Engineering Good Design & Usability

Blake Reary and
Cai GoGwilt
MIT 6.470, January 2012.
What we’ll cover:

1. User-centered Design
2. Interaction Design Techniques
3. Visual Design Techniques
What is Design?
A lot of disciplines are considered “Design”
In broad terms, design is

Creating an artifact for a purpose.
What makes good design?
Good design is transparent.
Good design eliminates friction.
Good design is empathetic.
If we want users to like our software we should design it to behave like a likeable person: respectful, generous and helpful.

-Alan Cooper
Ok. But I’m an engineer, not a designer.

*not an actual engineer*
Design is an extension of engineering.
So how do I design my project?
The design process.

*Adapted from Janice Fraser, LUXr
The design process.
Who’s going to use your site?
User Research: Interview potential users.

- Identify a diverse set of potential users
- Even if you are designing this for yourself, if anyone else will use it, talk to them.
User Research: Interview potential users.

“Why do you play turbo hearts?”

“How often do you play?”

“Is anyone better than you? Worse? How can they get better?”

“How do you keep score?”
Model personas from what you learned in your user interviews
Identifying variables

Level of Turbo Hearts Experience

Seriousness in play

Danielle

Allen

Yves

Todd

Katherine

Dan
Level of Turbo Hearts Experience

Seriousness in play

- Allen
- Danielle
- Yves
- Todd
- Katherine
- Dan
Turbo Hearts Personas

- Turbo hearts expert
- Plays almost every day at lunch. Usually wins.
- Keeps track of scores on paper, inputs to big spreadsheet later
- Loves statistics
- Wants to gain insight from his historical gameplay

Dan
Turbo Hearts Personas

Todd

- Plays frequently
- Mostly plays “for the lulz” — it suits his sense of humor
- Wants to know how much havoc he’s caused
- Prefers bridge over turbo hearts
- Likes statistics
Turbo Hearts Personas

Allen

• Plays infrequently
• Doesn’t consider himself good
• Thinks the game is too competitive
• Wants to be a better player, but not quite sure how
Check mappings of personas to variables
Use Cases
• Use cases are the goals of the users
• Use cases, unlike workflows, prevent you from getting locked into a UI
Derive use cases from your personas

- Keep track of how much “money” players owe each other
- Compare a player’s stats to another player’s
- See improvement over time
- Get better at the game
Keep track of how much “money” players owe each other
Compare a player’s stats to another player’s

- Overall score
- Line chart
- Standings
- Boss Table
- Profile page
See improvement over time
Get better at the game
Information Architecture: How the site is organized

What goes where?
Technique: Card sorting
Sketching your design
TURBO HEARTS
SCORE TRACKER

Track your score, improve your game.

Start Tracking!

Recent Games
12/21 Don -5 Todd 12 & 30 6/34
12/20 Todd 5 Don 7 All 20 BA 5
12/17 Don 20 Todd 22 All 30 BA 64

username
password

Recent Tips
Dan - don't load with the gun, it gives everyone too much information.

Search for a player

Todd to Allen - try to run more.
Allen - Any tips on how to.
Dan - if you have more than one code of a suit, you have a good chance of taking everything.
Paper Prototyping

- Use your wireframe sketches as the basis
- Use post-its or index cards as interactive interface elements, e.g. buttons, drop downs, dialogues, navigation
- A pen works as pointer device
Paper Prototyping

• To effectively user test, have interactive elements ready for the desired workflow
• If the user wants to do something that you have not sketched, ask the user to sketch what they think it should be
TURBO HEARTS
SCORE TRACKER

Username: [scumbag@chp.net]
First name: Jon
Last name: Chu
Password: [hidden]
Confirm password: [hidden]

0 Use default game name (Jon Chu)
0 Use custom game name

Start Tracking!
Logged in as Jon Chu
Go to Dashboard

Recent Tips
Dan - don't look with the Queen. It gives everyone too much information.

Write a comment

Write a tip

Recent Games

New games:
12/15
12/10

Allen
Albert
Alan

Todd: 22
FA: 23
Jumps
Post Tip

Turbo 07 Hearts
Score Tracker

[Emoji] Jon Chu

Leagues
Default league view
Discovering what works and what doesn’t
More refined prototypes
Visual Design
Vision trumps all the senses. Half of the brain’s resources are dedicated to seeing and interpreting what we see.

-Susan Weinschenk

100 Things Every Designer Should Know About People
TRACK YOUR TURBO HEARTS SCORES!

It's what you've always wanted: a place to track all of your turbo hearts games and keep tabs on how your friends are playing.

Ready to get started? Create an account

TURBO HEARTS is a card game based on the classic card game "Hearts", with a few new mechanics to make it more competitive than ever.

Learn More

WHAT WILL I GET WITH TURBOHEARTS TRACKER?

- Game Statistics
- Play with Friends
- Win Awards
WELCOME BACK, DAN  View my profile »

You are currently in 1st place with $126 in your league!

RECENT GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>5pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>5pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>5pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>5pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOP PLAYERS

- **Dan Cervelli** -$126
- **Todd Weber**  -$82
- **Eric Anderson** -$15
- **Cai Gogwilt**  -$1

Add a Game
Visual Design Techniques

- Typography
- Layout
- Grid Systems
- Color
- Icon systems
Visual Design Techniques

- Typography
- Layout
- Grid Systems
- Color
- Icon systems

= Visual Language
Typography
Multifaceted like a Swiss Army Knife.
(sans the swiss part)

Randomly featured projects

Evergreen Advisors
At Evergreen Advisors, achieving success for our clients is our first priority.
View project →

My Day Magazine
My Day Magazine was a leading, high-end regional wedding magazine that recently folded.
View project →

Kennedy Center
Mini-promotional site for ARTSEDGE
View project →
**Typography**

Choose a typeface that represents your product’s (and its users’) personalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISPLAY</th>
<th>Sans-serif</th>
<th>Serif</th>
<th>Slab-Serif</th>
<th>Script</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Modern</td>
<td>Elegant</td>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Magazine/Tech</td>
<td>Human</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>-5pts</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
<td>2pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOP PLAYERS**

- **DAN CERVELLI**: $126
- **TODD WEBER**: $82
- **ERIC ANDERSON**: $15
WELCOME BACK, DAN

You are currently in 1st place with $126 in your league!

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**RECENT GAMES IN YOUR LEAGUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>$119</td>
<td>-35pts</td>
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**YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN 2ND PLACE WITH $420 IN YOUR LEAGUE!**

[Visit the website for more information](#)
You are currently in 2nd place with $420 in your league!

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Score</th>
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<td>01/01</td>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>-14pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Convey importance with font size. People like to scan headlines and don’t always read blocks of text.
Convey importance with font size.

People like to scan headlines and don’t always read long blocks of text.
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed justo nulla, hendrerit non varius ac, tincidunt id massa. Suspendisse elit
dui, tristique vel sollicitudin eget, iaculis ultricies massa. Mauris vestibulum venenatis enim, sed accumsan metus interdum sed.
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CSS: width: 30em;
Typography

Line height is important; too little makes blocks of text hard to read.

Typography

Too much is hard to read as well.

Typography

Rule of thumb: line height 1.2x size of font

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

CSS: line-height: 1.2;
Typography Resources

- Web-based type tools: typekit.com, google.com/webfonts
- Typography inspiration: ilovetypography.com, typographica.org
Layout
iPhone 4S

- Dual-core A5 chip.
- All-new 8MP camera and optics.
- iOS 5 and iCloud.
- And introducing Siri.

It's the most amazing iPhone yet.

Watch the iPhone 4S video →

Watch the iPhone 4S TV ad →
Layout

Classic three-column layout
At the heart of every good layout is a grid system
A grid system provides a logical structure to your layout.
Thirty something years ago

Hunter’s is the dream of Ernie and Jane Hunter – a fiercely independent, family-owned winery established in Marlborough over 30 years ago.

1979

When Irishman Ernie Hunter arrived in New Zealand Marlborough had not even been considered as a potential wine growing region. The land was primarily used for farming growing barley and grazing sheep.

A very fine beginning

From their very first vintage in 1976 Hunter’s won six medals at the National Wine Show. It was a good start.

The early days of Marlborough wine

The ever-enthusiastic Ernie, purchased farming land in NINETEEN and planted Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Müller Thurgau, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling and of course, Sauvignon Blanc.

The star of New Zealand wine

"London Sunday Telegraph on Jane Hunter"

The first six Hunter’s Wines to emerge were all award winners, the 1976 Marlborough Müller Thurgau Dry winning at the National Wine Show.

Jane arrives in Marlborough

The young South Australian was appointed to the position of National Viticulturist for Montana Wines based in Blenheim. Jane and Ernie met and married in 1984.
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The early days of Marlborough wine

First Plantings in Marlborough

The ever-enthusiastic Ernie, purchased farming land in Kiebitz and planted Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Müller Thurgau, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Viognier and of course, Sauvignon Blanc.

“The star of New Zealand wine”

– London Sunday Times on Jane Hunter

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# Welcome Back, Blake Reary

You are currently in 2nd place with $420 in your league!

## Recent Games in Your League

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>01/01</td>
<td>Blake Reary</td>
<td>$69</td>
<td>12pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You are currently in 2nd place with $420 in your league!

### Recent Games in Your League

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Team 1</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Team 2</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/09</td>
<td>Blake</td>
<td>+$40</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>-$16</td>
<td>10pts</td>
<td>24pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/06</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>+$100</td>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>-$56</td>
<td>-10pts</td>
<td>40pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/04</td>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>+$87</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>-$31</td>
<td>-12pts</td>
<td>14pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/03</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>+$115</td>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>-$35</td>
<td>-11pts</td>
<td>16pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/28</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>+$98</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>-$26</td>
<td>16pts</td>
<td>34pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/26</td>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>+$38</td>
<td>Todd W</td>
<td>-$26</td>
<td>7pts</td>
<td>54pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/25</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>+$107</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>-$35</td>
<td>-1pts</td>
<td>33pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/24</td>
<td>Blake</td>
<td>+$109</td>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>-$89</td>
<td>-30pts</td>
<td>109pts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cai</td>
<td>-$71</td>
<td>-39pts</td>
<td>197pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>Cai</td>
<td>+$85</td>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>-$29</td>
<td>-31pts</td>
<td>83pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 960 Grid System
The 960 Grid System
The 960 Grid System
TRACK YOUR TURBO HEARTS SCORES!

It’s what you’ve always wanted: a place to track all of your turbo hearts games and keep tabs on how your friends are playing.

Ready to get started? Create an account

TURBO HEARTS is a card game based on the classic card game “Hearts”, with a few new mechanics to make it more competitive than ever.

Learn More

WHAT WILL I GET WITH TURBOHEARTS TRACKER?

- Game Statistics
- Play with Friends
- Win Awards
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Grid Systems

- Great CSS grid framework: www.960.gs
Color
Which of these squares is the most important?
Which of these squares are related?
Welcome back, Dan! You are currently in 1st place with $126 in your league!

### Recent Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>-5pts</td>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
<td>2pts</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>-5pts</td>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>-8pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>+$0</td>
<td>-11pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Porter</td>
<td>-$25</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>-$5</td>
<td>-6pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Porter</td>
<td>-$15</td>
<td>5pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Porter</td>
<td>-$25</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>-$5</td>
<td>6pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
<td>2pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>+$0</td>
<td>-11pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>-5pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Porter</td>
<td>-$25</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Porter</td>
<td>-$15</td>
<td>5pts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>-8pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Players

- **Dan Cervelli**: $126
- **Todd Weber**: $82
- **Eric Anderson**: $15
Color

- Draws attention
- Shows relationships
- Communicates emotion, mood, culture
TRACK YOUR TURBO HEARTS SCORES!

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Learn More
### Recent Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$15</td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Players

- **Dan Cervelli**: $126
- **Todd Weber**: $82
- **Eric Anderson**: $15
You are currently in **1st place** with **$126** in your league!

### Recent Games

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<td>+$5</td>
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<td>+$5</td>
<td>-5pts</td>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
<td>-5pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>-$5</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>-$5</td>
<td>6pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Players

- **Dan Cervelli** - **$126**
- **Todd Weber** - **$82**
- **Eric Anderson** - **$15**
You are currently in 1st place with $126 in your league!
Color

• Use subdued (low saturation) color for less important components
• Use higher saturation for important callouts
Icons
Icons

- Icons can be used to make information more digestible
- Icons should be used when space is limited
WHAT WILL I GET WITH TURBOHEARTS TRACKER?

- Game Statistics
- Play with Friends
- Win Awards
WHAT WILL I GET WITH TURBOHEARTS TRACKER?

Game Statistics

Play with Friends

Win Awards
Icons

- Icons are difficult to create, so use proven icons
- Use commonly known icons
- Awesome freemium libraries: glyphish.com, glyphicons.com
WELCOME BACK, DAN

You are currently in 1st place with $126 in your league!

RECENT GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/21</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>+$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>+$15</td>
<td>12/20</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>12/19</td>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>-$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>+$20</td>
<td>12/18</td>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>+$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOP PLAYERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dan Cervelli</td>
<td>$126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd Weber</td>
<td>$82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Anderson</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cai Gogwilt</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Putting it all together
Think, Make, Check works on micro and macro level
Find inspiration!

- abduzeedo.com
- creattica.com
- smashingmagazine.com
Keys to a successful homepage

- Large, attractive graphic
- Catchy punchline
- Clear call to action
- Short, concise overview
Remember: It’s always about people.
Let’s look at what we made.