

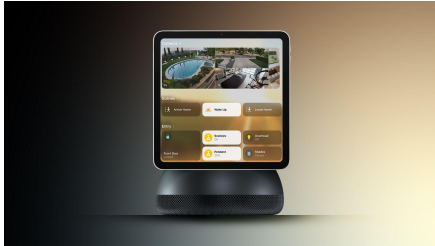
Ambient Intelligence: Critique

DESIGN 03

due 09 oct 2026 @ 11:59 pm

When people tell you something's wrong or doesn't work for them, they are almost always right. When they tell you exactly what they think is wrong and how to fix it, they are almost always wrong.

— Neil Gaiman, "Ten Rules for Writing Fiction," *The Guardian*, 2010



This assignment closes the loop on the iterative design cycle you started in DESIGN 01 and DESIGN 02. You'll test your Figma prototype with real people face-to-face, and separately absorb feedback from classmates who've only seen your design secondhand, through your video. Putting those two very different kinds of feedback side by side (i.e. one rich and interactive, one anonymous and asynchronous) is itself a lesson in what each is good for.

Goal

The goal of this assignment is to introduce you to giving constructive feedback and also synthesizing feedback on your own designs. This assignment builds from **DESIGN 01: Ideas** and **DESIGN 02: Prototype** towards giving and receiving feedback on your own and various others' designs. You will walk 2 users through your design from DESIGN 02 and collect feedback on their usage. You will also collect the anonymous peer feedback from your class (you will receive that on Oct 4) and synthesize all of this into an overall findings document reporting what you learned from your feedback, along with your proposal for redesigns.

Please refer to DESIGN 01 and DESIGN 02 for details about the design brief and the overall context and framing.

Design Prompt

Part 1: In-person testing. Show your Figma prototype to two people in person. These can be the same people you interviewed for DESIGN 01, or new people who fit the same kind of target user, whichever gives you a more useful signal at this point. Walk them through the interaction the way you would if this were a real device. That means letting them click through it, ask them to think aloud, and resist the urge to explain or defend your choices while they're using it. You are allowed to perform Wizard-of-Oz elements as needed. Pay attention to where they hesitate, what they expect to happen next, and what they say unprompted.

Document each session the same way you did in DESIGN 01: an anonymized description of who you talked to, and a summary of what happened. Document what they did, what confused them, what they liked, and anything that surprised you.

Part 2: Reading and synthesizing peer feedback. On October 4 you'll receive anonymized peer review feedback on your video from a subset of your classmates. Read through it carefully alongside the notes from your two in-person sessions. Then write a short synthesis (aim for roughly 250–400 words) that addresses:

- What you learned across both sources of feedback. In particular pay attention to where they agreed and where they told you different things.
- Which of your original assumptions about your design turned out to be right, and which turned out to be wrong.
- What you would change if you kept iterating on this design. In other words, what would you redesign? You need to be specific enough that someone reading your document could tell exactly what should be done differently, not just that you'd “make it better” or “make it easier”.

Obviously, in-person testing and anonymous peer review feedback will feel very different to work with and your synthesis will likely reflect that analysis. Clearly, in person testing allows you to follow up and ask why, the other doesn't. Part of what you're being asked to do here is notice that difference and account for it in how much weight you give each in your final writeup.

Part 3 (due 4 Oct): Giving feedback online. In addition to receiving peer feedback, you will provide constructive feedback on five of your classmates' anonymized video submissions through bCourses. For each one, watch the provided 2 minute video carefully and leave feedback specific enough to be useful to the design team. What confused or surprised you? What was unclear? What did you want to know more about? You can use the critique technique:

I Like, I Wish, I Wonder

When you leave feedback on a classmate's video, structure it may be most helpful to frame your comments around three prompts:

- **I Like** – something specific in the design that worked, that you'd want them to keep or build on
- **I Wish** – something you think could be stronger, phrased as a hope for improvement rather than a complaint
- **I Wonder** – an open question or “what if” idea that occurred to you while watching, even if it's speculative or you're not sure it would work. This isn't about handing out a verdict — it's about giving the designer new angles to think from. Specific beats general every time. For example “I wonder what would happen if the display only lit up when someone was actually standing at the counter” is far more useful than “I wonder if this could be smarter.”



- Did you conduct in-person walkthroughs with two people, letting them click through your prototype and think aloud rather than just describing the idea to them? (10 pts)
- Are both sessions documented with an anonymized description of who you talked to and a clear summary of what happened. What they did, what confused them, what they liked, and anything that surprised you? (10 pts)
- Does your synthesis explicitly draw on and compare both feedback sources (i.e. your in-person sessions and the anonymous peer reviews) noting where they agreed and where they diverged? (10 pts)
- Does your synthesis clearly state which of your original assumptions about your design were confirmed and which turned out to be wrong? (5 pts)
- Is your proposed redesign specific and concrete? Is it something someone else could act on rather than a vague statement that you'd "make it better"? (5 pts)
- Did you provide thoughtful, specific, constructive feedback on 5 classmates' designs online? (10 pts)
- Did you accurately describe your usage of AI during this assignment? (5 pts)

- Your name and Berkeley email address.
- Documentation of your two in-person testing sessions including anonymized description of who you talked to, and a summary of what happened.
- Your synthesis (250–400 words) comparing your in-person feedback with the peer review feedback you received on Oct 4, covering what you learned, which assumptions were confirmed or wrong, and your proposed redesign.
- Your AI Usage Disclosure.

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