

How to: Plan a User Experience

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One of the key pieces of planning to undertake before starting a project is to sketch out what the typical experience of users will be. Apart from helping funders to understand your project better, it will often expose any missing links in the project.

During the concept stage of your project, you should be sketching an outline of what your audience will experience when they take part in your project. By the time you are ready to move on to the planning stage, you will probably be able to give a far more detailed picture of how this will work.

Try not to describe the actual project content in detail. Focus instead on what the user sees, hears, feels and does. You will be able to write about content elsewhere.

The following questions may help you describe the project from the user's point of view:

- how do people find out about the project?
- where are they when this happens?
- how do they access the project?
- what do they first see and/or hear?
- what does it look like?
- what is the style and tone?
- what happens next?
- what do they do? (So they click on something? Do they print or make something? Do they contribute something? Do they learn something?)
- what motivates them to move through each stage of the experience?
- do they need to move from one medium to another?
- does the project affect their subsequent behaviour?
- what is the intended outcome for users (eg develop skills, educational)?
- what response are you hoping to elicit from users?
- what is the desired perception or (re)action from users?
- how do the overall design and structuring of the various elements (video, animation, audio, tactile etc) and environments support the intended experience?

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