YardSign (App and Responsive site)
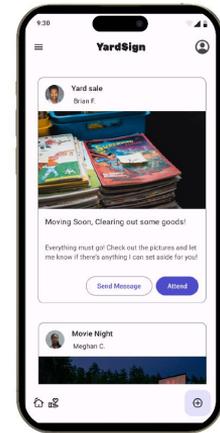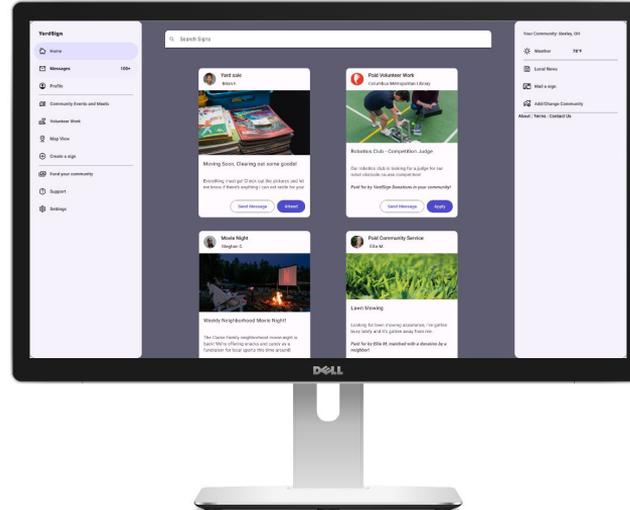
Rick Watson

Google

Project overview

The product:

For this third project in my UX Design Certification course, the topic was to design for social good. YardSign is a community connection app designed for equitable community service and resources.

Project duration:

August 2022 - September 2022

Google

Project overview

The problem:

Traditional community connective events and opportunities have seen an impact in reach due to dynamic changes to everyday life such as our recent pandemic. Previously yard signs could be used for everything from garage sales to finding pets or "help wanted" signs. With changes in how people commute, communicate, and spend their free time, these methods are less effective.

The goal:

Marrying the traditional nuances and expectations of yard signs and community boards with meaningful innovations reflective of social media and gig economy apps could help communities build equity within and help those who are generally underrepresented gain access to opportunities that may have provided barriers before.

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Project overview

My role:

UX Design and Research in totality

Responsibilities:

Complete project management from conception to completion including;

Wireframing

Prototyping

Usability Studies

Competitive Auditing

User Research

Google

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- Competitive audit
- Ideation

Google

User research: summary

My research started from studies and experience in seeing underrepresented communities affected by gentrification and other factors that can rapidly change the makeup of communities and create a need for outreach and collaboration. Using my own community and experience as the foundation, I conducted research and interviews in various neighborhoods I have had the fortune to work and volunteer in and find out how and why equitable opportunities are built and retained in areas traditionally and currently, and how that can be translated to this project in a genuine and sincere way.

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Persona 1: **Alicia Gould**

Problem statement:

Alicia is a public service employee who needs to expand her reach for connecting within her community because traditional brick and mortar methods are less effective today.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Goals
- Wants to connect with the community to host and participate in events in a modern way.
- Wants to amplify reach for library hosted events

Frustrations
- Placing flyers and signs are expensive, laborious, and unreliable
- Social media provides mixed/inconsistent results.

Alicia Gould
Age: 47
Education: High School Degree
Hometown: Dayton, OH
Family: Grandmother of 3
Occupation: Librarian

Alicia is looking for a way to connect to her community for events such as yard sales, potlucks, fundraising events, and more. In using flyers and yardsigns, she's found less engagement over time as the makeup of her neighborhood changes. As Alicia doesn't carry a smartphone, she relies on the library's facilities to access the internet primarily.

Google

Persona 2: **Liz Belfontaine**

Problem statement:

Liz is a new resident in the community who needs to identify opportunities and resources because she believes her community can invest in her mutual to her service and time.

"I know the personal value of service as a local volunteer."

Liz Belfontaine

Age: 22
Education: Some College
Hometown: Akron, OH
Family: Single
Occupation: Full time student

Goals
- To find free and paid volunteer or outreach opportunities in underrepresented communities nearby.
- To better know neighbors.

Frustrations
- Being new to a community can make it difficult to start connecting
- Schedule and commute makes it easy to miss traditional signage or flyers.

Liz is a busy college student that wants to invest her time and resources into her community through service and volunteer work. Being a student at a university has placed her in a new community that she doesn't know well, which gives her frustration in not knowing where to begin her journey.

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Competitive audit

The competitive audit I employed here was a comprehensive process including major direct competition such as Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, Angie (Formerly Angie's list), and nextdoor, as well as traditional government-funded state and local funded methods of community outreach.

The major findings in our research were that underrepresented communities were not able to identify verified members of their community safely and that there were absolutely no options for soliciting help in community service efforts that left the user in control.

Ideation

Ideation for this project began with a two week design sprint that began daily with a timed session of crazy eights, a collaborative session of "how might we" with a partner I trust with creative ideation (my significant other!), and looking over feature sets that were well received from competitors that I can improve upon.

Google

Starting
the design

- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

Google

Digital wireframes

In the design process, I started in two places, with the app as the basis of seeking opportunity using progressive enhancement, and with the desktop as the basis for static locations in the community, using graceful degradation in elements in that regard. Essentially splitting the two user journeys and designing around them as companions to each other.

Navigation Drawers are an option that helps organize content and provide a consistent flow on all devices
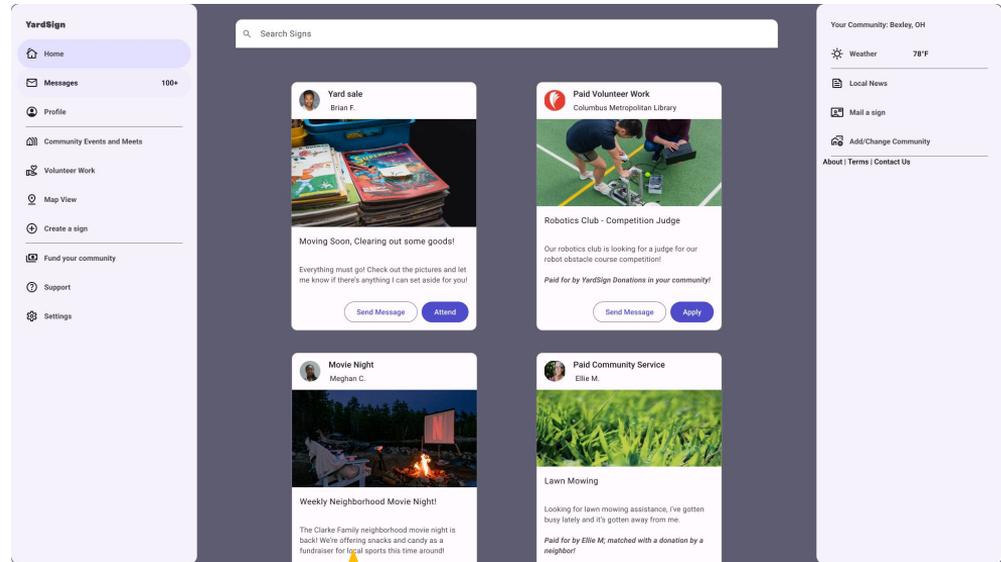
Using cards allows for easily identifiable information hierarchy that can be navigated as the modern version of a traditional Bulletin Board.

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Low-fidelity prototype

My initial low-fidelity prototype covered the first user journey of creating a "Sign" (post) on the platform. In scaling the flow I paid careful attention to design concepts I wanted to learn and implement the most such as effective use of negative space and when to change format versus add a page.

Google
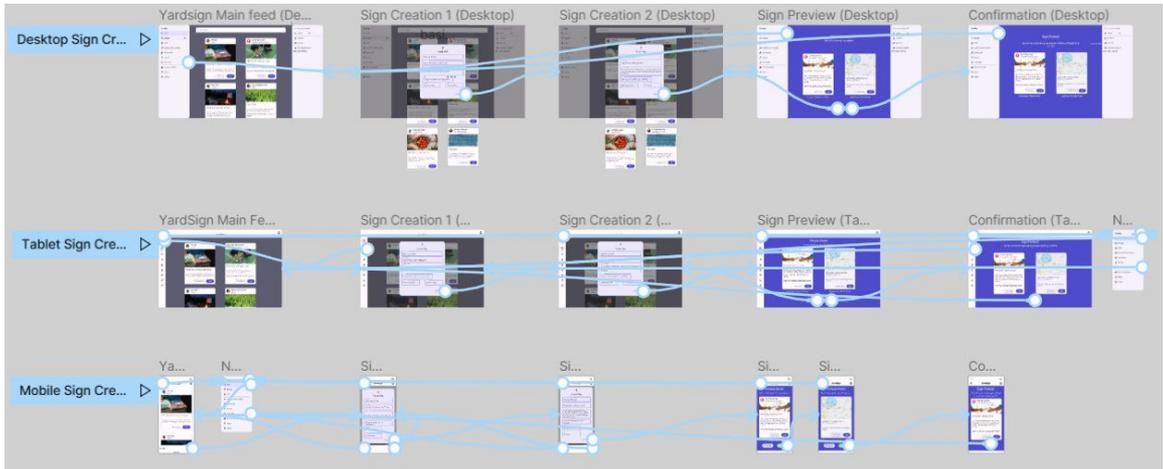
Usability study: parameters

Study type:

Unmoderated usability study

Location:

Remote

Participants:

10 participants spread across 2 groups of 5

Length:

30-60 minutes

Google

Usability study: findings

Insert a one to two sentence introduction to the findings shared below.

1

Navigation drawers

Universally well received, navigation drawers scaling up to include more information and easier access to options was a key finding.

2

Categorization of posts

Important especially when contrasting our two user flows, being able to navigate directly to posts looking for volunteers or service distinctly from events and meets.

**3**

Off platform use-case

A major feature that was well received is the ability to help overcome access barriers such as digital literacy or financial burden by sending mail within the community responsibly

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Refining the design

- Mockups

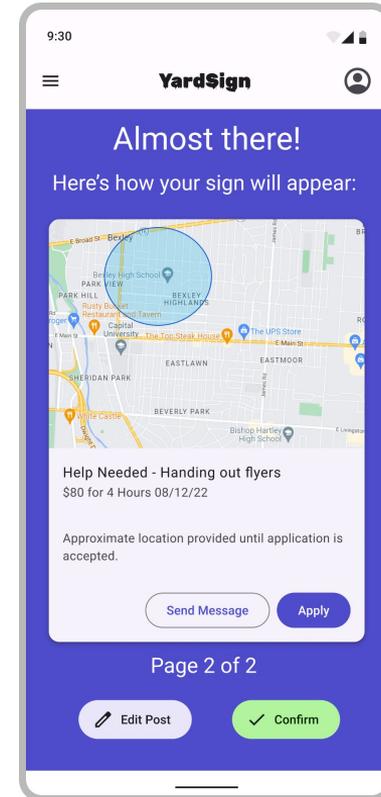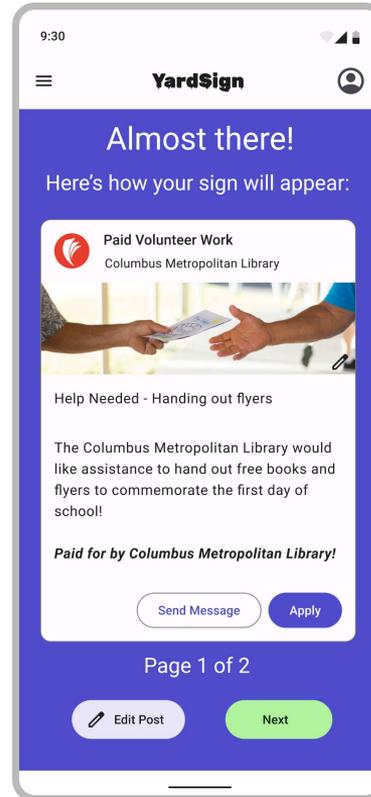- High-fidelity prototype

- Accessibility

Google

Mockups

After the low fidelity usability study my design goal was to further refine visual fidelity, while finding creative ways to emphasize information in an organic way. An example of this is the "tip" system in which users can get a variety of advice on features when making signs. (Pictured)

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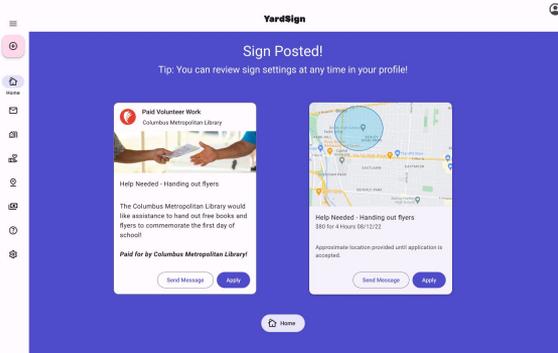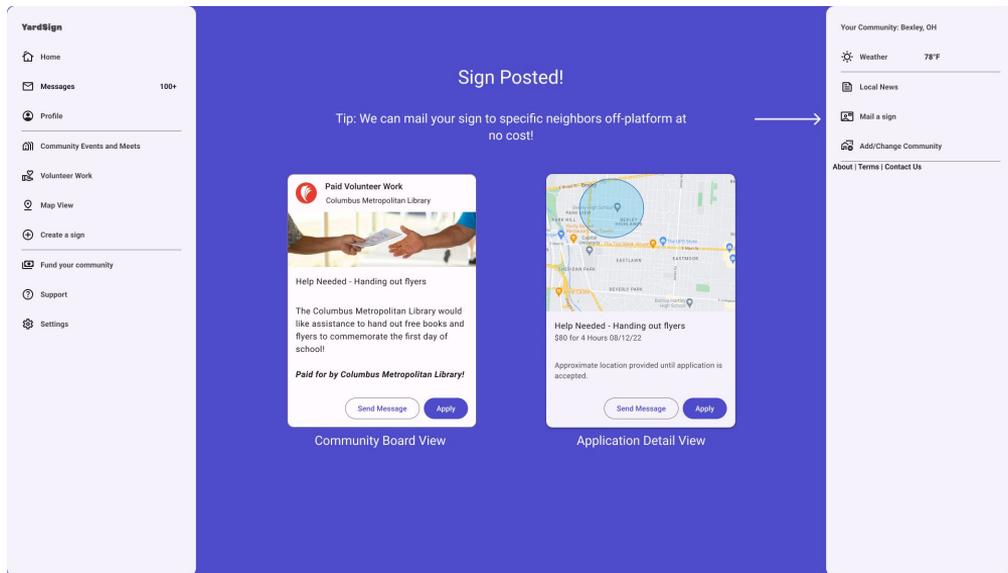
Mockups

In response to user feedback from the first usability study, the preview screen on mobile was split to allow the user to preview both views of a sign before posting. This allowed for optimal use of the space contrasting the larger tablet and desktop options.

After usability study
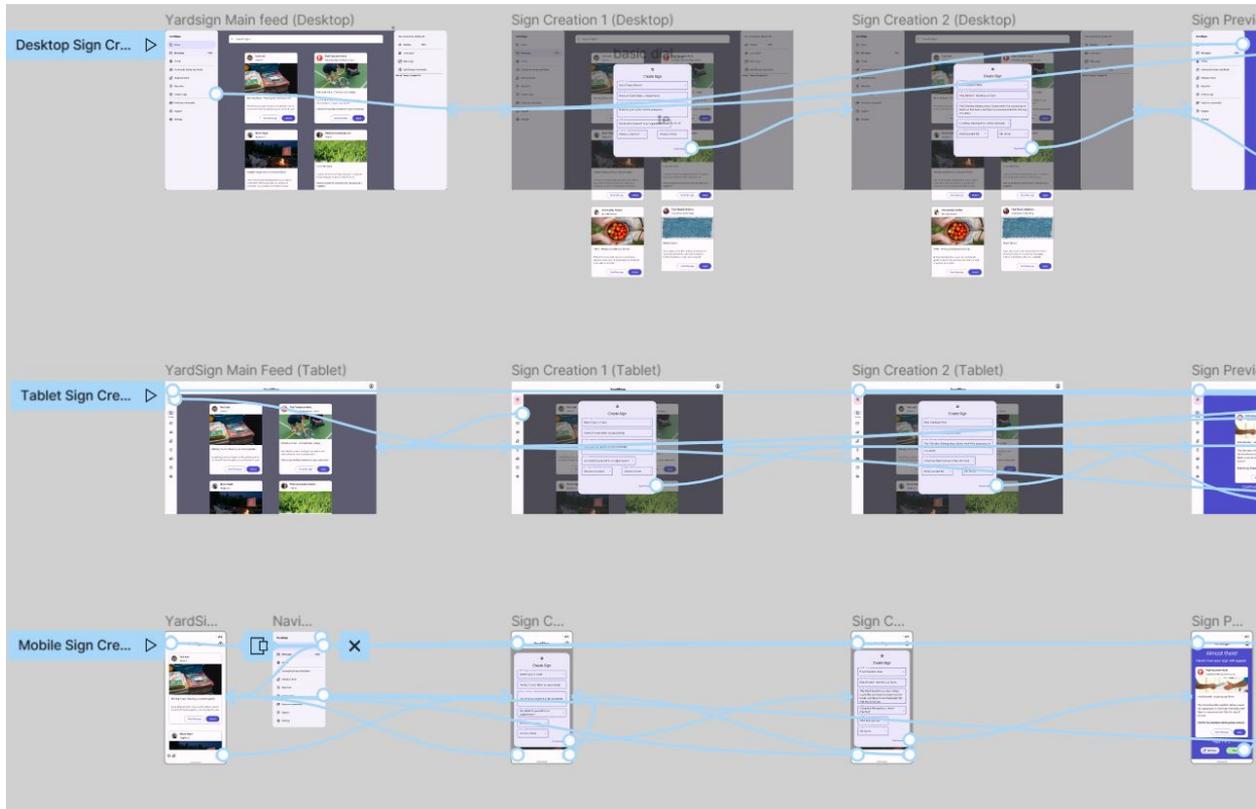
High-fidelity prototype

The High-Fidelity prototype is a representation of the final vision for the first user journey: Creating a sign.

The prototype is best viewed in figma with the "fit to screen" option (Z on keyboard). An Adobe XD version is to follow soon.

Desktop Flow
Tablet Flow
Mobile Flow

Google

Accessibility considerations

1

Through this course I have made standard in my designs to consult and abide by Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. These guidelines have been incredibly insightful and impactful for my design approach overall, and in this project they influence color and contrast.

2

In addition to color accessibility standards, WCAG guidelines help in designing for screen readers and other accessibility technology, a major consideration is informational hierarchy, which helps those assistive technologies convey the information on a page.

3

This particular app is my first forte into geolocation APIs and how accessible design comes into play in using location. I gave an emphasized look at considerations for privacy and safety as they are integral to the experience and success of this particular product.
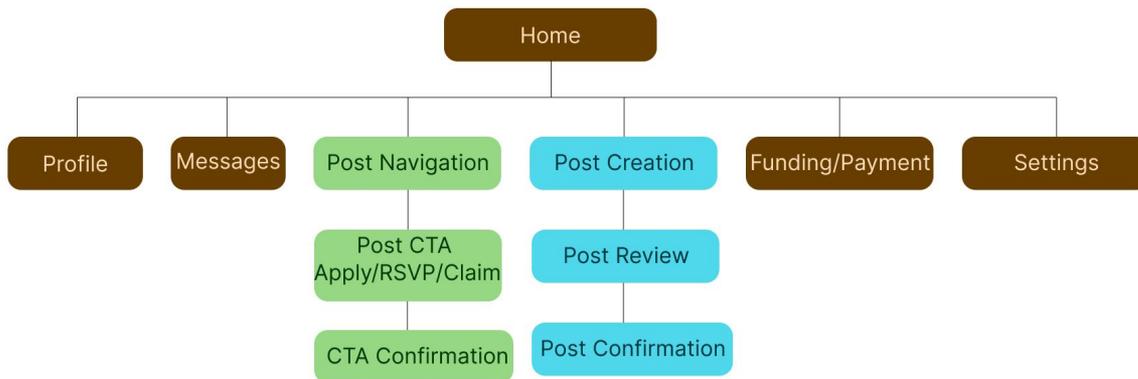
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Responsive Design

- Information architecture
- Responsive design

Google

Sitemap

In designing the desktop site, the design initiative of it being the home of user journey 1 was instrumental. I wanted to apply both Graceful Degradation and Progressive Enhancement approaches to this project and had a unique opportunity to do so. The site is sequential in the user journeys but otherwise hierarchical, to allow for greater freedom.


Home

Profile | Messages | Post Navigation | Post Creation | Funding/Payment | Settings

Post CTA Apply/RSVP/Claim

Post Review

CTA Confirmation

Post Confirmation

User Journey 1

User Journey 2

Google

Responsive designs

Through this course this is the second project that included responsive design layouts. I was able to deep dive into the concepts of designing for multiple layouts efficiently and creatively, as well as learn the perspective of google, amazon, and apple on scalable design.
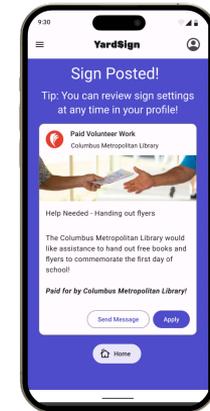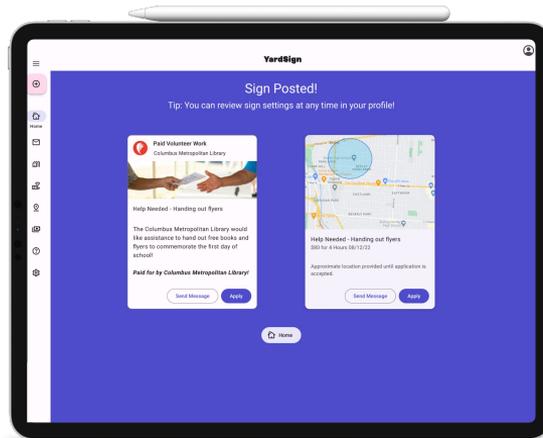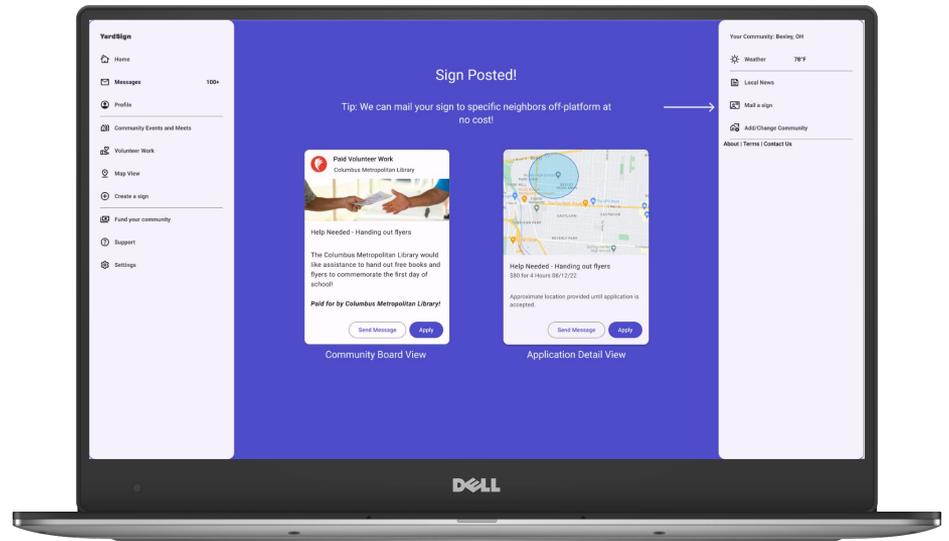
Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Google

Takeaways

Impact:

The impact of this project in particular was a more realistic view of how many different user journeys can be possible in an app/web experience. With a better idea of the scale and a chance to practice and refine my design philosophy and routine. Designing for social good is already a core part of my philosophy, and this was excellent practice in that.

What I learned:

In the technical sense I learned a variety of best practices in element arrangement and scaling between layouts, and during this project I actually had the fortune of working in both figma and adobe XD as the acquisition of the former was announced, which gave me a real world example of how fast the tools of the trade can change and grow with me.

Google

Next steps

1

The next step I would take is completing a full usability test and iteration cycle of the second user journey. While functional, it could use improvement.

2

The aspect of being able to have your community donate to pay volunteers or match pay offered by community members is one that will require extensive research and engagement before pushing forward on, and I would begin the process of reaching out to philanthropist groups in my community for consultation and suggestions.

3

Handing off the designs and beginning the collaboration of development. This project in particular would be one that would benefit from significant QA Testing once arriving at a good functional beta build.

Let's connect!

Thank you for sticking through this presentation with me! More samples of my work and contact information can be found at my site, which can be found here!

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