

Project 2.

Flow

Introduction

For the second project of this course, you will start living your research through iterative prototypes that you test with real users. In other words, you will continue on with the themes and findings from the first project. However now you will create iterative prototypes based on this research. This is the part of the design process where you begin pushing your ideas further into the world by introducing prototypes of products that could influence your users' lives.

If for whatever reason you aren't happy with where your research has gone thus far, pause for a moment to identify what you don't like, what you do like, and what other possibly helpful ideas came along the way during this process. Use this moment to thoughtfully reflect and gently pivot towards something you would genuinely like to explore.

For the first project, you ended with a synthesis presentation of your process and research plus three proposals for touchpoint products — one physical, one digital, and one temporal. For this second project, you will focus on the touchpoint you proposed that feels the most grounding, which the other two naturally follow after. Or, if all touchpoints are important, continue developing them all with equal emphasis.

Goals

By the end of this project, one goal is to have a strong portfolio piece — a PDF case study — that you can show to make clear that you know how to carry out a UX research process on a topic that's meaningful to you and your audience.

Another goal is being present during the process of creating these prototypes and conducting user tests. Good UX design is about listening to users and making things that will truly serve them.

Schedule

Tuesdays — Everyone shares their progress

Thursdays — 1on1 meetings & working time

Week 10 (Oct 28, 30) — Prototypes Draft 1 (“Lo-Fi”) or Competitive Analysis

Week 11 (Nov 3, 5) — Prototypes, Draft 2 (“Medium-Fi”) & User Testing

Week 12 (Nov 10, 12) — Prototypes, Draft 3 (“High-Fi”) & Production

Week 13 (Nov 17, 19) — Presentations

Week 14 (Nov 24) — Group Publication & Async Feedback on Presentation

Week 15 (Dec 1, 3) — Group Publication & Final Presentation Edits Due

Details

Process — Everyone is at a slightly different place with their projects. Some have already been developing real prototypes, whereas others are just beginning. Whatever place you’re at is totally fine; it just might mean you focus on different parts of the UX process that will help your project develop.

User Testing — Just like how the designers and researchers called for a group of people to “adopt” their furniture prototypes in *Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects* by Fiona Raby & Anthony Dunne (2001), I would recommend a similar process for your project. At the beginning of this project, assemble the users who are in your target demographic and are excited to try out your prototype when it’s ready in a couple weeks. These people might be those you’ve already spoken with in surveys/interviews from the first project, or they might be newer people based on your target demographic becoming more specific.

Collaboration — To make the designing part of your projects more socially integrated, I’d like you to commission a part of aspect of your project out to someone else in the class. For example, someone in the class might do your illustrations or logo. You might ask them, “What do you want to bring to my project?” or propose something specific, “I’d love for you to make x or y for my project. What do you think?”

Group Publication

Starting Week 10, we'll concurrently use some of class time to start brainstorming about a modest group publication we can make together. Laurel will lead this process, but ideally it will help us collaborate and synthesize some learnings and important process from this semester.

Guidelines

The guidelines are the same as the first project. One of the most effective ways to learn about something is by making something new, sharing it with others, reflecting on this process, and doing it (or something related to it) again. This is primary research. This is directly opposed to the traditional academic research process that you might be familiar with which relies on experiencing previously written and recorded accounts. This is secondary research.

In the case of UX Research Methods, for the second half of the semester we will be creating real prototypes that help us understand a project space. Trying out different mediums, senses, and modalities is welcomed. Experiment through using distinct media, at distinct scales, or with distinct approaches.

