

4 Designing the Web

“Consider the fact that Google processes over one billion search queries every day, that every minute, over 100 hours of footage are uploaded to YouTube.”



Margaret Gould Stewart
User experience designer, TED speaker

UNIT GOALS

In this unit, you will ...

- talk about digital products and how they are designed.
- read about designing websites for millions of people.
- watch a TED Talk about designing for all kinds of users.

WARM UP

▶ **4.1** Watch part of Margaret Gould Stewart's TED Talk. Answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 What examples of classic design can you think of?
- 2 What do you think Stewart means by designs that “live inside your pocket”?

4A Technology and design

VOCABULARY Describing website features

A ▶ **4.2** Complete the labels using the words in the box. Then listen and check your answers.

search
rate

browse
button

review
log in

download
logo

This is the website's ¹ _____.

Use the ² _____ box to look for posts you're interested in.

Enter your user name and password to ³ _____.

Click on the "share" ⁵ _____ to send the link to someone else.

You can ⁶ _____ the recipe by clicking on this icon.

Click on one of these icons to ⁷ _____ the post.

You can ⁴ _____ the sidebar for the latest posts.

Click to read the ⁸ _____ of a café.

B Complete the sentences. Circle the correct words.

- 1 McDonald's golden arches and Starbucks's mermaid are examples of famous (**logos** / **buttons**).
- 2 A lot of people go online to write (**downloads** / **reviews**) of the products they buy.
- 3 Customers usually (**rate** / **log in**) a product based on price and how user-friendly it is.
- 4 It's easy to look for information by (**downloading** / **browsing**) the Web.

C Work with a partner. What kinds of apps do you usually download? Have you ever written an online review?

I usually download news apps. I like to keep up with current events.

I prefer downloading gaming apps. My favorite is ...

LISTENING *Designing websites*

Stating your points

Here are some commonly used phrases for listing points.

First/Second, ... Also, ... One other thing is ...

A ▶ **4.3** Watch web designer Carrie Cousins talk about the work she does. How does she define “user experience”? Discuss with a partner.

B ▶ **4.4** Watch Cousins talk about the things she focuses on when designing a website. Match them to their explanations.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 functionality | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | The content is nice to look at. |
| 2 readability | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | The website solves a user problem. |
| 3 usability | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | The website is easy to navigate. |

C CRITICAL THINKING

Evaluating Work with a partner. What other things do you think are important to consider when designing a website? Why?



Carrie Cousins has more than 15 years of experience in the media industry.

SPEAKING *Talking about making decisions*

A ▶ **4.5** How did Speaker B decide what product to buy?

A: Hey, is that a new tablet? I didn't know you had one.

B: Yeah, I *looked around* and *finally decided on this one*.

A: It looks great. How did you decide which one to get?

B: Well, I *checked out* the company's website and watched their promotional videos. I *also read* a lot of reviews online.

A: Did you compare prices?

B: Yeah, this model is the best, I think. It's not the most expensive, and it has pretty good features for the price.

A: What do you like most about it?

B: The size. It's smaller than standard tablets, so I *can easily* carry it around.

B Practice the conversation with a partner.

C Work with a partner. Think of something you bought recently and describe your experience. Use the expressions in *blue* above to help you.

I bought a new pair of earphones over the weekend.

How did you decide which ones to get?

I looked around online and then ...

4B

User experience

LANGUAGE FOCUS *Discussing the influence of user reviews*

A ▶ **4.6** Read the information. How often do you buy something online? How important are user reviews to you?

THE POWER OF USER REVIEWS

A survey in the United States shows that user reviews can have a strong influence on buyers' decision making.



Consumers **TRUST** customer reviews **12 TIMES MORE** than manufacturers' descriptions.

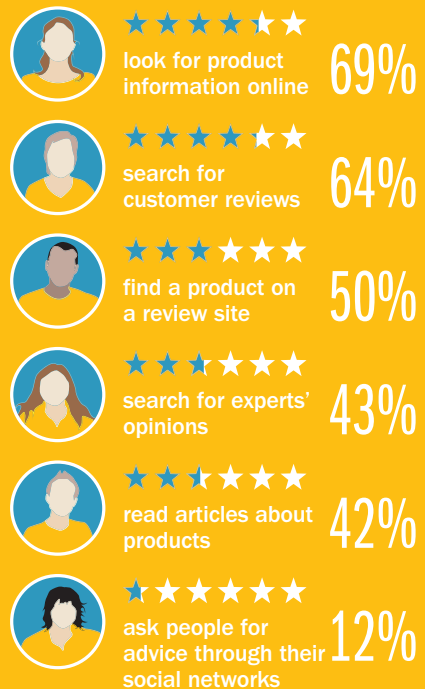


Customers who read reviews are **105% MORE LIKELY** to make a purchase and will spend **11% MORE** on that product.



45% of travelers **PLAN THEIR TRIPS** based on reviews.

HOW CONSUMERS SEEK OUT PURCHASING ADVICE:



B ▶ **4.7** Listen to the conversation. What do the speakers decide to do? Discuss with a partner.

C ▶ **4.8** Watch and study the language in the chart.

Comparing products and services

I think using a navigation app is *easier than* looking at a printed map.
 I think it's *much more efficient* to work on a desktop *than* on a tablet computer.
 Many consumers search online for *the best* product available before buying.
 Some smartphones are *just as expensive as* laptops these days.
 These days, people use their phones in *very different* ways *from* just ten years ago.
 Smartphones today have pretty much *the same* functions *as* computers.

For more information on **making comparisons**, see Grammar Summary 4 on pages 184–185.

D ▶ **4.7** Listen to the conversation in **B** again. Circle the correct words.

- 1 The woman is (**as confident as** / **more confident than**) the man about the reliability of online reviews.
- 2 The man thinks that checking out the restaurant in person is (**better than** / **not as good as**) reading online reviews.

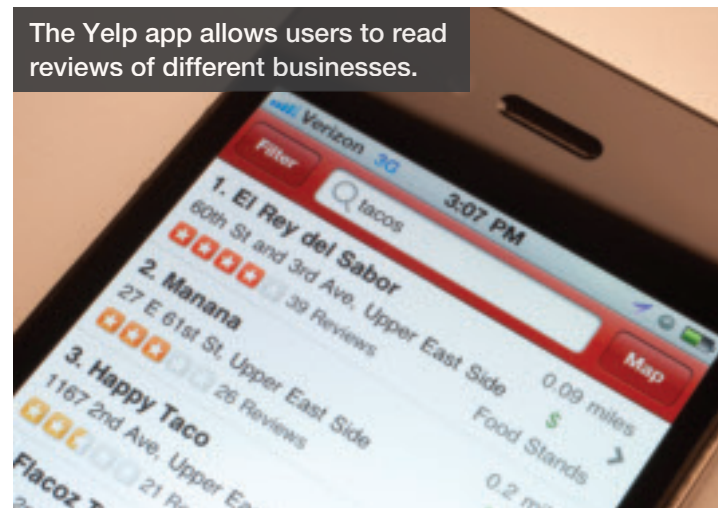
E Complete the sentences to make comparisons. Add suitable comparison words as necessary.

- 1 Sometimes, cheaper products may be just _____ (reliable) more expensive products—the price may not mean a difference in quality.
- 2 One of the _____ (important) things in website design is making it easy for users to find information.
- 3 Online prices are usually _____ (not, expensive) store prices.
- 4 I bought a shirt online, but when it arrived, it was _____ (different) how it looked in the pictures.
- 5 Some people think shopping at an actual store is _____ (good) buying things online because they can touch and try out the products.

F ▶ **4.9** Complete the information. Circle the correct words. Then listen and check your answers.

It has become a lot ¹(**more** / **better**) common for consumers to look for reviews online when making decisions on what to buy. It helps them find out what other people think of a restaurant or an item they have bought. According to a survey, consumers think that customer reviews are 12 times ²(**more trustworthy than** / **most trustworthy**) the manufacturer's product description. The growing influence of online reviews means that businesses have to work hard to provide the ³(**better** / **best**) products to stay competitive. Online comparison sites also make it ⁴(**as easy as** / **easier than**) before for consumers to compare prices. They can quickly find out if a business is charging them ⁵(**as different as** / **the same as**) others for a product or service.

The Yelp app allows users to read reviews of different businesses.



SPEAKING Making decisions based on user reviews

A Work with a partner. You are planning to buy a virtual reality headset. Turn to page 168 and read the reviews of two products. Discuss the following questions.

- 1 What features do you think are most important?
- 2 How do the products compare in terms of the features you're looking for?

B Decide which product you would buy. Describe the product you chose and give reasons for your choice.

I chose number 1. It's lighter and cheaper, so ...

Having a lot of features is good, but the price ...

4C Website design on a giant scale

PRE-READING Skimming

Skim the article. The purpose of the article is to _____.

- a explain how difficult it is to design huge websites
- b discuss some lessons in huge website design
- c explore the common challenges of digital design

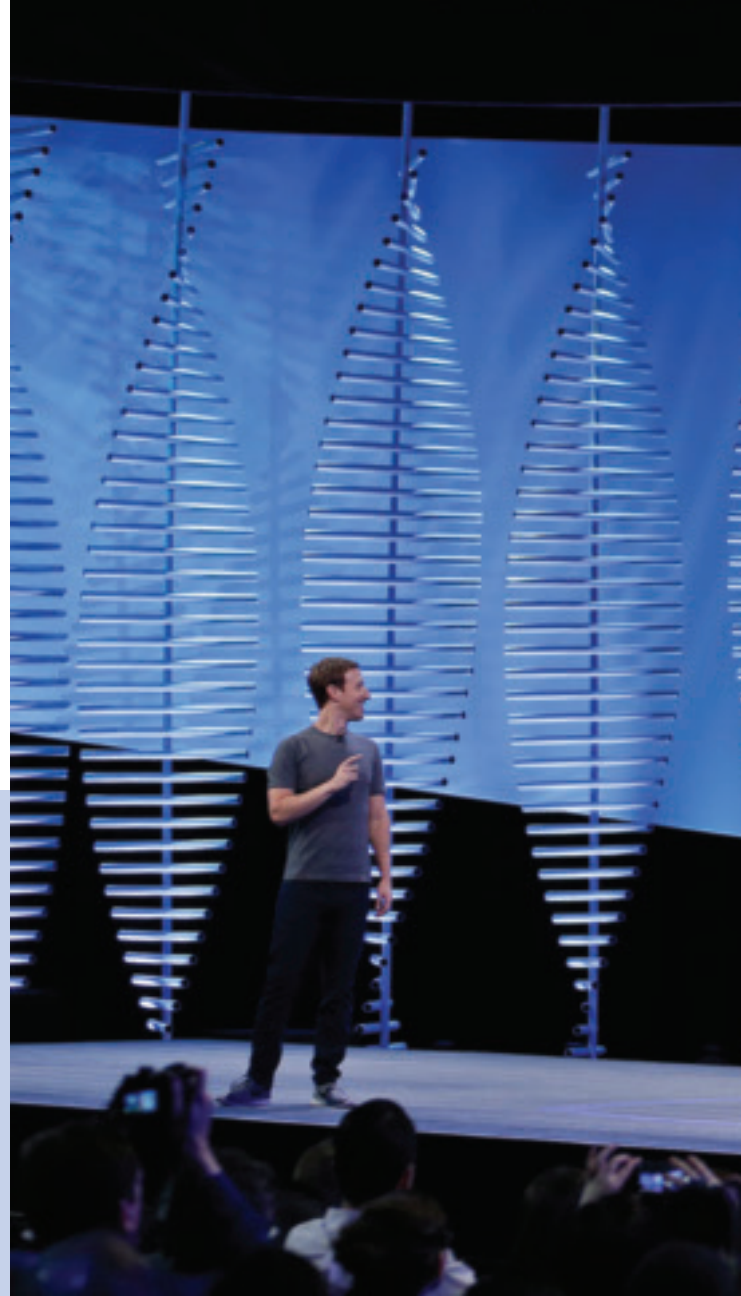
▶ 4.10

1 Margaret Gould Stewart has designed for some of the giants of the Internet, including Google, YouTube, and Facebook. Here are two lessons she has learned
5 from her experience designing for Internet users.

LOOK BEYOND DATA

For a long time, Facebook had a tool that allowed people to report photos as **spam** or abuse.¹ But of the cases reported, only a small percentage of
10 the photos were actually offensive.² One of the designers on the team felt there probably was a reason for this, so he studied the cases carefully. He found that in most cases users just didn't like the photos of themselves their friends had posted,
15 and wanted them taken down. To enable people to report cases like these, the Facebook team added a new feature. This feature allowed people to message their friends to ask them to take the photo down. But only 20 percent of people used
20 the function.

The team worked on the case further—it spoke to communications experts and studied rules of polite language. It discovered that users didn't just want to tell their friends to take the
25 photo down—they wanted to tell their friends how the photo made them feel. So the team made a



small change. People could select a message to explain why they didn't like it, such as, "It's embarrassing." This small change had a huge
30 **impact**—60 percent of people who reported photos used the function. Surveys showed that people on both sides of the conversation felt better as a result.

While data about how people are using a
35 product can help designers make decisions, it isn't always as simple as following the numbers. Other factors such as intuition,³ research, and testing of design are equally important. As Stewart points out, "Data can help you make a
40 good design great, but it will never make a bad design good."



Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, introducing the new features of its messaging app

INTRODUCE CHANGE CAREFULLY

At one time, YouTube was looking for ways to **encourage** more people to rate videos. When

45 Stewart and her team looked into the data, they found that most people were only using either the highest rating (five stars) or the lowest rating (one star). Almost no one was using two, three, or four stars. So the team decided to simplify the rating—it

50 gave users a choice between good or bad: thumbs up or thumbs down.

YouTube tried to prepare people for this change by sharing data about how the five-star rating system wasn't being used as intended. It

55 announced that it was going to change the system to match user behavior. When the change was

made, it was still **frustrating** for some users as they had become **attached** to the old design. However, because of the preparatory steps taken earlier, it

60 was easier for YouTube to get users to accept the change.

This experience shows that even when huge websites try to manage change carefully, it's impossible to completely avoid negative responses.

65 Any changes—even small improvements—need to be introduced carefully.

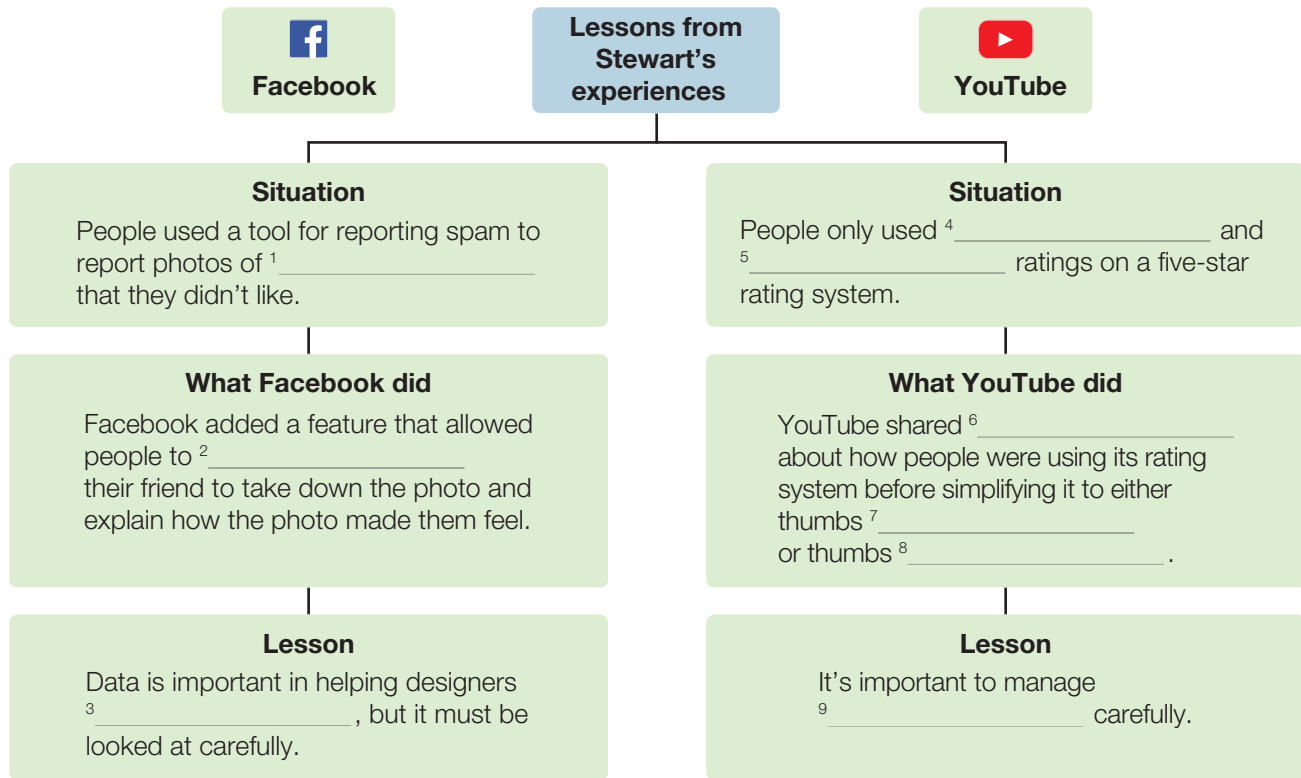
¹ **abuse**: *n.* improper use of something

² **offensive**: *adj.* making someone feel hurt or uncomfortable

³ **intuition**: *n.* a natural feeling about something

SUMMARIZING KEY POINTS

Complete the diagram summarizing Margaret Gould Stewart's experiences.



BUILDING VOCABULARY

A Match the words in blue from the passage to their definitions.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 spam | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | an effect |
| 2 impact | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | having a strong liking for something |
| 3 encourage | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | unwanted emails |
| 4 frustrating | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | annoying, irritating |
| 5 attached | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | to make someone more likely to do something |

B Complete the sentences using the words in A.

- 1 I get more _____ than regular emails.
- 2 YouTube made its rating system simpler to _____ more people to rate videos.
- 3 Creative innovations can have a big _____ on how people interact with one another.
- 4 Some people may find learning how to use a new cell phone a(n) _____ experience.
- 5 Many people become emotionally _____ to their smartphones.

C CRITICAL THINKING

Inferring Why do you think more people sent a message to their friend after Facebook allowed them to explain how the photo made them feel? Discuss with a partner.

4D

How giant websites design for you (and a billion others, too)

TED TALKS

MARGARET GOULD STEWART has spent her career asking the question, “How do we design user experiences that change the world?” She has managed user experiences for some of the most visited websites in the world, including YouTube and Facebook. The wide reach of these websites means that Stewart has had to deal with **unprecedented** challenges and **constraints**.

Margaret Gould Stewart’s idea worth spreading is that designing at a global **scale** requires both the **audacity** to believe your product is needed by the whole world, and the **humility** to understand that your audience is far more important than you as a designer.



PREVIEWING

Read the paragraphs above. Match each **bold** word to its meaning. You will hear these words in the TED Talk.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | the quality of not being proud | _____ |
| 2 | confidence or courage to take risks | _____ |
| 3 | the size or level of something | _____ |
| 4 | things that limit what you can do | _____ |
| 5 | not done before or hasn’t happened in the past | _____ |

VIEWING

A ▶ **4.11** Watch Part 1 of the TED Talk. Check (✓) the sentences about design challenges that Margaret Gould Stewart mentions.

- Designers need to believe that their products are something the world wants.
- Users differ greatly in the kinds of things they want.
- Designers must understand that their work may have an important impact on people’s lives.
- There are no fixed ways of doing things or guaranteed success when designing at scale.

B ▶ **4.12** Watch Part 2 of the TED Talk. Which of the following describes the lesson learned from designing the Facebook “Like” button?

- a When you are designing on a huge scale, every detail—no matter how small it seems—is important.
- b It’s necessary to spend a lot of time and effort redesigning elements many times in order to make sure that the overall design fits the brand image.
- c The smallest design details are the most important when designing on a huge scale, and you need to get the best designers to work on them.

C ▶ **4.13** Watch Part 3 of the TED Talk. Check (✓) the information Margaret Gould Stewart is likely to agree with.

People who design at scale _____ .

- need to design for low-end cell phones
- should try using their products in different languages
- need to try out their products on both old and new phones
- should find ways to cut costs

D CRITICAL THINKING

Inferring Margaret Gould Stewart describes her work as something that isn’t always glamorous. What does this say about the work she does?

““ If you want to design for the whole world, you have to design for where people are, and not where you are. ””



VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

A ▶ **4.14** Watch the excerpts from the TED Talk. Choose the correct meaning of the words.

B Complete the sentences. Circle the correct words.

- 1 Designers can (**get their heads around** / **keep in touch with**) clients via email or social media.
- 2 Great designs are (**timeless** / **out of sync**)—they last forever.
- 3 Designers for huge websites should always (**keep in mind** / **get their heads around**) that change needs to be managed carefully.
- 4 It can be difficult to (**get your head around** / **keep in mind**) complicated computer terms unless they're explained simply.
- 5 I haven't done any design work in a while. I think I'm (**out of sync** / **keeping in touch**) with the latest trends in design.

PRESENTATION SKILLS *Asking the audience questions*

Ask your audience questions to keep them engaged and to encourage them to think about the topic. Questions sometimes begin with *So* or *Now*.

A ▶ **4.15** Watch part of Margaret Gould Stewart's TED Talk. Complete the questions she uses in her talk.

- 1 "What do you think of when _____?"
- 2 "Now, why would we spend so much time on _____?"
- 3 "So how do we keep this _____?"
- 4 "So what does it mean to _____?"

B Work with a partner. Take turns explaining the steps for doing something. Practice using questions in your explanation.

Do you often receive spam? Here's how you can prevent ...



4E Making suggestions

COMMUNICATE Improving user experiences

A Work in groups. Think of a website you've used that could be better designed. Brainstorm ways to improve the design to create a better user experience. Consider the following questions.

What's good about the website? _____

What doesn't work so well? Why? _____

How can it be redesigned to make it better for people to use? _____

B Describe the website your group chose to the class and suggest ways it can be improved.

Describing user experience

The website is not very user-friendly ... It's easy/difficult to navigate ...

It has a simple/complicated design ... The organization of the website is confusing ...

The website has a cool design, but it's difficult to find ...

Having fewer icons on the page would make the website ...

WRITING Writing a review

Write a short review of your cell phone. Describe what you like and don't like about it, and suggest how it can be improved.

My cell phone is slim and light, but the screen is small. It's difficult to read the text when I'm typing because the keyboard is almost half the size of the screen. I would suggest ...

Visitors testing the products on display at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona

