🙌 Empowering Participation:

A User-Centered Approach to Low-Stakes Edit-a-thons

👋 I'm Michelle Chin

- User experience designer
- ❤️ solving problems and empowering people
- 🦀 from Maryland in the United States, but currently in Oakland, California
- Wikipedia: dcskagirl (I love ska music! 🏁)

Today's talk

- Overview of user-centered design (UCD)

- Using UCD to create an edit-a-thon

- Top tips

- Resources

🧑‍🦰 User-centered design 👩🏽

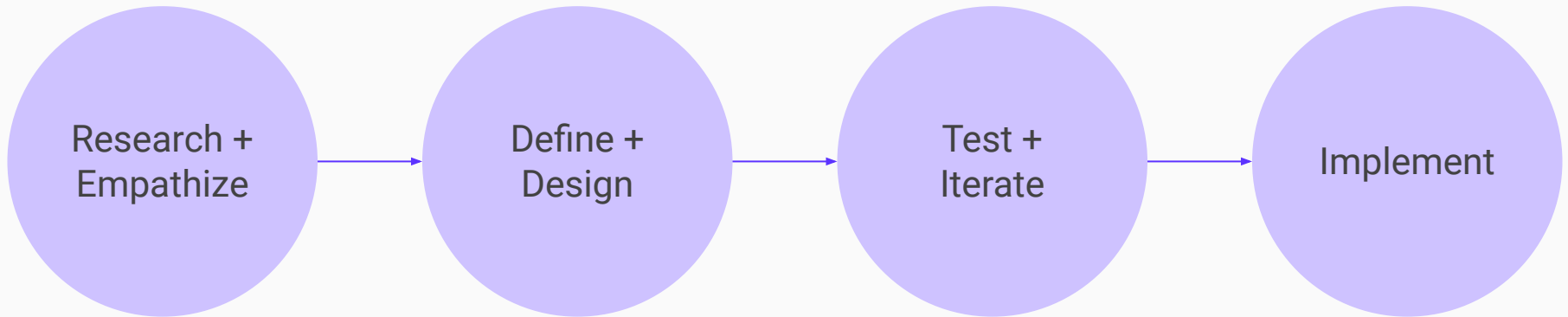**User-centered design** is a process to create solutions while keeping the user in mind.

🤔 We think about their backgrounds, goals, needs, how people work or think, and so on to influence how we craft solutions.

Photo by UX Indonesia on Unsplash

User-centered design process

The problems I was trying to solve

"How can we get more content about **women in tech** in Wikipedia?

How can we get **more people** to contribute?"

🕵️ Research + 👂 Empathize

Research - asking people ("users") questions that can help provide context and shed light on why things might be or how things can be improved.

Empathize - Listening to what people say, picturing yourself in their position, and understanding their perspectives.

🕵️ Research + 👂 Empathize

Questions to ask

- Would you be interested in improving Wikipedia?

- Have you edited Wikipedia before?

- What's prevented you from editing?

- Would you like to learn?

- What questions do you have about editing?

Feedback I received

- I tried editing years ago, but it was too difficult.

- I wasn't sure where to start - I had no idea what the process was like.

- **I'm intimidated!** I don't really think I know enough about anything to add content.

📏 Define + Design

Define - Based on your research, identify how you might approach your solution. Ask yourself:

"Is how I'm defining a solution address the problem AND meet the needs of the people?"

Design - With the focus defined, think about the solution you'll want to take.

- **One solution** - try it and see how it goes
- **Many solutions** - brainstorm several, get feedback from people, and try 1-2 out

📏 Define + Design

Virtual, edit-a-thon workshop → Online presentation that's both education and working session

Focus on beginners - no experience editing →

Reduce intimidation!

Easy editing options

Creating an account

Gathering resources

Editing guidelines

Live demo

Identify ways to keep the momentum going → Creating ways for continued contribution

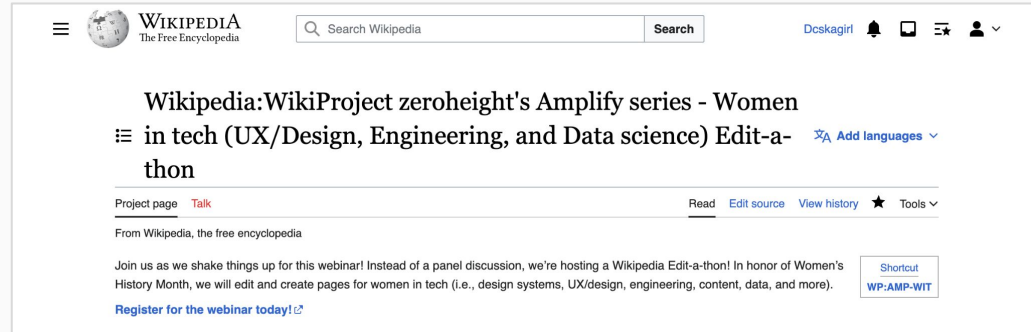# 📐 Overall Design Approach

Focused on removing the pressure of contributing:

- 🆕 **Emphasize beginners** — creating an account and listening in is OK!

- 💬 **Provide just the right amount of info** — around the importance of editing and guidelines around editing.

- 🏆 **Make it super easy for people to edit successfully** — nothing complicated, they have some pages they can edit/create, they have resources.
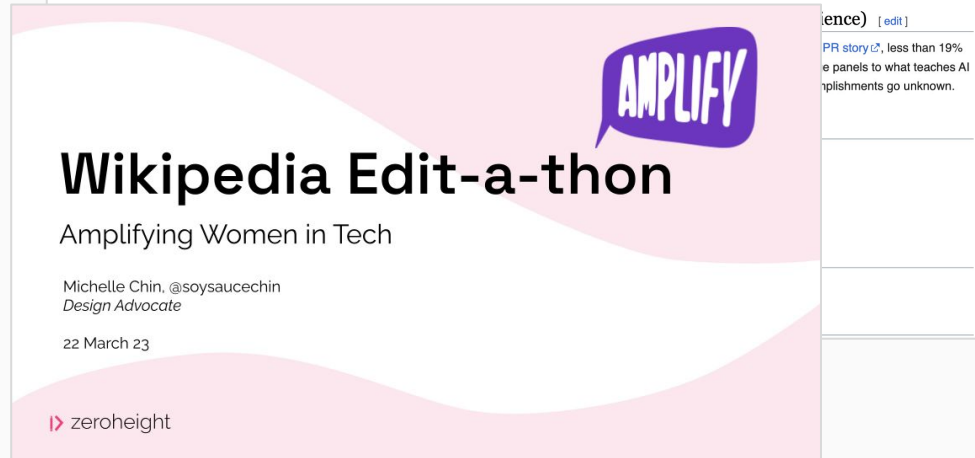
Basics

- 1-hour workshop

- **Theme:** amplifying women in tech; specifically authors from UX/design, development, data fields.

The Project: Wikipedia Edit-a-thon for Women in Tech

The importance of contributing

- Showed data

- Who uses Wikipedia + why

- Aimed to get people excited about editing

Addressing the Gender Gap on Wikipedia

- **1** in 10 editors identify as women!
- Women's biographies on Wikipedia (English)
  - 2014: 15%
  - 2023: 19% (9 years later) ‼️
- ~374K of 1.92M biographies ‼️

- **9** in 10 editors identify as men!
- Men's biographies on Wikipedia (English)
  - 2014: 85%
  - 2023: 81% (9 years later) ‼️
- ~1.5M biographies on men ‼️

The Project: Wikipedia Edit-a-thon for Women in Tech

Basic guidelines for contributions

- Policies

- Reliable sources

Reliable sources (WP:RS)

👍 **Acceptable sources**
- Scholarly articles
- Published books (publishers)

👎 **Sources to avoid**
- Self-published sources (personal sites, LinkedIn profiles, self-published books)
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Wikipedia policies (WP:LOP)

- **Neutral point of view:** all sides can agree (WP:NPOV)
- **Notability:** significant independent sources on the person (WP:N) - starting with authors
- **Verifiability:** References are from reliable sources (WP:V)
- **No original research:** pointing to existing information, not making your own (WP:NOR)
- **Assume good faith:** people assume we're all trying to help Wikipedia (WP:GF)
- **Conflicts of interest:** strongly discouraged in editing affected articles directly (WP:COI)

The Project: Wikipedia Edit-a-thon for Women in Tech

Areas that are great for beginners!

- Showed examples

- Spoke about how to find things, etc.

- Mentioned the benefits of making improvements

Great areas to edit for beginners

Edit the "Lead section" - the intro paragraph for the article
- What people read

Julie Zhuo
Article Talk
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Julie Zhuo is a Chinese-American businesswoman and computer scientist. She was the vice president of product design at Facebook and now co-founder at Inspirit. Zhuo is the author of The Making of a Manager (2019).

Early life and education [edit]
Zhuo is from Shanghai. When she was five years old, her family moved to Texas.[1] She studied computer science and graduated from Stanford University.[2]

Career [edit]
In May 2006, Zhuo became the first intern at Facebook.[1] She became a manager at the age of 25.[2][3] Zhuo

Great areas to edit for beginners

Add links - connect the article to more articles (or articles that need to be written)

Career [edit]

Chisnell began her career in 1987, working with banks, insurance companies, and tech companies as a designer and usability researcher. In 2001, Chisnell began consulting as UsabilityWorks.

In 2013, Chisnell co-founded the Center for Civic Design, a non-profit focused on voter intent through design. Chisnell served as co-executive director with Whitney Quesenbery until January 2020. As part of the center, Chisnell led research on what became the Anywhere Ballot and was the originator and managing editor of the Field Guides to Ensuring Voter Intent.[2] The Field Guides are featured in a collection on Design and Democracy hosted by the Cooper Hewitt Museum and Smithsonian Design Museum.

In 2014, Chisnell was a founding member of the United States Digital Service in the Executive Office of the President of the United States.[3]

Chisnell taught a course on Designing Government as an Adjunct Lecturer at the Harvard Kennedy School from 2017 to 2020.

Chisnell is the co-author of the Handbook of Usability Testing Second Edition (Wiley 2008).[4]

The Project: Wikipedia Edit-a-thon for Women in Tech

Live demo

- Demonstrated how to make those edits I just showed

- Worked in the sandbox - "the safe space"

- Showed how it's OK to make mistakes and that I didn't know everything
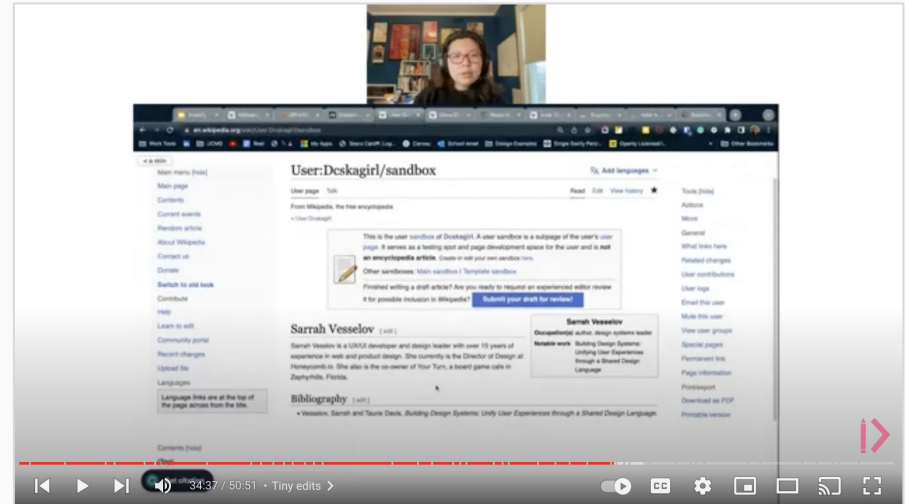
🧪 Test + Iterate

Test - where you take a "prototype" or draft and test it out with people. This pilot is a way to see how things will work.

Ask yourself:

- Where are people doing well? Where are they struggling?

- Is the timing OK or is it too short or long?

- What's unclear?

🧪 Test + Iterate

Iterate - based on the feedback and observations from your "pilot," make improvements before implementing the real thing.

🧪 Test + Iterate

My pilot

- Internal mini edit-a-thon with co-workers

- Super helpful to work through logistics; there were a lot! (Tabs open, editing, slideshow view, and Zoom 😅)

Changes I made:

- Small tweaks to wording

- Change up some of the slide order

- Making time for people to set up an account

🚀 Implement

Implement - "final" stage of this process! This is where you try out your solution.

Because your solution was user-centered and tested, it should go well!

🚀 Implement

Hosted the Edit-a-thon on March 22, 2023

- Almost 2 dozen attendees!
- Welcomed people into the world of editing! 💜
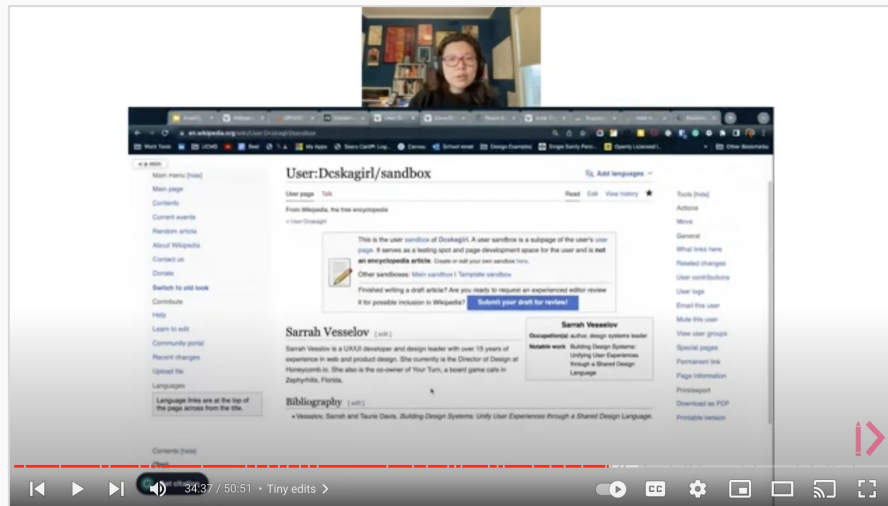
🤩 Top Tips (things that worked well)

- ✈️ **Pilot** - get comfortable with the logistics!

- 💜 **Tie the event to something special** - e.g., Women's History Month

- 😝 **Keep things fun** - use emojis in slide decks

- 👨‍💻 **Show a live demo** - including making mistakes

- 📚 **Share the slide deck** as a "reference" that people can look at during the event or later

👍 What could be improved

- ⌛ Finding time to keep the momentum going - Taking this on as a winter project 😉

- 🎤 Might have do multiple intro-sessions - making a recording available helps

- 😰 The list of pages that need editing/creating is overwhelming

- 🙌 Getting others to help me organize more edit-a-thons

📚 Resources

💪 Women-in-tech Edit-a-thon

- **Edit-a-thon page: WP:AMP-WIT**

- Slide deck (Google Slides)

- Recording on YouTube

🤝 Connect with me! I'm happy to answer any questions!

- Wikipedia: dcskagirl

- LinkedIn: michelletchin

- ~~Twitter~~/X: @soysaucechin