Knowing When Enough is Enough in Mobile Design
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As programmers have learned since the beginning of coding, it can be difficult to feel your program is 'done.' There's always more tweaking you can do, but are you really making it better? While you are 'improving' it, you're losing the business you could get if your app was available. It's important to know when to stop. After all, you can always do an updated version later.

Start with your design. Spend more time designing upfront and less time coding after. A well-thought-out design not only makes it easier to code; it also provides limits. This means carefully considering first which features of the device you need to use and which ones you can omit. It's tempting to use all the new capabilities, but ask yourself—is the feature you're considering going to add to the appeal, increase the capabilities or reflect your company's brand? If not, skip it. Make sure to check in with the people who will actually use your app. They may not be able to tell you what it should look like, but they can tell you exactly what they need to do with your app.

This also applies to making your landing page too fancy. If you have too many bells and whistles, particularly on the first page rendering, you will impact performance. If egregious enough, you may also cause reduced battery life. Cute animations are just like cell phone ringtones—fun the first time you hear them; not so great after that. Only add what you need so users can readily perform a function or highlight your brand.

With screen sizes increasing and pixel counts higher, it's tempting to crowd more 'stuff' into the real estate. Don't. A clean, straightforward interface is far more appealing to a larger audience than a cluttered one. Older app users as well as those with dyslexia, astigmatism or other visual challenges really appreciate it when they can see what they're doing. While more content on a single page may look really great to you, it may cause problems for others. Don't stress that you have to have everything on the home page. If it's appealing and easy to use, people will click through to accomplish a task.

Good design ensures that users don't have to read a manual or try to find the 'help' button. When it's intuitive, the buttons make it clear how to interact and a user knows when they are done with a page, you make them happy. That's all about design; less about coding.

Stop when you start trying to code for the one-off user—the purple cow. Design for 80%; the 20% will either figure it out, or perhaps they don't really need your app. Over time, the metrics you collect on your app will help you determine if there is something critical you overlooked. Get it out and learn as you go.

The first release doesn't have to do everything. There are several reasons for that. In the business world, you want to be able to release new features to regenerate the initial

excitement and speak to new types of customers. You miss that opportunity if you put everything into your app Day One. When you start smaller, you have the chance to learn as people use the app. Add features as you determine a real, quantifiable need.

Leave time for testing. You're not your own best tester. Test in-house to avoid embarrassment then get it out as a beta. Think of app development as an iterative process. The longer you hold onto it, the less iterations you may get.

Get it out there! Only then can you move onto the next app.