www.designwhine.com

DesignWhine

Digital Magazine for UI/UX Professionals

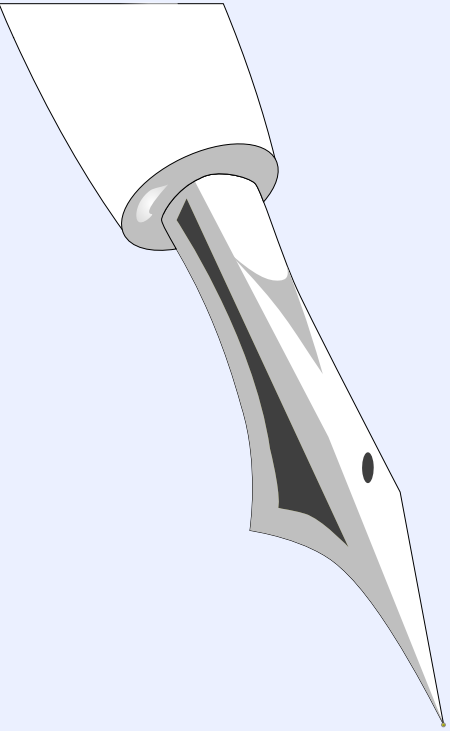
Issue # 03

BOOMER NOT OK!

HAVE WE FAILED OUR ELDERS AS UX DESIGNERS?

*'I want to grow **Design Buddies** to be the largest design community in the world'*

EXCLUSIVE: INTERVIEW WITH GRACE LING



EDITORIAL

Taking inclusive design beyond lip service

When it's time to replace my mom/dad's smart phone I get sleepless nights. Replacing their phones means hours of figuring out an easier way to explain to them how to export their contacts, WhatsApp messages, texts, apps to their new phone. It isn't easy for me as well, who's rather tech savvy, let alone my parents. This usually ends up in me doing it manually for them.

Not just phones, the digital experiences around us are quite unfriendly to our elders. We hold conferences, write articles about inclusive design but never really make efforts to make them truly inclusive.

The few and far between articles or conferences that do shed light on making experiences pleasant for the older population do so due to this demographic hitting a really high number in the upcoming years. That's not really inclusive, it's trying to tap on a goldmine of users for sheer profit.

I'd argue our elders deserve to be counted as an active user set and thus included in all digital experience designs, especially something as ordinary as smart phones. Only then could we say our design is really inclusive. ☹

RAJAT AGARWAL
Editor-in-Chief

Bring your design and coding skills to the next level!

Designing User Interfaces

+UI Styles ebook included (a $25 value)

The most comprehensive UI book there is! Over 490 pages of tips, tricks, knowledge and more, so you can bring your projects to the next level. Perfect for designers and startup founders!

Use the code DESIGNWHINE to get 20% off!

designingui.com ›

Frontend Unicorn

Download 40 pages FREE and get a 30% discount when we launch

Always wanted to be a unicorn developer? Become one with this magical book. How to understand design, master the business side, freelance or work a steady job and most importantly HOW TO *learn*.

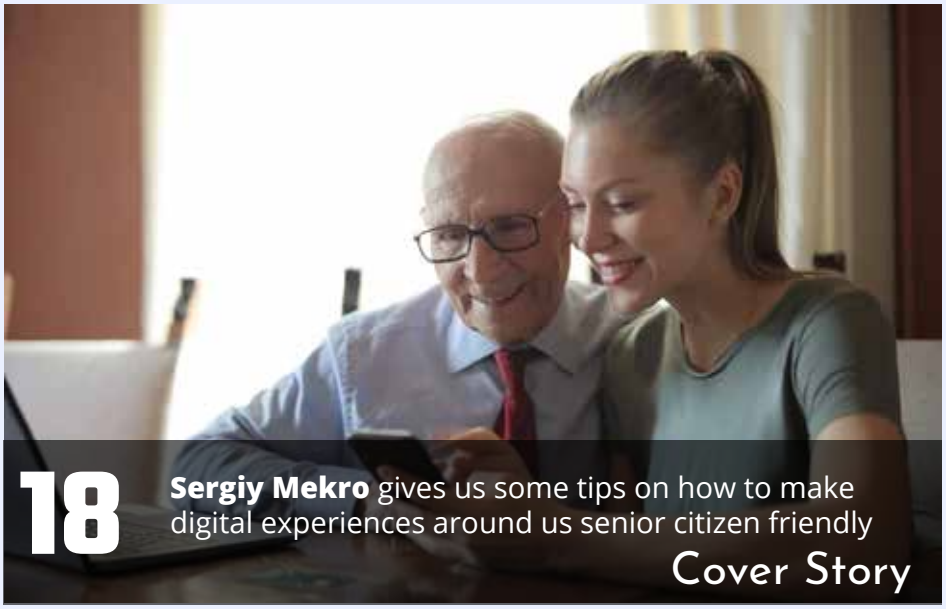
frontendunicorn.com ›

FREE YouTube Courses

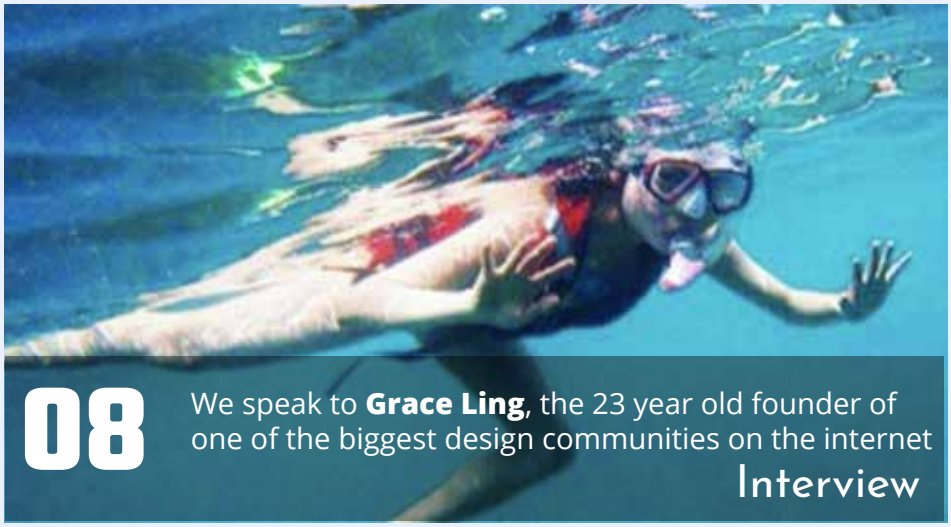
→ YouTube.com/c/malewiczhype

CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE



18 **Sergiy Mekro** gives us some tips on how to make digital experiences around us senior citizen friendly
Cover Story



08 We speak to **Grace Ling**, the 23 year old founder of one of the biggest design communities on the internet
Interview

DEPARTMENTS

02 EDITORIAL

06 DESIGN DESK

Onsi Kahlaoui takes us on a tour of his amazing design desk which he lovingly shared with his four children..

30 ULTIMATE UX CHALLENGE

Can you redesign to make Craigslist.org visually appealing? There are prizes to be won if you're prototype is popular

31 SATIRE

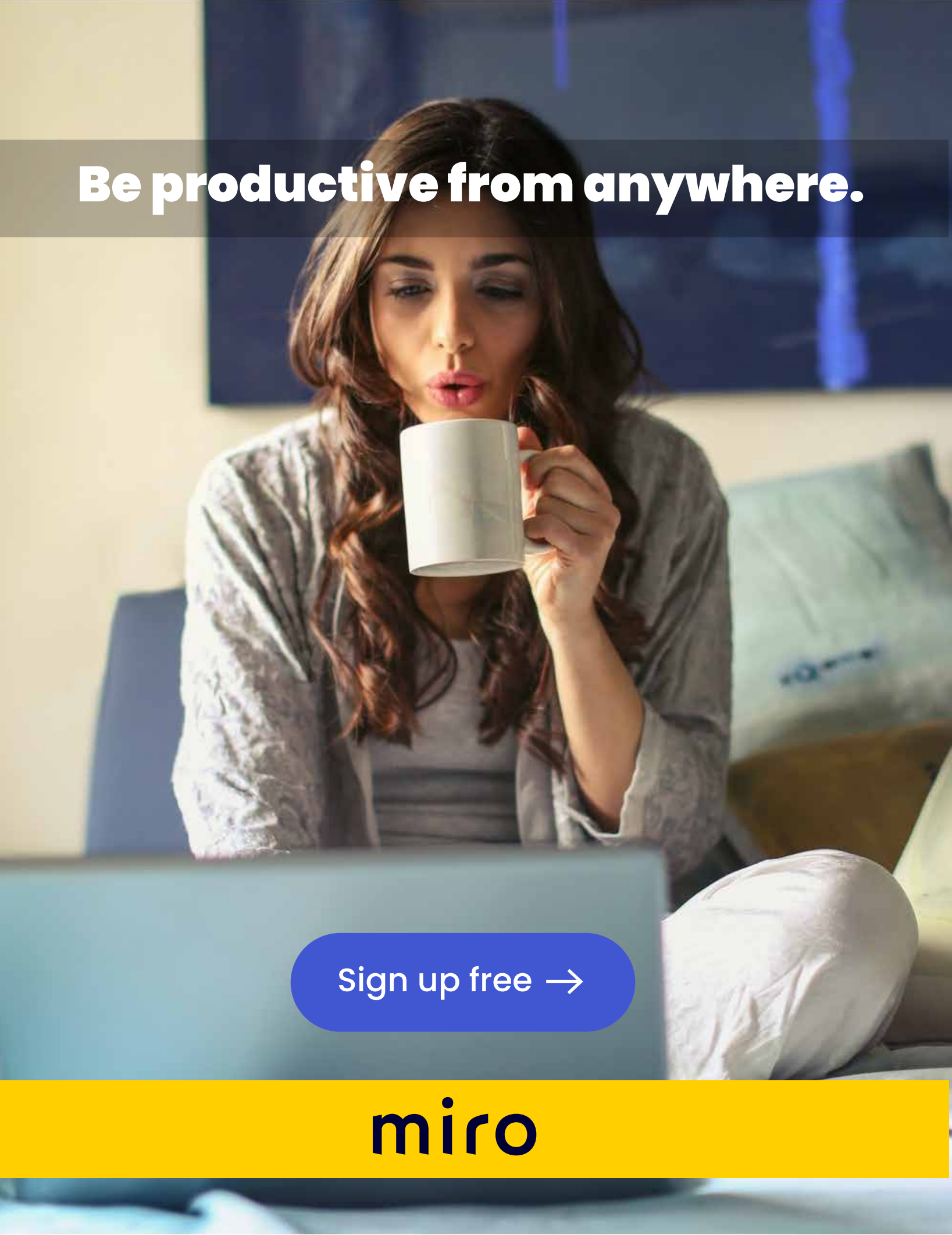
When balancing business requirements and user needs makes you a performing circus jumbo..

Connect with us

in / DesignWhine ✉ / hello@designwhine.com

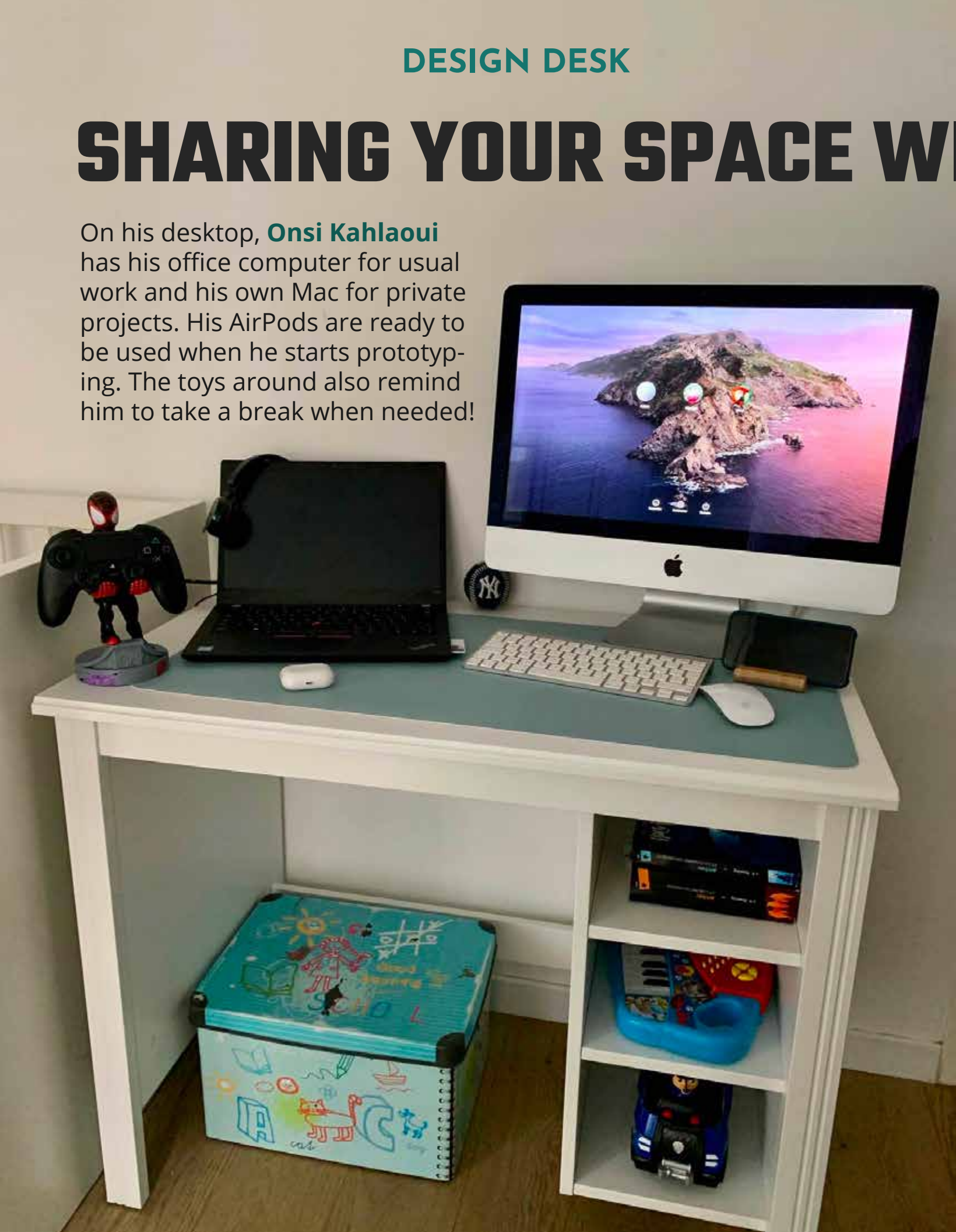
Cover concept and design by Rajat Agarwal

© 2020 DesignWhine. All rights reserved. It is prohibited to re-publish content from DesignWhine without permission of the authors or the editors.
Unless otherwise specified, all illustrations and pictures accompanying the articles in the magazine are derivatives of copyright-free vectors and pictures from websites like Pexels.com and PublicDomainVectors.org
Some features and articles have been republished by permission of the authors.


Be productive from anywhere.
Sign up free →
miro

SHARING YOUR SPACE WI

On his desktop, **Onsi Kahlaoui** has his office computer for usual work and his own Mac for private projects. His AirPods are ready to be used when he starts prototyping. The toys around also remind him to take a break when needed!



ITH KIDS

Onsi Kahlaoui was working in big open spaces till he had to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic in Paris. After first trying the living room which was too noisy at the time kids came back from school, he finally finished locked in their room where no one could enter during working hours...

A happy dad of four and a UX designer at Societe Generale group, **Onsi** has a background in banking domain. He switched to the wonderful world of UX just about a year ago!

INTERVIEW

AMAZING

BY RAJAT AGARWAL

GRACE

HOW SWEET THE ACHIEVE-MENTS..

The supremely talented **Grace Ling** spills the beans on her childhood, journey and Design Buddies in a candid interview with DesignWhine

It's a monotonous Sunday afternoon as I log in to the video conferencing client for an interview. My twenty three year old guest has a very inspiring journey of getting into design from offbeat career fields and has faced a lot of hardships her way. She is the founder of one of the largest design communities in the world - Design Buddies - and a UX designer at Electronic Arts. I had been reading about my guest on the net, stalking her on LinkedIn and following her other social media presence for a while and was prepared for a grim discussion around her ventures and the struggles she'd had to face as a student in high school. Alex Cornell's 'I'm on hold' played in the background as I waited for her in the call.

A couple minutes later, a vivacious girl enters the meeting room with a chime and greets me with the most cheerful smile ever. My apprehension and the preparedness for a stern, serious interview vanish in an instant.

The most fun and laid-back interview with Grace Ling has just begun.

So, Grace, everyone knows your journey post Design Buddies. Tell me something about your childhood, your family, where you were born, and how you got into doing all the things that you've done?

Grace: Yeah, of course. So I was born and raised in San Jose, California, right in Silicon Valley, right

in the middle of like, a lot of engineering, and law tech and stuff. Growing up with both parents as professors, they always encouraged me to pursue higher education and get a PhD as an engineer. But I never imagined myself doing any of that. I've loved drawing anime and manga, drawing comics, and playing games. And I was never very studious, I'd just draw, and kind of be like the class clown and disrupt everyone. I never really cared about my grades. I was like a random kid who screamed in class being cheeky and goofy with everyone else around you.

My parents had to bribe me to actually try and school and the only thing that would motivate me to actually try was video games. So that's what kind of got me into gaming.

This is even more amazing. Because looking at the tonnes of achievement you have in studies, which you were not even interested in initially.

Grace (with a chuckle): Yeah. And then in high school, I ran cross country and track, and I got really competitive and running. And then I had a lot of dreams to run in the Olympics one day. Around the same time, I started my blog on Tumblr called *IRunGrace-Pace*. I was actually bullied a lot as a kid as well, just because a lot of kids in my middle school and high school were really into engineering, medicine, science and all that while I was just into games and different than everyone else. And so I was bullied really badly because of that. The blog that I started, talking about my struggles being bullied and how I was left out on my team and overcoming that, kind of went viral. And I got

My parents had to bribe me to actually try and school and the only thing that would motivate me to actually try was video games

RAPID FIRE WITH GRACE

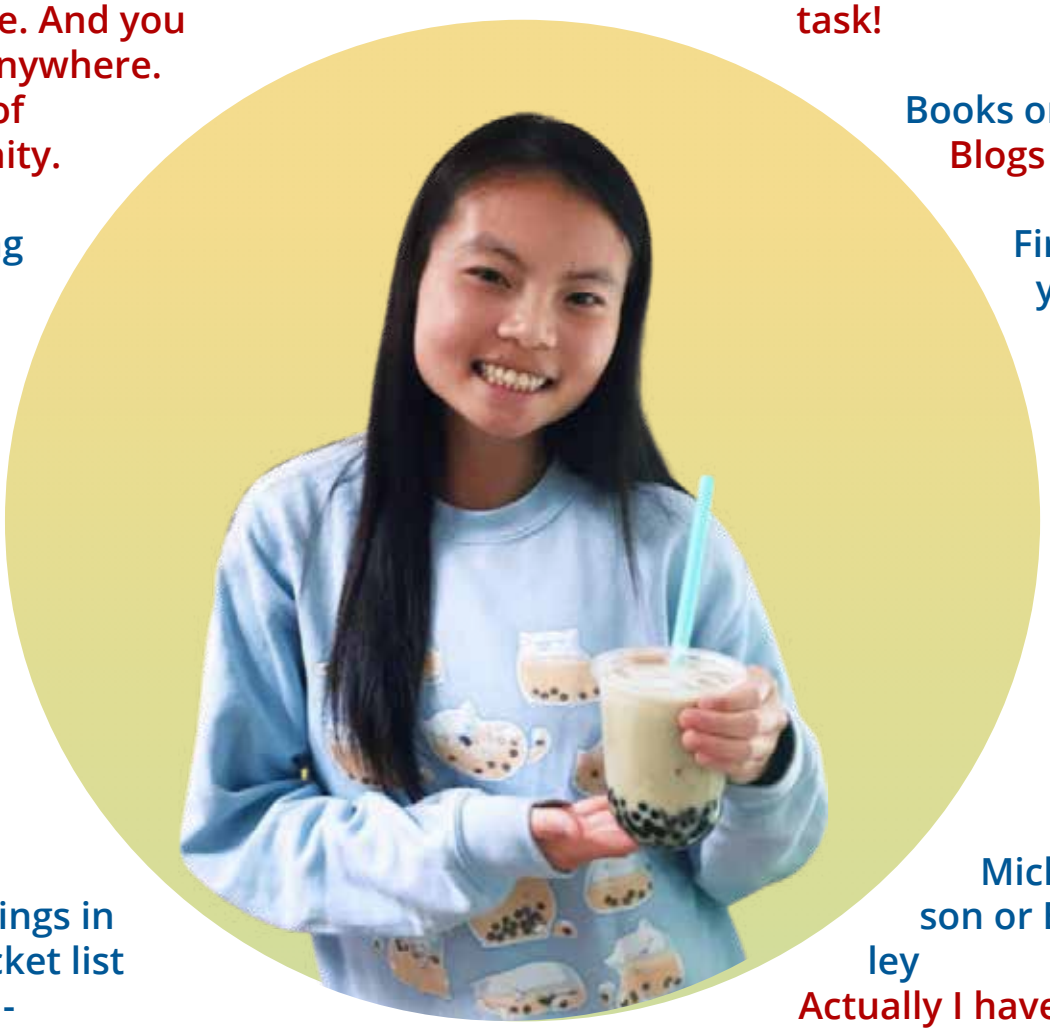
Apart from being a bunny, if you could be any other animal you'd be -
I'll be a bird so I can fly. And I know how to like commute. And you can fly anywhere. So type of community.

One thing you don't like about UI UX -
I don't like it when scope changes without reason

Three things in your bucket list for 2021 -
Graduate, grow Design Buddies to be the largest in the world, get promoted at EA

LinkedIn or Instagram-
That's hard! LinkedIn

Morning person or night person -
Night person all the way!



You're addicted to -
LinkedIn!

Idea of a perfect day -
Perfect day would be I guess to start with a hike or like a run of some sort. I just like working

Videos or podcasts -
Podcasts so I can multi-task!

Books or blogs -
Blogs

First app you use in the morning -
I look at my notes on Linke-dIn!

Michael Jack-son or Elvis Pres-ley
Actually I haven't listened to both of them. I don't much listen to music

a lot of followers through that. That got me into blogging. And then in college, I studied, I came into college as a bioengineering major, something I had never thought of, because I was interested in running.
I was also convinced by my peers that I should study engineering. Influenced by that as well I took bioengineering because I wanted to learn how to biohack myself to run faster. That's really fashionable, running, and I want to learn the ins and outs of a human body. So I could optimise myself to run faster.

You have a knack for juxtaposing different career paths, right? So, you got into bioengineering to use that to become a better athlete. That's amazing! How did

you get into design after that?

Grace: I was a junior in college a third year undergrad, and I decided to go into game development, virtual reality game design development. And then I got an internship making VR games to train surgeons doing surgery at Intuitive Surgical. I thought I wanted to go into software engineering just because I like STEM. I graduated from college in June of 2019 but didn't really know what I wanted to do after that, and continuing my Master's in computer science and engineering. And it was then that I kind of got into design. I found like this online design class and really enjoyed it and decided to pursue that.

Awesome! So tell me a bit about your family.

Grace: So I have a younger sister who's three years younger than me. She always like, got really good grades. And I was the one who only drew without any focus on studies.

You've changed career paths, like thrice. How do we really know that you're not going to be switching again and that your heart really lies in UI/UX?

Grace: I don't plan on switching. I feel the most happy now. The other paths that I tried like medicine, research and software engineering I soon realised that I didn't like being in those paths. But after like two internships as a full time role in design, this is my final destination!

Great! So do you

still hold the dreams of running the Olympics one day?

Grace: One day, one day, I was actually supposed to run to the Southeast Asian Games representing Singapore but then I got injured so that didn't happen. But maybe one day!

Grace, what is this obsession with bunnies? How deep does this rabbit love go?

Grace: Really deep actually! I've always liked bunnies. I just feel like it just reflects my personality. I just like bunnies because I feel like it's a reflection of me.

In UI/UX, we talk about discovering users' pain-points, right? What would you say some of the pain points of UI/UX designers are?

Grace: Yeah, I feel like UI/UX design is relatively new. And a lot of people are getting into it right now. And just like how I was unsure on how to go about it, because design is like, a way of thought and not something that can be taught much. And so, getting into

UI/UX is tough.

And also in terms of design communities. From my personal experience, design communities aren't very welcoming if one doesn't have a design degree. When I was enrolled in a boot camp, people didn't take me seriously. I thought they kind of just looked down upon me. And so that's how I created Design Buddies. And I founded it with a mission to make it inclusive to anyone interested in learning design. Ever since the launch in April 2020, we have about 15,000 members now. And I realised that a lot of people felt the same way in other design communities - judged. So I think I solved other people's problems as well by solving my own.

One of your projects was Selfie while you were a bio engineering student, right? A virtual reality game which shed light upon the gender gap in STEM. Do you think such a gender gap or bias exists in the design world as well?

Grace: Interesting. I personally don't really know and I haven't looked at any stats. So I don't really know about that. But I do see a lot more females in design compared to STEM. Like my classes in computer science were like, a lot more males compared to females. But in my design class there were mostly females. I definitely feel like it is a good and diverse field but I haven't personally experienced it.

Okay, so what inspires Grace to be a better designer. Do personal experiences inspire her designs?

Grace: Yeah, I just like improving people's lives, I guess I feel like I'm really passionate about, like, I really like games and community, and what actual-

..that's how I created Design Buddies. And I founded it with a mission to make it inclusive to anyone interested in learning design.

ly comes from actually being bullied a lot growing up. And that's why I'm really passionate about building inclusive communities that are safe spaces for people. So they will experience the same thing. So I've been on the other side and know how it feels. And so that's what drives me to keep rolling on. And we're also really interested in games specifically, because I love games.

Great. So, last question, what do you think is the role of art and aesthetics in UX design?

Grace: Both. So art is just like expressing oneself and design is like solving problems. And I definitely feel like the user experience had a design like tapping into that human aspect that art expressive acts, but it's important, but it's also important to making sure that it's actually solving the users problem. So I definitely think both art and science have an important role because of that user experience and the human aspect to it.

Thank you so much for the interview. It was lovely talking to you!

Grace: Thank you for having me. It was lovely speaking to you as well.

are you a designer with a story?

we're interested in getting you heard.

mystory@designwhine.com

IN SEARCH OF AN ELDER-FRIENDLY WORLD

It is expected that the number of people over the age of sixty will more than double by 2050 and triple by 2100. Globally, the group of people over sixty is growing more rapidly than any other demographic. Yet digital experiences around us continue to alienate this growing demographic..

H OF
-FRIENDLY

BY SERGIY MEKRO

As people age, there are certain physiological and cognitive changes that are almost inevitable. And while many who are over sixty have been around technology almost their entire adult lives, those physiological and cognitive changes need to be compensated for.

Nevertheless, there are also older adults who aren't as comfortable or familiar with technology in general, or more specific things like mobile devices. They need incentives to engage and may have vastly different usage patterns for things like apps compared to their younger counterparts.

As the population ages, though, more "seniors" will be comfortable with technology and only need compensation for actual physiological and cognitive changes. UX and UI designers need to understand these changes in order to effectively master interface design for older adults.

Visual Elements for Users with Impaired Senses

Vision loss is the most common disability reported in adults in the United States, with an estimated one in six people over the age of 70 reporting vision impairment. It's vital that UI designers consider visual accessibility when creating websites that are likely to be accessed by older adults. And considering that there are over 75 million baby boomers in the US (the youngest of which are turning 55 this year), it's likely that at least some of them are visiting pretty much any website online.

As people age, a number of changes commonly happen to their vision. Many older adults use reading glasses or opt for much larger font sizes when given the option.

given the option. Shades of blue can also appear faded to seniors, potentially reducing contrast when blue elements are used in a design. Overall, color contrast should be increased in websites and apps that cater to older adults.

Text and button sizes should be kept large. Basically, anything that's meant to be read or clicked should be scaled up. Fonts should be a minimum of 16px (some sources report 12px is sufficient, but larger is better in this case). Although the ultimate solution is to make it easy for users to increase or decrease font sizes at will. Sans serif typefaces are often preferred for on-screen readability. And any website or web app should be tested with a screen reader before being made public.

Icons are another area of special concern for older adults. Icons should be labeled with text whenever possible. This makes the purpose of the icons crystal clear for everyone. While many older adults are just as tech savvy as the generations that

While many older adults are just as tech savvy as the generations that came after them, there is quite a number of those others who are not

there are others who are not. Therefore, making sure that any and all text is easily interpreted is essential. Those who don't need the helpful text aren't likely to be offended by it, but those who need it might get lost if it's not included.

When video or audio content is vital for interaction, it's important to include subtitles. This is good practice anyway since people are often in situations where they want to access video or audio information without having to disturb those around them or use headphones.

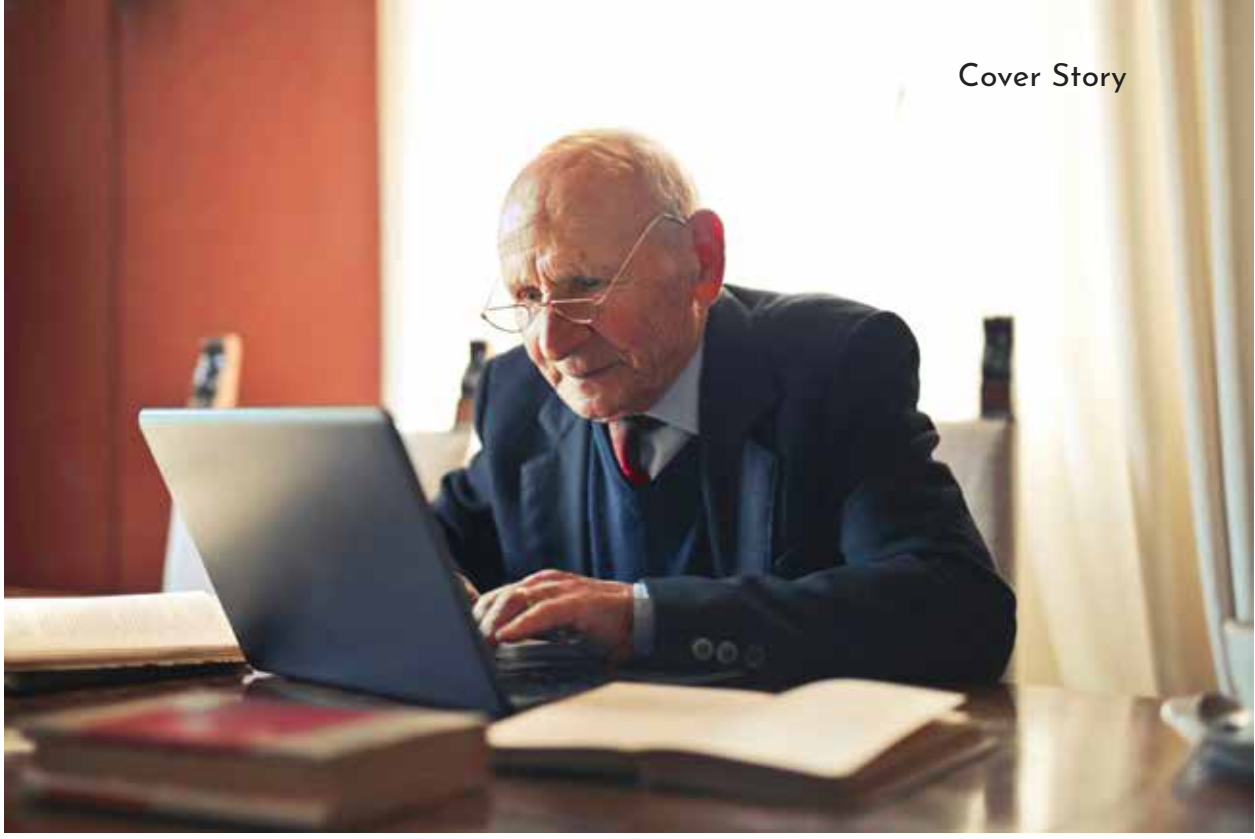
Improving Interaction for Older Adults

Interaction is fundamental to the user experience. Visual cues are often vital to those interactions. For older adults, especially, visual cues need to be clear, easy to decipher, and easy to interact with. But it goes beyond just making sure visual cues are clear. Every part of the interaction needs to be kept easy to understand and complete. This is especially true as the target demographic age increases since motor skills tend to decline with age, making things like complex gestures more challenging.

Besides common UI design best practices, there are a few other areas designers should pay special attention to.

While Apple's Human Interface Guidelines recommend that buttons be at least 9.6mm when measured diagonally (44 x 44 pixels on an iPad), increasing that size for apps and websites commonly used by older people improves usability. In general, wherever there is a "recommended" size or distance specified, designers should view that as the absolute bare minimum for any interface targeting older people.

Gestures are another area where seniors can sometimes stumble, especially when they're new to touchscreen technology. There are a number of interaction patterns seniors may have that aren't common in younger generations. These include things like typing with one hand, particularly on a mobile device (don't assume that



older generations don't know how to type on a regular keyboard; many took typing classes in school).

When designing for older adults, particularly those over the age of 70, keep gestures simple to perform. Forget complex gestures that require more than two fingers (those can be a pain to master regardless of age). Simple horizontal, vertical, or diagonal movement is fine, as these are all natural motions. But avoid incorporating gestures with quick movements, difficult positioning, or multiple gestures that require the use of both hands or more than two fingers. All of these can be frustrating to even tech-savvy older users as motor function declines.

Issues with Memory and Concentration

While not every older adult has issues with memory and concentration, there are cognitive declines that happen with age for many people. The speed at which seniors process information slows with age. They can still complete the same tasks, but it may take them a bit longer than it did when they were younger.

Because of this, older adults need a bit more time to absorb the information they're presented with and take appropriate action. Where this becomes a real problem is when presented with complex tasks that require quick intake and processing of information in order to make decisions.

Different types of memory also decline with age, including the ability to remember to do things in the future (this is where app notifications can be really helpful), and their working memory (the ability to retain and recall information for a short period of time, like remembering a phone number long enough to dial it).

There are a few ways designers can take these limitations into account when de signing for seniors to ensure that these shortfalls are compensated for.

Gradually introducing product characteristics—progressive disclosure and minimalist design—can help prevent cognitive overload from slower mental processing speeds in older adults. Designers should also ensure that older people's attention isn't being divided by multiple tasks or parts of a screen.

Memory issues can be overcome through things like providing clear feedback on progress and reminding users of the end goal. Avoiding splitting tasks into multiple screens if they require memory of previous actions is also helpful. Even familiar actions can be made more user-friendly by including reminders and tooltips.

Motivation

While younger generations often integrate technology seamlessly into their lives (they've grown up using it, so it's a natural extension of their day-to-day activities), older adults use technology a bit differently.

It's important to note that older adults tend to prefer tablets to smartphones. It makes sense, considering the differences in screen sizes and ease of use

Applications that aren't useful are generally neglected by seniors. Even with notifications, if an older adult doesn't find an application to be useful, they're likely to ignore it for days, weeks, or even months.

However, if they see

the benefits of using an app or website, they'll be motivated to use it regularly and to respond to notifications. While gamification and similar motivators work well with younger adults, they are often not as effective on seniors. Instead, making sure an app is useful and easy to use is the best way to ensure that the app will be used by them consistently.

It's important to note that older adults tend to prefer tablets to smartphones. It makes sense, considering the differences in screen sizes and ease of use. According to some studies, older adults are the primary users of tablets and adopted them earlier than younger users.

Social Factors

In general, older adults prefer to connect with smaller, more intimate groups of people. On social media, for example, they may limit connections to close friends and family members, rather than the large, sprawling connections many younger people have (like the friend-of-a-friend they've only ever talked to via Facebook comments). At the same time, isolation can be an issue, so making those smaller networks more meaningful is key.

Depending on the type of app being used, seniors may also have trepidations about privacy and security. For example, when talking about their health, they may be much more selective than younger people about who they share data with. They may be more open with sharing things like photos or news.

At the same time, privacy settings can be challenging if they're not fully tested with users from all age groups and demographics.

Seniors can end up sharing information publicly without realizing it or struggling to limit who can see things they share on sites like Facebook.

To best serve older adults, designers should make sure that privacy and security settings are easy to manage. They should also strive to be transparent in how information is used, and be forthcoming about any data breaches to ensure trust is maintained among older users.

Seniors and Technology Experience

In order for any user to comfortably use an application, they must be able to quickly and easily get from point A (entry point) to point B (where they perform their task). That is why simple navigation through the user interface is so important. Additionally, keeping the focus on the task at hand and limiting exposure to secondary functions improves usability.

When designing for older adults, it's important to make sure that navigation is not only simple to use, but that proper onboarding exists to introduce users to functions they might not be familiar with. While younger users who grew up with technology integrated into their daily lives might be more than willing to just dive in and start exploring an app or interface they've never seen before, many older users are hesitant to do the same.

In terms of UX, doing things like keeping the navigational structure simple is a good place to start. Strictly adhering to usability best practices—minimizing sublevels in navigation, keeping menus to a single function, etc.—is a good place to start when design-

ing user interfaces for an aging population. Keeping the "return" function and the "home" navigation readily accessible serves as a sort of safe point on the interface, too.

Many of the things that make apps more usable for all users are particularly important for older adults. Following best practices and accessibility guidelines will go a long way toward making any app more senior-friendly.

Getting Help

Older adults may be more likely to turn to an app's help functions or tutorials when they run into problems. Therefore, designers should make sure these features are easy for users to find.

While younger users may be more likely to skip onboarding screens, older users will likely pay more attention to them, reading all instructions before clicking. It is vital to include contextual tips throughout an app that are both automatically shown the first time a feature is accessed, and are available at later points when the user requests them.

One thing to keep in mind, particularly when designing apps specifically for older adults: be careful to use clear, objective, and educational language without being condescending or patronizing. Older users who aren't familiar with technology often already feel insecure while using it; a condescending message will only cause further insecurity and may turn them off to using the app altogether.

Conclusion

Older adults don't need a ton of compensation to feel comfortable using an application. Following best practices and usability guidelines, in general, will go a long way toward making products accessible to all users, regardless of age or any physical or cognitive impairments (age-related or otherwise).

Designers should make additional compensations for older adults in appli cations specifically geared toward them—things like larger fonts, more intuitive interface elements, clear wording, and helpful tips for functionality—it will only improve their user experience.

MEET THE AUTHOR

A self educated visual designer from Ukraine and the author of the cover story of this issue of *DesignWhine*, **Sergiy Mekro**, started as a freelancer in 2008. He has founded a boutique digital agency and is also an art director.

At the moment his biggest passion is user experience design, working on very complex and data heavy saas systems. He has studied construction engineering, which he believes helps a lot building logical and practical interfaces.

For *DesignWhine*, he shares his personal opinion on the subject of designing for senior citizens.

With all the emphasis given on accessibility and inclusivity, why do you think the digital interfaces around us are not older-adults friendly?

As many popular mobile and web apps, specifically the social ones, are developed gradually, I can see that eldery audience doesn't get along with it. From a user experience standpoint, facebook is pretty complicated and confusing. Other popular digital products such as instagram, snapchat and tik tok also do a poor job thinking about the needs of a broad audience.

How could designers keep interfaces less complicated for senior citizens?

Talking about user experience approach, the majority of visual designers do not consider elderly audience as a main target group, often not mentioning that that group is the most profitable one. Modern trends are moving to more logical and simple interfaces, focusing more over content, rather than the aesthetics. The most constructive approach in creating easy to use digital products can be defined rather simply: function over beauty.

In your opinion, do you think in the coming years older-adults would become more tech-savvy or will unfriendly interfaces around us alienate them from technology further?

As time goes by, more and more users are becoming older, and their needs definitely need to be taken into consideration. The majority of people are used to popular digital products. So my advice for designers, who are creating new stuff will be to follow general principles, that are already adopted by big and popular web and mobile apps. 😟

Sergiy Mekro - A self-taught designer, now an art director, from Ukraine

ULTIMATE DW CHALLENGE

USABILITY AND AESTHETICS

Craigslist.org is a classified advertisement website that is designed to assist users in buying and selling products and services.

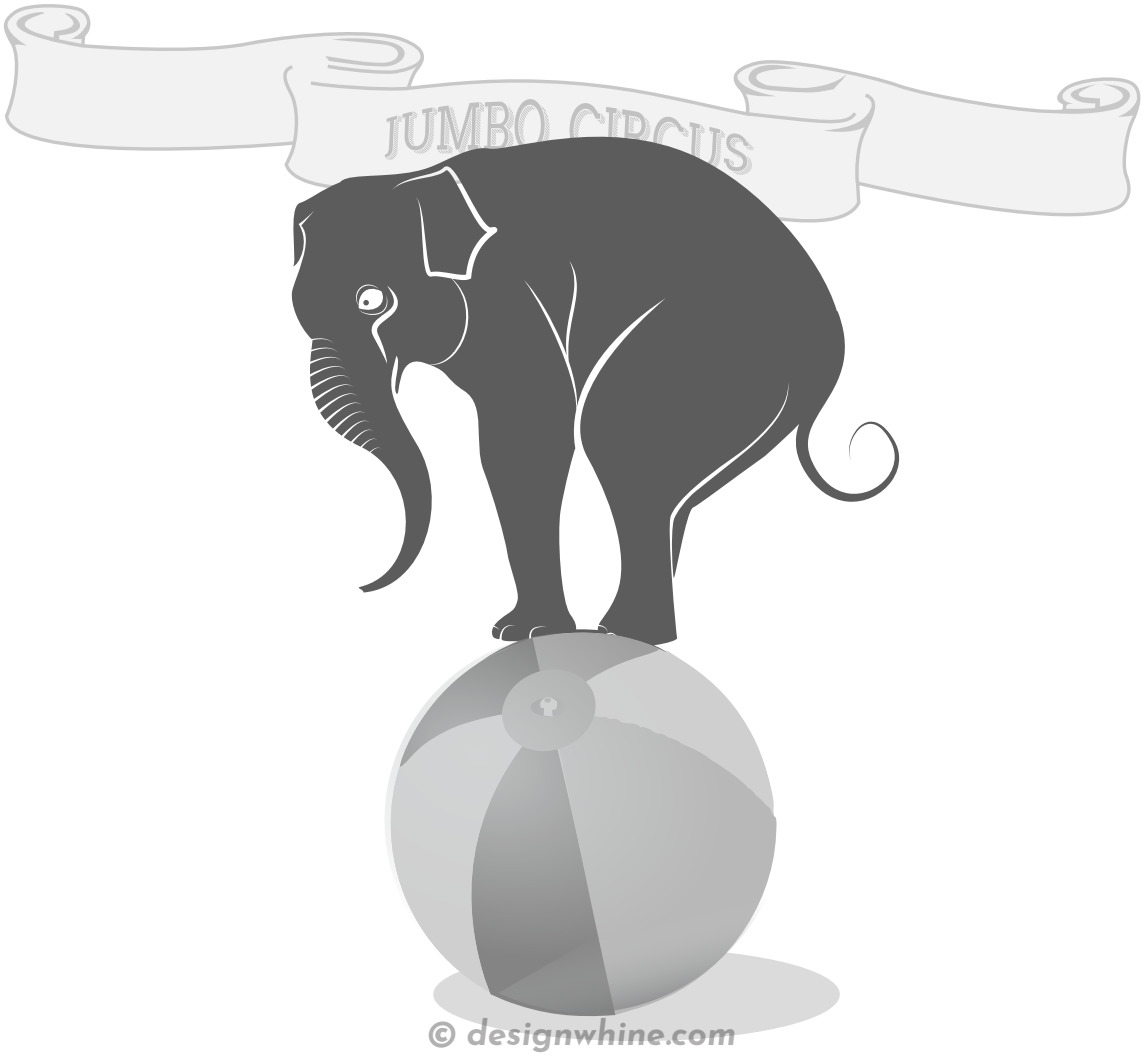
Initially, the outdated but highly usable design worked as it only focuses on the primary tasks of the user. Gradually, the retro aesthetics became part of the brand.

However, the design could be transformed into something that visually appealing and modern without losing out on the usability.

Can you redesign the homepage of Craigslist treating the current one as a wireframe?

*Post your mockup/prototype link on your LinkedIn profile and tag **@DesignWhine Magazine**. All popular posts with more than 99 reactions all time on the post would win an **Amazing Goodie** each!*

SATIRE



*"He could be an excellent UX designer -
balancing business requirements and user needs!"*

We need your ❤

DesignWhine was born and continues to grow in moonlight.

Its a small independent venture run by a handful of team members after office hours. A lot of hardwork and resources go into it’s production but we do it for the love of the UI/UX community.

If you enjoyed reading this issue, we’d request you to please share it with your professional network on LinkedIn to support us.

Follow us on LinkedIn