Managing UX Debt Using a Design System

Startups often operate in uncertainty with company objectives and product requirements susceptible to rapid change. To remain competitive, they intentionally occur a limited amount of technical debt. This allows companies to develop software faster, with the understanding that the compromises made negatively affect product quality and user experience.

The lack of an integrated user-centered design approach managing this negative impact poses a risk to the product and the company as a whole. It leads to fragmented user experience and a disconnect from changing user needs. Over time, the accumulation of this debt becomes a great weight that hinders growth and causes users to seek out competitors. The aim of this project is to increase product quality without losing agility.

At the Cirqle, we developed a user validated design system; a collection of functional user interface patterns that are used as a set of building blocks while developing software. Three products have been rebuilt and evaluated. End products showed an increase in design consistency and redundancies in the development process were diminished. Furthermore, this led to an increase in the team’s efficiency; more resources could be dedicated to user-centered design activities and new features were released at a faster pace.

Figure 1: User interfaces are constructed with user validated reusable patterns. Products show an increase in design consistency and redundancies in the design and development process are reduced.

Figure 2: The visual user interface is fully abstracted from the data and content that powers it. When data dictates the visual interface, the building blocks can be reused across different product, platforms, and devices.

PDEng Program:
USER SYSTEM INTERACTION

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