

Great Design is Open

The Open Design Movement Manifesto



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Jan 17 · 4 min read ★

Great design results from a process of constant iteration and relentless refinement. Design is fundamentally collaborative. We believe that the best ideas grow and expand with the input of others.

Open design is not about sharing a cropped final static image. It is about sharing your process; the hours of missteps and false starts you tore through, the frustration and anguish you pushed beyond, before you arrived at that final iteration. Each of those false starts is a learning experience, a teachable moment to invite others to understand not just what you designed; but how you did so.

Designing in the open can be frightening. Exposing your work to critique requires bold effort. But with the collective, collaborative genius, together we can push the boundaries and create better work.

Be open. Design better. Together.

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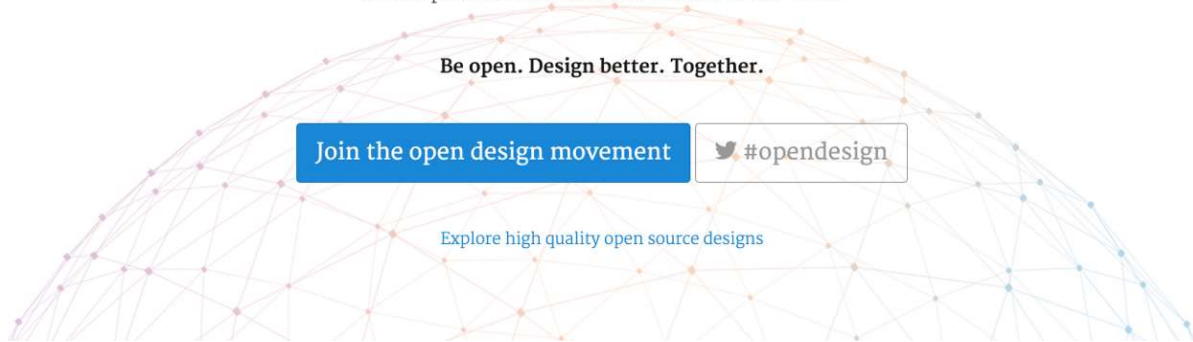


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This original manifesto published on Pixelapse in 2014

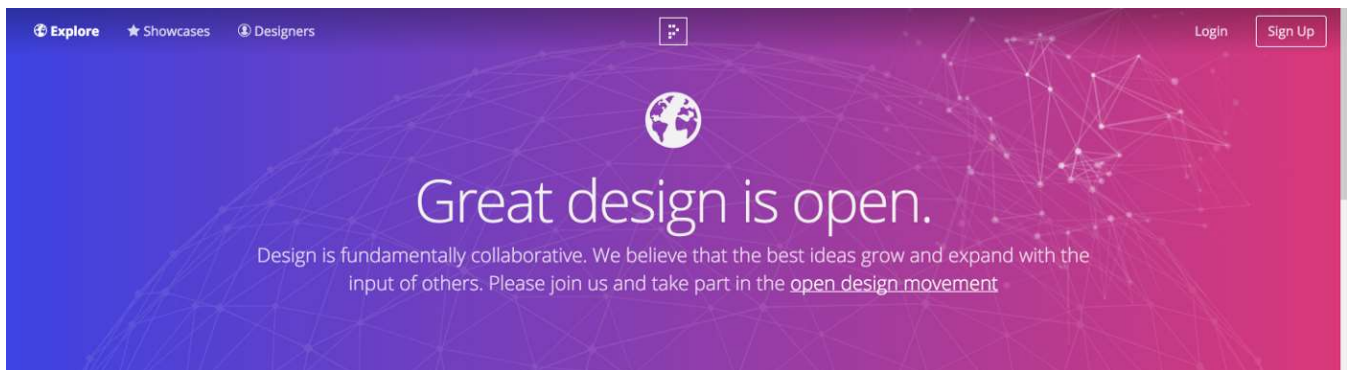
This manifesto was originally published on Pixelapse in 2014 to push the idea of open source design. It was also discussed in **FastCompany**: “Ex-Googler Builds A Github For Designers”. I spoke about it in **MCE 2015 conference** in Poland: “Open Design Movement” (full video on YouTube), and it was picked up by some folks on **Medium**.

Pixelapse is Github for Design, and part of the goal was to create an Open Design movement where multiple designers, just like developers on Github, can work together on design projects.

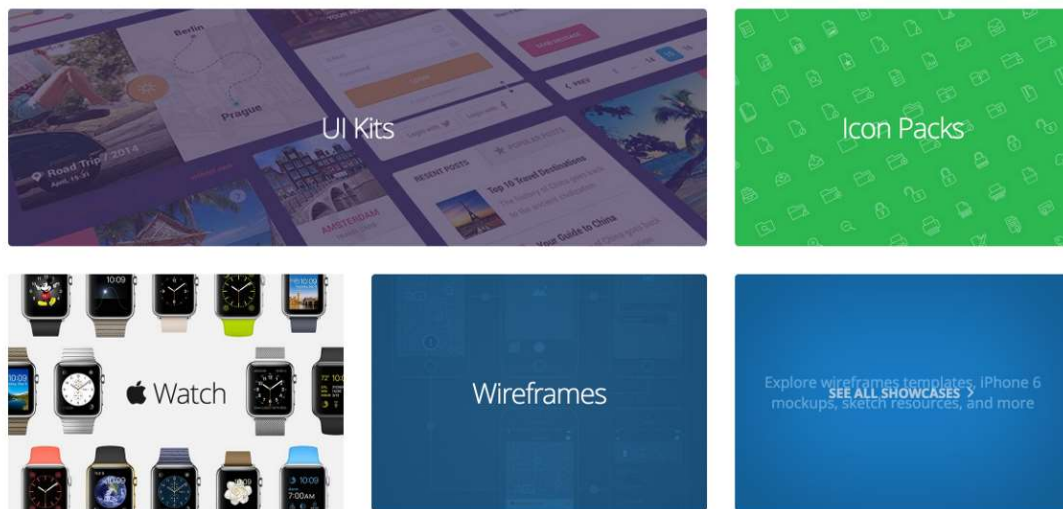
Imagine the possibilities where multiple designers can work together to refine and expand on...

- **Icon Set:** adding more icons for the set in a similar style
- **Font Pack:** refining character rules; adding more characters
- **Architectural/3D Models:** expanding the range of elements in a particular category (e.g. 3D models for lights from IKEA)

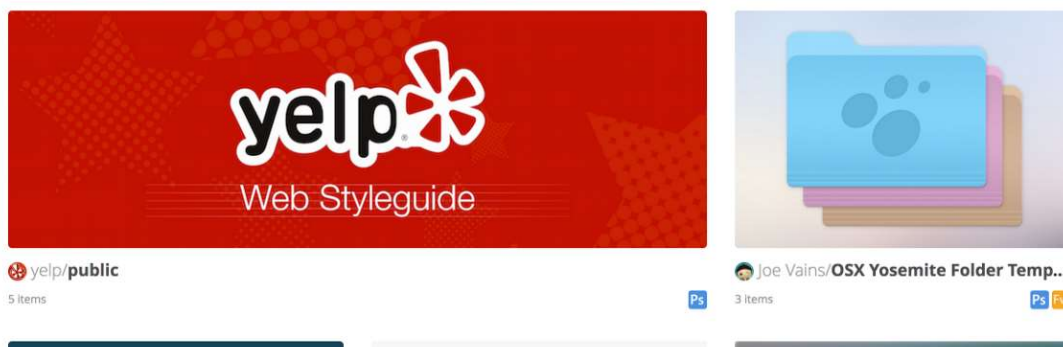
- **Visuals/Wallpapers/Posters:** collection of similar stylistic visuals
- **Templates:** collection of mockup templates (e.g. iPhone), presentation templates, etc.
- **Kits:** Wireframes/UI/Stationary kits
- **App/Site Design:** designs collaborated in Pixelapse; code collaborated in Github
- and many more possibilities...

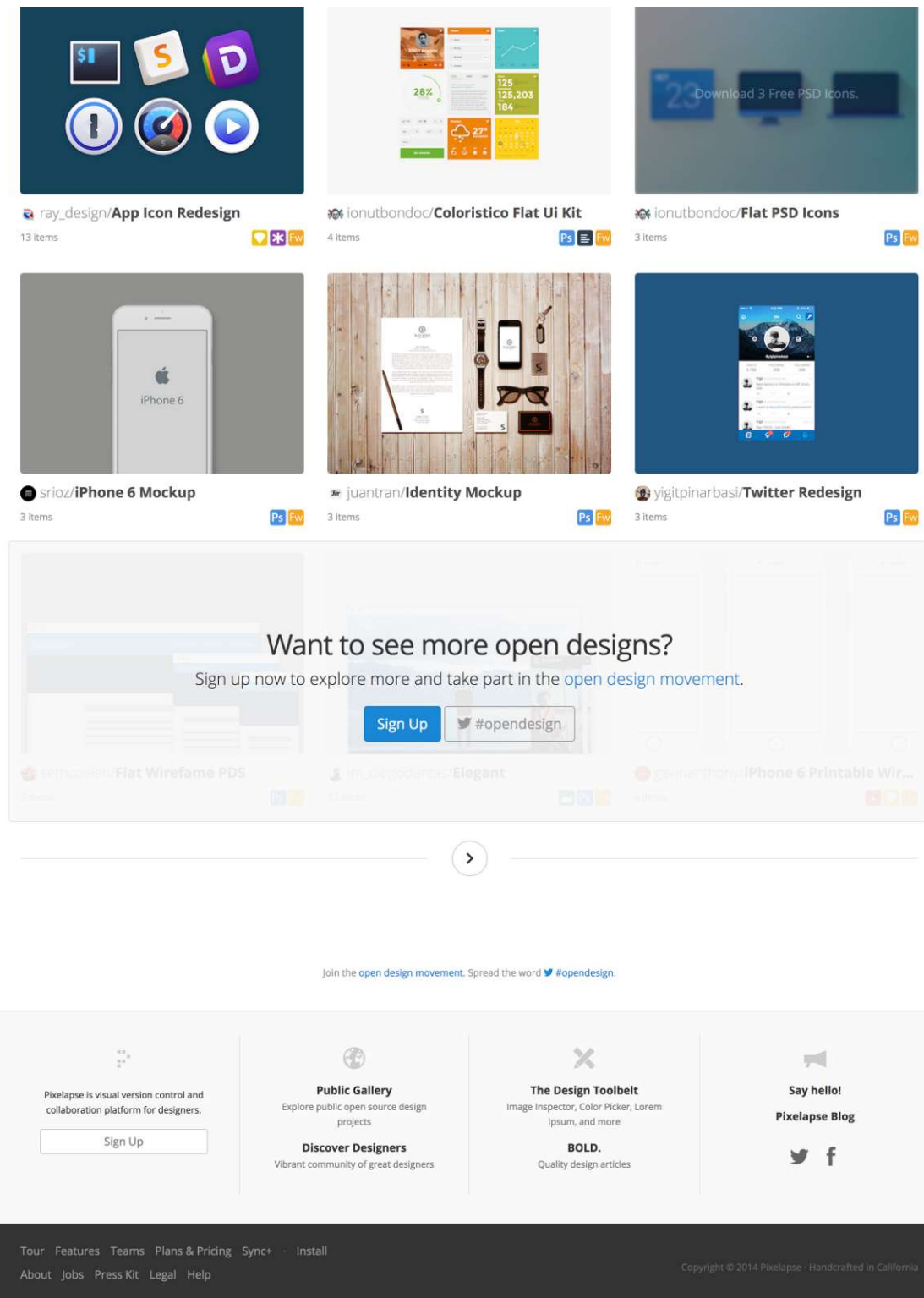


Explore open design projects organized by type



Explore featured projects





The landing page for public open design projects on Pixelapse in 2014

Today, the design landscape has not changed much. Designers still fundamentally work in silos with no collaboration. See something you like in Dribbble or Behance? You cannot contribute to it. How about Figma? It is limited to CSS/HTML type of 2D designs, and is fundamentally mean for internal teams, not for open source collaboration.

Why is there still no Open Design today?

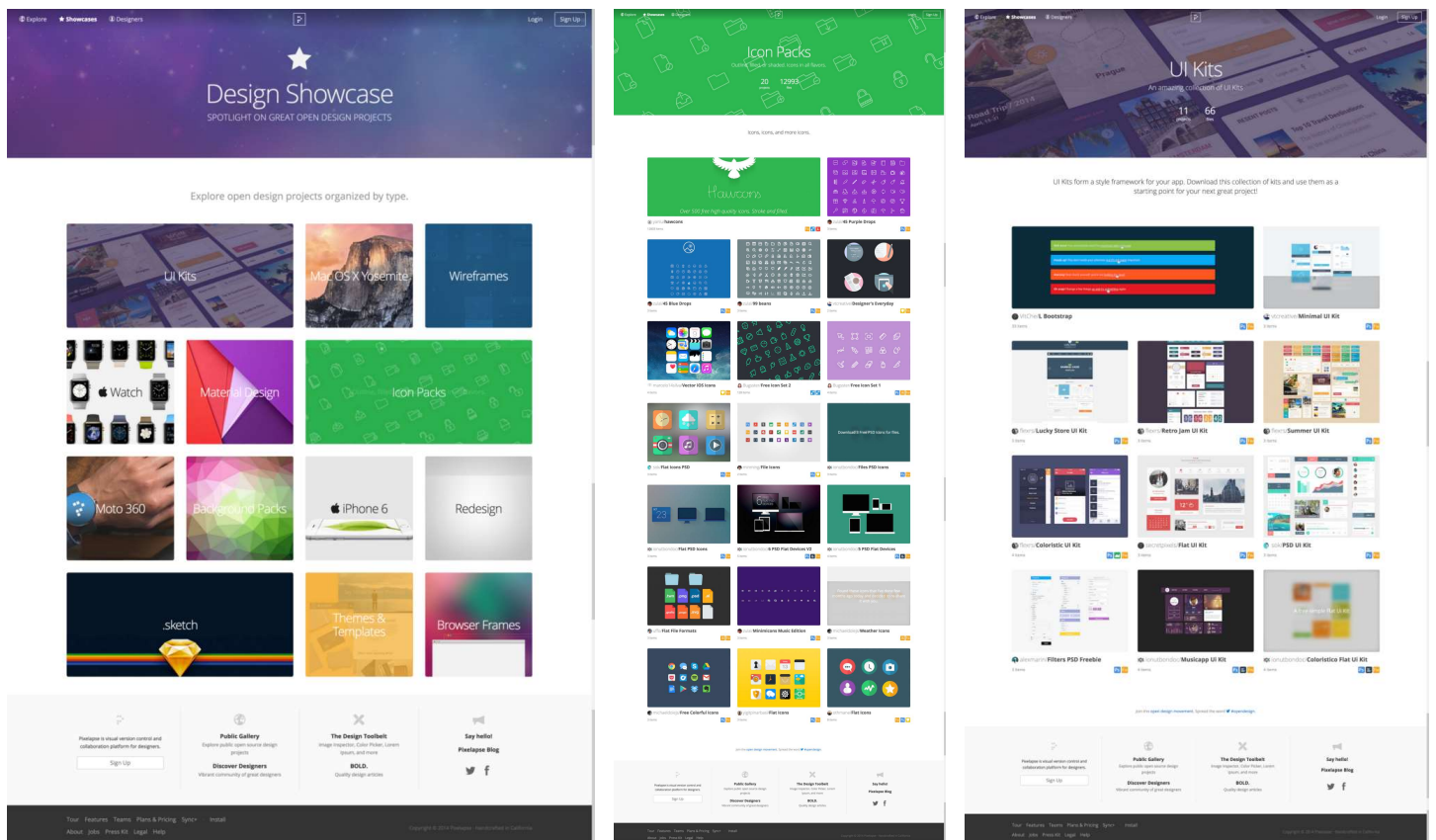
The primary reason is that ***the technology is not ready***. Open Design will require designers to have a platform that is as ***seamless, reliable, and understood*** as Github is to developers. Without the underlying technology that can help to support such an ecosystem, Open Design is not going to take off.

We tried with Pixelapse, but the vast complexity of dealing of bits & bytes (not text), version control, huge files, and conflicts, meant that this is not a trivial mission.

I will end with sharing a couple of screenshots from Pixelapse days, hoping to engrave them into the history books so that one day when we have an open source design community as vibrant as that of developers, we can look back at the tiny blip that may have nudge the open design movement along the way.

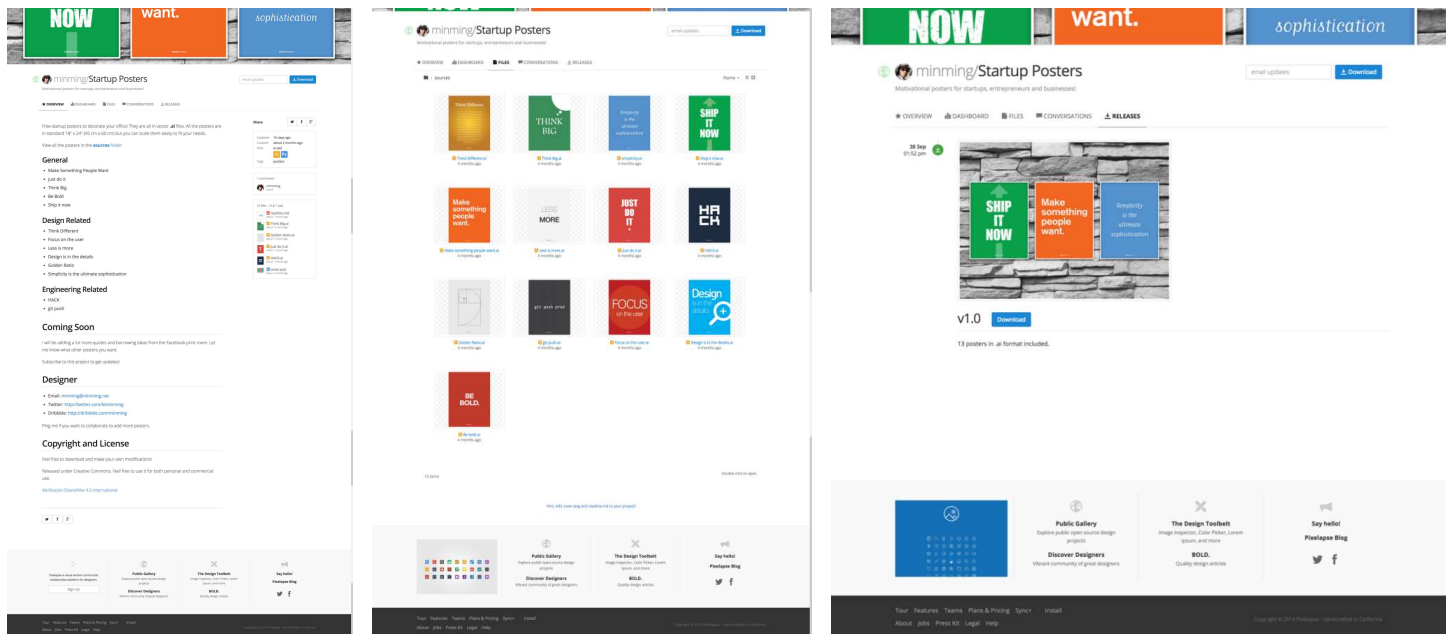
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Footnote: Pixelapse was co-founded by myself in 2012, and was acquired by Dropbox in 2015. Unfortunately, we only migrated the technology to Dropbox, not the open source community.

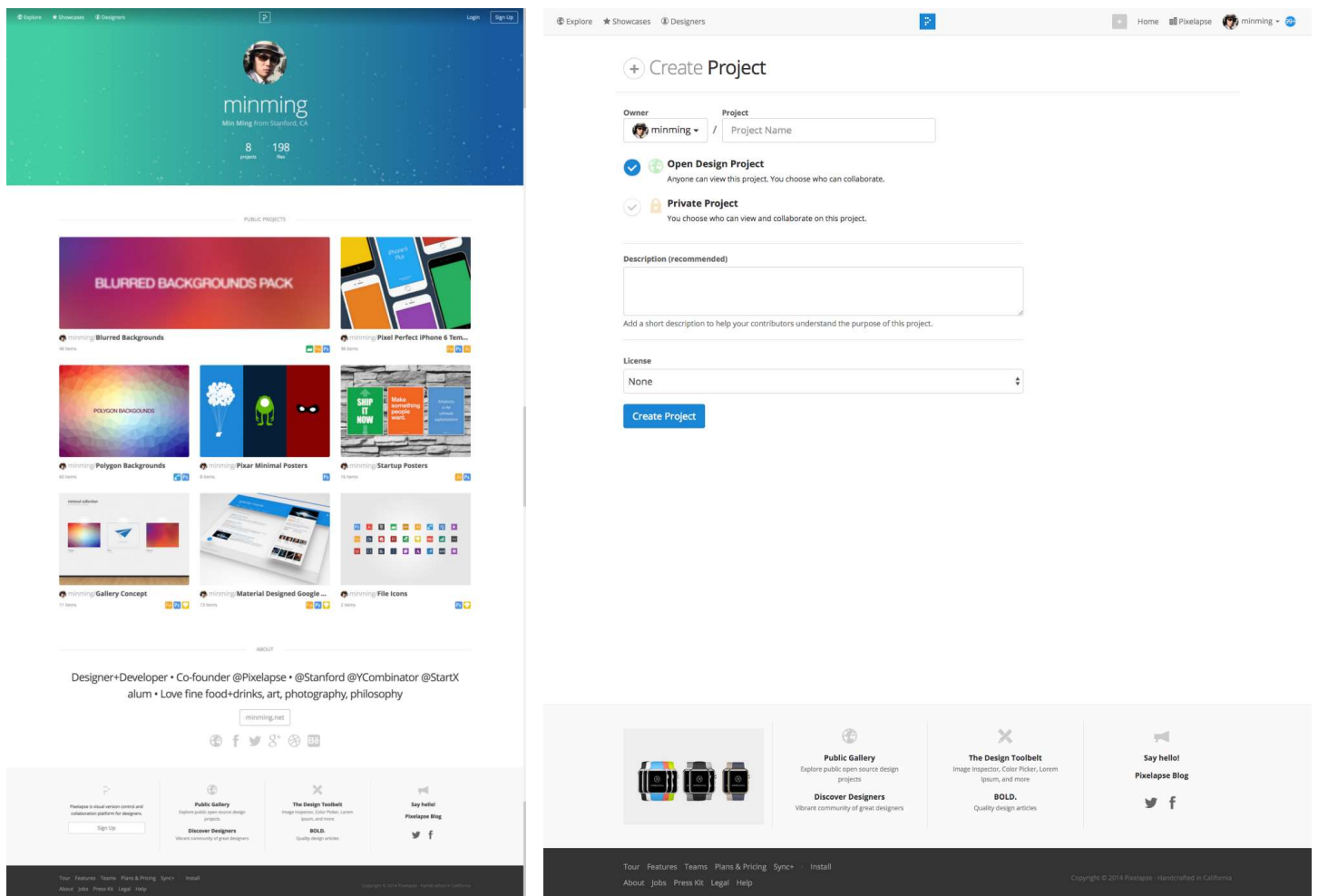


Different categories for the design projects





A design project landing page: README.md, Files in the project, Releases for the project



User Profile page and the creation of a new project

Design Github Open Source Collaboration Open Design