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Translating the Offline to Digital Products

Creating digital products is something that people often associate in conjunction with large companies. Considering that Apple, Google, and Microsoft produce both devices and software that society is accustomed to and heavily dependent upon, it makes sense as to how large the market is for innovation. Technology is intertwined into society because through it we are able to gain more access to data and information that helps us to live more efficiently. At times people even refer to their digital devices as extensions of themselves, viewing them as their connection to systems outside of their current surroundings. The world of tech is in a constant state of flux, there are always new and more adaptable products being released but just because it entices those hungry for innovation doesn't always make every product functional.

Products of substantial quality rely heavily on their design, whether it's a piece of hardware or a system within software the way that it works and the way people experience the the design determine the products later success. User experience design focuses on the relationship that people have with technology and is viewed as the design which helps to bring digital projects into existence. Incorporating a wide variety of design principles user experience heavily emphasizes the importance of human-centric design. The offline world is the place in which people exist in time and space, however the digital realm is one of constant expansion. User experience incorporates patterns and systematic approach of the offline into the devices that we use everyday, human centric design starts with people and continues to rely on the way that we interact with the design of the world around us.

Review of Literature

Technology Corporations

Companies that produce the largest and most valued products worldwide are widely known for their recruitment and strategic hiring efforts. Google is one of the more exceptional companies in the industry known for their strenuous process and specific company culture. Computer science heavily influences how mobile devices and computer software exist and continue to grow. "People spend most of their lives at work, but work is a grinding experience for most—a means to an end. It doesn't have to be.We don't have all the answers, but we have made some fascinating discoveries about how best to find, grow, and keep people in an environment of freedom, creativity, and play."[1] Google is widely known for their engineering culture and their emphasis on hiring people that are some not only some of the most intelligent people on the market but from the most diverse backgrounds. It is important to take into consideration the hiring process of a company of this magnitude. Investigating the hiring process and company culture while taking into consideration that specific types of people Google looks for in order to build their experiences will lead to a better understanding of the most innovative problem solvers within technology.

Design Principles and Guidelines

Design principles are not limited to specific field, however they extend to any and every type of design. A designer is hired to help solve problems, and a well designed object takes into consideration the way in which it will have to interact with either people or the space around it.

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[1] Bock, Lazlo. 2015. *Work Rules! Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead.* New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, 27.

"Experience is critical, for it determines how fondly people remember their interactions."[2] An experience designer has to investigation the interactions in which people experience outside of the device they are using. Human-centric design starts and ends with the way in which people engage with the object they are using and how successful they are while using it. *The Design of Everyday Things* and *100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People, investigate the underlying themes behind creating successful interactions.*

User Experience, Service, and Human-Centric Design

      Defining user experience better known as UX can be very difficult for those who are new or unfamiliar with the term. Human-centric design, service design, and UX are extremely comparable if not almost identical. While user experience focuses on the engagements that people have online service and human-centric design is extremely broad and focuses on the engagements that people have with both the physical and digital world. While the names are different the terms were invented to share similar meanings. "The purpose of a Co-Creation Session is to convene a group of people from the community you're serving and then get them to design alongside you. You're not just hearing their voices, you're empowering them to join the team. You can co-create services, investigate how communities work, or understand how to brand your solution."[3]

      When designers take on digital products they are forced to consider the emotions and goals that the user has in mind. Each product has to be looked at with a considerable amount of empathy, as each user type is different and will require a specific eye of detail. Every individual has a unique way in which they engage and interact with technology and this vast variety of

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[2] Norman, Donald A. 2013. *The Design of Everyday Things*. Revised and Expanded Edition ed. New York: Basic Books, 37.

[3] *The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design: Design Kit*. San Francisco: Innovation, Design Engineering Organization, 2015, 109.

potential experiences has to be mapped out in a way that makes sense and which is chronological. The process of mapping and building around human experience for a project is never the same. Researching and investigating how to build a specific interface or how to work through specific interactions is crucial to the design of the application or website.

Driving Engagement

Successful products drive conversions, whether that is a certain amount of people reaching and downloading an application or if there are sales to made on a website. No designer or developer can consistently work towards goals unless at some point they are measured. It is important to take into mind the outside factors which also heavily rely on the UX of a product. Interaction design is a specific focus within UX, the way in which things appear in front of an individual on a screen or how quickly they disappear. These interactions produce emotional responses which are key insights into how people can engage with a product. Monitoring the market for which a product will be launched provides UX designers key insights into to best design specific features of a website or app. Understanding how interactions and market research go together provides the ability to decipher how to translate engagement into conversions.

Research Methods

Ethnography was used as a tool to collect data throughout this research question. As a design intern I engage with UX projects on a weekly basis through working on a small team. I have been able to gain a deeper understanding of how design problems are approached by actively engaging with them. Working on a team has provided me a substantial amount of access. The experiences that I've had have made the process of understanding how UX design is implemented much easier. Choosing a local design and strategy agency for ethnography

provided me the opportunity to view the UX process within multiple projects. The data I collected was based off of the days I spent at my internship, and the projects and team members that I frequently engage with. Collecting data from an agency provided the opportunity to see how multiple projects use UX in their products. If I were to have collected this data from a specific product owner it may not have provided as much insight into how versatile the approaches within UX are or provided insight into how to turn the data collected is into actual digital experiences. I was heavily influenced by the process of data collection and mapping, these insights were very valuable to me when learning how to create experiences.

I choose books that were published by companies and authors with relevant experience or understanding of specific principles of design. Several of the sources that I used are heavily recommended for not only UX designers but for any designer creating products for people. These sources have helped to

Data & Observations

Research is the first stage that takes place when developing almost any product whether it is physical or digital. This is especially true when it comes to user experience design, and I found throughout my ethnography that digital product research takes place not only at the beginning, but throughout the entire span of the project. Research often began with the product owners, depending on the complexity of the system that they were working within. Some products are attempting to innovate within an already established field such as finance and require an extensive amount of research, data collection, and user interviews before the product can even be built. I began to make the assumption that projects are not brought to the UX team without having been heavily built and backed by research. As a team we worked to further investigate the products we have been assigned, but it started with the people who plan to launch the product having done the ground work beforehand. I found that research is the

foundation to collecting insights into users habits and needs. Within the agency is common that as a designer you may not be an expert on the industry that your assigned project is in. Research is the foundation to understanding how to decipher this industry and specifically it's users needs, wants, and complexities.

Finances were also an important factor is the design process that I later discovered. Throughout my ethnographic research I found that conversions whether they were sales, product discovery, or posts from website viewers as an extremely important factor when designing the interactions of a product. Clients were heavily involved in the process of iteration and it was crucial to build a product that not only created value from our perspectives as designers, but also which kept the interests of the product owners in mind as well.

Team division was an interesting insight that I almost overlooked because of my involvement as an intern. As a designer I think I almost overlooked this observation because it never stood out to me, but as a researcher maintaining an objective perspective throughout the process lead me to this insight which I thought was key in understanding the process. Teams are broken down into multiple channels, this includes copywriters, strategy, communication design, & UX design. Each team contributes differently to the product process but all have individual forms of research that they will conduct to make informed decisions.

Discussion