BELLS AND SWEETY SONGS

" Grab your camera and sleds, enjoy your winter vibe in the snow-coated Christmas country —— Germany!

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

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1. Introduction

"Find your Christmas Trip in Germany" is a travelling guide website that designed for non-local tourists (both in and outside of European Union) to enjoy their Christmas holiday in Germany. Besides, promoting popularity of Germany as a Christmas holiday destination is the secondary goal of this website. The following steps will follow the order of targeted users persona, problems identification, ideating, website prototype and final test.

2. Strategy

Germany has always been the country that attracted me the most, since great Christmas fairy tales that I heard when I was young come from Germany and my favorite football club was born in Munich. And two years ago, when I was exchanged in an EU country, I chose Germany as my Christmas holiday destination. However, when I searched for travelling guides, I could not find a website with comprehensive guidelines from normal travelling destinations and Christmas special activities. I had to search for them separately in the search engine and download various apps for complete information.

Therefore, I decide to create a website that contains both normal travelling guide and Christmas activities information, with also food and shopping to try to cover most potential demands of tourists when they come to Germany for Christmas holiday, tried to make the website a comprehensive Germany Christmas information guide.

3. Scope

Users Need

To understand basic demands from users, according to my first and secondary goals,

I chose two groups of people to interview and draw the users journey map. As the first goal is to provide an overall travelling guide to people who plan to spend their Christmas holiday in Germany, a 4-people group was interviewed. Two of them comes from EU and now located in Finland and Slovakia, two of them come from China and now located in the United Kingdom. Two questions were asked to them.

Question 1	What preparations did you do before you go to Germany for your Christmas holiday trip?
Question 2	If there is a comprehensive Germany travelling website to guide your Christmas trip, what do you want from here?

Figure 1. Questions to discover users' need

Feedbacks I received through my interviews are that regardless of nationalities, for the first question, users have similar demands like trip route, food, accomendation and special Christmas activities. For the two Chinese girls who may go to Germany only for one time in the recent decade, they are more interested in travelling destinations, shopping and VISA application. Sceneries are their prior choice and enjoying the Christmas atmosphere in Germany is their secondary goal. For two EU interviewees, they want information on road trips (rather than scenic spots), special Christmas activities and local experiences.

In the second-round interview, 5 people now consider Germany as their Christmas trip destination are interviewed to discover the secondary goal of this website: to promote popularity of Germany as Christmas destination. All 5 interviewees are students from China, but they are separately located in the United Kingdom, Netherlands and the United States. An added question is asked to them about what may attract them to choose Germany as their travelling destination.

According to feedbacks given by interviewees, the second group expected nice

pictures (on beautiful sceneries or attractive humanity landscape), special local experiences and recommendation from friends or new media platforms as main attractions. Besides, question two is asked to Group 2. Their answers are similar with that of Group 1, what they expect are also mainly travelling guide, special Christmas activities and food. Based on interviews, a persona is drawn to show targeted users' characteristics.

Persona

Persona

Age: 18 - 45 years old
Plan to go / consider Germany
as Christmas destination

Goals

1) Enjoy travelling pleasure during Christmas holiday
2) Experience special local Christmas activities in Germany
3) Discover landscapes and food in Germany

Frustrations

1) Information are not comprehensive, travelling guide and activities need to be searched separetely.
2) Do not know where to visit and what to enjoy
3) Incomplete and out-of-date information

Pain points

1) Comprehensive and overall Germany tourism guide
2) Recommendation and detailed information on Christmas activities

Figure 2. Persona of a typical user of my website

As the targeted customers are identified, a user journey mapping is drawn as following to show users' action when they start to browse and utilize the website. The user journey is divided into 4 steps: awareness, acquisition, activation and retention. In this website, the activation part is emphasized to meet users demands.

Users Journey Map

Persona	Stage	Goals	Touch points
Someone considers to spend Christmas holiday in Germany	**Awareness**	Plan to spend Christmas holiday in Germany	Photos, articles, videos; special local experiences; others' recommendation
	Acquisition	Search for related information	Search engines; Friends' reposts; FB&IG&Twitter
	Activation	To get an overall impression on Christmas in Germany	Homepage: Enjoy photos and concise guide
		To find out special activities to experience	Christmas activities page
		To find out where to travel (cities, scenes, road trip route, accommendation)	Homepage and travelling page
		To find out where to eat in different dining scenes	Restaurants page
		To find out where to buy	Shopping page
	Retention	Check updated information	All pages

Figure 3. Users journey map

According to users journey map, information of this website is divided into 5 parts. Homepage mainly contains activities photos, scenic spots in main cities, dining scenes, map of top 10 shopping malls in Germany and quick links to subpages and preparation websites (visa application page, weather page and tripadvisor page in Germany to make up for information incompleteness of my website). Design of homepage is aiming to leave potential customers an overall impression on Germany and attract them to choose Germany as their Christmas destination country. In addition, links to subpages are

attached with buttons in each column.

For the Christmas activities page, local special Christmas activities and performance are attached in the website, detailed information (time, place, popularity ratings) of Christmas markets are shown. For travelling guide page, as homepage has already categorized travelling information by cities, these part shows main scenic spots for individual travelers, recommended road trip route for drivers, and a brief Q&A section on accommodation. For restaurants discovery page, restaurants are personalized with specific dining scenes: dating, friends and family, browsers can choose what they like according to their demands. Besides, number of feedbacks picked up from TripAdvisor are also shown through the button in each dining scene. For shopping mall part, main brands and top 10 popular shopping malls in Germany are listed. Because I cannot find comprehensive data in this part up till now, it still needs future updating.

4. Site-map and skeleton

Above all, a site map of Christmas trip in Germany is drawn and shown as following. According to site map, wireframes are created to show structures and layout of the website.
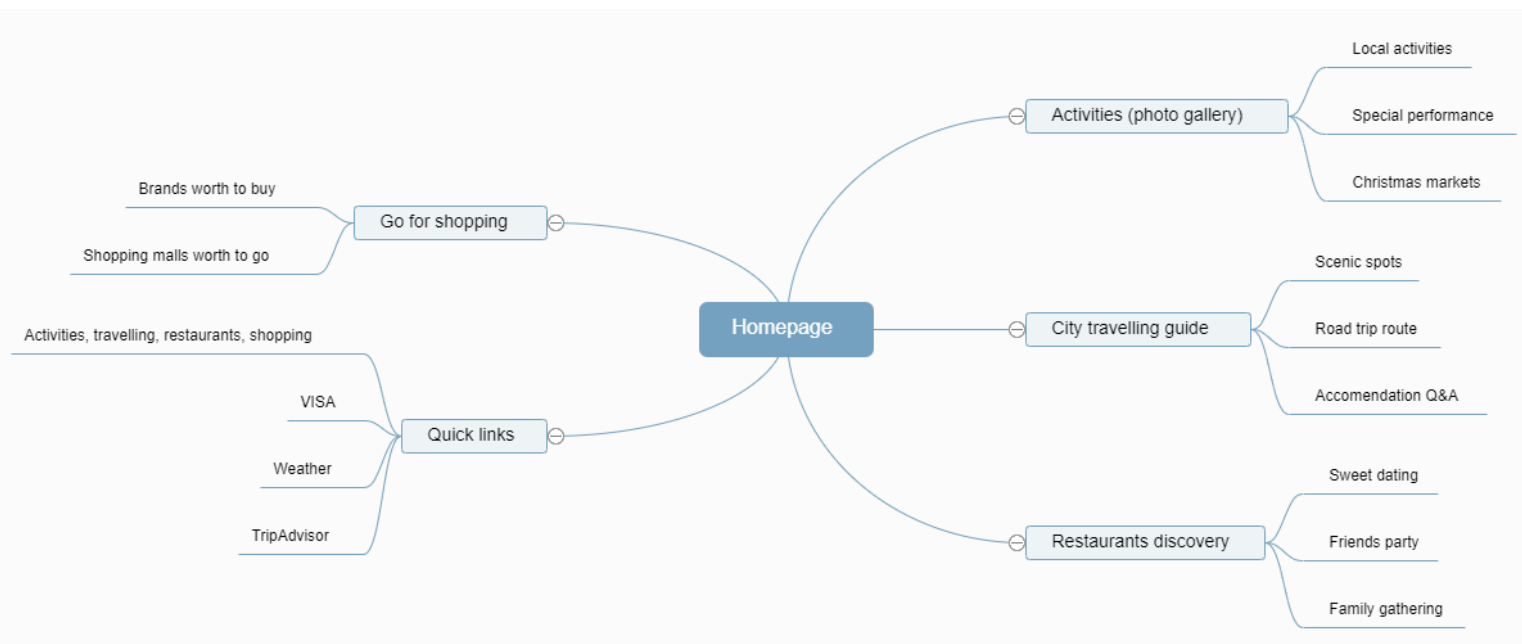

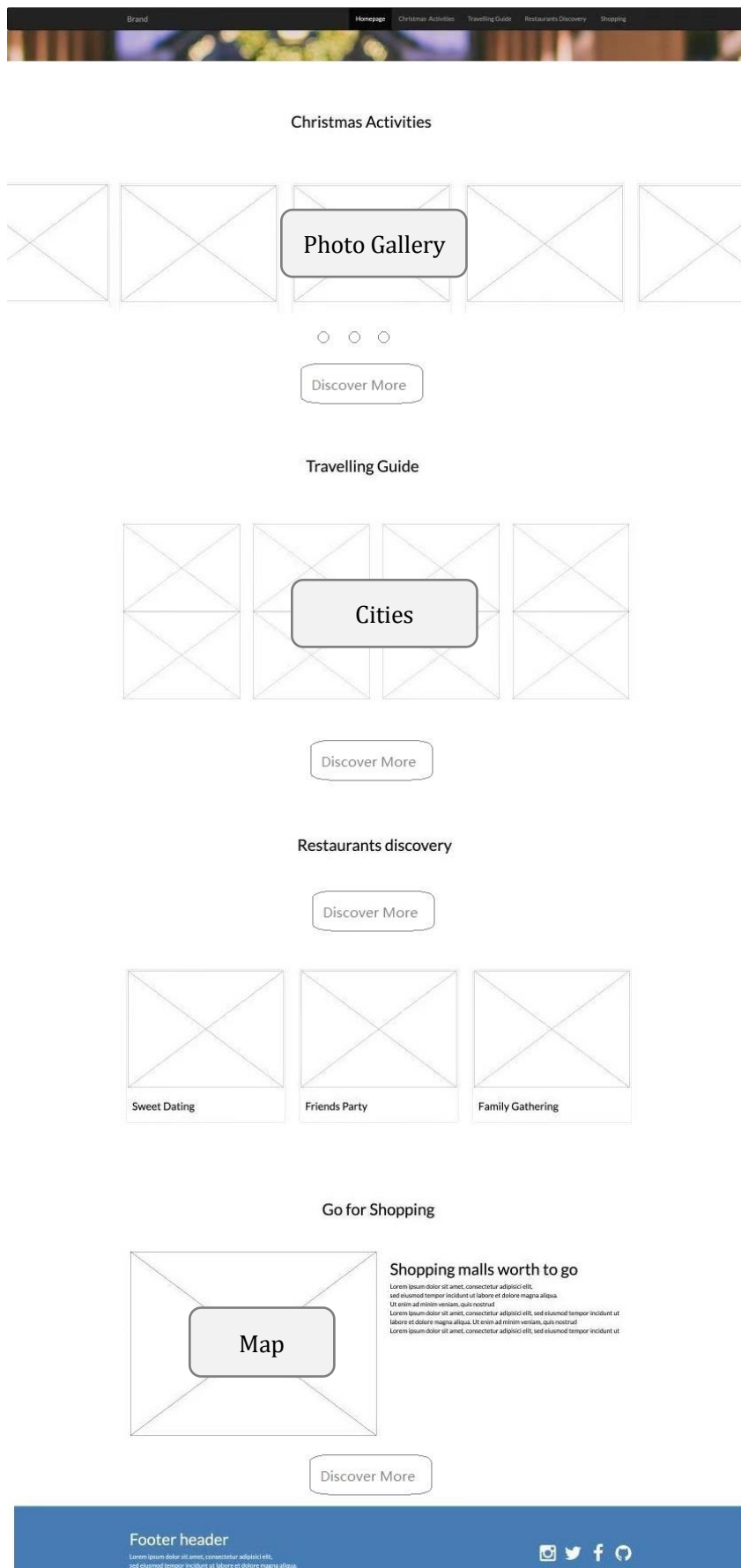*Figure 4. Site map of my website*
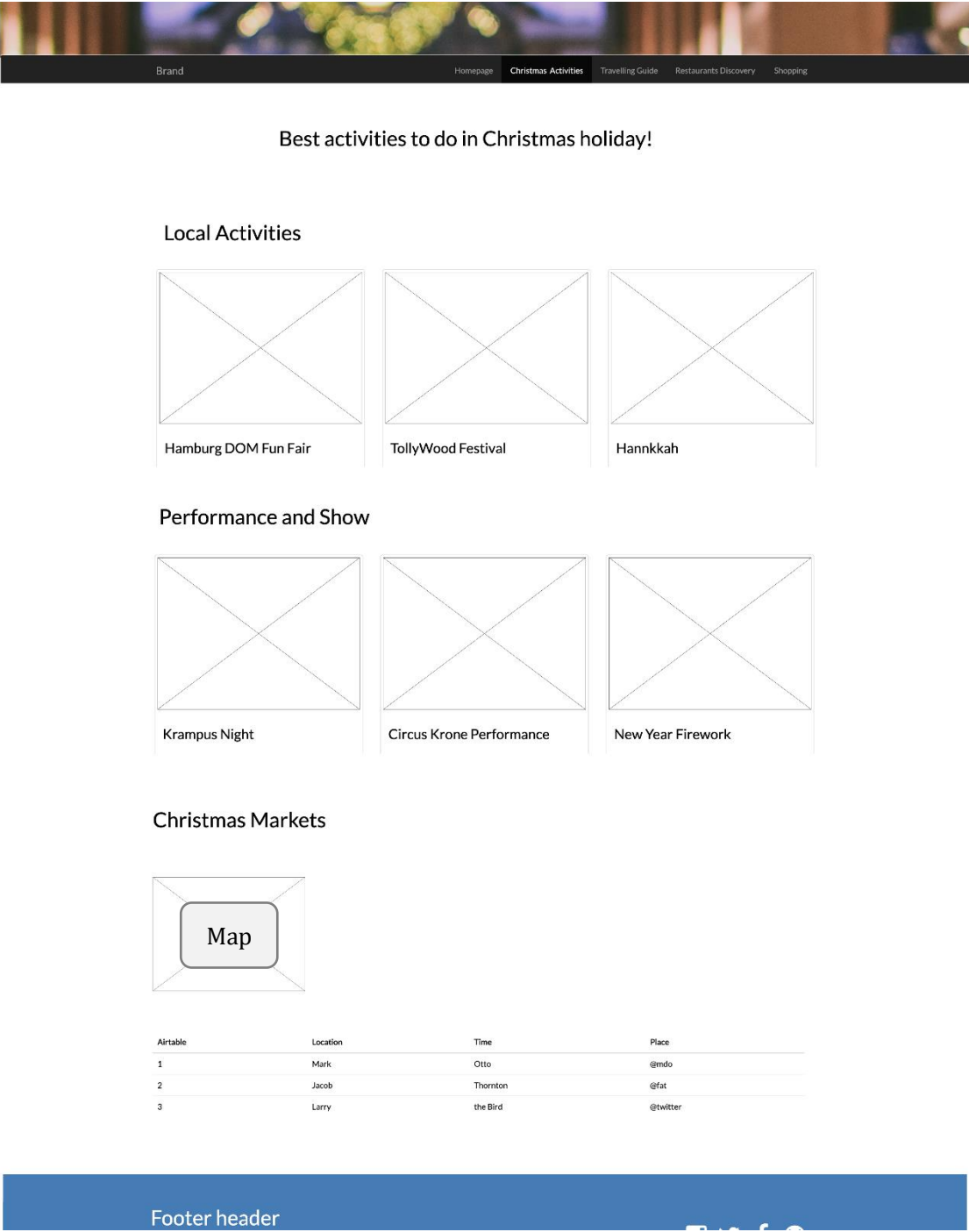
Figure 5. Wireframe of homepage

Best activities to do in Christmas holiday!

Local Activities

Hamburg DOM Fun Fair	TollyWood Festival	Hannkkah

Performance and Show

Krampus Night	Circus Krone Performance	New Year Firework

Christmas Markets

Map

Airtable	Location	Time	Place
1	Mark	Otto	@mdo
2	Jacob	Thornton	@fat
3	Larry	the Bird	@twitter

Footer header

Figure 6. Wireframe of "Christmas activities" Page

Landmarks

Road Trip Route

| Romantic Road | Alphs Mountain Road | Hessen Road | Fairy Tale Road |

Transporation and Hotel

1. Can you recommend me some transporation ways in Germany?
2. Where can I book the transportation tickets?
3. Where can I book the hotel?
4. What's the average cost for acommendation?

Footer header

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Figure 7. Wireframe of "travelling guide" page

Brand — Homepage · Christmas Activities · Travelling Guide · **Restaurants Discovery** · Shopping

Line chart

Restaurants Discovery

Sweet Dating

Friends Party

Family Gathering

Footer header

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sed eiusmod tempor incidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.
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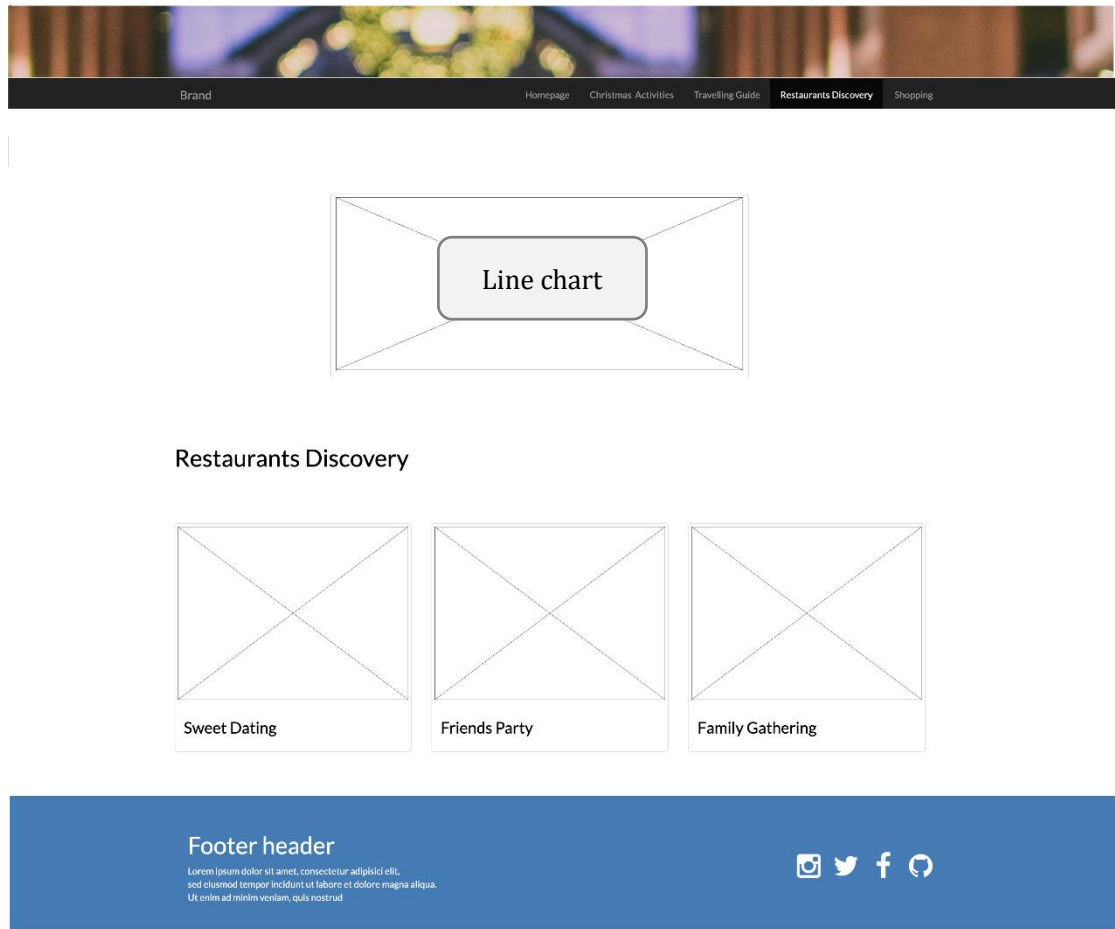
Figure 8. Wireframe of "restaurants discovery" page
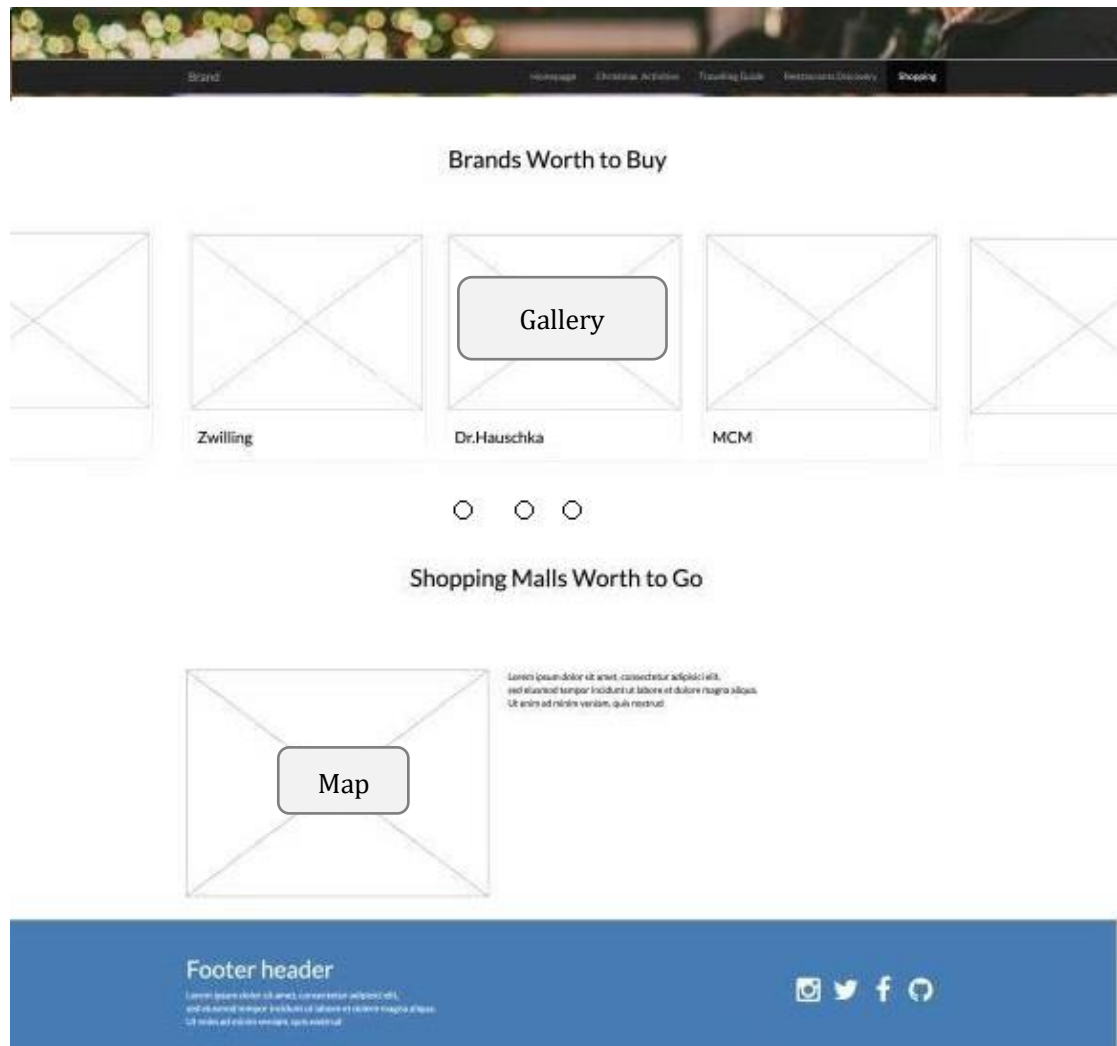
Figure 9. Wireframe of "Go for shopping" page

In order to distinguish content of homepage and subpages, homepage mainly plays the role as "overall introduction" to impress customers. Therefore, in each section, a button is applied to let users skip into targeted detailed page. To enhance the contrast and highlight the skip button, orange is used to compare with background color. As users click the button, they can discover detailed information in the specific section,

Figure 10. The skip button

5. Qualitative Usability Test with Site Map and Frameworks

To test usability of my websites, 6 questions are proposed to test audience's impression on my website. Audiences are shown with wireframes of the website and asked to answer these questions. These questions are designed to measure audience's opinions towards theme, content and simplicity of the website and find out to what extent can the website achieve its goal.

In this interview, five audience are targeted users of my website who are considering to go to German during December. Three of them come from China, one comes from South Korea and one comes from Finland.

Q1	What do you think the website is about?
Q2	Is the arrangement of each section on the webpage logical and reasonable?
Q3	Can you easily find information you need?
Q4	What's your impression towards the layout design?
Q5	If you want to go to Cologne for Christmas market, how can you find information? If you want to buy something for your mother, how can you find tips on it? If you come to German for a road trip, are your demands satisfied by the website?
Q6	What do you think can be improved in the website?

Figure 11. Usability test questions

In this test, I encouraged my interviewees to talk with me about their first impression on each webpage of my website, and they do not need to care about impact of their words on our friendship because it is just a way for me to understand usability. In addition, I also informed them that their opinions will be recorded in my report.

Answers for Q1: What do you think the website is about?

All 5 interviewees answered that the website is about travelling tips to Germany. 3

of them said it is a German travelling guide during Christmas holidays, 2 said that it is a German travelling guide but they didn't pay much attention on "Christmas". Therefore, I'll add more Christmas elements (like texts and photos) in the webpage layout design.

Answers for Q2: Is the arrangement of each section on the webpage logical and reasonable?

Answers for Q3: Can you easily find information you need?

In these two questions, I received positive feedbacks that each section on the webpage is reasonable and information can be easily found according to categories. Two interviewees mention that they want to have more specific guidelines like how to get a visa, preparations etc., but due to large workload, I may add this section through links.

Answers for Q4: What's your impression towards the layout design?

In this section, I received positive feedbacks that the layout is concise and clear. One interviewee mentions that the sub-titles in each webpage is clear but single, he expects more words' styles can be added. This suggestion will be taken into consideration, I will decide the final style according to the final work.

Answers for Q5:

In question 5, 3 questions are picked up to test real usability of this website. In the first small question "where to find information of Cologne Christmas markets", all 5 interviewees say such information should be in Christmas activities part and it is. But 1 points out that she is reluctant whether such information can be in the "travelling guide" part, so I will try to figure out a way to distinguish it.

In the second question "how to find tips on shopping" part, all 5 interviewees accurately figured out the shopping guide part.

In the last question "road trip" part, 1 interviewee mentioned he wants a daily schedule for the trip route, 1 interviewee mentioned there can be car-rent website guide

in this part.

Answer for Q6: What do you think can be improved in the website?

Interviewee 1: I want to find some travelling tips categorized by cities.

Interviewee 2: Rather than special Airbnb recommendation, I want to see overall ways on hotels booking because I used to stay at hotels.

Interviewee 3: Size of carousel is too large and I don't want to click transfer photos.

The rest 2 interviewees say that they think everything is almost fine. I decide to take the three suggestions into consideration, like adding main tourism cities introduction and replacing carousel with photo gallery.

Besides, one interviewee says that if homepage is repeated with sub-webpages, the homepage makes little sense. Therefore, I will insert different content in homepage and sub-webpages to increase usability.

6. Surface design of the website

After going through my targeted users, their problems, ideating and wireframes, I spent a long time coding and finally finished my website. According to suggestions put up by my interviewees during the qualitative five questions test, I made some subtle adjustments compared with my original wireframes.

Screenshots

In my website content and design, I focus much on the guide demands of users' trip to Germany together with German special Christmas activities. The following are screenshots of my website's display on PC, it is still responsible in iPad and mobile devices after several tests. More details on this website can be found on:
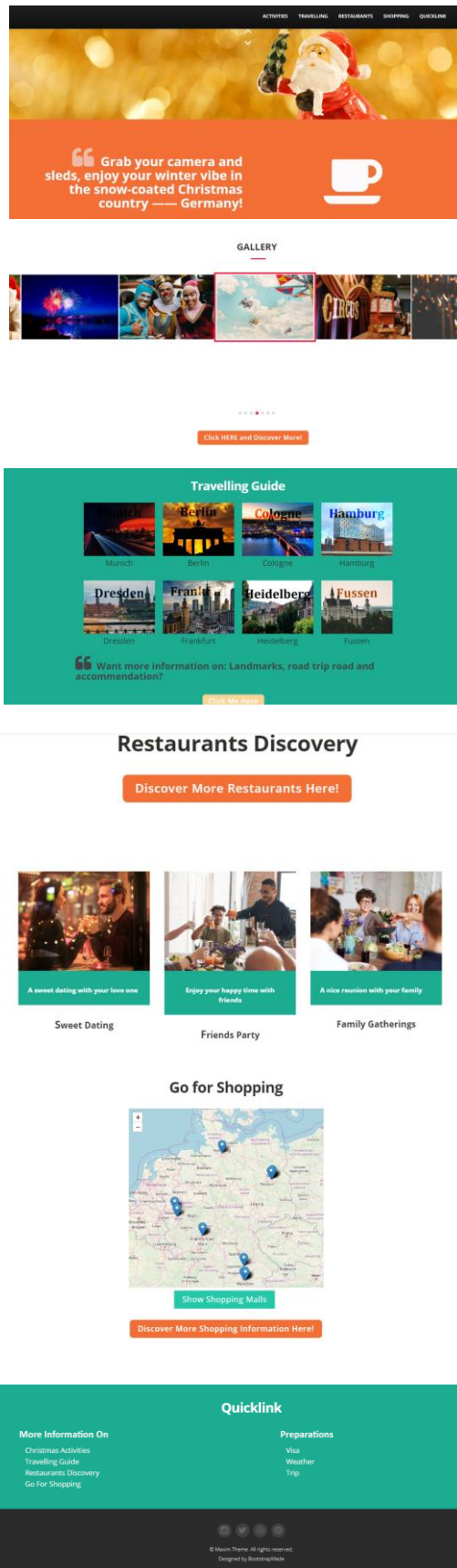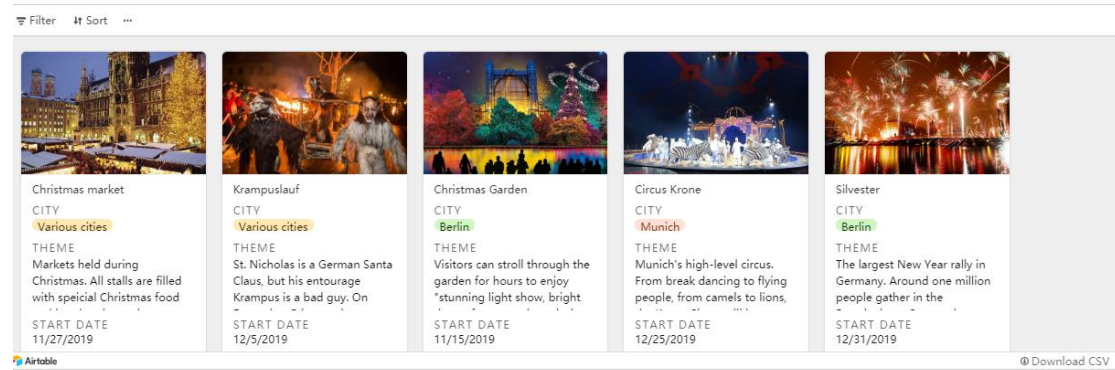
https://adeline0791.github.io/final%20website/index.html

Figure 12. Screenshot of homepage surface

Performance and Show

Christmas Markets

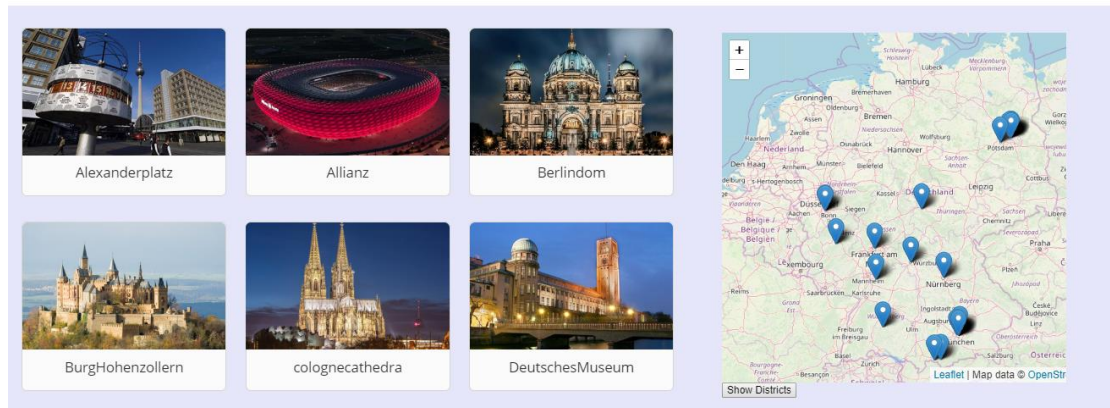*Figure 13. Surface of sub-page "Christmas activities"*

Figure 14. Surface of sub-page "Travelling guide"

According to the suggestion that given by one of my interviewee "I hope subpages can be distinguished from homepage", the design of my homepage mainly plays the role as users impression. For activities, as users are impressed by photo gallery, they may click "discover more" and skip into the detailed activities introduction page. For travelling guide, users can browse city introduction at first, if they have deeper demands like scenes, road trip or tips on accommodation, they could click the button and discover more. For restaurants, in the detailed page, line chart on feedbacks comparison are also shown for users to make a comparison. For shopping section, top ten largest shopping more are displayed on the homepage and users can click for details in the specific shopping page.

7. Quantitative A/B Testing

As "Click me for more" button is the skip point that encourages users to click into their interested section in homepage and discover more detailed information, A/B test is chosen to examine the color of button. As the background color of my webpage is green and white, the original color of button is chosen to be the opposite color: orange. The button color of B version is also green, which is in accordance with the main color of my website.
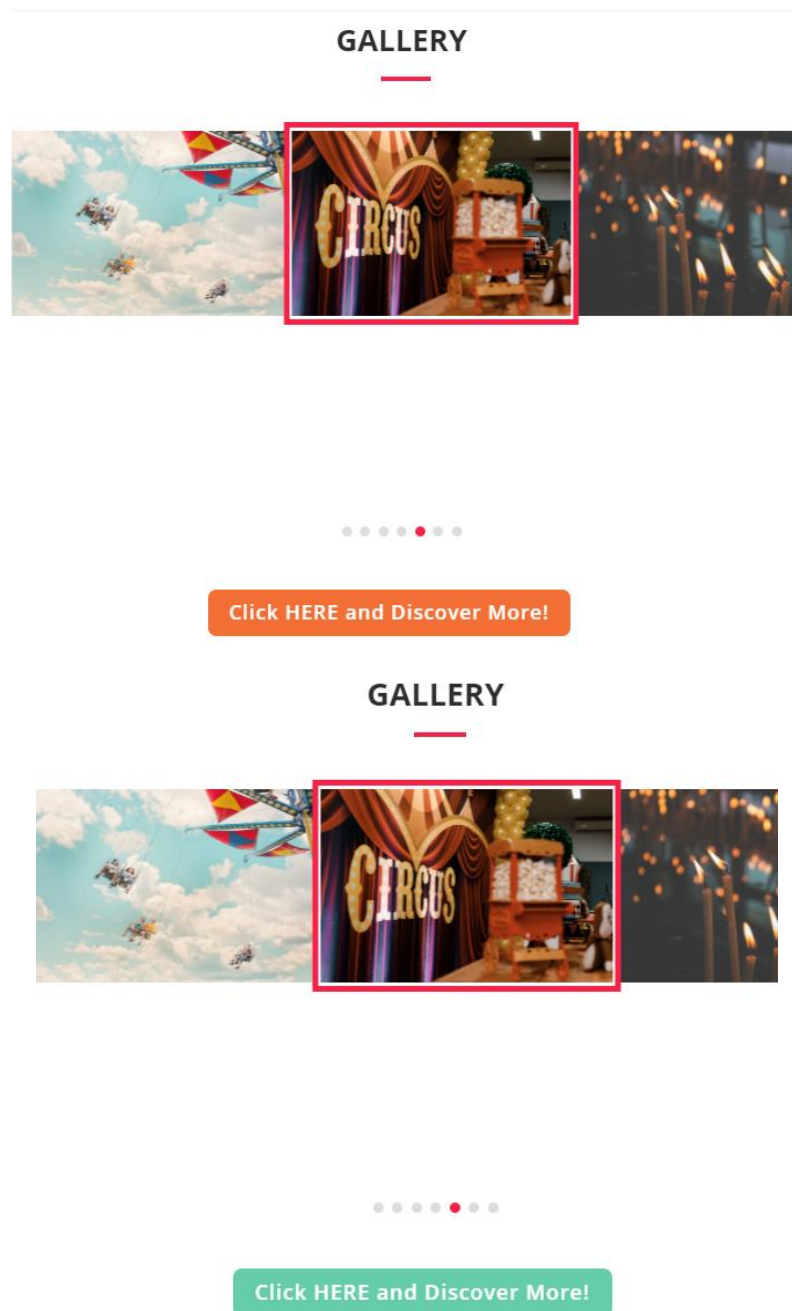

Figure 15. Version A and Version B of the skip button

After running the A/B test experiment for six days, I have collected some data to help me with the final edition. As whether the reach of my "Christmas activities" landing page is the only goal for my button, the result suggested that A version surpassed B version on the conversion rate section, therefore, a brighter color is suggested to be used in all skip buttons.
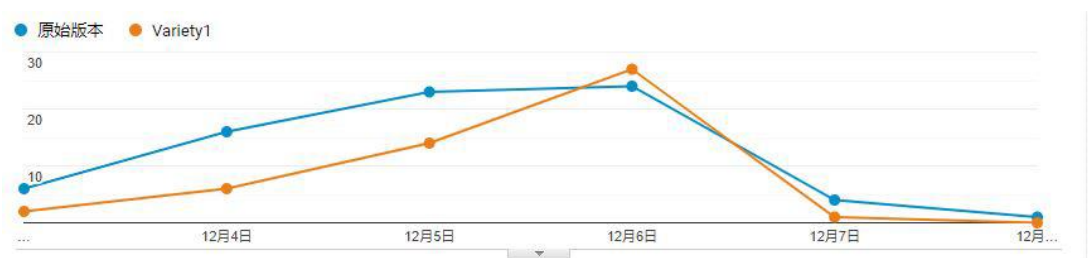

Figure 16. Overall views of Version A and Version B

Figure 17. Result of A/B test

8. Dashboard

As dashboard is a direct way for me to find out performance of my website, I generated a dashboard form with metrics to discover things need to be improved. The performance is not as good as I thought before, as page sessions and bounce rate are not satisfactory enough. I tried to find out reasons beyond this and I think it might because most viewers come into the website in their mobile devices, for PC users, the settlement of skip button could be friendly, but for mobile users, this way to skip to another page is not quite friendly and convenient for them. As the figure suggested, almost 53.9% users come from mobile devices, which is a little out of my expectation. And I might need to change my UI design and make the skip much more mobile-friendly. As I expected most people use PC to search for travelling guide when they are planning their next trip, perhaps I need to reconsider about the application of mobile devices nowadays.

Besides, according to users sessions, users from mainland China and Hongkong still take a large proportion of my visitors and greatly surpass users from US, UK, Japan and Australia, which means that a Chinese version of my website could be developed in the future. Although in mainland China there is no Christmas holidays, but I could still consider about white collar's annual breaks and students, and regard it as a potential travelling market.

Another thing that attracts me is about number of returning visitors. Compared with new visitors, it is not good performance in the users retain section. As the users journey map I suggested before I started working on this project, the major way to retain users mainly comes from information updating. In the future development of this website, I may transfer my attention to enhance users stickiness like set up communities, and achieve the goal of users retention.

Figure 18. Dashboard 1

Figure 19. Dashboard 2

9. Conclusion

Based on my interviews on users' feedbacks and results shown by dashboard, I find three parts in my website could be further developed: a more mobile-friendly UI design; a Chinese version website and diversified ways to enhance users stickiness. Besides, data collection is not comprehensive enough. As the website has only English version, and I was blocked by Instagram and Facebook for a long time so I can not post the website to overseas friends and investigate their usages, the demographic composition of my users is a little single and the total number of my visitors could be improved in the long time.

However, I still learnt a lot from in my past semester courses and discovered a lot during the process of working on my final website. From front-end knowledge to ways to thinking, I really gained a lot and hope to pursue my further progress in the future.