



Designing and Prototyping Better User Experiences

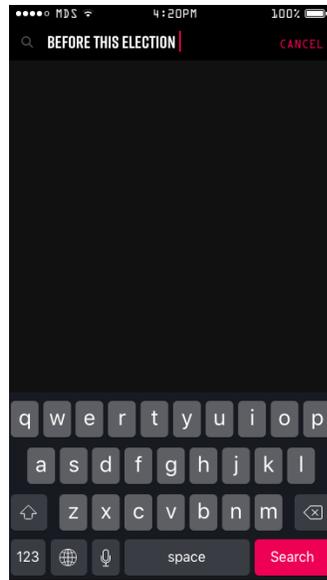
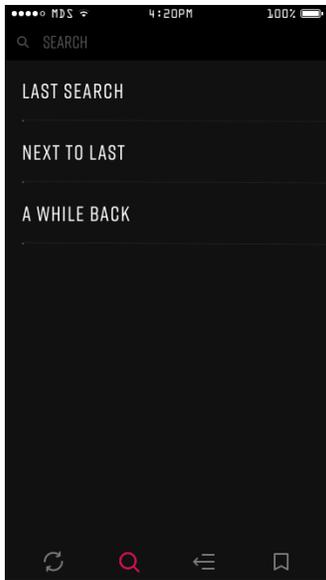
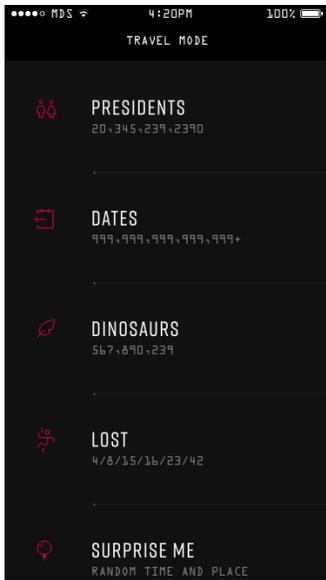
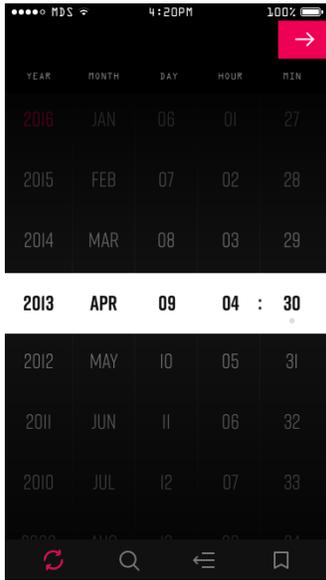
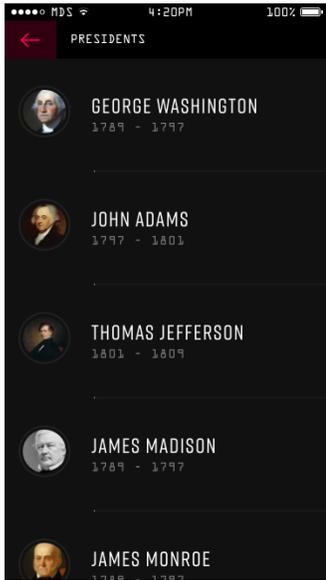
P1284 – ADOBE XD

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In this session you'll learn...

1. How to use the latest features in XD to create a simple iOS user interface.
2. Strategies for designing with multiple Adobe products on one project.
3. Tips for art direction, choosing typefaces, and selecting colors for your interface designs.

Introduction

Hey, I'm Matt D. Smith, Owner and Design Director at Studio MDS located in Athens, GA. Read more at <http://mds.is/matt>

Before We Begin

The demo file we'll use contains a few Adobe Typekit Fonts. We need the installed first so the fonts don't get substituted incorrectly and screw up the designs.

- Click the CC icon in the menu bar (top right).
- Click on the **Assets** tab,
- and then the **Fonts** tab.
- Now click **Manage Fonts**.

This will launch the Adobe Typekit website. We're going to sync two type faces.

1. **Rift**
2. **OCR A**

On typekit.com, use the search bar in the top left to search for **Rift**. You should see two results, **Rift** and **Rift soft**. Select **Rift**.

On the **Rift** detail page, find the following font weights...

1. Rift Light

2. Rift Regular
3. Rift Medium
4. Rift Bold

...and click the green `sync` button on right. If you sync more, that's fine, but we only need those four for our demo file.

Next, search for `ocr A` on typekit.com and click on the `ocr A` search result to drill down to the detail page. There is only one font weight—click the `sync` button on that one as well.

Why are we doing this?

Art direction. That's the reason. Art direction is one of the most important decisions to make at the beginning of the project.

For this project, we're building a time traveling app. When designing the UI for this project, I decided on a dark and futuristic theme that felt techy and punchy. I may even go so far as to call this a "Tech Punch" theme.

Once we decide on a direction, we have a baseline to guide our design decision making process.

Does this feel techy and punchy? What elements and attributes might contribute to this type of theme?

These are questions that we can ask ourselves when starting new design projects. Determine how each little decision builds towards a common theme.

Here is a list of attributes I came up with and stuck to when designing this app:

- Dark futuristic UI
- Techy typefaces
- Punchy colors
- Hard edges on buttons
- Small corner radius on input fields

All of these attributes and more contribute to the overall art direction of the app.

Rift is a typeface designed by my studio mate, Mattox Shuler of [Fort Foundry](#). He designed the typeface for a new card game called “Control.” The premise of the game involves time travelers getting caught in a spacetime rupture and trying to escape. Pretty appropriate for a time traveling app.

OCR A is a typeface according to Wikipedia that, “...arose in the early days of computer optical character recognition when there was a need for a font that could be recognized not only by the computers of that day, but also by humans.” Humans and machines coming together. Sounds time travelly, right?

Open the demo file

With the font business out of the way, let’s open our demo `.xd` file. Look for the `Assets` folder on your desktop.

Here’s the full file extension of our `.xd` file

- Desktop / Assets / P1284_Smith / MAX XD MDS / design / XD / MAX XD iOS MDS v0.1
- Once you see it, double click MAX XD iOS MDS v0.1

PRO TIP

I always use this formula for my file naming strategy:

```
Project_Name Doc_Contents My_Initials Version_Number
```

Always use version numbers and never `final`. You documents will **never** be `final`.

Bonus: If you name your files without hyphens or underscores it makes it easier to search for them with Spotlight.

Warm Up

Let's warm up a bit and get the finger dexterity juices flowing.

- In the open XD demo file, zoom out to show all of the artboards by hitting `⌘ 0`.
- Now press `A` to activate the artboard panel.
- Select `iPhone 6/7` (on the top right).
- Hit `⌘ 3` to zoom to the selected artboard.
- After you've zoomed in on your new artboard, hit `R` and draw a rectangle on the artboard. Any size, it doesn't matter.
- Change the `fill` from white to some other solid color in the properties panel.
- Deselect the `border` checkbox to remove the default border.
- `Option Shift Drag` your shape to create a duplicate.
- Now let's spend some time playing around with these shapes using the quick keys below.

Mind-bending Speed (ie. Quick Keys)

I highly recommend learning **all** of the quick-key commands so you can efficiently use the software.

MOVING AROUND

- Hold the `spacebar` to change your cursor to the move tool and explore the canvas.
- With an object selected, hold `option` to activate quick measurements.

ZOOMING

- `⌘ +` Zoom In
- `⌘ -` Zoom Out
- `⌘ 1` Zoom to 100%
- `⌘ 2` Zoom to 200%
- `⌘ 3` Zoom to Selection
- `⌘ 0` Zoom to Fit All

TOGGLING MENUS

- `⌘ Shift Y` Symbol Library
- `⌘ Y` Layers

PRIMARY TOOLS

- `V` Select
- `R` Rectangle
- `E` Ellipse
- `L` Line
- `P` Pen
- `T` Text
- `A` Artboard
- `Z` Zoom (I don't use this one very often)

ADVANCED ZOOMING

- `⌘ Spacebar` Press and hold to change cursor to Zoom In
- `⌘ Option Spacebar` Press and hold to change cursor to Zoom Out

TIME TRAVEL COMMANDS

- `⌘ Z` Undo
- `⌘ Shift Z` Redo

OBJECTS

- ⌘ G Group
- ⌘ Shift G Ungroup
- ⌘ K Make Symbol
- ⌘ L Lock
- ⌘ ; Hide
- ⌘ R Make Repeat Grid
- ⌘ Click Select an object within a group—**IMPORTANT**

FILES

- ⌘ N New
- ⌘ O Open...
- ⌘ W Close
- ⌘ S Save
- ⌘ E Export
- ⌘ Shift I Import
- ⌘ Shift E Share...
- Control Tab Switch Workspace (Design/Prototype)

ALIGN

- ⌘ Control ← Left
- ⌘ Control → Right
- ⌘ Control C Center (Horizontally)
- ⌘ Control ↑ Top
- ⌘ Control ↓ Bottom
- ⌘ Control M Middle (Vertically)

DISTRIBUTE

- ⌘ Control H Horizontally
- ⌘ Control V Vertically

ARRANGE LAYERS

- ⌘] Bring Forward
- ⌘ [Send Backward
- ⌘ Shift] Bring to Front
- ⌘ Shift [Send to Back

PREVIEW

- ⌘ ← Quickly preview prototype
- ← == enter or return (whatever you like to call it)

XD Highlights

Now that our fingers are nice and warm, let's explore more of what XD can do. If you have your phone with the XD Preview App installed and a USB cable, go ahead and plug it in launch the mobile XD app.

Once you've done this your living designs will show up in real time on your phone. If you don't have the app you can visit <http://mds.is/max> on your phone and snag the download links.

GROUPS

Make your way to the 3rd artboard called **list empty**.

- On your computer's desktop, find an image of a president in the Desktop / Assets / P1284_Smith / MAX XD MDS / assets / presidents folder. Any image will do.
- Position your Finder window over XD and drag one of the presidents onto the solid gray ellipse. This will automatically resize the image to fit and mask it to the shape. Sweet!

After clicking around on a few of the objects, you'll notice they aren't grouped. Let's group them.

- Select all of the ellipses on the left—three in total—and hit ⌘ G to group them.
- Now do the same for the two text fields on the right. Select them and hit ⌘ G .
- Yo dawg, I heard you like groups with yo groups, so why don't you go ahead and group all those groups you just grouped, including that little line group.
- Seriously though, draw a selection around all of that stuff and hit ⌘ G once again to create a super group. I made up the term "super group" FYI, but it sounds good so let's go with it.

Now you can move around the entire group as one object. If you want to drill down into the group for one specific piece, you can ⌘ Click to select an individual item.

This will also set your cursor to be able to select any group or object within that subgroup.

- `⌘ Click` on an object. Then click on a subgroup within the super group. Drilling down first with a `⌘ click` make this possible

`⌘ Clicking` within groups and subsequent clicking to navigate subgroups is an **extremely fast** way to work your way in the XD canvas without the need to use the layer panel for every single object selection.

REPEAT GRID

Ok, now let's move onto one of the coolest features of XD.

- Select `v` the new group you just made.
- Now hit `⌘ R` to create a `Repeat Grid`. This will turn your selection's bounding box from a solid blue border to a dashed green border. You can also convert an object or group to a repeat grid by clicking on the `Repeat Grid` button in the properties panel, but you want to be as fast as possible, so stick with `⌘ R`.
- Hit `⌘ Y` to view your layers panel. You can see that the Repeat Grid is signified with the little grid icon.
- Close your layers with `⌘ Y` again.
- Grab the bottom handle of the repeat grid and start dragging it down as long as the `list of presidents` artboard to the right.
- Click the `list empty` artboard name and select the bottom middle node and drag it down as far as the repeat grid you just made.
- Now select your `Repeat Grid` again. Make sure the green dashed border is visible.
- Hover your cursor in between the duplicated items and you'll notice a pink background color appears. This is the default space between the duplicates.
- Click and hold the pink area to see the number value of the space in pixels `20`
- Drag down or up to increase or decrease the spacing.
- Have mind blown.

Alright, that's pretty cool, but we don't necessarily want the same dead president's face in all of the instances. Let's make some more magic happen.

Navigate back to that same assets folder that you grabbed the first president from.

```
Desktop / Assets / P1284_Smith / MAX XD MDS / assets / **presidents**
```

- Position the finder window on top of your XD document, so you can still see a president's face.
- Select all of the `pres-*.jpeg`s by hitting `⌘ A`
- Now drag and drop all 24 images onto any of the president faces in your XD document. Make sure the blue bounding box of the circle shows up before you drop the images.
- Boom. All of the repeated shapes in your `repeat grid` are now updated. Ridiculously awesome.

Now, let's rename some of the president's names. How many can you remember on your own? `Repeat Grid` makes it easy for you to update the value of a text string.

- `⌘ click` the first "PRESIDENT NAME" and hit `↵` (return) to quickly activate the text field.
- Type "George Washington"
- Click anywhere on the canvas away from the text field to deactivate it.
- Now `⌘ click` the "2008 – 2016", hit `↵`, and type `1789 – 1797`. Yes, that is the span of years. I googled it.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR REPEAT GRID

Let's look at a few other ways to use `Repeat Grid`.

- Navigate your way to the `selector year big` artboard. The one with all of the years listed out "2016, 2015, etc."
- Click on any of the year values and you can see that all of those pieces are in one group.
- `⌘ click` on `2016` to enter that group. Use the layers panel if you'd like, but you really don't need to. Break that habit!
- Once you're inside of the group, click one of the little divider lines. Not with `⌘` though. We don't want to go inside of the line group.
- You should see a dashed green border indicating a `Repeat Grid` group.
- Hover inside until you see the pink spacing zone.
- Click and drag up and down to see the lines moving around.
- You can see that the spacing is set to `120`

In this particular design there is a single text size for the year. This is a good candidate to keep everything in one text field so it's quick to adjust the line height and font size on one item.

- ⌘ Click on the year list again.
- Look in the properties panel on the right in the TEXT section and you can see the line height is set to 120 also. This is an easy way to make sure the text is set to the same baseline as the repeat grid's spacing.

I've used the repeat grid on the divider line only so that it's independent of the text.

This by no means the **only way** of doing things, just another example of how you can put Repeat Grid to work for you.

SYMBOLS: WHY, WHEN, HOW?

Make your way over to the very first artboard in the document called components . Remember the spacebar is your friend. So is selecting an artboard name and hitting ⌘ 3 then ⌘ 1 .

In this artboard there are a series of components and symbols that can be used to assemble your own screens.

- Let's ⌘ Click the 4:20PM time in the status bar and move it around a little bit. You can see that every instance of that status bar is updating in real time.
- Hit ⌘ shift Y and you'll see the symbols panel on the left appear. These are all of the symbols I've created within this document. Symbols are great when you have duplicated content from screen to screen that doesn't need to change very much.

Scroll down to the bottom of the components artboard until you see the tab bar and icons.

- ⌘ Click on the Tab Bar Variations title near the bottom. This will put your selection abilities inside the group.
- Select the very bottom tab bar and `Option Drag' it below to create a copy. You'll notice a solid green border indicating a symbol.
- Hit ⌘ shift G to ungroup the symbol. In doing so you are breaking the symbol link.

- In your duplicated tab bar, ⌘ click the background shape to access this groups contents.
- Now switch the Search and the Refresh (Time Travel?) icons.
- Make use of the auto spacing and alignment features that show up while you're repositioning the icon groups.
- Once they're in position, you can double check the spacing and alignment by hold option with a group or object selected.
- You can also shift click each icon group and hit ⌘ Control H to distribute them horizontally.
- ⌘ click the tab bar background shape again to access this groups content.
- Select the background and all of the icons and hit ⌘ K to create a new symbol.

Now you can use these techniques to create your own symbols for common elements across your screen designs.

Next Steps

Now that you've gone through a crash course on XD Design, spend some time creating your own app designs based on your paper prototype.

Feel free to design your screens...

- from scratch with your own unique designs
- using the Time Travel UI kit.
- from the built in UI kits available from the menu bar: File / Open UI Kit / Apple iOS or Google Material

Q&A

Hit me! If you have questions that we didn't get to during our session, I'd be more the happy to take the conversation to email.

→ matt@mds.is