

DGM6168: Team Project

Fall 2014

Working in teams, you will design a **mobile application** that responds to a specific user need. You may choose any problem domain that you wish, choose to improve upon some existing application, or invent something entirely new. The only requirement is that you must have access to likely users of your app.

Your task will be to execute a goal-directed design process as outlined in Alan Cooper's book, *About Face 3*. Critical to this process will be performing original research with potential users leading to creation of a user persona for your project and a set of user scenarios. These deliverables should drive development of your design. You will then create a design prototype based on this work, which we will test during class. The project will culminate with a final design presentation, in the form of a design storyboard, presented during the last night of class.

While you may work on any application of your choosing, you are encouraged to keep the scope narrow so that you may produce a complete solution from research through design. You must decide which mobile platform you will target, and your design must be appropriate for the platform you choose. The project will include the following steps and deliverables:

1. Characterize the problem to be solved through user research. Perform user interviews to develop a primary persona and identify required use cases to describe that user population and application.
2. Create a click-thru prototype of your proposed solution that will be suitable for user testing. In building your prototype, you should consider what features are critical for your user testing and how best to model those.
3. Create a usability test protocol for validating your design. Prepare a usability report that describes usability test findings in terms of actionable problems and recommendations.
4. Create a final presentation of your recommendations in the form of a design storyboard that would be suitable for presentation of your redesign proposal to a client.

Deliverables

Detailed information for each of these project deliverables will be posted prior to their due dates. The schedule and high-level requirements for each phase of the project are outlined below:

October 23	Proposal / Research Plan. You will submit a one page brief that summarizes the problem that you are trying to solve (i.e. the problem statement), the likely users for your application,
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	your plan for gaining access to these users for the purpose of user research, and a set of research questions.
November 6	User research report and context scenarios. You will document your user research and create a primary persona for your project along with a list of critical needs/opportunities. These will be elaborated on in a set of context scenarios that will be used to drive your design.
November 13	Initial Concept. You will create a design storyboard to describe the initial design concept for your application according to the scenarios coming out of your user research.
November 20	Usability Test Plan. You will create a usability test plan that can be run during class to validate your design.
December 4	Design solution storyboards. You will create a final presentation that will be presented during the last class. Your presentation should touch on all aspects of your project, including the key finding from your user research and how they led to your ultimate proposal. Your final proposal should incorporate any changes required to your design as a result of learnings from your usability test. Quality of your presentation, as well as the quality of your design proposal will count towards the final grading.

A project blog has been set up for each team. Deliverables must be posted this blog each week.

Grading Criteria

The final project will be worth 40% of your final grade. The planning and execution of your user research, the usability of your design solution, and the quality design deliverables are all important for this project. As designers, the way we present and sell our ideas to others can often be as important as the quality of the design itself. Your final solution should consider all of the aspects and principles of interaction design that we covered during the course.

Each student will receive two grades for the project. The first is an overall project grade that reflects the quality of team deliverables. All team members will receive the same project grade. The second grade is an individual performance grade that will consider your individual contributions to the project based on both peer feedback and on my own observations.

Project Teams

Learning to work effectively in teams is an important aspect of this project. Teams often succeed or fail based on their ability to cooperate and get the most out of each team member's unique talents and skills. To facilitate this, each team member will adopt a role as described below. This will more closely simulate how real teams operate in a corporate environment. Roles are as follows:

Project Lead. Provide overall coordination for the project by scheduling meetings, facilitating team communication, creating presentations, and ensuring overall consistency of deliverables. The project lead should have good communication skills, attention to detail, and should enjoy interacting with others.

User Research Lead(s). Coordinate all user research and testing activities. Working with other members of the team, the user research team should create research plans, analyze results, and create required reports. The research lead should be passionate about understanding users and ensuring that the resulting design will be consistent with their needs. They may typically act as a user advocate during design meetings.

Design Lead(s). Lead the design effort and create required design deliverables including wireframes, design mockups, and prototypes. This will require collecting input from the entire team and consolidating those inputs into a coherent solution. The design lead(s) should be skilled at synthesizing solutions from sometimes vague user requirements and using software tools for bringing those ideas to life.

You may self-organize and decide who will take on what role. **It is important to note that all team members are expected to participate in all phases of the project.** However by adopting lead roles, it will be clear who has the primary responsibility for each deliverable and has the final decision in the case of disagreements. It will also ensure that one person does not get saddled with all the work, and that everyone has an important role to play on the team. See project team assignments below:

Team 1:

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Collaborating Online

Teams should generally plan to meet live at least once per week outside of classroom hours. You may, of course, arrange to meet on campus or at a location convenient for everyone. But the abundance of online tools now make remote meetings a great option. You may want to explore Google Hangouts or similar social media platforms for holding online meetings.

Between meetings, keeping every on the team informed of progress and contributing to discussions is also important. While communicating via email is fine, it is not always the most efficient way to keep track of conversations. Again, Google provides some free and easy to use tools for addressing this problem. You might consider creating a Google group for your project and using Google Drive for sharing, editing, and commenting on team deliverables. I will be glad to get you started in setting up a collaboration environment that will work for your team.