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User Experience & interaction Design final Manifesto

Throughout this course, I have learned that good design does not happen by accident. Design is a process that involves planning, testing, and improving ideas over time. During this course i worked on many projects and each project helped me better understand how users interact with designs and how my choices affect their experience. This manifesto I will try to explain the mindset I developed and the lessons I learned and try to carry into my future projects.

1. Design Begins with the user

The most important part of the design is understanding the user. Before designing anything, I learned to ask who the design is for and what problem it is we are trying to solve. I mean just knowing your intended audience and how the design can be used to appeal to that certain audience. Earlier in the semester, I focused more on how design looked instead of how it worked. After doing user research and testing, I realized that only succeeds if users can understand and use it easily. The radio station redesign is a strong example of why design should always start with the users. Before the redesign, we did a class demo where classmates gave feedback. In my first design, the app did not match what the radio station staff had told us they wanted. Their goal was to make the app appealing to students and alumni on campus, which was the main target audience. After the demo, I received feedback, but I was not satisfied with my design. Then I realized something important: most college students are always on their phones. Earlier in the semester, the radio station staff mentioned that most users access the station through their phones rather than laptops or websites. Once I switched my design to a mobile layout, the app improved significantly. The design felt more natural for users, and I received much better feedback from my friends and classmates on campus.

2. Revising is a key part of design

One major lesson from this course was that the first version of a design is rarely the best one. Improving a design through multiple versions made my work stronger and easier to use. Sketching and trying different styles was a must in this class and it really helped me become a better designer. Before any project becomes reality, it starts on paper. Going back to 4 we had to take what we answers we recived through the interviews and try to make it a reality and sketching really helped me because it allowed me to make mistakes before putting the final product and i can use ideas from failed or passed examples and put them together to make a better design. Overtime revising my work felt frustrating. But looking back now I realize that the feedback helped me see the problems I missed and made my design stronger.

3. User Testing shows Real problems

User testing helped me understand the difference between what I expected users to do and what they actually do. Sometimes users struggle with things I thought were obvious. These moments helped me learn what needed to change. In my movie app redesign, we had the logo be the home button, and many of the users struggled to understand that. They asked questions like how do I go back to the previous page. To fix this, we just included a back button. A small fix like this changed the website and made it easier for the user to not get lost. Even though having the back button on the website log was a nice design, it's not a universal design, so it made it hard for users to know it's the back/home button.

4. Different projects Need Different Approaches.

Not every design project needs the same process. Some projects require more research, while others need fast ideas and quick changes. Through this course, I learned that it is important to adjust my design process based on what I am creating instead of using the same steps every time. For example, sketching was helpful during the early stages because it allowed me to quickly explore different ideas without worrying about details. As the design became more developed, digital prototypes were more useful beacuse they let me test how users move through the design and interact with different elements. Learning when to switch tools helped me work more efficiently and create Stroger designs overall.

5. Limits can Improve Design

Time limits and design rules were challenging at first, but they helped me stay focused and make smarter design choices. Having clear requirements forced me to think carefully about what was truly necessary in each project instead of adding features or details. Rather than seeing these limits as a problem, I learned to use them as a guide for my design decisions. Working within constraints pushed me to prioritize clarity, usability, and purpose, for example, when I had to follow strict design requirements, I simplified my layout and reduced unnecessary elements. This made the design easier to understand and improved the overall user experience.

This course helped me develop a clear design mindset. I now focus on understanding users, testing ideas early, and improving design through feedback. I also learned the importance of keeping designs simple, clear, and purposeful rather than overcomplicating them. These ideas will guide how I approach future design projects, even outside of this class. Overall, this manifesto reflects the skills I built and the lessons I learned throughout this semester.