

UI Narrative Podcast

The UX Process | Shanisha Collins

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[00:00:04] shanisha: [00:00:04] When you're skipping through processes and you're not considering research, you're more so saying like, , I hope this product will work, or I hope this feature will work.

[00:00:15]but user research, will point you to the direction of, I know it will work because you have data that will back it up.

[00:00:23] you're listening to the UI narrative podcast, the biweekly podcast that shares how industry leading designers got started interface design and how they create successful user centered experiences. And I'm your host, Tolu Ajayi let's get started.

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[00:00:37] Tolu: [00:00:46] Hello everyone. Welcome back to the UI narrative podcast. Shanisha is a user experience designer and business alignment consultant. She's a multi- passionate person who [00:01:00] strives to make the greatest impact on the lives of others. She has an extensive background in public relations. Digital sciences and user experience design, her UX consultancy firm. Rue designs and solutions focuses on helping small businesses merge user needs with organizational goals through user research, which in turn creates great experiences for all her professional cleaning company.

[00:01:26] The Maid Experience. Strive to enrich the lives of clients by alleviating their cleaning duties so they can focus on being happy, productive, and creative people who are so needed in the world. She also enjoys being actively involved in the community and can be found in women students in small business empowerment circles around the Northeast Ohio area.

[00:01:50] Everyone please give a warm welcome to Shanisha Collins.

[00:01:55]shanisha: [00:01:55] Hi everyone.

[00:01:57]Tolu: [00:01:57] so Shanisha tell us [00:02:00] about where you grew up

[00:02:01]shanisha: [00:02:01] Well, I was born in Cleveland. but I was raised in Oklahoma. my family is a military family, so I grew up on a military base, in, Southwest Oklahoma at Fort seal, and I returned back up to Ohio once. I was an adult.

[00:02:21]Tolu: [00:02:21] Nice. Tell us a little bit about your education journey. How did you end up studying user experience design? Was it originally what you went to school for?

[00:02:31]shanisha: [00:02:31] no. So I, initially went to school for e-commerce. my goal was to open a plus size, a women's boutique. so I started off, with the major e-commerce and then I switched to public relations. I did a lot of, a lot of different switching, so I switched to public relations. and then I switched to fashion [00:03:00] merchandising, and then I switched to digital sciences.

[00:03:05]while I was, in digital sciences and I was working as a media services, manager for a nonprofit here in Northeast Ohio. I was pretty much doing the public relations, advertising, marketing, event planning. I was, I was like the everything girl as well as, managing their websites for their programs that were under the nonprofit agencies.

[00:03:32] So was about 60 something programs that was under there. so I was helping him with that as well. And someone told me about the UX program at Kent, and I think I was still in my undergrad. So, I looked into the program and looked into what was the user experience, and I'm like, Hey, I've already been doing this, in my day to day [00:04:00] jobs.

[00:04:00] So, I applied for the master's program , at Kent state, and I got in. And so that's how I became officially in the user experience realm.

[00:04:11]Tolu: [00:04:11] Everyone, I think Shanisha is a great example of how no matter where you start off, like career wise, you could still get into UX design even if you priorly like had no experience in it. And funny thing is, how I hear this a lot, like what you said, people are already doing UX in some other industry, but then realizing like, Hey, I didn't know like already have some of the fundamentals down, but.

[00:04:36] There's, you know, a whole, education built on this with terminology and processes. So I just think it's great like that you were exposed to it, priorly but then figured out like, Hey, there's actually more that I can do with this, and then going for it with, education.

[00:04:52]shanisha: [00:04:52] yes, definitely.

[00:04:54]Tolu: [00:04:54] All right, so with this episode, I mainly wanted to be going over the UX process. So I [00:05:00] want to get into your experience Shanisha with the UX process. we're going to walk through the different phases of the UX process. let's start with phase one, discovery and research.

[00:05:10] And what that means is empathizing and understanding the user. This involves you identifying the user's needs and finding inspiration for our design. What does this look like? How do you start this process Shanisha?

[00:05:25] shanisha: [00:05:26] so the very first thing I do is, I start with stakeholder interviews, so that I can gain clarity on what the stakeholder's goals are or organizational goals are, as well, kind of get an idea of what their biases are as well , and assumptions. then we move forward on making sure that we can define the user's goals after that and prioritize those.

[00:05:52]So that's pretty much how , I started the process. I always started with stakeholder interviews.

[00:05:57]Tolu: [00:05:57] I think that's a great way to figure out, like, as [00:06:00] you said, the goals for, why you're starting to do the project in the first place. What is the most common research method that you've done for clients when you're in this discovery phase? You know, some research methods like involve observing, people in the environment or, sometimes you're just sending out like a screening.

[00:06:20]what type of, research do you usually like to do? Like methods.

[00:06:24]shanisha: [00:06:24] well, of course, like I said, the stakeholder interviews are the most common because that's actually your research method. so those are usually the first, steps. And then depending on the scope of the project, we may do surveys and survey their current users. to see how effective the current product is and, identify areas for improvement. So I would say surveys and usability testing.

[00:06:54]Tolu: [00:06:54] Some questions that we should think about before determining which user research method to use [00:07:00] are. Am I looking for attitudinal or behavioral data? And this type of data might reveal a conflict between what a user says they do.

[00:07:09] And what they actually do because attitude and the data describes what people say. For example, like the user saying they go to the gym every day. Behavioral data describes what people do, for example, like the gym records on a user's actual gym attendance. Another thing is, think about if you're looking for qualitative or quantitative data, qualitative is collecting data on behaviors or attitudes directly through observation and quantitative is collecting data on behaviors or attitudes indirectly through a measurement or survey or analytics. And, the last thing I want you to think about is

[00:07:50] generative or evaluative data. So when we do research, we usually don't know what the problem we're trying to solve is. So, generative [00:08:00] data helps you define the problem you'd like to design a solution for. For example, observing shopping behavior of potential users. Evaluative data is observation from watching users interact with the checkout process.

[00:08:15]When a product already exists, you usually start with evaluating how people already interact with that existing problem, which goes back to what Shanisha said about, doing stakeholder interviews and just figuring out their pain points were interacting with this product.

[00:08:30] And I talk more in depth about the types of user research methods in the episode. Which UX methods should you use? So any object experience or process, which humans interact can fall under UX design. You design how people interact with products and how those products interact with people in return.

[00:08:50] So understanding how users interact with different products is important. Data and key findings. What types of differences have you noticed [00:09:00] when researching the user's needs? For example, between mobile web, e-newsletters, and or platforms.

[00:09:06]shanisha: [00:09:06] I would say that , for mobile, people have a need to access the information quickly, as they may be in a rush, for web. Most likely people are shopping around window shopping and they're looking to find the most reliable information. And, for e-newsletters, in my experience, people, they like to have the newsletter in their mailbox early in the day because they're reading their emails early in the day.

[00:09:37]As well as when they're in lunch so those are kind of the differences in trying to understand, how they're using those devices.

[00:09:44]Tolu: [00:09:44] how do you conduct effective research?

[00:09:47]shanisha: [00:09:47] well, I start by making sure that I have a solid, research plan. with those, I'll, define what the user's goals are, prioritize those goals and then determine,

the [00:10:00] particular research questions that, we're going to ask. and as well as. Making sure that, you know, how the research will be used afterwards.

[00:10:10] So like, who will be using the research findings, how will they be analyzed? how will they be acted upon? how will the findings be updated? So if you have to go back and do some additional research. and how, the research will be measured, for success purposes. I pretty much made sure that I have a solid research plan, and that includes , why are you doing the research?

[00:10:35] Which are the goals? what are you trying to find out? Which are the objectives. who are you researching? Which is the audience, how you're going to do the research, which is the methods. when are you going to do it? So there's a timetable, a schedule and things like that.

[00:10:49] where are you going to do the research? which is location-wise. So if you're going to have a physical location or, can the research be done, virtually. Again, [00:11:00] who will be using the research? So are you going to have researchers or will you have a team member who does the, the research, how much it's going to cost?

[00:11:10] Because research actually costs money. most of the time you have to pay your participants maybe a gift card or maybe a discount or anything like that. So you have to make sure that in the research plan that. you have that already mapped out and, what are you going to do with the research? So the outcomes and the deliverables and things like that.

[00:11:32] So let's make sure that I have a solid research plan. and then I go about implementing it.

[00:11:41]Tolu: [00:11:41] and something I want you guys to remember is whenever you're doing these in person or remote interviews with people, it's supposed to feel like a conversation. So be naturally curious in what they have to say so you can identify their problems. All right, so [00:12:00] that's phase one.

[00:12:01] Going through the discovery and research

[00:12:04] phase two is synthesizing research and design strategy. In this process, you're defining and researching. We're exploring our research to find trends and meaning in our data and develop a clear understanding of our target users. After gathering data, how do you usually start synthesizing that research?

[00:12:27]shanisha: [00:12:27] So, like you said, I categorize the results, where I look for similar deems or issues encountered by the users.

[00:12:35] I usually use an Excel , a spreadsheet, and I'll tag the different results depending on what the issues are. And then I'll, gather all of those results . into one area, and then I start, kind of a hierarchy chain where I'll say, if this issue has a major impact on, the [00:13:00] products or if it has like a kind of mild impact on.

[00:13:05] The product or the usability of that product as well as like a low impact. So, I'll group all of those together and then start fleshing out, Possible solutions.

[00:13:18]Tolu: [00:13:18] One of my favorite ways to synthesize research is affinity mapping. I really like the, interactive part of moving to sticky notes around what's your favorite way to synthesized research.

[00:13:31]shanisha: [00:13:31] I'm more of a person who does not necessarily use technology for, it's hard, more of the person who has the sticky notes all over. and I, and I'll group those, in those particular categories as well.

[00:13:50]Tolu: [00:13:50] what do you like to include in a user persona?

[00:13:55] shanisha: [00:13:55] So, in a user's persona. I like to make sure that [00:14:00] I have demographics. The behaviors and beliefs of the persona, characteristics and attributes as well as, what their ultimate goal is when using the particular product.

[00:14:15] Tolu: [00:14:15] have you had any challenges when creating a user persona?

[00:14:19]shanisha: [00:14:19] yes. So, and I think if this is something that is. A commonplace is, you have to control your own biases and assumptions. when you are, developing a persona, you have to make sure that it goes back to the data. and if you have something included in there that, it should point to, your research at some point. And then also I want to say that like personas are, a living document, so they need to be updated. Frequently as you get [00:15:00] more data or you do more research and you go back to your persona, and if they need to be updated, then you need to update them so that you can make sure that you're being consistent and that you're actually solving the issue for that particular persona.

[00:15:17] Tolu: [00:15:17] Yeah, and it's also important that the persona includes what type of technology that they use. For example, a persona for a game product should include if they play games regularly.

[00:15:29]what type of tools do you like to use for showing the user flow and user journey.

[00:15:35]shanisha: [00:15:35] there's this, product caught Justintime. And, I actually, I really like to use that for, showing the user flow and they use the journey

[00:15:50] Tolu: [00:15:50] after gaining a better understanding of how the user is currently solving the problem, it becomes easier to write a problem statement and [00:16:00] problem statement helps you identify what you can do to solve the problem. How do you figure out what to put in your problem statement.

[00:16:10] shanisha: [00:16:10] So, I use this process called how might we, and so , it's basically asking those, how might we questions, how might we, address whatever the issue is? So that keeps it an open ended type of, question. When you say, how might we, it can spark your ideation and also with brainstorming. So it may be like, how might we make users pay more attention to, to the ads? how might we make ads more engaging or things like that. so it's always starting with the, how might we, and then also with knowing the five why's, you know, Why is this working? Why isn't this working? Why is it broke? Why hasn't it been replaced [00:17:00] by those types of things? you know, it may be organizational constraints.

[00:17:04]it may be an issue of the fact that they may not have someone to solve that particular issue. so those types of things, you want to make sure that you're putting into the problem

[00:17:18] Tolu: [00:17:18] I also like to start with the, how might we method. I always feel like I have more grounding on what I'm going to do, especially with projects where I, I'm struggling with direction. It really does like how you said start to get me, thinking of ideas for the project. and for the problem statement and hypothesis.

[00:17:40]like how she said the template of it sounds something like this. So let's say the user. Needs a way to use their need because of the insight. And then we believe that by doing something or creating the type of experience for user, we will achieve an outcome. And we will know this to be [00:18:00] true when a feedback, qualitative insight or, quantitative measurement says.

[00:18:05] [00:19:00]another question I have for you is, have you had a client that wants a ton of features in their product, but. You know that it's not feasible for a minimal viable product, AKA MVP. How do you go about choosing which features to include in the product?

[00:19:43] shanisha: [00:19:43] yes. So I have had a client who, wanted to, this was a for a web project, who wanted to include, a whole lot of information and a lot of the information was redundant. And so how I went about it was [00:20:00] I went back to the user. So , I went back and did, some usability testing, to show the stakeholder that, their solution, would have been more confusing

[00:20:11]to the user. and was able to let her know that, if we streamlined it and made sure that we mirrored content as opposed to having like a lot of redundant areas on the website, that it would improve the functionality of the site. So, And I would say like , how would I choose which features to include?

[00:20:34]it's just more so prioritizing, what the users are actually needing at that moment. and then also just letting them know that like, later on, we can revisit whatever the feature is that. The stakeholder is requesting to have added on. So not necessarily shooting down the client.

[00:20:54] You don't want to shoot down on a client's idea. You just want to make sure that they understand that, you know, [00:21:00] at that moment that you have to prioritize which features to be able to meet those goals of the user.

[00:21:07] Tolu: [00:21:07] I totally agree with needing to prioritize what's needed with the moment. Some clients get feature-itus when it comes to create a new product. So. And it's maybe because they're excited and they want to try many ideas at once, but like, I totally agree that one way to help them see features that are most important is using something called , two X two matrix.

[00:21:34] It's basically like a cross with arrows pointing out at each other. and then in each corner there's high impact, Which are the essential features that will go a long way to helping the user achieve their goals. There's low impact in one corner, which is a nice way to have features that will not address users.

[00:21:54] Primary goals, and then there's the expected in one corner, which is low cost [00:22:00] features that users will expect based on similar experiences with products. And then I'm in the last corner. It is the high cost features that are innovative for the field. All right, so that's phase two, which is synthesizing research and design strategy.

[00:22:18] Next, we're going to go over phase three, which is ideate and sketching, which includes things like layout, design. so in this phase, you're sketching solutions based on our user research and. Discussing their strengths and weaknesses. This is when you'll be fleshing out design ideas and creating low fidelity wire frames.

[00:22:43] If you start user testing for the layout designs. I don't know if you did this in school, but as a part of a project, we had to create a paper prototype and I enjoyed the process, but also found that creating the paper prototypes can be time consuming because. [00:23:00] I was trying to be a perfectionist. Have you ever actually created a paper prototype for user testing?

[00:23:06] shanisha: [00:23:06] yes. I've done it, in my classwork as well. I'm trying to think of the name of the class. May have been like designs, principles or something. but yes, we've had to, do a quick paper prototype and test it while we were in class. I actually do like to do a paper prototype. Like I said.

[00:23:28] I think it's, for me, it's faster to just sketch out, something very quickly. And I do agree with you in regards to the perfectionist, issue. I'm just trying to make sure that it looks neat and things like that, but really and truly in the real world. your prototype in your sketches do not have to look perfect.

[00:23:49] as long as you're able to convey your design purpose, clearly, you can do it with scribbles, gravel, or even stick figures.

[00:23:59] Tolu: [00:23:59] Yes, that is [00:24:00] totally right. something though that I've noticed though, like for creating rough sketches. And wire frames? Well, mainly like sketch wire frames. I noticed that I'd never have actually used paper prototyping outside of that course, which is like funny to me because like, I guess mainly most of the companies that I've worked for, they're trying to move and iterate so quickly that they like to start on the screen as soon as possible.

[00:24:27] with testing for their users compared to paper prototypes. So mainly, I guess with paper prototyping it's been. Between me and like showing another designer, but I haven't actually used it on users outside of the class. Have you used it like in the industry since that class that you had?

[00:24:47] shanisha: [00:24:47] no. it's always more so, like utilizing Omnigrappe or, something we've even used, Photoshop. You can actually [00:25:00] lay out everything in Photoshop. that's more high end though, where you have like an actual critical, type and things like that.

[00:25:09] Tolu: [00:25:09] what type of tools do you like to use to ideate and sketch out your layout designs?

[00:25:15]shanisha: [00:25:15] Omnigrapple is really good. Photoshop has, a great, layout tool. I have not used Adobe XD yet, but I'm hearing some very great reviews in regards to that. So maybe one day I'll, I'll fall into that and see what it's about.

[00:25:35]Tolu: [00:25:35] Yeah, I've heard a lot of good things about it too. but mainly I've been using UI kits a lot more lately, for wire framing because I just don't be having the time. a lot of the companies that I've been working for have just, they really want fast iteration, and I noticed like. If I'm sketching, it's usually just for my own purpose of just trying to get the idea out.

[00:25:57] But then I go straight into trying to [00:26:00] use a UI kit to quickly get a wire frame together.

[00:26:06] shanisha: [00:26:06] Yeah. And those are like your more agile type environment, so I

[00:26:10] Tolu: [00:26:10] that's definitely what I've been working in lately. Agile environments that use, that type of a methodology.

[00:26:17]shanisha: [00:26:17] Which I would say they have. Most places are going more to agile. which is good.

[00:26:22] is good and bad.

[00:26:23] Tolu: [00:26:23] Yeah. I feel like I have mixed reviews with agile, like some days I like it. Some days I don't, and this is because the days I like it is when I really want to see. The results of what I'm working on quickly. The days I don't like it is when I'm, we're putting things out, but it's like, I really want to do some more user research.

[00:26:45] Like let's say we only tested with like two to three people, but it's like, I feel like that's not a big enough demographic to test with, early on just because there's so many, personas within that project.

[00:26:59] shanisha: [00:26:59] Yeah. And, [00:27:00] and that's where you have to be careful, with agile. Like are you really testing the user base? so when it comes down to. Having a repository of research participants for a particular client, you need to be able to quickly get, to those, research participants who are matching your persona or, things like that.

[00:27:28] Cause you cannot have just anyone testing, that product. And so that's why I'm hearing like, in regards to, you're saying like with the agile, you don't feel as though that, you know, that the particular participants gave you, like accurate results. I would say.

[00:27:45] Tolu: [00:27:45] Yeah. It wasn't well-rounded enough to where I felt like, it was substantial data to make changes. Just because there were some parts that I feel like we just needed [00:28:00] a few more people. So opinion to validate that that one person comment, is that a valid.

[00:28:08] All right, so that was phase three, which is ideate and sketching. Phase four of the UX process is prototype and design, which is the execution part. You start to make a decision

about our design and bring it to life in an interactive prototype. So this is when you start creating the high definition screens for a prototype.

[00:28:33] Shanisha. what does your process look like when you're ready to start prototyping?

[00:28:37]shanisha: [00:28:37] I mean, mostly it falls back to my, schoolwork. because then the industry, like I'm usually the person who is dedicated To the actual research, and so we'll have someone else on the project who will take my research results and build out their prototype. so my process is pretty much just, you know, handing over the research, giving us suggestions [00:29:00] and things like that, and then someone else's, I'm putting together a prototype in there.

[00:29:04] Once the prototype is. Put together, then I'll come back in and, you know, give my opinion as to , if I particular features were missed or, if there needs to be any type of adjustments. However, when I was at school, we would use, like, I think it's called Proto IO. for like the more high definition, prototyping tools as well as Photoshop is definitely the one that you can use for like, interactive.

[00:29:32]Tolu: [00:29:32] I don't know if you guys remembered, but I told you that as a UX designer, you don't necessarily need to know how to design. it comes down to just being able to know how to understand your data that you collect from users and knowing how to explain that to other people on it's relevance to creating a better experience for the product.

[00:29:57]So as Shanisha said, like in [00:30:00] her process as a UX designer, she handed off to another designer who does the process of, creating that UI design and getting it ready and the prototype, and then she goes back and reviews it just to make sure all the comments she has for. The, user experience was executed correctly.

[00:30:20]so just know that there is space for you if you really aren't trying to get more into the design side with UI. you can just stay on the research side with a UX. but something like as you're going through the prototyping process, like as a UI designer, this is when, I start to get into the information architecture.

[00:30:40]Which is understanding how the information content and features are structured and how user navigates them. I create a site map on how many screens are going to be needed for the MVP, minimal viable product, and what's needed for usability testing coming up. And if you have trouble with choosing the navigation, [00:31:00] you can try something called card sorting with some users and you can use a website like optimal sword.

[00:31:07] Which you can ask each user to sort cards and whichever way it makes sense to them, and boom, you have help on the best way to organize that content.

[00:31:18] shanisha: [00:31:18] I wanted to agree with you in regards to that. making sure that the information architecture, , is good on, on the prototype as well as your website. and making sure that the. Taxonomy, which is the labels and things like that. The words that are on the labels are actually meeting the mental models of the users.

[00:31:41] So, you mentioned card sorting. that's one, testing that I do to make sure that like the content is categorized properly. and then I also use, tree testing for like an existing

website. and of course, you know, like tree testing, it takes away [00:32:00] all of the visual aspects and has a user find an information simply off of the labels that's on the website.

[00:32:09] so I think that that's also like super important.

[00:32:13]Tolu: [00:32:13] it's good to get down the foundation of how the user will navigate before getting into, you know, creating 50 plus screens in the process, just to realize that the user doesn't understand where to go.

[00:32:26] you talked about some tools you like to use, to prototype, which was, Proto IO. some tools I like to use, I currently only use InVision, and that's probably just because I'm subscribed to them, so they lock me down. or where's that sponsorship though? I mean, InVision. , come through. so that's phase four. Prototype and design. let's get into phase five.

[00:32:49] This is the last phase of the UX process, which is testing and refining. This is where usability testing comes through. And, we start to explore [00:33:00] the functionality and ease of use of our prototype. And this is the fun part because you're seeing how the users interact with your products, and there's five steps to usability testing.

[00:33:12]You're preparing, recruiting, conducting, analyzing, and debriefing. What tips do you have for someone doing their first usability test

[00:33:22]shanisha: [00:33:22] I would say, just make sure that when you're preparing your, tests, that you have , a great script, to read because, It helps make sure that the project is consistent and that , your research is consistent where you're asking, the participants have had these same questions.

[00:33:44]and going back to what you said earlier, just, you know, making sure that, you're able to. I asked additional questions to gain more insight, but as long as you have like the base of those questions, in a script, when you're doing your usability testing, [00:34:00] then you'll know that you'll be able to have, I guess more consistent, results.

[00:34:05] And when I'm saying like consistency, it's more so that you're actually getting those questions, those basic questions answered. along with that, you just, with the script and things, you want to make sure that you are, reassuring the participant that we're testing the product or the website and not down. people an innate desire to be. Right. and because of that, they'll be afraid to make mistakes. And, so when they're sitting down to do a usability test, they feel like that, it's a real test when , it's not a test for them, it's a test for that particular product.

[00:34:44] So , they're like, need to get an A when it's like, Hey, it's okay. You're not getting graded. Just making sure that you have a script. You have, like you said, the different, parts of usability testing. So when you're doing the [00:35:00] planning and things like that, that you want to make sure that you have a particular goal of the usability test.

[00:35:07] what are you trying to find out? Basically.

[00:35:08]Tolu: [00:35:08] . A way to find people for usability testing is to do a screener. So basically what that is, is you send out a survey to potential user testers and see who fits the criteria from the survey answers. , places that you can recruit. People are like existing users.

You can check if the company has a list of people, your network of just, you know, friends and family.

[00:35:33] That are potential, users, classified ads and also snowball recruiting. So recruiters asking around, they're circled people. What are some usability best practices that have helped you.

[00:35:48] shanisha: [00:35:48] I would say, utilizing the script, . The screener is definitely important because you don't want to, Utilize that time on a [00:36:00] participant who is not, the ideal participant for that particular study. And making sure that when you're doing the usability testing. you're not giving users the answer, and that you're not there to guide them.

[00:36:15], you're just there to observe their behavior. So making sure that you're not encouraging or discouraging them, you're simply there to observe what they're. doing and, and recording it. So I will also say to make sure that you're staying in the moment. So most of the time when you're doing usability testing, you're doing multiple people.

[00:36:35] And just because one person was able to, figure out something, easily doesn't mean that the next person, you know. So just making sure that you're checking your own biases.

[00:36:45]Tolu: [00:36:45] yeah, those are great points. also be clear of what your purpose is for the interview. This will help you come up with non-scripted follow up questions as you're asking questions. I've been getting more into the game design [00:37:00] industry and, but I haven't done any usability testing with them yet. So there's so many things to consider when creating a game.

[00:37:07] For example, first thing is which platforms can they play? Is it mobile, tablet, PC, X-Box, PS4, et cetera? And that doesn't even include all the different screen sizes that can be used with each platform. So just. Try to think of every aspect of understanding. If the user fits the criteria for the product, will they actually be using it?

[00:37:32]And also as Shanisha said, like don't lead them while you're going through this interview. Give them space to talk. Even if it's for like pausing for a minute after they talk. Cause sometimes they may have more to say, but it came to them right as you started talking. So they feel like, Oh, maybe I don't need to say this.

[00:37:51] [00:38:00]So you have experience with the Kelvin Smith library research report. What are some key things to include in a report like this?

[00:38:51]shanisha: [00:38:51] so when you're, doing, the report, you want to make sure that you have a great executive summary

[00:38:59] cause all of the [00:39:00] key points out of , the research and, you know, put those on top and then you go down and, you know, you flush out and explain it more, down below. So the first thing is to make sure that you have a great executive summary, that you are explaining the reasons for your methodology, your evaluation tasks.

[00:39:18] And. as well as your completion rate. So, if someone is successful or unsuccessful in completing those particular tasks, so you want to make sure you have that. you want to

make sure that you have an outline of your participants. you know, the, the particular people, the demographics that you test it.

[00:39:37]And then always have, my next steps included , on your, research report. , so then people who are reading the research report, are able to understand what may be asked of them or, you know, they'll have clarity on what the next steps of. Oh, that particular project. But maybe after the research you're doing those wire frames, you're [00:40:00] doing those prototypes.

[00:40:01]you may have to go back and ask some more questions. You can have additional research. So laying out those things, for the stakeholders, are important. And then also it's important to know who you're presenting the report to. , of course, you want to have a longer report, but sometimes, a PowerPoint, a report is sufficient enough to pull out whatever your research, your research findings are.

[00:40:27]Tolu: [00:40:27] Yeah, those are some great points. Something I've noticed that happens to me a lot, and I know this is probably just because of the type of companies I work with, but there's some companies you know that they don't go through the entire process of the UX process. Like for example, we start on ideate and sketching, then go straight to prototyping.

[00:40:51] And this is probably because I work at a lot of startups that use lean UX method. And I like it, but I'm also starting to get more annoyed with this process [00:41:00] because the startups are so eager to fail fast that it hurts the products in the short term. But mostly I'd like to get more time to, you know, gather user data.

[00:41:10] Do you have products that skip part of the UX process?

[00:41:14]shanisha: [00:41:14] I've worked on projects that have, and I would say that, every project is unique, so it's important to, assess the objectives of that particular product project and then prioritize things. There's a saying that it's like a hundred times cheaper, to perform the research prior to then to start coding and having things done without the research and having to go back and fix.

[00:41:48]so I would say that, yes, I have had projects like that. and most likely, You ended up having to return back to the research phase because something is not right. [00:42:00] Something didn't work properly.

[00:42:02]When you're skipping through processes and you're not considering research, you're more so saying like, , I hope this product will work, or I hope this feature will work.

[00:42:13]but user research, will point you to the direction of, I know it will work because you have data that will back it up.

[00:42:20] Tolu: [00:42:20] definitely there's been some projects where I know that they don't need as much user research just because they've already collected some of their own, so it's easier to go straight in to the prototyping phase of usability testing. But then there's also, you know, as I said, the companies that they just really don't know what they're doing.

[00:42:43]but they try to act like they do. So it's really just trying to, put a firm standing on, you know, you hired me for this reason. Let me show you how this is going to work and why it's important.

[00:42:56] So I think it's important for getting [00:43:00] into this industry as a UX designer, really understanding.

[00:43:03] Your purpose and how you're going to help them and get used to explain that a lot because it's just part of the job. cause not everyone really understands the difference that your job and, the findings, easier findings that you're going to have, will make for their product.

[00:43:20]shanisha: [00:43:20] Yes, I totally agree. And so that comment goes back to making sure that you understand your stakeholders, and making sure , that you have a solid understanding of what their goals and their perspective is. because they may have different perspectives, but then it's also important to get the stakeholders buy-in. Because if you don't get their buy in for the research, then they'll feel like you're just wasting time when they're there wanting to push that product. So you have to make sure that you have a full understanding of who your stakeholders are and [00:44:00] also just make sure that when you're coming back for them, that you're repeating some of their concerns.

[00:44:07]Oh, so that they'll feel like you're actually listening to them. and kind of move forward with that. But the thing is of that, you don't have to, like with research, you're not trying to find a new solution. You're not reinventing a wheel. You're literally trying to understand the user's perspective. there's so much research out there that you don't necessarily have to research a particular problem when there's a whole database , of research , that you can utilize , for your project. You know, say for instance, One of the projects that I am about to start soon is there's a client, she has an eCommerce site. She's having a lot, cart abandonment issue. But that's [00:45:00] her biggest issue. She's like, listen, I spent so much money on these ads. there's, a high percentage of people just leaving things into their cart and I want to understand why. Well, there's a whole database, a whole company. I can't think of the name right now.

[00:45:14] They have nothing but a whole bunch of, research that describes why people are abandoning cars. So my job as a researcher is to research the research,

[00:45:26] Tolu: [00:45:26] Right.

[00:45:28] shanisha: [00:45:29] Yeah. So when you're doing that, you can present. To your, stakeholders statistics show this, this and that, and you can get their buy in by presenting them with someone else's research and letting them know how that applies to their organization. so yeah, there's times where you can , skip the process of some of the parts of the UX process simply because you're, pointing towards like industry standards or [00:46:00] you're pointing towards a research that has,

[00:46:03] previously been done.

[00:46:04] Tolu: [00:46:05] And just to explain what stakeholder buy in is, it's the process of involving these people, that hired you to do this job in the decision making process in hopes

of reaching a broader consensus on the organization's future. cause stakeholders, they may support or oppose the decisions made by the business managers.

[00:46:27] So it's important to get them involved at the beginning. So, when you're already into the prototyping phase of this project, there isn't some key fundamental feature that the stakeholders, need in this product that, you know, was left out.

[00:46:44] Next, we'll get into listener questions. I asked on Instagram, what do you want to know about the UX process? Here's what y'all had to say at Shaw. Undo scored VOD. Jean said, what's your job hunting experience [00:47:00] like?

[00:47:00] shanisha: [00:47:00] In regards to the industry, I've been pretty blessed to, secure position while I was still in school. and I utilized my, my university networks. So at Kent state, they have the UFC program. there are people who. Are currently working, in the field. And so they'll post different jobs to our listserv.

[00:47:27] And, and that gets a shout out to everyone. And a lot of these people are probably the ones that are interviewing you or you'll be coming along onto their team. So I would say, that was like one big aspect of my, job hunting experience.

[00:47:43] and then once I left the quote unquote corporate realm. I would say my experience in job hunting, lately has been kind of a mixed emotions, I would say. for user experience. there [00:48:00] is a, a disconnect. In regards to what user experience is and what a UX professionals do. So there's, I'm coming from the more of an academic standpoint in regards to UX, right.

[00:48:18] So, in our training, UX is the umbrella. You know, user experience is the umbrella, and then different things fall under the umbrella. Research falls under the umbrella. you know, interface design or UI falls under the, the umbrella. So it's more like a specialty or concentration. and then there's people who are the information architects that falls under the umbrella as a content strategist that falls under the umbrella.

[00:48:46] So what I've noticed. in the field is that a lot of these companies are like, Hey, we need a UX person. And then they'll write their job description out [00:49:00] and they're actually looking for. A UX unicorn, someone all day, and we're not built that way. We're not a UX professionals. Not built in a way of all things like you're going to falter somewhere if you're trying to be the one who's doing the research, the, IA.

[00:49:20] The interface, design, the content you're doing for people's jobs, you know? And so then that interference ends up making, an issue within the company where they lose trust and faith. And in the UX role. Whereas if they had like a solid team or they had, what they call like a UX maturity for organization.

[00:49:45] So that's important to understand what their UX maturity is. If, they already have a dedicated team or UX or are they pulling someone in because they, they need someone to do all eight. so with my experience, it's just been kind of like a mixed [00:50:00] emotions. Because a lot of these companies don't necessarily know what they want it, you know?

[00:50:05] And it makes it harder as, you know, job seekers because you'll get onto the phone with someone or like, you know, the initial step of the interview and the interviewer. Has no clue about UX. You know, maybe someone in their, in their HR department who's

doing that get your interview. They have no clue what their company is looking for. I would say, in regards to like the job hunting experiences, like you have to assess what the organization's UX maturity is and, and make sure that. You have a full scope of understanding of what they're looking for. so it's kinda, it's, it's kinda tough out here and there's so many jobs open for UX professionals, but , , it's tough, hard as job seekers because these companies don't necessarily know what they're looking for.

[00:50:57]Tolu: [00:50:57] That was some great insight to what it's [00:51:00] like looking for a job. totally agree that UX designers aren't built to do all things. And it's important, like if you get an interview, you know, for UX designer role, asking these types of questions, you know, day one in the screening process for the interview so you know what you're getting into or if you're wasting your time with them. recently I've had success

[00:51:23] through indeed.com but, a lot of jobs that you see out there, they're looking for UI designer or UX designer or developer or copywriter. but they may not be really clear with which skills are needed for that job in the description, until you get into the screen process and see, okay, I'm at a good fit for this role.

[00:51:52]

[00:51:52] shanisha: [00:51:52] yeah, that's very important. Yeah. That making sure that you're a good fit for the company and the culture is the way [00:52:00] to go. I am a person who I try to encourage people to utilize their network. and that may include joining these different tech groups, on social media. A lot of those people post jobs for, you know, have a job opening for their positions.

[00:52:19] Their particular company , and then you can ask them questions. So, I felt, I found that that's very, helpful is if there's a particular company that you're targeting for you to find someone in that particular company and ask them about the environment, ask them about, you know, how they go about, projects and, you know, what do they like working at that company? What don't they like? You know, what's the biggest resistance that they get from stakeholders? I found that companies that have like a very mature in regards to UX, they get it. You [00:53:00] know, the other companies that don't get it. Not necessarily a bad thing.

[00:53:07] It means that you're going to have to do a good job on conveying , why they need you. You know? and , it's, a huge education piece to it. So you could choose whether you want to go into a company where you can kind of define their UX process because you'll be the first one, in their company or one of the first people in their company performing, user experience, duties. Or you can go into one that's already have a solid team that's in place. So, you know, different things that people need to consider.

[00:53:39]Tolu: [00:53:39] The next question comes from PIP underscore, when they said how to find users for research, is there an app, company, subscription service or trade secret? Not that this one was pretty funny. I do feel like we answered some of this question, or at least I gave my, answer for how to find users [00:54:00] research.

[00:54:00] But, would you like to provide me insight on that? Shanisha.

[00:54:03]shanisha: [00:54:03] Yeah. I would say for, start with your current customers. you could screen those first customers by just, kind of. Understanding who they are. So just, you

know, get a thought, an understanding of who the current customers actually are, and then you can start filtering down, those particular people to get an understanding of.

[00:54:25] Of who you actually need for a particular part of the research. and then there are some paid, programs. I think it's like user testing. That's one of 'em, where they're able to kind of recruit, a high amount of people. So it depends on what the research is that you're, you're doing. But most of the time, like the way that I've, recruited users is through surveys.

[00:54:51] So you may have someone to complete a survey, and then at the end of the survey you may ask, would you like to be contacted [00:55:00] for. Additional research and things like that. And so like, if you need it to do a focus group or something that you already have, a list of people who say that they're open and willing to, perform, you know, or participate in additional research.

[00:55:15] Tolu: [00:55:15] And I'd like to add, if you're trying to find users for like a personal project, you can go through your family and friends, or you can go on Facebook groups and look for like targeted groups. Like let's say you're trying to create like a, a mock project for a fitness app.

[00:55:34] You could go on, you know, some fitness, Facebook groups and posts about like how you're looking for people to test out. an app that you're trying to create. Cause I feel like if you, go at least to a targeted area where there will be a lot of potential users, then you'll have more success with finding some people to, be interested in being a part of that user testing.

[00:55:57] That's all the listener answers for this [00:56:00] week. As a reminder, you could be included in the next episode. Make sure to follow me on Instagram uinarrative and Twitter uinarrativeco co I randomly ask questions that will be featured in an episode and answer your questions live on the show with the guest.

[00:56:17] So I like to end the show with a random question completely unrelated to what we've been talking about. The question is, let's say you have your own late night talk show, who would you invite as your first guest?

[00:56:30] shanisha: [00:56:30] I would say I definitely would like to interview Oprah. and the reason why is because they really, she does all things right. but she has to delegate like crazy. And so she has to trust those people that she's delegating tasks to, to actually, build her vision.

[00:56:58] You know. [00:57:00] And I would like to know how, how does she go about that? How, how is she able to sleep at night without having her hand on everything, you know? I think that that's important. from over.

[00:57:14] Tolu: [00:57:14] Yeah. Yeah. I think she'd make an amazing guest. for me, I would probably invite. Gabrielle union and her shady baby. I don't know if you've seen her, her shady baby online, but, main reason is just because Gabrielle inspires me to stand up for what I believe in, no matter like how many people are watching.

[00:57:33] I just, I'm always like impressed with how she, she stands with, whatever it is that she firmly believes in and follows through with that. Like, for instance, with, What was that

show? She was on? America's got talent, I think. So where can we find you and connect with you online?

[00:57:50] Shanisha.

[00:57:51] shanisha: [00:57:51] I can be found on Facebook, on the UX Connection. I have a UX connection, page where I post, [00:58:00] different interests and articles and things like that. on Instagram I can be found @ ux.diva And then, if you want to get more information around me, I've, you have a website and it's, shanishacollins.com

[00:58:15] Tolu: [00:58:15] let's say someone needed some help with, , getting into the UI, UX industry. do you provide any help for that?

[00:58:22] shanisha: [00:58:22] Oh, yeah. So I do. so I'm a business alignment consultant where I help, organizations, with identifying their goals and, emerging them with the user needs. So do have, a consultancy business. I also help with, people who are looking to enter the UX field. so with that, I'll kind of gain an understanding of who they are, what their interests are and things like that, and then point them into a direction within the UX around, you know, best places to start.

[00:58:57] So say for instance, if there is someone who [00:59:00] is, who loves connecting with people like myself. know, UX research, maybe a good starting path. and maybe someone who was good , with writing. a content strategy may be a good path by their own. So yeah, I definitely help.

[00:59:14] people kind of understand where is a good starting point because the industry is so vast. People will continue to get overwhelmed themselves and try to do all things or get discouraged because they may not know how to code. Or like you said earlier, may not have visual design stress, you know. but there are so many different avenues, I think over a hundred different. UX. Concentration that people

[00:59:39] can enter in.

[00:59:40] Tolu: [00:59:40] Well guys, if you're someone who is interested in getting into the UX or, specifically like UX industry or UI, Shanisha will be more than happy to guide you along that path. And you can go to her website at shanishacollins.com and, book an appointment with her today to get [01:00:00] started getting into this industry.

[01:00:01] also, Make sure to tag us online, @uinarrative. And, you can also tag Shanisha on Instagram @ ux.diva For anyone that is interested in becoming a UX or UI designer. And we're here to help them. And also any additional questions you have about UX process, please tag us in those posts and we'll be more than happy to answer those questions.

[01:00:26] I appreciate you taking the time to join us on this episode. Shanisha and I know listeners are so excited that I finally asked this question, so please stop emailing me about answering the UX process I already did. Now, so chill, and I'm sure a lot more people are really excited that we dived into.

[01:00:45] Understanding the UX process and what it all entails.

[01:00:49] and I hope to talk to you soon.

[01:00:51]shanisha: [01:00:51] All right. Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it and I'm looking forward to helping your listeners, with whatever they need help with.

[01:01:00] Thank you so much for having me. thank you for listening to the UI narrative podcast. If you like what you hear, make sure to show this podcast and love by commenting and subscribing where you listen. You can find me on Instagram and Facebook @uinarrative or Twitter at @uinarrativeco. I also respond to emails at hello@uinarrative.com.

[01:01:23] Talk to you later. Bye.