

Book Review

UX Design for Mobile

Pablo Perea and Pau Giner

—Reviewed by
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Index Terms—*Design, mobile app, user.*

In a world where mobile apps are a dime a dozen, Pablo Perea and Pau Giner give mobile app designers the tools and tips to design successful mobile apps, and they do so in plain language. The book targets designers, developers, and product managers. However, regardless of the reader's background, the instructional information is communicated clearly. *UX Design for Mobile* addresses all aspects of making a mobile application, from designing the app to solutions to potential problems, and finishing with prototypes and usability testing. Experienced users may already have most of the information provided in the book, but they will gain helpful tips and fresh perspective from Perea and Giner. Readers new to the mobile app will find this book an important point of reference when starting each step of the app creation process.

Perea and Giner's organization parallels the actual process of creating an app. Chapter 1 details designing the application, and Chapter 2 stresses the importance of the user. Chapter 1 provides basic design principles and characteristics of human perception from psychology to help guide design decisions, and Chapter 2 recommends conducting user studies to better understand the design problem. "Designing a positive user experience is the key to successfully addressing the needs of your users" (p. 99). The authors stress the importance of user-centered features and design, and they warn against the common mistake of detached design, which yields products pleasing to the designer and his or her supervisors rather than

the users themselves. They recommend that designers focus on three categories: the needs from our human condition (p. 69), needs from general expectations (p. 74), and needs from the specific context of use (p. 81). This big-to-small model really helps designers and readers of this book see the big picture of user-centered design as grounded in users' lived experiences with a mobile app and their detailed expectations about content.

Chapters 3 and 4 step through the mobile app design processes for both Android and iOS interfaces. Perea and Giner also examine how to take all of the ideas and drawings and make them applicable and proven methods that have been successful in other applications. The authors mention how to capture solutions in more detail with wireframes. "A **wireframe** is a technical representation of a screen using skeletal lines. By similarity, they are also known as user interface blueprints" (p. 157). They also explain that there are different levels of wireframe depending on the amount of detail you are working with in your application. The example wireframe that they provide is created with Adobe Illustrator, which ties back to the preface and its suggestion of the tools needed to read and then create, or for the reader to create while reading the material. These examples lead, fittingly, into the prototype phase. In these two chapters, readers learn about pen-and-paper sketches and other tips for idea exploration, as well as different channels for your product and designing across platforms.

In Chapters 5 to 7, Perea and Giner explain prototypes with a brief and simply stated summary. They illustrate how wireframes and mockups help render products prior to full production. They walk through the strengths and weaknesses of different types of prototypes, and they provide detail about using functional prototypes for visual appeal.

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Chapter 6 provides information and tips on prototypes and their construction; it is a valuable introduction to prototypes and showcases the important aspects of prototypes and pitfalls to avoid when constructing one.

Chapter 8 provides an introduction to Framer Studio and Tumult Hype, two software applications for building prototypes. The examples in this chapter are very helpful, and they showcase the strengths of each technology. This is helpful information to those readers who have not yet purchased the technology or are not familiar enough to use the software successfully.

If you try to prototype too many aspects at the same time, the level of complexity of your prototype will increase, eventually approaching the complexity of the final product. Keep prototypes focused, to quickly learn one aspect at a time (p. 203).

Finally and most important, the authors emphasize user testing in Chapter 9. The symmetry between opening the book with user importance and ending the book with testing your prototype reinforces the importance of users and their needs, as well as how to meet and understand their needs through every step of the process. While some readers may already be familiar with user testing, the authors

explain it in a way that new readers will be able to understand and still captivate readers already familiar with usability testing. The visuals in the “Using the Right Method” subsection (p. 304) plainly and clearly show that the methods are “organized based on the information they rely on (user behaviors or attitudes) and the approach used to learn from them (qualitative or quantitative).” This again enforces the importance of user testing and shows the method that best suits your prototype and will yield the best results.

UX Design for Mobile is a valuable resource for readers new to the field of mobile applications and to transforming your ideas into tangible prototypes and testing them with potential users, but it also provides appropriate tips and warnings on what to do and not to do and uses real-world technology and information that are easily condensed into visual aids. The book could use features such as running heads with chapter numbers and a table of contents to help readers use and navigate the book, but detailed and informational headings partially compensate for this weakness and allow finding necessary information pertinent to the reader. Newcomers will find this book helpful and a good starting point; informed readers will find this book a useful refresher on important components of creating a mobile app from start to finish.