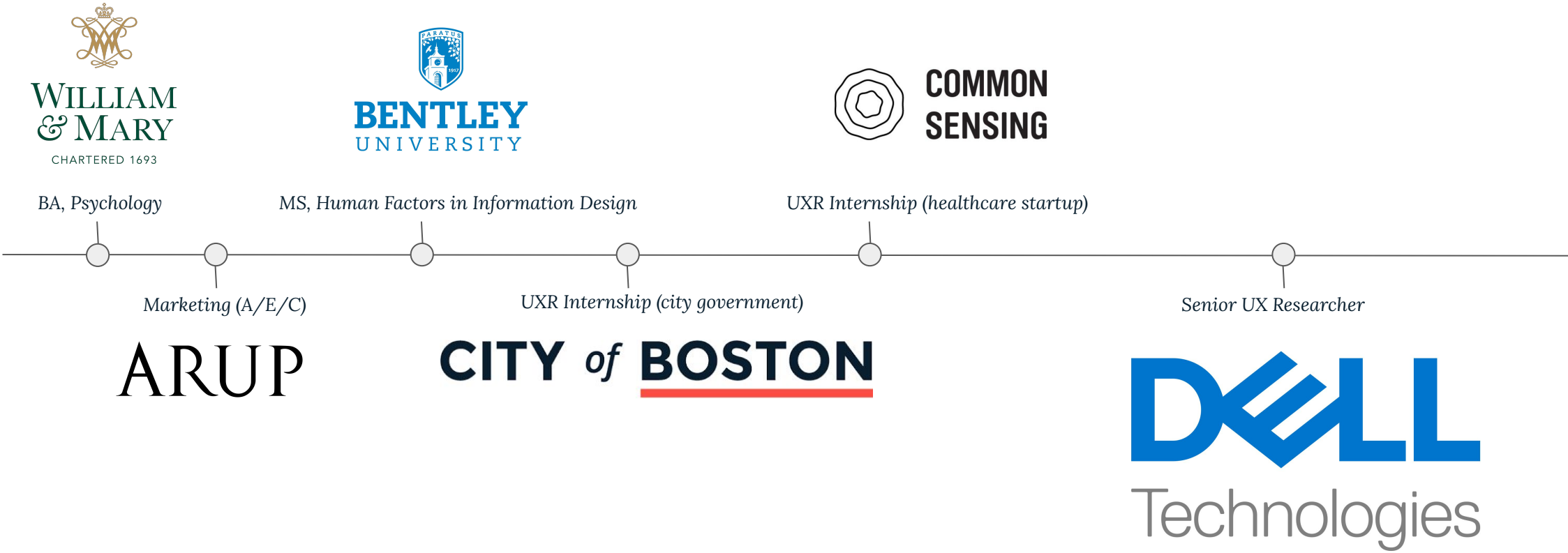
*You might already have these skills from your previous career. You'll learn why these skills are important and how you should highlight them.*



## Students

*You will be learning about skills you may not know were important for a UX Researcher to have. You should start developing them now.*

# My path



# What you learn from schools and bootcamps...

## Research Methods

- Usability testing
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Contextual Inquiries
- Card sorting
- Affinity mapping
- ...

## Research Tools

- UserTesting
- UserZoom
- Qualtrics
- Optimal Workshop
- EnjoyHQ
- Dovetail
- ...

# What you learn from schools and bootcamps...



# What you need to know as a researcher...



# What you need to know as a researcher

Research communication + Research execution

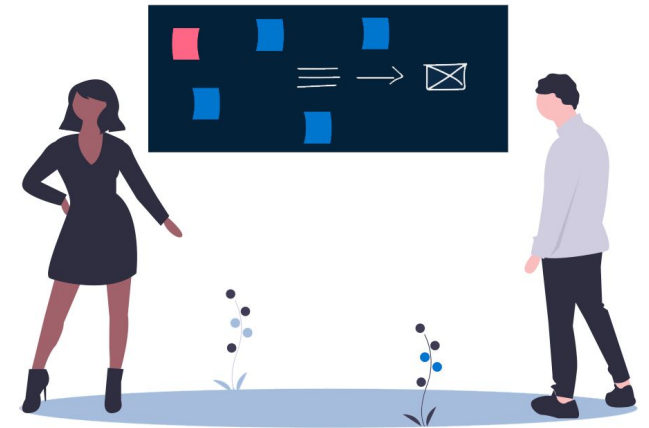
*Making sure the right research is done*



*Conducting research and analyzing data*



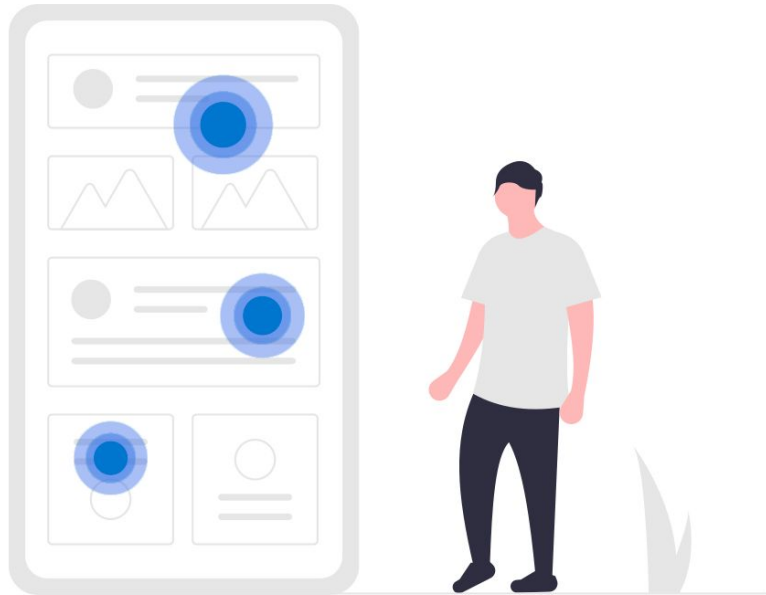
*Making sure research has impact*



**Before research is even  
conducted...**



# You might get a research request like this...



*“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. Can you go test this design?”*

# You might start to plan...

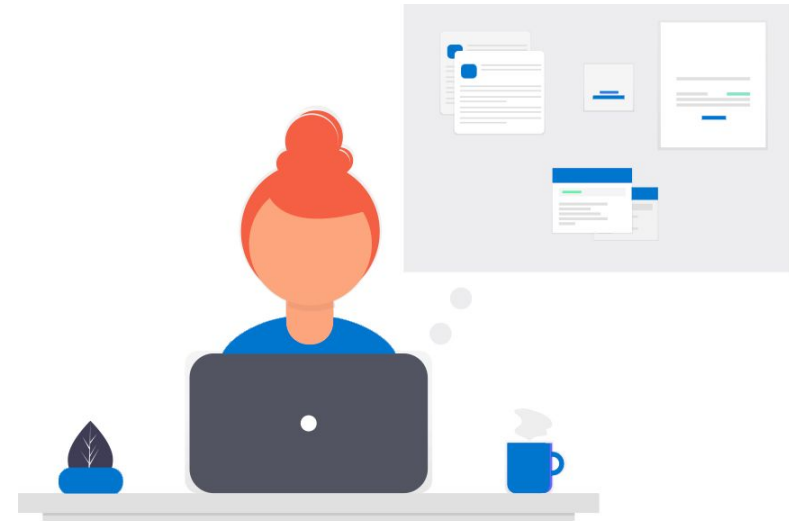
*30 min usability study*

*Recruit 8-10 users*

*5 Tasks*

*SUS scores, success rates, lostness*

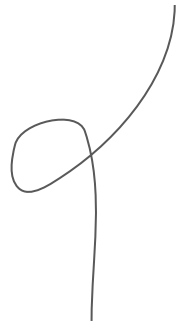
...



**But are you doing the right research?**

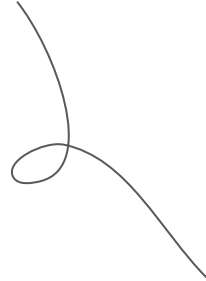


*“People are not buying things from our website. **I think we should build an app.** Can you go test this design?”*



**“If we build an app, then more people will be buying our products.”**

*“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. **Can you go test this design?**”*



**“I already decided on a solution before the problem has been fully identified. I’ve come up with a design and I need you to prove that I’m right.”**

***“People are not buying things from our website. I think we should build an app. Can you go test this design?”***

**This is the ACTUAL problem we are trying to solve. To find the right solution, the researcher needs to find out what is causing the problem.**

# Common problems to solve

## Understanding people, current experiences, problems

- *Who are my customers (how do they think, feel, behave, what motivates them)*
- *How can we improve XYZ (faster, better, more intuitive)*
- *Why did this metric go up or down (what's going on)*

## Finding the right solution to the problem

- *What should we build?*
- *Are we building the right thing?*
- *Are we building the thing right? (Are we taking the right approach)*
- *Should we implement this feature? (pros/cons)*
- *Do they understand this (how do they interpret it, does it make sense)*

# Identifying the appropriate method

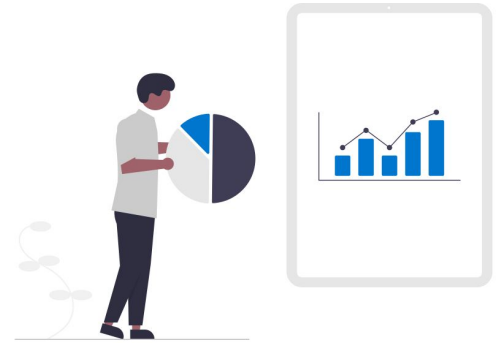
*Finding the right questions to ask*

**Why are people not buying stuff?**

*“Are people interested in the stuff we sell?”*

*“How are people accessing our website?”*

*“Where do people drop off in the purchasing process?”*





# Identifying the appropriate method

*Finding the right questions to ask*

## Why are people not buying stuff?

*“Are people interested in the stuff we sell?”*

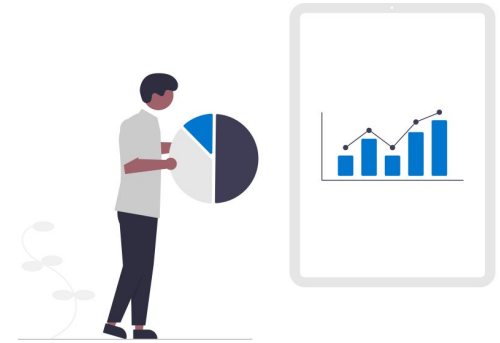
*“How are people accessing our website?”*

*“Where do people drop off in the purchasing process?”*

*“What do users come to the website to do?”*

*“How do they make a purchase decision?”*

*“What prompts the users to leave?”*



# Making sure the right research is done

*Managing stakeholder expectations: why it needs to be done, how it benefits them*

## Understanding the real question(s) behind the request

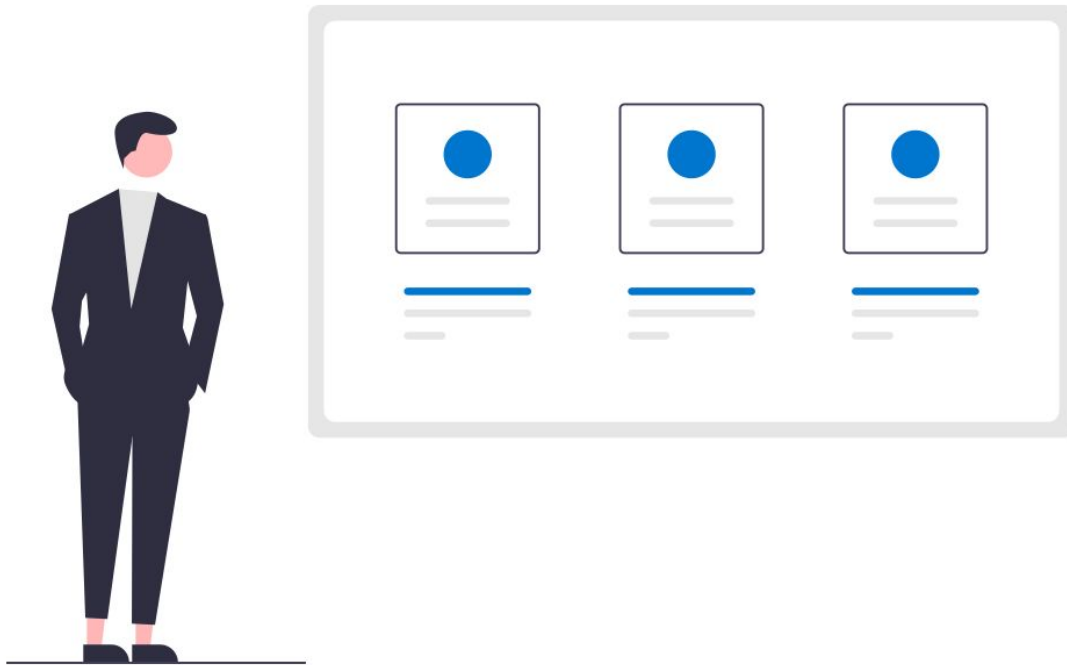
- *Stakeholders may not realize they are coming to you with solutions/assumptions*
- *As a researcher, you need to be able to reorient your stakeholders and convince them the right research needs to be done*

## Choosing the right method

- *As a researcher, you should be able to select the most appropriate method for a study*
- *Method selection is dependent on the questions being asked*

**After the research has  
been conducted and  
data has been  
analyzed...**

# You might present your findings...

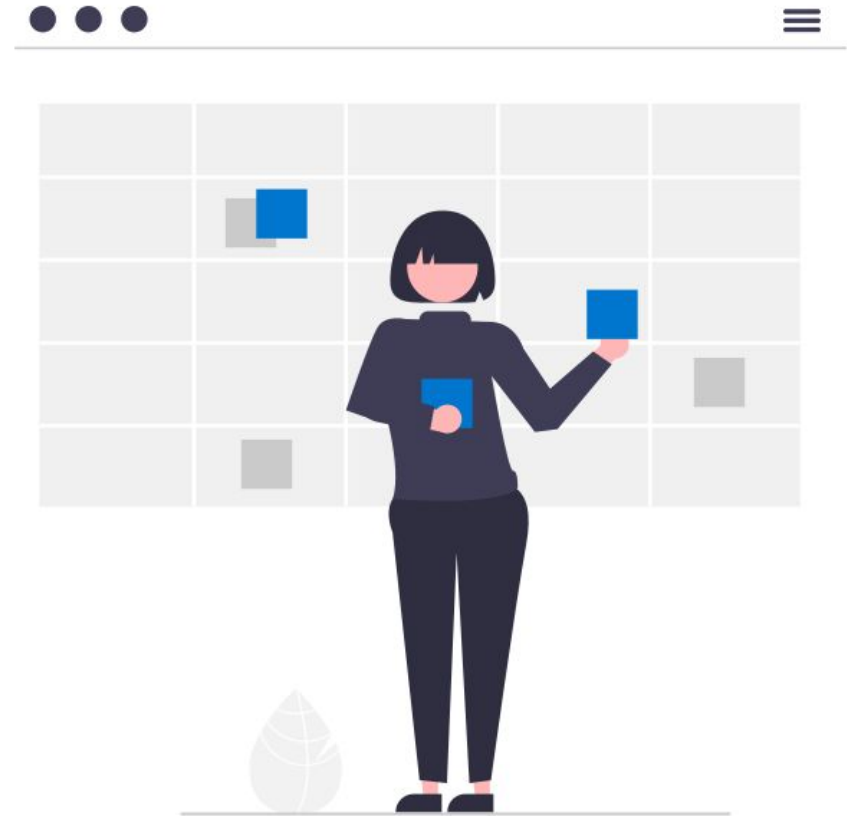


*“Great job! Really interesting findings.”*

# But are changes actually happening?



*Different types of insights  
require different types of  
communication.*



## ***Users can't check their order status without an account created.***

### **User Needs:**

- *Ability to check on status of the order with an order number*
- *Ability to track order once it's shipped*
- *Ability to create an account after order placement*

### **Solution:**

- *Make sure customers receive order confirmation email with the order number*
- *Make sure order updates are sent*
- *Allow account creation from order confirmation emails*

***Users can't check their order status without an account created.***

**Solution:**

- *Make sure customers receive order confirmation email with the order number*
- *Make sure order updates are sent*
- *Allow account creation from order confirmation emails*

**Straightforward**

**Actionable by product team**

**Solutions can be implemented quickly**



**Users are overwhelmed by all the emails sent by the company.**

**User Needs:**

- *Only get emails that are relevant to them*
  - *Order emails and updates*
  - *Discounts for the items they are interested in*
  - *...*

**Solution:**

- *Coordination among different departments*
- *Consolidate tools used for automated emails*
- *Standardize communication guidelines across the company*

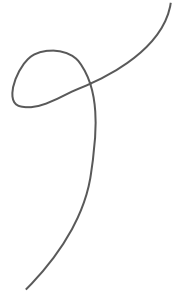
**Users are overwhelmed by all the emails sent by the company.**

**Solution:**

**Conflicts with existing agenda**

**Requires buy-in from multiple teams**

**Legacy problem would take a while to solve**



- *Coordination among different departments*
- *Consolidate tools used for automated emails*
- *Standardize communication guidelines across the company*

# Making sure research has impact

*Be strategic about how you communicate*

- **Find the appropriate audience at the appropriate time**
  - *Your research may be relevant beyond your immediate product team*
  - *Be prepared for your insights to conflict with someone else's agenda*
  - *Your research may be more helpful for a later strategic conversation, but now is not the time*
- **Get people invested in what you are trying to say**
  - *Risk of not changing/What do they stand to gain*
- **Effective communication**
  - *Understand how people digest information*
  - *Right level of information for different audience: Facts -> Data -> Insights*
  - *Provide concrete paths to move forward*

# What types of impact can you have with research?

## Tactical

- *Feature improvements*
- *Product improvements*
- ...

## Strategic

- *Product strategy/direction*
- *Cross-product consistency*
- *Reduce duplicate work by UX/engineering teams*
- *Improvements in employee experience (support, services, sales, etc.)*
- *Visibility of UX in the organization*
- ...

# What you need to know as a researcher

*Research communication + Research execution – You may already have these skills!*

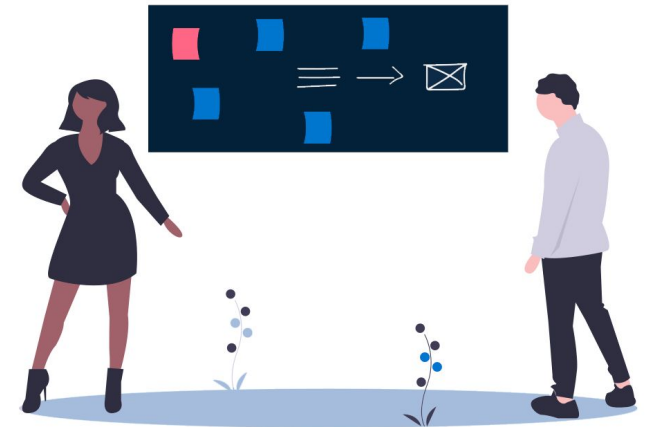
*Making sure the right research is done*



*Conducting research and analyzing data*



*Making sure research has impact*



# You are more than a “bootcamp grad”

*Leverage and contextualize your previous experiences*



*Storytelling is a crucial skill in UX.*

*How do you showcase that skill if you can't even tell a good story about yourself and your own experiences?*

# Your portfolio is NOT a list of things you did



*“I did surveys...then I did interviews...then I did usability tests...then I did card sorting...”*

**I have used all of these research methods**

# Research Portfolio Project Structure

*Applies to student projects AND projects under NDA*

- *What was the problem?*
- *What did you do to identify the root cause of the problem?*
  - **Process**
  - **Rationale for decision**
- *Challenges you faced and how did you overcome them*
- *Brief results (your audience is NOT your project stakeholder!)*
- **Impact**



# Thank You!

*Special thanks to Natasha Tjandra, Maggie Qian, Caleb George*



