

By [Nick Leggett](#)

With the evolution of technology only accelerating there is no shortage of possibilities for key UX predictions in 2016. Here are the top 5 UX themes that we predict will be at the forefront this year.

1. Investment in Enterprise UX

whiteboard

With years of significant UX gains in the consumer space, the user experience of Enterprise applications will play some serious catch up this year. There are real barriers to moving UX forward in the Enterprise including legacy technologies, organizational limitations, and reliability/security hurdles.

So why a change this year? First, an increase in mobile scenarios will push Enterprise applications to adapt with an improved UX, which is less constrained by desktop technologies. Second, startups with improved experiences are beginning to threaten established industries such as Zoomcare in the healthcare industry and Simple in the banking space. Third, the Lean UX method will push its way into Enterprise companies who must iterate quickly.

Enterprise companies are more likely than ever to “reorganize around design” by hiring DEOs (Design Executive Officers) or CXOs (Chief Experience Officers), understanding that a unified and intuitive experience design leads to increased customer loyalty and satisfaction, which in the end is ROI positive.

2. Virtual reality will become real

VR

2016 will see a boom in augmented and virtual reality experiences, given Oculus Rift's pre-orders starting in January and a host of new hardware and software players entering the field. We'll see greater commercial opportunities in the augmented reality space, given the breadth of applications available.

As VR experiences become more common, we'll see typical "first generation" technology frustrations, especially around onboarding. People will struggle to comprehend how to interact in a 3D space and designers must attempt to painlessly teach this new paradigm.

In order to see wider adoption, VR hardware and application makers must ensure their products are wearable, affordable, portable, and most of all, usable. Getting the end user experience right will be the key differentiator for those who wish to thrive in this brave new world.

3. UI-less UX

watch

The newest user experiences will have less and less visual user interfaces. There are a few trends driving a different user interface model. First, the wearable market is gaining ground with more and more devices communicating with us using haptic feedback instead of visuals.

Second, voice interfaces will continue to proliferate. The Amazon Echo provides an excellent example of the future of our digital experiences, as "point and click" is replaced with, "Computer, listen up!"

Finally, the Internet of Things—the connecting of almost all types of devices— will result in many successful and even more failing user interfaces with minimal UI. Regardless of whether the interface is visual, felt, or heard, designing an elegant experience will remain as critical as ever.

4. Finding needles in the data haystack

graph

We are awash in data and this will only increase in 2016. More and more private and public entities are enabling access to their data and this presents opportunities in UX.

We will continue to see tools like Domo, Tableau, and Splunk that aim to take data from a variety of sources and make it easier to find meaning. In addition, we'll see more and more specialized applications that can manipulate and visualize unique data-sets, especially in the sciences, such as disease research and at NASA.

UX designers who excel at this difficult task will see no shortage of work in 2016.

5. An uptick in healthcare apps

dropper

The rise in fitness trackers will come with a corresponding increase in mobile apps that monitor everything from heart rate to respiration to perspiration. Don't be fooled into thinking that the larger, more traditional healthcare companies will stand still while startups try to get a jump on this monitoring craze. In 2016 we'll see an increase in healthcare providers combining their knowledge and domain expertise with patients' medical records to deliver highly personalized and actionable information.

Though predicting the future is always a tricky business, what is clear is that there will be no dearth of exciting UX developments next year. What would you add or change to this list? What are your 2016 UX predictions?