Project plan

Passion project

Photography blog

Cretu Claudia
ICT & Media Design

Semester 3

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Content

1.   Project Assignment

1.1   Context

The Passion Project is about focusing on a field, development, that I really like and I consider myself to have good skills in. Also, this project is used to improve my skills in the field of UX research, development and interactive design.
In this project I am going to create a website, where I am going to sell pictures that I am taking with my personal camera. The pictures can be bought by everyone who needs them for personal use or projects.

1.2   Goal of the project

The goal of this project is to provide access to a unique photography gallery, to create a self-expression website and provide an efficient purchase process.

1.3   The assignment

The assignment is to create a sustainable, accessible platform for sharing and monetizing my photography, where people can purchase my work and connect with me as a photographer.
The possibilities that my website is going to offer are:
- High-quality photography gallery
- E-commerce for photos
- Engagement with viewers

The project includes:	The project does not include:
1 Research	1 CI/CD
2 User tests	2 User manual
3 Low-fidelity prototypes	3 Developer manual
4 High-fidelity prototype	4 Code testing
5 Fully developed website	

Deliverables:	Non-deliverables:
1 Project plan	1 Research documents
2 High-fidelity prototype	2 Sketches and low-fidelity prototypes
3 Fully functional website	3 User test scripts

1.4 Conditions

1. **Technology Requirements**

- Deploy Platform Choice: Ensure that the website platform supports e-commerce, secure payment gateways and a high-quality image hosting.
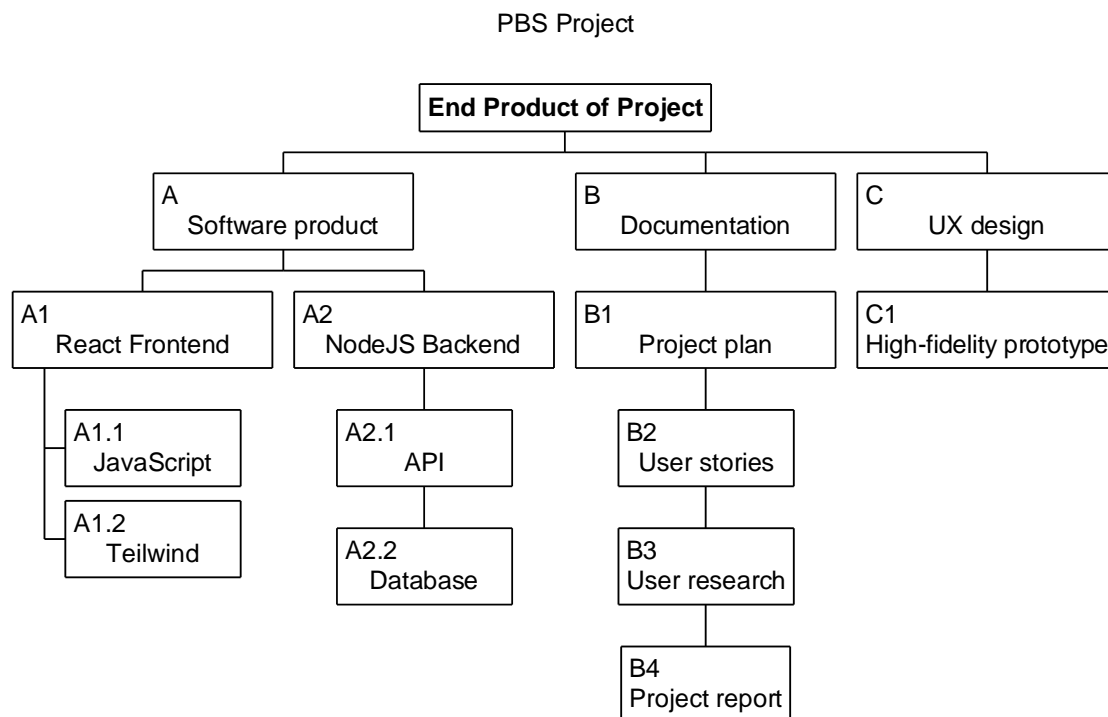
2. **Legal and Licensing**

- Copyright and Usage rights: Every picture should come with an attachment file that describes the licensing options for the user.

3. **User experience requirements**

- Mobile friendly design: The website should be optimized for mobile viewing, as customers may browse on various devices.
- Secure payment options: Include multiple payment options.

1.5 Finished products

PBS Project

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ End Product of Project │
                    └─────────────────────┘
          ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
    ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐
    │ A         │  │ B         │  │ C         │
    │ Software  │  │ Document- │  │ UX design │
    │ product   │  │ ation     │  │           │
    └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘
```

- A — Software product
  - A1 — React Frontend
    - A1.1 — JavaScript
    - A1.2 — Teilwind
  - A2 — NodeJS Backend
    - A2.1 — API
      - A2.2 — Database
- B — Documentation
  - B1 — Project plan
    - B2 — User stories
      - B3 — User research
        - B4 — Project report
- C — UX design
  - C1 — High-fidelity prototype

1.6   Research questions

1. What are design principles used in existing online photography blogs?

Design principles for online photography blogs focus on on usability, accessibility, and efficiency to provide a nice and simple experience for users. Most of the websites go for the minimalistic design to ensure that the images remain the focus point. Clean layouts, neutral color schemes, and limited text help reduce distractions, letting the photos stand out. Grid layouts are popular for photography blogs as they display images in an organized, structured way that is visually pleasing and easy to navigate. Websites like *500px* and *EyeEm* often use a grid layout where all images align perfectly for a layout that allows for varied image sizes, creating a dynamic, artistic feel. Also most websites use the three element rule because the user sees more appealing elements in rows of three, based on the Gestalt principles. To cater to users on all devices, most photography blogs are designed responsively, ensuring that image quality and layout are maintained on both desktop and mobile. Photography blogs prioritize high-resolution previews, often using large images that fill most of the screen when opened, drawing users into each photo. Effective navigation helps users quickly find photos by category, style, or other filters. Clear menus, a search bar, and tags make it easy to locate specific images or themes. Consistent fonts, color palettes, and logos contribute to brand identity, while customizable themes let photographers convey their personal style. Many photography blogs include posts that share the stories behind photos, techniques used, or personal experiences, creating a connection with the audience. E-commerce features are essential for photography blogs that sell images, offering quick access to purchase options, cart, and secure checkout without leaving the page.

By leveraging these design principles, online photography blogs create visually engaging, user-friendly experiences that help photographers showcase their work, connect with their audience, and drive sales.

I got this information by doing research and looking at other online photography websites to compare them and take what is the best for my website from them. Based on my findings I have decided to follow some design principles that are very important for the user such as a simple buy process, responsiveness, a simple structured and clear design, make a unified look by choosing the appropriate colors, fonts and styles and have a clear navigation.

For this research I used the method "Best good and bad practices" to find my information. I investigated what other have done and chose which practices are important for me and witch not.

2. **Which current UX principles and trends can be used for a better UX design?**

First step that needs to be taken to achive the best UX design is to understand the needs of the target audience and personas.
Current UX principles and trends that enhance user experience design focus on simplicity, personalization, and accessibility. **Minimalism** remains a top trend, emphasizing clean interfaces with limited clutter, so users can navigate content intuitively and focus on essential elements. **Personalization** is also popular, allowing users to tailor the experience to their needs and preferences, whether through customized recommendations, adaptive interfaces, or settings that adjust based on user behavior. **Responsive and mobile-friendly design** is crucial as mobile usage continues to rise, ensuring consistent experiences across devices. Additionally, **interactions**, small animations or feedback triggered by user actions, like tapping a button, add an interactive layer that makes interfaces feel more dynamic and engaging. **Accessibility** is increasingly prioritized, with many designs incorporating text alternatives, voice commands, and high-contrast elements, making products usable for a wider audience. Finally, **dark mode** remains a popular option, providing flexibility for users to switch between light and dark themes based on comfort and environment. These principles together create seamless, enjoyable, and inclusive user experiences that adapt to diverse needs and contexts.

I got this information by doing reserch on the current trends that can be used for a good design. I used the "Literature study" research method to find my answers. I searched and found general information, guidance, and the best practices about my topic. I identified relevant keywords such as "design principles, usability, Gestalt principles" and read my findings in detail. In the paragraph above I summarized my findings.
From my findings I am going to use the Gestalt principles for creating the structure and layout of my pages, a good usability making the websites simple to navigate, and a ligh-mode dominance with posibility pf changing to dark-mode to make the user experience as nice as possible.

3. **How does an optimal user flow look in an online photography blog?**

To create and optimal user flow I established a list of requirements from my findings in the previous two questions. To do this, I used the requirements prioritization method.

I created a MoScow list for my requirements and I will further answer this research question by creating the prototype of my pages. For this part I will follow the "Prototyping" method, creating a low fidelity prototype, test it, take what I learn from it and improve in the high-fidelity prototype witch will be also tested.

Must have	Should have	Could have	Won't have
• Good usability • Gestalt principles • Clear navigation • Simple buy process	• Light theme/Dark theme • Responsive design • Contrast colors for good readability	• Personalization and customization	• Complex navigation • Strong colors and fonts • Bold and loud style

4. What technology do I need to develop this?

To develop this system I will need a combination of front-end, back-end, and security technologies. The technologies I chose to work with are HTML, CSS and ReactJS for the front-end, Node.js (with Express) for the back-end and NoSQL Databases: MongoDB for flexibility in data structure.

ReactJS with Node.js, Express, and MongoDB presents a compelling choice for developing my website due to its cohesive and streamlined development experience. Leveraging JavaScript across the entire stack ensures consistency, code reuse, and developer familiarity, facilitating seamless transitions between front-end and back-end tasks. Node.js, with its non-blocking, event-driven architecture, is well-suited for handling I/O-bound operations efficiently, making it ideal for real-time applications. Express.js provides a minimalist and flexible web framework for Node.js, offering essential features for building web applications with ease. MongoDB, a NoSQL database, offers flexibility in data modeling and storage, aligning well with JavaScript objects and providing scalability for evolving schemas. The JSON- based nature of JavaScript and MongoDB simplify data manipulation and communication between different layers of the application, reducing conversion overhead and enhancing performance. Furthermore, the rich ecosystem surrounding JavaScript, Node.js, Express, and MongoDB, along with their active communities and extensive learning resources, ensures ample support and facilitates rapid development, scalability, and maintenance of the website.

For this research I used the "Best good and bad practices" method to answer my questions.
I searched what has proven to work in other log in/sign up systems and what forms the basis of a quality project like this. I found that the programming languages that I have mentioned above are the best to build this kind of project because of their flexibility syntax, their compatibility and efficiency.

5. How do I develop the website?

This question will be answered with the high-fidelity prototype that is going to be created based on my findings on the user test on the low-fidelity prototype. After that I will test the prototype again using the "Usability testing" method to detect if the users have any problems with my solution and correct them.

2. Approach and Planning

2.1 **Approach**

For this project I will use the *Waterfall* method. Each phase will be completed before starting the next one, the requirements will be set from the beginning of the project and a timeline will be respected.

Planning:

Phasing	Effort	Start date	Ready date
Sprint 1	1. Documentation 2. General concept research 3. Target audience research	11/11/2024	22/11/2024
Sprint 2	1. Design 2. User testing	25/11/2024	13/12/2024
Sprint 3	1. Development 2. Deployment	16/12/2024	10/01/2025

2.2 **Research methods**

I decided to use the Double Diamond method throughout the work process of the project. Each phase will use the corresponding CMD research methods.
I am starting with research about competition websites and design inspiration and concepts. The next step is to create multiple designs showing an iterative process, and last to develop the application and test it on users. The steps can change and repeat as, the research will be always required to achieve this goal.

Project Phase	Research method	Description
Discover	Research on existing photography blogs Research on the targeted audience	By applying different types of research and methodologies, examination of already existing websites to take the best user experience examples.
Define	Defining the target audience	Setting up a group of people who are interested in buying online photography to understand their needs.
Develop	Prototyping Coding	Beginning of design phase, design a final product Develop the product and deploy it

Deliver	Usability test Pitch	Testing final features and delivering and pitching final concept

2.3 Learning outcomes

The process and result of this project will contribute to several learning outcomes that I have to prove proficient in this semester.

LO1 - Conceptualize, design, and develop interactive media products

I will conceptualize and design an interactive photography website, specifically created for people who would like to buy online photography. By applying user-centered design principles and visual techniques, I am aiming to create an engaging product that would make people appreciate art photography.

LO2 - Transferable production

I will keep track of my code using GitHub, which helps organize the work. I will develop the project using React, NodeJS and MongoDB database. My knowledge in all of them is brief and this will help me learn a lot more.

LO3 - Creative iterations

Throughout the project, I will collect feedback and use it to improve my design and features, sharing the steps that I take in my creative process.

LO4 - Professional standards

I will use a combination of the Double Diamond and Waterfall methodologies to structure my project. A lot of research will also be done to this project to be completed.

LO5 - Personal leadership

With the help of this project, I can experience in more depth programming, photo editing, design and research, and I will get an idea even more clear than now about what I am good at, and not and what I do like and do not. I think this is important in the decision of choosing my future in the ICT field.

3. Project Organization

3.1 Team members

Name	E-mail	Role	Availability
Cretu Claudia	*c.cretu@student.fontys.nl*	Full stack developer Designer UX researcher	Weekdays from 9 am - 6 pm
		Teacher Project Coach	

3.2 Communication

3.3 Configuration management

I will work together at the development part of the project using the GitLab version control tool.
- create a Git directory for the project
- create a repository
- create a main branch
- work in a separate branch for every new feature
- push to the main branch

4. Risks

4.1 Risks and fall-back activities

Risk	Prevention activities included in plan	Fall-back Activities
1 Time risks	Respect the timeline	Finish project too late
2 Unable to work	Take care of myself	Task overflow
3 Hard to find target audience	Try to find people who are already interested in online photography	Late tasks