

Project 1

DESIGNING FOR USABILITY

This project focuses on the design, functionality, and usability of web and interactive applications. You will design the mobile and desktop user interface of a web and computer application. Your goals as a UI designer are as follows:

- Develop graphics and icons for the application.
- Adapt the design to suit the various device types and sizes.
- Demonstrate how the user experience changes from one device to another.

Choose one of the following categories:

- Productivity app (To Do, Notes, Journal, etc.)
- Music app (Music Player, Radio, Music Creation, Lyrics/Song Finder, etc.)
- Weather app (Forecasts & Alerts, Sun & Moon, etc.)
- Social Networking app (Messaging, Content Sharing, etc.)
- Travel app (Airline, Car Rentals, Hotels, etc.)

This project is in 2 phases:

Phase 1:

You will develop unique ideas for the icons and graphics for the mobile, tablet, and desktop application. Here is a tip: Begin by designing the mobile application—it is easier to progressively enhance your design than it is to degrade it. **Note that you are not developing the application in code**, but you are designing a prototype and explaining how the application works. You will also create an icon for the application to show it in its proper context.

Required components:

- Three (3) states of the application for each device. For example, a music application could feature the *now playing* screen, *album list* screen, and the *song list* screen; designed for mobile, tablet and desktop respectively, making a total of nine (9) designs.
- Application icon

Phase 2:

In the second phase, you will build a mini site to promote your application and describe how it works. You will present your application so it is appealing to the user for purchase. Your minisite should be made up of two (2) pages. The mobile, tablet, and desktop mockups of the application should be featured on one page with a short description of how the application works. The second page should be a bio page about you, the designer.

Required components:

- Mockup of your minisite
 - Homepage containing information about the product with in-context presentations of your mockups. Also, highlight a few features in your application explaining how it works.
 - A bio page about you, the designer.
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Technologies to be used:

Photoshop, Illustrator, HTML, CSS, JS

Things to do:

- Review samples of UI designs of mobile applications, websites, and minisites
 - Read chapters 1, 2 & 10 of “Don’t Make me Think.”
 - Find examples of websites or applications that relate to the reading and post them on your blogs.
 - Presentations: UI Design, HTML components, Introduction to CSS, Preparing images for the web, Embedding fonts
 - Complete exercises on Code Academy
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Grading

Evaluation of this project will be as follows: 60 points for the UI design of your application and 40 points for the Design and Usability of your minisite.

Design

- Wireframes and mockups are well conceived and inform the final composition.
- UI design is finished, creative and professional.
- UI design motivates the user to use the interface.
- UI design is intuitive and makes it easy for the user to find information.
- Typography, layout, color, and texture complement the theme of the site.
- Content is finished and has been optimized intelligently for mobile, tablet and desktop (includes write-up).

Functionality

- HTML and CSS code validates and does not break the design.

Usability

- Links are clear and helpful
- Active page is evident in the navigation
- Each page has an appropriate page title
- Visual metaphors are in use and icons are easy to interpret
- Good usability principles are applied, making it easy for users to navigate the site without thinking

A detailed rubric will be posted on the Google Group

Resources

UI design inspiration — behance.net, uiparade.com, dribbble.com

Examples of minisites — app-sites-blog.tumblr.com and onepagelove.com