Conducting Interviews & Creating a Persona: Reflection

Team #6

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Overview

Our project is about exploring what types of people, common backgrounds, and what makes it interesting to people about the field of UI/UX design. Our target user group are college students in the ICS department, computer science related major undergraduates, and anyone with a technical background that has an interest in becoming a UI/UX designer. We also want to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the people we interview, and to pull out insights from our interview findings to better understand why they're afraid or have not started pursuing a career in UX/UX. We send out our interview questions to potential interviewees that align with our target group, or in similar demographic groups.

People that we interviewed are college students in the ICS department, computer science related major undergrads that we found in the UCI directory list, and anyone that has technical backgrounds in software engineering and tech-related fields. Some of the key characteristics of the persona from the people we interviewed are: passion for expressing creativity and designing intuitive technology, likes working with front-end development; likes to see how different people interact with different interfaces; dedication to help develop accessible technology; and dealing with UI/UX designing in their work. The rest of the report are the steps and processes of conducting user research and creating personas in detail.

Recruiting

Recruiter: <Lincoln Nguyen> <Nathan> <Erick> <Qijian> <Sean>

Recruiting is important because it allows us to find a good candidate that will be able to participate in the interview. Finding the right people was hard because it depends on the location of where you're recruiting. If we are recruiting people at the School of Business then there will be a very low chance of finding someone that would want to major in UI/UX. However, if we were to recruit someone at the School of Informatics then the chances of finding someone pursuing in UI/UX would be much higher. Something else we learned while recruiting is that not everyone wants to be interviewed. It took us some time to find a person that was fine with participating in the interview. What we would do differently next time would be asking the professor at the School of Informatics to let us make an announcement at the beginning of class to see who would like to participate in the interview and to have an incentive such as a gift card. This would be a better approach because we would have the students' attention as well as having a way to motivate the students to participate with a reward.

Interviewing

Interviewer: Erick Burciaga

Scribe: Qijian Li

It is quite well known that being interviewed can be nerve-racking but being on the opposite end as the interviewer also has its challenges. The first thing I learned about the interviewing process is that it's essential to be prepared with a list of questions and follow up questions. I believe a good interview is one that can come close to mimicking a natural conversation. If we simply fire a series of questions at our interviewees they may give us shallow responses in return and we will leave the interview without getting much useful information. Therefore it is important to have possible follow up questions in mind in order to help the interviewee dive deeper into their responses. However it's not enough to have only predetermined questions, it's equally important to be able to listen carefully to the interviewee and come up with more personalized follow up questions on the spot. Not everyone had the same opinions and experiences so to capitalize on this we sometimes had to stray away from the questions we set and ask about specific details mentioned by the interviewee. Lastly, interviewees are more likely to give more detailed responses if we create a comfortable environment for them. We found that it's best to ask the interviewee if they had any preferences such as being interviewed indoors or outdoors, sitting or standing up, etc. Another way to help them feel more comfortable is by first asking simple questions (such as: how has your day been? Do you have any weekend plans? etc.) before moving on to the planned interview questions.

As the scribe, the most difficult part was figuring out which details to record. Trying to write down everything that was said ended up not being efficient as it would often lead to me missing what was currently being said. To work around this I found it was better to write down key words and paraphrase the responses. I also found that taking notes on a phone felt less distracting as there were no keyboard clicks and the device was much smaller than a laptop or notebook. If we were to do this again I think it would be better to audio record the interview as well as take notes to preserve as much detail as possible.

Analysis

The team received a great deal of knowledge and practical experience through this analysis. We need to put more effort into psychologically analyzing the multicultural college students we work with because, despite having computer-related majors in common, they all have different areas of focus. Some are more interested in business analysis, while others are more interested in computer professionals. However, they all have a passion for UI/UX design and want to show off their skills in the area of front-end design. To evaluate the interviewee's assessment of some of his or her own self-perceptions throughout the interview is the most crucial part of this. We learned the most from this team when we asked them questions on how they got interested in front-end design, what work they put into it after that, and how they assess their present front-end design strengths and shortcomings. So, let's examine these three key elements to learn how to become a proficient front-end designer and what elements are

necessary. According to the respondents, the majority of those interested in front-end design have had formal education and have acquired a sizable amount of expertise in computer-related subjects to assist their front-end job; moreover, kids have a very great capacity for independent learning, acquiring the necessary information not just through the educational system but also from websites. Via reading books and watching videos to gain the necessary knowledge, flat through consistent practice to produce certain outcomes in the design. The examples provided were all discovered through thorough analysis and psychological evaluation of the interviewees, so our team's analysis yielded a great deal of information as well. The instances provided were all discovered through thorough analysis and psychological evaluation of the respondents; therefore, our team's investigation yielded a great deal of information as well. In order to better analyze the various skills and success factors of front-end designers moving forward, we will be open to including more elements in the analysis in the future, particularly those that pertain.

Persona Design

Designer: Sean Huynh

Our team learned that a persona can capture the many characteristics and qualities of the people in our targeted demographic. We found ourselves combining information that was similar or prominent among the interviewees because we felt they were valuable for potentially developing a solution. We realized that a persona mainly represents the key characteristics of our audience, which is important when it comes to making relevant decisions to address the goals, needs, wants, and frustrations of individuals within our intended group. Personas can give valuable insight on habits, behaviors, and attitude, allowing researchers, developers, and designers to better understand the types of users that might use a product or service. The user in a persona is supposed to be fictitious, however the finished persona felt like a description of a real human being. Thus, we believe personas allow for a deeper sense of connection and empathy between project developers and the users. Personas are also a great tool for communication, as they have text and visual elements to convey information. For future personas, we would like to try and incorporate more behavioral information as our group focused mostly on goals, wants, and challenges in our interview questions for this project. We want to include information such as how often an individual seeks out resources for strengthening their UI/UX related skills, the kinds of help they receive or are looking at currently, how many hours they spend coding or designing to better understand how they would react to and benefit from a design that we make. We would also like to include more visual elements such as icons to make the persona more interesting, comprehensive, and really bring it to life.

Conclusion

Both interviews and personas can provide useful information on the type of users a product or service is intended for and can help with important decision making. Interviews do not have to follow a strict set of questions, and more in-depth answers can be attained when the interviewer has flexible questions that stem from answers the interviewee has given. Having

multiple people to interview also provides more diverse data on the different kinds of people in the targeted audience, showing the interviewers the differences and similarities between individuals. However, because human-computer interaction works to understand and cater to all potential users, interviews are more effective the more they are conducted. This means that interviewing can require more resources and time depending on the scale of the project. Verifying and validating the truth from interviewees can also be challenging because there is no way for the interviewer to tell if they are lying. The advantages of personas include presenting key characteristics of the users and helps condense important data. By incorporating the goals, wants, needs, challenges and other behavioral qualities, personas can allow designers to better connect to and understand who it is they are designing for and what questions and issues they have to address. Personas reflect real user patterns, which can prevent personal biases and generalizations from interfering with making decisions. However, user personas can not define or predict the success of a design and require designers to take further actions to ensure their designs are effective by taking steps such as usability testing and reiterating. Personas are also static, meaning that the information they contain will stay the same until it is updated. As the values, attitudes, and motives of people change over time, personas need to stay relevant and consistent with the present. If the interface that our team is supposed to design is meant to help college students who want to become UI/UX designers, then this project was useful in providing relevant information on the aspirations, needs, and challenges of the types of individuals in this target audience.

Appendix

Interviewees

Hannah Lu, Julian Guevara, Crystal Pham, Zoe Zeng, Minh To

Interview protocol

Interview Questions

- ❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with interview)
- ❖ What's your name?
- ❖ How old are you?
- ❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
    - ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
    - ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
- ❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?
- ❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
- ❖ Why do you want to become a UI UX designer?
- ❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?

- ❖ What challenges are you facing if any? (can be related to finding opportunities for experience, learning challenges, etc.)
- ❖ What are your strengths as an aspiring UX UI designer?
- ❖ What are your weaknesses as an aspiring UX UI designer?
- ❖ What do you hope to do by learning UI UX?

Notes

Interview Questions (Lincoln Nguyen):

- ❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with interview)
  - ➢ Yes
- ❖ What's your name?
  - ➢ Hannah Lu
- ❖ How old are you?
  - ➢ 20
- ❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
  - ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
    - ■ My major is Computer Science. I'm interested in CS because its a broad field that allows me to have more options in my career path. My specialization is Systems and Software
  - ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
    - ■ Since my major is computer science I am able to take in informatic classes and learn more about UI/UX. This will let me take steps towards becoming a UI/UI designer.
- ❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?
  - ➢ No
- ❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
  - ➢ The way users interact with software. It's important to allow the user to fully utilize the application because that is the intended goal of the designers. Also user are more drawn towards things that are efficient and easy to understand/navigate.
- ❖ Why do you want to become a UI UX designer?
  - ➢ It helps me understand the User point of view and can be very useful if I want to expand my application that I create. On top of that, I am pretty creative and like to draw things so this career would align with my interests.
- ❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?
  - ➢ I have been watching a lot of youtube videos about UI/UX, creating my own projects, and reading books about designs. I also am planning on taking more informatic classes to broaden my knowledge.
- ❖ What challenges are you facing if any? (can be related to finding opportunities for experience, learning challenges, etc.)

- ➢ It is definitely hard to learn on my own since there are so many questions that I need answers to. I am able to do a lot of research on the web and fortunately found answers to my questions.
- ❖ What are your strengths as an aspiring UX UI designer?
    - ➢ I have a lot of creativity and can do a lot of prototyping on paper
- ❖ What are your weaknesses as an aspiring UX UI designer?
    - ➢ Need more knowledge about the path to becoming a UX/UI designer and practice.
- ❖ What do you hope to do by learning UI UX?
    - ➢ I hope to be able to work as a Front end developer and make the user experience a lot more enjoyable.

Interview Questions (Erick Burciaga):

- ❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with interview)
    - ➢ Yes
- ❖ What's your name?
    - ➢ Julian Guevara
- ❖ How old are you?
    - ➢ 20
- ❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
    - ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
    - ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
        - ■ I am studying UI/UX. I've always been interested in designing and the frontend perspective rather than the backend when it comes to programming. In my opinion, functionality is important but alone it's not enough for users. Software needs a well designed interface to keep users engaged and interested. I also enjoy the freedom to express my creativity through UI/UX.
- ❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?
    - ➢ currently unemployed
- ❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
    - ➢ I like how UI/UX focuses on user experience. I enjoy putting myself in the mind of the user and looking at problems through different perspectives to make better design decisions. I also like the research aspect of UI/UX design, like seeing how different people interact with the same interface.
- ❖ Why do you want to become a UI UX designer?
    - ➢ I want to become a UI/UX designer because there are lots of job opportunities given the rise in popularity of mobile devices and apps. I also think UI/UX design helps a lot of people, technology is everywhere and everyone interacts with it on a daily basis.
- ❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?

- ➢ I am just trying to do some personal projects and I'm thinking of looking for internships soon, hopefully ill have on by next summer.
- ❖ What challenges are you facing if any? (can be related to finding opportunities for experience, learning challenges, etc.)
    - ➢ Sometimes I hit creative blocks, and it can be hard to translate an idea into code. Also finding solutions to problems can take a long time, I feel like I spend a lot of time looking things up on google. Sometimes it feels like I don't know enough about programming, and this slows me down from applying to internships because I am afraid I'll encounter a problem where I'm completely lost.
- ❖ What are your strengths as an aspiring UX UI designer?
    - ➢ I think I'm pretty good at putting my mind in the perspective of the user, and looking at problems through different perspectives. I also think I'm pretty creative.
- ❖ What are your weaknesses as an aspiring UX UI designer?
    - ➢ I tend to procrastinate sometimes, time management is always a challenge. I also feel like my skills in coding can improve.
- ❖ What do you hope to do by learning UI UX?
    - ➢ I want everyone to have enjoyable experiences when interacting with technology. When I think of UI/UX I think of people like my grandparents who struggle adapting to recent advancements in technology and it motivates me to want to design technology in a way that is easily accessible to everyone. I think the way we approach user interfaces now can shape the future of our relationship with technology so I hope to help provide the best experience possible for everyone.

Interview Questions (Sean Huynh):

- ❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with interview)
    - ➢ Yes
- ❖ What's your name?
    - ➢ Crystal Pham
- ❖ How old are you?
    - ➢ 20
- ❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
    - ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
    - ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
        - ■ UI UX. I am interested in pursuing UI UX because I grew up with a creative background so going into college I wanted to find something that I could be creative and practical. I fell in love with making people's lives easier through technology. As a business major, a lot of my curriculum is very broad so I am able to reach a lot of different industries and with UI UX you can be a UX UI designer in any industry and you can apply anywhere. And with my major I am working in a lot of leadership positions and teams so it helps with my communication and collaboration.
- ❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?

- ➢ I am currently a student communications coordinator for university advancements and I am in charge of marketing communications for alumni centered events. I am also doing a UI UX project for a given website.
- ❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
  - ➢ I really like making apps and the design process and being creative and exploring trends. I love that this field allows me to stay relevant with technology and the market.
- ❖ Why do you want to become a UI UX designer?
  - ➢ I hope to make people's lives easier through technology. I want to help address the issue of accessibility in tech as there are so many opportunities for people when they have technology. Thus, I believe technology should be inclusive. I have a particular interest in designing technology for disabled communities.
- ❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?
  - ➢ Currently I am being proactive in my job to develop skills in UI/UX and I am joining various project teams. I am also collaborating with others and designing apps from the ground up and going to design related workshops.
- ❖ What challenges are you facing if any? (can be related to finding opportunities for experience, learning challenges, etc.)
  - ➢ Being confident in my abilities → not as straightforward as coding, being able to show something I'm proud of → I don't know when to stop reiterating and testing.
- ❖ What are your strengths and/or weaknesses as an aspiring UX UI designer?
  - ➢ My strengths are always wanting to learn something new and not being afraid of challenges. I'm eager to learn what I don't.
- ❖ What do you hope to do by learning UI UX?
  - ➢ when collaborating with others, I am to explain exactly what i'm thinking clearly the first time around → I want to be more concise with my ideas

Interview Questions (Qijian Li):

- ❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with interview)
  - ➢ YES
- ❖ What's your name?
  - ➢ Zoe Zeng
- ❖ How old are you?
  - ➢ 21
- ❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
  - ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
  - ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
    - ■ I am a Business Econ student and currently have an interest in designing UI/UX. My major would largely help me in the application of user experience, and can help to determine the value of a product.
- ❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?

➢ Currently, I do not have a full time job, and my position is just a student. But sometimes I would like to customize a user experience for my project and help to improve the process of using a product, which can better help to refine my project.

❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
  ➢ Basically, UI/UX can be applied in many different areas, especially doing a startup program. With these professional skills, I can do a good job in both design and monitor the project and being in a good position as a product designer.

❖ Why do you want to become a UI UX designer?
  ➢ This is just one of my interests, I probably will enroll in many different positions especially in marketing and management, I just want to be more professional in all various areas.

❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?
  ➢ I am not sure yet, but I would try to be more prepared for this position because now I am still focusing on business economics and doing something about consulting.

❖ What challenges are you facing if any? (can be related to finding opportunities for experience, learning challenges, etc.)
  ➢ I am not a student who majors in informatics and something about this, so I can not really get access to the area of UI/UX.

❖ What are your strengths as an aspiring UX UI designer?
  ➢ User experience evaluation.

❖ What are your weaknesses as an aspiring UX UI designer?
  ➢ UI design without creative ideas.

❖ What do you hope to do by learning UI UX?
  ➢ Basically everything about it.

Interview Questions (Nathan Van):

❖ Is your goal to become a UI/UX designer? (IF NO, do not proceed with the interview)
  ➢ Yes.

❖ What's your name?
  ➢ Minh To

❖ How old are you?
  ➢ 25

❖ What is your major/minor and specialization?
    ■ Software Engineering
  ➢ Why are you interested in (w/e they're studying)
    ■ To develop user interactive apps.
  ➢ How will you use your major/minor to pursue UI/UX?
    ■ I want to improve my current control console application to better serve my users.

❖ Do you have a job? If so, what?

➢ SWE
❖ What interests you about UI/UX design?
➢ The impact of a good UI/UX on user experience and user retention rate.
❖ Why do you want to become a UI/UX designer?
➢ I want to have the abilities of an UI/UX designer in my current SWE role but not necessarily become a full-time UX/UI designer.
❖ What steps are you taking now to prepare for a career in UI/UX?
➢ I review other professional works from highly rated UI/UX designers to improve my skills.

Persona

Jolie Kim

MAJOR
Informatics

COLLEGE
UCI

AGE
21

BIO
Jenny is an ambitious and hard-working junior in college. She is currently studying informatics with the hopes of becoming a UI/UX designer. Her creativity and passion for intuitive technology has motivated her to pursue front-end development and a career in the tech industry.

WANTS & NEEDS
- more opportunities to work in teams and develop portfolio
- resources to build design skills
- resources to help with front-end coding
- internship opportunities
- creative inspiration

PAIN POINTS
- unsure of where to look for internship opportunities
- needs help with interviewing
- sometimes gets frustrated with coding and creates feelings of self-doubt
- properly conveying ideas and thoughts to others

GOALS
- wants an UI/UX internship opportunity at a tech company
- wants to develop a professional portfolio for job applications
- to be able to showcase a set of desireable skills and abilities
- ultimately wants a career in UI/UX at a tech company