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Beverly May: Founder of The UX Awards, Advocate for Exceptional Experiences

Ryan Galloway on March 5, 2013

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May 21 brings the third annual *User Experience Awards*, honoring outstanding UX projects and practitioners. To find out more, I sat down with Beverly May, founder and president of *Oxford Technology Ventures*, a UX consultancy. Beverly founded the UX Awards and remains the moderator and chief advocate. If you have a project, idea, app, site, or software that you'd like to have considered, there's still time! *The submission window is from March 15 to April 15. For more information or to submit, visit userexperienceawards.com.*

Tell me a bit about you. What gets you out of bed in the morning?

I like creating and using well-designed products. I find the challenge of designing something with a serious "wow" factor to be deeply motivating. Designing a new digital experience is a lot

like being an architect (the original UXers were called "Information Architects," after all); we design something that someone else will eventually experience. Using a great app is a lot like walking into a wonderful building. When the architect has done it right, you can appreciate the skill that went into conceiving something new and refining every detail.

So who's doing it right in the UX space?

Pinterest is a great example. From a technology standpoint, there's nothing at all revolutionary about it. What's revolutionary about Pinterest is its UX. It's sleek, simple, intuitive, and addictive. You could say the same thing about **Tumblr**. They're playing in a crowded space, but they're getting huge traction by differentiating the UX.

Tell me about the awards themselves. The User Experience Awards are the first awards to exclusively celebrate UX. What inspired you to create such a specific award?

Other awards focus heavily on brand. They reward products that are sexy or flashy. The UX Awards celebrate usability and effectiveness. Brand and visual design are not as important. We're interested in whether or not a nominee has created a clean, usable, superior product. We're also interested in celebrating the UXers themselves. User Experience professionals don't get much attention outside of their own organizations, but the work they do is crucial to a product's success.

What kind of product wins a UX Award?

I think a great example is last year's Grand Prize winner, **Bloomberg Anywhere**. Bloomberg collaborated with **Mobients** to create a Bloomberg Terminal for the iPhone. It's not a mass-market app by any means, and it would never win a Webby or something like that, but it's a powerful, complex, sophisticated product that's eminently functional. Another example is **SeatGeek**, a New York startup. They won a silver for Best Transactional Experience for their ticketing experience flow, because it's really seamless. It's not sexy, but it is effective and useful.

What does a UX Award winner receive?

There's a range of monetary prizes, really nice crystal trophies, plus considerable exposure through the User Experience Awards and our sponsors. Plus the recognition of their peers, of course.

One last question: what does the future of User Experience look like?

It's definitely mobile. The current separation between desktop and mobile experiences will continue to fade until it disappears completely. In crowded, competitive markets like the app market, the UX becomes increasingly important for competitive differentiation, so it's an exciting time for UXers because UX is becoming more understood and respected. Location-based mobile services like Foursquare or Highlight have also architected new in-person interactive experiences through a digital



All the 28 Days to a New Job Links In One Place

by The Hired Guns

28 Days to a New Job, interviewing, job hunting, job interviews, LinkedIn, networking, resumes, salary



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by Allison Hemming

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by Beth Temple

entrepreneurship, freelancing, work/life balance

Wyatt Jenkins

UX. When you buy these mobile products, you're essentially buying the UX. We'll see even more transformation of how we live and interact through UX in the coming years.

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Ryan Galloway

is the Editor at The Hired Guns. He manages the gigs, the blog, and those delightful Gig Alerts that land in your inbox. He's also an experienced freelance writer who covers a range of topics, but his real wheelhouse is jobs and employment trends. Before coming to The Hired Guns, Ryan managed Content Development for TheLadders' Career Services division. Follow [@ryan_e_galloway](#).

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We've built The Hired Guns to help the digital creative class expand their potential far beyond the 9-to-5, bringing their expertise to companies in unexpected and exciting ways and guiding their careers through transitions from freelance gigs to fulltime jobs and back again.

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