UX Design Trends for 2019

What does this year hold for user experience design? We identify key trends in the interactive field from crypto to screen time and more.

You're up to date on visual trends for 2019 and the Pantone colour that will define it, but what about predictions away from the creative field? What does 2019 have in store for the nitty gritty below the hood, the aesthetic trends that UX designers need to keep on top of for the next 12 months?

Answering these questions is Dylan Field, CEO of online interface design tool Figma. Dylan spoke to *Digital Arts* about his predictions for interactive design in this last year of the 2010s, breaking down his thoughts into four key user experience trends.

Accessibility is required

Credit: iStock

We've seen Instagram roll out alternative text to detail images for those with visual impairments, but Dylan believes there's a lot more potential in UX design to ensure total accessibility for all kinds of users.

"The first step in helping create more inclusive and accessible products is awareness – and we're seeing this come up more in public discussions," says Dylan. "Fields like user research have grown substantially and have helped companies build empathy with current and prospective customers, which helps develop that muscle for paying attention to folks who may not act, look, or think like you do."

"The next step is about taking action and convincing businesses it's worth their time to fix. Part of this will be

better tooling so it happens more naturally in the product development process. New products are coming out regularly that make it easier to build screen readers or check proper contrast ratios for the visually impaired, as well as better captioning and transcriptions for the hearing impaired.”

Accessibility then is not a trend but rather a requirement in the design process, and we’ll see more companies publicly pledge their commitment to accessible design.

Responsible screen time

Credit: iStock

Last year saw both Apple and Samsung introduce screen time features that allow users to monitor and restrict how much

time they spend on their phones. It’s arguable how effective these features are in combatting our smartphone fix – are users particularly interested in seeing graphs of their usage when really they just want to not be looking at their phone in the first place? – but Dylan is hopeful there’s a lot more to explore in this area for UX designers.

‘It’s the designer’s job to help users complete a task in the most efficient, enjoyable way possible,” he believes. “Companies like Facebook still succeed at this; they are just focused on making advertising more cost-effective rather than making the average consumer more efficient at catching up with their friends.

“I love that platforms are starting to measure and present screen time to users,” Dylan continues. “Personally, I’m a bigger fan of the Apple model where people are presented with information rather than being cut off (as with the Samsung model). As an optimist, I believe that when presented with the right information people can make their own choices about their information diet.”

It’s a new frontier in the user experience and as such there’s a lot of potential to play around with in the field. pop-up emoticon-like characters to tell you off for surpassing your limit, perhaps? Let’s call it ‘rehaboji design.’ Either way, rather than designing experiences that keep users engaged for an extended time, designers have a responsibility to think beyond the screen to create more efficient apps that ultimately enrich people’s lives.

“My hope for 2019 is that this year people will spend more time using screens to create – and less time using screens to consume,” Dylan sums up.

Crypto goes mainstream

Credit: iStock

With Bitcoin’s turbulent 2018 giving them a reputation of being volatile and untrustworthy, crypto companies are focused on educating the public and bringing true financial freedom to the masses. Dylan believes better design is the key and next hurdle to making the technical ideas of blockchain accessible to all.

“The entire crypto ecosystem is immensely complicated,” he says. “Basic transactions often involve several clicks and due to the self-sovereign nature of cryptocurrency, all mistakes are final.

“Today most developers are designing apps for other crypto

developers. We need more designers communicating these complex topics in order for the crypto ecosystem to grow.”

Open design is the standard

Credit: iStock

Cloud-based technologies like Figma and Volve are creating new ways for designers to create and collaborate together. In Dylan’s view, it’s time to say goodbye to the ‘black box’ approach and hello to open design.

“At Figma we’re working to advance the idea of open design by giving more people in organisations an ambient awareness of what their design team is working on. We think this will make design teams more powerful and bring non-designers closer to

the design process.”

We share Dylan’s optimism, and can see such openness educating clients more about the design process. Whether that means more or less meddling in your work this 2019 though, we can’t say.

Read next: 2019’s Visual Trends

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