Ideation & Sketching

HCDE 518
User-Centered Design

By this point of the project, you should have a good understanding of the users for whom you are designing and their needs. You should now be thinking about ways that you can design or redesign technology to meet the needs of those users. As we have been learning in class, sketching is an important component of the design process. For this assignment, you will begin thinking about ways design might be able to address the needs you found during your user research stage.

What to do?

Conduct a brainstorming ideation session (plan to dedicate about 1-2 hours to this) where your team meets in the same location to brainstorm and sketch as many ideas as possible that could meet your users needs. Have your personas and your design requirements handy when you do the brainstorming session as a source of inspiration. You should plan on generating at least 4 sketches per member of the team (e.g., 20 sketches for a team of 5). Each sketch should represent 1 distinct idea on a single sheet of paper, either as a whole system, or as a part of a system. The neatness and quality of the sketch is not important, as long as the idea is clearly conveyed to others on the team. Ideas can range from mundane and practical to far out and crazy. Feel free to build off of each others' ideas as well during the brainstorming process.

Once you have exhausted all of your ideas, you must then critique and filter the sketches. Either immediately after or during a separate meeting, you should, as a team, go through the sketches one-by-one and discuss the strengths, weaknesses, feasibility, and originality of each of the ideas (similar to how we did this in class). Then, sort the sketches into piles ranging from most promising to least promising according to the criteria listed above. By the end of the critique session, you should have chosen the 3 most promising ideas. For each of these three ideas, re-sketch the idea more neatly (and perhaps with more details and annotations) and write a short statement (approximately 1 paragraph) explaining the idea, what its strengths and weaknesses are, and why these ideas are more promising than the others with regard to feasibility and originality. These three sketches should be presented in a way that they are suitable for inclusion in a portfolio.

What to hand in?

- Photocopies of all the sketches generated during the brainstorming session, compiled into a single, stapled document.
- A document containing the resketches of your three most promising ideas and the 1-paragraph written justification for why this was one of the more promising ideas. This document should be about 3 pages (1 per sketch – the sketch plus the paragraph) of 12 pt Times, single-spaced, with 1” margins.
How will it be graded?

- 17-20 Points – **Excellent** – The assignment is complete, and the three best ideas are well described and justified. The written document is professional, proofread, and well written.
- 12-16 Points – **Okay** – The assignment is complete, but the ideas are not well-justified or there are issues with quality.
- 0-11 Points – **Poor** – The assignment is incomplete, the ideas are not well-justified, and/or the document is unprofessional or unclear.