What is user-centered design?

User-centered design is a web development approach that prioritizes the end user, from their needs to their preferences and limitations. The goal of user-centered design is to craft a web page that is intuitive, efficient to use, and pleasing for your users to interact with.

One of the first aspects of user-centered design is considering your target demographics. For example, if your intended user-base is younger, you might leverage more flashy eye-catching designs that grab their attention immediately. For an older audience, you might focus more on clear and streamlined designs without distractions.

Another aspect to consider is the goal of your end users. For example, if you're building an e-commerce page for your products, you probably don't want to advertise someone else's products on your page. But if you're building a personal blog, you might include advertisement elements to generate revenue from passive readers.

User behavior is an important factor as well. You'll want to leverage an analytics tool, like Google Analytics, to measure how your users engage with your pages. This can reveal areas where users might be getting "stuck" and leaving your page, or opportunities to improve the overall interaction flow.

A key to user-centered design is to actually involve your users. Providing a feedback channel where they can share their experiences and pain points with your site allows you to capture vital information and iterate further to improve. Ultimately, user-centered design means you need to put the user at the forefront of your decision making, whether that's through research or direct feedback.