



Crossroads: Intersectional Feminism & User Experience Design

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Tech Lady Hackathon



Hi, my name is Radhika

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What is **Intersectional Feminism?**



Image source: Tyler Feder, <https://www.etsy.com/people/roaringsoftly>

“The view that women experience **oppression** in varying configurations and in varying **degrees of intensity**.

Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society.

Examples of this include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity.”

- Kimberlee Crenshaw, Law and Civil Rights professor,
coined the term intersectional feminism

How will we solve certain
problems in society?

By looking at them
intersectionally.

User Experience Design

“Experience design is the design of anything, independent of medium, or across media, with human experience as an explicit outcome, and human engagement as an explicit goal.”

- Jesse James Garrett

What does UX design entail?

Problem
identification

Persona creation

User Testing

Human-centered
design

Prototyping

Copy writing

Research

Product design

Presentations

Communication to
stakeholders

In-person
interviewing

Working with
developers

Empathy building

Usability

Information
Architecture

Interface design

Problem solving

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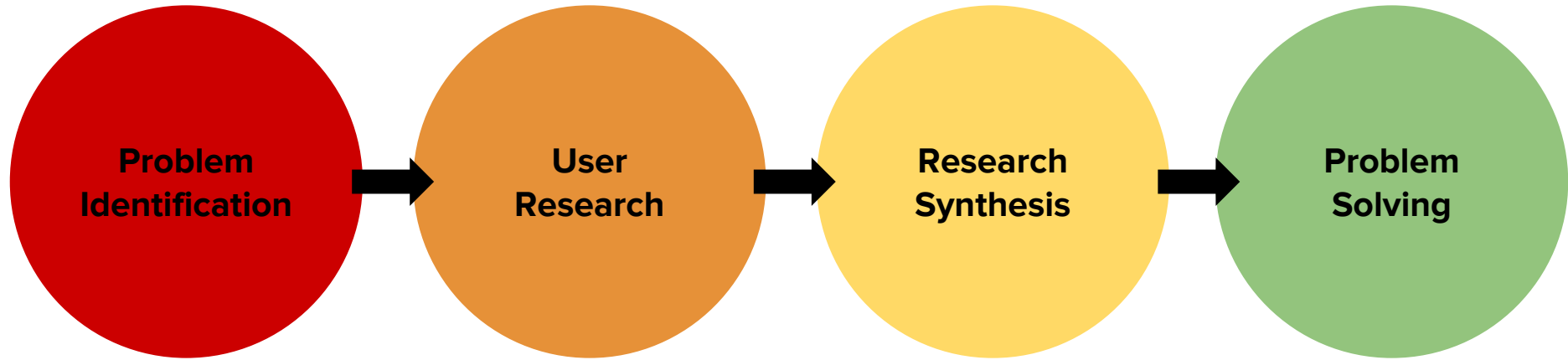
Empathy building

Usability

Information Architecture

Interface design

Problem solving



Empathy

“People try to act empathetic ... without first taking time to develop empathy.

This leap is problematic when it comes to your work. You end up with business decisions based on **expectations about how others are reasoning, not based on knowledge.**”

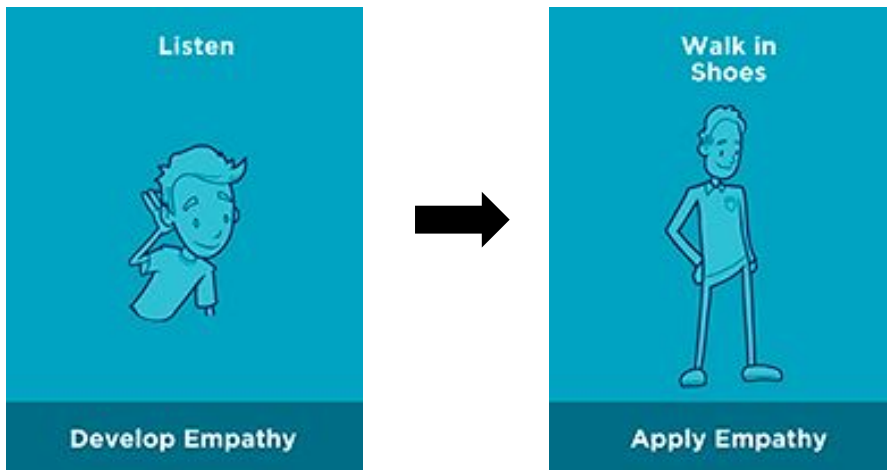


Image and quote source:
<http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/04/practical-empathy.php>

Practicing Empathy

Empathy is an understanding you develop about another person. Empathizing is the use of that understanding—an action.

1. Listen without judgement
2. Be present & active in the conversation
3. Find common ground
4. Don't assume anything

Problem Identification

The lack of diversity in tech

Companies think diversity is just a buzzword, although some are making efforts to recruit and hire diverse applicants. People think women just aren't interested in technology jobs, even though there are plenty of women in the technology field. Women are more likely to leave their tech jobs more than their male counterparts, even though women work just as hard as men.

In order to solve and understand this problem, we have to understand the people it affects.

Activity ①: Problem Identification

Take 5 minutes to answer these questions yourself.

1. Who is affected by lack of diversity in tech?
2. How are they affected by lack of diversity in tech?
3. What are the experiences of those who are affected?
4. How are they dealing with lack of diversity in tech?
5. Are some people affected more than others? If so, why?
6. What systems are in place that reinforce the lack of diversity in tech?

User Research

User Interviewing = empathy practice

Remember: you are not the user.

Your experiences may related to the subject you are exploring, but you are not exploring your experience, you are exploring the experience of your class partner.

As UX designers, it's our responsibility to listen to the users experience, and to find a solution that may also address problems multiple users experience.

The Importance of Questions

As a UX designer, our most important and useful tool will be our ability to ask questions.

The 5 W's

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- **Why** → if you ever don't understand something, always ask why!

Activity ②: User Interviews

Take the next 15 minutes to conduct an interview with a partner. Each of you will take 7 minutes to interview each other, and you can record your findings in the persona document I've handed out.

This is an opportunity for you to **build a persona** from the person you are interviewing, to develop and **practice empathy**, and to **identify specific problems** your partner faces and/or has faced.

Remember: The questions I've outlined are only guidelines, you may stray from the outline and ask your own questions. Always ask why!

Image

Draw an image of the person you interview

About

Name / Age / Profession / Gender Identity /

Ethnicity / Sexual Orientation /

How long have they been working in tech?

Do they enjoy working in tech?

What has been their experience with lack of diversity in tech?

Pain Points

Is there anything that frustrates them about working in tech?

What was the most difficult experience they've had while in tech?

Is there anything blocking them from achieving their goals/doing what they want?

Goals

Why are they in tech? Why did they choose this career?

Do they plan to stay in tech?

What are some of their career and personal goals?

Activity: Research Synthesis

Now that you've interviewed someone and gathered stories about their experiences, synthesize the research you've found.

Tips:

- Highlight the most important facts you've found
- Circle key elements of your interview that show a human-centered problem (such as bias, stereotyping, discrimination, etc.)
- Try to categorize the problems you've identified in your research and interview

Problem Solving

With all the information you've gathered, what are some problems within your personas experience that you identified? How can we think of solutions for those specific problems?

Tips:

- The solution does not have to be a technology-based solution (but can be)
- Think of your interview, and think of the problems, then think of a solution
- Human-centered design is key!

“Because the user does this, and has had this experience/problem, a solution to address this problem would be to _____.”

Activity ③: Problem Solving

User Action: Introduces herself as a front end developer.

Experience: Other male developers ask her if she knows how to code in HTML & CSS.

Problem: Male developers assuming she doesn't have basic skills even though she just said she was a front end developer.

Solution: The minute she introduces herself as a developer, have a hologram of her resume pop up next to her that shows her experience, rids the male developers of any doubt of her abilities, and saves her time repeating her experience to the other developers.

Thank you!



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Additional Resources

UX Design

- [What is UX Design? Overview, tools, and resources](#)
- [UX Myths](#)
- [How to Make Personas](#)
- [Nielson Norman Group UX Articles](#) → excellent resource for UX trends + findings

Intersectional Feminism

- [Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color](#)
- [Combahee River Collective Statement](#)
- [Not a Tech Bro, but not a Tech Lady](#)
- [Intersectional Feminist Podcasts](#)