

Interacting with the games we love

UX & UI in games

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This lecture

Recap!

- What is UX?
- What is UI?
- Different types of UIs
- How UI varies on different platforms
- UX design principles
- User Research

Next time:

- Onboarding (tutorial)
- Accessibility in small projects

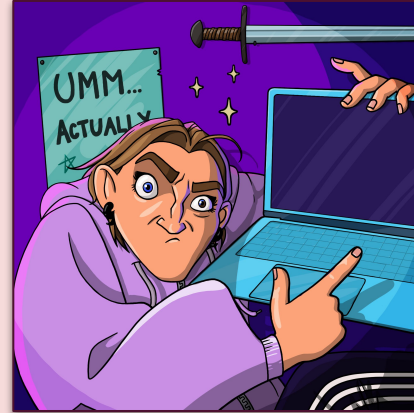


Who am I?

Anna Högberg Jenelius
Any pronouns

Indie Game Developer/Consultant
Games since 2011
Indie/consultant since 2015
Valiant Game Studio since 2017
Credit on 50+ games

Based in Stockholm, Sweden



DOUBLE
MOOSE



CULT

MAGINATION
STUDIOS



Climate
re:play



krillbite
STUDIO

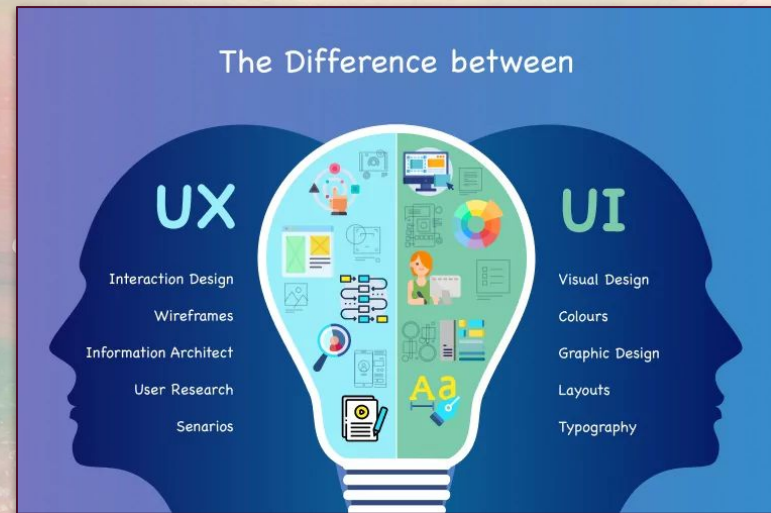
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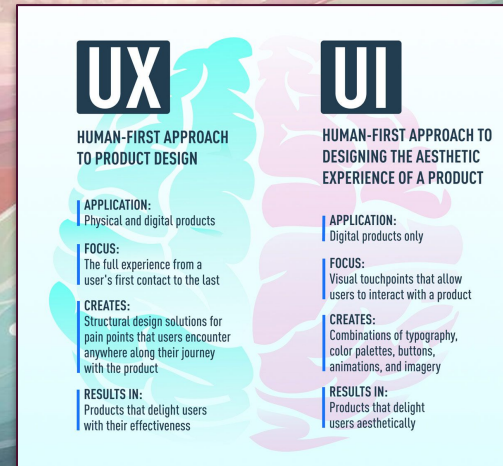
WIP

What is UX?

- User Experience
- The full experience of the user, from first contact to the last:
 - How is the player introduced to new mechanics?
 - How does the player interact with the game?
 - How do they know if they are playing as intended or not?
 - Do they know how to improve?
 - How does the game minimize frustration for the player?
 - Accessibility, allowing anyone to play.
- Arguably, UI is *part of the UX*
 - *Example:* Bad color choices can make the game hard to play
 - *Example:* Some fonts are easier to read than others
- An integral part is User Research



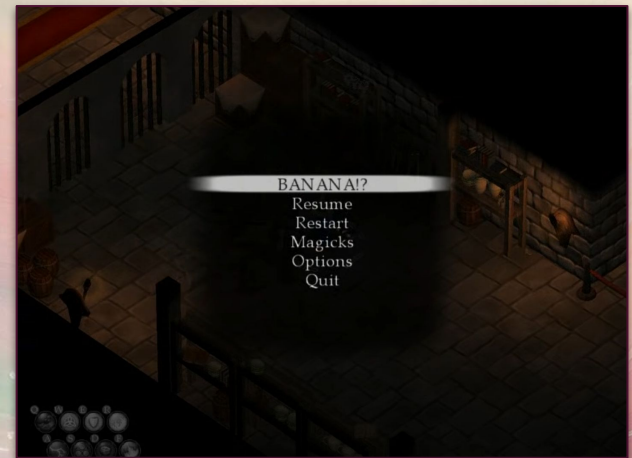
<https://www.eskimo.co.uk/ux-design/>



<https://careerfoundry.com/en/blog/ux-design/the-difference-between-ux-and-ui-design-a-laymans-guide/>

What is UI?

- User Interface
- We use it to
 - Display information
 - Interact with the game
- Many different types of UI!



Magicka 1

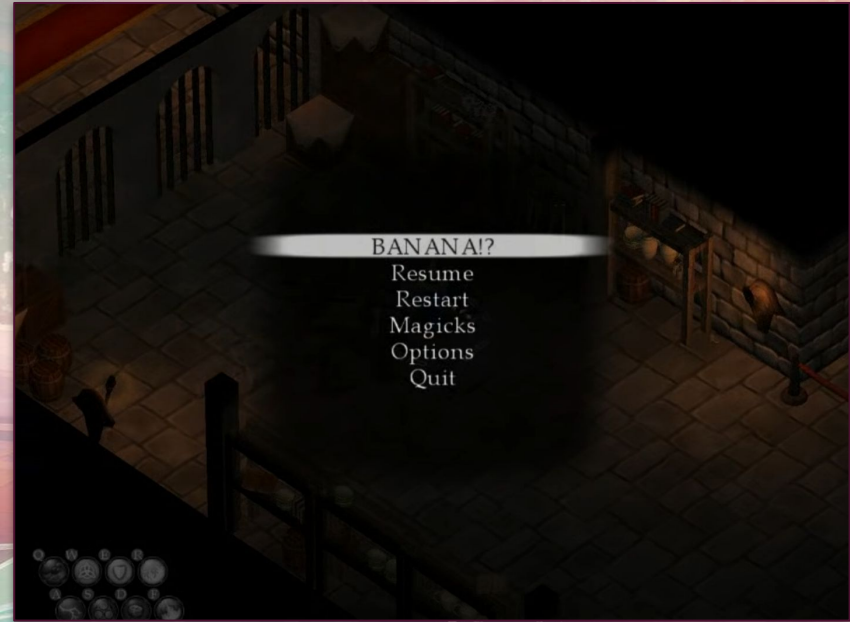


Baldur's Gate 3

Menus



World of Warcraft



Magicka 1

Head-up Display (HUD)

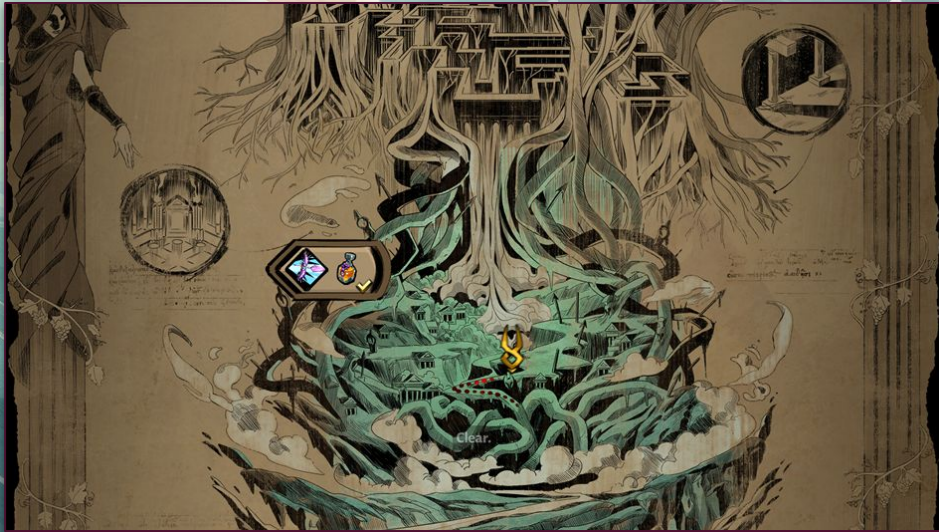


Grand Theft Auto V



Minecraft

Maps



Hades



Sea of Thieves

Inventory



Valheim



Baldur's Gate 3

Dialogue

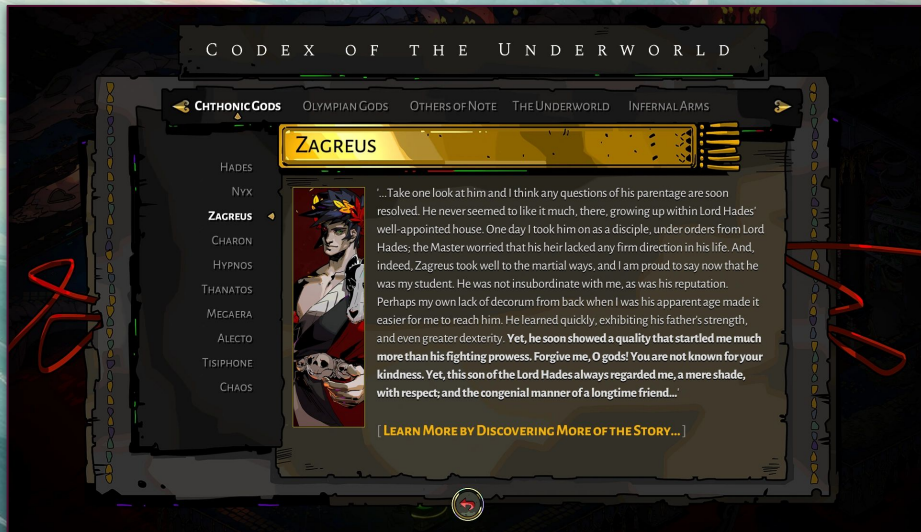


Dream Daddy

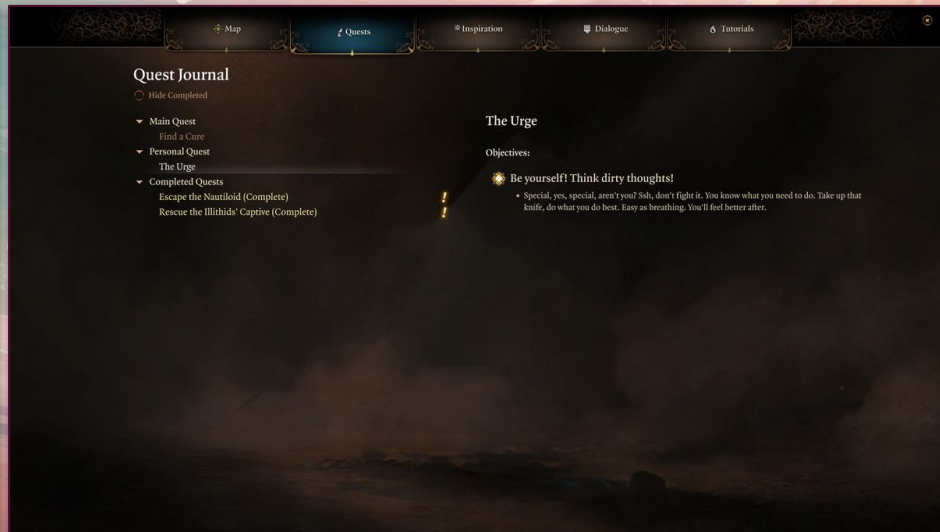


Bioshock Infinite

Codex/logs



Hades



Baldur's Gate 3

Loading screen



Elden Ring



The Sims 4

...etc!

How does the UI relate to the game world?

		<i>Is the representation visualized in the game space?</i>	
		No	Yes
<i>Is the representation existing in the fictional world?</i>	No	<i>non-diegetic</i>	<i>spatial</i>
	Yes	<i>meta</i>	<i>diegetic</i>

How does the UI relate to the game world?



Baldur's Gate 3

Is the representation visualized in the game space?

No

Yes



The Last of Us

No

non-diegetic

spatial

Is the



FIFA 23

meta

diegetic



Sea of Thieves

Platform-specific UIs

- Different platforms have different requirements
- Keep in mind while designing!
- PC vs. console
 - Certification
 - Interaction
- Can't hover on consoles, how to layer and display information?



Console UIs

- Some types of UI “feel” better on different platforms
 - Lists on console
 - Grids on PC
- If you use the same UI design, players may call it “a bad port”



The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

Mobile UIs

- No hovering
- Large buttons
- Hand may cover screen
- Consider round buttons over square
- Right-handed use most common, most used buttons on right side
 - Left-handed layout as option?



Stardew Valley

VR

- Still a lot of experimentation
- How to know where the player is looking?
- Tactile
- Can use rays from controller



Beat Saber

TL;DR

- UX is the entire experience of the player from start to finish
- UIs come in many different forms
- Some part of the game world, others only visible to player
- UI needs to be adjusted to the platform





Questions?











Break



UX principles

- Design principles: Heuristics
- Nielsen:
 - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/>
- Note that games may differ from other products
- Let's go through some I find helpful!

10 Usability Heuristics

 Visibility of System Status	 Match Between System & the Real World	 User Control & Freedom	 Consistency & Standards	 Error Prevention
 Recognition Rather than Recall	 Flexibility & Efficiency of Use	 Aesthetic & Minimalist Design	 Help Users Recognize, Diagnose & Recover from Errors	 Help & Documentation

Interaction Design Foundation
[interaction-design.org](https://www.interaction-design.org)

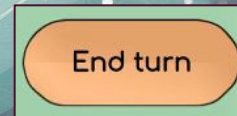
Visibility of System Status

- Show what the game is currently doing
- When the player acts, give immediate feedback
- Make the player's understanding of the game match what is in fact going on



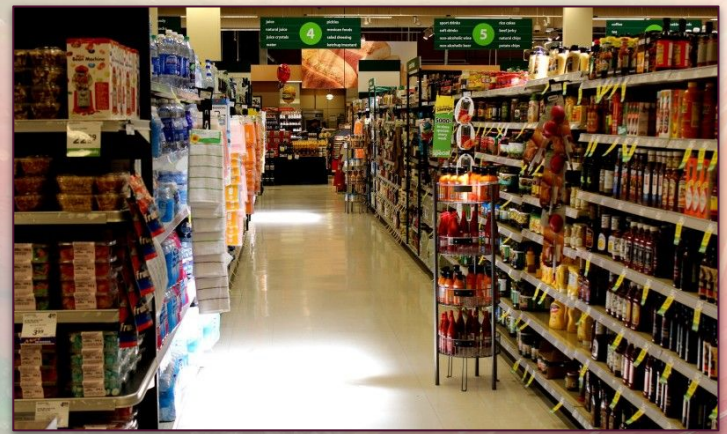
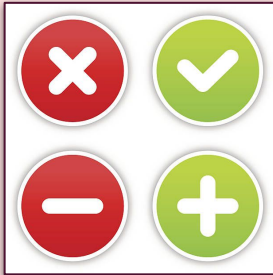
Affordance

- What do you instinctively want to do when seeing an item, or UI element?
- We want to *push* buttons
- We want to *pull* handles, *push* flat surfaces
- How does the UI element *feel*?
- Less cognitive overload



Recognition vs. recall

- The difference between remembering where the ketchup is, and looking at the signs
- Recognition > recall
- Avoid relying only on text
- Use familiar, clear iconography
- Cognitive offloading



Layering information

- Create hierarchies of information
- Only the *most important* info should always be visible
- Hide the rest in sub-menus
- Create logical connections between menu items, making the info easy to find when needed
- Again, helps with accessibility



Heart of Iron III



Stellaris

Confirm choices

- “Are you sure?”
- Prevent miss-clicks
- Hint at intended playstyle

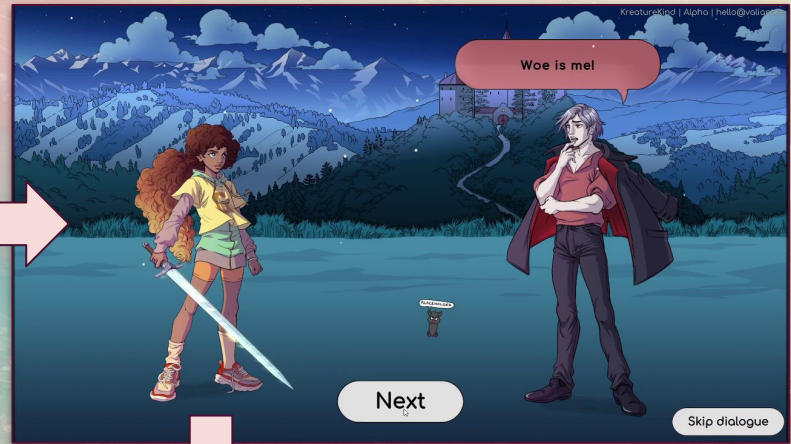


Clash of Clans

Case study: KreatureKind



WIP



WIP

Reading tip



TL;DR

- There are many UX design principles (heuristics)
- Consider:
 - Visibility of System Status
 - Affordance
 - Recognition vs. Recall
 - Layering information
 - Confirm choices
- User research



Questions?

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