
Pinning the blame of my success on social media

Facebook is responsible for some of my biggest wins. Here's my story plus tips on making your time online beneficial, not detrimental.



[Carl and friends](#) chilling during the World Robotic Olympiad at Hungary on September 2019 B.C (Before COVID-19)

Let's set the clock to spin backwards. One year ago, 2020 B.C. Perfect! Dull. Repetitive. Boring. My mind distanced itself from reality, thinking about what could have been had COVID-19 not manifest itself into existence, turning everything I see into a blur. My face leaning on the back of my left hand with my eyes half open, lit up by shades of blue, yellow, and red. My hands applying light, sustained force to the mechanical contraption controlling the screen as if on auto-pilot. I couldn't help but subconsciously have my cursor evade pixels destined to hover on *like* and contribute to the metrics powering our appeasable egos.

It was a wrap-up night from hours of gaming. Put simply, I was doom scrolling on Social Media. Then, in a flick and a click, my eyes feasted itself on a post that changed the way I dealt with the pandemic...

Simala Sanctuary de Cebu



[Simala Sanctuary de Cebu](#) by yours truly

I continued my scrolling. I might seem calm on the outside, but on the inside, I was calculating how much more my hand had to endure before getting the Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. When all of a sudden, blam! Shoved into my face was news of Overwatch, my favourite shooter game, hosting an in-game map concept art competition open to South East Asia. The reward? A Nintendo Switch. So like every other gamer-artist-hopefuls, I ignored it. Because all I was and am capable of are a few crooked stick men.

If you are waiting for the story development or plot twist, this is it—On the day of the deadline at exactly 6 PM, I thought about how I was capable of Photo Manipulation (or in common terms, *Photoshop-ing*).

I spent 6 hours the night before the deadline to whip up something decent for a map of my favorite game. I had to iterate three times! First, I tried using the modern touch of the famed SM Seaside, then I used my photos from Korea to piece together a decent view. But no, my face was in it, so I would cringe all the time upon further refinement. Until I finally decided on Simala Shrine because nothing culturally screams Philippines like this historical and sacred church. It was a time-pressured but therapeutic night. Fast forward a few months of campaigning for votes with a lot of help from my family, acquaintances, and friends (shout-out to People Power), I bagged 6th on the skill-based rating, and 3rd on the vote-based rating. A nice feat on its own. But did I mention I got media exposure from local news channels as well?



Featured twice in GMA! View more of [my interviews here](#).


CDN NEWS ENTERPRISE ISLAND WORLD OPINION SPORTS LIFE WHAT'S UP SILOY IS WATCHING

FEATURED STORIES

16-year-old lad from Lapu joins 2020 SEA map contest design

By: Immae Lachica - General Assignments Reporter/CDN Digital | May 23, 2020 - 03:19 PM





CEBU CITY, Philippines— A 16-year-old Oponganan is hoping to bring pride to the Philippines as he takes part in international competition, a map design contest, from the company, Blizzard.

Carl Vincent Kho, 16, a senior high school student from Basak, Lapu-Lapu City, is one of the many hopefuls to win in this prestigious international competition called "SEA Overwatch Map Design Contest."


Kho said he learned about the competition on Facebook and decided to give a shot.

The competition is letting all participants from Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines create their own dream map for the game, Overwatch.


"Overwatch has always been a game known for its culturally diverse environment. Taking inspiration from characters from multiple places in the world like Zenyatta, a Buddhist from Nepal, Sombra – Dorado, Mexico, and a lot more. This time, the game would like us, the creative players to create their dream map while maintaining the "Overwatch style". I am actually hoping to see my map in-game someday," he said.

He said he worked on his design using the computer for two to three days last April, and he submitted his map concept design entry in mid-April.


LATEST STORIES MOST READ




LATEST NEWS
Lapu-Lapu logs 11 new COVID-19 recoveries




BREAKING
12 of 20 new COVID-19 cases in Cebu are from Talisay



LATEST NEWS
Talisay City's PT4 contact tracing results: 15 out of 16 negative of virus



LATEST NEWS
Second batch of repatriated OFWs arrives in Cebu City



BREAKING NEWS
Mandaue City logs 3 new COVID cases on May 23

This took me by surprise, I was PM-ed by [CDN](#) and I couldn't imagine how miserable I'd feel right now if I didn't check my message requests back then.

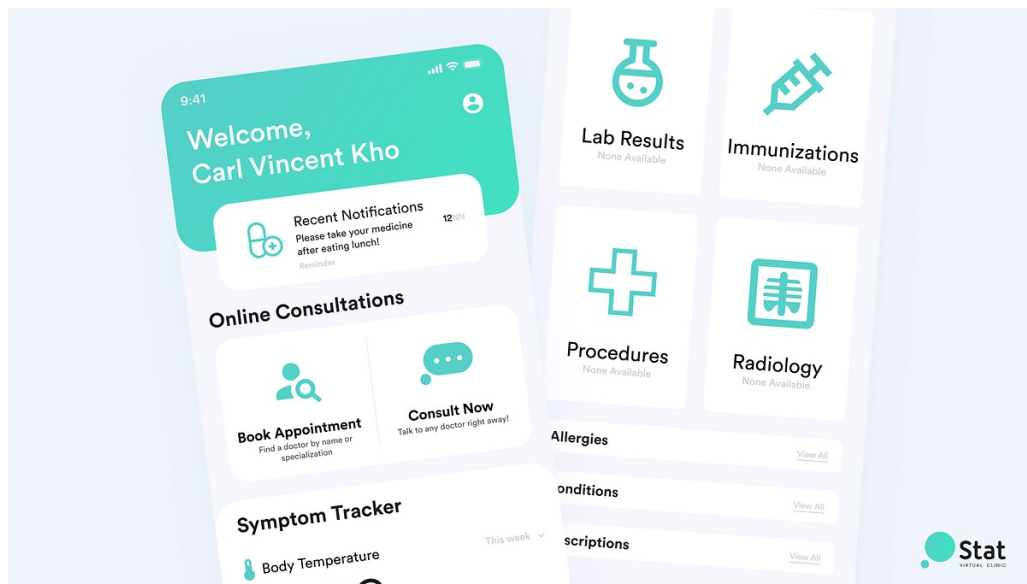
"But Carl, weren't you gonna teach our readers on how to be digitally productive during this pandemic?"

Well, yes. But how was I supposed to make myself credible? Alright,

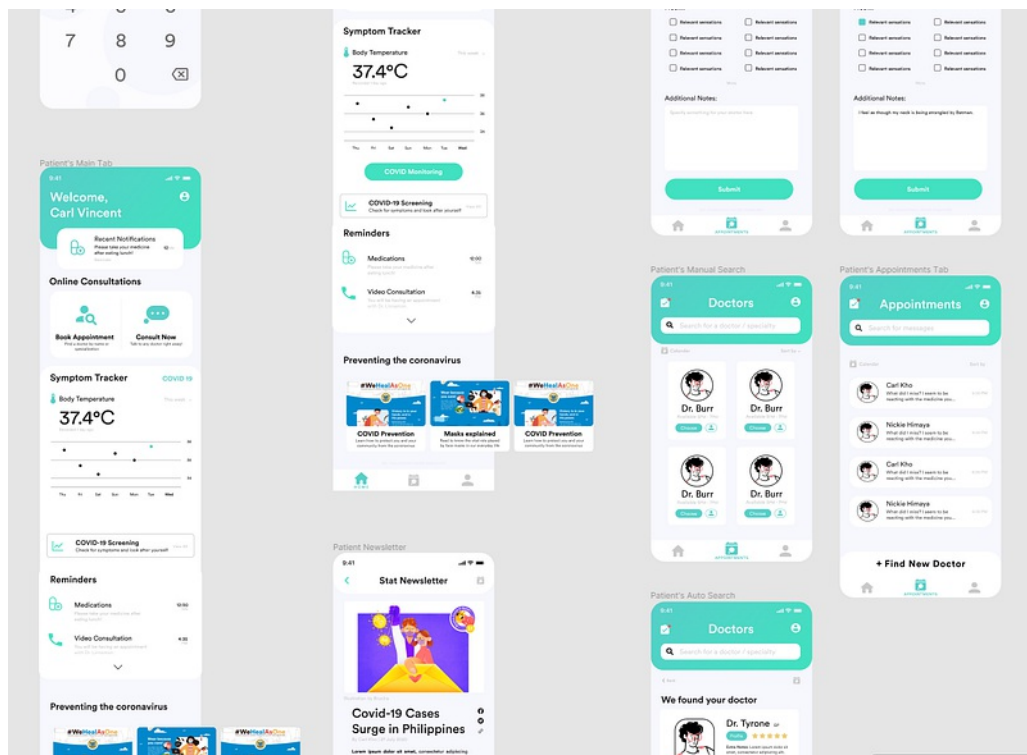
time for the meat. Remember how I said how it was a pressure but therapeutic night. Well, that's the crucial point: I was having fun! And, no. Before you argue how fun should be stress-free, tell me what made your favourite games fun. It was the challenge, right?

And that right there, ladies, gentlemen, and STECians is how we should do our “passion hunting”. We should constantly keep on exploring and see if we find fun in doing it. Although I used that contest to prove my point, art actually is just a hobby for me—**I still can't draw**. My genuine passion lies in creating solutions. Cue, my next story on how my app concept, Stat—Your Virtual Clinic was created.

Stat—Your Virtual Clinic

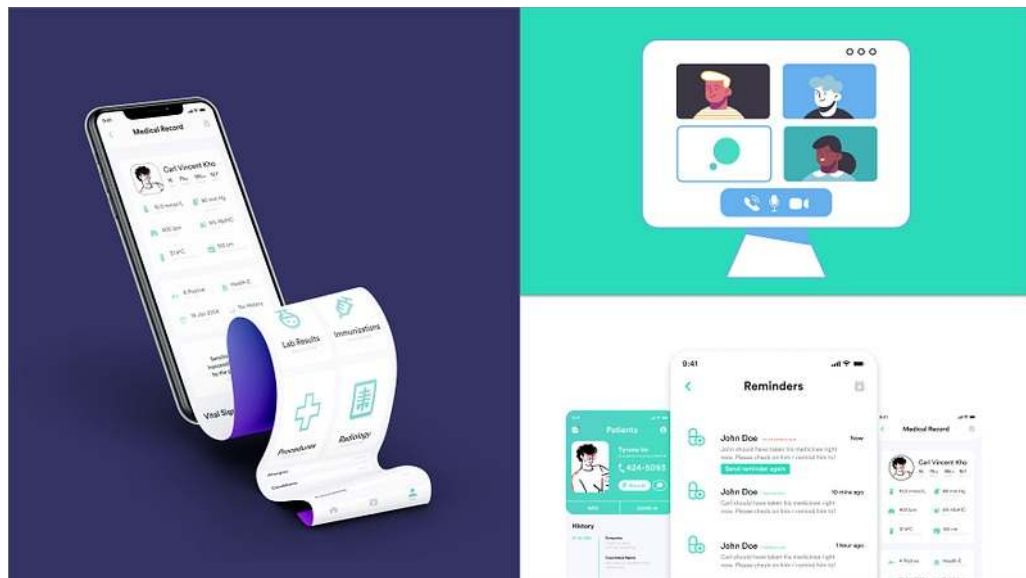


I was reminiscing with a friend via Facebook Messenger. Upon further communication, I found out about the sad situation my friend, unable to go out for medical treatment because of multiple unforeseen circumstances. That flicked the switch on my head: “Why don't I bring the hospital to my friend?”. There also happened to be another competition (yes, I found this through Facebook) that sprang itself unto me: San Francisco Design University's search for a relevant app concept in response to COVID-19. And so, with the help of my girlfriend, I discovered Telemedicine. I then went and used my trusty Ice Bear drawing pad (yes, that Ice bear from We Bare Bears™) and sketched out the layout of my envisioned app.



From empathising, to defining the problem, to ideating the solution, to the creation of the prototype, and then the user testing and feedback.

After 2 weeks of tireless designing and user feedback with Nickie, I finally submitted my entry.



Interested? Read my article dealing with the technical side of Stat [here!](#)



And another 2 weeks later, I wake up to the winner's announcement with our names in first place. We got 20,000.00 PHP (*I'm proud to announce this since this amount is already depleted—it has become my new internals for my Gaming PC!*)

An Internship on my dream company

Soon after that I was then privately messaged by [Albert Padin](#) himself of [Symph.co](#), a person I've always ogled my eyes on (no homo, not that there's anything wrong with being homo) every time I go to a Google Convention because he speaks and thinks well. He offered me an internship. Presumably because I let him try the app concept out and asked for feedback. And he liked it.



Me in my crewcut hair glory during Google I/O 2018 Cebu Extended at San Carlos

So, what did we learn after reading through the 3 success stories? It's one simple thing actually: always doom scroll on Facebook.

Jokes aside, here's the actual how-to section and the very reason you read this article:

DISCLAIMER: I extracted these recommendations from my personal experiences. Wisdom, if you may. I would like to point out this is not a one-size-fit-all solution to capable of catering to every unique individual.

Social Media is a gold mine for opportunities.

Teach the Social Media platform of your choice to feed you contests—Company-hosted, government-hosted, be it from big names, or just-started Facebook pages. You are the one who makes the final verdict whether you want to take part in this, anyway.

The algorithm or the logic behind them is to show them **what they think** is something you'd be interested in. You can do so by interacting contest-related posts as liking, commenting, clicking the links, and sharing.

Always try out new things.

Don't let the lack of experience stop you. How are you going to gain experience by denying opportunities of it in the first place? Stat was actually my first attempt in UI, UX, & App design. Simala Sanctuary de Cebu was amongst my baby steps in photo manipulation, specifically, it was my second original piece. Yet God has graciously given me the gift of victory. So what's to say the same won't happen to you?

The internet is your best friend.

Google, google, google! People say the internet is full of resources, but they do almost always just leave it there. *Now what?* Ranging from online courses to short how-tos. The internet is filled with helpful and doable information! There is no shame in looking up tutorials and simple Google searches like "how to hack". That will go a long way. What you're doing is still learning—Just don't get this stuck in this thing called *tutorial hell*. Where we eternally choose to follow along tutorials forever and getting the fundamentals learned never.

Get involved and/or get into a commitment

Think you're decent at graphic design? Use your skills for the greater good. An example of this is volunteering to be in charge of the graphics for an initiative. This is speaking from [experience](#). With this, you will be

forced to hone your craft even when you do not feel like it because the community needs your output. Resulting into a meaningful use of your time (and extra smiles for the people you have helped).

Do not fear failure and embarrassment

Let's use the scenario of online classes. You think you've got the right answer, but turns out you were wrong, then you're going to think about it before you sleep and fear how this loss of confidence will trigger a domino effect and block you from potential success for a significant chunk of your life.

Instead of moping around, think about it this way:

- Will this matter to me **10 seconds** from now?
- How about **10 minutes** from now?
- Will this still affect me **10 days** from now?
- **10 months** from now?
- **10 years** from now?

You will then be able to stand up (after reflection and correction, of course) and say, "**this doesn't matter at all!**" You can then place your spare thinking times into things that actually matter.

Have fun!

Honestly, this tip is so cliché, you'd roll your eyes over it. But aren't there times where you lose yourselves doing a certain something? That's the magical moment. That's when Disney Princesses start to sing and eventually, animals around you will too.

Finally, identify your passion.

I know, I know, it's one of those things that are really easy to say, but also really hard to do. "What do I even know what I'm good at?", "I'm actually interested in a lot of things, how do I sift through them all?". You might think you sound really hopeless and pathetic, but let me tell you that is actually very normal and is part one of two phases in our professional lives:

1. Saying yes to almost everything or having multiple interests with equal levels of passion. This part is the exploratory stage. The learning and growing stage. Once we finally recognize the fun, when we're finally fulfilling a task that does not feel like a task, we go to the next...
2. Saying no to almost everything. This is when we develop deep expertise, spend half your life solving problems relevant, and focusing ourselves on one field.

Congratulations... in advanced

Wow. You've spent a handful of your time comprehending sequenced words. Don't worry, you will be rewarded for it. Effort is, after all, the best ingredient for success. But just like after every effortful activity, don't forget to rest up, drink water, and de-stress. Because we are just humans after all. With human lives, human needs, and human desires. Just continue to have fun.

BONUS: An achievement tracker is not only a great way to boost your self-esteem, it is also a necessary step to prepare you for your future career and college. Check [mine](#) out if you're interested in its anatomy. Good luck!

By [Carl Kho](#) on [April 15, 2021](#).

[Canonical link](#)

Exported from [Medium](#) on October 31, 2025.