

Case C

Participant: Designer 6 (P)

Facilitator: Xiao Zhang (R)

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R: #00:00:36-8# So can we start?

P: #00:00:38-2# Yeah, yeah.

R: #00:00:42-1# what's your responsibility in this project?

P: #00:00:59-8# You have talked with [the name of Designer 5], right?

R: #00:01:07-7# Yeah.

P: #00:01:09-3# So we are both designers on the project, but he came out of the idea, and I was sort of like executing on the visuals of it like how it will work. So I guess like the user interface, a lot of the UX, and most like the interface, user interaction. I have some of the screenshots of the earlier versions of the website actually, I don't know you have seen these stuff.

R: #00:01:52-8# I think [the name of Designer 5] shared a link of the [the name of the company] [the name of the product]

P: #00:01:58-5# Yeah, so, I will link you something now, so yeah, this is like the first version of it. So like all the visual styles and UI elements and sort of the stuff that I did. And this isn't the current version, but this is sort of like the original stuff that I did for it. So like how you manage your account, like say, how to manage your setting as well. Yeah, so, all the kinda visual design responsibilities, user experience, user interface stuff. I think [the name of Designer 5] did a lot more of the sort of coming up what account we are gonna support and kind of hit all of the wire framing. And I did a lot of more visual refinement.

R: #00:02:57-8# So, what's the design technique you used to accomplish your own work? Or design method you used?

P: #00:03:30-5# About what tools I used?

R: #00:03:31-3# Yeah, tools or method or technique.

P: #00:03:35-2# So, I guess I can talk about the process a little bit. So I mean I think the biggest part of the process is like, kinda defining the problems that you are trying to solve at a very early kinda of process. I think the most important part is like figuring out what you are trying to achieve. So in this project, where is like, oh, like we are define the problem is like, there is all these share links all over the internet. Every site is like polluted with these icons talk about either like tweet something or share something on Facebook or like something. How can we come up with a way of eliminating these visual noise? And so, being [the name of the company], we decide we do something in the browser, provide API that would allow people, third parties to sort of like, just rely on a single button rather than polluting their website with like tons of icons and stuff that might just visually pollute the stuff. So that was the first part of the project, was like

define our problem. And then after that, it was just like a matter of you know, kind of wire framing a lot, coming up with like, alright, this is sort of like a new, like where in the browser does this live. Like traditionally, there is no way this sort of like sharing interfaces live. So the version of our website was like sort of a drop-down, more like a header. With one iteration, we also had one where it is like a sidebar, and another in the final one, I think that we landed on was like a door hanger. It's like an overlaid that drops-down over the browser. And then, so once the wireframes were done, we sort of, we started building really, the wireframes are done, then I would either mock up stuff in Photoshop or just come up with like html prototypes, and from there, I just worked with the engineers to sort of like build it, I guess, does this answer your question?

R: #00:06:04-9# Yeah, this is a design process that your design team adopted, but I'd like to know the details about your own work.

P: #00:06:21-7# Oh, my own work, So in terms of like my process I guess, that's like a pretty standard process I think, is like this going from like, problem definition, so like sketching on paper, to prototyping. Usually I prototype a lot in html like just using html, css, Javascript, and like making the interactions feel right in a browser. And then we usually start building the actual product and then see how that feels, and then kinda, it goes in between prototyping and the actual product at the end a lot. In terms of specific tools, it's mostly just like, I use like Photoshop, pens, paper, and I guess I use the software called Codec for programming.

R: #00:07:25-5# So what's your opinion about this project?

P: #00:07:33-3# [the name of the product] particular, I think I would say that the project kinda went on for a long time and I think we sort of lost sight of the original problem we are trying to solve a little bit. Like I am entirely sure that sharing, like the ability to share links through these various services. I don't know we made necessarily easier because we were asking people to install this browser plug-in which in reality is much more difficult to do than simply hitting you know, a small share link on a website. So I think the problem could have been more well defined in the beginning, and maybe the execution could have been possibly a bit better, just because I am not sure how many people are using this right now and personally, I am not really using it. So I think there are things that could be improved or simplified. For example, it was a really general goal like being able to plug any service into [the name of the product]. Maybe this is like a specific thing like, Oh, we are gonna make it way easier, to tweet something in [the name of the browser], then that's only one service that you have to deal with. But it was so vague in general like any service you can share from. It just became, the interface wasn't optimized for anyone of them, so it didn't actually making anyone of them easier. I think if we optimized like a single service, then it could have been awesome.

R: #00:09:31-7# So what's your idea about sharing a link using [the name of the browser]?

P: #00:09:37-9# Yeah, I mean, I understand that a lot of people don't really know how to do this, I mean it is a problem that like, we were solving a problem that none of us really had because for example, we all knew how to like copy/paste a link, and it's so intuitive, like people like us. So in fact, we don't have this problem ourselves, I don't know, it makes harder design for that. You are trying to design for problems that you actually face on day to day basis, then it become much more easier. I think what we could have done is like we could probably figure out, [the name of the company] try to figure out in [the name of the browser] like when people are trying copy or paste a link, and like prompt them explain how that works better rather than building this entirely new service trying to change user behavior. It might just be a case of like user education

would have been better than trying to change user behavior. For example, me and you, probably, you know, we command + c/ command + b makes all that right? So, we are probably not gonna change our behavior because like why would we? And that sort of like the standard whether you do this across all browsers, so like why not just educate users to teach them how to do that and service the copy/paste rather than trying to build this whole new interface. Yeah, so that's sort of what I think.

R: #00:11:32-6# Ok, in terms of my interview with [the name of Designer 5], he said your team used prototyping a lot to explore design ideas and interaction flows. So how do you think the prototyping is a useful, effective design technique for this project?

P: #00:11:55-9# Yeah, I think, prototyping for any project is just the most vital thing in the interaction design. Like you can really get a feel and feel confident about your design until you've dealt how the interactions feel, and like gone through the user flow in a more substantial way than just wire framing. So yeah, I think we prototype a lot to this project, it's just awesome, and I think, really any digital products should be prototyped extensively before they should. And I don't have an opinion about like the best way to prototype, but whatever way you are most comfortable with is the best. So like for example, this project, we did a tons of prototyping within the browser, so like I said, the html, css, and javascript and I think these are all like, if you are gonna work on the web, they are like really awesome skills to have to designer even though just the basic knowledge of those tools.

R: #00:13:10-9# So do you have other comments on the prototyping as a design technique or do you have any special and interesting experience of utilizing prototyping to help you figure out design problems?

P: #00:13:29-8# Yeah, I think, like, definitely helps me like work through problems. You can figure out early on like what is/isn't gonna work, it's also a really great way of getting a team, to convince a team of your ideas. If you just show them static mocks, a lot of engineers won't get it or won't put the effort in until like creating an animation that looks awesome. But if you can actually show them that animation, it like, Hey, look, I already pretty much build this myself. That will like convince people that, Ok, that's actually pretty cool, we should actually build that. So it's a good way of like convincing people of your ideas and it's better communicating your ideas I think.

R: #00:14:23-6# So what kind of prototypes you mostly used?

P: #00:14:34-5# I pretty much always do interactive prototypes, I think you just communicated better with what you trying to achieve. I think early on, when you trying to explore faster and get a lot of iteration paper prototypes were awesome. But when it comes down to like, Oh, hey, I think this is what we should build, and the interactive prototype sales what you are saying really well. So, I think it's a combination of both, depending on like what stage of the project you are at, but I don't know, I am a big fan of interactive prototypes.

R: #00:15:16-5# Ok, so that just like in the concept design stage, you used paper prototypes, but when you want to polish the design idea, you would choose interactive prototypes.

P: #00:15:46-2# Yeah, I feel like, I often don't show paper prototypes presentations, just because they don't communicate that well, but when you try to figure out to solve a problem for yourself, I think prototypes work really well. But yeah, I mean, it doesn't really necessarily have to be polish, it can just be to like communicate an idea in interactive prototypes.

R: #00:16:14-1# So communicate the idea to other people in the design team?

P: #00:16:19-2# Yeah, I think that's what it works. And like just approve of concept, right? like convincing yourself as well as others that something is worth exploring. You can only really get there with an interactive prototype.

R: #00:16:35-5# So how did your design team make the decision of making so many prototypes or adopting prototyping as a design technique?

P: #00:17:11-2# Oh, I don't think it is really a conscious decision to like adopt prototyping. It's more or less like what would we not prototype different ideas, right? And the benefits of like rapid prototyping just out way, like it's so obvious that you should do it at this point, like with most teams that, you should just be like in assume a part of the process I think. I don't think there is ever really any communication between me and [the name of Designer 5] that are like, Oh, yeah, it wasn't like those are like the conscious decisions we made, it was just like, we are gonna do this because it makes sense. I think also as a designer, it's sort of your job to like initiate it, like engineers tend to like, not like all engineers, some of them would like just end up building one thing and then be happy with it where as if you are the one actually prototyping different ideas, and you can show them like alternative, and they are a lot of more accepted of trying different things. But I think it's a designer's job to sort of like explore those areas of options. And I don't think if you ever have someone you are working with, it's a waste of time to like prototype different ideas then they are crazy, because iteration is a really important part of the process.

R: #00:18:56-9# So have you use your first person experience in the project?

P: #00:19:03-4# I think my experience with [the name of the company] in general, like, the skills I learnt there in terms of like prototyping and I use those skills like everyday, so just like learning how to work with engineers, prototyping my ideas, communicating those ideas and another thing that isn't really in here is that, we did a lot of user testing. So it's actually really really exciting to watch people use something you made in prototype you built, and completely fail in using it, and just knowing that like product design is really difficult to get right, and so, it's just like really, you learnt so much when you watch real people to use your product. So it's like a nice reminder that even if it makes total sense to you, and you iterated a prototype and you are certain that this is the most obvious product in the world. It's entirely possible that it's not and then it still confuses certain people. So that's a good thing to remember, like all the time.

R: #00:20:34-3# So that means within this project, your design work mostly drew on the user study and what you had learned from the user study, you never used your personal life experience in this project.

P: #00:21:27-8# sorry, I didn't quite catch the question.

R: #00:21:32-3# so my question that is, because you said you team did a lot of user study to see how people use your prototypes.

P: #00:21:50-6# Oh, yeah, we watch like people use our product, we didn't actually like, this is actually kind of, now I am thinking about it kind of aid. But like, we didn't do much of the study as how people were sharing links from other products, and that's actually a pretty important asset as well. Like just researching to like why people are having trouble of sharing in the first

place would have been exceedingly awesome piece of data to have. Like we only really user tested our own products.

R: #00:22:25-9# ok, yeah. So my question is when you designed the prototypes, or the user interface, did you use your first person experience in this process?

P: #00:23:01-6# Oh, did we how did we incorporate the user testing into the design?

R: #00:23:08-2# No, I am wondering if you used your first person experience in the design stage or when you created the prototypes.

P: #00:24:09-5# what do mean by first person experience?

R: #00:24:11-6# Ok, the first person experience refers to the accumulation of a designers' previous experiences emerging from his interaction with designed artifacts no matter digital or not, or interaction with other people. Anything happened in your past that could inform your design.

P: #00:25:06-4# Yeah, I don't know I would say that there were many of first person experience going into this thing, like I said, like we were solving a problem that anyone is really had I don't think. So it's hard to say like how much myself be really like put into this thing. But obviously like, you know, your previous experiences with other kinda product and interactivity throughout the web, obviously inform, like, the decisions you do make, and you are trying keep the visual language kinda consistent with what people might be familiar with, but in terms of like anything specific that went into this project. I can't think of anything that was like really stands out.

R: #00:26:21-2# Yeah, I see.

P: #00:26:38-3# Yeah, it seems like is this project, specifically like I don't, if you definitely like the problem I thought really passionately about, like avater, I don't think this is a project that I was like, When the problem is defined, I wasn't like, Oh, yeah, I have tons of previous experience in my life that really like informed my ability to like solve this problem. It's more just like, alright, this isn't a problem I have, and Is not really a problem that anyone I know really has, so in that sense like, it wasn't like an extremely good example of like solving a real world problem that we had. So I don't know if in terms of first person experiences, I don't feel like there is much of like that informed the design decisions that are made. ok, I am looking at the rest of the questions now, and I should probably have like more throughly read the previous section.

R: #00:27:44-4# No problem, don't worry. If you think you didn't use any specific personal experience in this project, I will skip the questions in the second section. But if you recall something related to these questions, please email me.

P: #00:28:17-3# ok, I will read over the second section, and if I have any thoughts, I will email you.

R: #00:28:23-8# ok, yeah.

R: #00:28:42-2# last question, I really want to know your comments of designers use their first person experience in design practice.

P: #00:28:50-7# Yeah, I think it's just like inevitable right? like I think you can't just like become

a designer overnight, and like be really good at it. I think it's just like your design is informed by your environment and like your experiences, so I think everything you do whether it's explicitly related to design or not, I think it's like inform my past experiences you had. So even though it's just like small things like the way you use product, or like you move to a new city and like your experience like new problems that you didn't previously have in like a different city or country. All those things inform the decisions you made when you are designing stuff. And especially with interaction design, it's not only like your physical surroundings, but also your digital surroundings. So yeah, I am thinking more about what specifics, what experience specifically would change your perception of things, but like, there is so many things that inform your design decisions I guess. I don't know.