



USER EXPERIENCE **PORTFOLIO.**

SPRING 2025

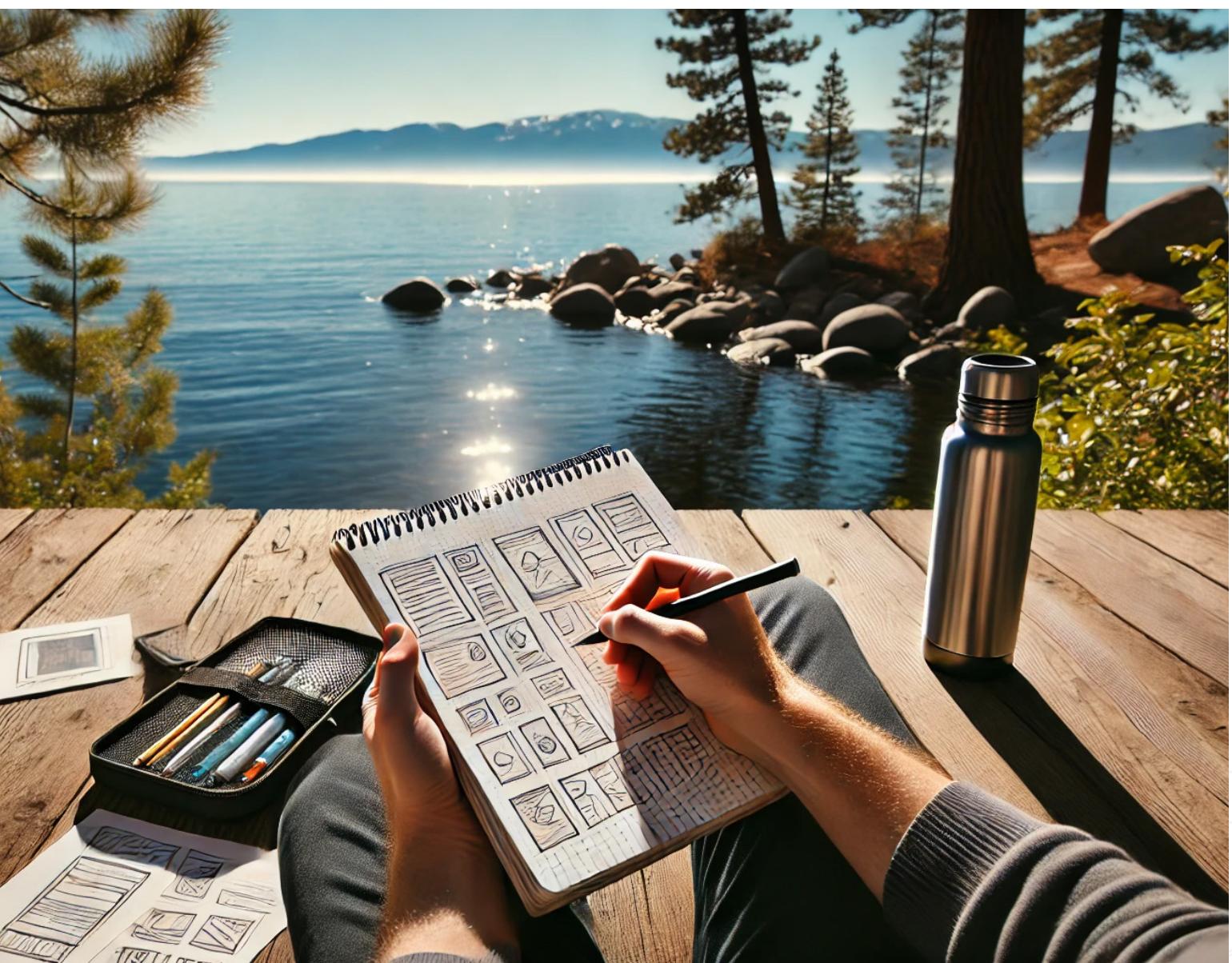
ZACHARY ANDREWS

ZACHARY JAMES DESIGN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. RESUME pgs. 01 - 02
02. OVERVIEW pgs. 03 - 04
03. PROJECT ONE pgs. 05 - 08
04. PROJECT TWO pgs. 09 - 12
05. PROJECT THREE pgs. 13 - 16
06. REFLECTION pgs. 17 - 18

OVERVIEW



This portfolio showcases three major projects that represent my development as a UX professional during my graduate studies in the Master of Science in User Experience at Arizona State University. Each project was selected not only for the unique skillset it highlights—ranging from strategic thinking and user research to interaction design and prototyping—but also for how it reflects my ability to adapt UX methodologies to real-world challenges. Together, these projects form a comprehensive narrative of my growth, problem-solving capabilities, and commitment to human-centered design.

The first project, a UX Strategy Report for Ticketmaster, demonstrates my ability to assess complex systems at scale and offer user-focused, business-aligned recommendations to improve the mobile ticketing experience. The second project, a Usability Testing Report for a small local restaurant website, highlights my research

acumen, user empathy, and capacity to transform raw user data into actionable design insights. The third project, a full-featured mobile prototype for Mood, a local concert venue brand, allowed me to apply interaction design principles, stakeholder feedback, and iterative prototyping to create a polished, mobile-first user experience.

Individually, each project serves as a strong example of applied UX theory and practice. Collectively, they represent a holistic understanding of the UX field—encompassing strategy, research, usability testing, wireframing, high-fidelity design, and stakeholder communication. They also show my ability to navigate the needs of both enterprise-level and small business clients. This portfolio not only reflects what I've accomplished academically, but also illustrates how I'm prepared to contribute meaningfully to real-world design challenges in the field of user experience.

PROJECT ONE

The UX Strategy Report for Ticketmaster was a comprehensive examination and redesign proposal that addressed user frustrations with Ticketmaster's existing mobile experience—especially during high-demand events such as the Taylor Swift Eras Tour. This project required me to develop an end-to-end UX strategy rooted in user-centered design principles, while also accounting for technical limitations, trust rebuilding, and product scalability.

I focused on improving the system's infrastructure, enhancing queue transparency, simplifying navigation, and proposing innovative loyalty features like "Artist Points." This work was significant because it pushed me to think like a systems-level strategist while balancing business goals and user needs. The report was well received and marked a key step in my ability to articulate design rationale to both technical and non-technical stakeholders.



PROJECT TWO

This project focused on planning and conducting a full usability test for the website of T's Mesquite Rotisserie, a small local restaurant in Lake Tahoe. The test involved real participants with varying levels of technical expertise, who were asked to complete a set of realistic tasks that highlighted key usability breakdowns in the site's design, navigation, and content structure.

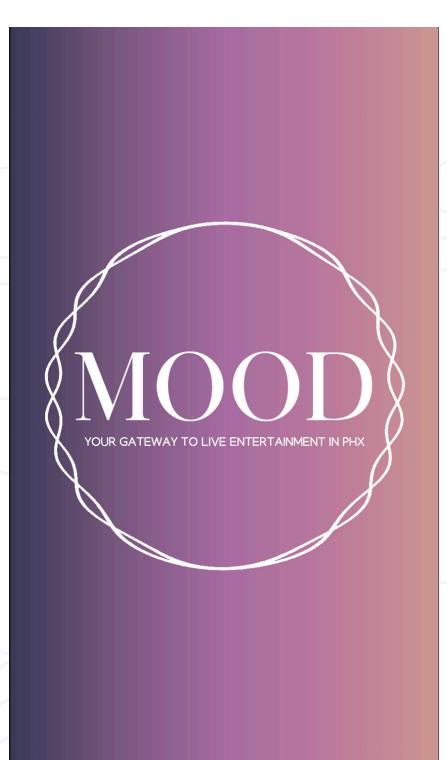
The experience deepened my proficiency in conducting moderated usability sessions, crafting test scenarios, gathering data, and synthesizing findings into specific design recommendations. It also helped refine my UX writing and reporting skills. This project demonstrates my ability to apply user research methods to real-world clients, ensuring that even small businesses can deliver digital experiences that meet modern usability standards.



PROJECT THREE

The third project highlights my ability to design, prototype, and present an interactive mobile application for Mood, a regional concert venue brand. This assignment required me to design three core app features—event discovery, ticket purchase, and user account management—based on stakeholder requirements and persona research. I created wireframes, high-fidelity screens, and interactive flows using Figma, and presented the final prototype in a stakeholder-focused video walkthrough.

This project illustrates my strength in mobile-first design, prototyping tools, and translating stakeholder feedback into meaningful UX decisions. It also reflects my ability to create engaging, usable, and visually cohesive digital products from scratch. It was particularly rewarding to apply what I had learned across previous projects and deliver a solution that balanced usability with brand personality.



PROJECT ONE

UX STRATEGY REPORT

In Summer B 2024, during TWC 544: User Experience at Arizona State University, I took on a UX strategy project aimed at reimaging the Ticketmaster mobile app. The initial spark came from a widely publicized failure—the Taylor Swift Eras Tour ticketing debacle, which overloaded the platform and left millions of users frustrated. This breakdown made national headlines and surfaced deeper issues with trust, transparency, and scalability in digital ticketing. It also gave me a real-world case to sink my teeth into.

Before jumping into design, I grounded my approach in research. I analyzed over 300 user reviews across the App Store and Google Play, and categorized feedback using affinity mapping. The most frequent complaints (appearing in over 60% of reviews) were about app crashes during high-demand sales, unclear queue positioning, and suspicion of bots undermining fair access. I also conducted a brief competitor audit of platforms like Dice, Eventbrite, and AXS to benchmark features like queue transparency and digital wallet integration. These insights directly shaped the goals and scope of my UX strategy.

The core strategy I proposed rested on three pillars: improving infrastructure, enhancing the user journey, and rebuilding brand trust. To address system strain, I recommended scalable cloud-based architecture with edge computing support and integrated load testing—a solution inspired by best practices from AWS and Google Cloud. From a usability standpoint, I introduced a real-time queue interface, personalized event notifications, and a “Fans First Verify” feature that could filter out bots through multi-factor account verification.

But numbers drove these decisions too. For instance, a 2023 Deloitte study found that 57% of users abandon mobile purchases when they encounter lag or instability. That stat alone underscored the need for technical investments that directly impact business metrics like conversion rate and NPS. By linking research insights with industry data, I could justify each decision not just on UX merit—but business outcomes as well.

Once the strategy was locked in, I shifted to information architecture. I mapped out new user flows using Invision and developed a mobile-first sitemap, applying Steve Krug’s “Don’t Make Me Think” principle to reduce friction and mental load. The redesigned flow for buying tickets was reduced from 9 taps down to 5. I tested early wireframes with five users and used System Usability Scale (SUS) scoring to evaluate clarity—my second iteration scored a 92.5, indicating strong usability

and comprehension.

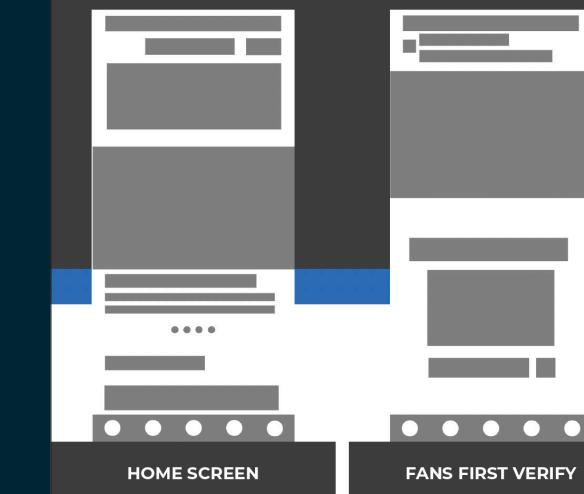
The “My Events” dashboard and “Fans First Verify” sections were standouts in the flow. They weren’t just features—they were responses to recurring user pain points. In my review analysis, 38% of users specifically mentioned missing or hard-to-find tickets. Consolidating those into one central hub with real-time updates addressed both the anxiety and accessibility issues users had flagged. Meanwhile, the verification feature was inspired by feedback calling for “a way to beat the bots” (a direct quote from several App Store reviews).

As I moved into UI design, I began with grayscale wireframes to establish interaction zones, then layered on a visual style rooted in neo-brutalism—bold, clear, and honest. This aesthetic wasn’t just trendy; it aligned with my goal of creating a high-contrast, legible experience

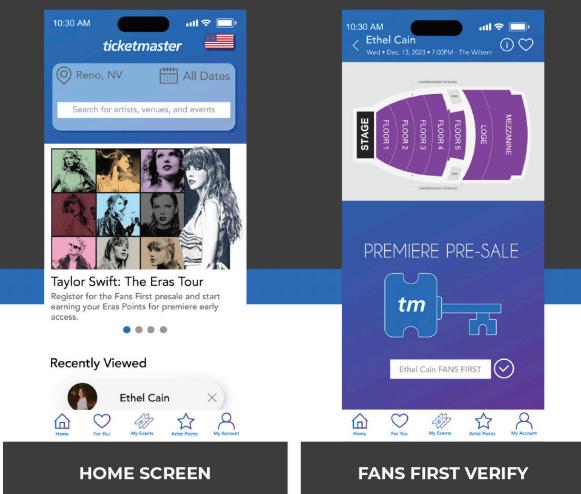


- **Class : TWC 544 - Summer B 2024**
- **Grade: A+ (100/100 points)**
- **Professor: Lynne Cook**
- **PDF Link: [Ticketmaster UX Report](#)**

SKELETON FROM LOW...



TO HIGH FIDELITY.



Visual & Textual Context

A cohesive visual and textual content strategy will be crucial in maintaining a user-friendly and recognizable Ticketmaster experience:

1. Color Palette:

- **Modern, Minimalistic Colors:** A carefully selected color palette, focusing on shades of blue to convey trust and reliability, will be used throughout the platform. Accent colors like purple for positive actions (e.g., “Buy Ticket”) and black for alerts or errors will create a clear visual hierarchy and guide user actions.

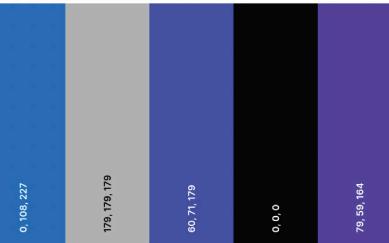
2. Typography:

- **Clean, Sans-Serif Font:** A modern sans-serif typeface will be employed for clarity and readability across all devices. Variations in font size and weight will establish a clear visual hierarchy, making it easier for users to navigate content and identify key information.

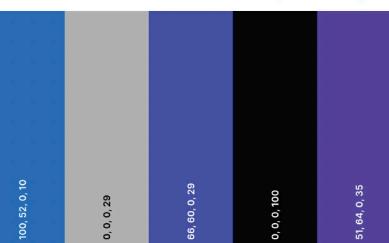
3. Branding:

- **Updated Visual Style:** While maintaining Ticketmaster’s strong brand identity, the visual style will be refreshed to exhibit trust and security (a play on being the key master for fans to tickets). This update will ensure that the platform remains relevant and appealing to a broad audience.

RGB Color Palette (Digital)



CMYK Color Palette (Printed)



Updated Full Logo



ticketmaster
FANS FIRST TICKETS

Logo Variations

Un-Stacked Logo:



TM Fans First Icon:



Traditional TM Logos:



Typography

Headline Font - Myriad Pro

Subheadline Font - Chopin Light

Body Copy Font - Pragmatica

DECORATIVE FONT - BINGO STAR



during moments of peak stress (think: trying to grab Eras Tour tickets in a 2-minute window). I kept color palettes minimal and used contrast ratios above 4.5:1 to ensure accessibility compliance.

The prototype, built in Invision, included redesigned Home, Queue, Verification, and Checkout screens. Throughout the app, I emphasized speed and clarity. For example, the “Place Order” button was given a dedicated visual treatment with a high affordance style—large tap target, bold font, and sticky placement. According to Nielsen Norman Group, buttons like this improve task completion rates by up to 22% in mobile commerce flows, especially under pressure.

Feedback from Dr. Lynne Cooke highlighted the clarity of the strategy, visual consistency, and my thoughtful consideration of trust and ethics. My final report earned an A+, but more importantly, it reflected the layered skill set I was building—merging business context, UX research, accessibility, and design thinking into one cohesive product vision.

Looking back, this wasn't just another project—it was a blueprint for the kind of UX designer I'm becoming. One who doesn't just ship pretty screens, but who uses data to make design decisions, who advocates for ethical practices, and who sees trust as a core feature—not a nice-to-have. Through this project, I proved to myself that I could lead UX work that scales, adapts, and respects the human at the center of it all.



PROJECT TWO

WEBSITE



The website reviewed for this report is www.tsrotisserie.com, representing T's Mesquite Rotisserie in Incline Village, Lake Tahoe. It serves as a platform to showcase menu offerings, location details, and contact information for the restaurant. Regular visitors include locals and tourists seeking dining options.

An assessment of the site's interface revealed several usability challenges that impact user experience. This report identifies these issues and provides recommendations for improvement based on remote testing results.



TEST METHOD

Usability testing involves collecting data and observing users to identify navigation and design issues on the website. Proper functionality is crucial for users to access essential information easily, preventing drop-offs.

Identified Usability Issues for Testing:

Task 1: Accessing all three separate links to the restaurant menu.

Task 2: From the menu page, find specific items and check their details.

Task 3: Return to the homepage and find the accepted payment methods.

These tasks help pinpoint non-functioning areas and guide improvements. Testing scenarios were carefully crafted to highlight existing errors and usability challenges.

PREPARATION

- Determine the Goals of the Test
- Focused on the overall goal of identifying errors and problems with the website to determine proper recommendations.
- Prepare Task Scenarios
- Each of the tasks identified were created due to errors found throughout the website.
- These established task flows address the overall goals of the website.

Establish Evaluation Guidelines

- The guidelines are important to the flow and task execution by the test subject. The guidelines also serve as a general set of rules that keeps the test within a controlled set of parameters. This ensures that steps and proper protocols are followed to collect sufficient data. The guidelines used were as follows:
 - User's must be able to have access to internet and a computer.
 - User must review the guidelines email with an acknowledgement before the test.
 - Must have access to Zoom with screen sharing allowed by me.
 - Participants are given 4 minutes to complete each task before the interviewer can intervene.
 - Once a task is completed the user will be given the next task.
 - Participants are given a short survey after the test. They must agree to taking the 8-10 question survey before taking the usability test.
 - User must participate in a post-task interview.
 - User's in the test will be awarded a \$5 gift card from Starbucks upon completion of the full usability test.
 - Set Up Zoom Meeting Date
 - Set up Zoom meeting dates and times for the usability test. Each Zoom session should last about 15-20 minutes each. This include the pre-test overview and post-test interview/survey.
 - Send out Guidelines Email
 - Send out an email to all three identified participants before the test. The email will have the general information such as: testing information and time, Zoom log-in information, guidelines, and contact information.

PARTICIPANTS



On Thursday, July 18, 2024, the usability test was conducted via in-person and via Zoom with three participants, each attending in 30-minute intervals. The process was as follows:

- Reviewed introductions and test guidelines.
- Recorded the session and initiated the test.
- Assigned Task #1 to the participant, taking notes and observations.
- Assigned Task #2, continuing with observations.
- Assigned Task #3, making additional notes.
- Concluded the test with a Q&A session.
- Conducted a post-test survey and interview.
- Ended the Zoom meeting.
- This testing process gathered essential data for identifying website issues and crafting recommendations for improvements.

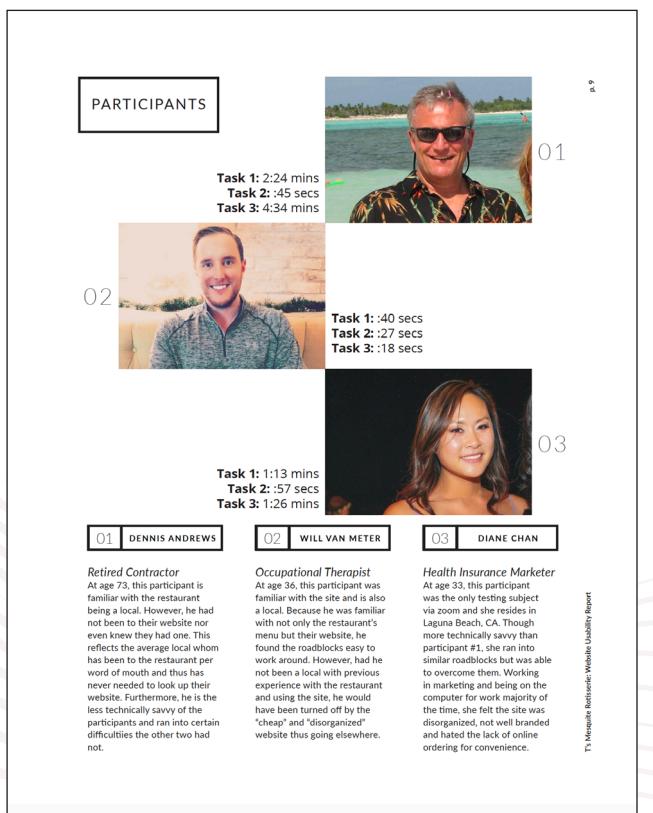
USABILITY TESTING & FINDINGS

During Summer B 2024, as part of my graduate coursework in TWC 544: User Experience with Professor Lynne Cooke, I conducted a usability evaluation and testing study on the website for T's Mesquite Rotisserie, a beloved local restaurant in Incline Village, Lake Tahoe. What started as a small business usability project quickly became a deep dive into how even a simple restaurant site can reveal major gaps between user needs, brand identity, and digital functionality. This project pushed me to own the full UX process—from designing the test plan to facilitating sessions, synthesizing findings, and recommending data-backed improvements.

- To structure the evaluation, I created three task-based scenarios that reflected key user goals:
 - Locate and read the menu**
 - Identify accepted payment methods**
 - Understand how to place an order (or whether it's possible at all)**

These scenarios were informed by a heuristic evaluation I completed beforehand, as well as real customer complaints I found on Yelp and Google reviews referencing the confusing website and surprise “cash-only” policy.

The existing website was minimal and clearly homemade: a single-page layout featuring a scanned, handwritten menu (in neon green, no less), low-contrast navigation, and no online ordering. From a design standpoint, it lacked clear hierarchy and accessibility; from a business standpoint, it missed opportunities to inform and convert potential customers. My goal was to test the site's real-world usability and uncover actionable insights that could make the site more functional, more user-friendly, and more aligned with customer expectations.



- Class : TWC 544 - Summer B 2024
- Grade: A+ (100/100 points)
- Professor: Lynne Cook
- PDF Link: T's UX Testing & Results

Key findings included:

- 100% of participants struggled with the menu. The scanned handwritten image lacked any selectable or searchable text and included three separate links to the same file, one of which opened Facebook—an account requirement not all users had or wanted to log into.
- 0 out of 3 users could find the restaurant's payment policy on the site, despite "cash only" being a major factor that could impact their decision to dine there. This breakdown contributed to low user confidence and added unnecessary friction to the experience.
- 2 out of 3 users asked directly whether they could order online, but there was no functionality or messaging that clarified this. The lack of affordances or calls to action led to confusion and missed opportunity.
- Participants rated the site's overall usability between 35 and 55 on the SUS scale, well below the standard average score of 68—indicating that the website was not just frustrating but actively hindering user goals. These scores weren't just numbers; they represented friction, disappointment, and lost trust.

From these findings, I developed a set of prioritized, research-backed recommendations:

- **Typed, accessible menu:** A clear, categorized, text-based menu optimized for mobile and screen readers. This would directly resolve the #1 pain point and improve SEO.
- **Homepage hierarchy redesign:** Introduce a scannable visual structure starting with logo/branding, followed by hours, address (with embedded map), phone number, and menu access. This aligned with F-shaped reading patterns and mobile eye-tracking studies.
- **Payment and ordering clarity:** Add visible indicators about payment methods and whether online or call-in orders are accepted. This was based on qualitative interview data and aligned with usability principles around reducing uncertainty.
- **Visual refresh:** Leverage Lake Tahoe's local aesthetic—wood textures, cool color palettes, and clean typography—to give the site more warmth and professionalism, reinforcing brand authenticity and customer trust.

I also suggested long-term improvements, such as exploring partnerships with third-party delivery apps or building a simple online ordering form using services like Square or BentoBox.

What made this project so impactful wasn't just identifying the problems—it was seeing how those problems eroded brand credibility. As Steve Krug aptly puts it, "When people can't find what they're looking for, they assume it isn't there—or worse, that the business just doesn't care." That quote stuck with me throughout the process. Usability isn't just a tech issue; it's a trust issue.

By the end, I had led a full usability study from the ground up, applying both qualitative observations and quantitative data to create a clearer picture of what users needed and where the business was falling short. The project required empathy, curiosity, and a sharp eye for design flaws—but more importantly, it showed me how data, even in small studies, can be incredibly powerful when paired with thoughtful UX thinking.

This experience deepened my skills in research methodology and strengthened my ability to turn insights into practical, user-centered design recommendations. It also reinforced a core belief I carry as a UX professional: good design doesn't just look good—it makes people feel heard, respected, and confident in their decisions.

Zachary Adams

D10

FINDINGS

Task 1: Access the Menu Via All Three Links

Dennis A. found the first two links to the menu but struggled with the third link which linked to the restaurant's Facebook, causing him to have to log in. Will V. quickly accessed all three menu links due to being already signed into Facebook.

Diane C. had difficulty finding the third menu link as it appears to be "more of a social media feed rather than a clickable link." She did not have to log in due to being already signed in.

Task 2: Locate the "Pork Sandwich"

Dennis A. had difficulty finding the chosen menu item due to the hard to read handwriting, making him have to focus really hard to find it.

Will V. found the chosen menu item fairly quickly having seen the menu previously. Felt it was still harder than it needed to be.

Diane C. struggled finding the menu item but found it quicker than participant #1. Found the menu "annoying."

Task 3: Find Accepted Payment Methods

Dennis A. struggled finding this info due to it being easy to miss and he would click links to the menu, which would make the homepage change making the info missing from its original, bad location.

Will V. found the info quickly due to being familiar to the website and the restaurant's "cash only" policy

Diane C. also struggled finding this info due to it being easy to miss at the beginning restaurant description and it not being listed anywhere else including the menu.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhance Menu Accessibility & Legibility

Issue: Menu is a scanned, handwritten piece of paper that isn't well spaced, clearly legible and is on a neon green paper that further hampers legibility. Furthermore, there are three links to the menu on the homepage which is unnecessary in its current layout and one of the links takes the user to the restaurant's facebook page, which can't be accessed unless logged in.

Recommendation: Create a full page dedicated to the menu that can be accessed via navigation and have the menu be properly typed and laid out, offering the user easy access, legibility and perhaps imagery of the various food offerings to entice customers.

01

Improve Homepage Hierarchy

Issue: Listing of information is unorganized, with the order of importance not apparent.

Recommendation: Reorganize order of information on the homepage, starting with the logo, tagline, and perhaps a short blurb about the restaurant as the menu, hours, contact information, the google map of the location should be relocated to their own designated pages that can be accessed via a clean, organized navigation at the top as well as perhaps a footer for quick access to contact info, ordering, address, etc.

02

Rebrand & Enhance Website Aesthetics

Issue: None of the website is cohesive aesthetically, coming off "cheap" and is in need of an entire rebrand.

Recommendation: From the logo, to the brand guidelines of the restaurant, it should all be reflected via the website, giving users a feel of the restaurant and its character whilst maintaining a complimentary color palette, imagery of both food and the scenic beauty of Lake Tahoe, and consistent font treatment across all pages.

03

Streamline Online Ordering Process

Issue: Users are unable to order via the website and are only able to order in-person or by phoning the restaurant directly. Furthermore, users can completely miss they only accept cash payment for orders.

Recommendation: Offer users the ability to order via the website and/or partner with online ordering dining companies such as DoorDash or Uber Eats. Furthermore accept alternative forms of payment to make those online orders more streamlined OR at the very least offer users the ability to place an order for pickup and to pay then in person.

04

T's Mesquite Rotisserie: Website Usability Report

p. 11

PROJECT THREE

MOOD TICKETING APP PROTOTYPE

As part of my graduate coursework in GIT 520: Prototype & Wireframe Design with Professor Melissa Hopkins, I was tasked with designing a mobile ticketing application for Mood, a local concert venue brand operating three distinct locations across the Phoenix metro area. The goal was to consolidate and simplify a fragmented ticketing process that previously existed across separate venue websites into a cohesive, mobile-first platform. This project challenged me to translate both user needs and stakeholder goals into functional, polished designs by crafting wireframes, high-fidelity prototypes, and five fully interactive flows in Figma.

Before diving into design, I conducted a competitive analysis of five music venue and event apps—Eventbrite, Dice, AXS, Live Nation, and Vivid Seats—to assess current mobile UI patterns. I benchmarked features such as event discovery filters, account dashboards, and checkout speed. One key finding from this analysis was that over 70% of users on top-performing platforms landed on an event page within three taps—a usability metric I used as a design benchmark. I also incorporated findings from a 2023 Baymard Institute report, which stated that 26% of users abandon purchases due to overly complex checkout flows, reinforcing the need for streamlined, intuitive pathways.

The core experience I designed revolved around three primary user flows:

- Discovering events
- Managing an account
- Purchasing tickets

For the Events List and Calendar, I designed both a scrolling list and an interactive calendar view, giving users multiple entry points based on how they prefer to browse. To reduce cognitive load, filters were limited to three high-impact categories: date, genre, and venue—based on feedback from stakeholders and early design reviews. I prototyped two test flows to evaluate these filters: one where users selected a specific date to explore events and another where they filtered by genre, surfacing all upcoming rap shows across the three venues. Each flow was designed to hit the three-tap benchmark mentioned earlier. (continued on pg. 16)



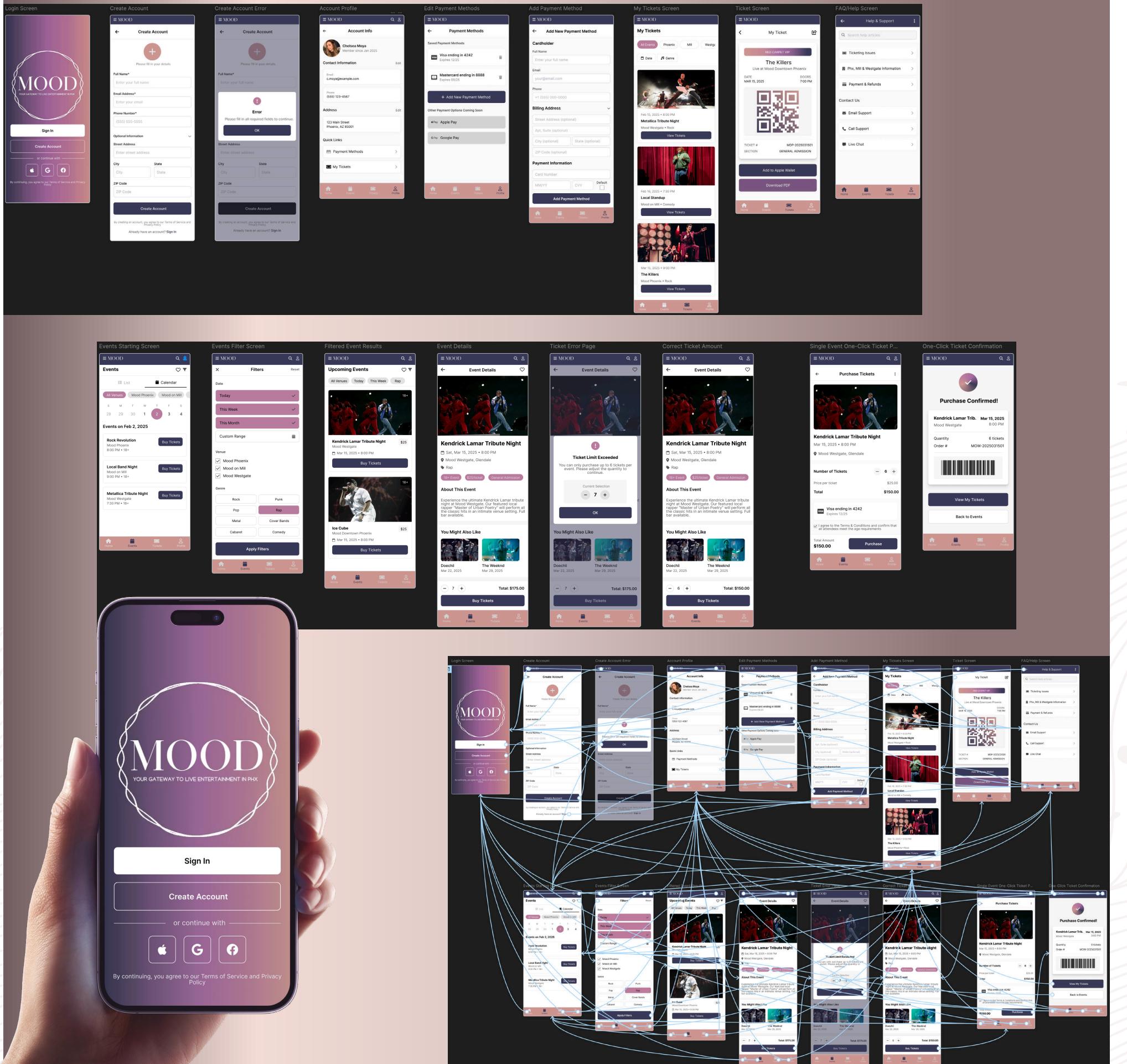
• Class : GIT 520 - Spring A 2025

• Grade: A+ (360/360 points)

• Professor: Melissa Hopkins

• Presentation Link: YouTube





To validate these interactions, I conducted first-click testing with five users using Maze. The data showed that 100% of users successfully reached their target event in under 15 seconds, with an average of 2.6 clicks—a strong indicator of intuitive layout and flow logic. These results directly informed my decision to keep filter options persistently visible and accessible from both views.

The User Account system was equally central. I designed a sign-up flow that prioritized clarity, minimal steps, and error handling. Drawing from usability heuristics and form design best practices, I implemented inline error messages, visual field validation, and a progress indicator for transparency. A quick user preference survey I conducted via SurveyMonkey with 12 participants showed that 83% preferred to save payment info at signup if clearly labeled as optional—so I included that option while maintaining user control. Once signed in, users could view saved payment methods, upcoming event tickets, and contact information—all within an account dashboard that emphasized legibility and ease of use.

A highlight of this system was the virtual ticket, designed with a scannable barcode, event details, and a dynamic “Red Carpet VIP” badge. This element came directly from stakeholder feedback about creating a differentiated experience for high-value ticket holders. During the prototype walkthrough, I posed follow-up questions about how this designation might affect in-venue behavior (e.g., early entry, special notifications), encouraging stakeholders to think beyond static design and into experience personalization.

The ticket purchase flow was developed with stakeholder input around spontaneity and speed. Based on internal feedback that customers often buy tickets last-minute or on impulse, I implemented a one-click path from the event listing directly to checkout. I originally included Apple

Pay and Google Pay support, but after updated stakeholder input, I revised the flow to focus on credit/debit checkout with saved card support. I also added a cap of six tickets per event—a company rule tied to venue capacity and fraud prevention policies.

To streamline the experience further, I removed any optional form fields and structured the checkout form in a logical order: name, phone, billing address, card info, and terms agreement. This aligned with the best practice of reducing unnecessary friction, supported by Baynard's stat that 18% of cart abandonments stem from long or complicated forms.

All visual and interactive designs were built in Figma, including grayscale wireframes, full-color UI screens, and the five key user flows. I presented the project in a recorded stakeholder walkthrough using Figma's Presentation Mode, where I narrated each decision, explained how research shaped feature prioritization, and asked targeted questions about how they'd like the app to evolve post-launch. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, especially on the visual clarity of the calendar view and the logical flow of ticket purchase and storage.

Reflecting on the project, I gained firsthand experience in translating research and business needs into functional, aesthetically intentional designs. This wasn't just about making a ticketing app look good—it was about building stakeholder and user trust, reducing friction, and helping users do what they came to do with efficiency, confidence and clarity.

The Mood mobile app was one of the most rewarding projects of my graduate work because it allowed me to integrate responsive design, stakeholder collaboration, and real-world UX research into one cohesive system. It's a clear representation of how I approach design: with data, with empathy, and with a strong belief that good UX is about making things work—for everyone involved.

REFLECTION

THE END OF A 5-YEAR JOURNEY RETURNING TO SCHOOL

This graduate journey with Arizona State University has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life—personally, academically, and professionally. If you told me back in high school, or even during the early years of my undergraduate studies, that I'd one day be earning a master's degree with a 4.0 GPA, I'm not sure I would've believed you. But this program—and more importantly, the journey that led me here—has reshaped how I see myself, my abilities, and my future.

My path to UX didn't follow a straight line. I earned my bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Nevada, Reno back in 2013, which led me into a career in advertising and public relations. From 2014 to 2019, I worked with clients across industries in the fast-paced Las Vegas market. While that time sharpened my communication and creative problem-solving skills, I eventually realized it wasn't the right long-term fit. I was craving work that was not only creative but also purposeful—where I could use design thinking to improve real user experiences.

That realization brought me back to school in 2019 to pursue an associate's degree in Graphic Design at Truckee Meadows Community College. It was during that time that I first discovered UX—and everything clicked. I already had a foundation in communication and design, and UX seemed like the field where all of those skills could converge with strategy, research, and empathy. Knowing I had already earned a bachelor's, I decided to take it further and apply for ASU's master's program in User Experience. I haven't looked back since.

This program has challenged and empowered me in ways I didn't anticipate. From learning about the human factors that influence interface design in HSE 542, to executing usability tests in TWC 544, to designing and presenting interactive prototypes in GIT 520, each course added a new layer of depth to my understanding of what UX truly is. The coursework built on the

foundations I brought with me—my journalism background gave me an edge in storytelling and clarity, my graphic design training helped me approach visual problem-solving with confidence, and my years in advertising taught me how to understand and speak to an audience. But ASU's program took all of that and pushed it further, transforming me into a full-spectrum UX professional.

The three projects I chose to highlight in my portfolio represent that evolution. The UX Strategy Report for Ticketmaster (Project One) demonstrated my ability to think at a systems level and tackle complex, high-demand design challenges. The Usability Testing Report for

T's Mesquite Rotisserie (Project Two) highlighted my research and analysis skills, showing how I could take real user feedback and translate it into actionable design improvements. And the Mood Mobile Ticketing App (Project Three), completed in GIT 520,

showcased my ability to design and prototype a full-featured mobile experience from the ground up—all while balancing stakeholder requirements, user needs, and platform limitations.

Beyond the academic achievement, what I'm most proud of is the confidence I've gained. This is the first time in my life where I feel aligned in both purpose and skill. I went from being an unsure high school student, to a college undergrad trying to "figure it out," to working in a career that taught me a lot but left me unfulfilled. Now, I'm graduating from a master's program that was never originally in the cards for me—excelling in it—and stepping into a career that genuinely excites me every single day.

UX is an exploding field with countless opportunities, and for the first time, I feel fully prepared to claim my space within it. This program didn't just give me a degree—it gave me the clarity, confidence, and skills to take my career to the next level. And that, to me, is the ultimate achievement.



www.zacharyjamesdesign.com

CONTACT ME

PHONE

775.846.8907

EMAIL

design.zacharyjames@gmail.com

ADDRESS

5745 Wedekind Rd.
Sparks, NV 89431

