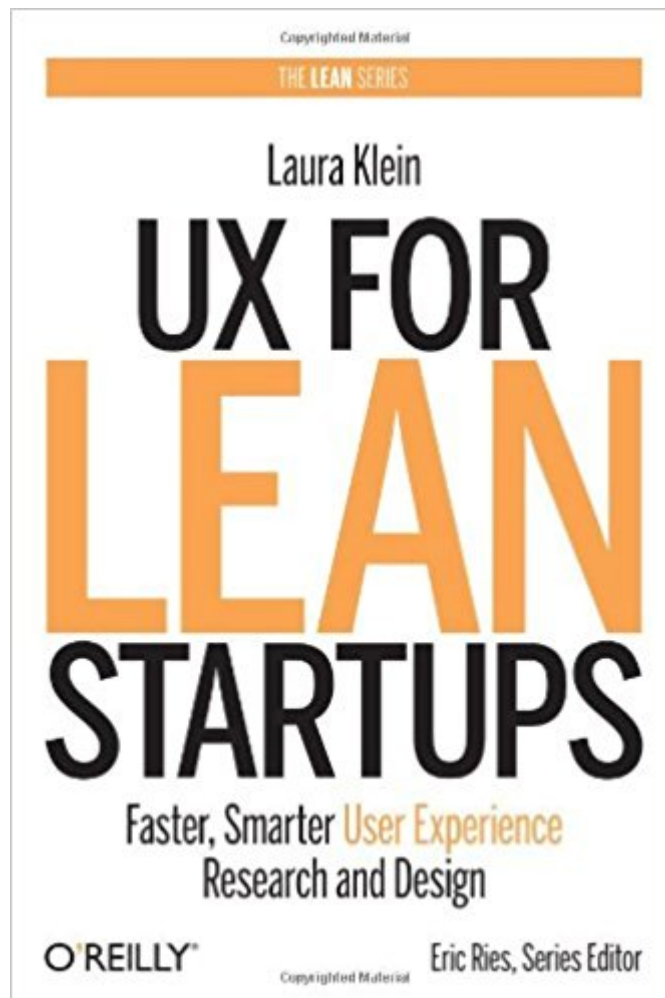




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UX For Lean Startups: Faster, Smarter User Experience Research And Design



Synopsis

Great user experiences (UX) are essential for products today, but designing one can be a lengthy and expensive process. With this practical, hands-on book, you'll learn how to do it faster and smarter using Lean UX techniques. UX expert Laura Klein shows you what it takes to gather valuable input from customers, build something they'll truly love, and reduce the time it takes to get your product to market. No prior experience in UX or design is necessary to get started. If you're an entrepreneur or an innovator, this book puts you right to work with proven tips and tools for researching, identifying, and designing an intuitive, easy-to-use product. Determine whether people will buy your product before you build it. Listen to your customers throughout the product's lifecycle. Understand why you should design a test before you design a product. Get nine tools that are critical to designing your product. Discern the difference between necessary features and nice-to-haves. Learn how a Minimum Viable Product affects your UX decisions. Use A/B testing in conjunction with good UX practices. Speed up your product development process without sacrificing quality.

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Q&A with Laura Klein, author of "UX for Lean Startups" Q. Why is your book timely-- what makes it important right now? A. We're seeing a massive increase in the demand for well-designed, easy-to-use products. At the same time, we're seeing an incredible shortage of designers who can work at the sort of fast-paced, data-driven, innovative startups that are popping up. UX for

Lean Startups helps teach founders and entrepreneurs the basics of research, design, and UX so that they can build products people love and companies that can grow. Q. What information do you hope that readers of your book will walk away with? A. I hope that everybody who reads the book will be able to learn from their customers and turn that information into products that people will actually buy. I want startups to stop building things people don't want and can't use. This book can help them do that. Q. What's the most exciting and/or important thing happening in your space? A. I think the addition of data is the most important change to design that I've seen. By incorporating real data into the design process, we can understand exactly what effect our changes have on our users' behavior. It used to be that design was about opinion and compromise. Now it's about proving that the work we do has a positive impact on the company's bottom line. Laura's top 5 tips for readers: 1. Talking to users is not as good as listening to users, which is not as good as observing users. The best way to truly understand your user experience is to watch people trying to use your product. Do this as often as possible. It can be painful, but it's always useful. 2. Know that something you believe may be wrong. The most important thing you can do is to identify which of your beliefs are assumptions and validate them. Before you spend a lot of time designing and building a feature, spend a little time validating whether or not the feature will help your business. 3. Quantitative research tells you what. Qualitative research tells you why. Things like A/B testing and funnel analysis (quant) are useful for explaining things like which design caused people to buy more products and where people fell out of the purchase funnel. Things like observational research and usability testing (qual) can tell you why users responded better to a particular design and why users are getting dropping out of the purchase funnel. Use them together for the best results. 4. An MVP is not half of a big product. It's a whole small product. Don't build something crappy and unusable and then claim it's a minimum viable product. Build a good, but limited, version of your product that solves a serious problem for people. 5. Lean Startup is about learning, not landing pages. Whenever you're wondering whether you should use a specific Lean Startup tactic, like a landing page or an MVP or an A/B test, ask yourself what you hope to learn from it and whether there is a cheaper, faster, more effective way to get that learning. Just measuring things doesn't make you lean. The only way to truly be a Lean Startup is to Build, Measure, and Learn (and then Iterate).

Laura has spent 15 years as an engineer and designer. Her goal is to help lean startups learn more about their customers so that they can build better products faster. Her popular design blog, Users

Know, teaches product owners exactly what they need to know to do just enough research and design.

Great introduction for people who don't really know much about UX Design. It was well written, pretty funny, and valuable. Only downside for me was that it seemed a little bit repetitive. Still worth the read though! The introduction of the book talked about what Lean UX is and isn't. It was compared to Agile Design and User-Centered Design, which meant nothing to me, to be honest. The actual definition was irrelevant to why I was reading this book - I care more about the practice and benefits of Lean UX. But the rest of the book got into the meat of that. Lean UX can be summarized into 3 principles: 1. Do research. Ask questions, make hypotheses. 2. Validate. Answer questions, test hypotheses. 3. Iterate. Take answers and data, and then make adjustments. Research is extremely important not just because it tells you whether your product or service is viable, but because it saves you time and money. The key to Lean UX is doing research and avoiding problems before they come up. Don't waste your resources. "Lean UX isn't about adding features to a product, it's about figuring out which metrics drive a business." The author talked about the 2 different kinds of research you can do: quantitative and qualitative. "Quantitative research tells you what your problem is. Qualitative research tells you why you have that problem." Quantitative research is about getting statistically significant data about a potential feature or workflow - like A/B testing. Qualitative research is about listening to what the user has to say. You have to pay attention to what they do and how they use your product. Looking over someone's shoulder while they use your product is a great way to do user research. The best way to figure out if your product is any good is to hand your product over to the people and observe how they use it. The worst way is to ask people if they would use it. The main reasons for this are because we as consumers don't really know what we want and our dollars speak louder than our words. Another thing I liked from this book was this set of questions we should ask when determining if a landing page has good UX: 1. What does the user think this product does? 2. Who does the user think the product is for? 3. Can the user figure out how to get the product? It seems simple, but those questions are golden. I think they apply not just to UX designers and marketers, but also to authors, video producers, and a whole slew of other people. Think about it. The Start-up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career by Reid Hoffman. Make sure you can answer these questions about yourself as a professional. Another important aspect of UX design is making sure that you're starting with problems, not solutions. Bad starting point = "Let's add commenting functionality to the product

page!" Good starting point = "Users aren't able to communicate with each other, which affects their engagement with the product." All in all, good book. This is extremely accessible to lay people and most valuable to anyone working in the startup realm (especially marketers and business dev folks). If you're already a UX designer or you've read a fair amount of stuff on UX, you probably won't find this novel at all.

I work for one of the largest companies in the world. We have tons of ideas, too many. What we didn't have was a way to prove that people wanted the ideas. My boss challenged me to figure that out and through this book (and a few others in the series like Lean Customer) I realized we had all the pieces in the company already, we just needed to tie it all together. As an engineer I also used to take the mindset that only the consumer research folks in the company could talk to customers. Now I try and talk to 3 a week. Ideas are rarely the issue which is the focus of many other books. I came out of too many brainstorming sessions thinking what a waste of time. I replaced those with the alignment meetings mentioned in this book.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It explains UX design in the context of lean startups. It's a great read for anyone, even if you don't work at a startup. And it made me laugh out loud several times as I was reading. (I listen to Laura's podcast, What is Wrong with UX, so I'm familiar with her sarcastic sense of humor.) Laura shows you how to validate hypotheses with UX tools like user research. She goes into detail about the different user research methods out there and when to use them. I'm glad Laura also explains an MVP. Contrary to popular belief, an MVP is not the slickest version of your product you can ship. An MVP is the smallest thing you can build to validate or invalidate a hypothesis. Laura uses funny stories and examples to illustrate her points. I appreciate her analogy "fixating on the cupholders." Fixating on the cupholders is like building a car that doesn't have any brakes, yet focusing on how to design the cup holders. This analogy refers to when teams channel time and money into building the wrong things, such as building low priority features. Laura talks about fixating on cupholders in the context of startups, but I've seen this happen outside of startups. I also appreciate Laura's approach to new product ideas. Laura says, don't try to come up with brilliant product ideas out of thin air. Instead, think about every product as a solution to somebody's problem. This book is packed with great stuff for entrepreneurs and UX designers. Do yourself a favor and read it. :)

I really love this book because it consolidates the key principles of Lean and in an easy to understand way, and it's really helped me plan my projects better. You don't have to be an expert to understand it. I refer back to specific chapters a lot when I work through new projects. I think of the design and development process very differently now, after reading this. Especially in regards to metrics, and analytics, and deciding what I need to measure to determine my design decisions have actually improved my app. As a designer, I need to explain why I've changed the design and help show that it's "better" than it was before and that people like it more. It also gave me tons of ideas how to test out new designs to see if they are truly better and result in more engagement. It really de-mystified many concepts for me. It's helped me ground all my decisions in reality and think more clearly about how to make design, schedule, and make requirements decisions. It's really useful for PMs, designers, and developers because all the concepts can be applied to all these roles in different ways. I can see the changes throughout my team after we all read this. So, I highly recommend it.

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