

What are the differences between a web designer, a web developer and a UX designer?

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So, the different roles in web design relate to the different kinds of steps in the process of building a website. So, if you start with the UX designer, what they deal with is essentially user experience. So, what that means is you're taking the behavior for your clients who are interfacing with the website and mapping out how that process is going to work in terms of information architecture.

So, the actual physical deliverables for a UX designer might be things like a site map or a wireframe. I like to think of what the UX designer is doing as building a skeleton. So, there's no look and feel yet. It doesn't do anything yet. But we need to understand how things are structured before we move into those steps where we're fleshing out stuff. So, that's what a UX designer is for.

Once you've figured that out (the structure and architecture), then you can move into what the web designer does. And oftentimes, the term web designer is meant to reflect, like, what all of those processes are. So, they're conflated with the web developer.

But when we say web designer, what we mean is a visual designer. So, they take the information architecture, and then they make visual compositions--or comps, we tend to call them. And those can be Photoshop files, or nowadays, there's sketch files. And what they are is the final look and feel of the website. And that look and feel is what the client's gonna sign off on and what the developer ultimately will build.

What happens after that is we move into the development phase, and that's when the web developer takes over. And the web developer--he takes those visual comps, and he breaks them down into code (or she). And then what they do is they, you know, make that translated for deployment. So, there's a lot of processes involved for that, for the developer.

There's different kinds of web developers. There's front-end web developers and back-end web developers. And so, I like to think of the difference between them in terms of the construction of a car. So, with a front-end web developer, you have the chassis of the car, the exterior of it, the look, you know, the inside, so you have the seats and the dashboard. That's all involved in the construction of a website, too--you're taking the look and feel and translating it into HTML and CSS.

When you have the back end, that's kind of the guts of the car, the engine, the logic of the applications. The back-end developer deals with that.

Ultimately, there's--in modern development, the rise of a third kind of developer, which is the JavaScript engineer. And that developer is like a back-end developer who also does stuff on the front end. So, they're kind of bridging the gap. So, between the, you know, user experience, visual design, and development, you have all the roles involved in web design.