

1. Understand Dribbble

I wanted to start off by understanding how Dribbble positions itself. I've attached some statements below that stuck out to me. I've also underlined some words to better highlight themes within each statement. I feel that Dribbble clearly positions itself and knows what its mission is.

- Dribbble is on a mission to build the world's best platform for designers and creative professionals to gain inspiration, feedback, education, community, and job opportunities.
- Focused around "What are you working on?"
- A community of [creatives] sharing 'shots' of their work, process, and current projects.

2. High-Level Features

Now that I understand how Dribbble positions itself. I felt it was best to understand each of the core features and function of the platform. From my limited perspective, the information architecture feels scattered and navigating the website can get difficult if you're not familiar with the features.

- **Shots** – The core function of posting screenshots of a user's own creative work (images)
 - **Debuts** – Filter view of first shot posted by a user; popular within the community as a way to introduce and thank the person who invited the user
 - **Rebounds** – Posting a response to a shot
 - **Playoffs** – Filtered view of shots with rebounds from multiple users
 - **Goods By Designers** – Filtered search for just shots that can be purchased through dribbble
 - **Browser By Color** – Filtered search based on colors (hex) within shots
 - **Tags** – Filtered search based on shots that have been taxonomized by the user
 - **Places** – Filter search for shots posted by users of a certain city; also a chance to showcase available for hire users and upcoming meetups in that cities
- **Designers** – A user who can post shots, join teams, get hired

- **Dribbble Pro** – paid membership; allowing for granular control of profile layout, ability to add a domain to use dribbble as a portfolio, and have the ability to sell work, get hired, and search designers for hire.
- **Messages** – ability to send messages between users
- **Teams** – A profile for a group of users and their shots for that team, usually used by companies and agencies to creative showcase work
 - **Dribbble for Teams** — paid feature; a way of showcasing your company/agency to showcase work with the community and grow the team (hiring)
- **Community Features** – Mainly consisting of a blog, podcast, and regional meetups, dribbble offers the ability to share knowledge both digitally and in-person
- **Advertise on Dribbble** – allow businesses to promote their message to the community in various ways; including in the dribbble newsletter, podcast, and contests (which is based off the Playoffs feature)
- **Hiring on Dribbble** – A paid feature that, depending on your plan, allows someone to search for designers and/or post a job listing
- **Dribbble API** – a way of viewing and posting different data types, such as shots and jobs, to dribbble from a 3rd party application
- **Integrations** – A small handful of add-ons that leverage the API to do various things on common platforms like Slack, Invision, Framer, and Flinto.
- **Dribbble for iOS** – a mobile app only for Apple products (iPhone & iPad) to browse Dribbble with a native platform experience [Release Mid 2017]

3. Opportunity Focus

While there are simple things like an android app or a faceted search that would be very beneficial and are wise to pursue, a potentially missed opportunity is that in the category of education.

The Dribbble mission highlights education, but outside of commenting on shots, there's no meaningful online interactions that encourage the community to help itself. It's worth noting that Dribbble has an annual conference, allows anyone to host a local meetup, and the blog does designer interviews, which all aid in the educational and community goals of the platform.

For the rest of this case study, I want to focus on Education and exploring additional steps that Dribbble can take to enhance community-driven education within the platform.

4. Initial Assumptions

- Creatives on Dribbble want to share knowledge with the community and look to other platforms such as YouTube and Medium to educate and teach.
- Creatives on Dribbble are posting shots that link to educational resources, such as tutorials, but there's no official way to filter for those posts
- New and unconfident creatives feel reaching the level of talent displayed by other designers on Dribbble is not obtainable for them; Dribbble can be seen as intimidating.
- Creatives using dribbble for the first time may feel discouraged from sharing any of their work in fear that it's won't be responded to in a positive manner.
- As someone that's interested in becoming a designer, Dribbble may be great for inspiration but won't teach an individual to become a better designer.

5. Initial Research

Since I'm working in isolation on this, there's no opportunity to get insights from other stakeholders and team members. Ultimately, any outside perspective will add color to this process. I was able to look to a couple friends who use Dribbble for some additional insights. Here is a select set of questions to exemplify what I might be looking to answer. The overall goal here is to uncover additional pain points around the topic at hand.

- **Do users tag shots with tags such as tutorial and link them to other resources?**
 - Yes, for example the tag "tutorial" has a wide range of users sharing "How To's" <https://dribbble.com/tags/tutorial>
 - In instances where the tutorial or how-to tag is being used, there are people using it because their design calls for it. Otherwise, there are users linking to 3rd party resources or have breakdowns (in other words, disassembled) of their work.
 - Example #1: "how to create vector eagle on illustrator", which links to a full tutorial with video on Behance, with a separate link to only YouTube
 - Example #2: "Typography In Illustrator Tutorial", which links to a YouTube video
 - Example #3: "HTML Tutorial: Text Formatting", which links to the user's patron account (and we can assume that has the posts for this HTML series)
 - Example #4: "How To Trace Hand-Drawn Image in Adobe Illustrator" links to some freebie store with a PSD for something not related. (Might be a mistake or it might be a

person trying to do link building for the freebie store.)

- **Do new or less experienced creatives feel intimidated by other shots on Dribbble?**

- I asked a Product Designer, she said: “I remember the first time I used Dribbble, I saw the other designer’s work and wanted to be [that good], but wasn’t sure I ever could be – *that* was intimidating ... It all felt so far out of reach for me”
- I asked a creative, who didn’t do design, he said: “I always used Dribbble as a place to get inspiration from other designers, more like a moodboard. I don’t look at myself as a designer and I never felt that I could learn how to do the things that are on Dribbble”

- **Where do you go to learn new things about design?**

(Note: The following answers are based on my own assumptions)

- Search Google and typically find a tutorial website to follow
- Search YouTube or Google to find a video on how to use a tool or to do something
- Got to Skillshare, Lynda, or other and follow a course
- Come across an article on Medium, that explains an aspect of design
- Experiment with tools, search Google for how to do specific features
- Ask a friend that’s a designer and does that type of work
- Ask someone on Twitter or other social channel

6. Brainstorm Solutions

Now that I’ve gained additional points of view, I’ve reviewed all my above notes to ensure it’s fresh in my head. The next step is to brainstorm some potential solutions. I expect this to be high-level and not yet fully fleshed out, thus allowing for a good starting point of exploration.

- **Mentorship Search:** The ability for more junior designers to search and connect with more experienced designers who are willing to offer their time to mentoring a designer on a specific topic. This could be called Passing The Ball.
- **Tutorial Shots:** A new shot post type that allows for structured steps. For example, each attachment could be thought of as a linear step with a description to match. A user would be able to advance through each stage to learn the steps required in the tutorial.

- **Courses:** A group of educational videos (or possibly write ups) that together are a course on something specific (e.g. “Getting Started with Illustrations”). This could be called something like Pre-Season or Practice Time.
- **Multimedia Attachments:** Since users are already using things like YouTube and Podcasts to share valuable knowledge, a shot attachment would allow for playing of media inline on Dribbble.
- **Themed Groups:** Multiple users can join a group, where they can post shots to get answers to questions and get feedback on not-yet-completed designs. The group would be positioned as safe space to help and teach each other, therefore the group might have different types of privacy settings as well.
- **Pro Series:** A blog or video series hosted by Dribbble that encourages the community to collaborate on helpful guides that are shared with the rest of the community. This resource would be curated by Dribbble to create high-quality content.

7. Next Steps Explained

I want to stop here for now – The next thing I’d want to do is understand the different users that use Dribbble. I know that I have some initial assumptions about the relevant user groups, so I’d want to write up notes on that. After, I would want to better understand the persona of the users, especially any users that would be looking for education or to educate. Next, I would clarify any product or company goals, as well as any constraints with the project at hand.

Now that I knew the top solutions and would have a target user, I would want to better understand the types of signals to be mindful of when considering a direction to pursue. I would rank the solutions from the brainstorming session on factors like difficulty, value, and risk. The goal would be to create a testable hypothesis centered on a single solution that’d, at some level, enhance the educational features within Dribbble and therefore grow the community.

Now that I have something to focus on, I want to understand at the highest level, what were a couple realistic user stories. Continuing this effort, I’d outline proper requirements for the product. I’d want to go over the user stories with a Product Designer (or similar) and write Design Requirements and eventually with an engineer lead write Technical Requirements. Assuming the feature required visuals, I’d either work with a designer or alone to rapidly wireframe concepts in my head to see how they’d play out. This would allow for a basic idea of what did and didn’t work. The wires would be quickly iterated until something implementable exists.

8. Example Experiment

Choosing a solution that I am drawn to without any concrete reasoning, I might be able to conclude that the mentorship feature is low complexity, high risk, and high value. Therefore testing this feature with a select group would be the most telling and help minimize unknowns around other educational features.

The hypothesis I'd therefore be testing would be, "I believe that *allowing more experienced designers to offer their time to teaching* will help *increase engagement within the community*, which will educate and encourage the next wave of designers helping to further increase the daily usage of Dribbble."

The experiment might be as simple as well crafted email and a link to a firm to an engaged group of highly ranked designers, asking if they're interested in helping other designers and what areas they consider themselves knowledgeable in. There would also be a second email sent to less experienced designers with similar questions. We'd connect the users, maybe help schedule a session, and send surveys to both sides to better understand their conversations and if it was helpful.