DesignWhine

Digital Magazine for UI/UX Professionals

EMPATHIZE   IDEATE   VALIDATE
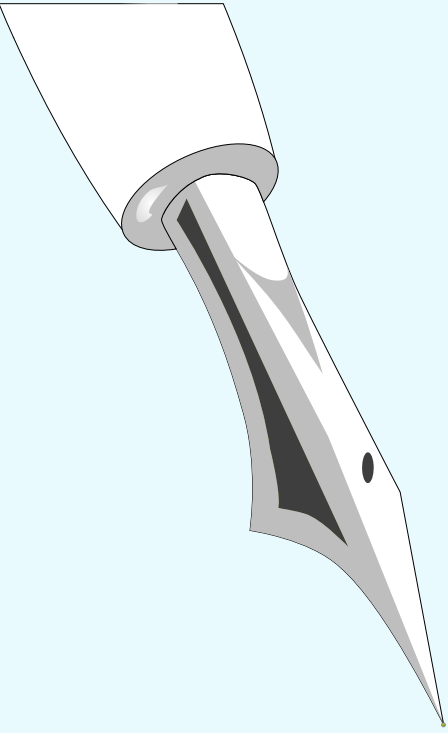
DEFINE   PROTOTYPE
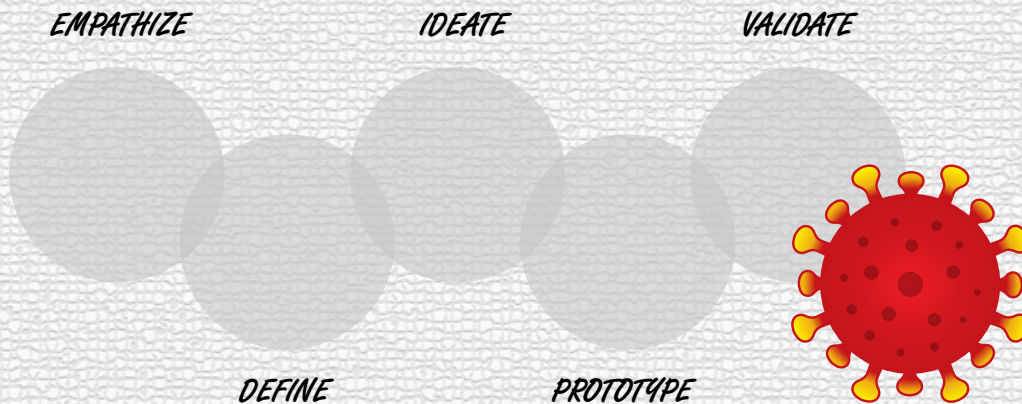
NEW STEP IN THE PROCESS

How have designers adapted to a post-pandemic world?

A look at the world's COVID-19 tracing apps ● Is remote working really successful?

INSIDE: Ultimate UX Challenge - Design a moneyless ride-sharing app

Greetings, designers!

Perched on the edge of the twenty fifth floor balcony fence, I watched blankly as Aditya cupped his hands around a cigarette and lit it. It was my imagination break from the reading of a printed copy of *WIRED* magazine which Aditya was a subscriber to. The house smelt of roast chicken and fried onions.

I was at my ex-colleague's place for dinner who now worked at *Samsung* as a UX researcher and lived a few blocks away. This was my first "outing" since the countrywide lockdown had been announced in India due to COVID-19.

"Blogs can't hold my attention for long. I'm always distracted with multiple tabs open on my browser, constant IM pings in the background and endless notifications of social media. Reading this magazine, *holding* it in my hands catapulted me to a different world. I was lost as I read it all, just like childhood days.."

Aditya didn't seem to pay any attention to what I said. He looked into the distance as he puffed at his cigarette.

I continued, "You know, when I was about thirteen years old, I was gifted a subscription to *Down To Earth*, a science magazine and I was ecstatic when they published my letter to the editor in one issue. It was a very silly letter that went, 'I am a new reader of your magazine and would like to read more about space and the universe..'"

I watched Aditya look in my direction but without saying anything, he

stubbed out the cigarette and got up and went into the kitchen. I followed.

"It's the power of the covers and themes in these magazines that is fascinating. It stimulates imagination. I think there should be something of this sort for UI/UX. You know, with visually stunning covers, cartoons, and collections of themed articles. Maybe we could use the advantages of the digital medium as well, you know, like juxtapose these two or something.."

At this point, Aditya who had been stirring the onions put off the gas flame and went, "Stop whining and get the plates on the table. Dinner's ready!"

D esignWhine is an experiment. As much as us UX designers would like to advocate user research before designing anything, I am a bit hesitant to say there has been none for this magazine. It is the result of empathizing with just a couple of users from our team at best or an insane fancy of mine, at worst.

With a relevant cover, the inaugural issue is themed around the widespread COVID-19 and its effect on the design world. We have feature articles from Sam, Manuel, Michal and Barkha who present their opinions on the pandemic. And then we have a few regular features that will attempt to amuse you or get you thinking.

As this is the debut issue, the only way we'll know whether we should continue in this endeavour is via your feedback and participation. Please talk to us, write to us, write *for* us. You can give us a shout on social media channels, website comments or email us. Let us know your thoughts if this insane fancy is any good..

RAJAT AGARWAL
Editor-in-Chief

C O N T E N T S

IN THIS ISSUE

Features

DEPARTMENTS

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Cover concept and design
by Rajat Agarwal

DesignWhine

NEW STEP IN THE PROCESS

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survey *sparrow*

Crisis is an opportunity!

Lost your UX job during COVID-19? Mindset is a huge part of seeing the opportunities that present themselves during times like this. All depends on where you set your focus..

BY SAMUEL HARPER

At the time of this writing, the economy across the world is in shambles. We are experiencing one of the worst recessions ever experienced since the Great Depression that started in 1929 and extended three and a half years. Currently, COVID-19 pandemic has left 147 million people unemployed globally. Even tech giants like LinkedIn are feeling the effects of the recession, as they laid off almost 1000 employees.

I myself was laid off just a week ago, and like a lot workers across the world, I found myself back on the job hunt a lot sooner than I was anticipating.

As crazy as it sounds, I believe this is actually an incredible opportunity for all of us, in so many ways. Tech jobs are still abundant, and some companies are doing exceedingly well during the pandemic. *Netflix*, *Amazon*, *Nintendo*, *Twitch*. The list is huge!

Warren Buffet, one of the wealthiest men alive, once said "*be greedy when others are fearful, and fearful when others are greedy*". I believe this applies to other aspects of our lives as well, including the job market due to COVID-19. Mindset is a huge part of seeing the opportunities that present themselves during times like this.

If you are unemployed, especially as a result of COVID-19, I
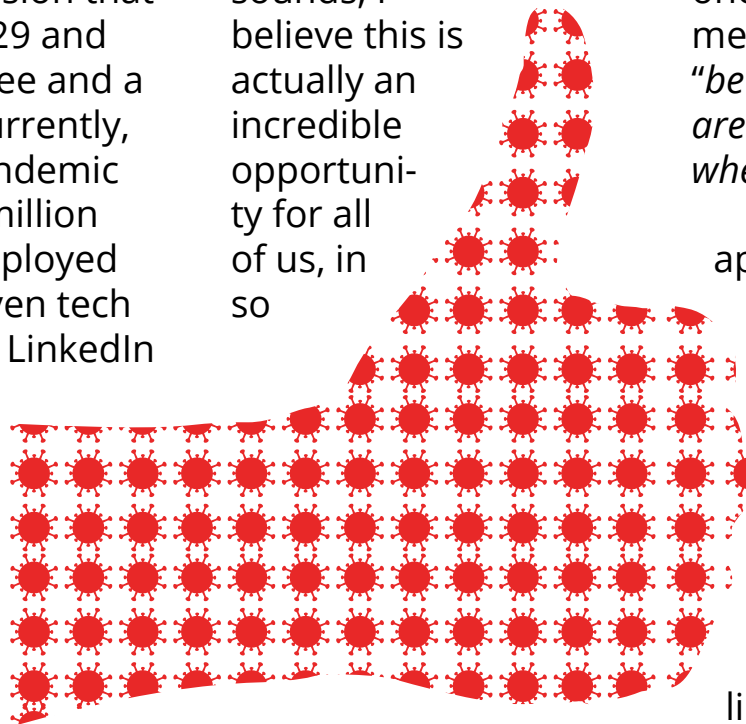
believe you may be in a much better position than you give yourself credit for.

Let's analyze some opportunities that this situation brings with itself:

Time to decompress and reset

Being laid off creates a nasty molotov cocktail of anger, fear, resentment and depression. I would be lying if I said I never experienced any of these emotions throughout my own career, including my recent COVID related layoff. It definitely took me by surprise, and it took awhile for me to finally come to terms with it and admit to everyone, ranging from close friends and family members to my LinkedIn followers, that I recently joined the ranks of one of the unlucky few who lost their job during a recession.

But this is the perfect time to reset your emotions. Go out of town on a camping trip. Visit friends and family (while taking COVID-19 related precautions, of course).

See a new part of the country. If your job was hyper stressful and you were running around 24/7 with hardly any work/life balance, this is a good time to shift gears and move into something more relaxing before you move forward.

Chance to identify the work environment you want to be in

Maybe you are burnt out from startups that try to entice employees with an office that feels more like a frat house offering ping pong, video games, beer on tap, etc. Or maybe you were working in a seemingly stale corporate environment or government agency, and you want a more relaxed and fun environment.

Perhaps you were a one-person UX team, and you wanted more collaboration from several UX designers and researchers. Or you were working with a company that had a mission that did not quite align with your values, or who had a business model that you supported with your work, but in reality you couldn't care less about why the company exists in the first place.

Whatever you experienced in your previous jobs that you would like to improve upon, you now have the opportunity to narrow that down with your new job search.

I recommend getting a journal and writing down what you have experienced in the UX world, both what skills you used and what platforms you executed them on. Also write down the environments you have worked in. What did you like? What did you not like? What would you like to branch out into?

These questions, if thoroughly and thoughtfully answered, will give you clarity on what your next UX job should look like.

Opportunity to level up your skills

Not every UX job is the same, and each job will have a nuance of responsibilities depending on the company's maturity of their internal UX team (assuming they have one), resources they have available, etc.

For example, you may have not needed to use any HTML/CSS or Javascript in your previous role. However, you may be seriously considered by a position that, for its own reasons, requires that expertise from their UX team. Or some roles want a strong understanding of UI and visual design. Or maybe it requires a deeper understanding of UX research.

While I agree that these roles would be clearly separated and well-defined in an ideal company with a strong understanding of what UX is and how to implement it, not every company is like that. Some will expect you to have a more broad (or specific) range of skill sets, which you can build upon while you have all the free time in the world on your hands. And the best part is, these educational resources do not have to be expensive.

For example, an account with the *Interaction Design Foundation* costs $13 per month. Courses on *Udemy* can almost always be purchased through a flash sale at around $10 each. And *LinkedIn Premium* (which costs around $25/month) not only allows you to network more effectively, but it also has a wide array of courses you can choose from from within *LinkedIn Learning*.

And in addition to learning, you can use this time to further beef up your professional experience and portfolio. You can use these resources to volunteer your time to do UX work for your resume and portfolio. I recommend finding opportunities that do not require an NDA so that you can show the work publicly. But choose what works for you!

Opportunity to build your personal branding and networking skills

Being unemployed without a strong network to fall back on forces individuals like you and me to gauge how effectively we are networking on LinkedIn and establishing ourselves as industry professionals.

If you have a weak, or non existent presence on LinkedIn, or at least other platforms where UX professionals are very active (such as *Twitter*), this is a good time to step back and evaluate how you can present yourself professionally. The silver lining here is that it is forcing you to evaluate how you are approaching the job search, which in itself is absolutely worth studying. Is your job hunt approach not as effective as it could be?

Now you can force yourself to change and be a complete *LinkedIn* and con-

tent badass, and attract your ideal jobs to yourself, rather than chasing for scraps.

Freedom of remote working

Tech workers have now been forced to adapt to remote work. While some people are only able to work in small offices or bedrooms that are nowhere near the size and comfort of our open office spaces, the possibilities of remote work across tech have become more and more feasible. So while travel may be difficult for COVID related reasons, this does allow you to be a lot more mobile, if you have the luxury of being able to do that in your personal life. And I don't believe remote work will be a temporary thing either.

I genuinely believe that the prolonged effects of COVID are waking up both companies and employees to the realization that remote work is not only feasible, it can be quite beneficial for employees

who need that lifestyle, such as parents raising young children, tech workers who want to travel the world, and people who may have health problems and need to work from home.

Amazing time to invest in (or build yourself) startups

Humans are creative beings by nature. We all crave recognition, achievements, and contributing to a better, healthier, more sustainable world. And it's no secret that tech is by far, one of the leading fields to be in that is swarmed with entrepreneurs who created Facebook, Lyft, Airbnb, Amazon, Tesla, Twitch and other tremendously innovative companies were born from the tech space.

But here is the wild thing; did you know that a lot of tech companies, including some that are extremely successful today, were created during a recession?

If you have had an idea for a company you

want to launch, this is a great time to do it. And similarly, these tech companies will always need funding, especially during a hard hit economy.

So whether you have been interested in angel investing, building a startup or both, now may be an excellent time to scratch that itch.

In conclusion

There is a silver lining in every situation, no matter how bleak it may seem. And it is more critical than ever to see these possibilities, so you can really make the most of your professional opportunities during COVID-19.

SAMUEL HARPER

A former marine biologist turned UX designer who has worked at two award-winning agencies, Sam is also a career coach who helps new UX designers land their first roles, and a published author on the UX Collective Blog on Medium

WORLD'S QUEST TO TRACE

BY BARKHA SHARMA

Since it was declared a pandemic, COVID-19 has pushed almost every country's government on the planet to come up with an official contact tracing mobile app.

Here, we evaluate the UX of top 12 official, government-backed, contact tracing apps of various countries and find if their designs are any solace to the citizens..

A month into the worldwide lockdown, I began keeping a track of the various endeavours of major countries rushing in to contain the spread of the virus via technology. The primary objective of these apps is to determine and notify the citizens who came in contact with a COVID-19 positive.

The key UX metrics that I measured these apps against were -
1) Simple Navigation
2) Conversational Tone
3) Modern, Trendy Interface
4) Empathy and most importantly **5) Handling of Data Privacy**

While data privacy largely depends on the technology

THE TECH BEHIND THESE APPS

Bluetooth - Some systems use "proximity tracking," in which phones swap encrypted tokens with any other nearby phones over Bluetooth.

Location - Some apps identify a person's contacts by tracking the phone's movements and looking for other phones that have spent time in the same location.

behind these apps (for example, bluetooth offers better anonymity), it's also on design on how the user is notified and given control of privacy. Let's take a look -

CovTracer, *Cyprus*

⭐⯨☆☆☆

CovTracer tracks people through GPS technology. The UI looks cluttered. Colors, fonts used in the app are different at different screens. The forms are not well designed, available real estate isn't utilized well, buttons design isn't consistent. Language used in the app is not simple. For example, Start logging isn't something that can be easily understood. Options such as import or export don't make sense to a new user.


Aarogya Setu, *India*

⭐⭐⭐⯨☆

It requires bluetooth and location services to be on and follows a conversational design approach. It mentions that the data is shared only with the Government of India and takes consent from users before moving to the next step. Setting up the application is super easy. You need to provide personal details and answer health related questions. App is flexible enough to let users take a self assessment test later. Arogya Setu provides features such as call helpline number, self assess, COVID updates

Feature

TraceTogether, *Singapore*
⭐⭐⭐⭐

## eRouska, *Czech Republic*
⭐⭐

COVIDSafe, *Australia*
⭐⭐

TraceTogether supports 8 languages & follows a minimalistic design approach.The language used in the app is modern and conversational. Informing the users that their data is used only when needed and clearly communicating how the app is helpful makes it meet it's objective while trying to be as little invasive as possible.
Using a wizard for registration ensures process completion. Aesthetics are pleasing.
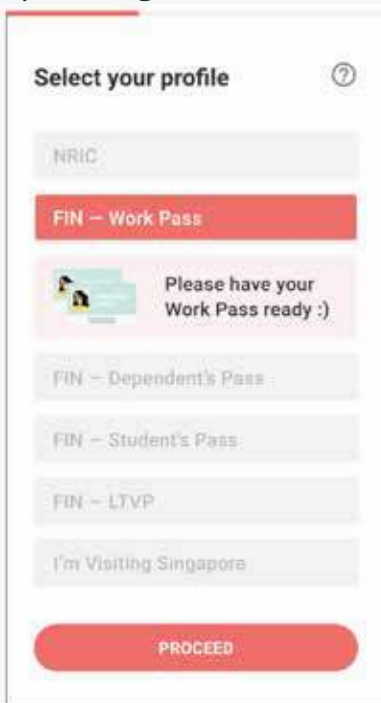
eRouska app is easy to set up. It requires registering phone number, enabling both bluetooth and location services. To combat privacy issue, the users can see the history of their data use. But this is where the good things end. There's an information overload in the help section, the chat section redirects the user to a browser while the information of the team behind the app serves no purpose really.
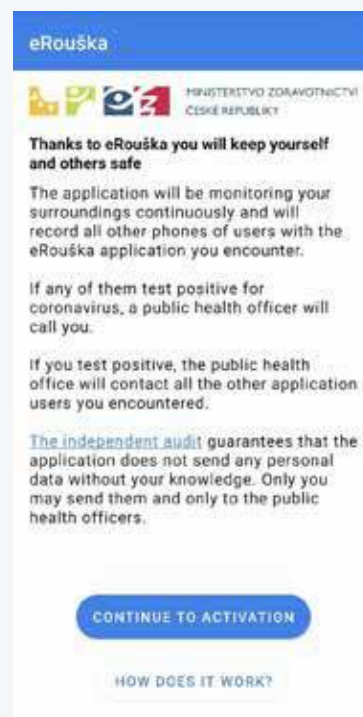
COVIDSafe clearly mentions that it doesn't collect location information, and you can even ask for your information to be deleted from the secure serve. However, COVIDSafe struggles to reduce the information overload. The UI doesn't give the feel of a native app. There's an option to enter a mobile number that is not Australian but requires an Australian number to register. This doesn't align with the users' mental model.

Rakning C-19, *Iceland*

⭐⭐⭐⭐⯪

The tone and mood of the app is very relaxing and is pleasing to the eye. Rakning C-19 supports 12 languages. It requires registering your contact number, enabling location services and you are all set. Rkaning C-19 ensures that location data is saved on the user's phone only and isn't shared unless the user allows. App is very clean and follows a minimalistic design approach. It provides a feature to start Live Chat with health officials with a list of clinics is also provided.

SwissCovid, *Switzerland*

⭐⭐⭐⯪☆

According to a research by NN/g, 94% of the first impressions are design related and SwissCovid's design nails that aspect. User onboarding has nice illustrations with relevant information following an empathic approach. The only issue is that there is no skip or go back button. The app is easy to set up. It explains every how and why to the user in a plain language. SwissCovid uses bluetooth for tracking people.

StopKorona!, *North Macedonia*

⭐⭐⭐☆☆

Supports 3 languages, though the option to change language isn't easy to find. It provides an option to skip user onboarding steps thus putting the user in the driver's seat. App gives a fresh look. It takes consent from the user to store mobile numbers and use bluetooth and location. App doesn't support other countries' contact numbers. Once you register your contact number you land on the home screen and you are all set
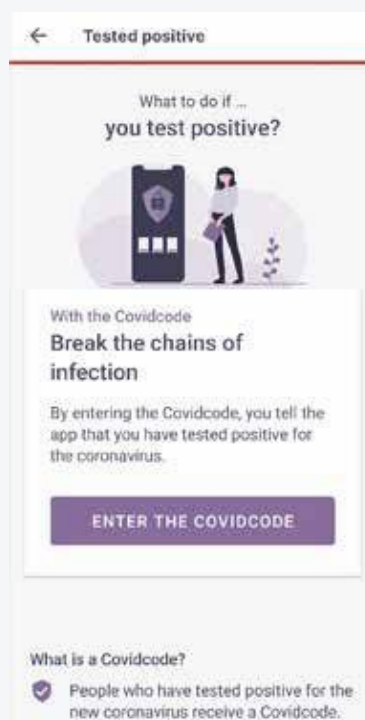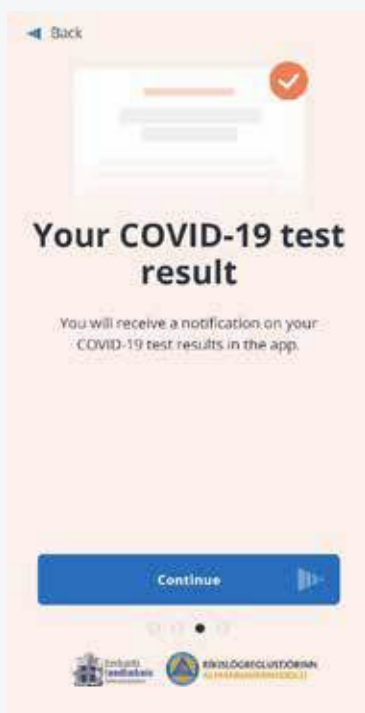
Stopp Corona, *Austria*
⭐⭐⭐⭐⯪

Uses nice illustrations with minimal text to clearly convey the information to users thus following the Less is more approach. App uses bluetooth to keep track of infected people. Digital Handshake feature allows users to anonymously save their encounters and are notified if one of the encounters falls ill. App gives users control and freedom to disable the active handshake feature. It provides an option to check symptoms and report medical confirmation.
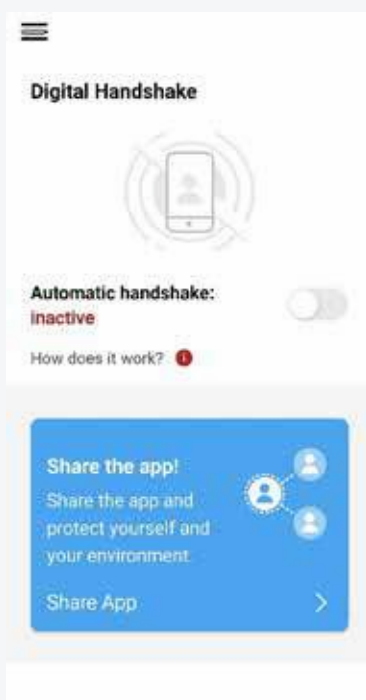
SimtteStop, *Denmark*
⭐⭐⭐☆☆

Supports only Danish language. It requires you to enable bluetooth and location services. Guess what! If you don't want it to register users that you are close to, you can simply turn off the app. Thus giving users complete control and freedom, No need to uninstall or log out. Smittestop gives priority to data protection & complies with regulations aimed at protecting users data. Considering the fact that COVID is a global problem, app should support more languages.
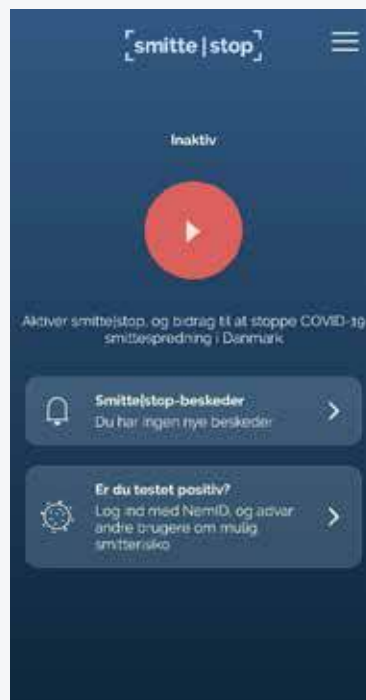
Immuni, *Italy*
⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

 Immuni's User onboarding is quick, clean and helps users understand how the app works. The app follows a minimalist design approach.Information is presented in a clean and concise manner. Language used is simple and conversational style. A separate screen ensures complete explaination to data use and privacy. Immuni follows empathy driven design.
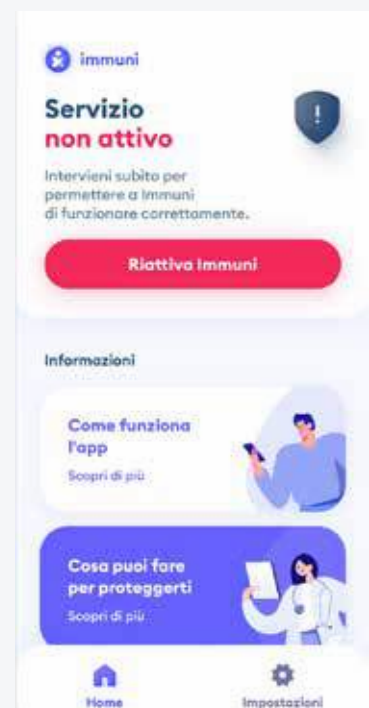
HaMagen, *Israel*

★★★☆☆ 🇮🇱

Israel's HaMagen app launched by the Ministry of Health supports 6 languages. HaMagen also follows a minimalistic design approach by providing a clean UI and only necessary details. But it doesn't give the look a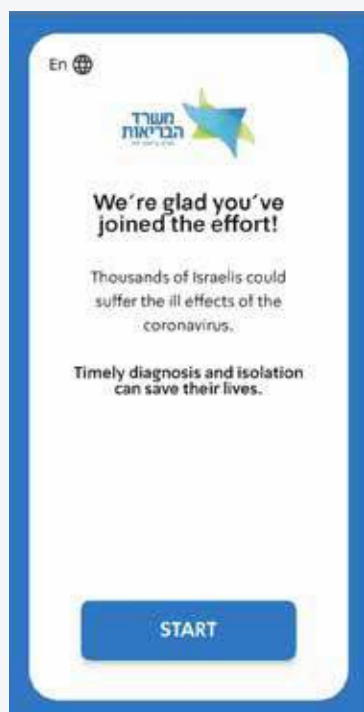nd feel of a native app. The app is simple to set up. It takes consent from the user before collecting their location data and has an optional step where users are asked to allow access to locations within the last 14 days from Google.

Closing Thoughts

Despite their uncertain role in helping contain the spread of the virus, it is commendable that the governments took the help of technology and design to aid their citizens deal with unprecendented times.

As mentioned before, while bluetooth offers for better data privacy, it has it's share of accuracy issues. For example, A bluetooth-based contact-tracing app that sends a signal when two users are close to each other might not recognize when they are separated by a window or walls.

Another issue that the technology suffers from is cybersecurity.

The next best option, GPS, also grapples with it's share of problems. An app that used cellular location data would also pose significant privacy concerns, as tracking could be applied unilaterally. This could bypass the need for user consent and violate citizens' data protection rights.

Ultimately, it's a combination of technology and design that can offer an optimum experience to a panicked user.

Also, in our comparison of the apps, it is noteworthy that even countries not considered technologically advanced have also fared at par, if not better, with technological leaders. Apps from North Macedonia, Israel, Cyprus and India just go on to show that design talent is not hindered by the adversity of a country. One just needs to have an inquisitive mind. ☺
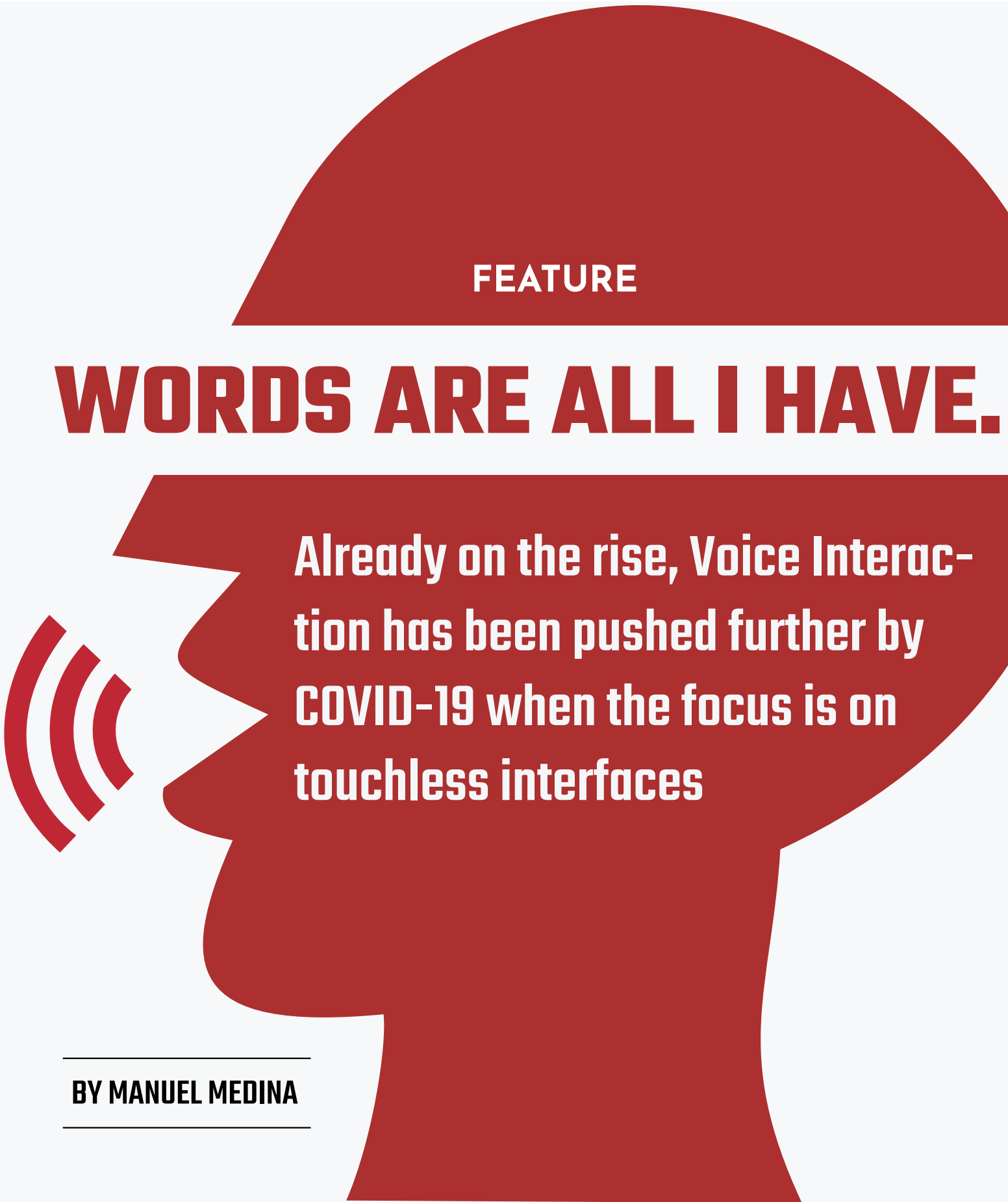

BARKHA SHARMA

An Experience Designer at TO THE NEW, India by the day, she's an avid reader by the night. Growing up, she wanted to be an astronomer and is still starry-eyed when she looks up at the night sky

WORDS ARE ALL I HAVE..

Already on the rise, Voice Interaction has been pushed further by COVID-19 when the focus is on touchless interfaces

BY MANUEL MEDINA

It's becoming increasingly common to see people use their voice to interact with their devices both on the street with their smartphones and at home with their smart speakers.

We are also seeing that technologies such as biometrics, artificial intelligence and machine learning are having a greater impact, and even, in the current circumstances with the Coronavirus, their development is accelerating.

Avoiding contagion when paying with your card using biometric payments, teleworking in confinement and signing contracts by voice, are examples that will gradually become more common.

If we put together the current situation, with the ways of interacting and the technological advances we see that the relationship between human/machine is undergoing changes, the physical interaction is reduced and the use of digital buttons on the screens are eliminated as much as possible. This is what we call: Buttonless.

Voice First: Voice interaction has become necessary

We must keep in mind that using the voice to interact, even before the pandemic, is part of our daily routine. Devices like Alexa, Siri, Google Home, virtual assistants in cars,

The physical interaction is reduced and the use of digital buttons on the screens are eliminated as much as possible. This is what we call: Buttonless

voice mail on WhatsApp... allow us to communicate and manage our device accurately and with great precision. This interaction by voice is called "Voice First".

Buttonless Experiences in Mobile

With regard to smartphones and computers,

new ways of interacting without using a mouse, keyboard or finger are appearing every day.

Sometimes we use our voice, other times new touch gestures or sometimes it is not even necessary to touch the screen, as is the case with "Distance selection" technology that allows you to select options on the screen without having to touch the screen, a solution of current interest to prevent the transmission of bacteria and viruses.

Could we imagine applications or websites without buttons, screens so intuitive that just by looking at them we would know how to act?

We're not there yet, but let's look at some examples such as Instagram's button-free solution. In their designs, you jump from one story to another by swiping or tapping on your own photos and icons, even double-tapping to make a "like" on the photo you like.

Other cases are Apple, Samsung and Google that bet on clean screens without many functionalities where the user's "journey" is clearly defined by the most imp-

Smart Speaker Use Case Frequency January 2020

Use Case	Ever Tried	Monthly	Daily
Listen to streaming music service	88.7%	73.6%	39.8%
Ask a question	83.1%	66.2%	29.4%
Check the weather	77.1%	59.8%	33.9%
Set a timer	64.5%	52.4%	20.3%
Set an alarm	59.8%	45.6%	26.3%
Listen to the radio	59.8%	42.6%	19.0%
Listen to News / Sports	50.6%	37.7%	16.9%
Use a favorite Alexa skill or Google Action	47.9%	34.0%	16.4%
Play game or answer trivia	46.1%	27.7%	9.0%
Listen to Podcast or other talk formats	44.9%	32.0%	11.4%
Control smart home devices	43.4%	31.9%	24.5%
Find a recipe or cooking instructions	42.3%	26.0%	5.4%
Call someone	40.2%	21.2%	9.5%
Search for product information	38.2%	27.9%	7.3%
Check traffic / directions	35.1%	23.7%	11.1%
Access my calendar	32.1%	19.0%	9.5%
Send a text message	27.8%	14.0%	6.7%
Make a purchase	25.2%	14.3%	4.9%

voicebot.ai
Source: Voicebot Jan 2020

-ortant and necessary interactions.

In relation to e-commerce, applications are appearing where the "Add to cart" button has been removed and replaced by a "Drag & drop" directly from the product to the shopping cart.

Advantages of Button-less in Mobile

By focusing more on tactile gestures when designing screens and not so much on buttons, we can achieve a more human interaction, where the user feels more identified with the screen and we improve their experience with the application and therefore with the brand.

We can also prevent errors and mistakes, since with fewer buttons and less functionality we achieve that the user has a clear action, the "Call to action", which he has to take for each screen he navigates.

Biometrics simplify the user experience

Another technological advance to take into account is biometrics where interacting with a machine without touching the screen is a reality.

In recent months, with the COVID-19 pres-

ent in our lives, we are seeing a decline in cash payments, the cards are living their best moment but there are still phases of the processes that are not 100% contactless, is the case of entering the PIN in the payment POS.

How good it would be to eliminate physical contact to make payments, open automatic locks without keys, interact with vending machines that remember your previous orders and anticipate your request.

In general we make the experience faster, easier and safer by avoiding friction points.

THE SCIENCE OF VOICE IDENTIFICATION

Biometric Vox is a tech company that researches and develops voice products. The startup offers in-house algorithm-based artificial intelligence technology, identity authentication products (CheckVox, vocal biometrics) and advanced remote electronic signing (FirVox)
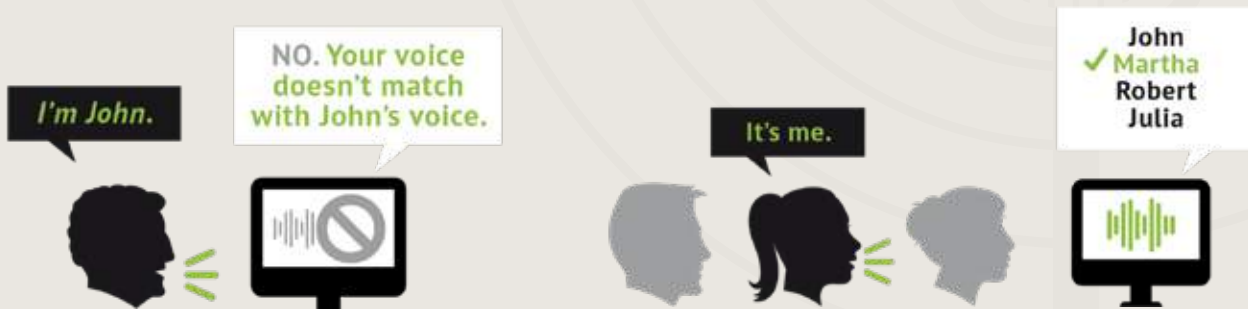
Voice identification and verification at CheckVox by Biometric Vox. Logo and illustration by Biometric Vox.

PORTAL BY FACEBOOK

Facebook Portal is a device that is placed on a desk or table or near a TV and the camera follows the person as they talk and walk around making the video chat with Facebook friends completely hands-free. The camera can automatically pan and zoom to focus on the speaker, even in a room full of people. It also has a voice-enhancing microphone that minimizes background noise and has Amazon's Alexa in-built that let's the user do a plethora of tasks

Portal by Facebook starts at $149. Photo via portal.facebook.com

Buttonless experience in TV

All these trends, of the use of voice, fewer buttons to interact, are also having an impact on the way we use the TV.

Being able to integrate with devices like Alexa and Google Home eliminates the negative experience of using remote control when searching for content and allows you to use your voice for faster and error-free interaction. In the case of Apple TV, it allows you to say the password by voice, pronouncing individual characters, without having to type it.

Buttonless experiences in home automation

In these last months of confinement, we are becoming more homely than usual.

Here we have the home controllers, such as Amazon Echo Show and Google Nest Hub, where the visual environments are practically messages that appear after giving them voice commands. You can use them as a newsreader, check the weather, control the house, cook and there is no physical interaction with the device.

The way to communicate, see each other and be able to telework is

Facebook Portal moves the camera sideways and enlarges the image automatically without having to do anything and without any buttons on the screen..

through video calls and devices such as Facebook Portal the camera moves sideways and enlarges the image automatically without having to do anything and without buttons on the screen.

By using fewer buttons we generate cleaner designs and leave space for content, focusing the user's attention on the information that is really of interest.

Health when interacting, a new variable to take into account

In the current situation, and perhaps more so now than ever, the digitalization of the customer experience is one of the main challenges any company faces. Service and process design, user research, interface design and the application of the latest technological advances are key factors to take into account in any business project. Applying techniques such as Buttonless, we take a step forward and improve the user experience by providing prevention, security, simplicity and we manage to connect more emotionally with the user. ☺

MANUEL MEDINA

A UX Lead at Santander Global Tech, Manuel is also a lasagna lover and believes in empathizing, thinking, prototyping and designing as the way to innovation

retro is unspeakably sexy.

contributions from authors are welcome.

More than half a year later,
how have designers adapted
to a remote life?

ACCLIM

BY RAJAT AGARWAL

&

I
Acclimatized Mental Model

W ho would have thought? In just about a couple of months, a new paradigm has emerged. A paradigm that brings with itself changed ways of working, new domains, new economy, new corporate conflicts and beyond all this an altered, reformed cognitive process. This paradigm is as profound as the invention of the internet or in the world of UI/UX design, the launch of the iPhone in 2007.

In early February, as COVID-19 cases rose worldwide, most of us thought the event would pass just like the Swine Flu, COVID-19's milder cousin from 2009. When news of layoffs or companies going remote from within the industry started pouring in a few of us still believed it was far off. But the paradigm has been like the approaching Tyrannosaurus rex in the side view mirror of the 1993 film Jurassic Park. Closer than it appeared and far too real. It forced millions of people in the workforce, including designers, to swiftly adapt their ways of working and thinking.

Not just at an individual level, a bit too hurried and massive attitude transformation

Six months later, the dust has somewhat settled. Both employers and employees have come to terms with this mandatory reform.

has occurred at organisational level as well. The employers which were earlier hesitant about having a couple of team members work remotely quickly went 100% remote with no qualms. Something touted as an optional facility had suddenly become a necessity.

Other companies went on an enormous cost-cutting spree as they cut down on the UX research budgets at best and laid off entire design teams at worst.

Six months later, the dust has somewhat settled. Both employers and employees have come to terms with this mandatory reform. The transformation is almost complete perishing the ones who couldn't adapt to this wave of change.

The paradigm has only pardoned acclimatized mental models.

II
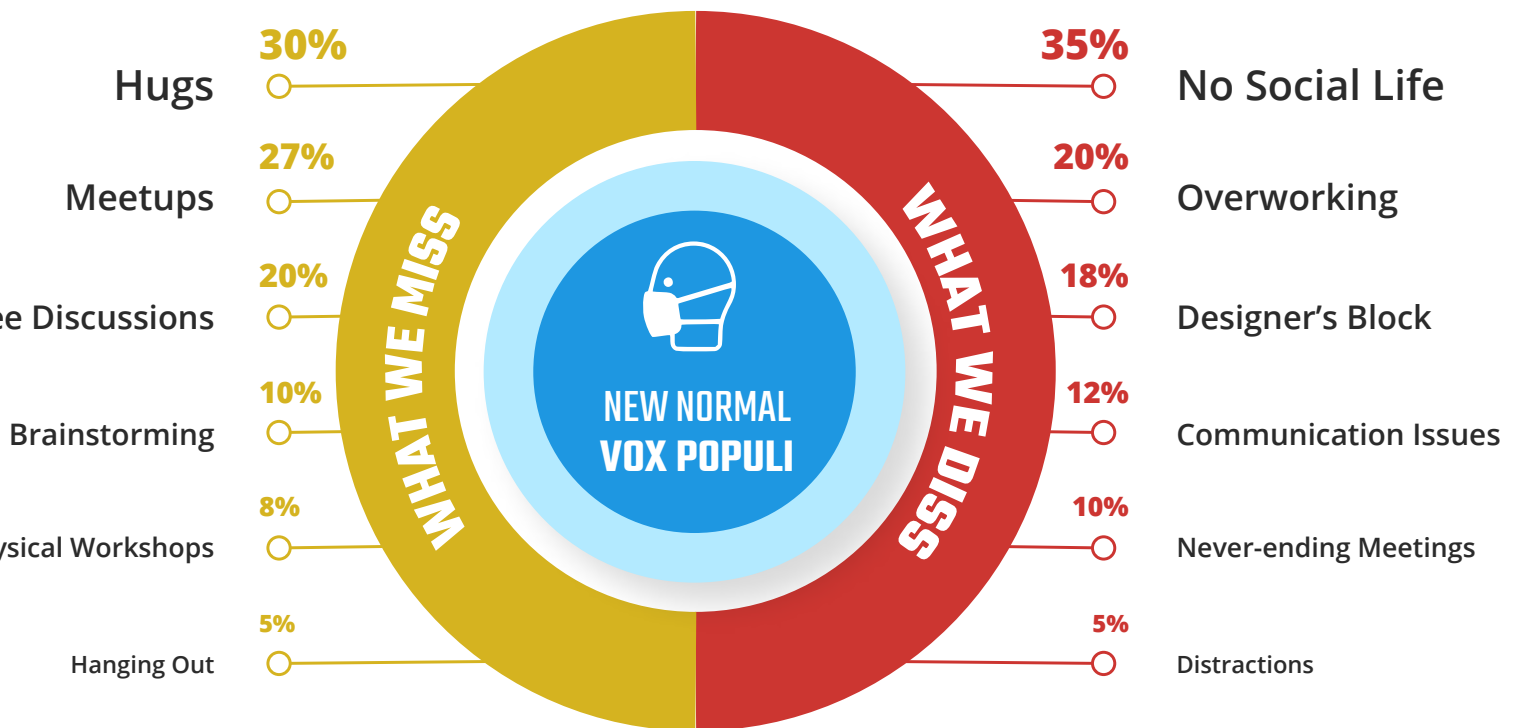## Remote, Remoter, Remotest: Virtual Workspace

What a UI/UX designer could need apart from a laptop and an internet connection was already present. The market was awash with software and tools for a designer to work from home incessantly since about a couple of years ago. However, the elective subjects have suddenly become core.

But the biggest struggle of working

Coffe

Team

Phy

WHAT WE MISS

- 30% Hugs
- 27% Meetups
- 20% ...e Discussions
- 10% Brainstorming
- 8% ...ysical Workshops
- 5% Hanging Out

NEW NORMAL VOX POPULI

WHAT WE DISS

- 35% No Social Life
- 20% Overworking
- 18% Designer's Block
- 12% Communication Issues
- 10% Never-ending Meetings
- 5% Distractions

*July 2020: Survey conducted by **DesignWhine.com** with 90 UI/UX designers in India, the US and the UK*

remotely isn't about the tools, software and technology. The workers, especially the UI/UX designers have swiftly adapted to using various tools to go about their design process. The struggle is to keep yourself engaged and feeling part of the bigger picture within your organisation. The only key is to push yourself to communicate and collaborate with colleagues via on-the-fly video calls even more than you'd do normally. Frequent peer one-on-one pro-

grams for team members to meet weekly and connect about anything and everything of their choice, volunteering and conducting knowledge sharing sessions or opening up various channels on Slack for everything from #projects and #general company information to #fitness, #music, #hobbies,

#dogs, and #parenting to encourage interaction between the team members and facilitate

But the biggest struggle of working remotely isn't about the tools, software and technology. The struggle is to keep yourself engaged.

the cafeteria conversations digitally.

The other challenge to working remotely is to know when and how to dis-

connect and manage work-life balance. This challenge can be overcome by assuming absolute control over your calendar. Planning out your schedules, blocking calendars for various activities and then religiously sticking to it, including planning for free time. Establishing a routine for answering emails also helps to disconnect by reducing the pressure to check your inbox during established non-working hours.

III
Creative Dead End: Designer's Block

Just like an acclimatized mountaineer scaling Everest can still go snowblind if s/he doesn't take precautions for an extended period of time, a designer is prone to something known as a designer's block where our creative muse disappears if we're not watchful. The paradigm has ensured a designer cannot afford this and it's necessary to revive it

by any means necessary. This is even more difficult when we're working in isolation with no physical interaction with our team and getting a different perspective is not as straightforward as walking up to a colleague for a quick banter in the office

..even more difficult when we're working in isolation with no physical interaction with our team and getting a different perspective is not as straightforward

cafeteria.

But there are some things you could do try to revive the muse -

Visualization Technique - Turn off your laptop for a while, shut off all the lights, close your eyes and turn on soothing instrumental music and imagine your calm self in a white sandy beach with

turquoise water and a clear blue sky. We recommend listening to https://www.solopianoradio.com while you give this exercise a try. This is sure to quieten your anxiety, bring things to perspective and make you feel refreshed.

Browse Pinterest - This one's quite straightforward but works wonders. Just log on to Pinterest and search for "Experience Design" and just browse the results casually. You're sure to feel refreshed and get new ideas instantly.

Organize - One of the things I frequently do when I'm battling creative block is organise my laptop and desk. Shut down unnecessary tabs, folders, windows. Tuck away non-essential objects from the table, put them in the drawer and focus on the absolute essentials. I can tell you from experience it works like a charm.

Look at nature - Going for a walk in a park nearby or just staring at the sky, trees, birds from your balcony

can help you beat creative block. Coffee would be an add on.

IV
Superhero or Sidekick: Designer's Role in the Pandemic

As much as we'd like to blow our own trumpet and claim that "design will save the world", the pandemic is testimony to the fact that nothing is further from the truth. We've no major role to play in medical epidemics such as this and are in fact supporting actors at best to the doctors and healthcare workers who have a huge role to play.

However, some contributions that us

designers have made

We've no major role to play in medical epidemics such as these and are in fact supporting actors at best to the doctors and healthcare workers..

during the COVID-19 outbreak are noteworthy.

Covid19India.org and TheVaccineTracker.com are examples of data being distributed efficiently to the general populace as are all the various tracing apps backed by the official government of these countries. Then

there's this amazing AR ruler, the Keep Distance Ruler, that is compatible with the iPhone and measures the necessary distance for social distancing in a public gathering.

If we're willing to leap beyond digital

PRESENT

interfaces and encapsulate physical product designs and their contribu-   tions, we can perhaps take   a
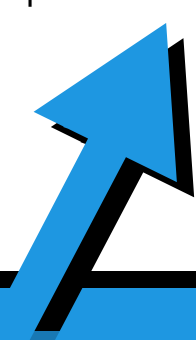
INDUSTRIES BOOMING IN THE PANDE

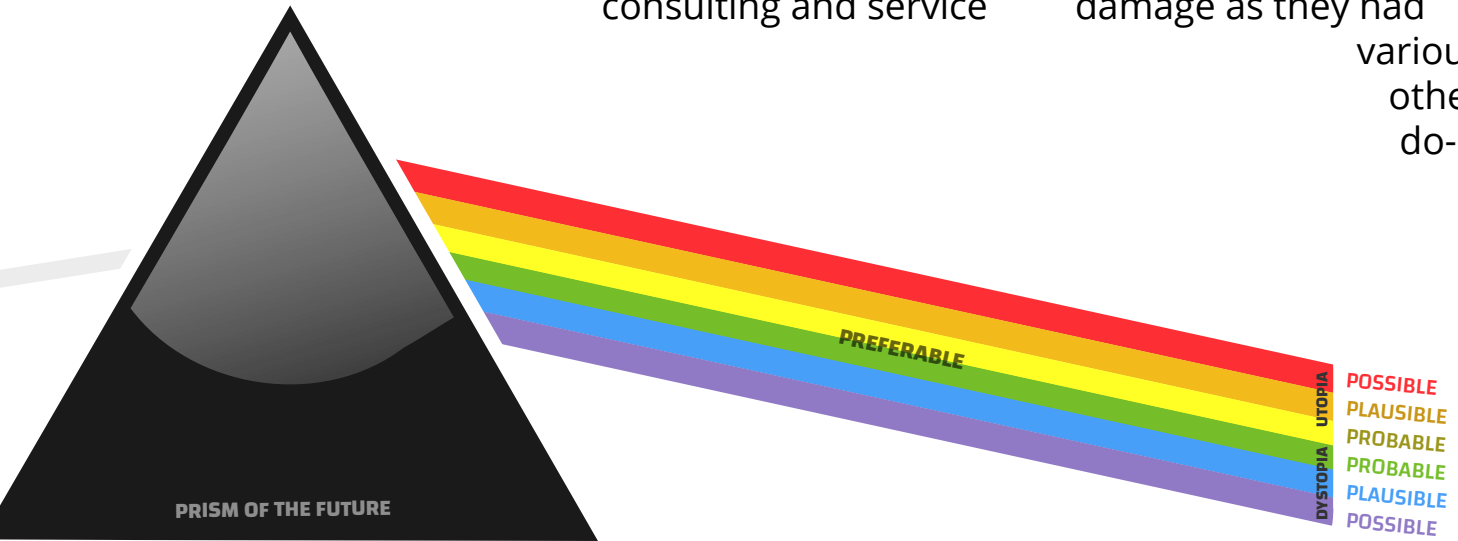**OTT MEDIA**   **ONLINE EDUCATION**   **VIDEO CALLING**   **E-COM**

moment and applaud some concept designs for better PPE kits for medical professionals, 3D reusable masks etc.

has a good amount of valuable insights to offer which one could make use of to future-proof their careers. For instance, it is quite apparent that consulting and service

product companies focusing on a single sector like travel, tourism, hospitality collapsed due to COVID-19, service based corporations withstood the damage as they had various other do-

PREFERABLE

PRISM OF THE FUTURE

UTOPIA
POSSIBLE
PLAUSIBLE
PROBABLE

DYSTOPIA
PROBABLE
PLAUSIBLE
POSSIBLE

V
The Road Ahead

If one chooses to evaluate, the pandemic also

based business are a safer option as compared to product based corporations. Where

mains and sectors to balance out from.
Then there are industries whose growth has skyrocketed

MIC THAT CONSUME UI / UX SERVICES

MERCE

BFSI

HEALTHCARE

IT SERVICES

during the pandemic. The global lockdown ensured the OTT industry was at an all time boom with millions of new users every month who had no other option but to resort to streaming media for entertainment and escapism.

Similarly, hordes of schools and educational institutes rushed to put their services completely online so that schooling, training, coachings could be provided to the students at home safely, without stepping out in the epidemic. Video conferencing, E-commerce all witnessed a massive upsurge in user adoption in just a couple of months since February.

If there's ever been a time to apply and learn Speculative Design, it is now and to none other than our own careers. Coined by Anthony Dunne, head of the design interactions programme at the Royal College of Art, London, in the 1990s, Speculative Design, also known as Design Fiction, envi-

sions solutions for a distant future at a societal magnitude. It goes beyond the design of individual products of use, and offers an opportunity to the designers to extend their creativity into the realms of science fiction and

At the risk of making a blanket statement, I think as long as humanity is alive, there will always be scope for a career in Healthcare..

imaginary future worlds.

For example, if we were to speculate the future of our careers at a glance, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that the two industries that will withstand the worst of pandemics and even grow manyfolds during such catastrophic events would be Healthcare and Digital Payments. The former because of the very characteristic that

declares such events as pandemics concern human wellbeing. At the risk of making a blanket statement, I think as long as humanity is alive, there will always be scope for a career in Healthcare.

The latter, because it ensures commerce without much movement. Any catastrophic event such as a COVID-19, a zombie apocalypse or even a meteorite collision would warrant restricted mobility and this in turn will ensure humanity's reliance on the digital payments for goods and services even more. Payment processors will be encouraged to invest in service quality and to increase infrastructure and capacity.

As designers it is only imperative that we pause, speculate, empathize with ourselves and redesign the future so that our experience of it is as seamless as possible. ☺

Rajat Agarwal is an Experience Design Manager at TO THE NEW, India and the Founder and Editor-in-Chief at DesignWhine

THE BIG REMOTE EXPERIMENT

Suddenly, everyone is a remote-work advocate. But does it really work?
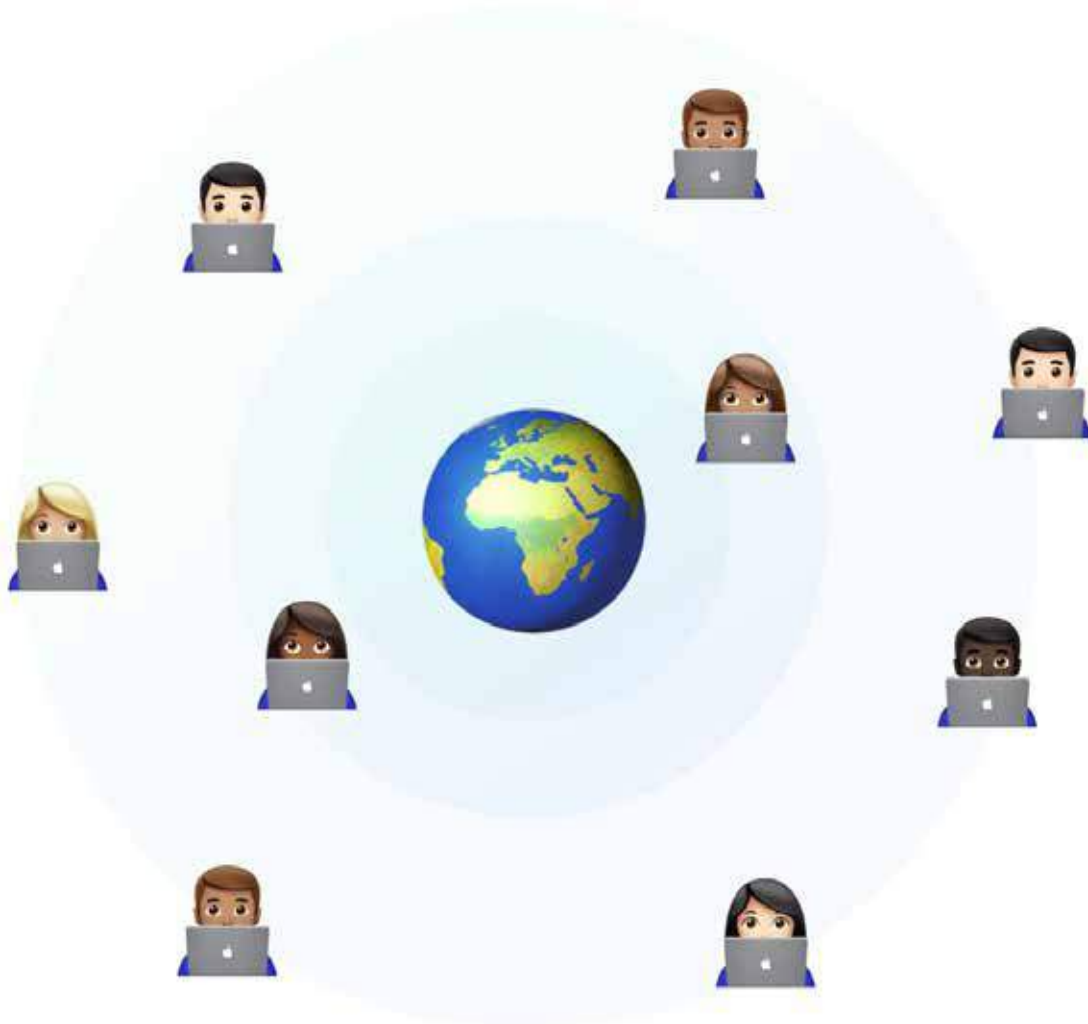
BY MICHAŁ MALEWICZ

Unless you have been living under a rock or hidden deep within a sketch design library with a million components, there's a viral outbreak that currently affects the entire world. And the digital product builders (that includes the UX-people) are also massively starting to work from home.

The situation is dangerous enough so that many stores have been entirely bought-out, with people preparing for the incoming zombie apocalypse. So while we're getting ready for a month on canned beans, we may get bored and decide to work a little.

There's a lot of encouragement to work from home now, even from businesses that previously shunned the idea.

But while it's all fun and beans, it has a huge potential downside for the entire "remote worker" community. But first, let's take a look at the positives.

The Positives!

The benefits of remote work are easy. You can do it from home. But you can also travel abroad and do it in the morning, and then go

The Work-Netflix-Sleep cycle

sightseeing and exploring in the evening. You can have a more meaningful life than the work-netflix-sleep, that's plaguing a lot of the millennial generation. You can save time and money on commuting. Those hours each day can add up.

Let's add the hours up -

If it takes you just 30

minutes to get to work each day, it means it takes one hour both ways. So assuming you won't get sick, it's 252 hours spent on commuting each year alone. That is ten and a half days!

Surely, you can find much better use for that time. Maybe write a book, start a podcast, or learn a new skill or language. Or binge-watch the entire X-Files library (except for the "new" seasons).But, there's the rub..

The Negatives!

30 min

30 min

The problems that are not associated with the current situation have been around for a while. No human contact can lead to depression, anxiety, and lower quality work.

Some people simply can't focus well, if they're not in an office. They need the division of home and work to be clear and set in stone in order to do their best work.

Teamwork and collaboration are an essential part of building fresh, new things, and exploring new ideas. And don't tell me it's still Teamwork if you're using Microsoft Teams.

If you're in a cool, relaxed company, it doesn't have to be a "daily grind," it can be a fun place to spend a quarter of your day. Staying at home will push you out of that circle.

But that's not all. Many companies, who never considered remote work before, are doing it now. While usually, it would be a reason to jump up and shout "viva remote work!" the whole process is happening too fast. All of a sudden, half of the world is going remote (if the type of job allows it).

Forced WFH

People who never tried working remote, are now "forced" to do it, with a potential pandemic happening around them. The new situation (not being at the office), combined with fear and anxiety, can significantly decrease their output. I've heard it from some friends in the last few days:

"*I can't focus! I'm trying to work, but it's just going so slow... They may even fire me when it all calms down!*"

All of this adds up to an overall weaker performance of those newly turned remote workers.

Do you think the people in charge won't look at the stats?

This entire thing can lead to many new studies on how remote work doesn't well... work. We'll see huge percentages of subpar performance, vs. what was measured before everyone started working remotely.

It's hard to argue with statistics

There have been surveys by various organisations on the benefits and drawbacks of working remotely, while the benefits largely revolve around not having to commute and flexibility,

at work
30 min after
waking up

30 min

at work
60+ min after
waking up

What's your biggest struggle with working remotely?
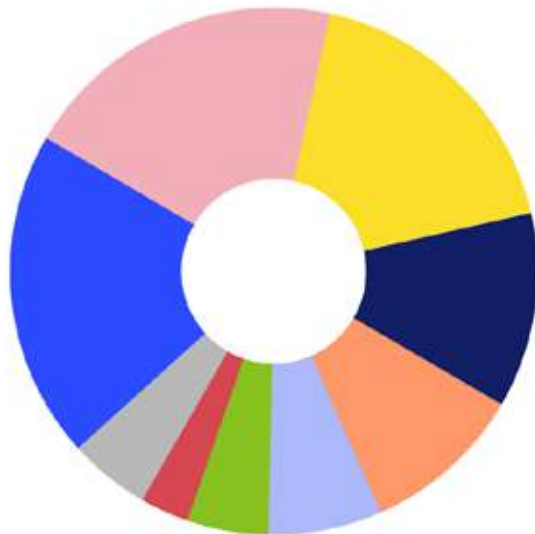
20% ● Collaboration and communication

20% ● Loneliness

18% ● Not being able to unplug

12% ● Distractions at home

10% ● Being in a different timezone than teammates

7% ● Staying motivated

5% ● Taking vacation time

3% ● Finding reliable wifi

5% ● Other

State of Remote Report 2020
buffer.com/state-of-remote-2020

the drawbacks are more varied with the top contenders since the covid-19 lockdown being "Collaboration and Communication and "Not being able to unplug after work".

So while it all seems to be a win for working remotely, keep in mind that it may well be its end. When the dust settles, and the virus goes away, we may find out that it was a massive fiasco in terms of pushing remote work forward. Hopefully not.

Mike has also written a book called "Designing User Interfaces" which is over 420 pages of knowledge, best practices, problems, solutions & tips.

MICHAŁ MALEWICZ

CEO and Creative Director at HYPE4, Mike also teaches design at SWPS University in Poland, speaks at design conferences, surfs (Baltic sea can be quite fun) and skates

Designing User Interfaces

www.designingui.com

BRAINSTORMING IN URBAN GAR

Niamh has a nice plant, some prints, notebooks and pens at her design desk which overlooks a small urban garden which has another desk where Niamh spends her time brainstorming!

NIAMH HARMAN'S GREEN D

My favourite thing about my workstation is my urban garden! I usually keep the door open and I sit on the balcony when I need to brainstorm. I have peas, radishes, lettuce, carrots, tomatoes and beetroot growing!

99

Currently working as Head of Design and UX at Spectrum.Life, Niamh is a creative visual designer with a background in branding, print and digital design for large corporate clients.

As a visual designer her main focus is design for positive social change. This has been explored through fitness & nutrition innovation through digital products, mental health wellbeing design solutions for large corporate companies and working closely with Irish charities to initiate awareness through visual design. Niamh's Portfolio - www.letsdesignstuff.com

Want your design desk featured in the next issue?
*Submit your desk pictures at - **desk@designwhine.com***

THE PROBLEM

Jugnoo Taxi was a traditional taxi services company in Delhi, India that went out of business with the introduction of app based taxi services like Uber and Ola.

Anil Singh, the MD of Jugnoo Taxi considered opening up an app based service emulating Ola but was wary of the huge competition they would have to face with already established brands.

On the verge of going bankrupt, Anil came up with a very innovative idea to launch an app that could save his company from going insolvent.

He observed the slow but steady rise in the carpool culture among the office going crowd of Delhi. Knowing that the crowd that indulged in car pool was primarily young, he came up with a gamified version of car pool that does not rely on money directly for its services.

The concept goes like this -

If you drive people around you earn kms but if you ride with someone, you spend kms. If you only ride, eventually you will need to buy kms from the app. If you only drive people around, you will need to redeem kms in exchange for gifts, coupons and cash.

THE CHALLENGE

Design a lo-fi concept iOS app for Anil so he can present his idea to investors and get them to invest in Jugnoo Carpool. Design as few screens as you think are required to showcase a complete journey of a user using this app.

*Send in your lo-fi prototype link on twitter **@designwhine** with the hashtag **#ultimateuxchallenge**. Top design solutions will be featured in the next issue of DesignWhine.*

SATIRE
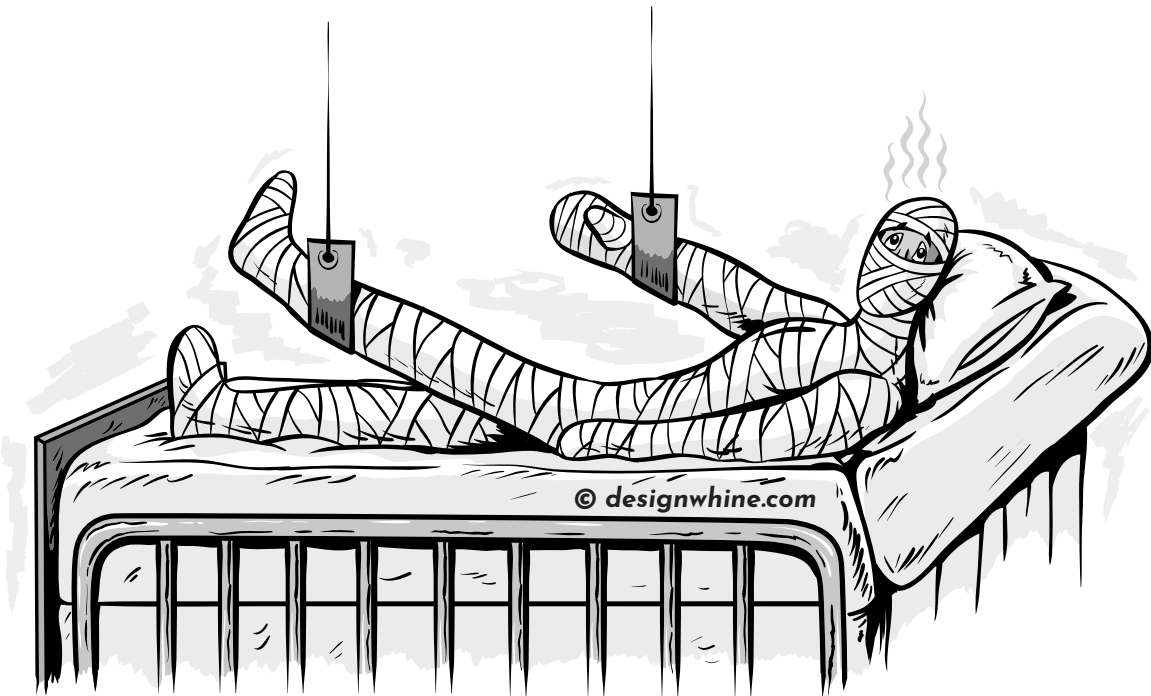
"All I did was ask our UX guy to make my website look pretty!"

© designwhine.com

LEISURE

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I X W L L U N A Q K A S D O C A V Q W K
N X R Y Q A O D R B X Y A T K E S G J V
G B K E W W I I Z S D T U N O A F F D M
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N K Y R A F F I N I T Y D I A G R A M P
R B P Y Q O G N I K R A M H C N E B X U
F E R F N O P A M T A E H F V K D D W P
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From the alphabet maze on the left, find design related terms given in the box below.

LEANUX	EXPERIENCE
CARDSORTING	CTA
MENTALMODEL	BARINSTORM
HEATMAP	USABILITY
AFFORDANCE	UXBENCHMARKING
AFFINITYDIAGRAM	
PROTOTYPE	RESPONSIVE
WIREFRAME	MICROANIMATION
WHITEBOARD	HEURISTICREVIEW
EMPATHIZE	PERSONA

Take a snapshot of your answers and tweet it @designwhine with the hashtag #wordsearch

We'd ❤ some feedback.

There are many ways you can let us know how you liked this issue of DesignWhine

in / DesignWhine

🐦 / DesignWhine
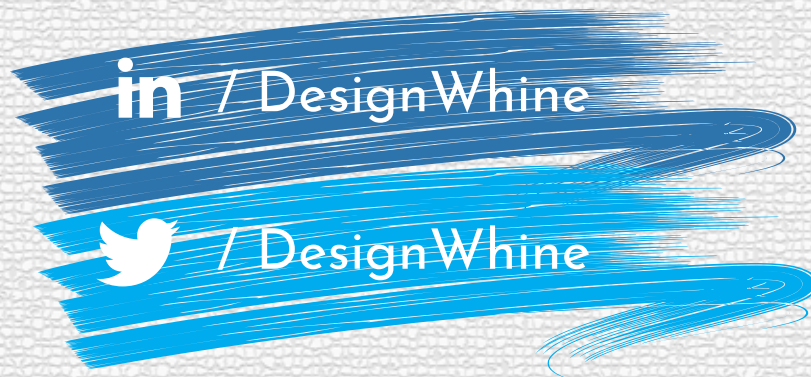
Or, you could leave us a comment using the form right below this issue..