

ROB ASHCOM - UX DESIGN PROCESS

Time is finite, but design activities aren't. Agile UX prioritizes the steps below—not as rigid requirements but as essential considerations for good design hygiene. A designer should have an answer for each step, even if it's sometimes a rationalization rather than a full research project.

The process of going through these steps depends on cognitive biases, blind spots in the UI, and tenacious ideas that turn out to be misguided. A lot of design looks like only #1 and #7 to other people. I frequently revisit these tools, spread them out, and select what gets us the best design in the time allowed.

Tools in the Toolbox / Process Steps

1. **Gather Insights:** Talk to internal teams, experts, customer support, and users. Identify needs, biases, and constraints. Build relationships.
2. **Identify Users & Scenarios:** Define primary users, personas, and use cases. Locate real users for future testing.
3. **Analyze Research:** Leverage quantitative data and conduct qualitative interviews to understand workflows and pain points.
4. **Define the Problem:** Synthesize insights into clear UX challenges and opportunities.
5. **Explore & Sketch:** Whiteboard/wireframe solutions and brainstorm approaches.
6. **Iterate & Review:** Conduct design reviews with stakeholders, designers, and users. Refine based on feedback.
7. **Build Prototypes:** Develop interactive or static prototypes for usability testing.

A Sample Decision Tree...

1. Have I talked to all the right people internally?
2. Have we identified the specific subset of users for this product?
3. Check for existing research.
4. Go from #1 narrowing down the UX problem.
5. Produce a wide range of ideas.
6. This is TEAM-BUILDING! Everyone can be heard. The designer can prove they're not fragile to criticism. 😊 Consensus is built. Can't skimp on this time.
7. A big dashboard design might be obvious to use, and a new popup dialogue might be tricky. Prototyping to check interaction design is great. Prototyping to generally simulate the final app is going to take a lot of time and maintenance.
8. This could range from dozens of tests with end-users in series as the prototype evolves, or it could be the same testing rigor applied to an internal person or two posing as a

8. **Test & Validate:** Conduct usability testing, analyze findings, and refine the design.
9. **Handoff to Development:** Annotate designs, collaborate on implementation, and clarify interactions.
10. **Look Ahead:** Continuously gather ideas, anticipate future needs, and maintain a backlog of improvements.

end-user. Balance this out with the preceding seven steps!

9. A range from low to high maintenance—whatever makes engineering confident.