# UXR for Dodl by AJ Bell

Synopsis.

Having experienced high levels of growth as a business, AJ Bell was looking to improve investing for everyone in the UK. Since its launch, Dodl by AJ Bell was focusing on people who haven't invested yet and has now become a popular option for people who might prefer a more simplistic approach to investing.

The app was named an Honoree in the 27th Annual Webby Awards in the Financial Services / Banking category, recognised by the International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences—granted to only the top 20% of the 14,000 projects submitted in this year's competition!

From inception, understanding the users' needs through comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research was key for both the agency and the client, enabling us to craft a user-centric platform that would simplify the scary and confusing world of investing. Through user feedback, we refined the app's design and functionality, creating an intuitive interface that resonated with investors of all levels. Iterative usability testing further optimized the user experience, ensuring seamless navigation.

As a result, the app surpassed key milestones, like a 4.6 rating on Google Play and Apple Store with over 4k downloads per month (ref Crunchbase), making it one of the most popular apps of the company.
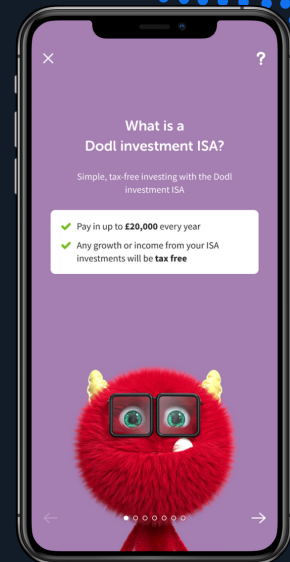
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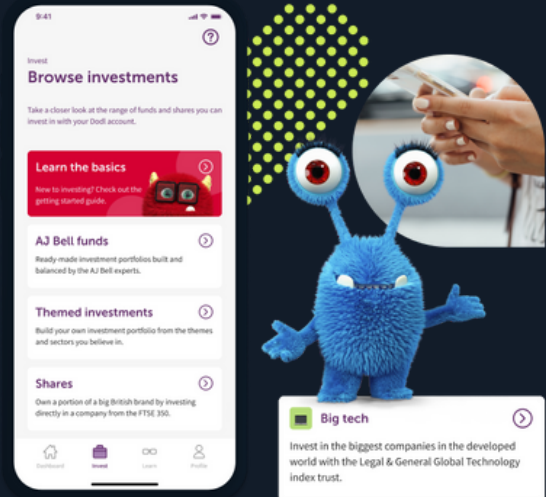
We proudly present Dodl, the innovative investment app developed by hedgehog lab for AJ Bell, aimed at breaking barriers and simplifying the UK investment landscape to create the advised clients of the future. AJ Bell is a multi-award-winning, FCA-regulated investment platform that's been doing this for over 25 years. With no dealing fees and an annual fee of just 0.15 per cent per annum, this investment app is set to revolutionize the market as we know it and rival some of the cheapest neobrokers out there.

In contrast to traditional investment apps, Dodl was meticulously designed to empower both seasoned investors and "nervous newcomers" with a seamless, less intimidating investment journey. The success of this transformative project can be attributed to our thorough User Research (UXR) process, which played a pivotal role in identifying user needs, driving design decisions, and ultimately delivering an app that has garnered widespread acclaim.

Innovative User Research Approach.
Dodl's success began with our comprehensive User Research conducted by hedgehog lab's UX research team, led by our User Experience Research Lead. The team's extensive research efforts included testing and observing how respondents navigated through the process and redesigned where necessary. During this step, the UX research team asked the target audience to execute specific tasks while monitoring and video recording them as they explained their behaviour through the app. This allowed the team to identify any obstacles and other processes that could be improved to make their experience better. These sessions focused on understanding the experience of browsing, buying, selling and withdrawing, which were previously identified as most confusing. The research process enabled a thorough understanding of the target audience, particularly those who felt overwhelmed with investing. These insights became the foundation for our user-centric approach, with a primary focus on accessibility and user confidence throughout the app's development.
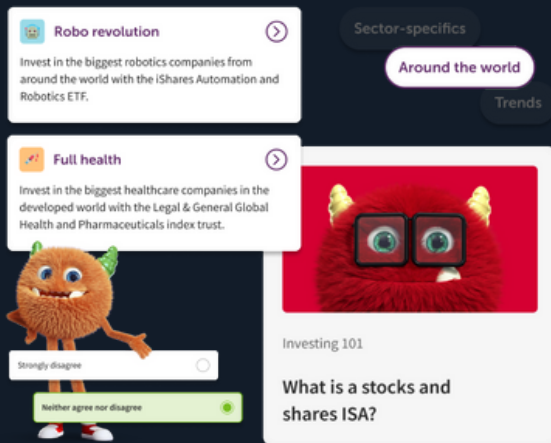
In order for this project to succeed, the team had to identify and better understand each of the target users' behaviours. In order to have clear insight into who the audience is and how Dodl could help them, 3 target audiences were formed as follows:

1. Nervous Newcomers

Inexperienced investors who feel more comfortable when they get help with their investments. They do not like the idea of risking money but need to achieve a better return than is currently available on cash deposits.

2. Hungry for Help

Less experienced investors but enjoy researching ideas online and comparing different investments before making any investment decisions. Comfortable taking some risk with their investments.

3. Confident in Control

Informed and experienced investors who are comfortable making their own investment decisions. Willing to take more risk with their investments and confident in managing them.

User-Centric Design and Development.

Building on the UXR insights, Dodl was designed and developed using the innovative Flutter hybrid technology provided by Google. Flutter is an innovative open-source UI software development kit (SDK) by Google. It enables developers to build natively compiled applications for mobile, web, and desktop using a single codebase. It was first introduced in May 2017 and has since gained significant popularity due to its innovative approach to app development. Its key features include fast performance, hot reload for quick iterations, customizable widgets, access to native features, and a strong community support.

This approach allowed us to create an engaging, cross-platform app with significantly reduced development time and costs. Although a relatively new technology, our in-house developers skillfully overcame the challenges and successfully delivered a feature-rich app with advanced functionalities.

Iterative Testing for Seamless User Experience.

Throughout the development process, hedgehog lab's team conducted iterative testing sessions to ensure a seamless user experience. More specifically, respondents were asked to navigate through the app while sharing their thoughts, helping us identify and address pain points in the browsing, buying, selling, and withdrawing processes. One critical realization was the need to redesign the purchasing flow, leading to an optimized onboarding journey and simplified user experience.

App Impact and Reception.

The new ofering has been 14 months in the making, from concept to go-live and since its launch in April 2022, Dodl has left its mark on the investment landscape, with visible impact and exceptional user reception.

The app accumulated nearly 5,000 registrations on the waitlist before going live, and it is currently at over 4,000 monthly downloads (according to Crunchbase). Moreover, Dodl's remarkable average ratings of 4.6 out of 5 stars on Google Store and the App Store are certainly an accurate reflection of the seamless user experience and positive feedback from users.

Emma Keywood, Head of Strategic Planning and Governance of AJ Bell said about the partnership:

"We are really satisfied by our partnership with hedgehog lab. We've had a great team over the last 2 years whether that's the same people working from the off or working with different people around hedgehog lab and everyone has brought the same passion; the same energy and love for Dodl, we have ourselves. And that's been really wonderful."

Key App Features.

Dodl offers individual savings accounts (ISA), Lifetime ISA, pensions and general investment accounts, with existing customers able to consolidate ISA and pensions onto the app. Initially the app was only offering UK shares but this year sees the app introducing US shares. Particularly, the mobile app was developed with the following key features:
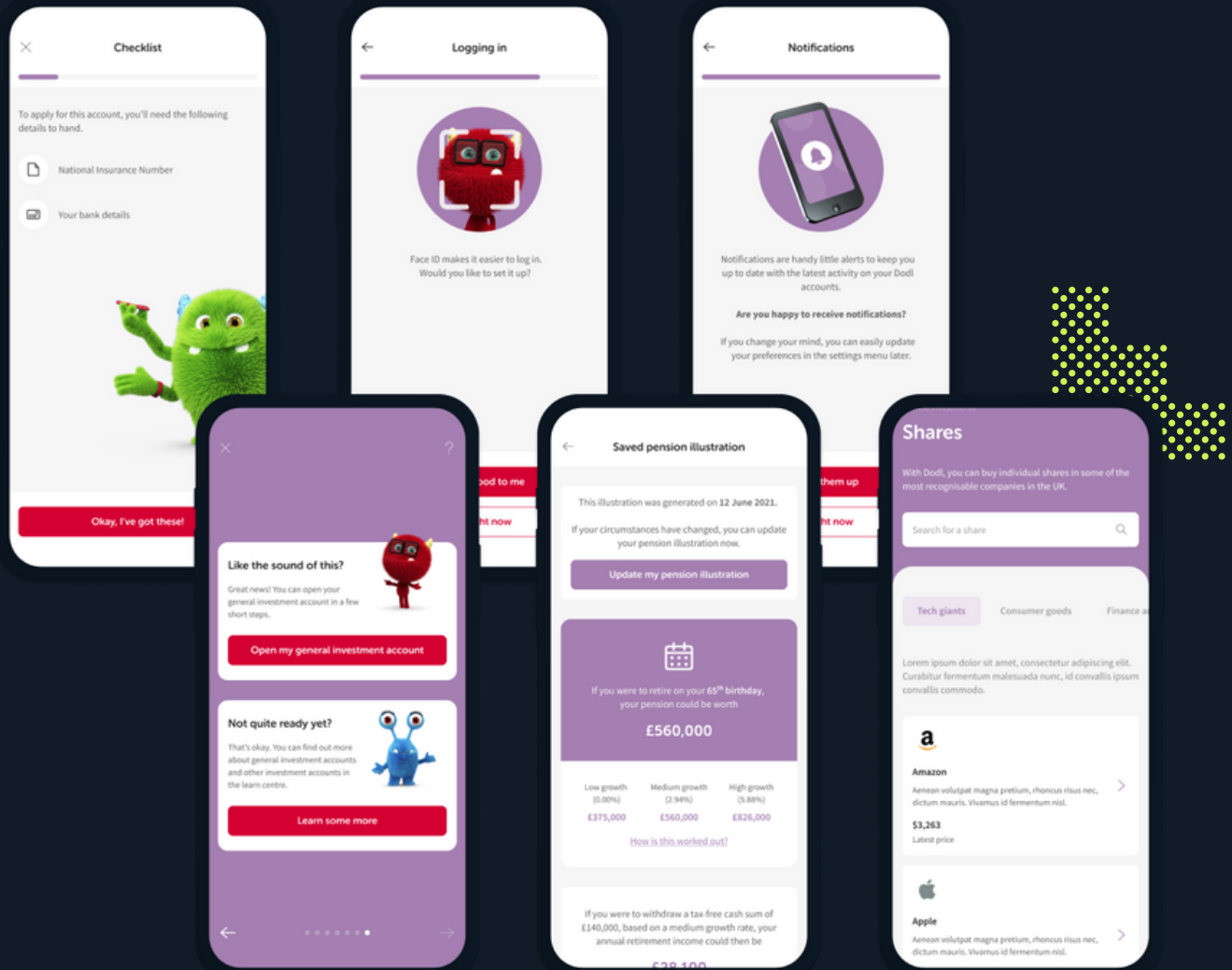
- Optimized onboarding journey with simplified user experience
- Enhanced user guidance and information for new investors
- Detailed analytics integrated with AJ Bell's MI systems for in-depth understanding of product experience
- Seamless user experience aligned with brand guidelines
- Transparent investment opportunities with easy-to-understand themed investment categories