

# User Experience (UX) Design



# What Is UX Design?

UX design, or user experience design, is the process of creating products and experiences that help users get done what they've come to do—as efficiently and effectively as possible.

# What Is UX Design?

The user experience is how users feel as they engage with your product. This concept applies to physical objects and daily experiences, like using a coffee maker or buying a car at a dealership; but it also applies to the digital side of life—think about the last time you transferred money using a banking app, purchased something online, or even played a game on your phone.

# What Is UX Design?

- How each of these apps or websites are designed, combined with your needs and goals as you engage with them, create the user experience. Sometimes it's a really great experience; sometimes, not so much.
- UX design is the process of understanding and empathizing with the actual needs and goals of your users, diving into that user experience, locating the problems (often called "pain points"), and finding solutions that result in a better user experience.

# What Is UX Design?

Good UX design often flies just under your radar—unless it's just a really outstanding experience, if the UX is good, you don't notice it. Things are just working the way they're supposed to. But bad UX? You'll spot it every time, and chances are that you won't be very interested in repeating your experience with that product.

# Where did UX design come from?

Some of the most basic tenets of UX can be traced as far back as 4000 BC to the Chinese philosophy of Feng Shui, which focuses on arranging your surroundings in the most optimal, harmonious or user-friendly way. There is also evidence to suggest that, as early as the 5th century BC, Old Greek civilizations designed their tools and workplaces based on ergonomic principles.

# Where did UX design come from?

In the late 19th century, great thinkers and industrialists like Frederick Winslow Taylor, and Henry Ford began integrating basic experience design principles into their production processes. On a mission to make human labor more efficient, Taylor conducted extensive research into the interactions between workers and their tools—just like UX designers today investigate how users interact with products and services.

# Where did UX design come from?

- Another key figure in the history of UX is industrial engineer Henry Dreyfuss, who wrote one of the earliest books in the UX design canon: *Designing for People* (1955).
- Next up, Don Norman joined the team at Apple as their first User Experience Architect—making him the first person known to have UX in his job title. He came up with the term “user experience design,” wrote another essential UX design book—*The Design of Everyday Things* (1988), and co-founded the Nielsen Norman Group.

# Where did UX design come from?

For centuries, humans have been seeking to optimize their surroundings for maximum user comfort. And over time, that attention to design has evolved and adapted to a digital age, which brings us full circle, back to the demand for UX designers in the world of tech.

# What does a UX designer actually do?

- Guided by the design thinking process (more on this in a moment), a UX designer understands and advocates for the needs and goals of the user.
- This process begins with empathy. UX designers connect with users and seek to understand what makes them tick, as well as what they really need from this product or experience. That's called user research and it includes the bulk of the empathize stage of the process.

# What does a UX designer actually do?

- The next stage is to clearly define what problems, needs, and goals users have that the product could potentially solve or help users achieve. This leads naturally into the ideation stage, when UX designers actively come up with proper solutions to the problems they've defined. This ideation can take many forms, but it's not unlike brainstorming ideas for classes, projects, and lesson plans.

# What does a UX designer actually do?

- In the prototyping stage, UX designers take their solutions and build them into a functioning model so they can share the ideas with stakeholders and test the solutions to make sure they'll actually work. And that's the final stage of the process: testing to make sure that the solutions they've arrived at will actually improve the user experience.

# What does a UX designer actually do?

- This process takes on the entire life cycle of a product (from concept to delivery). It also involves coordinating and communicating with such a variety of people—from users and fellow designers to developers and stakeholders (which could include any number of people from all levels of the organization).

# What is a UX designer's core skillset?

A great UX designer can connect and communicate with a broad variety of audiences (internal and external to the organization and the design process). They are empathetic and curious—always ready to learn more. They're critical thinkers who can approach problems in strategic ways while they embrace the creativity required to arrive at truly innovative and effective solutions.

# **What is a UX designer's core skillset?**

UX designers are also fluent in a variety of tools and processes involved in user research, usability testing, communication and project management, visual design, wireframing, and prototyping. Many UX writers also specialize in UX research, UI design, and/or UX writing.

**Questions?**