

EXERCISE 2.2
UNDERSTANDING THE USER

Surveys & Interviews

UX IMMERSION
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THE APP AT-A-GLANCE

Dabblr: Our on-demand advice marketplace will be a responsive web app that matches amateur creatives, hobbyists, crafters and DIY-ers with more seasoned experts to get affordable advice on projects and troubleshoot problems in real-time.

RESEARCH GOALS

<user>

1. Better understand user behaviour around seeking advice online specifically as it pertains to creative pursuits, hobbies and DIY projects.
2. To determine which tasks users would like to complete using an advice-seeking app.
3. To document painpoints with existing apps on the market.
4. To collect data on the context in which the user would use an advice app to support their hobby projects.

<expert>

1. Better understand expert behaviour around providing advice and instruction to new and current clients / followers online.
2. To determine which tasks experts would like to complete using an advice-giving app.
3. To document painpoints with existing apps on the market.
4. To collect data on the context in which the expert would use an app to support their clients and students/mentees in completing their projects.

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

users: Chris (DIY), Alyson (craft), Katherine, Peter

experts: Katherine (?), Renee Leighann, Kristin Arzt, could I find a tradesperson??

INTRO FOR SURVEY / INTERVIEW

<user>

We are talking to creative hobbyists and DIY enthusiasts to learn about their process for planning and executing their projects, especially who and where they turn to for advice when they need it. While online searches, youtubeing how to videos, and facebook groups can yield valuable feedback, and hiring contractors can help complete home improvement projects, we are seeking to connect hobbyist advice seekers with qualified expert advice that is more immediate, personalized, and economical than current methods. Our on-demand advice marketplace will be a responsive web app that matches amateur creatives, hobbyists, crafters and DIY-ers with more seasoned experts to get affordable advice on projects and troubleshoot problems in real-time. Through this survey / interview we are hoping to learn more about what kinds of projects our potential users need help with, where hobbyists like yourself currently go for advice, frustrations with current tools, and where and how you use digital tools to support your project goals.

<expert>

We are talking to creative professionals and tradespeople to learn about how they connect with new and current clients to share their expertise and generate additional income. etc....

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS <USER>

1. What kinds of hobby projects and creative endeavours do you practice?
2. When do you fit your hobbies into your schedule and where do you normally work on creative/DIY projects?
3. How often do you start a new project or try a new technique -- what is the impetus to try something new?
4. Did you start any additional projects you abandoned? Why didn't you finish?
5. How do you plan new projects or discover new hobby ideas? What role do websites or apps play in getting inspired or planning your projects?
6. How often do you seek out advice online? What spurred you to seek out advice? What was the result? At what point in your project is advice most helpful
7. Who or where did you turn to for advice? How do you know whether to trust the input?
8. [Have you ever hired someone for a home improvement project then wished you had done yourself? Why weren't you satisfied? What would you differently next time?]
9. Have there been times you've resisted asking for advice on a problem or feedback project? Why?
10. What don't you like about any online tools or apps you currently use? Why?
11. What do you enjoy most about dabbling?
12. How much of a role does connecting with other people play in your enjoyment of your projects?
13. What are your favourite features of any existing apps you use to help with your creative projects? Why?
14. What do you hope to try your hand at next? Is there anything that would help you achieve your creative goal?
15. Do you think you would use an real-time advice app like this? What would convince you use it?

USER INTERVIEWS: SUMMARY

context - respondents are practicing their hobbies primarily at home (especially at the moment) and mainly on weekday evenings or on weekends.

behaviours - respondents tended to practice multiple hobbies not just one, and tended to have more than one project on the go (plus unfinished projects on hold at any given time); respondents referred to web-based tools and apps not only for advice when they got stuck, but also browsing for ideas and inspiration in the planning stages of a new project.

painpoints - not visual enough, lack of vocabulary (for search/keyword purposes), lack of access of specific enough topics / bespoke advice, unqualified sources (i.e. people presenting themselves as experts but no truly being one), advertising, and poor transparency on costs were all raised as key frustrations.

preferred tasks - our interviews require more analysis to define task needs, however: browsing generally for ideas/inspiration, gathering specifics on tools, knowing upfront costs, setting detailed search parameters, a system for rating / understanding expert qualifications were all brought up as key considerations.

opportunities - video, live/personal feedback, vetted expertise, fee structure, celebrity expertise (?), detailed but easy to use search/filter/expert-matching mechanisms

challenge - ensuring high quality video, vetting high calibre instruction and recruiting a diversity of experts to attract users (at the right cost)

REFLECTION / WHAT'S NEXT

Cost was a clear concern for respondents - especially given most of the resources they currently use are free (aka ad supported or in app/in platform purchases). However the interview did not contain a specific question as to how much they would pay or whether they could be convinced to pay a monthly membership vs. would prefer to pay on demand for services rendered. Cost research will need to be explored

Related to costs, **SAVINGS was a key concept** brought up by respondents specifically around DIY. The amount of money saved by doing a job themselves was brought up as a key point of enjoyment/payoff and something that was relished in / bragged about long after the project is complete. I'm not sure yet what if any role this insight may play in design but it was worth noting.

Access to tools - this was raised as an equal concern to accessing advice. Although beyond the scope of this project it does raise an interesting idea for future expansion of the product: just as this app could be the Uber/Lyft for project advice, could it also be the Airbnb of tools, whereby users could find someone in their area with the tool they need to borrow for their project? Find both the advice and the tools needed to complete your project in one spot? -- what a concept!

Celebrity Expertise - this came out of survey answers rather than interviews, but the behaviour was indirectly reinforced by other feedback: respondents often go back to the same experts again and again, and seek out well-respected/celebrity bloggers. This points out an avenue I had not considered that for marketing purposes in particular and recruitment of users: some element of celebrity content & endorsement could be useful (even if having celebrities actually available to chat is unrealistic)

Some of my questions are still too long. Two part questions should be asked as such --- splitting up a question into a Part A and Part B for my reference as the interviewer so I am not tempted to ask both parts at the same time (too hard for interviewee to remember both parts). Also I wonder if leaving the question more open ended would allow for more natural discussion and whether the Part B question would sometimes be unnecessary as the respondent might "get there" on their own, but ultimately offer up more detail by being given more space.

User-first, Expert-later: Although I was interested in gathering perspective from two main user types I have come to realize and be advised to focus in on a single user-type for the purposes of this course simply due to time. This has already proven to be true. The complexity in designing for both users is necessary to the success of this app, however for the purposes of this course I will need to make certain assumptions and educated guesses based on survey responses (not interviews).

EXERCISE 2.2
BONUS TASK

Surveys

SURVEY QUESTIONS

<USER>

Summary of survey responses (15 respondents):

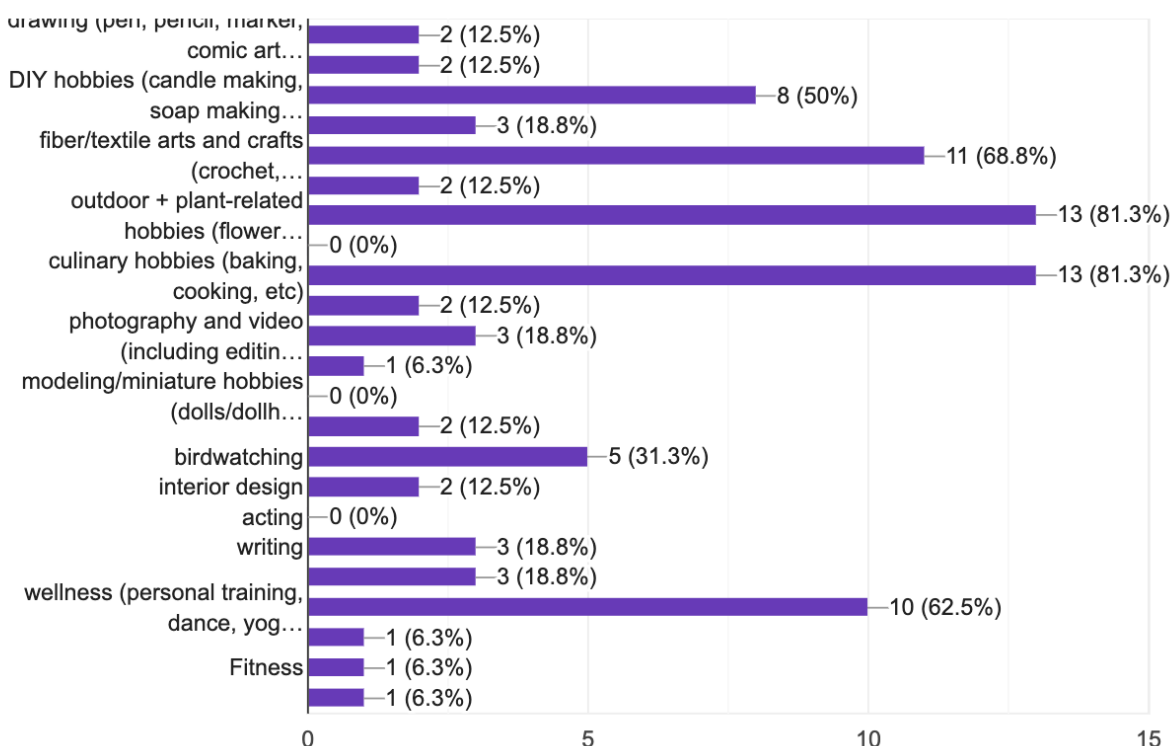
Answers from self-selected hobbyists yielded very few surprises. Hobbyists are prolific, tackling multiple projects every year. Only one or two respondents are exceptional, undertaking almost constant projects as more of a “lifestyle hobbyist.” Lots of projects are abandoned due to either lack of time, interest, or knowledge. None of our respondents had any knowledge of the identified competitors in our space (JustAnswer and Hobify) which reveals there is space in the niche, however new analogous competitors were listed, including hyperspecialized websites like Ravelry for fibre arts.

While there was a smattering of interest across all hobby topics, top ranking topics were DIY home improvement, DIY hobbies (candle-making, soap, etc), culinary (baking, cooking, etc), fibre arts (knitting, crochet, sewing, etc), and wellness (fitness, personal training, yoga, dance, etc). A larger study might reveal a somewhat more diverse pool of interest as social proximity to the researcher will have likely skewed results -- although this might simply be representative of current trends.

For interviews I hope to gather more information on the whys by asking open ended versions of some of these closed questions. I also want to gain more insight about how and at what times in a projects people are using online tools and apps. Given that 50% of respondents answered only “Maybe” as to whether they would use an app like this, I would like to understand more about what features would be most compelling.

What kinds of hobbies, crafts or DIY projects do you do regularly?

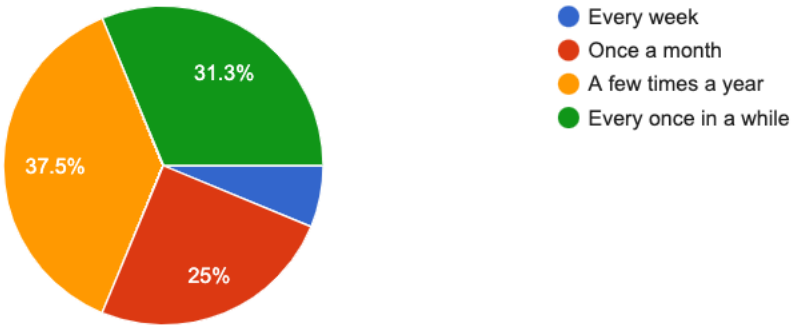
16 responses



Hobby habits...

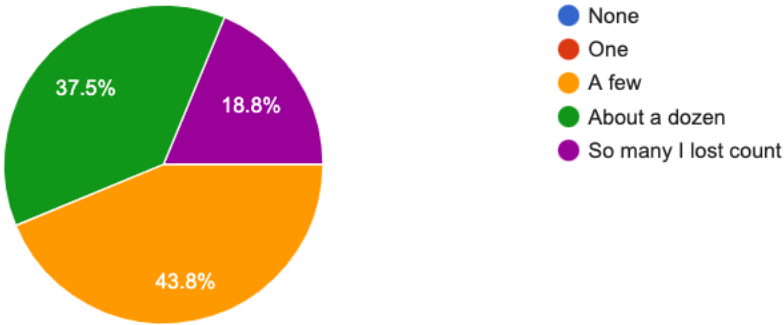
Approximately how often do you undertake a new DIY project / try out a new hobby?

16 responses



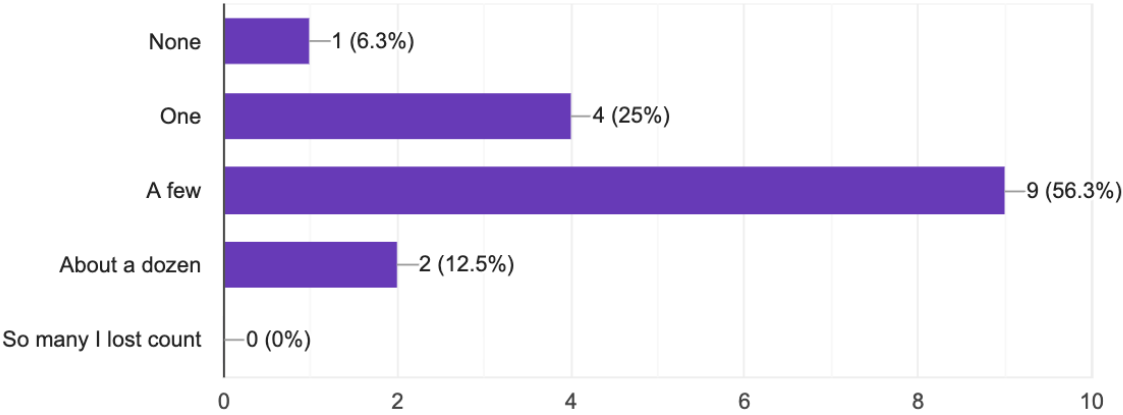
Approximately how many hobby/DIY projects did you complete last year?

16 responses



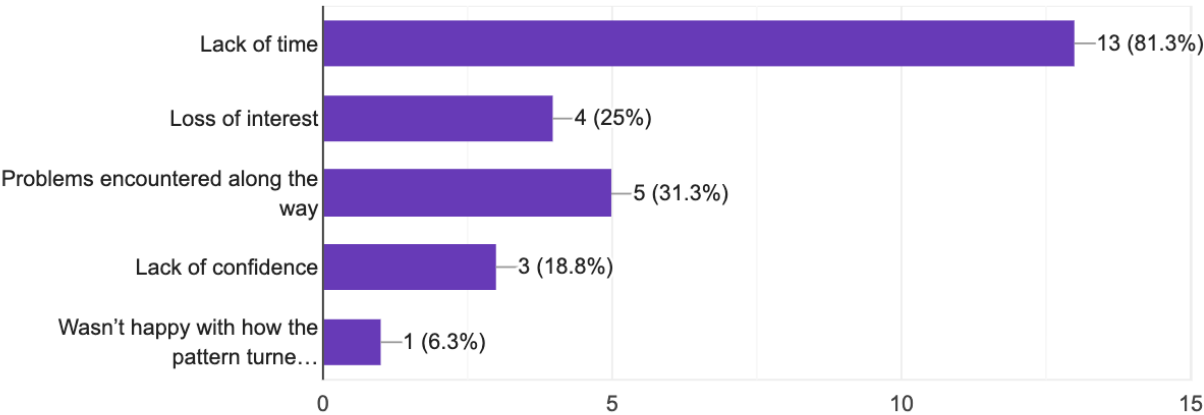
Approximately how many hobby/DIY projects did you start but not complete last year?

16 responses



Why did you abandon these projects?

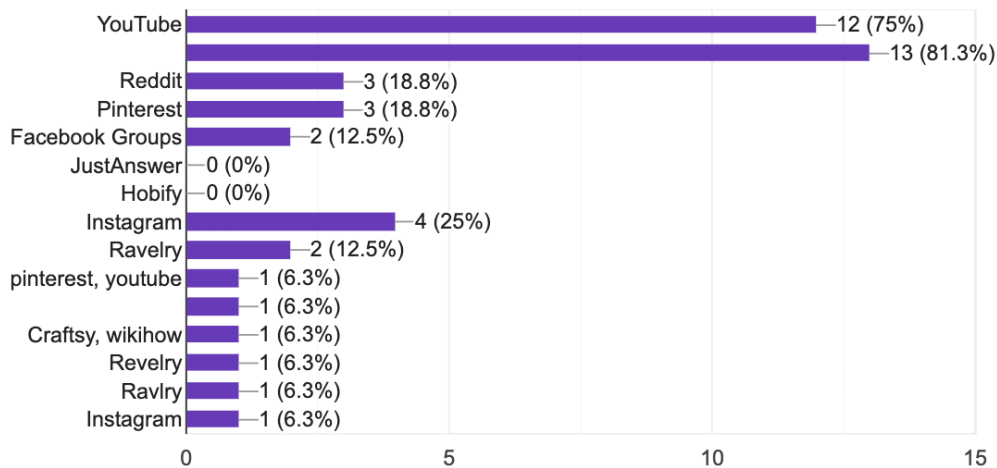
16 responses



Inspiration & Advice...

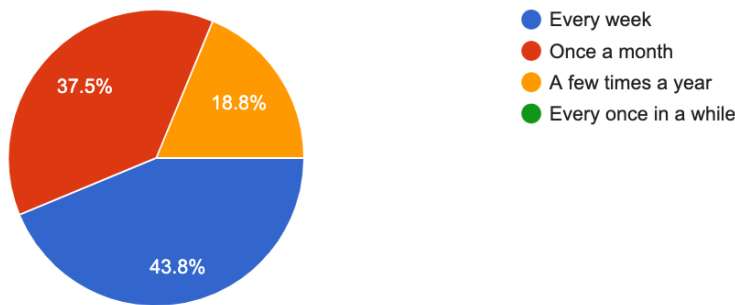
What online tools or apps do you use to find inspiration or advice for your hobby and DIY projects?

16 responses



How often do you seek out online tools for advice or inspiration for your projects?

16 responses



What are your favourite features of any existing online tools or apps you use to help with your creative projects? Why?

12 responses

Visual (lots of good quality images), flexible search capabilities, organized information, suggestions of related projects or topics

Free, easy to access, succinct info

Ease and familiarity; few barriers to accessing/no passwords

Search engines, group forums, how-to videos

In searching for something, whether general inspiration or specific instructions, I often stumble upon something else that catches my interest.

Visual aid

Easy to search and filter results, no cost

Step by step instructions, video helps

Quick video tutorials - almost like those overhead recipe gifs, links to a marketplace.

Instruction & inspiration

There is usually an answer on Google.

What don't you like about any existing online tools or apps you currently use? Why?

12 responses

Hard to find relevant information that responds directly and wholly to issues when they arise on projects, sometimes get all the do's and none of the do not's (which can be just as important - ie in your plumbing if you shouldn't use Teflon tape in a particular application because it will make things worse etc)

Long preambles to the info I need, excessive or intrusive ads, requiring registration/submitting an email address to access info

Lack of confidence in search results, distrust of rating systems, suspicion of online marketing

Sometimes I need a real person helping me or showing me in real time.

I often learn as I go with projects, and my time to do projects is limited, as such I want specific instructions that are quick to find/access. I have limited patience for things like long preambles, or instructional videos that are not shot with clear visuals.

Poor quality video, lack of clarity

Hard to use filters

For Instagram, I love to see examples of finished work. There is so much out there that I eventually find really cool stuff but I have to wade through a lot. And it's just for inspiration as it often doesn't show much of the process.

Nothing comes to mind

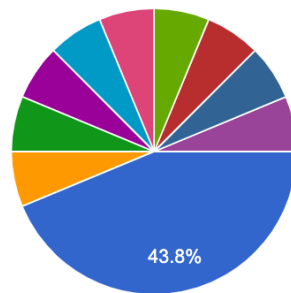
Need for accounts on several Platforms

Hard to find specific examples of what I'm looking for sometimes.

Too many pop up ads and unreliable formats making the information difficult to find.

Do you trust online advice?

16 responses



- Yes
- No
- I spend a lot of time evaluating if a so...
- 50:50
- I watch several things then decide whi...
- Depending on the source
- Sometimes! It depends on the source
- Depends on the advice- I'm not taking...

▲ 1/2 ▼

How do you decide whether the advice you find online is trustworthy?

16 responses

I don't always

The sources I use seem very knowledgeable.

If they mention experience, quality of the information (level of precision, etc), comments/reviews/ratings from other people

If it is verified by multiple online sources, I find it trustworthy. Numerous 4-5 star reviews of the advice (e.g., a recipe or a knitting pattern) make advice seem more trustworthy. Advice from individuals with nothing to gain from whether I take the advice or not is preferred.

Sources quoted, absence of extra advertisement, appearance of credibility/trusted source

Ratings/number of views/trusted sources

Research, looking at a variety of advice and following different leads

Quality of website/video

Other user comments, referencing multiple sources

I feel like I know it when I see it. Clear honest communication with a sense of established practice. I tend towards those whose style or approach to a craft really speaks to me.

The source, whether it's repeated in multiple places, and whether it seems like it will work.

Depends on the quality of the website

It's source.

A more transparent creator using their crafts/projects in their own life and sharing what works.

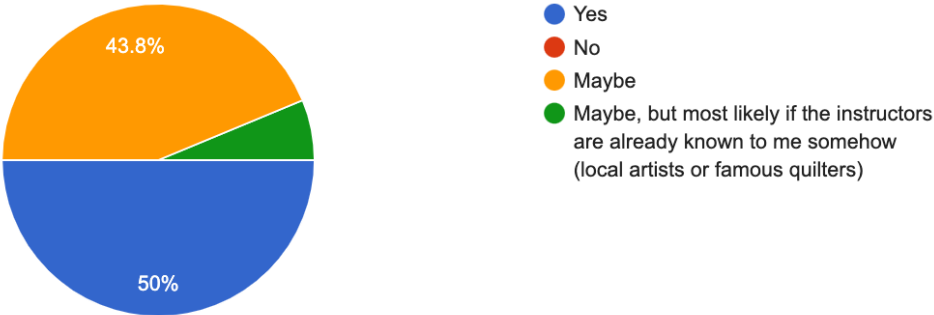
I examine the overall quality of information, the video, the person's background...it's an exercise in judgment and media literacy.

Reproducibility ie more than 1 source says the same thing.

The app...

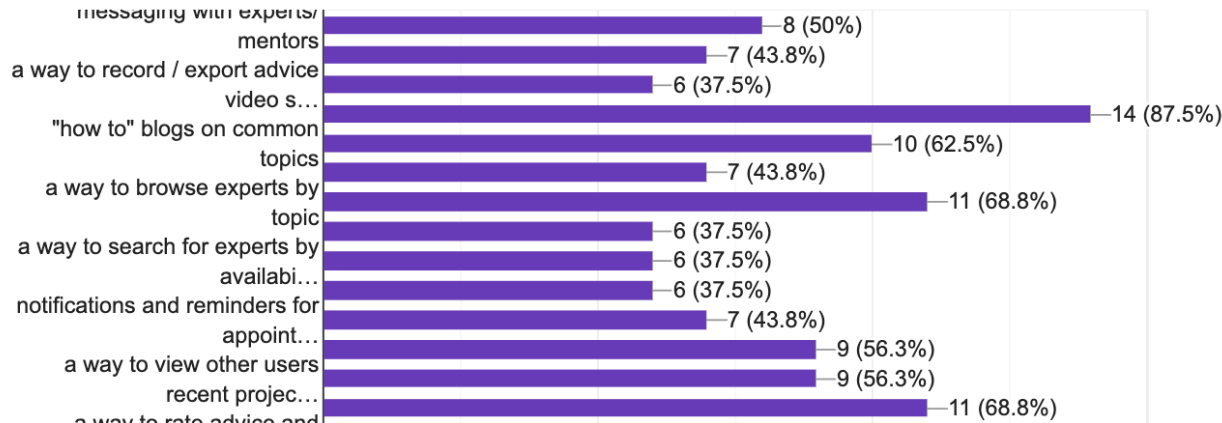
Would you use an app that connected you with an expert to get real-time advice on creative hobbies or DIY projects?

16 responses



Which of the following features would you find useful in a tool that helps you get advice for your creative and DIY projects?

16 responses



SURVEY QUESTIONS

<USER>

What kinds of hobbies, crafts or DIY projects do you currently practice?

<insert list + other: __>

What kinds of hobbies, crafts or DIY projects are you interested in attempting or learning?

<insert list + other: __>

Approximately how often do you undertake a new DIY project / try out a new hobby?

Every week - Once a month - A few times a year - Every once in a while

Approximately how many hobby/dyi projects did you complete last year?

Only one - A few - A dozen or so - So many I lost count

How many projects did you start but not complete?

Why did you abandon those projects?

Lack of time - Loss of Interest - Problems encountered along the way - Other

How often do you seek out online tools for advice or inspiration for your projects? Every week - Every month - A few times a year - Every once in a while

Do you trust online advice? Y - N - Why? __

How often do you take online / virtual workshops for your hobbies?

Every week - Once a month - A few times a year - Every once in a while

Would you use an app that connected you with an expert to get real-time advice on creative hobbies or DIY projects?

Which of the following features would you find useful in a tool that helps you [get advice] for your creative or DIY projects?

messaging with experts/mentors

video calls with experts/mentors

a way to record / export advice video sessions / messages

tutorial videos on common topics

a way to browse experts (general)

a way to browse experts by topic

a way to browse experts by geographic area

a way to search experts by availability (aka online now)

a way to be matched with an expert (by topic and availability)

notifications and reminders for appointments with experts

a way to discuss projects with other users

a way to view other users recent projects

a way to view experts recent projects

a way to rate advice and experiences with experts

a way to set your language preferences

other: __

SURVEY QUESTIONS

<EXPERT>

What field or medium do you work in primarily?

How often do you use online tools when you're connecting with clients or seeking out new clients?

Daily - Every week - Once a month - A few times a year - Every once in a while

How often do you field questions / get asked for input from students or followers interested in your technique and expertise? (outside of workshop / teaching hours or structured time of hire)

Daily - A few times a week - A few times a month - Once a month - A few times a year

How much of your time is dedicated to answering "how to" questions or requests for advice in your area of expertise?

<5%, ~10%, ~25%, ~30%, More

How much time in your schedule do you commit to sidegigs, generating extra income or hustling for new work?

0 - all my time is taken up by doing my core work, a few hours a month, 1 hour/week, 2-3 hours per week, 4-5 hours per week, 5+ hours per week

What websites or apps do you currently use to share your expertise and connect with new and existing clients/followers of your work?

Would you use an app that connected you with local and international clients to get paid for giving real-time advice on creative hobbies or DIY projects?

What topics and methods do you currently consult on or could you see yourself advising and teaching others?

Which of the following features would you find useful in a tool that helps you connect clients / instruct creative advice seekers?

messaging with advice seekers

video calls with advice seekers

a way to schedule payouts from income

a way to download income reports for tax purposes

a way to set availability

notifications and reminders of upcoming appointments

a way to discuss projects and problems with other experts

a way to rate users / advice seekers

a way to promote your recent projects

a way to set your own rates for your consulting time

a way to set a sliding scale for your expertise

a way to set your language preferences

other: ____

How often do you demo or livestream your techniques / methods for clients / followers?

Every week - Once a month - A few times a year - Every once in a while

Still live - not enough results to summarize