

Design Friction

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Current Interest

Building on my previous Thesis Research topic, I am interested in Design Friction, particularly in how intentional moments of friction can be introduced into digital environments designed to operate smoothly and without interruption. Today's interfaces use infinite scrolling, autoplay, notifications, recommendation algorithms, and real-time responsiveness to keep users continuously engaged and moving forward. Although this smoothness appears convenient and natural, it can also conceal the underlying systems of data collection, algorithmic decision-making, and behavioral influence.

I want to explore friction not simply as an error or inconvenience, but as a design intervention that interrupts automatic behavior and allows users to become more aware of the systems they are using. Not all forms of friction are necessarily productive, but I believe that carefully designed friction can reveal otherwise invisible systems and power relations while creating space for reflection.

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Origins of Interest

My interest in Design Friction began with observing how digital interfaces naturally influence user behavior in everyday life. Features such as infinite scrolling, autoplay, and personalized recommendations encourage users to remain on platforms without consciously realizing it. Because these interactions feel so convenient and seamless, it can be difficult to recognize the systems operating behind them, which I found particularly interesting.

As a designer, I have learned to consider clarity, convenience, and ease of use as important qualities of good design. Therefore, I was intrigued by the paradox that Design Friction, which seems to oppose comfortable and seamless experiences, is an existing concept used in UX design. This led me to consider friction not simply as an inconvenience that should be removed, but as a design method that can interrupt automatic behavior and encourage users to reconsider the systems they use and the choices they make.

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Related People and Context

This topic is connected to users of digital platforms, UX/UI designers who create interfaces, and technology companies that collect and use behavioral data. Features such as infinite scrolling, autoplay, and personalized recommendations provide convenient and seamless experiences, but

they can also encourage users to remain on platforms longer and continue engaging with them. In this process, behavioral data such as clicks, searches, and viewing time is collected and used to personalize and predict user experiences.

Therefore, I want to question whom smoothness is designed for and what kinds of social and economic systems it supports. Seamless interfaces provide convenience for users, but they may also serve the objectives of platforms that operate through user attention and data. Through Design Friction, I want to explore how these underlying structures can be made visible and whether users can be encouraged to reconsider their relationship with digital platforms.

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Personal Significance

My creative philosophy is that the work I create should go beyond simply communicating information or solving problems. It should inspire new thoughts and questions. I believe these thoughts and questions can become sources of inspiration for new interpretations and creative practices, forming a continuous cycle that leads to further work and dialogue. I am interested in creative practices and designs that make the familiar feel new and encourage people to reconsider the conditions they have taken for granted.

From this perspective, I began to question whether comfortable and seamless experiences should simply be accepted as the standard of good design. Convenience can support users' actions, but it can also conceal the systems and intentions operating behind an interface. Through Design Friction, I want to explore how familiar experiences can be made strange again, encouraging users to pause, reflect on the systems they use, and ask questions about them.

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Emerging Questions

Time and Speed

- How does the speed of digital environments change the way we think and perceive time?
- Can slower interfaces help users understand and remember information more deeply?

Choice and Freedom

- Are users truly making free choices in digital environments, or are they following predetermined paths?
- How do seamless interfaces conceal the structures that influence users' choices?

Data Collection and Transparency

- How aware are users of which of their actions are being collected as data?

- If the process of data collection were made visible, would users' behavior and choices change?

Habitual and Addictive Behavior

- How do infinite scrolling, autoplay, and notifications create repetitive and habitual behaviors?
- At what point do users continue using a platform regardless of their original intentions?

Invisible Labor

- What forms of human labor are concealed in order to maintain seamless digital experiences?
 - Who is actually working behind systems that appear to be automated?
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Shifts in Thinking

Through research, I learned that maintaining smoothness depends on invisible human labor, such as categorizing and reviewing content or entering data. I also discovered that seamless interfaces involve more social and economic systems than I had expected, including systems that influence user behavior, collect data, and connect that data to platform operations and profit.

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Further Research Methods

To understand this topic more deeply, I would like to collect and transform everyday digital experiences through design experiments. I could create a Smoothness Archive by documenting features that remove friction, such as infinite scrolling, autoplay, autocomplete, and personalized recommendations. I could then visualize how each feature is connected to users' time, behavior, and data collection.

I would also like to create prototypes that intentionally reverse the speed and convenience of familiar interfaces or present the data generated while using a platform in the form of a receipt. Through these experiments, I could observe when users begin to notice systems that usually remain invisible.

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Relationship to My Practice

As mentioned earlier, my creative philosophy is to create work that inspires new thoughts and questions, forming a cycle that leads to further interpretations and creative inspiration. Design Friction connects to this philosophy by making familiar and seemingly natural digital experiences feel unfamiliar and encouraging users to question the systems hidden behind them.

Desired Change

Through this project, I hope to encourage people not to accept convenient and seamless digital experiences as inherently good design, but to question whom that convenience is designed for and what it may conceal. I also want to create an opportunity for users to recognize how actions they perceive as their own choices may be influenced by interfaces and algorithms.

Ultimately, I hope friction can be understood not simply as an error or inconvenience to be removed, but as an opportunity to reveal invisible systems and reconsider familiar experiences.