Home page txt

Money Envelopes

Money Envelopes app aims to help young professional better manage their money and spending by visually representing how much money they have budgeted for the week.

I will be attempting to meet these target users’ needs for an easy saving and budgeting platform. I would like to extinguish the belief that users do not make enough to save or should prioritize paying off debt first before saving for retirement or emergencies.

Minimal Life

The Minimalife (Minimal Life) app aims to help the user reduce the number of material items one owns and buys in order to help achieve financial freedom and peace of mind. This app uses positive reinforcement, gamification and statistical habit tracking to motivate users with their past success, and encourage them when they are struggling.

Yelp Usability

Yelp guerilla-style usability test to identify issues with ordering take-out or delivery from restaurants.  
  
There were two major questions I sought out to answer: Can users easily search for places that offer take-out or delivery? Can users save a place for later quickly if they are looking at multiple menus?

Design Jams Pg Txt

IBM iX Abode

For the IBM iX Adobe Creative Jam our challenge was to identify a critical area of need in the area of climate change and then conceive, design and build an experience that enables individuals or groups action that is accessible, achievable and measurable.

Lucid

For the Lucid Design Jam, we were to rethink the on-boarding process for their users and decrease the number of users that left the site after one or two interactions.

Deloitte

For the Deloitte Design Jam, we were to develop a data driven solution that will increase college football viewership (in person and online).

Great Lakes

In the Great Lakes Design Jam we worked to help tourists and locals understand the dangers of drowning on the great lakes.

Reads Pg Txt

Digital Minimalism — Cal Newport

Digital Minimalism applies the idea of physical minimalism to our personal technology. Newport focuses on helping readers live a more focused life in an increasingly distracting and noisy world. The digital detox Newport suggests helps readers break away from the current way they use technology and reflect on what is actually beneficial. The digital detox helps readers explore if they actually need many of the applications they currently use and aims to minimize the amount users feel tied to their social media and personal technology devices.

As a designer, I think it is of the outmost importance that I design products that add value to the users life. I aim to add very specific value to their life, not general statements such as “aim to make the world more open and connected.” Vague value statements have no specific goal and claim to add value to users lives in a general sense. This isn’t always useful, and encourages users to use products even if they offer a tiny bit of usefulness (regardless of negative effects). I aim to build products that are transparent in the value they offer users.

Hooked — Nir Eyal

“Why do some products capture widespread attention while others flop? What makes us engage with certain products out of sheer habit? Is there a pattern underlying how technologies hook us?”

Hooked explores the methods by which applications encourage users to keep going back to them by creating applications based around a “hook.” This hook can be anything from an emotion to a thought a user has on a frequent basis. The hook is created through alleviating some negative aspect (or enhancing a positive aspect) to that emotion or thought. Once the user associates the hook with the product, the product becomes something the user will engage with on a regular basis, making the product valuable and important.

Blink — Malcolm Gladwell

Blink explores our mental processes that work quickly and automatically with little information. Our snap judgements about how good a book will be by its cover to how organized our professors are by how they dress influence how we react to things in our lives. Blink discovers the negatives associated with these snap judgements (like stereotypes) as well as the strengths of snap judgements (like stepping out of the way of a speeding car).

These snap judgements happen on the applications we build every day as designers as well. Understanding first impressions is important to understanding how our users will interact with our designs and what judgements they will make about our products that may have a lasting effect.

Everything That Remains — The Minimalists

“What if everything you ever wanted isn’t what you actually want? Twenty-something, suit-clad, and upwardly mobile, Joshua Fields Millburn thought he had everything anyone could ever want. Until he didn’t anymore.”

Everything That Remains explores the idea of attachment to material objects and what happens when we regain control of our physical possessions. The effect of minimalism can be felt in our moods as our physical clutter disappears so does our mental clutter. Minimalism asks us to live a life with more of what we love and less of everything else.

I take this notion to heart and aim to design products that only add to the life of the user and enhance and improve things they already love and add none of the frivolous things they don’t need.

About Pg txt

# **Tess Mendes**

I am a Masters Student studying Human Computer Interaction and User Experience Research and Design at the University of Michigan graduating in 2021.

I am interested in building technologies that avoid distracting users from living life, but instead enhance their day to day activities. I respect users time and intentions for their life and build tools that help them reach their goals and aspirations. I believe in digital minimalism, intentional living, and user-owned data.

Aside from design, I enjoy studying behavioral economics, philosophy, the social sciences, and reading dystopian and satirical novels.

## **Course Work**

SI 501: Contextual Inquiry

SI 506: Introduction to Python

SI 539: Design of Complex Websites (html, css, javascript)

SI 582: Interaction Design

## **Previously**

BA Psychology — San Jose State University

Post-Bachelors, Environmental Design — University of California, Berkeley