

**Adam:** A cool thing that redesigning a D&D system taught me is that the human experience and empowering a user to kind of go where they want to go is fundamental to really good design.

**Narrator:** This is AdLab performance, marketing dissected, decoded, and delivered.

**Gavin:** Welcome to AdLab for all the return listeners and new listeners, I'm happy to have you here. I'm your host, Gavin Flynn, and I wanted to start today's pod off by saying Happy Prime Day or Prime Days technically this year to anyone listening. So Prime Day is hitting earlier this year than ever before, June 23rd through the 26th, which means it's an extra busy time of year for brands and marketers.

**Gavin:** So if you have a marketing manager in your life or have friends and family that work at an agency, send them a care package or something. They're going to be grinding these next few weeks. So send your love and be a support team for everybody in the e-commerce space. We'll actually get back to Prime Day later in the episode, but first I wanted to prime see what I did there.

**Gavin:** Prime listeners for today's deep dive. Marketing insights usually don't come from a textbook. They usually come from hands on experience, and I'm really excited to be joined by LP, UI, UX designer Adam Gilbert to talk websites and web experiences. He's bringing the hands on experience, and he has one of the more unique backgrounds we've had on the podcast, and our conversation goes a ton of different directions.

**Gavin:** We talk storytelling, psychology, Dungeons and Dragons to anyone interested. And we obviously land back on how that all relates to website optimization cover a lot of ground. But before we dive into the topic at hand, we're actually going to jump into this week's hot headline.

**Gavin:** Ryan, thanks for coming on today. We're talking about Amazon Prime Day slash days.

**Gavin:** So what I wanted to start with, it's moved up a month. Yeah. Compared to previous years. And I'm kind of curious if you have any insights into industries that are going to be extra affected by the early Prime Day. Do you think outdoor brands are going to see the benefit of people buying for the summer season? Any industry related, effects, do you think?

**Ryan:** I mean, it's going to be everybody's best guess, really, at the end of the day. And what used to move in June versus July? But I think Amazon has more data than anybody else on what people buy and when. And so Dan was on Amazon, obviously saw some reason that if we move this up, we're going to collect more revenue.

**Ryan:** Amazon's not going to move something and be like yeah I hope we sell.

**Gavin:** We're gonna sell less.

**Ryan:** Sounds exciting. Our our sellers would be excited if we sold less. I would.

**Gavin:** Assume that early summer date is some strategy to again get some of these summer related brands, in outdoor related summer activities, maybe a little bit more time for these early purchasing decisions, I don't know. Well, it could be.

**Ryan:** Or Amazon may have saw some fatigue between in July, Prime Day, and then quickly moving into holiday where they have the October Prime days. Yeah. And so maybe they saw if we move this up, it's giving people enough time to save money back up for the next blowout Prime Day. Yeah. And so if they're looking at because the October Prime days weren't like prime prime days, it was more like focus.

**Ryan:** Like, hey, it's a beauty day. It's it's a this day. So if they're looking at making it like Holiday Prime, then you're probably going to need those months between because I mean we would have had generally August and September. Yeah. And brands have to get into Prime Day with enough inventory and history of keeping their inventory up and then submit their deal for Prime to be able to take advantage of it.

**Ryan:** So that was probably too condensed realistically between them.

**Gavin:** Yeah. Alleviate that time. Anything you saw brands do last year, any brands that you've been working with or chatting with that maybe they made some mistakes last year and maybe some corrections they could make for this year.

**Ryan:** There's so many nuances and strategies you can adopt that brands try to be like, hey, if we kind of increase our price a little bit leading up to it, we can discount it more. Amazon's a little, why is that so you can't do that as much. A lot of brands don't get aggressive enough. And so when I'm when we're talking promos especially during prime days, if you don't have a product, you can get really uncomfortable on your discount.

**Ryan:** Prime day may not necessarily be where you're trying to hit. So some brands need to have specific SKUs that they know. If somebody buys this product, the chance of them moving into an expanded product line mix or buying other products from us is much higher. That's it's like your gateway drug. That's the product you want to be like all right, if I discount, I'm losing.

**Ryan:** I'm losing money. But I'm getting people that may not have considered it before. And I think some of the the mistakes brands make is saying, hey, across the board, it's Prime Day. We got to go 30% off all of our products. A lot of those sales are probably people like me that would have bought anyway. Yeah, but you're going to give me 30 or 40% off.

**Ryan:** I'm going to take it. Yeah. And I'll give you the sales now. Whereas maybe I would have bought that at regular price in July. I'll buy it in June for a discount. So you moved forward the revenue but taking a hit. And so some brands have to consider maybe we don't need to participate aggressively in Prime Day.

**Ryan:** And maybe we're just going to take advantage of the fact that people are in the buying mood. And I need to get something, you know more aggressive on my non brand

terms on Amazon and just get my products up there. Yeah. And maybe I'm just doing small little discounts that I can do regularly. So the because the non discount products are going to be tough to get somebody to purchase during Prime day.

**Gavin:** Yeah yeah. One more question for you post Prime day week, what would you recommend brands do to analyze that data and pass through that data after we've kind of completed that window and any any tools that you recommend brands using to kind of analyze what happened and maybe take that into the rest of the year.

**Ryan:** I mean, if you don't already have some tools that you're using to analyze Amazon data because Amazon's platform fairly well, no, not fun for sifting through data at this point. So often you want to be able to download as much as you can out, you know, use your AI tools you're already familiar with to say, hey, how can I analyze this with a certain states that I tended to do better in?

**Ryan:** And was it did that have to do with the quickness I could get the product because I had more product in, you know, New York so I could get more there, or was it more about, hey, my competition wasn't as great there? Is it? What can the kind of gleanings can you get on increased conversion rate, time period to say, where did I win?

**Ryan:** At what time of day did I win, and what were the reasons behind that? But I can further expand on later on.

**Gavin:** Got it, got it. No, I'm all good thoughts here. It's coming. It's coming in quick. It's coming coming in quick.

**Ryan:** And if you're if you're listening to this and you're not ready I'm sorry. I guess we're probably coming in a little late to at this point to talk through. But it's you find the data you can use and expand on it after. And if you missed this, this Prime Day, you've got another one coming in October. Really coming close to the holiday.

**Ryan:** Make sure you're ready for that. You can expand on that. And don't forget your DTC site. You know, during prime days, all conversion rates go up. People are buying on the websites. They are buying on other marketplaces, target, Walmart, they're going to have big deals going on. I think I was even on target's site, a couple days ago, and they're already doing big discount days.

**Ryan:** I think they're trying to capture those Prime Day buzz and trying to get people beforehand to spend some of the money on Target and Walmart. So you can't ignore those either. Know, be everywhere and try to get as many sales as possible.

**Gavin:** Hey, good words to end on Gara, thanks for coming.

**Ryan:** Out and thank you. Thanks again. Appreciate it.

**Gavin:** That was great. Ryan's really a wealth of knowledge when it comes to Amazon and basically anything in the e-commerce space. So if you're a brand and you're looking to take

your Amazon strategy to the next level, reach out to LP. Reach out through our website. We're here to help. Now let's jump into today's deep dive with Adam Gilbert.

**Gavin:** Adam works on LP's UX team and brings a unique perspective to the world of digital experiences. All of this experience has led him to think deeply about how people interact with systems and make decisions, which is really what web development is all about. So in the conversation, we get into what websites can learn from game design, the balance between creativity and proven design principles, and why understanding people still matters.

**Gavin:** Just as much as understanding the technology. Looking forward to it. Let's head into the lab.

**Gavin:** Adam, thanks for coming on the show. Thanks for.

**Adam:** Having me.

**Gavin:** So first to set the stage, I wanted you to tell the listeners a little bit about you. Your background and your role at LP.

**Adam:** Sure. So, I'm Adam. My background is highly eclectic. Once upon a time, I wanted to be a novelist. So I went into, school for English communications. But during that time, I also ended up fumbling into a lot of graphic design, web design and illustration as a freelance gig. And I just kept doing it because it deeply fascinated me.

**Adam:** Then I hopped around, figured things out in my, you know, in my early years, as one does, I had a variety of different jobs that taught me, strangely, a lot about human interaction and really weird ways. I have heard it said in the past that there's something to be said about kind of having a jack of all trades and going different places, and then when you collect that into a singular sort of profession or skill, it can really culminate to something pretty cool.

**Adam:** So that was kind of my background for a while. I was a maintenance fan for a long time. I was a, at risk kids center person for a while, all the while doing a lot of freelance work on the side. And then I eventually found my way into LP. I wanted to do the, graphic design thing full time.

**Adam:** I wanted to get into the creative space full time. I always had a knack for web design as well, so that was something I led with when moving into LP. And a long story short, I gradually found my way into a UX role here. UX, UI role here at LP, because it's something that we needed. There was a lot of needs on the back end, and there just seemed to be a space for it.

**Adam:** And I've been doing that now for a couple of years. I specialize predominantly here on LP with, design systems. That's internal tools that are it, team uses as well as web design. And that just comes from a, a long history of, of creating websites, running my own websites, helping other people get their websites up.

**Adam:** Even having the opportunity to jump into LP's SEO side of things and kind of working with the web dev team on that side. So, a lot of different educations, combining together to sort of create this, I don't know, is Arsenal too strong an arsenal of skills that I, I use here at LP and I guess that's it in a nutshell.

**Adam:** Yeah.

**Gavin:** Well, I understand that you're passionate about, you know, human psychology and game theory.

**Adam:** Yes.

**Gavin:** What in your. Yeah. What what, in your opinion, are the common threads between building an awesome Dungeons and Dragons game and building, website for a brand?

**Adam:** Yeah. I think it's a really interesting throughline. So one of my weird side obsessions has been, with D&D, and the D&D system as it was created. It was actually created by a group of engineers that just were really they just needed a strong ruleset for the kinds of games that they were playing. But it doesn't necessarily play nicely into how users actually, most users actually think.

**Adam:** And so a cool thing that, redesigning a D&D system taught me is that a human, the human experience and empowering a user to kind of go where they want to go is fundamental to really good design. And that correlates directly with almost any kind of app interface or web design interface that you're going to create. So, let me see what's a good way to kind of explain this.

**Adam:** So there's this thing called AI. There might be different terms for it, but it's called a top down approach to design, meaning that, person might think, okay, I know that these patterns are really cool. I know that this is in trend right now, or I know that this flow is just something that I feel is good, and I've used it in the past and they sort of impress that on to the user and say, this is what you like too.

**Adam:** Another one that I often hear too is like users don't really know what they want. So we're going to take our experience and tell them what they want. That is identical to the bad GM experience. Or a player has a really cool idea of exactly what they want their character to do, where they want their character to go, the story they're trying to tell, and having a GM because of the ruleset or whatever constraints they feel are best constantly railroad though.

**Adam:** Another term you hear often. It's kind of in the improv community where, you always need to say yes and not no. Every time you railroad, you're kind of breaking off, a user's ability to get into a flow state, to feel empowered, to feel engaged and to feel like, oh, I'm here. This is for me. And so it was kind of a happy accident that I did that enough, because I ended up building up my own RPG system from the ground up solely with this idea in mind, that it should be a very seamless experience for the user.

**Adam:** And the other systems don't really do that. And then taking that into web design and realizing it's the same thing when you take a top down approach and dictate to a user, this is how it's going to be. You're essentially railroading their experience now. It's a bit more nuanced because obviously we need to create an interface. And inherently by doing that, you are to some degree dictating, where they need to go.

**Adam:** In fact, that's part of the the goal. But where you really want to, I guess, find that nirvana of, design is the same type of nirvana you find when you're a good GM, which is you've developed just a fine, fine set of guidelines that puts them on these rails. And the rails are so seamless and so smooth that that, player or that user just goes and by the time they get to where they needed to go, they haven't even really thought about much else except for their own experience.

**Adam:** It's it's almost like it's like a website should be like the flux for a person's abstract journey. In terms of like searching through your website, and other you know, we said this in maintenance when you're doing your job. Well, people don't say anything. It's only when they, when you start doing things wrong that people start speaking up a little bit.

**Adam:** Yeah, slightly different with web design, but that's kind of I guess that's it in a nutshell. That would be the correlation. Nuh.

**Gavin:** Well, as a as a person who has played plenty of Dungeons and Dragons in my day, when something's going well, you're entirely correct where the lead is invisible and that you're experiencing something in a way that's meeting your needs and engaging and potentially artful and beautiful. But you don't see the puppet master behind the screen directing you. Now that this gets into a larger conversation that I wanted to talk with you about, and actually one of the keys here, I think in web design, UX, moving into the future, we're in a spod and we're in a time where how people are engaging with search engines and websites is changing dramatically, right?

**Gavin:** There's all this talk and there's rightfully so, a lot of hand-wringing around LMS and the research phase of users. I wanted your thoughts on what you've seen the consumer and buyers online. What are they doing when they're interacting with websites? How is their research phase changed, and how have websites changed in turn to meet maybe some of those new needs and demands?

**Gavin:** Big question, but I wanted to get your your thoughts on that.

**Adam:** Yeah, a very big question. And I don't know. The answer is at least so far as I can tell, is we're kind of still in, for lack of a better term, the arms race or the gold rush of what AI is. There is this it's sort of turned into the Wild West, you know, we're we're at the we're at the, the ledge of, potential Bladerunner esque future where AI agents will be in the holograms and you're going to talk to them like it's your C-3po.

**Adam:** And, you're not going to work anymore, but you kind of work with them, and then there's going to be these bars and taverns, and the AI is going to show up, and people are

like, we don't serve your kind, and they're going to tell you that, you know, and it's like, that's one projection that everyone's speculating on, like, it's going to get that crazy, which wow, wouldn't that be crazy?

**Adam:** The other speculation is, okay, this is going to more fall into the back end and become secondary tools because do users even want them in the first place? And I think to that point we were talking about before, right now, then and again, I'm going to say this with a take it with a grain of salt, because I'm certainly not an expert in the field.

**Adam:** But right now it seems predominantly the, development of AI has been top down, meaning that the developers, the think tanks behind it, the companies behind it have created truly an unprecedented type of technology that does some really crazy stuff. We don't know where the end point is yet. We're still investing in the infrastructure to even get this to the the plausible potential of where it could finally land.

**Adam:** And through all of that, I don't know if we've actually answered the question yet. What do users actually want? Let's take a great case study. Sorry. Sora was, a AI video project that was backed by, I believe it was OpenAI and Disney, and it was for a long time touted to be the game changer for cinematic filmography.

**Adam:** It was going to be like the tool that everyone's going to use. They deployed it. People downloaded it. They were all excited, like, that's cool. And it was very quick, I think, you know, for arguably kind of an overnight experience, it kind of just fumbled and the whole project was shut down. That's just part of R&D.

**Adam:** That's part of this. I think unprecedented build is kind of like the.com bubble for some degree. There's going to be some failures that occur along the way. But it does bring that question, what do users actually want? And so to get to your your question of where does it fall in design? The current reality is I don't know if I've seen that answer just quite yet.

**Adam:** I have seen a lot of Cros, hybrids up here. I've seen some very interesting things where you've take some old school web design patterns and you might overlay it with an assistant. But that doesn't do more than create, a more efficient back end tool. Then there's some other really wild stuff that I've seen, like in, like a few weeks or whatever from OpenAI, where they're now creating these almost hybrid all in one sort of platforms where it's like your interface is actually directly within that LM window.

**Adam:** And then I think the idea is eventually that you'll have an agent that kind of is your ancillary person running and doing a bunch of stuff like, like it was it's not too on similar to this concept of an all in one app. That was an idea way back in the day that there was going to be these big, big apps that that's all you do.

**Adam:** It's a one stop shop. But it kind of boils down to the question of, okay, but where we we're going to get all this technology, where is the user going to land? So I guess that's sort

of where I stand in it, where it's like it's kind of still speculative. I don't know if we we have an answer yet.

**Adam:** Yeah.

**Gavin:** Well, in speaking of kind of speculative new technologies, I also wanted your insight and opinion on new website building tools. It seems like there's a lot of new tech out there that can expedite build processes. We can whip up, landing page. We can build out maybe a B testing pages for our website and see how users interact with those tools differently.

**Gavin:** I wanted to get your insight on how the design side of what you do live, side by side with these new tools that can expedite some of the maybe more rigorous process of building out a website. Yeah. Have you been using some of those new tools that can help speed up that process? How have you been using those?

**Adam:** Oh yeah, oh yeah, big time. I think, it's it's very exciting. I think one area that, I does phenomenally well is when you can give it the technical requirements and say, you know, what would have taken me a couple of weeks? I need you to do and, maybe we're going to do a back and forth session for a few hours.

**Adam:** Some of my top favorites right now is probably Versal video is a very good web building app. I still rely pretty heavily on Figma. Figma does have some prompt capability, but honestly, if I'm going to do that, I'll use some other tools like Claude or OpenAI, depending on what's needed. But the interesting thing is, I've kind of noodled with it on and off.

**Adam:** I find that to be. I find those tools to be most useful in the sort of final prototyping stage. I, I really try to experiment with it when it came to the front end stage of like, hey, can you give me some ideas for Xyzzy? Can you give me some reference images? Or. This is the general concept, why don't we work on a wireframe?

**Adam:** Why don't we work on some user needs? And what I found was there's at least right now there's an intrinsic flaw when it comes to, how labs work. And that's essentially it's a collective bell curve. It's taking all of the information that has been aggregated online and then, you know, just through likeness, compiling it together and essentially giving you this is our best standard response for this.

**Adam:** Now, if you're doing something standard like, I just need a generic landing page, it's like, great, that's awesome. But when you start getting into really weird specific stuff where it's like, this is actually for our sales team because we need to actually apply it to a dashboard, but then it also needs to speak to this thing. And oh, here are all the requirements.

**Adam:** And here's the limitations on where we're at x, y, z. That side I think still really needs a lot of, human touch. And I think that's where I've kind of found my happy medium, where it's like I does very, very well for my back end technical, where it's like, okay, I have kind of

compiled the research, I've identified the user needs, I've identified the pain points, I've done whatever interviews I need to do.

**Adam:** I've done whatever homework I need to do. Now I'm going to actually build out a rough prototype and then write out the specs, and then that's what I'll send it to, an AI to build. And that's, that's usually where I get the most bang for my buck. Whenever I try to bring it into early, it ironically took longer.

**Adam:** It was better to have a fuller idea and then be like, okay, now this is very technical, and now I can build out a prototype that is so predominantly built that I could, like, hand it off to a developer, and there's already some code and some language behind it. That has been a very exciting and interesting journey.

**Adam:** I am very, very curious when agents become more like readily available to everyday users, how that's going to change the landscape as well. Because if you could have a team of little agents and be like, hey, I need you to do research, I need you to do this, I need you to do that. And then you kind of draw it all together.

**Adam:** Will that be a more effective AI? Potentially? I am very, very curious to see how that all plays out.

**Gavin:** And to add on to that, how brands keep a grounded identity with these new tools, I could imagine, and you might have already seen this at a brand level where some of these new tools can actually strip away some of that grounded identity. If you were to give a piece of advice or maybe a general message to either web developers out there, marketing managers at brands, what would be a nugget of advice or a takeaway that you would give them in context of their website and the function and purpose of their website?

**Gavin:** Any soul searching that you would recommend they do? Any questions you would recommend them ask themselves as they're planning for the future of their website?

**Adam:** Yeah, that's a good question. I'm going to take this question in the context of like I like editions as well, and kind of this sort of push for speed, speed, speed, because that's kind of the idea of what I sort of about. The first thing I would say is AI is only going to be as good as you are.

**Adam:** It's an enhancer of what you are. And so if you do not understand the fundamentals of I'm going to get a little, superfluous here, but, if you do not understand the fundamentals of art language through visual media, language through typography, language through color, the flow of color, the nature of color, and what it makes humans feel, the the importance of contrast and where that's going to take you, what the story even of that is about for a human.

**Adam:** If you don't understand these fundamental core elements, AI is not going to take you there. It is. It is an aggregator. And so I would say, do not neglect your fundamentals and

dare I say, don't rely too much on the tool lest you sort of fall into cognitive decline. I think I think there's something very important about you.

**Adam:** You really need to keep yourself sharp because it is you, the driver, that will, I think, either make or break those speedy tools. And the temptation is to be like, oh, this thing's so great off. I think anymore. It's like, that's not about that. I would, especially when it comes to, creating a unique voice. That's something that I still struggle with to this day.

**Adam:** It's it's going to not necessarily be able to be the soothsayer you're hoping it's going to be. Yeah.

**Gavin:** No, I truly believe we're in a moment of massive change for how websites are going to be positioned. And I truly appreciate you coming on and sharing these insights. Even with this time we had today, there was a few nuggets in there that I think brand owners, marketing managers, developers can take into their process. So I just wanted to say thank you.

**Gavin:** Thanks so much for coming on. And you're welcome back at any time. Thank you Matt.

**Adam:** Yeah, thanks for having me. It was a pleasure.

**Gavin:** Thank you to Adam Gilbert for joining us and sharing his perspective on user experience design and the human side digital marketing, which is still important. If you enjoyed this episode, be sure to subscribe and leave a review. This will help more marketers discover the show. You can find clips, highlights, and full video episodes on the LP YouTube channel and across our social channels at AdLib Pod.

**Gavin:** Thanks for listening and I'll see you next week in the lab.