

# **Collaborating with a Team of Student Volunteers on UX Projects**



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# Overview

- How to recruit, mentor and collaborate with student volunteers
- Our 7 month project to improve online help in the library's website
- Lessons learned
- Benefits to the library and the students
- Suggestions on the best way to work with students on UX projects

# University of California San Diego

- Large public research university with PhDs and professional schools
- One of the 10 UC campuses
- Student population: 43,000
- Academic and staff: 34,376
- 57 librarians and 174 staff members



# Background

- UX team of one - Digital UX Librarian
- Lots of issues, insufficient staffing to fix
- UX maturity



# UX Café

**free coffee  
and snacks**

for 10 minutes with our  
user experience librarian



**The Library**  
UC SAN DIEGO

# What is Fi @ UCSD?

Fi @ UCSD is a student-run user experience (UX) agency.  
Our team strives to



*Assist clients who need solutions to problems*



*Use design-thinking practices to create simple and transparent solutions*



*Showcase solutions to bring them into reality*





*Bella Zendejas*  
*Claire Liang*  
*Joel Loo*



*Justin Dang*  
*Justin Yang*  
*Xirui He*



*Yared Mekhib*  
*Jose Alvarenga*  
*Shan Prasad*



# Collaborate!

- New UX role
- No formal UX training
- UX design process cycle
- Learning opportunities
- Feedback from students
- “Free” labor!



# The Project



**Finding help on the  
UC San Diego Library  
website**

UX research proposal by **Fi @ UCSD**

# Answering questions through research

In collaboration with SuHui Ho, the Digital UX Librarian at the Library, we created an action plan to answer



What methods of help are users using online?



What methods of help do users prefer?



How should this research inform the way the Library offers help online?

# Original Proposal - 8 weeks

1. Ground Work (1 week)
2. Interviews - 2 week
3. Competitive Analysis - 1 week
4. User Empathy and Flows - 1 week
5. Sketching - 1 week
6. Designing and Testing - 2 week
7. Presentation

# UCSD Libraries



## **Ground Work**

*Evaluation of website  
and review previous  
UX studies*



## **Interviewing**

*Users, librarians,  
staff members,  
other stakeholders*



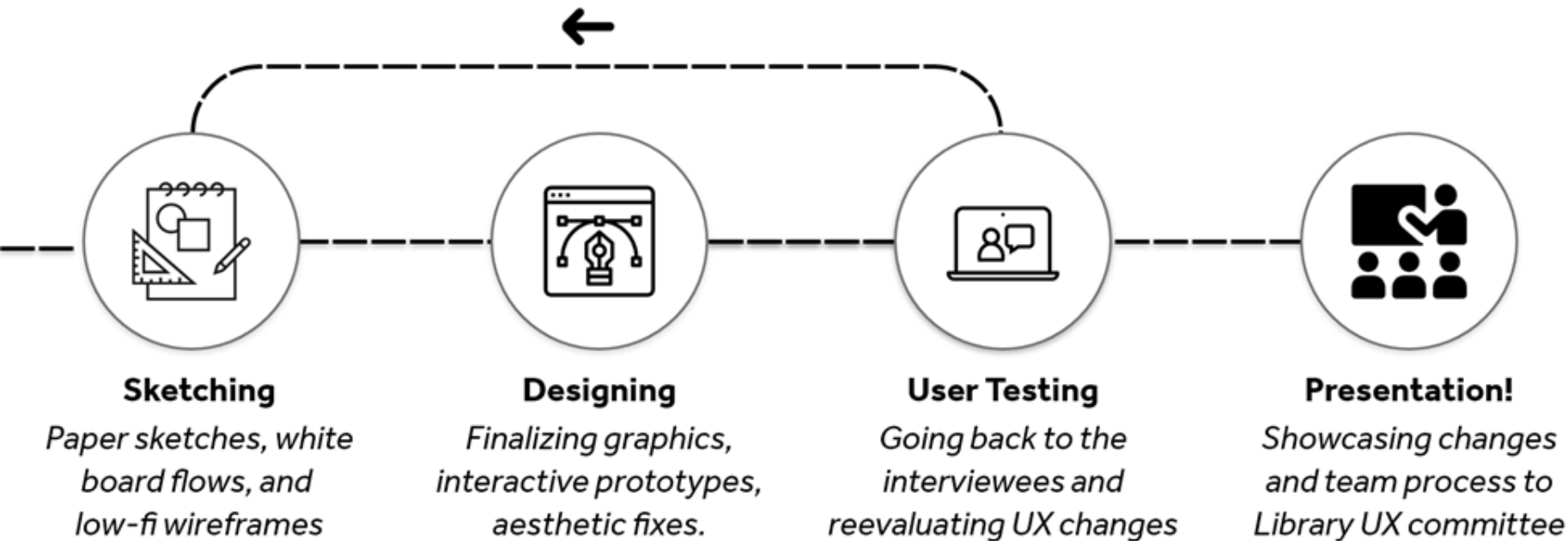
## **Competitor Analysis**

*Researching other sites,  
looking for potential  
features in library services*

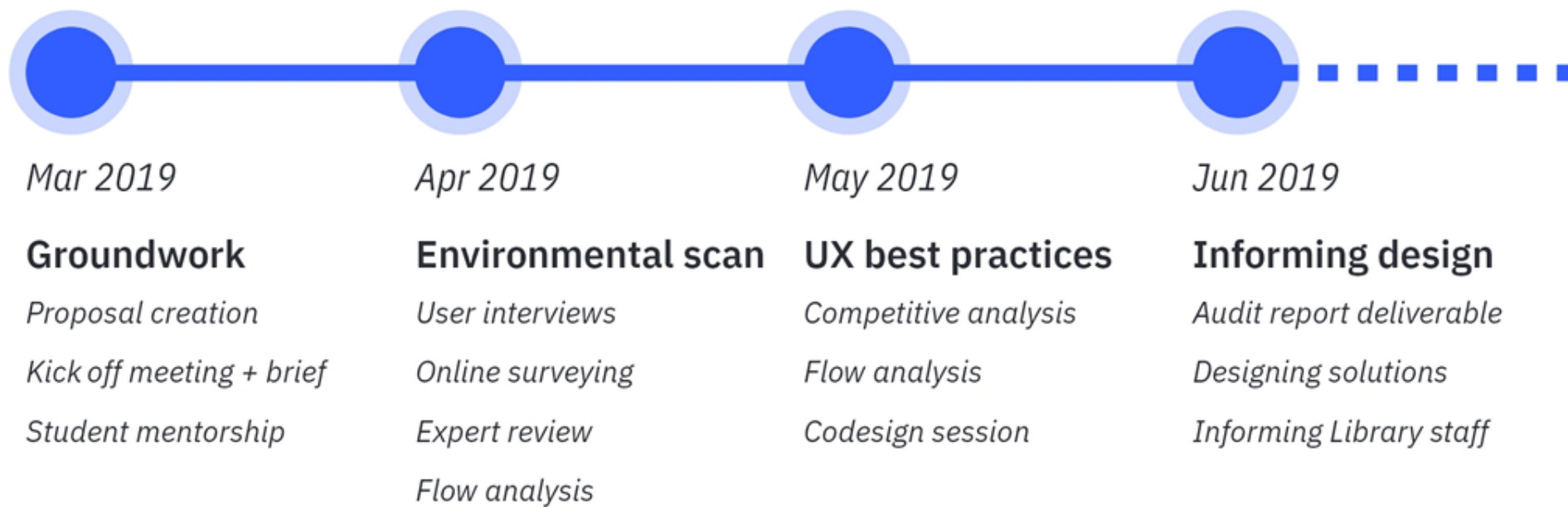


## **User Empathy**

*User personas, stories,  
and use cases*



# Our journey and process



# Solution research

## Creating centralized flow

How can we make information on finding help easier to perceive and thus easier to access?



*UC San Diego Library flow for finding a phone number to call*

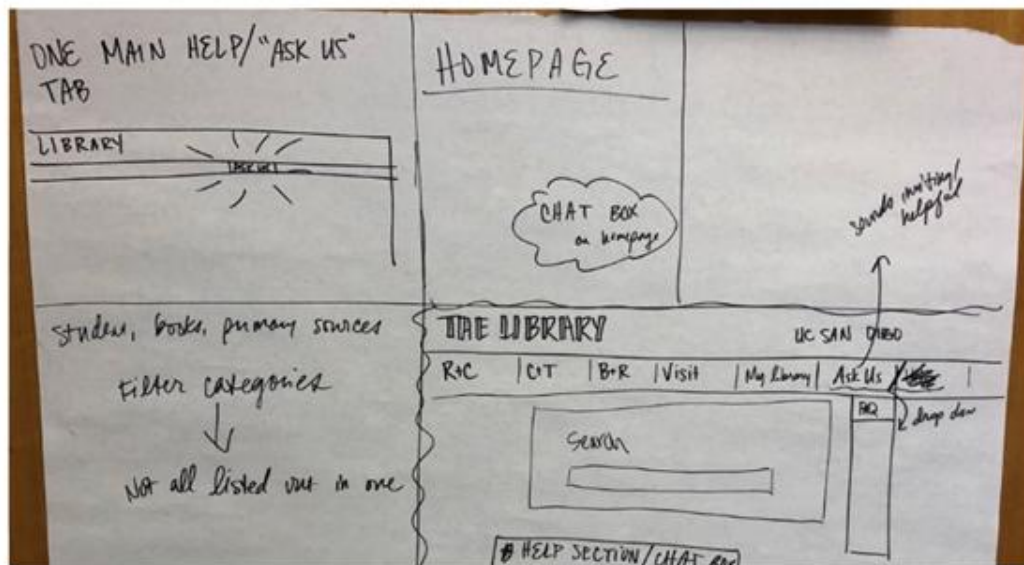


*More simplified flows for UCI and Harvard Libraries*



# Solution research

## Co-designing with users



The results of the co-design helped us learn what usability issues users desired to fix the most.

Although this was a trial run, we highly recommend the Library staff to use this practice in unraveling future problems and solutions.

*Final solution, included with a storyboard of how the users would prefer to access help on the Library site.*

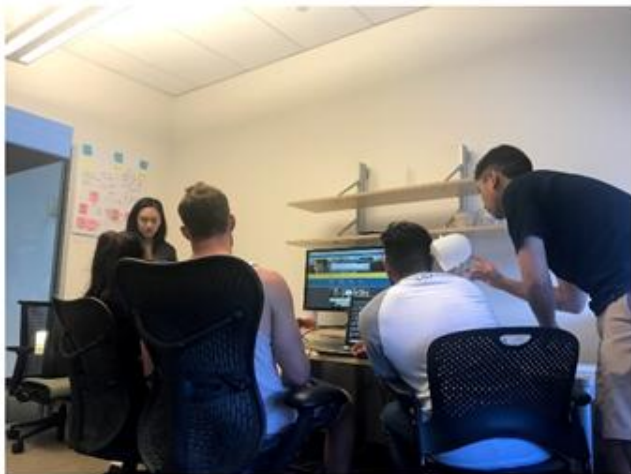




# Solution research

## Co-designing with users

A co-design session involves users into the design process directly, by reviewing a platform's problems and providing solutions to inform a new design.



*We recruited two undergraduate students to review the site and provide feedback.*



*Feedback from the users were inputted to help supplement the designs the users would put together.*





# Challenges

- Book knowledge v.s. Real world experience
- Timeline too aggressive for library environment
- Weak at project planning, scoping, and user studies
  - Not enough time for discovery, define and scope project
  - User research and data analysis - recruitment time, findings
- Great at Design
  - competitive analysis, user persona, user flow, sketching and co-design.
- UX student assistants

# Challenges

- Time consuming
- Mentor & teacher
  - Conduct user studies
  - Design surveys
  - Data analysis
  - Forming conclusions and recommendations
  - Present findings - report and slides
  - Training on focused , simple, professional report

# Benefits

- To students
  - Real world experience for students - stepping through the UX design process
  - Learn from a professional
- To me
  - Energy & creativity
  - Students are users too
  - UX learning - on my part!
  - Mentoring and professional development
  - Student success - resume & grad applications
- To Library
  - UX advocacy from student users
  - Reevaluate online help environment → Help Hub
  - Real impact to library

# Best way to work with students

1. Purpose - why you are doing this
2. Time commitment - more time than you think
3. Dream v.s. Reality - be clear and guide students to reality
4. Student priority - they are busy and be realistic about what you expect from them
5. Find a student project lead
6. Learn from them

# Reach Out

Many university classes in human computer interaction, design, computer science, and business contain UX components. You will be surprised to find many volunteers who are interested in gaining real world UX experience.

# Acknowledgement

Some of the slides are abstracted from the Fi@UCSD's presentation slides to a group of 25 librarian stakeholders. I provided mentorship to the development of the presentation and the slides.



# Questions

Thank you!

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