UX Resources

Selected titles from the Inforum’s collection

User engagement & aesthetics


Drawing on psychology, neuroscience and numerous design case-studies, Anderson’s Seductive Interaction Design offers a comprehensive catalogue of strategies on how to design digital systems and interfaces so as to keep users entertained and engaged. Anderson’s guiding metaphor is to approach user experience through the sexual-social dynamics of a date night. Employing this lens, Anderson unpacks several key angles of temptation, with major sections of the work focusing on Aesthetics, Playfulness, Subtlety, and Gamification. —BH


Crumlish and Malone examine an enormous variety of digitally mediated and digitally constituted social interactions that make up “the social web”. Looking at many well known (and lesser known) sites, with a focus on Yahoo’s numerous services during the late 2000s, Malone and Crumlish draw out the why and how of designing truly social spaces on the internet. While the focus of this book is largely on desktop-based website interaction, many of the characteristics outlined could map onto features of the mobile internet and app paradigm. —BH

Garret's diagram-laden text offers a systematic breakdown of numerous important dimensions to consider in user-centered design. Garrett's approach is highly structured, and discusses design principles that can be applied to interaction design and user experience in a variety of contexts. The highly visual nature of this text breaks down the vocabulary and experience of user-experience systems in an easy-to-parse fashion. —BH


*Designing for User Engagement* guides readers through an overarching framework of interface design centered on engaging end-users. Each of the ten principles are examined in their own chapter, and can be used to evaluate existing designs or guide the development of a new project. The principles include psychological, graphic design, and interaction design techniques to improve end-user engagement. Geisler demonstrates wayfinding, place making, interest building, and loyalty creation through visual examples pertaining to each principle. In the second half of the text, Geisler presents case studies in which interfaces are evaluated through these ten principles of engagement. -JC

Interaction designers are introduced to the concept of how computer etiquette impacts user experience, trust, acceptance, and overall relationship with the end-users in this informative text by Hayes and Miller. The authors present a theory of ‘cultural fault lines’, in which obstacles to collaboration may occur due to the diverse cultures of end-user groups, and the use of culture-free etiquette can fit propensities of cultural norms. Models of human-machine etiquette, such as the Brown and Levinson model are introduce to the reader as tools to predict compliance and reaction as a function of politeness in interactions. Hayes and Miller also discuss the impact of etiquette on long-term human-machine relationships, trust, and expectations. They conclude the text with considerations for the future of machine etiquette, including examining etiquette in anthropomorphic and social robots. -JC


Using an easy-to-follow and whimsical style, Sierra shows how to design services and interfaces that empower users. Sierra works from the belief that in order to elicit positive responses and sustained interest in an application, users should both feel skillful and be able to produce the results they want from the get go. —BH


Sutcliffe offers a concise guide to UX design focused on user engagement through the lens of cognitive psychology. Sutcliffe describes how to design a website to generate specific emotions by combining design principles and psychology, offering examples from real websites such as Nike and BBC News. Sutcliffe’s work also provides a flow chart of how to maintain user interest over time. Sutcliffe aims to help readers create a website that is not just utilitarian, but fun and exciting. —KK
Practical resources & how-to guides

Barnum, C. M. (2011). *Usability testing essentials: Ready, set... test!* Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann. QA76.9 .U83 B37 2011 | Also available [online].

Barnum offers a step-by-step guide to planning and conducting a usability test down to every last detail, such as how to format a session log and a complete set of product reaction cards. Barnum also provides strategies for implementing your findings for those who are short on time or finances. Unique features include methods of international, multi-cultural, and inter-generational testing. —KK


This colour-coded book serves as a companion to UX novices and professionals alike, providing checklists, case studies, and answers to unexpected questions such as what to do when your subject refuses to be recorded. —KK
Bill, A., Tullis, T., & Tedesco, D. (2010). *Beyond the usability lab: Conducting large-scale online user experience studies*. Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann. [QA76.9.H85 A53 2010](http://uoft.me/inforum-bibliographies) | Also available [online](http://uoft.me/inforum-bibliographies).

Researchers hesitant to launch large scale online studies on user experience can learn how to efficiently collect valid data with this text. *Beyond the Usability Lab* addresses each part of the research process and provides the best practices in research design, pilot studies, recruitment, data collection preparation, data analysis, and result interpretation for large scale studies. A multitude of case studies for other longitudinal and latitudinal research are available for reference and example. The text concludes with specific keys for success in designing large scale online research studies. -JC


Cato describes how to incorporate user-centered design into websites and mobile devices, encouraging creativity over traditional design. The author engages readers with practical and humorous language, such as suggesting to make a button look “buttony.” For practical application of these skills, this concise book offers diagrams, case studies, and to-do lists. —KK


Considered essential reading by experts, this is an updated version of the book that has maintained popularity since its original publication in 2000. This book is designed for people who need to perform a usability test but are not in the position to hire a consultant. This book’s popularity is sustained in part by his no-nonsense and often humorous writing. Krug’s usability methods place an emphasis on common sense and the reality of user behaviour, rather than the intended ideal use of your website. —KK

This complete guide to usability research encourages novices to dive right in with a micro-usability test. The subsequent chapters instruct readers to evaluate the definition of success from the perspective of all stakeholders before providing comprehensive instructions for a variety of research methods. Kuniavsky states that the goal of this book is to learn to understand people and their problems, not solve them. However, a proper understanding can sometimes direct you toward the right solution. —KK


Nielsen and Budiu provide an inventory of principles, strategies, and theories for mobile interface designers, arranged by key topics. The authors challenge designers to think of information architecture, affordances/constraints, and interdependency of mobile interfaces with desktop or app interfaces. Specific techniques in mobile interface are discussed and are illustrated with useful examples. Case studies are presented to users in which principles are applied to real-world examples to help readers see and contrast the improvements suggested by the authors. A unique value of this text is that it also provides best practices on copywriting and gestures for mobile interfaces as well. The text concludes with predictions on the future state of mobile usability. -JC

The process of interaction design is deconstructed into its constituent sequences and steps in *Interaction Design*. Readers can begin by working through the concepts and goals of interaction design, focusing on the cognitive, emotional, and social motivations and dimensions of interaction design. Examples of various types of interaction design across different media are provided for inspiration. The text proceeds to more concrete guidance of tasks in the interaction design process. Readers are given an introduction in establishing requirements, data gathering, prototyping with iterations in increasing fidelity, and evaluation of the effectiveness of a design. -JC


Resmini and Rosati’s book focuses on the UX design of information systems linking the digital and physical world. The authors redefine space, place, and time in order to explain how to build a sense of place in a digital, psychological space. The author illustrates these abstract concepts with storytelling, using examples such as a traditional Indian story “The Elephant and the Blind Men,” the Quentin Tarantino film *Pulp Fiction*, and the story of how the cholera outbreak in mid-19th century London was solved. —KK


Tidal explores usability within the context of mobile library software interfaces. This text serves as an introductory primer to front-end web design for the novice usability developer. The capabilities of mobile devices are overviewed in the beginning, and readers are introduced to responsive design and the JQuery and Bootstrap libraries to modify front-end web elements. The considerations and cyclical process of user-centered design is explained to the user, with an emphasis on the problems that usability aims to solve. The text concludes with instructions on conducting usability testing, data gathering, and results analysis. -JC

This text presents solutions to UI design problems as a set of templates paired with examples of how to use them and warnings for when not to use them. More than a technical explanation, these solutions delve into software history, cognitive science, and visual arts techniques. Tidwell encourages combining and remixing these templates for your specific project. —KK


This text focuses on the improvement of library search systems in the context of user experience. Considerations to a discovery system’s content is examined not only in its quality, but its ease of access as well. Readers can learn user interface principles that improve the display of search results, find the link to access resources, or help patrons submit queries. *Optimizing Discovery Systems* also provides best practices for libraries to instruct patrons on using the discovery systems effectively. Readers can also learn to validate their existing and newly developed discovery systems through user testing and analysis of discovery goal performance. However, the text does not provide visual examples of good interface principles. -JC

Priestner and Borg’s collection of case studies explores the use of ethnography and human centered design in a library setting. These case studies provide insight into specific techniques, highlighting the potential benefits and pitfalls to help librarians focus their efforts and best serve their patrons. Topics include evaluation of study spaces and accessibility barriers. —KK


*Customizing Vendor Systems* is a text directed for library web developers to modify software procured from a vendor for custom purposes. This text focuses on front-end web development in JavaScript, and emphasizes the use of the jQuery library. A basic overview of JavaScript is included for novices, but the advanced techniques explained later in the text requires a modest understanding of web development in JavaScript to fully appreciate. Readers can learn to use scripts, animations, transitions, and loops to modify the software provided by vendors for a system that fits their library’s unique needs. —JC


*Institutionalization of UX* is a step-by-step guide to implementing best practices for user experience design on an institutional level. Going beyond basic UX techniques, Schaffer and Lahiri provide advice particularly for large corporations, including topics such as facilitating company-wide changes and managing cultural differences for international clientele. —KK

Schmidt and Etches provide a hands-on guide for librarians to evaluate their library’s web presence and online patron engagement. The text guides librarians through orchestrating a usability test from creating personas to developing a content strategy. —KK


Based on the concept that the qualities Useful, Useable, and Desirable are the three legs of a metaphorical stool that must remain balanced, Schmidt and Etches provide a checklist of 19 factors that can offset the balance of a library. Librarians can fill out a scorecard in order to evaluate current issues in their library in terms of physical space, signage, customer service, online presence, and policies. For each factor, they provide practical examples of how to remedy them, including how much time, effort, and skill will be required to restore equilibrium. —KK

Business-focused UX


Anderson, McRee, and Wilson provide project management tools and techniques for product managers to address the disparity between the demand for better UX and successful implementation. With a focus on effective collaboration among employees, Effective UI is designed to help managers create the right company culture from the start of the project in order to create the best final product. —KK

The process described in *Lean UX* emphasizes fast turnaround time by going through multiple iterations of a design instead of waiting for perfect deliverables. Gothelf and Seiden suggest that a traditional multi-department business model can cause slow innovation, suggesting instead to build an agile team that collaborates every step of the way. This book combines case studies and practical advice for better collaboration and faster implementation to ultimately create a better product. —KK

McKay, N.E. (2013). *UI is communication: How to design intuitive, user centered interfaces by focusing on effective communication*. Boston: Elsevier. QA76.9 .U83 M443 2013 | Also available online.

McKay describes the user interface as a tool that facilitates a conversation between a human and the technology they are using. This guide to UI focuses on creating an emotional connection with the user. The author aims to provide a set of simple principles to get novices started making design decisions with confidence. Includes examples of real projects that were redesigned using these principles. —KK


Nudelman offers insightful and actionable advice for designing and optimizing ecommerce search results for maximum profit. Learn how to create a successful search strategy by developing an intuitive and exciting experience for customers through proven techniques in ad placement, image optimization, filter design, and device compatibility. With this guide, a “no results” search can still lead to a sale. —KK

This guide to research in product design emphasizes that anyone at any skill level can conduct effective UX research if equipped with the right tools and terminology. After first discussing the logistics of planning a research session, Nunnally and Farkas advise new researchers to learn soft skills in order to better connect with research participants and thereby conduct more effective interviews. Later chapters offer methods to uncover meaning in data beyond the initial hypothesis and how to communicate findings. Templates, sample tools, and exercises are offered at the end of each chapter. –KK

Careers & professional development


This straightforward textbook outlines the necessary skills and practices for promoting yourself and seeking employment as a UX professional. Lebson approaches UX as a diverse field and offers advice and guidance for both newcomers to UX, as well as those with considerable experience seeking to hone and refine their professional knowledge. To make the lessons stick, The UX Careers Handbook features a number of worksheets and quizzes to fill out in order for readers to help gauge their own strength and weaknesses as they prepare for the next stages of their UX career. –BH

Replete with expert and opinions and real-world examples, *A Project Guide to UX Design* covers both the theoretical and the social aspects of taking part in a UX project. Unger and Chandler lay out the larger business context in which UX operates through a thorough breakdown of the steps within the development and implantation of UX projects. While examining the finer points of social interactions with employers and stake-holders, Unger and Chandler’s text also details all the basic tools and techniques of UX practices such as wire-framing, storyboarding, and persona construction. —BH

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