

# User Experience & RIA's:

How does it all come together?

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## Agenda

- Intro
- Goals of this presentation
- How did we get here?
- Boiling it down
- Working on your own
- Wrapup

## Intro: Me

- Usability engineer
- Usability specialist
- User Experience architect
- Atlanta-based consultant



## Intro: You

- UX Group?
- Product managers?
- Designers?
- Solo or team?

## The good news about this presentation

- You'll leave here with an understanding of what it takes to make a dynamic interface usable
- You'll have specific tools to use in your work
- What I'm talking about applies to any technology, any platform.

# The bad news about this presentation

- No code samples

# Getting started...

*“Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”*

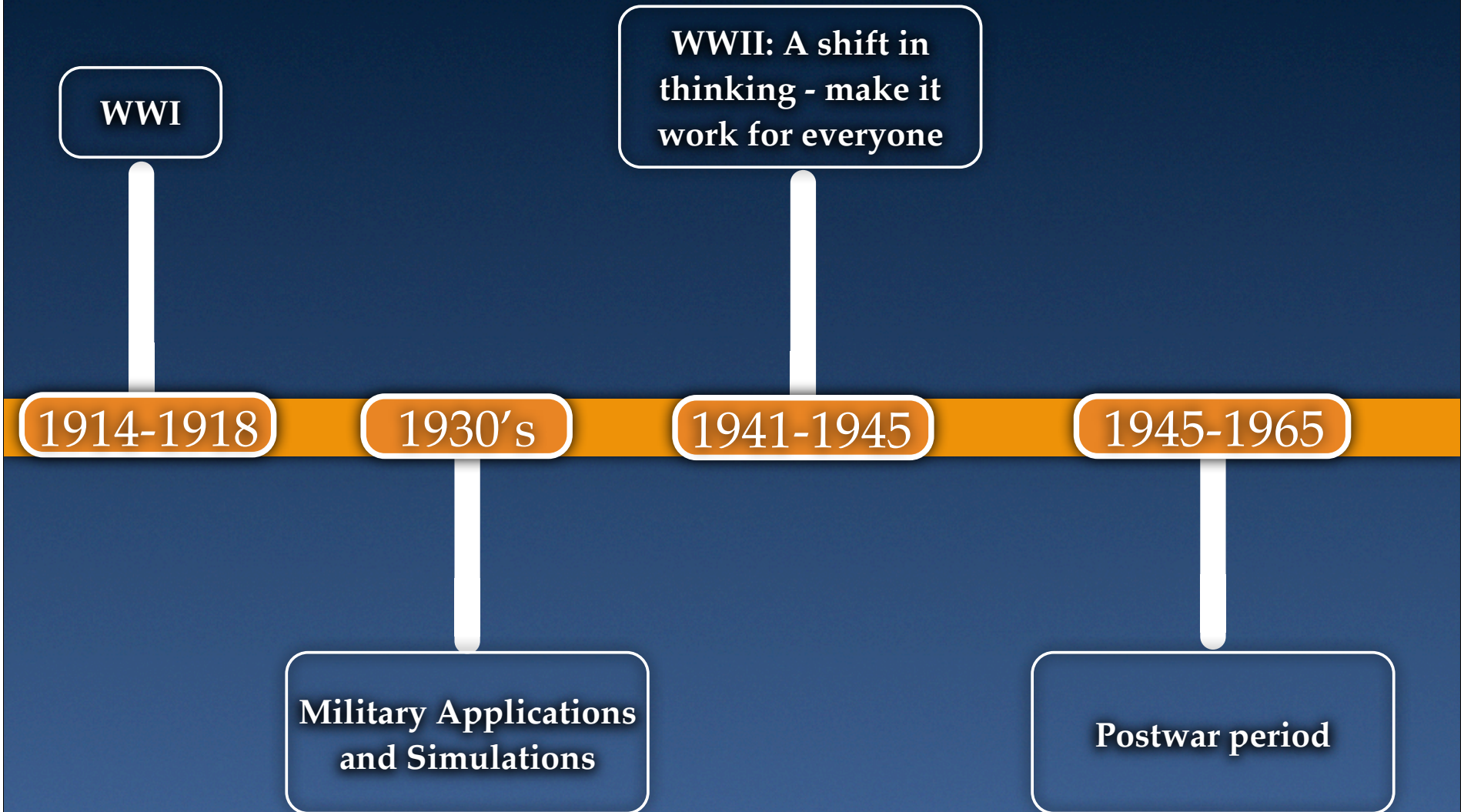
-Santayana



# A Brief History of User Experience

Frederick Taylor

1911



Postmodern  
Period

1965-present

But then...  
...there's the Web



## The bottom line:

We want to make stuff easy for people to use.

The goal: the interface should be **so transparent** that **users don't even need to think about it**, and it **should never, ever disrupt them from the task** of why they came to the site to begin with.

But how?

## The secret:

- We observe users carefully
- We understand how people think

The game has  
changed.

*Amazing transactional capability means changes in flow, navigation, and content, impacting concepts such as personalization and customization.*

*Visually moving, transactional GUIs are forcing us to think differently about web conventions, web controls, content, and navigation as well, but even as it becomes more mainstream we can be certain that our users are not thinking about this in the same way we do.*

-Me



*“Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”*

-Santayana

## The deal with RIA's

- Heritage from a usability perspective:
  - Nielsen's 2000 article "Flash: 99% Bad":
    - encourages design abuse
    - breaks web fundamentals
    - distracts from a site's core values
  - and more...

## So what's the problem?

- Many of the same complaints are being levied against dynamic applications:
  - encourages design abuse
  - breaks web fundamentals
  - what about accessibility?

## How you fit into the equation:

- **Devsigner:**
  - Tools are forcing developers to think more like designers than ever before.
  - Good news: you can learn to design for your users.
  - Great news: it's not that painful or hard.

# How do you create a GUI?

- Borrow code / use libraries
- Copy existing apps
- Talk to your colleagues
- Hire a consultant
- Make it up as you go
- Just dig in!

You don't have to be a designer.  
You just have to design the right things, well.  
It's not rocket science. It's not magic.

Here's your to-do list.

# 1. Create your roadmap

- Are you building a lending library or gas station?
- Who are your allies?
  - Create your own plans if you don't have the external resources to do them for you.
  - Make sure you have agreement and buy in.
- Recognize your boundaries and constraints.



## 2. Keep the user squarely in your sights.

- Who is your user?
- Ever heard of personas?
- Innovation for the sake of innovation is not always good.
- Not everything needs to look and work like Facebook.

## 3. Have a plan.

- Before you start building, have a plan:
  - When?
  - How big?
  - For whom?
- The 80/20 rule is immensely helpful in these discussions.

## 4. Don't make your users relearn everything.

- What my grandmother knows about the Web:
  - I enter stuff in forms.
  - I click on buttons. They do stuff.
  - I click on links. They take me places.
  - I want it to be simple but it's not.



# Dailyplate.com mini-review

The Daily Plate is a **LIVESTRONG.COM** Partner | Explore: [Cut Calories - 3 ways to cut calories everyday](#)

Latest TDP news: [LIVESTRONG.COM upgrades and fixes for TDP members](#)  
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 My daily calorie goal: [Calculate now!](#)

the easy, FREE way to track what you're eating each day

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**search** 1  
for the foods you eat  
and activities you do

[search](#)

**Examples:** [Burger King](#), [meatloaf](#), [Reese's peanut butter cups](#), [pilates](#)

Search more than 451,200 foods for calorie counts, total carbs, fat, protein -- or any other nutrition facts!

**track** 2  
with a free food diary

A diet coach, nutritionist, and food plan at your fingertips, just a click away.

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Keep track of what you eat
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Determine your daily goal
- Fitness Log**  
Calculate and log the calories you burn each day

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the weight you want

...and the lifestyle, too! We'll teach you to spot healthy alternatives with ease.

Create your own diary, and learn how the foods you eat affect how you feel. Join our user-created **Groups** to connect with people who really understand what you're going through.

**Whether you want to lose, maintain, or gain weight -- The Daily Plate can help!**

[Browse our Frequently Asked Questions >](#)

**The Daily Special**  
the latest news from the staff at TDP

**LIVESTRONG.COM upgrades and fixes for TDP members >**

A bunch of new features and fixes went live on [LIVESTRONG.COM](#) today! Here are some that you may find of interest. (Remember, you can login to [LIVESTRONG](#) with your existing TDP username and password.)

First up, for those of you who use [TDP on LIVESTRONG](#), we've added a great feature that's easier to use than to explain... but I'll still try to

**Popular Foods:**

- [Old Chicago Chicken Ceasar Salad](#)
- [Olive Garden Chicken Spiedini](#)
- [McDonald's Chicken Fajita](#)
- [Grapefruit \(large\)](#)
- [Red Robin Ensenada Chicken Platter](#)
- [Kellogg's Yogos](#)
- [Jiffy Peanut Butter](#)

**Members of The Daily Plate include...**

## 5. Create and use patterns

- It's ok to set new directions - sensibly and within reason
- If you can't be standard with everyone else, at least be standard with yourself.
- Ultimately, it will make your work easier.
- Consider iPhone, Yahoo, and others as models

## Bonus! How do you know when you're done?

- Ask your users - did you do what you set out to do?
  - use your avenues of contact
  - request feedback on the site
  - create a user advisory board
  - failing all else, ask your grandmother

## www.onespring.net / ajaxworld:

roadmap planning.xls User Experience RIA's

**Roadmap Planning Document**  
Quickly map out your plans for your project below:

Project name:

What problems are you solving in this project? Think of problems that can impact users, business, or technology.

Problem description:	Who does it benefit?

For each of the problems above, how will you know when you're finished?


Problem description:	Completion criteria:
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

For each of the problems above, what components of the problem are NOT going to be covered or are excluded from this current effort?

Problem description:	Exempt items:
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

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# The bare minimum reading list

- Don't Make Me Think - Steve Krug
- The Inmates are Running the Asylum - Alan Cooper
- Web Application Form Design - Luke Wroblewski
- Elements of User Experience - Jesse James Garrett
- Designing Web Usability - Jakob Nielsen
- Information Architecture for the World Wide Web - Louis Rosenfeld
- Edward Tufte's Information Design series (4)
- Designing Interfaces - Jenifer Tidwell
- Handbook of Usability Testing - Jeffrey Rubin



## Contact me

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Thanks!