

CSC 363: HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION

DESIGN MANIFESTO



INTRODUCTION

With a high level college design course under my belt, I can confidently say that I don't know anything about anyone, ever. I don't know what they want, I don't know what will work best for

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their needs, and I don't know how they may have to access my design. I don't know now is how to learn from others and keep my designs open to change. In design, leaving our egos at the door and being open to change any part of our design is absolutely essential. We will never know what others think, and that's alright—the most important thing is to hear their needs and change our design accordingly. From before we start to long after we finish, there will be needs and design methods that we don't even consider until we ask others. In this design manifesto, I'll discuss how important being open to change is in the design process that I've become familiar with over the last couple of months. We'll discuss this in the form of 5 major points, organized in order of where they predominantly appear in the design process.

POINT 1: NEEDFINDING IS ESSENTIAL

The first part of my (and anyone's) design process is having an idea. Maybe I've already found a need, like my mom becoming frustrated with the layout of her office. If I were to help her redesign her office (as a good son would), would I get to work without asking her first? Of course not. I would need to know how she likes things ordered and what her needs are, from a chair with support for her injured back to organizational cabinets for storing files. Thus comes in the need for needfinding. When designing something, physical or digital, I go in knowing that I need to speak

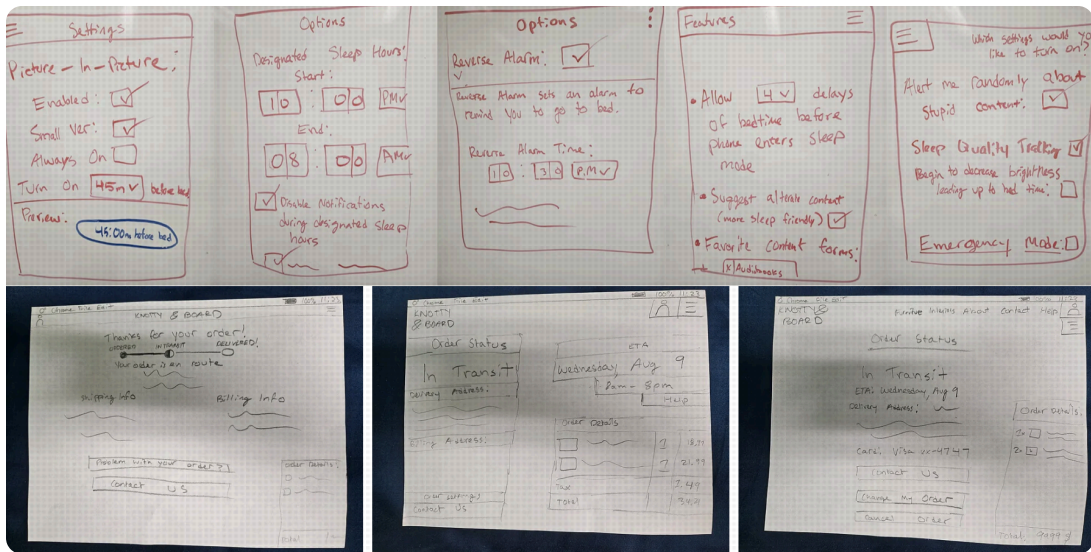
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own instincts and don't consult engineering or other disciplines. We end up with critical design flaws like the [decreased effectiveness of seatbelts for women](#). Although for [Design Sprint 1](#) we used personas to create an idea of a person we were designing for, personas aren't enough in the real world. Personas don't get designers out interacting with real people, and therefore don't teach them anything new. They do help in getting designers to think about who they may be designing for, but at the end of the day, conducting real interviews with real people (such as in [Homework 2](#)) is key.

POINT 2: PLAN USING VASTLY DIFFERENT APPROACHES

With needfinding completed, it is now time to begin prototyping. We have a task to accomplish (redesigning a cluttered desk), we have our needs (ergonomic chairs, organizational cabinets); we now need to plan for how to solve these issues. A key feature of planning is prototyping—making example versions of how the final product might look to better get a feel of the design. When I first tried creating many sketch prototypes for [Homework 3](#), I created an idea in my mind of a page and then prototyped variations of this idea—this wasn't the right way to do it. As I created paper prototypes for Design Sprint 1 later, I realized that prototypes need a wide variety of approaches. I could create an idea for one prototype, but the next prototype should be significantly different. This gives me more room to think of creative and effective

poorly designed can have parts that are well designed product. With so many different approaches considered, I could now combine my favorite elements from the wildly-different prototypes to create a more well-rounded polished prototype. For the office example, I may take versions with vastly different room layouts and combine them into an office that takes the best of the many designs.



Above: Homework 3 Prototype Sketches.

Below: Design Sprint 1 Prototype Sketches.

POINT 3: USE FEEDBACK TO CHANGE DESIGNS—RESTARTING IF NEED BE

Now that we have a solid prototype with diverse approaches considered, the next essential step in the design process is showing this prototype to the users it is for and receiving their feedback. Before I go about rearranging my mother’s office, I need

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Once again, we as designers know what users want and need until we actually ask them. I may think my industrial organizational file cabinets are perfect for my mom's needs, but when she tells me that she doesn't want something so ugly and bulky in her office, I need to take that feedback into account and go back to the drawing board. She may even say that what would really be best for her injured back is a standing desk, which would require me to completely redo the entire design. As stated in the introduction, egos need to be left at the door while designing. Our design might be *terrible* when actually shown to the target group, requiring us to start all over again. When my group and I were working on [Design Sprint 4](#), users found our physical visualization prototype to be needlessly complex, so we chopped off half of our data to simplify it, vastly changing the design. For most of the class, we didn't need to make such massive changes. We made data visualizations for students, many of whom had taken a data visualization class. We knew who we were designing for. In the real world, things aren't that easy. Designers need round after round of feedback to improve, which is why we can never escape the customer satisfaction surveys we get emailed after using an online service—it's all in the name of good design.

POINT 4: KEEP ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND

We've discussed previously the importance of getting feedback from diverse groups of people, however even with this in mind we

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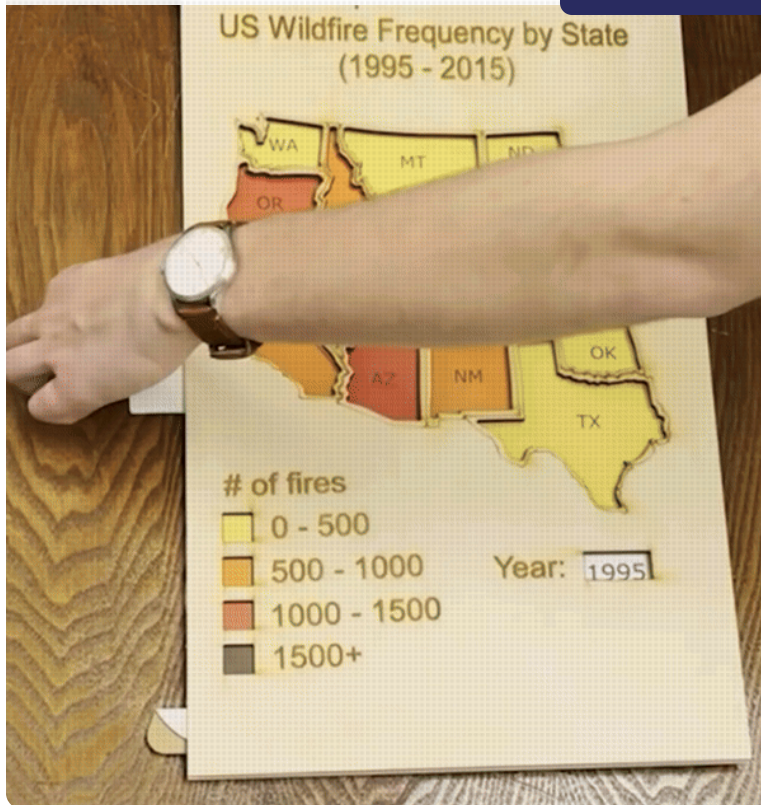
designs. Persons with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments may not be groups we always have access to interviewing in every context, so it's important for designers to consciously think about the best way to make their designs accessible. Designing for accessibility must happen at every step of the process, from initial needfinding to final touches, as ensuring your design is accessible is a task that can always be improved. A prime example of this was during the [oral exam](#) we took halfway through the semester, where we discussed how we would go about designing a new subway system for a city. For a system that will be used by so many people, it's absolutely imperative that accessibility concerns are taken into account—lives may depend on it. In the case of my redesigned office area, I should consider how small folder labels may be difficult for my mom to read with her slightly-diminished eyesight (no offense, Mom). So during all steps of the process we must consider how our users' different accessibility needs can be addressed.

POINT 5: NEVER STOP CHANGING

So we've made it! We've found our user needs, prototyped our design, we've changed our design according to user feedback, and we designed with attention to accessibility—we've made our design. I've created a clean office in a new, spacious room with a window, a standing desk, chic file cabinets...and my mom walks in and exclaims that she doesn't like it! The window faces west so she is blinded in the afternoons, the standing desk is too short for her,

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and the file cabinets to help me stay organized. Over the course of this class, I've learned that design is almost never done. There is always something to be improved, and user feedback will inevitably come in after the product is "done" such that additional changes must be made. We'll have to install blinds on the windows and change the height of the desk, since it's impossible to account for the real world during prototyping. Even after the product is created, design never ends, and we can never stop changing. It's crucial that we as designers always strive to make our designs the best they can be. When my group had finished our Design Sprint 4 and were demoing the project in class, one student asked why we have the wooden cutout at all when simply having the papers side by side would do the trick while allowing for easier comparison. The answer we gave to this question was...we don't really have one. Our design could still be improved, and I feel that every Design Sprint product I submitted for grading could have been better with more time and feedback. With time, us designers must always keep working on our designs to make them the best they can be.

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A demonstration of my group's [Design Sprint 4](#)

IN CONCLUSION ...

These 5 takeaways all hover around one essential theme: that we as designers aren't perfect. We don't know everything, and need to think about others to make a good design. Even when we do consider others, we won't make something that's perfect, and will need to go back and ask the target groups again and again. As it turns out, asking others for their views because we don't know everything applies to things outside of design, too (who would have thought?). As we go through life, we as humans must realize that

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others know things that they know and how they feel can v... best way
possible. It won't be perfect on the first try, but we'll try, try, again
and hopefully make a design that makes the world a better place.

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