

PROJECT 3: MOBILE APP DESIGN (250 PTS)

So far this semester, we have focused on theories of digital rhetoric and writing, web/social media content development and management, and accessible user experiences (UX). For the third project, you will take this knowledge and apply it to a specific task: developing an app prototype for Ball State students or for folks in the Muncie/Central Indiana community.

You will work in teams of 3–4 to develop wireframe mockups for prototyping mobile applications. This process will involve researching what students need, making choices about page design, sketching mockups, designing low-fidelity wireframes, designing a high-fidelity app prototype, and presenting your research through a project analysis memo and report.¹

Deliverables will include a 1-page project analysis memo, low-fidelity wireframes from each team member, a high-fidelity app prototype, and a 4-page report.

GUIDELINES

1. **Project Analysis Memo.** At the outset of this project, each team will compose a project analysis memo that introduces your project, outlines what primary and secondary research you plan to complete, and outlines what each team member will be doing moving forward.

Primary research for a project like this will likely take the form of student surveys and interviews, although you might also find observations or data analysis helpful.

Deliverable: 1-page memo, single spaced

2. **App Prototyping.** The focus of this assignment is the app prototype. The goal is not to create an app that people can download by the end of the semester; the goal is to conceptualize, develop, and produce a well-designed prototype that would act as the “blueprint” for developers to follow. You will approach this task rhetorically:
 - **Purpose.** What is the problem that your team is trying to solve?
 - **Audience.** What are the expectations, characteristics, goals, and contexts of your audience? What do they need the app to *do* for them?
 - **Context:** Why, when, and how will people use this app? What constraints might they face?
 - **Design:** How can visual and typographic elements make the app usable, accessible, and rhetorically effective?

¹ **Wireframes** are low-fidelity prototypes of a web page or application screen, and it is used to identify navigation, visual, and content elements. A high-fidelity prototype represents the user experience through design, content, and interaction. **Prototyping** is the process of testing the functionality of an app or website with its intended users.

You will use either Adobe XD or Figma to create your prototypes. The work of developing your prototypes will involve the following steps:

1. **Researching** the problem and audience: survey or talk to people, conduct observations, research similar solutions
2. **Writing** a complete list of content that you need to incorporate.
3. **Sketching** the site organization and information architecture, e.g., pages, navigation schemes, menus, and sections
4. **Developing** low-fidelity wireframe diagrams that outline the functionality of the app and its basic layout (no color or typography; use placeholder shapes and text)
5. **Designing** a prototype that communicates the user experience of the site, including content, navigation, color, and typography
6. **Sharing/Testing** your prototype and redesign based on feedback

You will conduct usability testing of your apps in class on Friday, April 7th and Monday, April 10th.

Deliverable: app prototype designed with Adobe XD or Figma

3. **Report.** Finally, your team will produce a report that introduces the issue that the app solves (or responds to), the research process, how the app functions, and the content and design choices made to facilitate usability and accessibility. In the recommendations section, you will offer next steps for the designers who would then start developing your app for production. You will share the link to your prototype in the report. Wireframes will be included in the report's appendix.

Deliverable: 4-page report, single spaced

SUBMISSION DETAILS

You will submit four deliverables for feedback and credit: a project analysis memo, low-fidelity wireframes, app prototype, and report.

Project analysis memos are due to Canvas by the start of class (1pm) on Friday, March 24th. We will hold in-class team meetings that day to discuss your plans.

Each team member will develop a low-fidelity wireframe diagram as you consider different designs. *Wireframes are due on Friday, March 31st.*

You will submit a complete draft of your prototype for feedback on Friday, April 7th. We will usability test these in class.

Reports and app prototypes are due on Monday, April 17th.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Project 3 is worth 250 points total: 25 points for the project analysis memo, 25 points for the wireframes, 100 points for the app prototype, and 100 points for the report. Low-fidelity wireframes will be assessed as complete/incomplete.

Project analysis memos will be assessed holistically, based on the following criteria:

- Introduction to your app idea, including its function and target audience (10 pts)
- Discussion of intended primary and secondary research (10 pts)
- Breakdown of team member responsibilities (5 pts)

App prototypes will be assessed holistically, based on the following criteria:

Content (50 pts)

- A homepage that identifies the app's purpose and functions (5 pts)
- Relevant and current information for the intended audience (20 pts)
- Clear, consistent, and concise writing (15 pts)
- Descriptive yet concise headings and subheadings (5 pts)
- Resources for additional information and/or help (5 pts)

Design (50 pts)

- Logical organization of content into distinct pages and sections (10 pts)
- Usability: Use of headings and subheadings to facilitate readability, clearly placed and labeled navigational elements, helpful wayfinding (15 pts)
- Accessibility: Use of legible fonts, color and type contrast, accessible media elements, and clean presentation (15 pts)
- Adherence to principles of contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity (10 pts)

Reports will be assessed holistically, based on the following criteria:

Rhetorical Awareness (25 points)

- Evidence of critical thinking and reflection (10 pts)
- Logical organization of ideas to facilitate readability/understandability (10 pts)
- Thoughtful recommendations and/or conclusions (5 pts)

Content (50 points)

- Introduction to the app's purpose and intended audience (10 pts)
- Discussion of primary and secondary research (10 pts)
- Overview of the app's structure, including the app's main pages (10 pts)
- Detailed discussion of specific content and design choices made to facilitate usability and accessibility (20 pts)

Genre Conventions (25 points)

- Adherence to report formatting (10 pts)
- Use of plain language (5 pts)
- Consistent citation style (5 pts)
- Logically organized appendix materials (5 pts)