

Final Project Report and Prototype
Solution to Facilitate Creative Collaboration on UBC Campus

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LIBR 506: FINAL PROJECT REPORT AND PROTOTYPE

Our project was to build a service that enables UBC student users to find collaborative partners across various creative mediums. Both personal experiences of our group members and an analysis of recent requests and posts on the UBC Graduate Community forum (see Figure 1) indicate that creative students in non-art related fields of study often tend to have difficulty finding and connecting with other artists to collaborate with, or are unsure of where to begin. Similar online communities aimed towards UBC students (such as Reddit/ubc and the UBC discord server) are decentralized, difficult to search, and are unlikely to reach all students with these creative needs or skills if they are not actively on or aware of those platforms. Because forum posts are also easily ‘lost’ to those seeking collaboration, an app with the singular purpose to match interested parties would be a more efficient way to meet these needs. Additionally, students who are in non-arts related programs are less likely to interact with and encounter other creatives in person who they might want to collaborate with, because their area of study is not focused on the arts.

Our solution was to create a mobile app that would be aimed entirely at UBC students, intended to assist them with making more efficient and simple connections with the type of collaborators they are looking for. While the app would be open to all students, it will mostly be tailored to assist non-arts program students who otherwise may have fewer opportunities to meet and connect with other creatives, as their fields of study are unrelated. We focused on the importance of having a centralized platform that can fulfill the information-seeking needs of non-arts students who are mostly in science, business, technology, or other programs but still have meaningful creative hobbies that they wish to explore and collaborate with others on. One of our teammates is a photographer, and this is his first time coming to Vancouver. He said, “it is hard to find someone else to collaborate for photo shoots during my spare time because I know nobody. Another obstacle I meet is that it is really tough to get involved in photography communities when I have no art-related degree, because it’s almost impossible for them to risk collaborating with someone who does not have an artistic background.”

Thu, 2021-09-23 16:49	
Hannah [17461]	<p>Hello!</p> <p>I'm writing a science fiction novel and would love to have a writing buddy for accountability and helping each other get through the inevitable rough patches!</p> <p>If you like writing (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, screenplays, anything) and would like to have some writing meet-ups, send me a text at [REDACTED] I check this forum pretty infrequently.</p> <p>- Hannah (masters student in the genome science and technology program)</p>
Sun, 2021-12-26 21:09	
Serene [21907]	<p>Hi everyone, I hope you have a wonderful holiday. I'm now majoring in violin performance, and would like to make some video combining violin play with beautiful scenery. We can figure out the shooting together. When the video is done, we can publish the video on social media platform like Youtube or Tik-tok.</p>
Fri, 2021-08-06 18:00 #1	
Parniyan [18669]	<p>Hey, everyone, I am looking for a dance team to join, I used to dance ballet when I was younger, now I am into latin, contemporary and jazz dance. I am looking for a group of passionate students that have a regular practice perhaps in the UBC rec studio or other spaces. I am not a professional but a fast learner.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Parniyan</p>
Sat, 2021-11-06 18:14 #1	
Seoyeon [19459]	<p>Hi, my name is Serena, and I am in a planning student.</p> <p>I desperately need some music in my life. I sing & my friend also sings and plays guitar. Let me know if you are interested in casual jam sessions!</p>
Tue, 2022-02-15 13:56 #1	
Jovana [16653]	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I'm very passionate about 3D visualization, virtual reality and computer graphics, and looking to connect with like-minded people!</p> <p>My background is in digital design and traditional scene design (for theatre and film), and I've completed several international VR projects in various fields (such as architecture and urban planning, nuclear physics, hydrology, business, education, and cinematography). Now I'm applying my skills to an engineering field as part of my PhD program.</p> <p>I know Vancouver is a great city for VR, but I didn't get a chance to integrate into the community so far! I was hoping there are some other grad students with a similar area of interest so we could exchange knowledge, have fun, or even collaborate :)</p>

Figure 1: examples of posts on the UBC community forum (Hannah, 2021; Serene, 2021; Parniyan, 2021; Seoyeon, 2021; Jovana, 2022)

We found several websites that focus on facilitating creative collaboration which currently exist and provide similar services, but on a broader scale and are often aimed at professional artists. We could not find one that focuses on bringing artists and creatives together with a low entry bar, or which is not aimed at monetizing an art hobby. The Creative Finder is one existing service that aims to provide a place “where 'finders' meet creatives for networking, collaboration and inspiration” (Hills Creative, 2011). However, it has several limitations such as an unintuitive UI, no mobile app, and again is aimed at professionals and not hobbyists or students. However, the existence of these similar websites and the analysis of the forum posts, along with our personal perspectives, showed an opportunity to fulfill an information-seeking need for a particular community. There is a dearth of research regarding the difficulties for

specifically non-arts students being able to make these connections to others, however there is research regarding general information seeking behavior of individual creative groups.

The app would cater to UBC students on the Vancouver campus, to ensure that all students using the app are within a close distance of each other. Using the UBC Student Enrolment data in Figure 2, this would mean a capped user base of about 59,000 possible users. However, this could be extended to other campuses depending on the success of the app.

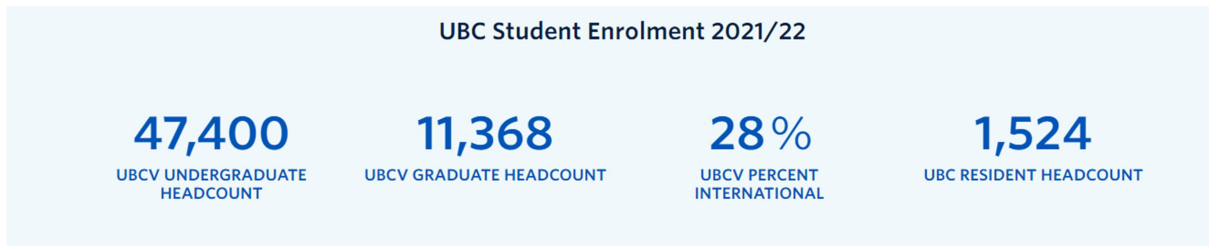


Figure 2: UBC enrolment for 2021/22 at the Vancouver campus (Planning and Institutional Research Office (PAIR), 2021)

CREATING THE APP

Information Architecture (Caitlin)

Information architecture is the ‘blueprint’, or the “visual representation of the product’s infrastructure, features, and hierarchy” (Pikover, 2018). Having never designed any information architecture before, I looked at several articles as well as the structure of several types of existing apps, including dating apps, which are intended with the sole purpose of matching individuals based on their shared interests and needs. Inspiration was also drawn from the Marcel mobile portfolio app (see Figure 3), which is not a service aimed at connecting creatives, but has a layout that is designed to showcase multiple types of creative output for artists (Marcel for Art, 2021).

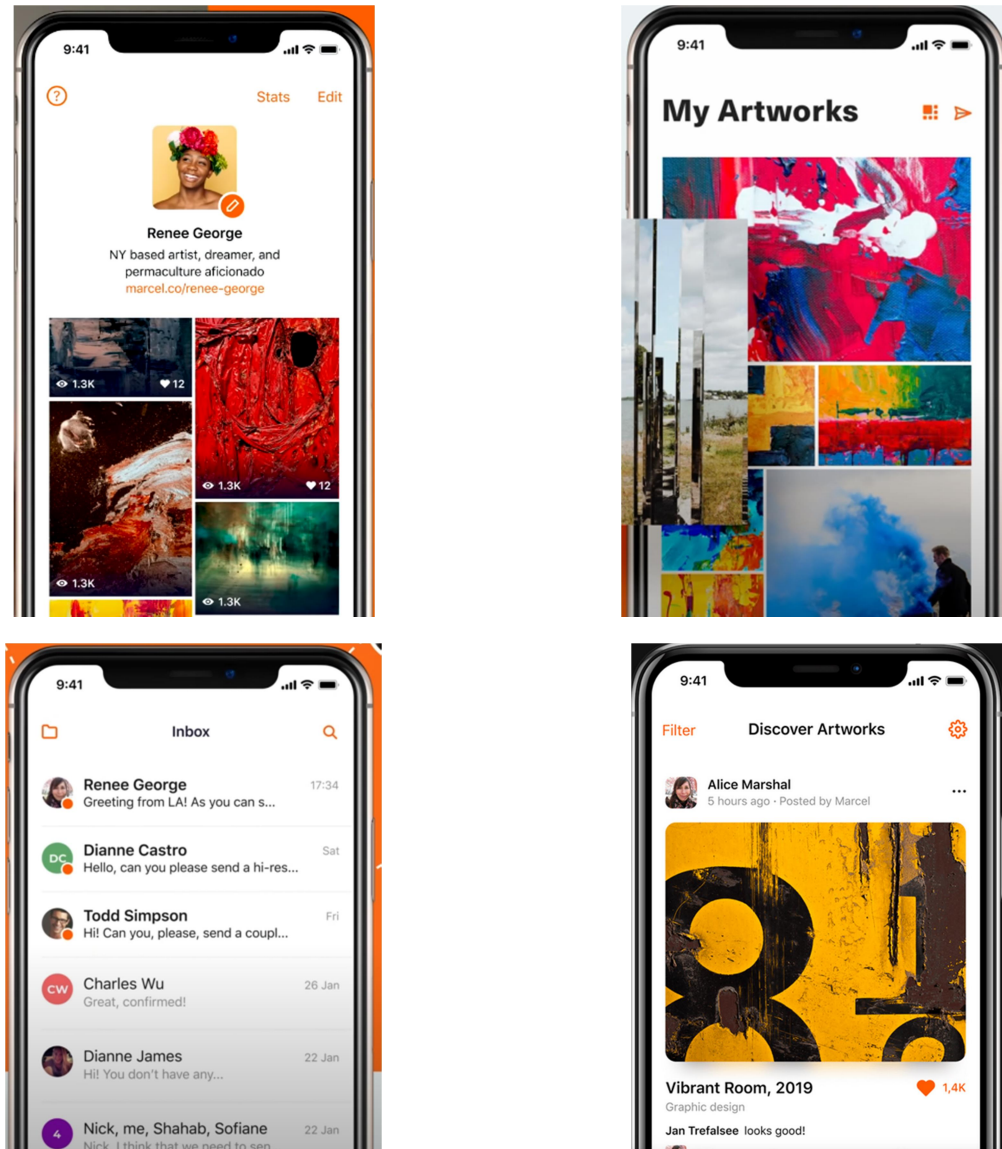


Figure 3: Images of the Marcel app (Marcel for Art, 2021)

There were several drafts of the information architecture, beginning with a rough first draft using ideas from the inspiration apps (see Figure 4). This structure was then sent to Will, who used it as part of his UX design process. The top priorities for the structure of the app were the Profile, Project, and Feed, with an additional messaging system. These would be the most important aspects for someone using the app with the intent to join or create collaboration projects.

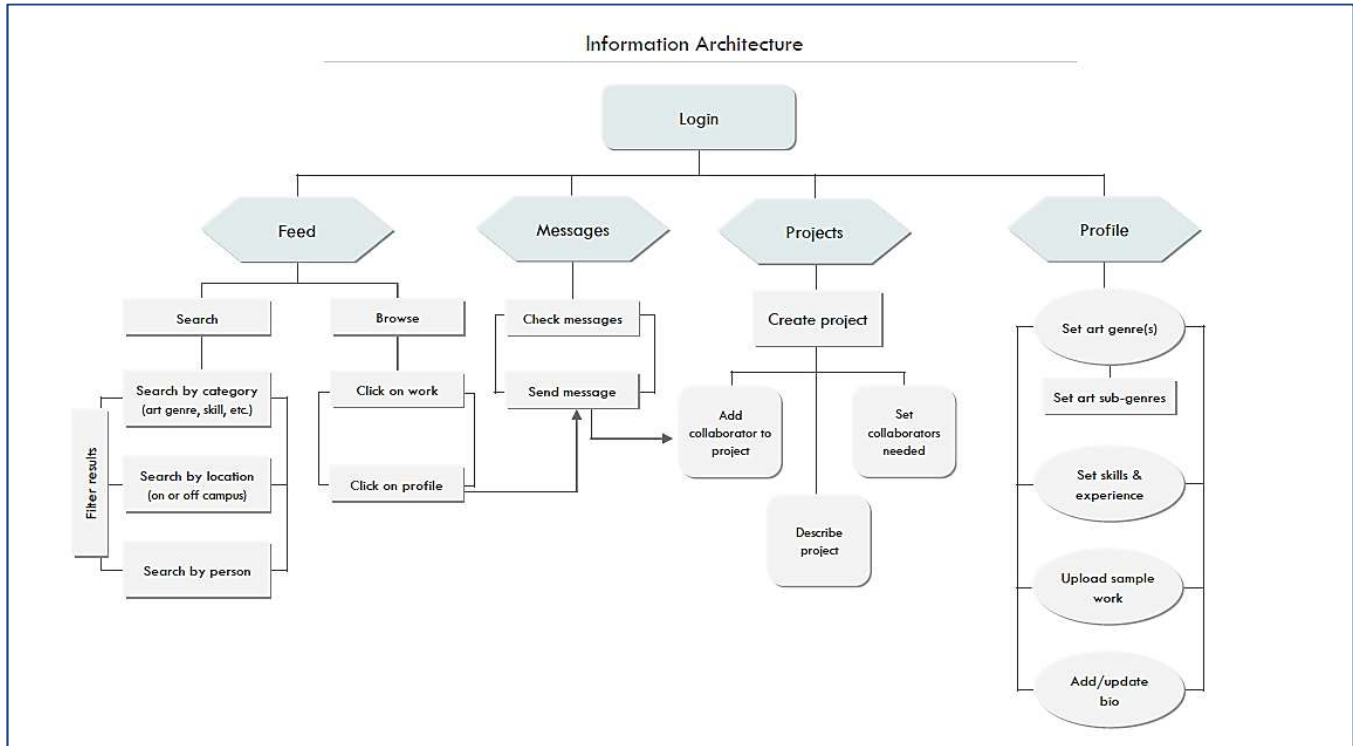


Figure 4: first draft of the information architecture

Once the basic structure was created and the app prototype was created, we implemented design and structure tweaks to the blueprints, and another draft was created (see Figure 5).

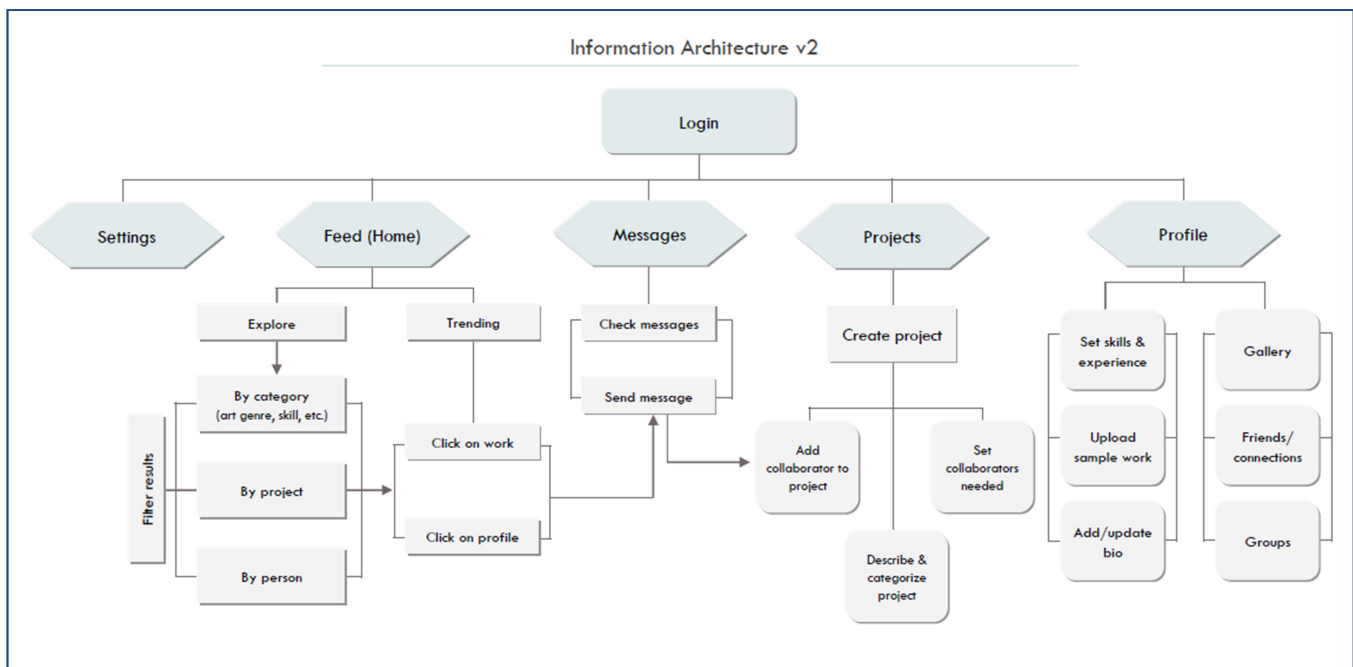


Figure 5: second draft of the information architecture

The final structure of the app can be seen in Figure 6. An ability to have a specific friends list was added in the final iteration, as well as separating active collaboration projects from archived or completed projects.

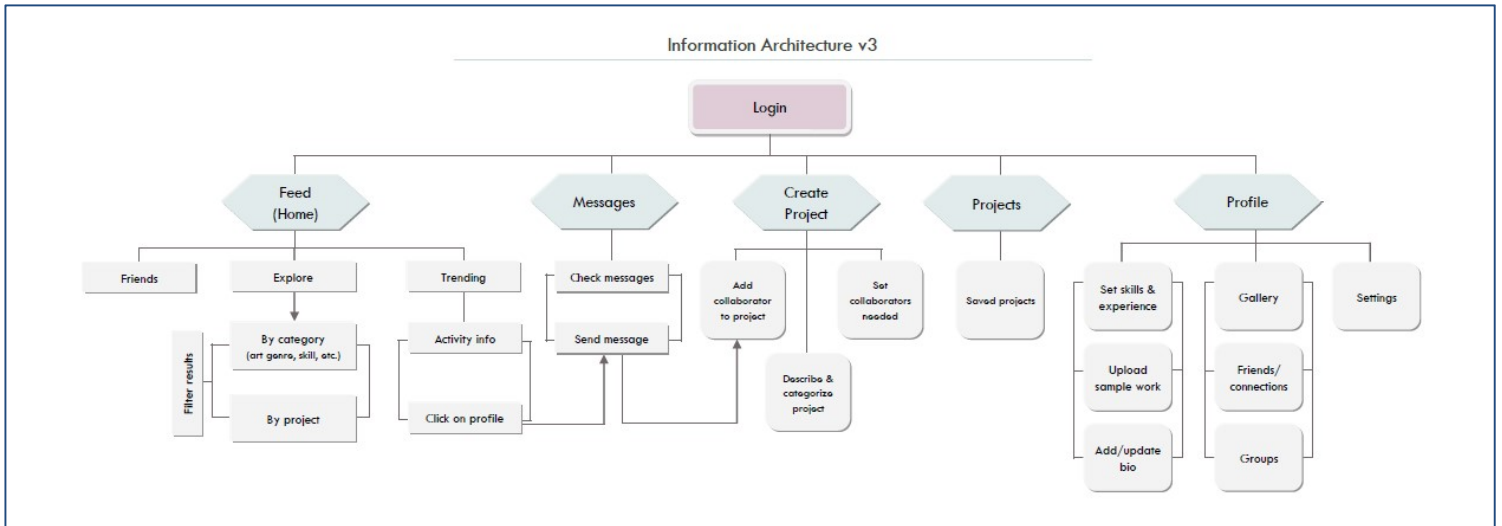


Figure 6: final draft of the information architecture

App prototype (Will)

In this project, I mainly took the role of UI design, focusing on using Adobe XD to make a mobile app with high fidelity. The process of making an app was divided into three parts:

1. Drawing a series of simple wireframes on paper according to Caitlin's information architecture (see Figure 7), and determining the application logic and typography of the entire app.

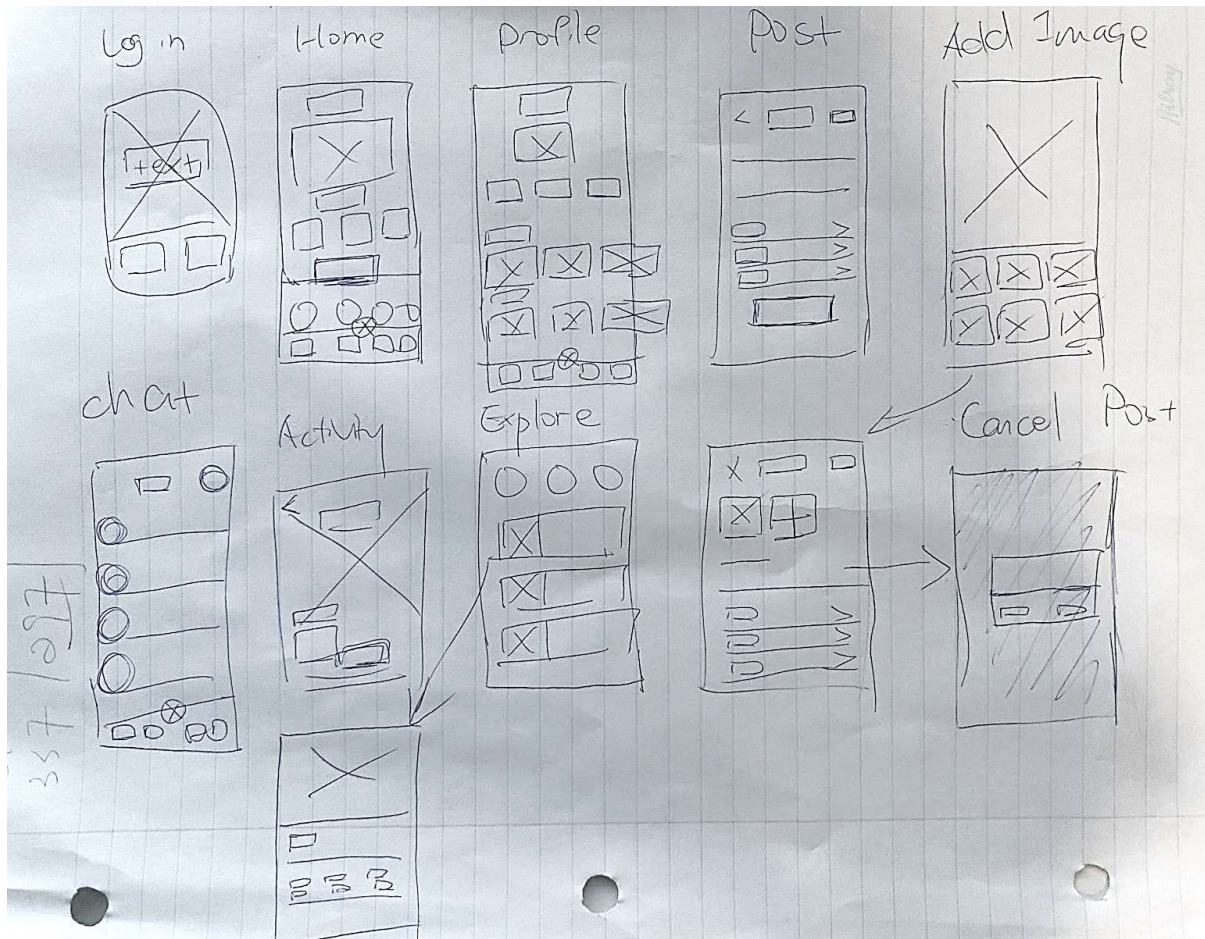


Figure 7: paper wireframes for app design

2. Designing a basic high-fidelity model with Adobe XD, then adding animations and images to make the whole design realistic. Then I found some photos, chose the suitable fonts and the spacing of the fonts to make the overall design look good. In terms of the design inspiration of the whole app, I used several photography apps as a reference, such as 500PX and Instagram, which provided significant help to my design.

3. Finally, when the app design was finished, I asked Bamidele, another member of my team, to make some suggestions for my app from the perspective of users. Based on his feedback, I made some adjustments and improvements to my app.

The final prototype of the app can be found here: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/bdfcfb6c-39a6-4a43-9371-d7a5a9b9579e-e8af/>

Personae and Survey (Bamidele)

I carried out creative research, in addition to the evaluation of team members' experiences as creatives which led to the development of personas for the application development. A persona, which is often a fictitious and generalized representation of users, are imperative because they help to understand, among other things, the user's needs, behaviors, and the goal they are looking to achieve—all of which forms the basis of the app design.

I evaluated the results of the analysis, thereafter using it to codify the following personae in Figure 8 and Figure 9, which informed the design of the app.

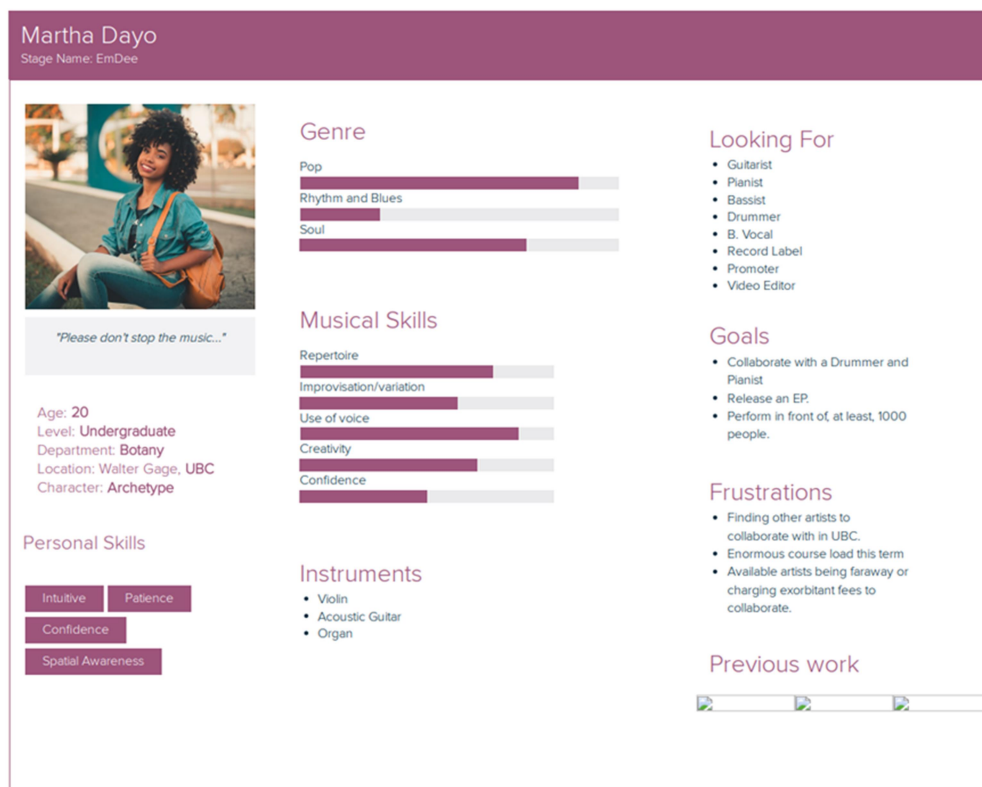


Figure 8: personae for 'Martha Dayo'

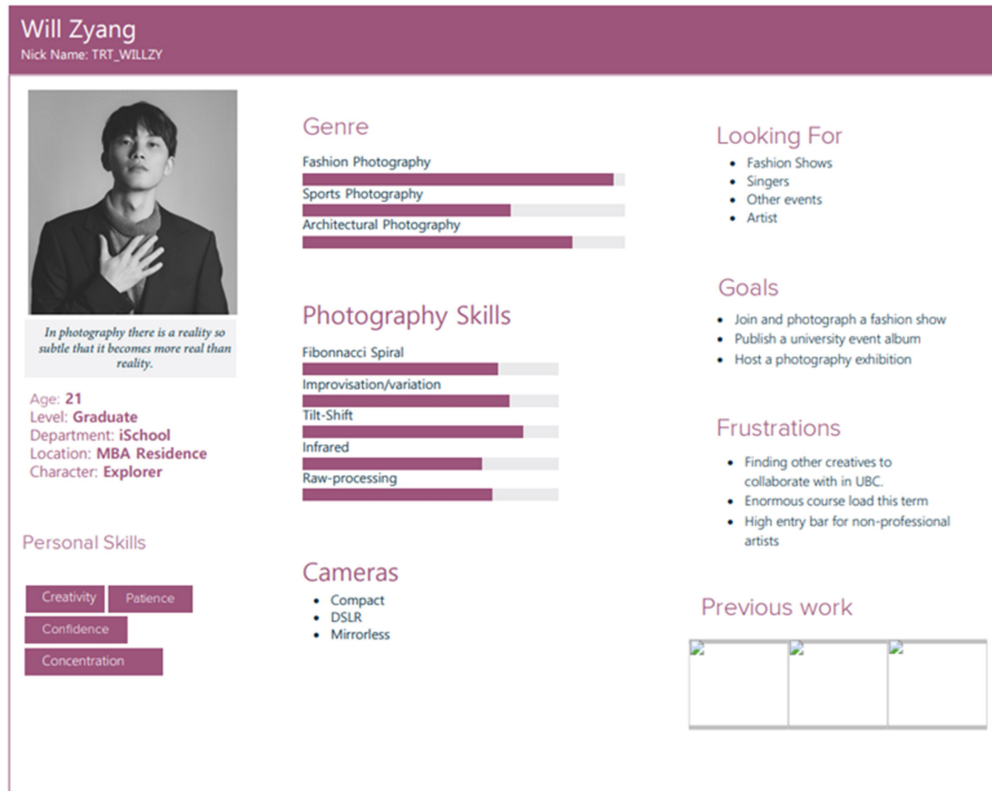


Figure 9: Personae for ‘Will Zyang’

Additionally, to test our and improve our design, we created a survey that measures the ease of use by users. The results were then analyzed and incorporated into improving the application. The sample questionnaire is attached to this report as an Appendix.

For students to begin using an app, they would first have to know about the existence of the app. We could begin with collaborating with some clubs on campus. We can find all clubs at UBC from AMS Campusbase, such as CSSA and UBC Photosoc. We would encourage them to post their events on this app, and ask more users to join. Even though we found website forums and other versions of social media to not reach the fullest possible audience, we could also take advantage of scattered user pools to broadcast the existence of the app, such as on the UBC graduate forums, discord, or reddit. Since this app will be launched in the Apple Store, users should be able to easily find the app there through searching.

There are pros and cons of using an app for this type of information-seeking need. Apps are convenient and easily accessible from a smartphone, compared with a website, and are geared towards quick and simple communication. The drawbacks are that there are many

functional similarities to existing apps, such as Instagram and Facebook. It is also difficult to convince users to move their energy to a new app, especially well-established ones.

For challenges, we need a back-end developer to build our app. More than that, we also need some funds from investors to launch this app. The interaction design of this app also needs to be adjusted from time to time.

Further work done by individual team members: Will created the Powerpoint for the in-class presentation video, and Caitlin edited the presentation video together and compiled and formatted the proposal and final report.

Appendix Survey



Department:

Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher:

1. Invitation Paragraph

We would like to invite you to participate in this user experience research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation would involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Should you require more clarification, please do not hesitate to ask us. We implore you to take your time in deciding whether or not you would like to participate in this user experience research. Thank you for reading this information sheet.

2. What is the project's purpose?

The purpose of this session is to determine the ease of use of the UBCCreatives (UBCC) app compared to industry benchmarks, and to improve the design of its user interface and user experience.

4. Tasks and duration:

You will be asked to:

- tell us a little about yourself as a potential user for UBCC
- perform 2 tasks on UBCC App and 1 task on <https://thecreativefinder.com> website.
- Give us some feedback about your experience with the website and app

The session will last around 5 – 15 minutes.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

6. What happens if I do not want to carry on with the study?

You may withdraw from the session at any time without prejudice, and you need not answer any specific question if you prefer not to.

7. What are the possible risks or discomfort of taking part?

This study has no side effects and will not impose any harm to you physically or mentally.

9. What happens when the study ends?

The results of the study will be analyzed and compiled into a report. This report and the key findings will be presented to all participants. No individual respondent will be identifiable from this information.

If you have any questions, please ask the moderator.

If you agree to participate in this study, please read and sign the consent form below.

Informed Consent Form

Project title: LIBR506: UBCC App

Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher:

Statement by participant

- I confirm that I have read and understood this information sheet and the invitation to participate.
- I understand:
 - the purpose, risks, and benefits of taking part in this session.
 - what my involvement will entail, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
 - that my participation is entirely voluntary, and that I can withdraw at any time without prejudice.
 - that all information obtained will be confidential.
 - that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified.
- Contact information has been provided should I wish to seek further information from the investigator at any time for purposes of clarification.

Name of participant: _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Statement by investigator

- I have explained this study and the implications of participation in it to this participant without bias and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigator: _____

Investigator's Signature _____ Date: _____

Participant Profile Questionnaire
LIBR506 – Usability Test

1. Have you participated in a usability test before?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. What is your age?
 - a. Under 18
 - b. 18-25
 - c. 26-40
 - d. 40+

3. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Prefer not to say

4. What is your department of study?

5. Which of the following best describes your main creative skills? (You can select multiple)
 - a. Photography
 - b. Designing and designer fashion
 - c. Filmmaking
 - d. Videoing
 - e. Producing
 - f. Writing
 - g. Singing
 - h. Dancing
 - i. Drawing
 - j. Rapping
 - k. Painting
 - l. Performing arts
 - m. Television and radio presenting
 - n. Others, please specify

Task Instruction sheet

LIBR 506 UBCC APP

Prototype Link: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/bdfcfb6c-39a6-4a43-9371-d7a5a9b9579e-e8af/>

Name and Contact Details of moderator:

Please read the instructions on this sheet carefully, and then tell me that you have understood what you have been asked to do. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Task 1: Create a project

Scenario: As a video editor, you want to find the right connections, and let others see your work.

Task: You are trying to **create a project with a video on the UBCC app.**

Note how many clicks it took you to complete this task.

Task 2: Apply for collaboration

Scenario: You are new to Vancouver, and you are looking for someone one who can introduce you to street photography. You thought you might use the UBCC app to join in an activity and make connections with someone else.

Task: Apply for the “photographer” role in Granville Island Event activity, and find the location of it.

When you’re finished, let the investigator know.

Task 3: Contact a collaborator

Scenario: You are looking for an artist to design artwork for your self-produced album cover, and you use the <https://thecreativefinder.com> to find an artist.

Task: Text a person you would like to collaborate.

Post-test Questionnaire

LIBR 506 UBCC

1. Which platform do you prefer?
 - a. UBCC
 - b. <https://thecreativefinder.com>

2. Which of the following best describes your likelihood of using the UBCC app in the future?
 - a. I definitely will use UBCC in the future to connect with other creatives
 - b. I probably will use UBCC in the future
 - c. I might use UBCC in the future
 - d. I probably won't use UBCC in the future
 - e. I definitely won't UBCC.

3. I had a good experience from using the UBCC app:
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree

4. I would gladly recommend this app to others:
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree

5. Please provide your general thoughts about the app:

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