Interaction Design Week

2022

Crits and constructive criticism in digital design

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Digital Scotland

Digital Scotland | Design System

Menu

BETA This is a new service. Your feedback will help us to improve it.

Design and build accessible digital services for Scotland

The Digital Scotland Design System provides static web assets for websites and web applications for the Scottish Government and other Scottish public sector bodies.

Get started >

Watch our introductory video on Vimeo

Purpose of this talk

- Not a one size fits all solution!

- To highlight common issues that arise during the design process

- Share steps that the design system team have taken to address some of these issues

- To share knowledge and spark conversations with other teams.

Structure

- **Design critique overview**
- **Constructive criticism**
- **Design system team process and crits**
- **Summary, Q&A and feedback**

Overview

What is the purpose of a design critique?

Purpose of a crit

- A collaborative conversation to gather feedback from team members to evaluate a design

- Crits evolve with the project progresses

- Are the requirements for the design are being met?
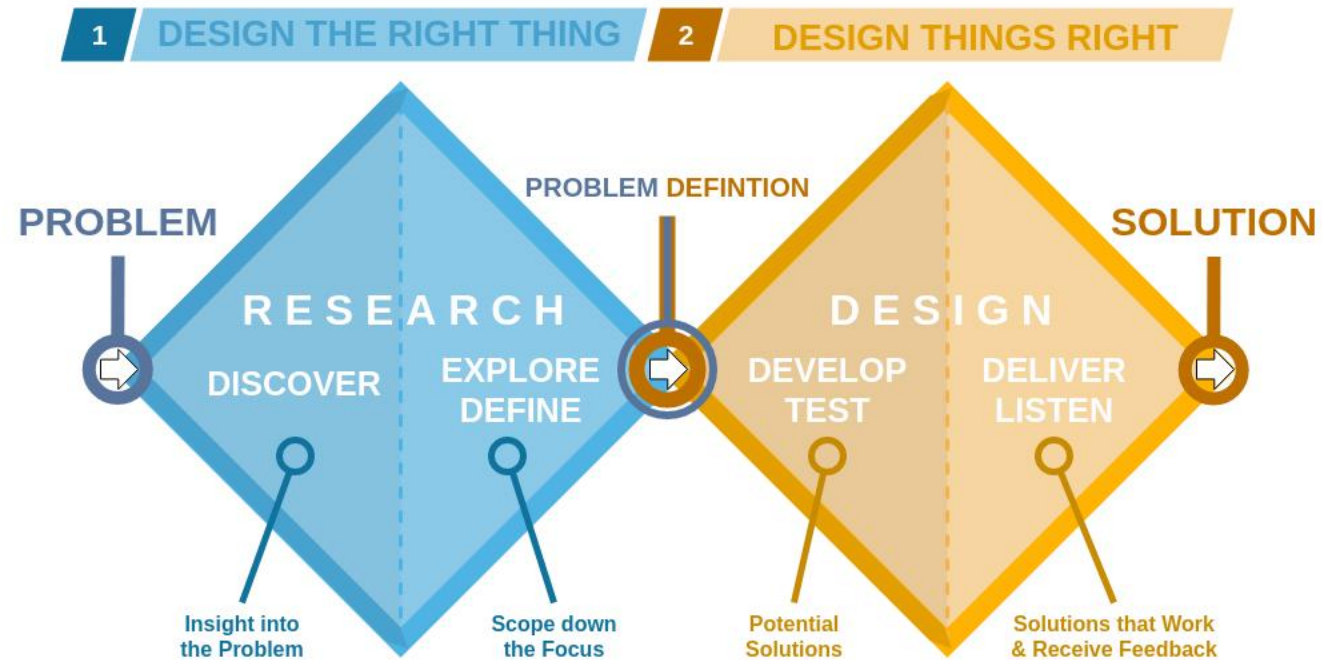
- Standard practice in all design disciplines.

What a crit is not

- A negative event

- A forum to purely criticise, the goal is to improve a proposed design through considered feedback

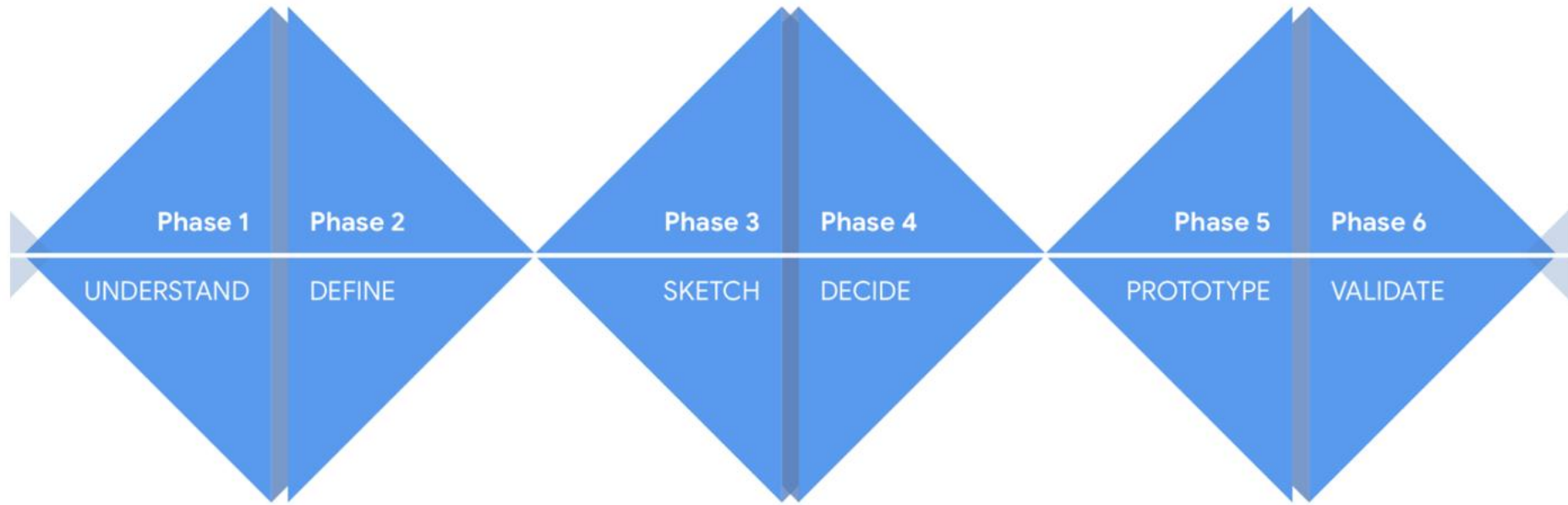- A designer/designers showing off a design they like to move to the next step of the process.

Frameworks

Google Design Sprint Kit

Phase 1	**Phase 2**
UNDERSTAND	DEFINE

Phase 3	**Phase 4**
SKETCH	DECIDE

Phase 5	**Phase 6**
PROTOTYPE	VALIDATE

Conducting a crit

Roles, preparation and outcomes

Roles

- **Presenter**
- **Participant (critiquer)**
- **Facilitator**
- **Note taker**

Preparation

- Clear scope

- Agenda/objectives

- Drafts/wireframes/prototypes at the ready

- The right people

- Share the work pre-crit
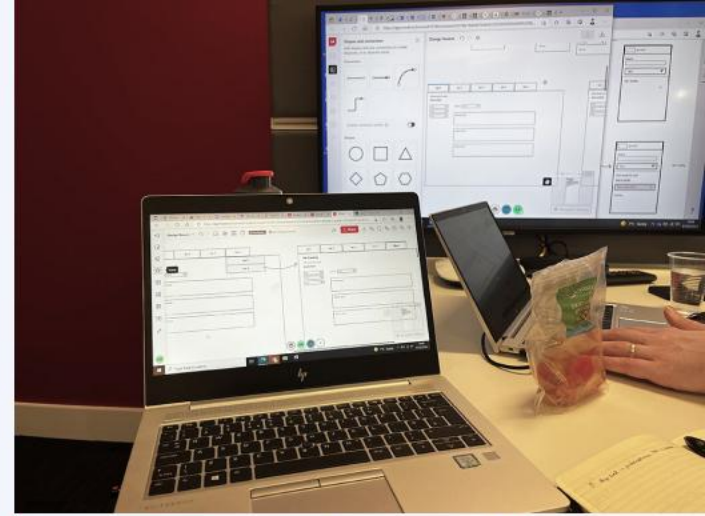
In-person or online

- Both are effective

- Ensure you are capturing feedback from everyone in online sessions

- In person crits require a lot of space, cramped crits are not ideal!

- Many online tools that can be used, we use a combination of MS Teams and Mural.

Outcomes

- Key feedback – all problems do not need to be solved then and there

- Build in time for additional feedback

- Mail out a summary and thank you

- All participants should be aware of the direction of travel – No surprises please!

Summary

- **Preparation is crucial**

- **The right people are required**

- **A crit is a positive and collaborative experience**

Constructive criticism

Perspectives and examples

Things to consider

- It is very easy to slip in to the habit of giving unhelpful criticism

- Each area of expertise has their own perspectives and requirements

- Try to communicate and understand each other!

Bad critique/feedback examples

Bad critique/feedback examples

- Lack of basis or rational foundation

- Subjective statements with no follow up: "This does nothing for me", "I don't like this"

- Opinion alone is not useful

- Broad, unactionable statements: "The whole page looks off"

Constructive criticism

- Begin with strong points

- Describe the design as you see it

- Frame criticism in relation to goals and misses

- Tie goals to guidelines/requirements

- Share examples

- Practical, actionable suggestions

Summary

- **Try to understand broader team perspectives**

- **Opinion on it's own is not useful**

- **Be polite!**

Design system team crits

Current process (WIP)

Scottish Government Design System – design process

🟢 Key stakeholders required. **This stage cannot progress if unavailable.**

Collate information and key points/requirements from any design system initial scope mural session.

- User research.
- Define requirements.

Key stakeholders identified in mural session.

Discover

Iterate on initial assumptions.

Draft low-fidelity wireframes/Determine main user flows

Discover   Define

🟢 Design critique (swarm) for team input.

Are the low-fi's meeting the design requirements?

Discover   Define

Yes

No

Iterate and update wireframes based on the team feedback.

Discover   Define   Develop

🟢 Design critique (swarm) for team input.

Are the medium-fi's meeting the design requirements?

Discover   Develop

Wireframes not approved

Wireframes approved

🟢 **Prototype/test**

Late stage crit

Develop

🟢 **Design**

Late stage crit

Develop

Handover

Develop

Process structure

- User research
- Discover the design direction
- Present early and often
- Explore and iterate
- Define and refine our process

Murals

AR **What's new section -...** ⓘ
Modified a month ago

AR **Design Swarm -Revisi...** ⓘ
Modified 3 months ago

AR **Design Swarm - DS F...** ⓘ
Modified 4 months ago

KD **Autocomplete - DS Ki...** ⓘ
Modified 4 months ago

AR **Design Swarm -Searc...** ⓘ
Modified 5 months ago

AR **Design Swarm -Searc...** ⓘ
Modified 7 months ago

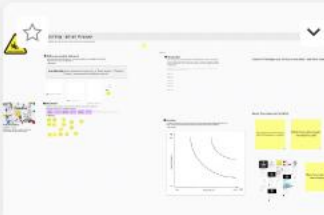LS **Search Results - DS K...** ⓘ
Modified 8 months ago

LS **Design System Priorit...** ⓘ
Modified 9 months ago

LS **Cookie Page Content** ⓘ
Modified a year ago

LS **Applying Design Syst...** ⓘ
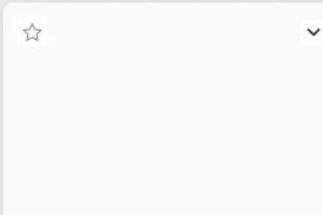Modified a year ago
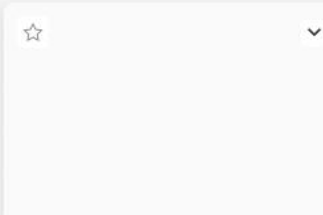
LS **DS Swarming session...** ⓘ
Modified a year ago

KD **Design System - deve...** ⓘ
Modified a year ago

LS **DS Swarming session...** ⓘ
Modified a year ago

KD **Spare board 1** ⓘ
Modified a year ago

KD **Spare board 3** ⓘ
Modified 2 years ago

14.06.2022 Gov.scot search - design swarm

Instructions: Use the section with sticky notes to enter your inputs/thoughts.

Total number of sessions: 2

2nd session on 17.06.2022

Objectives:

Since we are now moving away from squiz stencil, explore the following:

- **Do we really need tabs in our search design**? (see low fidelity wireframes w/o tabs)

- **Explore: Can we combine current tabs into filters section? If yes,** questions below:

  - What are the possible **problems/limitations**?   (any technical limitations etc.)

  - In this case, do we need **additional filters in 'All results' search page**? (consider promoted results)

- Think about the page layouts for 'Publications', 'News' and other pages on gov.scot main navigation. There is a search box in these pages.
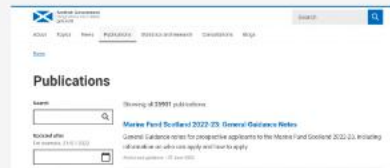
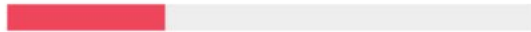- **Advanced search** - ability to search other SG site results like mygov.

29%

KA
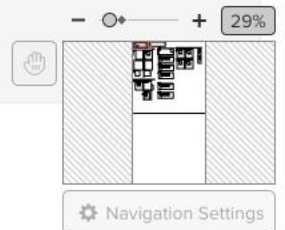
30/60/90

Lightweight design framwork

Using 30 - 60 - 90

A designer will tell you whether the design is at 30%, 60% or 90%

30%

Go / no go of a rough idea

Looking for

- Ideas, tips or impressions on the idea
- Whether this is something we should do
- If this is the right direction
- How to move the concept forward

60%

A first draft of a set concept

Looking for

- Was 30% critique addressed
- Visual / graphic feedback
- Feedback on interactive components
- Ways to expand the cocept

90%

Last check before dev

Looking for

- Was 60% critique addressed
- Final check
- Nitty gritty grammar
- Finalizing copy

- Fundamentally a 3 step process
- Crits and feedback are built-in

Thank you!