

EPISODE 47

[INTRODUCTION]

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[00:00:30] TG: You're listening to the UI Narrative Podcast, the bi-weekly podcast that shares the stories of people of color, interface designers and researchers, and their contributions towards creating user-centered experiences. I'm your host, Tolu Garcia. Let's get started.

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[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:48] TG: Everybody, welcome back to the UI Narrative Podcast. Let me introduce you to today's guest. Randall Wilson is a graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he studied at the College of Architecture. As a way to cultivate his creativity, he picked up graphic

design in his spare time. Upon graduating, learned front-end development to complement his design skills.

He currently serves as a UX Design Lead on Capital One's Digital Messaging Team, where he's been for over 10 years. Everybody, welcome Randall Wilson to the UI Narrative Podcast.

[00:02:24] RW: What's up, you all? Nice to be here.

[00:02:27] TG: So happy to have you. I like to start off the podcast by asking, what's your favorite memory of being interested in design?

[00:02:35] RW: My favorite memory of being interested in design.

[00:02:40] TG: I should say, like first memory.

[00:02:42] RW: First memory?

[00:02:43] TG: To make it more – Yeah.

[00:02:45] RW: I think, they'd be the same answer. Probably, the first memory of my life, I remember waking up in my parents' bedroom, and going into the hallway and going into the dining room where there were Lego that I was playing with, apparently, the night before. I was most likely creating stuff by myself, stuff that's not in the instruction booklet. I think, probably that moment, as clear as it is, to me, is probably the time that I started being interested in design.

[00:03:21] TG: Wow. I definitely want to get in later about your Lego experience, because that is going to be super interesting to talk about. You've been a designer for, has it been what? 10, 11 years now, Randall?

[00:03:34] RW: I've been a designer, if you want to go by the jobs that I've held, yes, I've been a designer for 10 or so years. I've probably been a designer all my life, like designing, creating stuff in art class, just drawing figures of superheroes that I thought would be cool. I remember coming up with something that I remember, be calling them the wily warriors, which was

basically, a great value Power Rangers inspiration. It's something that's been in me my entire life, and I had to figure out a way to get paid doing it once I grew up and got older. Here I am.

[00:04:18] TG: You started out with bachelors in science in architecture, then you ended up becoming a self-taught graphic designer, now getting into UX design. I know, it's been a while since architecture school, but how has architecture influenced the way you think about design?

[00:04:34] RW: I actually had a conversation about this today. Yes, and that one of my bosses, she really enjoys reading architectural theory. I've always said that a lot of architecture competencies that I learned in college boded well for my transition over in the UX design. A lot has to do with managing people's, or customer's expectations as they flow through the space. What are patterns that people are used to? When you break away from the patterns, what's the purpose for breaking away, so that you can introduce that uniqueness for them to take action, or just to notice something.

The way that, I would say, you design in terms of planning ahead, which I think, is probably not unique to architecture UX, but I think, it's the ways in which you have to declare something, and then work towards that hypothesis to prove or disprove it. There's always designing for context, which is true in both architecture and UX design that I particularly enjoy.

[00:05:47] TG: Yeah. I think, even though architecture was part of the beginning of your career, it's definitely something that's stuck with you. You're basically a Lego master. I want to dive into that, since we're on topic. You're on the hit TV show, Lego Masters. For those that don't know, the TV show, Lego Masters, is a show hosted by Will Arnett, best known as Gob in *Arrested Development*.

Basically, what the show is about, Lego enthusiasts are invited to compete to win prizes. The contestants are given challenges to create anything imaginable with an unlimited supply of Lego bricks. Randall appeared on the show with Syreeta Gates in the most recent season two. I just want to go into that whole experience. I know, in one of the episodes, you talked about how architecture influenced one of the designs that you were creating. Go into the experience and tell us what it was like.

[00:06:42] RW: I have to back up and talk about the point at which Lego Masters became a thing in the US, sometime in 2019. They were trying to audition people to find people to come on the show. Everybody that I knew who knows anything about me, knows that I like Lego. Love Lego, actually. I would probably get a post on my Facebook wall every other day like, "Have you seen this? You should apply for this. Do you know what this is?" I'm like, "Yes. You're probably the 5th, 11 person that posted this on my wall."

The thing about Lego that I think people probably understand, for the most part, is that it's a very solitary activity. You don't really build with other people like that consistently, as an adult. Yes, you may do it with kids. You have your little brother, your little sister, you playing with parents, and you're just making something. As you get older, and you start making stuff by yourself, it's very much a singular vision.

The challenge within the show is finding somebody that you work well with, and either work in the same way, or work in complimentary ways to complete these challenges. I had started a business with my partner, Syreeta Gates, a few years ago, caught most incredible, where we put hip-hop Lego art out. I asked her, and she wasn't interested at the time. The second season, they actually reached out to us and thought that we should apply. We said, "Yeah, let's take a chance." They never told us no, and there we were.

Being on set, actually building under those circumstances, I never thought that I'd have that opportunity. I always was perfectly fine just watching the show. There's also Lego Masters in Australia and UK and other countries around the world. It was a global thing. What I did learn from that show, are so many things that I think, are going to fast forward my development as somebody that makes their own stuff, and thinking about building in ways that are meant for display and read well on TV, because I don't build that way right now, but it's something that gave me something to look forward to in the future, my Lego journey.

[00:09:00] TG: Wow, that's amazing that you were able to see potential, the growth that you wanted to gain from going on the TV show, because I know a lot of times, people will just hype up the prizes and stuff like that. I love that you're able to take your own benefit from it, no matter of what the outcome would be.

[00:09:22] RW: Into your questions, specifically about architecture and employing that on the show, there was that specific challenge, the make and shake challenge, where you had to build for strength to withstand the different forces, or levels of force that you're building would be subject to. That's probably something that every kid that's played with Lego has ever done is stack bricks to see how tall they can make a Lego tower. We really were acting like kids at that particular challenge. We have to build to a certain height. Yes. Let's see what story we can infuse into it.

Now, that being said, there are also things that come into play, where you might not have enough of a certain piece. Even though it's unlimited, well, it's 5 million bricks specifically. Sometimes, other people are using those same bricks. Ours ended up looking like a French flag, but I think the architecture in me didn't allow us to fall as soon as possible. We made it to level 10 out of 11. That is probably a signing moment for me in that show.

[00:10:36] TG: Yeah, I think that's pretty amazing. I mean, to make it to the final episode. I want to ask you, too, how does design play a part in your Lego creations, things like color theory, and whatever else comes to mind?

[00:10:50] RW: I also explained this to some co-workers at work, too. Because they were surprised to see my Lego studio at home. The thing that I love most about Lego is that there is no business value tied to whatever I'm creating. There's no experience brief that I have to consult every time. It's really just out of my mind. However, whatever budget I have for the pieces is really the most important thing. When it comes to stuff that I might create, I definitely think about contrast, not just within the piece, but where it's going to be placed.

If I'm building a Lego creation, and I'm just having it in my studio, like my walls are white. It really don't matter what colors I use and employ in that model, because it's going to contrast and pop off the wall. If it is a reference to something in pop culture, then I'll probably use some of those colors that people would expect to see, so that it evokes that same emotion and uses that same visual language.

Color theory is a thing. In Lego, I think, it's been used to great effect in every single set. The same thing I was talking about earlier, when it comes to patterns, and thinking about the colors

that you might expect something to be. If you make a deliberate choice to make a flower stem, for example, you might expect that to be green. If you're making a choice for that to be purple, or yellow, or red, then that's a specific design choice that you're making, that is probably a reflection of how you're thinking about the rest of the model and the emotion that you want to evoke in somebody. Because if you're doing that, then you might be building something more fantastical than realistic.

The things that I like to build are very realistic. I also think about scale and how you play with that within the model. If you're building something that's out of scale, to something relative to what's in the model, then that's a very specific and deliberate design choice. You can build forced perspective in it, depending on how you want other people to engage with it. If you want people to be able to walk around it, to see a 360 view, if you just want people to see one side. If you build something on the back, but you're only wanting people to build something on the front, that's time and money and effort wasted. All of that is incorporated into what I build and how I build it.

[00:13:27] TG: Wow. There's so much strategy to creating Legos, like officially, the masterpieces that you create, you have to be so deliberate with your color choices that help with the balance. Also, to the scaling. I would imagine, that must be a big struggle of just thinking of in your head. Do you usually have to sketch things up whenever you're going through the strategy process?

[00:13:51] RW: I like to sketch. I like to sketch a lot, because again, I just like to build things that are realistic and don't seem out of whack. I'm looking at something that I had to build just now, if I'm building a chair, and if I'm building a medium, I don't know what's a medium size, so you can understand. Maybe four by four inches, a chair. Then I put a minifig in that chair, that's super out of scale, right? Or, maybe that's something that you're doing on purpose to emphasize something, or make commentary.

There's something that I'm building right now, that is based on Michael Jackson's Leave Me Alone music video. The racket that's in that video is something that I'm building, and thinking about how I might represent other scenes through the video. Are those going to be smaller than the racket? Are they going to be bigger? What parts of the video I want to include in it to satisfy,

both my friends that are into MJ and also, my friends that are into Lego? Stuff like that comes into play.

[00:14:56] TG: I just want to highlight your online Lego store that you co-run with custom hip-hop-inspired Legos. If any of y'all are interested, they have a website up. It's called mostincrediblestud.io. I'll have that link in the show notes, if y'all want to go and check it out. Those things are hot. I haven't seen Legos like that before. It goes back to the anything is possible thought. You don't think of what you can create with Legos, until you see it. It's like, "Whoa, that's amazing."

[00:15:34] RW: I think, I have to imagine that that's probably one of the things that helped us get on the show, is that unique quality, or the unique perspective that we have, that we employ Lego for. I was always making my own stuff. Then Syreeta, basically came around and said, "Oh, I think it would be dope to make some hip-hop art pieces." She she's really the one that's connecting us to opportunities and getting our name out there, building everything and making sure that we highlight and celebrate the people in the moments in the culture that we think should be celebrated and are fun to build as well. We've been doing this for a couple years, and we got more stuff coming up, hopefully, including minifigs.

[00:16:26] TG: Awesome. Just to say that company name again, it's called Most Incredible, and the link will be in the show notes. You've been working at Capital One about 10 years now, correct me if I'm wrong?

[00:16:37] RW: That's right. Since September 12, 2011.

[00:16:41] TG: Wow. Over time, I saw you've transitioned to multiple positions at the company. Long tenure seems less common these days, actually. I was surprised when I saw you've been there so long, with companies competing, attracting talent for various reasons. I think, that's one of the hot topics in tech right now, actually, is how to lower employee turnover rates. I'm curious, what have been some of the biggest factors for you to stay at Capital One all these years?

[00:17:10] RW: Number one, and this is everybody. I heard this years ago, and I think everybody would say this is true. People don't leave jobs, they leave managers.

[00:17:20] TG: Oh, my God. You are right. I'm thinking about every job I left was because of the manager.

[00:17:30] RW: I'm very grateful to have had great, personable, insightful, vulnerable, strong leadership in my time here at Capital One. That's really been the main thing that's kept me here, on top of giving me opportunities to grow and do things and do more things that either I didn't think was possible, or things I wanted to do. Being at Capital One was – If I'm completely honest, if I never answered a random email in my spam folder, from probably July, it was July 5th, 2011. I remember the day, because I found the email a few days ago. If I'd never responded to that random email, I would not be here.

I just took a chance, had never really heard of Capital One. Never heard of Richmond, Virginia. I was also ready to leave Atlanta at the time, and move into Richmond, work in a Capital One, and having leadership that allowed me to grow and learn in the role, and didn't have ridiculous expectations of me. That is why I've been here. Then just having side of desk work to do to fulfill some of the goals that I had.

I've been able to grow, as you've probably seen professionally, over these past 10 years to where now I've been a manager at this at this company, and in this design department. It's been a really good journey. I've learned a lot. I learned a lot about leading people. I've learned a lot about reaching across the aisle and working with cross functional partners, and learning the business of design. It's been a really good ride so far.

[00:19:19] TG: You've been promoted many times over the years. Getting back into growth, what has growth look like for you at Capital One? How do you continue to find ways to grow?

[00:19:30] RW: I think, Capital One came along at a good time, where I was getting into front-end developing. I'll even learn that, because some friends of mine needed a website for some music they were putting out. I was the only person that they knew that was even close to knowing how to develop a website, or code for one. Pairing my design with my development, curiosity and skills made me a good fit for that role.

Over time, being able to employ those skills and then start getting in rooms where decisions are made about strategy and intent, allowed me to grow into more of a UX designer, and not just focus on the execution and putting stuff out, but talking about what the goals are? Why are you doing this? Is this the right approach? Is this the right solution even? Being able to propose things and suggest things that are ultimately, adopted by bi-product and other creatives that end up seeing the end-up in the inboxes of our customers has been eye opening, to know that, yes, these things that I've had the experience to be able to speak to, end up being successfully deployed, and having our customers interact and engage with it in order to fulfill their goals.

The growth has been invaluable, because I don't know that I ever knew that this would have been a job for me back in college. I remember, in college learning about – there was a computational media major that was launched, maybe my second year of college, but I was still in love with architecture. Didn't know what that was going to be. Now, seeing the dots connect, I probably would have shifted over into that major earlier.

[00:21:23] TG: Yeah. I didn't know about UX in college, either. I studied in graphic design. It's so funny, I'd hear this from a lot of more seasoned professionals that are more self-taught into UX. It's just, the exposure wasn't there. I think, it's just a lot of people, I guess, didn't know how to teach it. Or, maybe it was just because it was still being developed at the time. It's just so interesting how a lot of us is more of fulfilling a need at the company, which is how I got into it, through Jeremy. He was the one who had told me like, "Hey, you keep asking about this in meetings. What you're asking about is UX. I think, you'd be interested in it." That's how I got into it. There was a position at the company that I was able to level up and get into.

Let's take a short break.

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[00:22:12] TG: One of the top questions I get about product design is how do I stay inspired? The other day, I decided to take inventory of what I'm doing routinely. The biggest thing that stood out to me was how I'm always investing time to understand products that are advancing in design and technology.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:23:06] TG: For someone looking to get promoted at their job, what are some skills you think that they need to level up in their UX career?

[00:23:14] RW: Oh. For somebody that's looking to get promoted in their career. I would say, it's not enough to just be good at the job and do the, by the book, responsibilities that you have on your plate. It wasn't just enough for me to develop these emails, crank them out, or design these emails, develop them, crank them out.

Having an opinion, and also having good enough communication to share that opinion, and also tailor it depending on the audience you're speaking to, is key. Because what happens with design in corporate America, at least in my experience, is you have to get people the why a lot and tie it to something that is tangible for them. What's tangible for the business might not be the same thing as tangible for product, might not be the same thing as tangible for tech. Knowing what motivates your partners, and being able to speak to those things to get buy-in and ultimately, advocacy for your ideas is important.

Communication is one. General soft skills, I guess, is two, because I don't think anybody wants to work with somebody that's, I'll say, mean. I'm not going to cuss on here, but hopefully, y'all know what I really want to say.

[00:24:39] TG: You can cuss on here.

[00:24:43] RW: Nobody wants to work with an asshole. Don't be that person. That's number one. Number two is communication. Number three, being able to tie design to business intent. I

think, sometimes designers love getting in the how might we question weeds, and think about, “Oh, how might we do X to end up doing Y?” Wax poetic on the purpose of design. How do we become better designers?

The way that you get promoted in design, at least in corporate America is learning the business, and caring about the business, enough to see through the matrix, is what I call it, to be able to insert your design opinion, and articulate that, for people to understand and not just sit around a fire and sing Kumbaya about design. This is more than that.

[00:25:43] TG: Yes, I completely agree with everything you said. I want to add on, just being able to adapt is so important. It goes into what you were saying, Randall, about the business needs, because sometimes they're not looking for someone necessarily to be a UX researcher. Maybe they're specifically wanting someone to be more heavy on the design side. Just being able to figure out what new skills you might need to learn, maybe it's a little course online, or YouTube videos, whatever is out there that fits that need for you to learn that education.

[00:26:16] RW: I would also say, too, that, you sparked a thought in my head, that even at my big, old age and being a manager, and I've heard this even from people, leaders that are at higher levels than me. Imposter syndrome is still real. It's always going to be there.

[00:26:32] TG: Like you were saying?

[00:26:35] RW: Yes. It's always going to be there. If you have that syndrome, that's a good thing. Don't think about it as a bad thing. There's a way to lead with candor, in my experience, that puts everybody at ease. Sometimes, we feel like we should know everything. If not everything, then we should know certain things at a certain time, like three, six months into a job, or a year, two, into a job.

Yes, that's fairly true. You can still ask questions for clarity, that will probably and most likely, end up helping somebody else in the room, that is either new, or doesn't have the same context that you think you should have. If you have that imposter syndrome, that means that you are consistently looking for opportunities to learn, which is how I've started shifting that thought about imposter syndrome.

It's okay to not know everything, and it's okay to say to people that you don't know everything, because then, you can start engaging with people without that mask of, "Oh, yeah. I'm competent. I'm the smartest designer ever. I know XYZ, ABC." It's really hard to relate to people that way, just on a human level. That's really where work gets done, in my experience. Those are some things that I think would be helpful for people to think about, as they think about their career matriculation.

[00:28:02] TG: Yeah. For junior designers listening, I want to touch on a part Randall said about, it's okay to say you don't know. Because I feel like, a lot of students coming out of college, because you have to defend your designs and design critiques, you get in this mentality of like, if someone is questioning you on something, even if you don't know, you feel you have to BS your way through it. You don't do that in interviews.

I've had some people in the past do that. It comes across as like, "Oh, my gosh." If you're going through a problem and you don't know, or you're not going to lean on your team for help, it doesn't come across so good. Yeah, as Randall said, the imposter syndrome keeps you growing, keeps you curious. Just lean into that uncomfortable feeling of it.

[00:28:47] RW: Do you have an imposter syndrome story?

[00:28:50] TG: Oh, my God. I have a whole episode on imposter syndrome. I think, I talk about in almost every episode. My listeners know, I deal with this. I struggle with this. No matter how much level, how high I get, I'm always going to feel like, "Oh, my God. Did you see that hottest design on Dribbble? Can I do something like that?" There's always the syndrome, "Oh, my God." You design is out-designing me. I don't know anything. There's always said imposter, especially too, you have moments in meetings, where a client will really stump you on a question, you're like, "Oh, crap. Am I supposed to know that? Is it okay to say I don't know?" It is okay. You can always do that. I'll follow up on that. I'm sure there's a reason for why it's done this way, and I'll circle back after this meeting with you. It's okay.

[00:29:45] RW: I lean into that all the time. If there's something that I'm not aware of, or I don't know, then I may ask the person that might expect me to know. I'll just ask, what's missing in my

knowledge for me to have known that? What is something that I need to read, or go find, or somebody I need to talk to, to fill that gap in my understanding? On top of saying, I don't know the answer, so that I can follow up with an action, and let them know that I'm not just sitting on my hands and just saying, "I don't know," and not doing anything about it.

[00:30:27] TG: Yes. I feel like, too, this comes up a lot with if you're ever doing user research, like let's say, you propose like, okay, this is the direction. Every time you have a meeting, you have to sound so confident like, "Yes, this is what we're doing." Then, you have to remember that you're going to get the responses from the users if you're testing something with them, and it's always going to come back with something like, "Oh. Well, we were wrong here." Then you give them directions like, "Okay, this is where we're going to go," and then you're confident in that new direction. It's always a cycle of you presenting something that you believe works to the best of your knowledge. Then, you go and test it and then you say like, "Okay, that thing was wrong. Here's the new thing that's right."

I think too, there's a little imposter syndrome that comes with that. It was like, "Oh, crap. I don't know what I'm doing, because I told them this is right. Then, He's just telling us that it's wrong." That's just part of the cycle of creating a better product.

[00:31:26] RW: Yes, yes. Because everybody, like I was saying before, everybody comes to it from different contexts and different schools of knowledge. Questions are one of the best tools in your repertoire as a designer.

[00:31:40] TG: Listeners, Randall is also the co-founder of HUE Design Summit, which is a multi-day conference created for designers and developers of color. As you all know, there's not many black and people of color at most tech companies. Resources like this summit are really powerful to show novice designers that we're out here. I can imagine what inspired you, Randall, and your other founders to create this conference. What were some of the deciding factors that led you to co-found the HUE Design Summit?

[00:32:16] RW: It was two things. Number one, Tiffany Ricks, she knows Alfonzo Jordan, my other founder from Travel Noir. She wanted to find a way to make a retreat for black people, if not black designers, specifically. That was half of it. The other half, and this is before I knew

Tiffany, Alfonzo. and I were talking about what it looks like to create a design agency to help create branding for black mom and pop establishment stores, restaurants, what have you shops, all of that.

The third contributing factor, so we have a group me that Alfonzo created of just black designers that he knew. We talk design in there, but we also employ some black shorthand on top of that, in the way that we talk about design. We don't talk about it in the way that we might be expected to talk about it in collegiate classrooms. We employ slang. We talk about it in the ways that it's comfortable to us. Alfonzo thought, "Okay, what does it look like to have this environment in person, physically, and have the same interaction model?" That's how the HUE Design Summit was born.

Then, it evolved into something that presented an alternative to conventions that we all usually go to that are super big, where there's hundreds, if not thousands of people. You might not be able to sit down and get to know somebody, because everything's moving so fast. Thinking about how do we make that space intimate, and emphasize quality over quantity, in terms of the relationship building. Not necessarily people when I talk about quality over quantity, so don't come for me. I'm talking about the ways that we talk to each other, and get to know people and have more in-depth conversation. That's been the goal, and we've been doing it for five years. We got five of them things under our belt. I didn't think we'd be able to get here, but we're here.

[00:34:28] TG: Wow. Amazing. They recently just had a summit. I think, it was a couple –

[00:34:32] RW: A couple weeks ago.

[00:34:35] TG: Yeah. Which is one of the biggest ones yet. If you guys are just now hearing about it for the first time, make sure you check out HUE Design Summit's website. I'll have that linked in the description. Randall, do you have any other advice for designers listening?

[00:34:50] RW: Any other advice for designers listening. Hmm. I would say, there's something that I always keep in mind, and it really removes anxiety from me anyway. It's that, I know that there's more things that I will never know than I will know in my lifetime. Yes, there's too much in

this world that is available to us. We're never going to know all of that. Being comfortable in not knowing is probably one of the greatest realizations that I've had in recent years.

I really settle, they're not lying to y'all when they say, when you hit your 30s, you really settle into that. It happened. I called BS on it, but it's true. It's true. I feel I feel more secure. I'm not the most confident. I won't say that. I'm secure in knowing that is a journey. That's probably something as well for people to consider. You're not going to know it all. You're not going to be on 10 at everything that you do. You need to be able to be a two or three at something to be a 10 at something else. Or else, you're going to be exhausted. Those are a couple things that I've realized in my what, 35th year of existence, that have served me well, and I think, contribute to me looking 25, instead of 35. I don't stress much.

[00:36:35] TG: Man. I got to apply that principle to my life. I'm doing some deep thinking over here, Randall. Because I feel like, I've always been in that mode of like, "Oh, my gosh. New thing? I need to learn it." I think too, it's just that imposter syndrome of not wanting to feel irrelevant at a company. It's just, you're so right. You don't have to know everything. You don't have to have every single skill. Of course, it's great to have multiple skills, but you don't have to do everything.

[00:37:09] RW: I would say that everybody doesn't have to have a personal mantra, but it helps me keep track of the things that I deem important in my life. Mine is just three things. Number one, be of service. Number two, express myself honestly. Number three, make dope shit. As long as I'm able to do two out of the three things at any stop that I have in my career, I'm going to be all right.

[00:37:38] TG: I love your mantra. I'm going to steal the last one.

[00:37:43] RW: It's free. Go ahead.

[00:37:45] TG: Thank you. All right, next we'll get into listener questions. I asked what Instagram stories, what questions do you have for our guests today. Here's what some of you had to say. The first one is from OnlyRolled_. They asked, what do you think the future of UI/UX is?

[00:38:07] RW: When I hear questions like this, I think about, these are the type of questions that we have around the design campfire, is what I call it, when I was talking earlier. This is something that, I think, it pays to pay attention to trends and stuff like that. Hopefully, this answers your question. I'm very curious about UX/UI in the world of virtual and augmented reality. Thinking about UX and UI that is adaptable, and it changes context based on the customer user actions, and designing for that, this is already happening for the most part, but in terms of delivering upon customers' expectations as of late in this new generation, in terms of having a personal experience, a personalized and relevant experience, is key.

I use VR and AR as an example. What I really mean is designing for those personalized and relevant experiences from person-to-person. Instead of delivering a one-size-fits-all dashboard, or look, or experience.

[00:39:25] TG: The next question is from Nydia.1. They asked, how do you apply lateral learning to graphic design, or architecture? For example, do principles in architecture help your graphic design, or do graphic design principles help the usability of architecture?

[00:39:42] RW: I'll speak to the architecture going into graphic design. Hierarchy is probably one of the most important things that I think are important competencies that are transmissible across different fields of design.

Having a hierarchy and understanding what's most important for people to see, what's least important for people to see, what is necessary was not necessary working. You add some flourishes and show off in a way. Those are things that I learned in undergrad in architecture, excuse me.

For example, in architecture, you got to start with the bones, more or less. You have to know, okay, this is square footage, this is how many bathrooms you have, this is how many rooms you're probably going to have. This is where the egress is. This is where the ingress. This is where the stairs are. Then, also, thinking about context, right? Where is this building? Where's the sun coming from? What's the elevation like across the whole site? What are the buildings

surrounding it? Doing light study around it. Graphic design terms, who's going to see this flyer? Or who's the customer for this website? What actions do they look to perform?

It's a lot of that type of stuff that helped my transition from architecture into graphic design, and eventually, user experience design. Just, context is key across everything. If you know the context, then you can design from that and start backwards. I imagine that going from graphic design to architecture is probably the same thing, in terms of those particulars of design that I mentioned, and understanding that what's relevant, use that. What's not relevant, toss that out.

[00:41:35] TG: The next question and final question is from ClaudiaChu16. They said, "Tolu, I love listening to your podcast." Thank you. "I'm a fourth-year architecture student and graphic designer, transitioning into UI/UX. I'd to ask how the design process compares between arch and UX. What components from each discipline, do you think can benefit the other?"

[00:42:01] RW: Yeah. I would say, some of the same things, like hierarchy and context and understanding audience and doing your research ahead of time. The other thing, she mentioned that she was architecture major and into graphic design. I would also emphasize that the print design, which they might be learning, when they say graphic design is very different from UI design, which is digital. It's still in 2021, there are print designers that still design things for digital experiences that do not translate well, when it comes to understanding things, like finger size, like how big buttons should be, how big text should be, or not, what type of fonts to use, or not, what type of colors and color combinations to use, or not. These are things that are still happening.

I hope that they take time, which they probably our, since we're talking about UX, take time to understand those differences between graphic and UI/UX design. I think, they talked about, like they said, the similarities between architecture and UX.

The other thing that I forgot to mention as well is psychology, understanding human psychology, and what feelings you want to evoke from people. This is something that is probably another key aspect that can be transferred between architecture and UX. Like, when you move through a physical space, in terms of architecture. Everything is designed for a reason. Good design is invisible, bad design is not.

Thinking about yes, how design looks, but also, how design works. How design works is probably the key link between architecture and UX. How are people moving through your digital experience, to eventually get them to feel the way that either you want them to feel, or they want to feel, and designing for that.

[00:44:08] TG: That's all the listener questions for this week. As a reminder, you could be included in the next episode. Make sure to follow me on Instagram @UINarrative and Twitter @UInarrativeCo. I randomly ask questions that could be featured in an upcoming episode.

I'd like to end the show with a random question, completely unrelated to what we've been talking about. Randall, if you were an Olympic athlete, what sport would you compete in?

[00:44:37] RW: With my current athletic abilities, or like, if I –

[00:44:39] TG: Let's say, you were blessed with whatever you wanted.

[00:44:45] RW: Okay, let's see. If I touch the monster ball and got powers like that, I probably would do skateboarding. I was of the generation of kids that got caught up in the skateboarding Tony Hawk craze of the late 90s, early 2000s. I used to play Tony Hawk's Pro Skater all the time. Yes.

[00:45:08] TG: That's a good game.

[00:45:09] RW: Yeah. They just came out with one and two for PS4.

[00:45:13] TG: I know. I saw that.

[00:45:15] RW: Yeah. I haven't bought it yet, but that's definitely on the list, because I love those games. I would probably be a skateboarder, because I love the concept of just riding certain lines to be able to get height on the halfpipe and do all those tricks, and a thrill. Because you could also get hurt and hurt something serious. If you're really good, then you can make what looks hard, look really easy.

[00:45:45] TG: Right, right. For me, today I'm feeling like a synchronized swimmer.

[00:45:52] RW: Ooh, do you swim?

[00:45:53] TG: No. I doubt.

[00:45:56] RW: Okay, so you touch the monster ball, too. Got it.

[00:45:58] TG: Definitely. It is though, on my bucket list assignment for adult swimming lessons. Because one of my cousin's did it. Now, she's swimming laps around the pool and under the water, and I'm like, my mind is blown. Because before, she would shake when she gets close to the pool.

[00:46:16] RW: Have you ever taken swimming lessons?

[00:46:18] TG: I did, but it was free and from YMCA, and they sucked. I had to go to pay the route and get one-on-one instruction, because I was still sinking to the bottom at the end of those lessons. Yeah, synchronized swimmer for me. I love watching them in the current Olympics. It's just so fascinating to me how their breathing techniques. I don't understand how they train for that to be able to hold their breath for so long, then just take one breath and be good.

[00:46:49] RW: Yeah. All that training for four years, just to do however many minutes, right? That's intense. That's really intense.

[00:46:57] TG: Where can we connect with you online?

[00:46:59] RW: You can find me on Instagram @therockfiles. No, I'm not Dwayne Johnson. It's probably the entry right under his. He's damn near a whole foot taller than me, so I'm definitely not that guy. You can also find me on LinkedIn under my government name. I'm on Twitter @rw2designs.

[00:47:27] TG: I forgot to ask earlier, is Capital One hiring right now for junior, or senior designers?

[00:47:34] RW: Oh, yeah. We're hiring. We got some people on a team right now. We need a UX/UI designer. I think, we need a content designer. When I say content designer, these can be people that have typically held copywriter roles, or anything to do with the written word. People like that. Yeah, we're hiring.

[00:47:58] TG: Okay, here you go guys. Y'all better come correct. I've taught you all how to do your portfolio. I've taught you how to reach out to people. Go back and re-listen to those episodes, and you know he's a direct connection, if you follow the instruction.

[00:48:12] RW: Yeah. Let me know if you need me to help you as well, if you're trying to come –

[00:48:15] TG: Hey, that's even better, y'all.

[00:48:16] RW: If you're trying to come to death row. Come on.

[00:48:22] TG: No hold back, Randall. Now, the listeners know. I've already torn them up several times, telling them how to put portfolios together. If you guys have any questions, or comments about today's episode, make sure to tag Randall on his social handles, which will be in the show notes. Also, to follow him and make sure to tag me @UINarrative on Instagram, or Twitter @UInarrativeCo. Also, don't forget to share this episode with anyone you think would benefit from it. Did you have something to say Randall?

[00:48:52] RW: Yes, you can find HUE Design Summit on Twitter and Instagram @huedesignsummit. Most Incredible on Instagram @mostincrediblestudio.

[00:49:02] TG: Those links will also be in the show notes. I appreciate you so much, Randall, for taking the time to join us on this episode. UI Narrative is big time now, you all. We got people from TV shows come on the road.

[00:49:18] RW: So they say. I'm glad that I was deemed worthy of being on UI Narrative. Thank you for having me.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:49:28] TG: Thank you for listening to the UI Narrative Podcast. If you like what you hear, make sure to show this podcast some love, by commenting and subscribing where you listen. You can find me on Instagram and Facebook @UInarrative, or Twitter @UInarrativeCo. I also respond to emails at hello@uinarrative.com. Talk to you later. Bye.

[END]