Interview with Genesia Ting — User Experience

[00:00:12] **Adriana Lacy** Hi, everyone. Today, we're going to hear from Genesia Ting, who's a user experience designer and former creative technologist who's worked on design and product at the Los Angeles Times. She's worked extensively within the civic tech space and media space and we got to work together on a few projects at the L.A. Times. Let's start with learning a bit more about you and your journey. How did you get into product and UX design?

[00:00:36] **Genesia Ting** Thanks for having me. I'm super excited to be chatting with you today. So as Adrianna mentioned, I'm Genesia Ting and I'm a user experience designer. Right now, I'm working at a smaller design firm called [00:00:49]==Excuser== [0.0s] on a long term client project with one of the largest technology companies in the world. Prior to [00:00:56]==excuser.== [0.0s] I worked on design products and innovation at the Los Angeles Times, which will talk about a little bit more today. Additionally, I design products for the Census Bureau's Open Innovation Labs out in DC, places like MapBox International Rescue Committee, Recidivists and other social impact organizations. So I'm classically trained as a designer. I studied design in university, but I was able to build a really good foundation for product design through these different channels. For me, the appeal of user experience design has always been the convoluted, yet really fun and iterative process to create something meaningful. The idea of supplementing something visual and backing up with research, psychology and the intent is much more fascinating to me than a standard process for designing.

[00:01:51] **Lacy** That's super impressive in this course, we haven't touched a ton on UX design, but could you talk a little bit about kind of what your day to day role looks like and the type of people that you collaborate with?

[00:02:03] **Ting** So like a lot of roles today, they can be pretty varied. At times, it can be preparing user interviews or conducting usability tests, creating conceptual models, putting together user flows, talking to stakeholders and of course, designing the interfaces themselves. There's never really a dull moment when it comes to designing products, and it involves quite a bit of talking, actually. Usually when you're working with lots of different people, particularly, there's going to be a point person who is championing the project as well as relevant parties who should have a say in commission process and sometimes you're able to even work alongside other designers, which adds a really wonderful collaborative component.

[00:02:49] **Lacy** That's super great to see, I mean, stakeholders and collaboration is definitely the heart of product thinking. So going back a little bit to your time at the Los Angeles Times, and I know you worked on the innovation lab there and on the product team. Could you share some differences between working on products for a news org versus non-news sectors?

[00:03:09] **Ting** Even within Los Angeles Times, there were quite a few differences from team to team. Working on any team comes with its own unique set of challenges. So with the innovation lab, we were able to explore more blue skies, R&D and out of the box ideas. So I would classify them more as bucket projects. Whereas with the product team there's a lot more stakeholders involved and things to consider. You have to be a lot more methodical. But just by nature of the news industry, environment and 24 hour news cycle, based on my experiences in media, I think it could be a little bit tougher to get people involved and on board in news organizations, partially because everyone is just so busy all

the time. Also for folks that are maybe not as technical, it can be hard to understand what the product or design team does or are trying to accomplish. That can be remedied with communicating often and clearly, as well as building good relationships with those folks. On the flipside, working in tech, even though they might understand products and UX as a concept a little bit more. There is a whole different set of challenges.

[00:04:22] **Lacy** That's super interesting. Thanks so much for sharing. In part two, we're going to talk with Danica a little bit more about product vision and product roadmap. So stay tuned.