

5.3: Understanding UX design

User experience (UX) can be defined as all the experiences for example, physical, sensory, emotional and mental, that a person has when interacting with a digital tool. The field of UX is full of similar sounding jargon, so here's a quick guide to the terms you should know.

User experience (UX) is the overall satisfaction a user gets from interacting with a product or digital tool.

User experience design (UXD, sometimes UED) is the process of applying proven principles, techniques and features to a digital tool to create and optimise the user experience.

User-centred design (UCD) is the design philosophy that prioritises the user's needs and wants above all else, and places the user at the centre of the entire experience. This often entails research and testing with real users of the site or product.

User interface (UI) is the user-facing part of the tool or platform and is the part of the actual website, application or tool that the user interacts with.

Usability refers to how user friendly and efficient a digital product is.

Online UX can be divided into two broad categories.

- **Functional UX.** This covers the elements of the user experience that relate to actually using the tool such as working technical elements, navigation, search and links.
- **Creative UX.** This is the bigger, harder to define impression created by the tool. The so-called 'wow' factor that covers visual and creative elements.

Note

User experience design roles differ in the skills needed and the functions performed.

There are six qualities that make up good UX:

- **Findability** – Can I find it easily? Does it appear high up in the search results? How long does it take me to find something on the site? Does the three click rule work on this site?
- **Accessibility** – Can I use it when I need it? Does it work on my mobile phone, or on a slow Internet connection? Can I use it as a disabled person?
- **Desirability** – Do I want to use it? Is it a pleasant experience, or do I dread logging in?
- **Usability** – Is it easy to use? Are the tools I need intuitive and easy to find?
- **Credibility** – Do I trust it? Is this website legitimate?
- **Usefulness** – Does it add value to me? Will I get something out of the time I spend interacting with it?

The benefits of UX

Note

The three click rule suggests that a user should be able to access what they need from your site with no more than three mouse clicks.

There are some real, tangible benefits to applying UX design to digital marketing strategies.

Good UX is an excellent way to differentiate your brand in the market and give yourself a competitive advantage. If your online touchpoints are easy, intuitive and awesome to use, your customers won't have any reason to look elsewhere.

Good UX research and design allows you to find the best solution for your needs.

Every business, website and online service is unique in some way, which means that the way it is constructed must be unique too.

✓ Example 5.3.1

Amazon's US \$300 million button is perhaps the most dramatic example of how a simple UX fix can impact the business. Amazon managed to gain an extra US \$300 million worth of sales simply by changing their 'Register' button to one that read 'Continue' instead. The number of customers increased by 45% because they no longer felt they needed to go through an onerous registration process simply to fulfil a basic shopping action. In fact, nothing else about the purchase process had been changed! (Spool, 2009).

Every marketer knows that the ideal customer is a happy customer. Customers who love the experience you give them will become loyal clients, and possibly even brand evangelists.

Applying UX principles allows you to get your digital tools working earlier, with much better functionality, at a lower cost. You can cut out features and elements that you simply don't need, and focus on the core user experience. This optimised development process in turn leads to sites that are easier and cheaper to maintain, upgrade and support across multiple platforms.

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