

Sketching Project

INFO 360 A

User-Centered Design

One of the goals of this course is to be able to think critically about existing interactive systems and interactions and come up with ways of improving them for end users. It is also good to practice sketching design ideas, so that you become more comfortable and more experienced. Good designers often keep a sketchbook to try out ideas and quickly visualize and document things floating around in their heads. Thus, for 6 weeks of the quarter, you will keep a sketchbook where you will think about objects or interactions in your daily life and sketch ideas for how they could be improved.

Each week, we will have a theme where you will do three sketches on products or interactive systems related to that theme. For example, for the theme “Food” you might redesign your toaster knobs, come up with a new recipe sorting tool, or an entire smart refrigerator. The idea can focus on an entire system or one specific interaction. If needed, you might sketch the current idea and how it’s broken, and then show how your idea can fix it. The focus is on *quantity* of sketches and not *quality*. Futuristic, creative, and original ideas are welcome and encouraged. The themes for each week will be as follows:

- **Week 3: Food** – cooking, appliances, eating, restaurants, food storage, etc.
- **Week 5: Sports and Recreation** – sports equipment, outdoor activities, sporting events, etc.
- **Week 4: Shopping** – finding items, purchasing, money, customer service, etc.
- **Week 6: Entertainment** – movies, video games, television, reading, museums, etc.
- **Week 7: Travel & Transportation** – air and car travel, bus travel, bicycling, etc.
- **Week 8: Family & Friends** – keeping in touch, childcare, eldercare, socializing, etc.

For each theme, a good starting point is to brainstorm a list of current objects you use and your frustrations in that space. Your A1 assignment might be a good starting place for ideas. Then, think of design questions that can help guide you toward what the problem is. Then, think of a solution to that question and quickly sketch it. The idea can be the first thing that pops into your head. If you only spend 10-15 minutes total time per sketch, it will be plenty of time. You are welcome to spend more time if you wish, but it is not necessary.

Every **Tuesday** for the six weeks listed above, you must bring your sketchbook to class with at least three new sketches related to the theme. *Each sketch must be on a single page, numbered, and dated.* The back of each sketch page should also *be left blank* to leave room for notes and critique signatures. You will break into small groups to discuss and critique each others’ sketches and get feedback on your ideas, and each critiquer will sign your sketches indicated that you’ve discussed them. Take good notes during these sessions, as you’ll need them for your reflection assignment. At the end of the quarter, you will write a short reflection upon your sketching experience, its usefulness in the generation of design ideas, and what you learned from feedback during the group critique sessions.

All sketches should be contained in a single, spiral bound sketchbook with blank, unlined pages. Each sketch should be on a separate page, with the back left blank. Number and date each of your sketches.