



DESIGNSYNC:

A Mobile App for Designers  
and Creative Entrepreneurs

**DesignSync:**  
A mobile app

PROJECT 4:  
Usability Testing  
& Analysis

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

2

DESIGNSYNC APP | PROTOTYPE REVIEW  
Evaluator: Devon Tingle | CMST 308

### Introduction

The DesignSync prototype is a collaborative mobile and desktop interface designed to help designers and clients streamline creative project workflows. Users can upload files, communicate in real time, and provide feedback directly within the app.

### Purpose of the Usability Evaluation

The purpose of this usability evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and overall user satisfaction of the DesignSync prototype. By conducting heuristic and usability testing, the goal is to identify areas of strength and discover potential usability issues that could impact the user experience. This evaluation helps validate whether the interface supports designers and clients in completing core tasks, such as uploading projects, communicating through messages, and reviewing feedback, smoothly and intuitively. The findings will guide future improvements to enhance accessibility, clarity, and interaction flow within the application.

### Tasks Users Perform:

- ◀ Upload a design file to a project
- ◀ Send and receive client messages
- ◀ View or approve design feedback
- ◀ Navigate between dashboard, project list, and profile
- ◀ Manage ongoing projects and updates

### Evaluation Criteria

This evaluation applies Nielsen's 10 Usability Heuristics to assess the DesignSync interface.

Each heuristic is scored on a 0–5 scale (0 = Deficient, 5 = Excellent) based on user performance and observation. Screenshots from the Adobe XD prototype and test sessions are used as supporting evidence.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

3

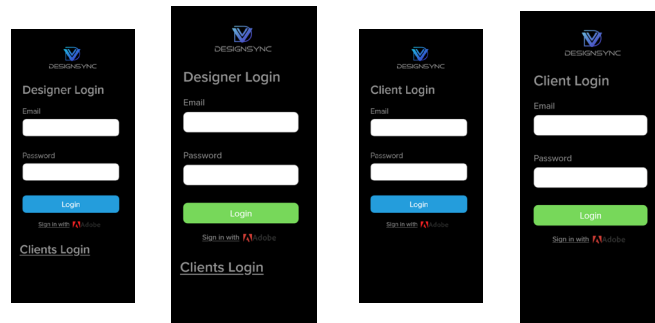
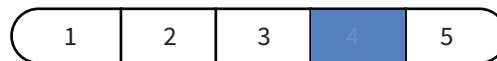
## Usability Heuristics

1. Visibility of system status
2. Match between system and the real world
3. User control and freedom
4. Consistency and standards
5. Error prevention
6. Recognition rather than recall
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors
10. Help and documentation

*Testing conducted via Adobe XD prototype and video walkthrough and if it was an actual app.*

## Heuristic Evaluation Checklist

### 1. Visibility of system status



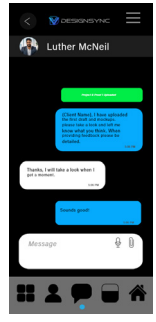
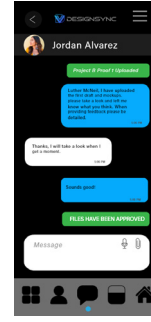
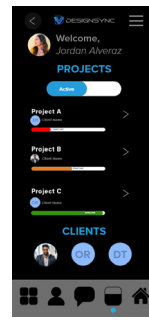
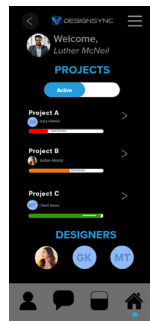
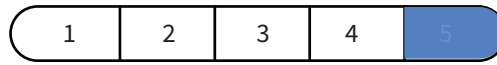
**Comments:** The DesignSync interface provides clear visual feedback through highlighted buttons (when logging in login button changes colors), pop-ups, and confirmation states when users upload or approve a file. The glowing neon buttons and toggle changes indicate completed actions. However, longer uploads or data transfers lack a visible progress bar, which may leave users unsure if the action is still processing. Adding a loading animation or progress percentage would improve real-time clarity.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

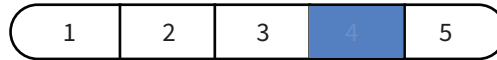
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### 2. Match between system and the real world



**Comments:** DesignSync uses familiar terminology such as Projects, Clients, and Portfolio, aligning with the real workflow of designers and clients. Icons (chat, upload, portfolio) mirror common design-app conventions, making navigation intuitive. Some labels, like “Message” vs. “Chat” could be simplified or unified for clarity to ensure that all users understand the function instantly.

### 3. User control and freedom



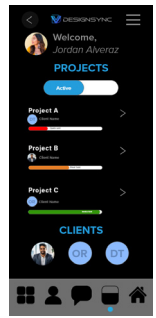
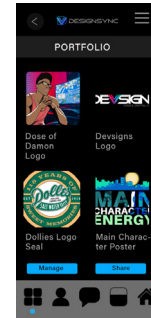
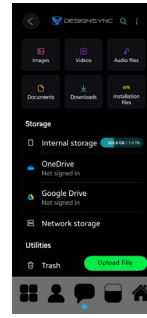
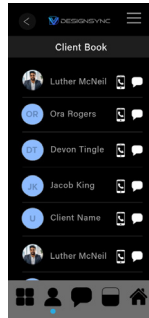
**Comments:** Users can easily move between sections using the bottom navigation bar, giving them freedom to exit or return to previous screens without losing progress. The app supports canceling uploads and navigating backward, but a visible undo or back to dashboard button on every page would enhance control. This is especially useful when a user mistakenly enters the wrong project.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

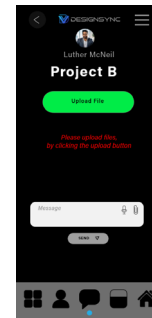
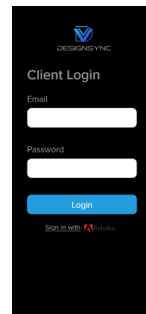
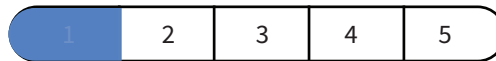
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### 4. Consistency and standards



**Comments:** The design maintains strong consistency in icons, color palette, and layout. The neon blue and green highlights are applied evenly across all screens, and icon placement in the footer navigation remains stable. However, text capitalization and button wording differ slightly across screens (“Send” vs. “Submit”), which could be standardized for full coherence.

### 5. Error prevention



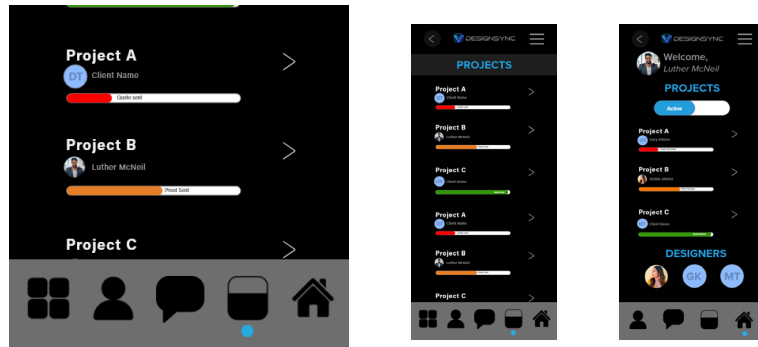
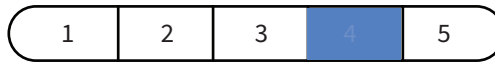
**Comments:** Login fields should display clear placeholder text and error prompts if left blank, reducing simple mistakes. The system should prevent submission until required fields are completed, which supports proactive error prevention. However, confirmation prompts before deleting or leaving a project are missing. Adding a simple “Are you sure?” dialog could help prevent data loss.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

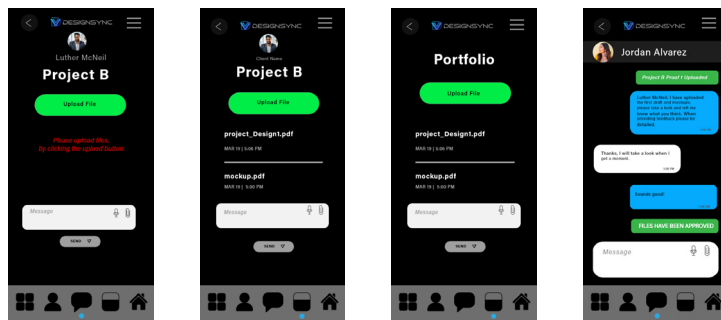
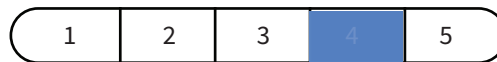
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### 6. Recognition rather than recall



**Comments:** The interface keeps navigation icons visible at all times, reducing memory load for users. Project titles, profile photos, and chat threads are displayed contextually, so users do not need to remember prior steps. Dropdown options and labels appear automatically when needed. The addition of breadcrumbs or page titles at the top of every screen would further enhance orientation.

### 7. Flexibility and efficiency of use



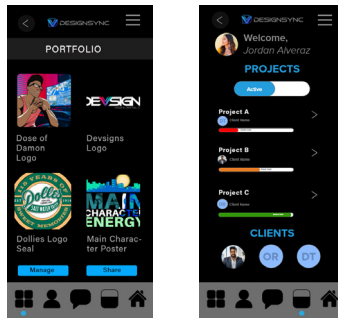
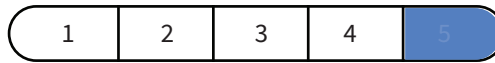
**Comments:** DesignSync supports efficient use for both first-time and returning users. Tasks like uploading and messaging can be completed in one or two taps. Experienced users benefit from quick-access icons and streamlined navigation. Efficiency could be further improved by integrating shortcuts, such as a “Quick Upload” or “Recent Projects” button on the dashboard.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

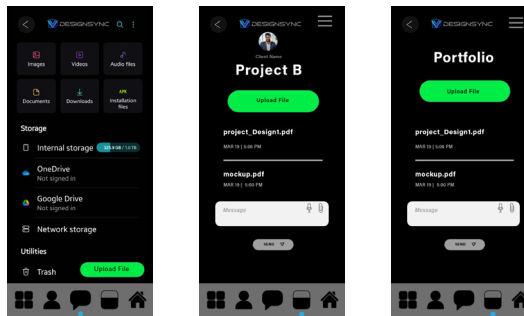
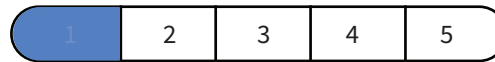
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### 8. Aesthetic and minimalist design



**Comments:** The dark interface with neon highlights creates a modern, futuristic aesthetic that fits creative industry expectations. Minimal clutter allows users to focus on content and tasks. The balance between contrast and readability is strong, though some small text on darker backgrounds could be lightened slightly to improve accessibility and reduce eye strain.

### 9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors



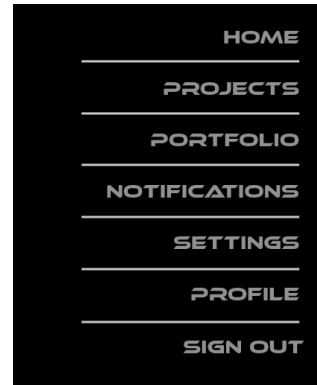
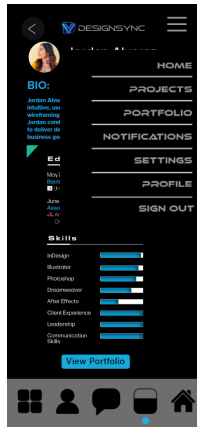
**Comments:** Error messages should appear when incorrect credentials are entered during login, providing immediate feedback. Yet, when actions fail (e.g., upload interruptions), the app does not always specify the cause or next step. Adding contextual messages like “File size too large” or “Check your connection and retry” would make recovery faster and clearer.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

8

### 10. Help and documentation



**Comments:** The interface is intuitive enough that users rarely need instructions. However, first-time users could benefit from a short onboarding or tooltip guide highlighting each icon's function. Integrating a small Help or FAQ button within the profile menu would ensure users can quickly access assistance when necessary.

## USABILITY DATA

### Participants

User ID	Profile Description	Testing Environment
<b>User 1: Alexis M.</b>	Freelance graphic designer with 3 years of experience using Adobe Creative Cloud and cloud-based storage apps. Represents the primary target audience for DesignSync.	Remote session via Adobe XD prototype (shared screen on Microsoft Teams).
<b>User 2: Matt R.</b>	Business owner who frequently reviews design projects and provides client feedback online. Represents the client persona.	In-person test on laptop and mobile prototype preview in Adobe XD.

### Test Overview

Both participants were asked to complete three core tasks based on Project 2's scenarios:

1. Upload a design draft to a project.
2. Send a message to the client (or designer).
3. View project status and feedback within the dashboard.

# DesignSync: a mobile app

## Usability Testing & Analysis

9

Each task was timed and observed for efficiency, errors, and user reaction (non-verbal cues such as hesitation, facial expression, or body movement).

### Usability Results

Task	Success Rate	Avg Time to Complete	Observations	User Comments
<b>1. Upload Project File</b>	100 %	30 sec	Both users quickly found the upload button and completed the action. User 1 noted the visual confirmation felt satisfying but wanted a progress bar for larger files.	"I like how clean it looks after upload, but I wasn't sure if it was done until it turned green."
<b>2. Send Message to Client</b>	80 %	45 sec	Both users navigated to messages easily but paused between the "Chat" and "Message" buttons. The conversation layout was clear once opened.	"Maybe rename one of the buttons so it's clear which is for clients."
<b>3. View Project Status and Feedback</b>	90 %	25 sec	Users identified the status labels and feedback area without assistance. Minor contrast issues were noted in dark mode when reading light text.	"Everything's organized, but some text blends into the background a bit."

### Non-Verbal Observations

- **User 1** smiled and nodded when completing tasks successfully but paused slightly when no upload progress was visible.
- **User 2** leaned closer to the screen to read light text and expressed surprise at how quickly the project dashboard loaded.
- Both users commented that the dark theme and glowing buttons were "visually cool" and "felt like a real design platform."

### Key Insights

- 1. Overall Success Rate:** 90 % average across tasks.

- 2. Usability Strength:** Clean layout and intuitive navigation.
- 3. Usability Weakness:** Lack of visible progress or loading feedback and minor contrast readability issues.
- 4. User Sentiment:** Positive, users described the interface as “professional,” “modern,” and “easy to learn.”

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS

### Usability Problems and Proposed Solutions

Problem Identified	Observation from Testing	Recommended Solution
<b>1. Lack of Upload Progress Feedback</b>	Both users completed the upload task but were uncertain whether the file was fully uploaded until the color changed. They hesitated and visually checked multiple times for confirmation.	Add a <b>visual progress bar</b> or percentage indicator during file uploads. Include a short success animation (example: checkmark or “Upload Complete” text) to increase visibility of system status.
<b>2. Confusion Between “Chat” and “Message” Buttons</b>	Users hesitated between the two icons, unsure which to use to contact clients. This caused minor delays and uncertainty.	Simplify or unify the terminology by labeling one consistent term such as <b>“Messages”</b> throughout the interface. Add icon tooltips or a short onboarding tip to clarify their function.
<b>3. Low Contrast Text in Dark Mode</b>	Both users found the neon text and labels visually appealing but slightly difficult to read in certain areas due to low contrast against the dark background.	Increase text brightness or apply <b>WCAG contrast standards</b> for accessibility. Use lighter secondary text tones and slightly larger font sizes for readability.
<b>4. Missing Undo or “Back to Dashboard” Option</b>	While navigating, users relied on the bottom bar instead of an in-screen “Back” option. They expressed concern about re-entering a section if they made a wrong tap.	Add a <b>visible back arrow or cancel option</b> at the top of each main screen to restore user control and reduce task friction.

### Summary of Key Improvements

Implementing these usability updates will enhance the clarity, accessibility, and confidence of users navigating the DesignSync platform. These refinements align with Nielsen’s heuristics for Visibility of System Status, User Control and Freedom, and Aesthetic & Minimalist Design, ensuring smoother interaction flow and improved user satisfaction.