

Fall
Professional Practice I

Credit Hours: 4

www.evl.uic.edu/mad/

Office Hours:
By Appointment

Lecture/Lab:
Mon/Wed 1.00-6.40pm
EVL / room 2068
ERF / 842 W Taylor st.

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Description

Market and UX Research & Analysis

1) Current Market Overview and Other Available Apps.

The goal of this exercise is to take a deep dive into your problem domain, and thoroughly understand what's out there that may compete with your solution hypothesis, or inform your solution-direction. You should organize your approach to this "competitive audit" by studying: relevant apps on the market (download and try); user reviews, articles covering trends in solving similar problems; new uses of technology in solving similar problems; consumer insight into these issues. Focus only on iOS and Android apps.

Each teammate should download and try as many apps which have similar objectives (5-10). You should also look at other apps currently used in the same field. And look for and show us apps that simply inspire you from a design & usability point of view. Prioritize primary use cases to list five apps that might compete with yours, have similar features, address, audience or similar objectives. If you feel that no other apps are sufficiently similar (e.g., yours is a new subject previously covered primarily in publications), then please list related apps the same audience would be likely to buy. This will give us a sense of how to position your app in the market. Provide short descriptions of how they solve the problem; list any key features or innovations; look for and describe strengths & weaknesses. As much as possible, provide screenshots capturing what you are critiquing.

2) UX and UI Research & Analysis

There are many angles to consider when doing UX research and analysis, in this exercise it is about simplifying everything as much as possible and reducing the number of steps it takes for a user to reach their goal. Analyze the app's user flow and overall UX —by walking an app in the users' shoes— to discover many weak points and frustrations and uncover opportunities that will improve the user experience. Take notes and draw sketches if you have an idea how to simplify UX and UI.

"Walk" the User Flow

Consider User Expectations

Analyze the Number of Steps in User Flows

Evaluate the App Structure

Simplify the Design

3. Draw pencil sketches to illustrate the alternative solutions for UX/UI ideas/structure.

- Evaluating overall app structure and interface clarity
- Brainstorming ways to simplify the experience, reduce complexity, and increase motivation
- Sketching ideas or proposing structural improvements.

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Your UX/UI analysis should include:

- Walking through the user flow from first use to task completion
- Considering user expectations, pain points, and needs
- Counting and analyzing the number of steps in key workflows
- Evaluating overall app structure and interface clarity
- Brainstorming ways to simplify the experience, reduce complexity, and increase motivation
- Sketching ideas or proposing structural improvements where relevant

Team Presentation Requirements

Prepare a class presentation (visual + spoken) with the following elements:

1. 3 Slides – A collection of 15–30 relevant apps/websites (5–10 per team member), briefly listed (app icons or website screenshots only).
 2. 5 selected relevant apps – In-depth analysis of the 5 most relevant or inspiring apps/websites. For each one:
 - Explain its core features and use cases
 - Outline pros and cons
 - Evaluate relevance to your research partner app, including:
 - Community engagement and outreach
 - Ease of use (GUI, user onboarding, accessibility)
 - User motivation and engagement
 - Effectiveness and feedback on AI features
 3. Be prepared to compare these cases and articulate how your proposed solution will differentiate itself or fill existing gaps.
 - Compatibility of design with content and audience
 - Color and typography
 - Symbols and icons
 - Administrative functions (navigation bars, toolbars, alerts, etc)
- Pencil sketches for alternative UX/UI ideas, thoughts, designs, navigation, etc. (1 slide)