

Overview of Project 2

Project 2 will take seven weeks to complete. Serious grading will occur at two points: at Milestone 4 and at the very end. Compared to Project 1, you will have a greater choice of tools and you will be expected to develop your designs in much greater detail. Like Project 1, you will make weekly additions and revisions to what will become your Project Report.

For this project, each team will pick their own problem to work on.

Timeline

[due before class on Wed Mar 14 25]

Milestone 1: Identify candidate problem areas (this assignment)

[due on Wed Mar 22 25]

Milestone 2: Needfinding. Same as Milestone 1 from Project 1.

[due before class on Wed Apr 1]

Milestone 3: Approach thesis. Same as Milestone 2 from Project 1.

[due before class on Wed Apr 8]

Milestone 4: First UI prototypes; pitch. Will combine a few elements from Milestones 3 and 4 from Project 1. This time, however, we will have **external evaluators** provide feedback on the pitches. Serious grading will occur at this point.

[due before class on Wed Apr 15]

Milestone 5: Refined prototype of concept and UI. Based on what you've learned the week before, you will revise and refine your concept and prototype.

[due before class on Wed Apr 22]

Milestone 6: Field evaluation. You will start the final evaluation of your product. You will strive to make your evaluation as authentic as possible. Rather than bringing people to a laboratory setting to do artificial tasks, you will seek as authentic a setting as feasible so that you can get realistic feedback on the complete product.

[due before class on Wed Apr 29]

Milestone 7: Complete evaluation, refined design, final report. You will complete your field evaluation, revise your design and submit final report.

During reading period, we will schedule you to give your presentation. **External evaluators** will be present for the final presentations.

A very important note

We expect that some teams will deviate somewhat from the suggested timeline. That's fine. Two constraints:

1. You have to have a mature product concept at the end of Milestone 4.
2. You have to notify your TF as soon as you know that you are making changes to your timeline. Tell them what timeline you plan to follow. If they agree with the change, they will grade your progress with respect to this mutually agreed-upon timeline.

This assignment: Identify interesting problem areas

Summary

Find at least two candidate problem areas in which you may want to do your final project. **You can complete this step with or without your team.**

Create a team contract for your new team, once it's been announced.

Relevant resources

- Lecture on 3/4 on how to select a problem.
- [Examples of mission statements and design inspirations from prior years](#). Use with care -- don't get fixated on these particular examples, it may limit your ability to think outside the box!

Specific steps for this assignment

[Individual or Team] Identify possible problem areas to pursue for Project 2

Find 2-3 problem areas (not solutions!) that are likely to provide opportunities for impactful products. For each problem area, provide:

- A description of the problem area
- The population(s) you wish to target
- Design inspirations (examples of specific questions or problems, statistics)
- Major products/solutions already targeting this problem area (that's your competitive analysis); aim for about 3-5 diverse examples that show the true extent to which this problem area has been addressed by others. Keep your eyes open for non-mobile or non-technology solutions that exist in that space. For each, explain briefly what specific

problem the product addresses and how. Feel free to include screenshots or other illustrations if this helps to explain the product.

Take the time to discuss this as a team. Do online searches, talk to people. Next week you will do needfinding and develop a design brief based on what you learn from your informants. This week, you just want to identify a valuable problem area.

Two constraints on problem selection:

1. You cannot work on the problem from project 1.
2. Your target population has to be different from yourselves. At a minimum, do not design for college students or “young professionals”. Designing for Harvard profs, house deans, etc., barely meets the spirit of the Project. Try harder. It is okay if you want to build something that college students will also find useful, but they cannot be your primary target users. We want to make sure that--through the final project--you will make a serious attempt to see the world through the eyes of somebody different than yourselves. However, we want to keep it realistic: make sure that you target a population that you have easy access to. You will need access to a small number of people from your target population at least twice: during needfinding (next week’s assignment) and during the final evaluation. This does not mean you have to select demographics that you have access to on a daily basis--i.e. tourists or professors. Instead, it means that you could, and are encouraged to, reach out to more niche populations in the world around you that are accessible given a little bit of effort.

Last piece of advice: it is often a good idea to go after a specific problem of a small group of people as opposed to trying to fix a vaguer problem that affects a large group of people.

➤ **Submit** a document detailing at least two problem areas you might consider working on. This is a temporary document -- you will start working on your actual Project Report next week when you develop your need thesis.

[Team] Once teams have been announced, write your team contract

Here is a [reminder of the minimum set of questions](#) for you and your team to consider when writing your contract.

➤ **Submit** a copy of the signed contract as a separate document through the course Canvas site. All team members need to sign the contract.

Grading

- **Progress** (up to 20 pts). Has the team made reasonable progress?
- **Exceptional work** (up to 10 pts of extra credit). Design can excel in many ways, and often the best designs are unanticipated. To acknowledge and encourage this, each

assignment offers a few points for this truly exceptional work. Great design is also rare. So these points can only be achieved by at most 10% of submissions.

This week's studio

Choose 2-3 problem areas to present as a team for feedback during studio, to solicit feedback from your studio on the finalists. Aspire to make a final choice within 24 hours of that studio so that you can move forward to needfinding.