

SHANE GRYZKO, UX DESIGNER

Fighting for UX since 2013

IN THIS CORNER...



Shane Gryzko, UX Designer

3 years in UX

Financial software

Oil and gas software

7 years total software experience

Quality Assurance

Programming

User Experience

Loves meetups, cycling, and the mountains

Learning French (600+ day streak on Duolingo!)

OVERVIEW

Round 1: The fight begins

Round 2: Application redesign concept

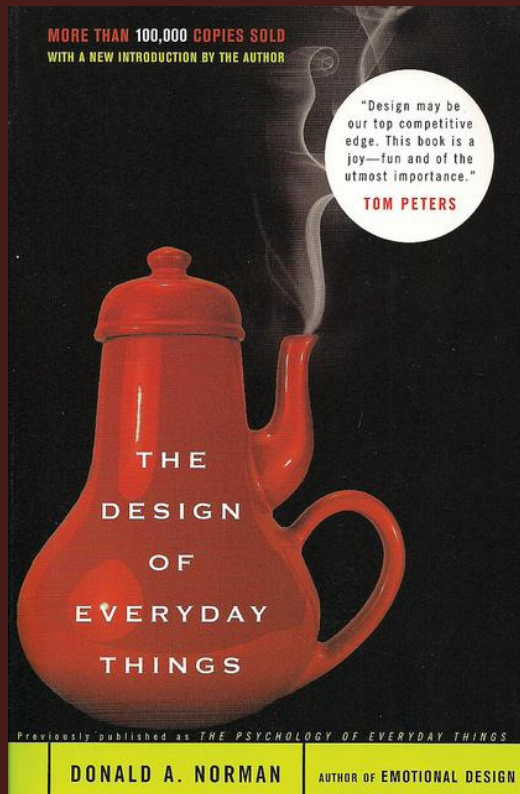
Round 3: Complex Oil and Gas feature design

Round 4: Form redesign for non-profit

Round 5: Legacy feature redesign (covered in detail)

Round 6: Who's next?

ROUND 1: THE FIGHT BEGINS



When: Q3 2013

Matchup: Donald Norman vs. Bad Design

Result: Reading the book *The Design of Everyday Things* inspired me to be passionate about design and notice confusing “Norman Doors” and their software equivalents ABSOLUTELY EVERYWHERE. Since then I’ve been fighting for UX, making useful, usable software despite working with limited resources and support.

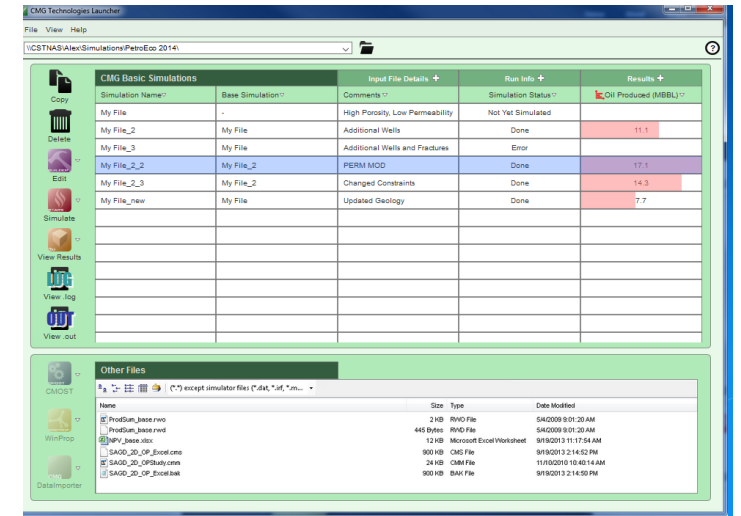
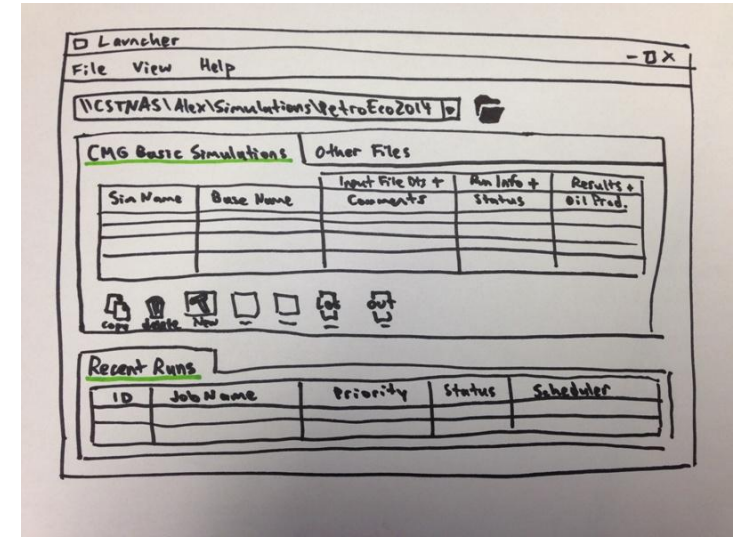
ROUND 2: APPLICATION REDESIGN CONCEPT

When: Q3 2014

Matchup: Shane Gryzko vs. a small legacy application

Highlights: User interviews, sketching, Axure prototyping, and usability testing.

Result: I exposed my company (and myself!) to the basics of formal UX; I couldn't convince managers to give me access to real users, so used coworkers in support instead; I wasn't happy with my visual design.



Early sketch (top) and Axure prototype (bottom)

ROUND 3: COMPLEX OIL AND GAS FEATURE DESIGN (CONFIDENTIAL)

When: Q4 2014 – Q3 2015

Matchup: Shane Gryzko & Backend Developer vs. Complex Oil and Gas Feature

Highlights: Sketches galore, wireframes in PowerPoint and Balsamiq, usability testing, user interviews, and stakeholder feedback sessions.

Result: After months of design, I bravely invited our CEO to a demo of my wireframe. In that demo, he criticized me for using unrealistic data; this cemented in my mind the importance of understanding your users and speaking their language. During this project, I trained coworkers on running usability tests. They still use these skills today!

ROUND 4: FORM REDESIGN FOR NON-PROFIT

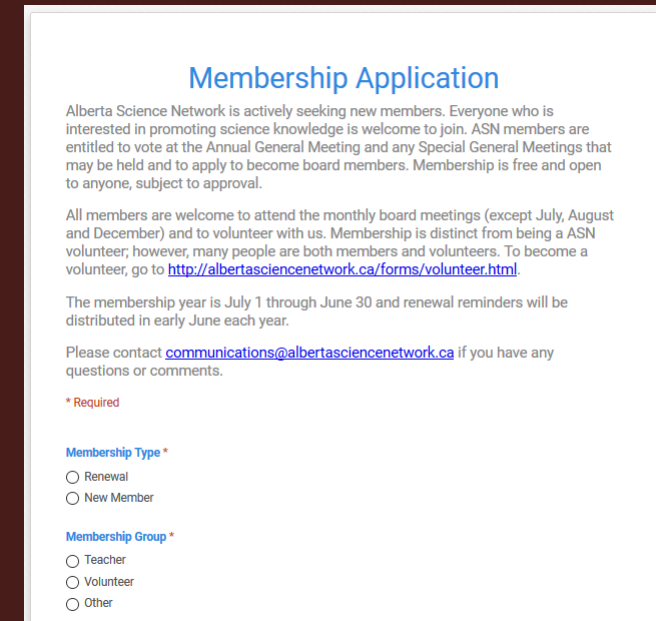
When: Q1 2015 – Q3 2015

Matchup: Shane Gryzko vs. Legacy Membership Renewal Form

Highlights: Google Forms, Google Sheets, Client work with regular feedback.

Result: I streamlined the member renewal process and implemented a simple web form, leading to 196% more on-time renewals and reduced staff workload.

See the [live membership form](#) and [my blog post](#).



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Membership Application". The text on the page reads: "Alberta Science Network is actively seeking new members. Everyone who is interested in promoting science knowledge is welcome to join. ASN members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meetings that may be held and to apply to become board members. Membership is free and open to anyone, subject to approval." Below this, it states: "All members are welcome to attend the monthly board meetings (except July, August and December) and to volunteer with us. Membership is distinct from being a ASN volunteer; however, many people are both members and volunteers. To become a volunteer, go to <http://albertasciencenetwork.ca/forms/volunteer.html>." It also mentions: "The membership year is July 1 through June 30 and renewal reminders will be distributed in early June each year." At the bottom, it says: "Please contact communications@albertasciencenetwork.ca if you have any questions or comments." There are two sections of radio button options, both marked as "* Required". The first is "Membership Type *" with options "Renewal" and "New Member". The second is "Membership Group *" with options "Teacher", "Volunteer", and "Other".

Screenshot of new form

“

The re-sign process is **working perfectly**. The notices went out as scheduled and the feedback has been great. Thanks for doing this for us. It has **saved a bundle of manual time**.

”

Ed Kusmirski, P.Eng.
Executive Director, Alberta Science Network

ROUND 5: LEGACY FEATURE REDESIGN

Q3 2016 – Q3 2017

PROJECT SUMMARY

Product: Well-established financial software application for Windows with large customer base including many large international companies

Problem: A core feature contributed a large volume of support requests, leading to lost productivity for users and increased support costs for product team

Involvement: I owned and led the project, inviting coworkers to participate throughout the process

Timeframe: Q3 2016-Q3 2017. Project was completed 90% on my own time / 10% on company time in addition to my developer duties

Result: Expected to be released early-2018 based on usability-tested prototype

Protected: Sensitive information and sketches have been removed for confidentiality

PROJECT PROCESS





DISCOVER: CROSS-DEPARTMENT LUNCH AND LEARN

Question: Where do we start?

Participants: 15 people including managers, developers, and support team

Format: 3 presenters from support team, 15 minutes each, answering “Teach us about a feature that causes lots of support incidents”

Takeaway: Several high-priority legacy issues. One was selected for further investigation

Challenges: Hard to watch at times (Eye-opening to see some tough workflows)

See my article [“The RTFM test”](#) about this process!



“

Most of our support queries that don't end up being logged as bugs relate to [this feature].

”

IT2 Customer Support Specialist



RESEARCH: INTERNAL USABILITY TEST ON EXISTING FUNCTIONALITY

Question: Is it really that bad?

Participants: 3 volunteers who work on the product- one developer, one product manager, and one support person

Format: In-person usability testing on existing product

Takeaway: 3-minute highlight video showing that yes, it really is that bad; shared with team to gain support

Challenges: Flying solo on usability testing; Technical difficulties with recording; Learning curve with video editing software





IDEATE: CROSS-DEPARTMENT BRAINWRITING WORKSHOP

Question: What might we do to fix it?

Participants: 9 people including developers, managers, sales, and support

Format: Split into teams of 4-5. One paper per person. Write an answer to “How might we fix this problem if we had unlimited resources?” then pass it on. Next person builds on this idea.

Takeaway: Several great ideas; Stakeholders interested in the problem

Challenges: No sketching, only writing; Should have warmed everyone up with easy sketching ice-breakers; Also, should have encouraged participants to dream bigger



Brainwriting 6-3-5 Worksheet		
Job To Be Done:	How to showcase Interior Architecture's work	Date:
		Team:
		Member:
1	2	3
able to zoom in to their works like 3D model. ↑	make a video of their work.	video of them making and some explanation of their work
before you zoom in, you can see a skeletal version of their work	making a flipbook of their ideas/vision.	Having a marker placed at areas of their work that are informative. viewers can click on it & it pops out.
has a description on their work in the when viewing	make an interactive story of the work from the beginning to the end	animation grid include
the main vid of student compiling their work	showing only images with descriptions hidden. viewers put out desc. only when they want to read it	different mail theme for different work to represent the needs.
Virtual Pop-up book effects on e-mag show their work	show the achievements of the students in various competitions	Auction column that the reader can bid the price of the model and actually buy it!
video or animation style to display the completion of the work from blueprint to the actual work	Before a page is shown, a Constructing-like theme will be activated to decorate the page and content	

Example brainwriting worksheet. This technique gives all participants an equal voice and generates lots of ideas!



RESEARCH: EXTERNAL USER INTERVIEWS

Question: Is it actually a problem for our customers?

Participants: 4 customers from 3 different companies.

Format: Skype interviews, 1 hour each. Loose script was used.

Takeaway: Quotes, workarounds, recordings, and more.

Challenges: Getting permission to talk to real customers; Interviewing two users at once; Technical difficulties with Skype; Acknowledging my own biases (one user reported no problems with this area, which I initially couldn't believe!)





COMMUNICATE: CENTRAL REPOSITORY FOR ALL PROJECT INFORMATION

Question: Where do I put all data, notes, results, and quotes I've gathered throughout this project?

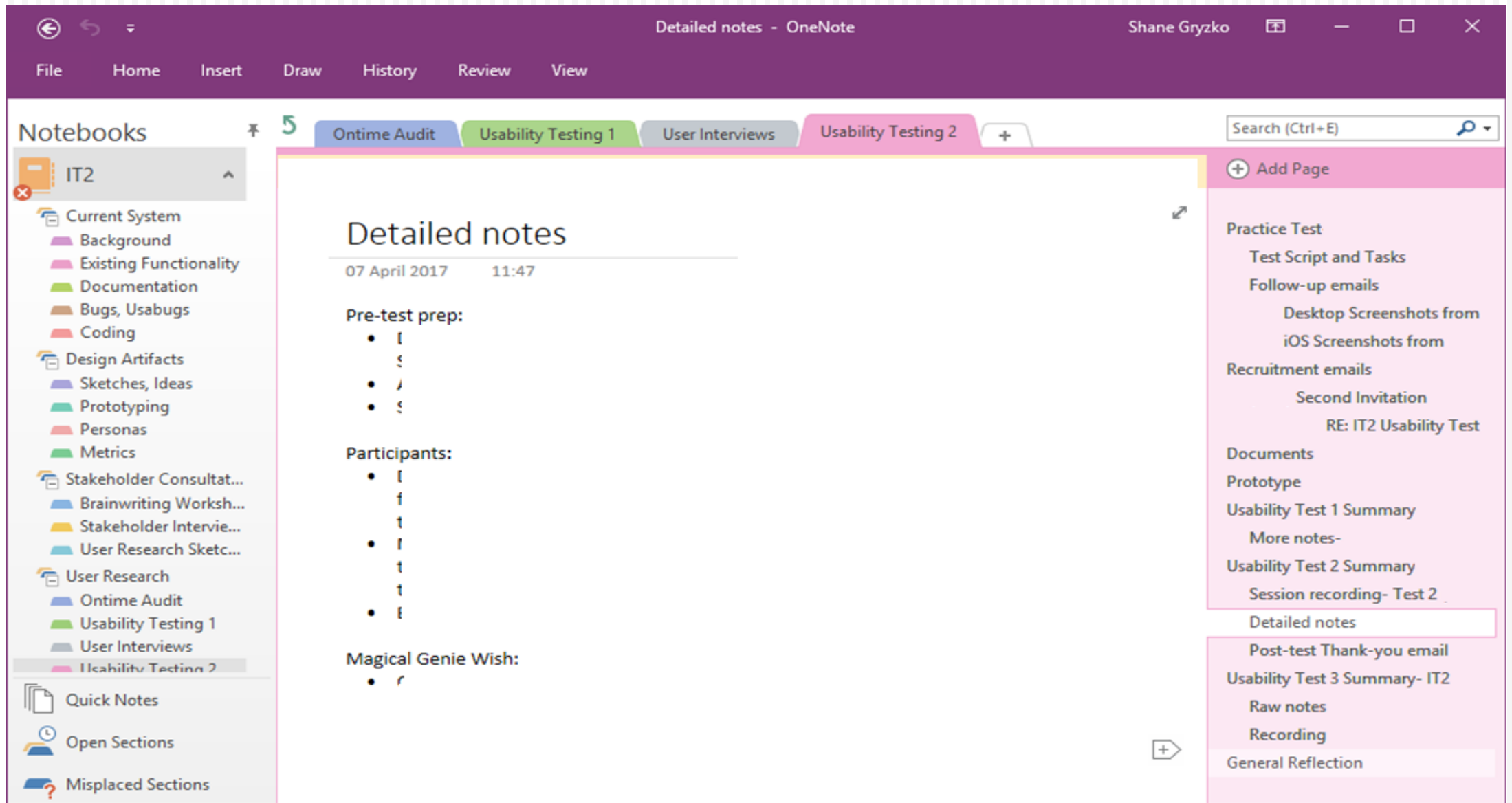
Participants: Just me.

Format: Continually evolving OneNote notebook.

Takeaway: Best to have one central location where all data lives.

Challenges: Keeping it organized as new data and new types of data became available.





Screenshot of OneNote notebook used to store all notes and data for this project (sensitive content removed)



IDEATE: CROSS-DEPARTMENT SKETCHING WORKSHOP

Question: What do we do now?

Participants: 13 people including managers, developers (two remote!), and support team

Format: Summarized findings, voted on ideas, then sketched

Takeaway: Votes and sketches from internal stakeholders

Challenges: Should have taken more time so that we could diverge (brainstorm) as a group instead of just converging.





BUILD: EXCEL PROTOTYPE

Question: How will this work?

Participants: Just me

Format: Sketching and ideating, inspired by group sketches, then Excel prototype

Takeaway: Votes and sketches from internal stakeholders

Challenges: Balancing desire to look good vs. consistency with the rest of the application.

See my article [“Ugly Yet Organized Sketching”](#) about my sketching process!





RESEARCH: EXTERNAL USABILITY TESTS ON PROTOTYPE

Question: Will this work?

Participants: 4 customers from 3 different companies. Internal observers: 2 product managers.

Format: Speak out loud remote usability testing with users on an Excel prototype trying to complete specific tasks.

Takeaway: Minor issues with wording, but promising results for prototype!

Challenges: Encouraging product managers to take over as facilitators.





COMMUNICATE: USER STORIES SPECIFIED, TEAM EMPOWERED

Question: What do we do next?

Collaborated with product managers to specify user stories based on prototype

- Entire team was involved in research and ideation, so deliverables were lightweight

Trained product manager to facilitate his own usability studies

- Going forward, he will continue to test designs with customers



PROJECT RESULTS AND REFLECTION

Result: Feature planned for early-2018 release

Collaboration: Inviting coworkers and stakeholders into design and research sessions led to shared understanding and shared ownership of the problem space and the design process.

Commitment: Having development duties in addition to this project meant that progress was very slow. Which is why I'm moving into full-time UX now!

Culture: This project demonstrated the value of UX to the team and empowered them to carry on the torch!

ROUND 6: WHO'S NEXT?

When: Now!

Matchup: Shane Gryzko vs. Anything!

I've always enjoyed a challenge, especially under constraints such as limited UX investment. Let me put my experience to work for you on whatever project you're working on.

Contact me at 587-223-7330 or sgryzko@gmail.com to arrange a meeting!