

Final Report on Personal Website Design

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Introduction

The advent of Big Data age has converted website design from a designer-oriented task into a relatively more user-based process, as what users need are easily detected and captured with the aid of data analytics tools in the market. Web design is no longer out of perceptual cognition of designers but centers around the needs and problems users seek to satisfy and resolve. Therefore, the foremost step of the Design Thinking Process proposed by IDEO and Stanford D. School is to empathize, where designers explore potential problems confronting users by going through imaginary user journeys by themselves (Humphrey, 2015). Later, designers outline the problems they got in Define stage and constitute solution plans in Ideate stage. In the fourth step Prototype, based on previous efforts, a prototype of website that visualizes solutions developed by designers is created. And finally, before the website is delivered to the target users, testing and evaluation of the website should be performed on general users to detect flaws embedded. Based on feedback from multiple test participants, designers adjust and improve their design to better satisfy needs of their target users.

Elements of User Experience, another web development framework proposed by Jess James Garrett, works as an embodiment of designing process. User Experience

basically comprises five planes: Strategy, Scope, Structure, Skeleton and Surface (Wiley, 2016). For my personal website development, I have also been through these five planes one by one and always taking what my target users need and seek into account. My personal website is primarily positioned as a visualized and interactive complement to my digital CV when I apply for a job. Thus, grounded on the job field I am targeting, I identified my target users, found their needs and set up the objectives of my website in Strategy plane; decided on functions and content I was going to place on my website according to target users' needs I detected in Scope plane; worked out how the information and content on my website were laid and connected with each other in Structure plane; established navigation bar and some key buttons on my website to facilitate target users' journey in Skeleton plane; and selected background photos, coordinated colors and typography on my website to make information aesthetically visualized in Surface plane. In addition to my individually creative process, I also embraced users' feedback into my design through qualitative and quantitative tests including usability test and A/B test. Finally, I integrated all the data collected from participants of the test into a Google Analytics dashboard and sought problems that I may make progress on my design through data analysis. Below displays the detailed plane-by-plane process of my design.

Strategy Plane

Based on my previous academic, professional experiences and interest, I am attempting an editor position at the arts & culture channel of big new media companies in mainland China. To build up my personal website, it is not what I need but what visitors need and seek that matters. Thus, the foremost step of my design is to figure out what should be presented on my website that employers might take interest in and finally be convinced to offer me a face-to-face interview. And basically, my research comprises of two steps. One is to inspect qualifications for an editor position listed in recruitment notices posted by employers. The following step is to interview some of the recruiters at new media companies as well as my friends who have taken an editor position in the arts & culture column.

I refer to job hunting websites as source of recruitment information. By examining notifications post by Tencent, Douban, Phoenix New Media and Juzi Entertainment (all of them have an arts & culture channel subordinated to their web portals), I summarize their requirements on applicant qualifications into three key points.



Figure 1 Job qualifications for an arts & culture column editor

① **Outstanding writing ability and strong interest in arts & culture;**

All the companies expect their prospective editors at the arts & culture channel to have outstanding writing ability and source gathering skill which will guarantee their outputs in stunning quality and help differentiate their articles from competitors. Besides, as the arts & culture column targets at audiences like arts and cultural issues, applicants should be experienced arts enthusiasts. They must be broadly knowledgeable of arts like films, music and photography in the first place.

② **Proficiency in photo processing, video editing and web design;**

Proficiency in manipulating photo processing and video editing software like Photoshop and Premiere is required, as editors have to do a lot of visual design to ornament their articles. Meanwhile, the ability to develop websites with pleasing layout and good usability is also what recruiters emphasize.

③ **Data analysis ability and data-oriented mindset;**

New media companies nowadays not only seek employees who can write but also who are excel in data analysis and produce contents that best suit their audiences according to results of data analysis. Some notifications I scanned point out that applicants might be also familiar with data analysis tools and have a data-oriented mindset.

For the second step of my research, I interviewed two recruiters at new media companies and two of my friends who have worked as intern editors at new media

companies. One of the recruiters is my previous supervisor in charge of content management center at Phoenix New Media. The other one of the recruiters is working for China Daily Website. And both of my friends were once intern editors in Tencent.

My previous supervisor believes that it is worth having a personal website in addition to a CV, as he has seen quite many applicants attach their digital portfolios. And he said he would like to enter their websites and have a look. When asked about what he is most eager to see on applicants' websites, he placed much emphasis on the previous works of the applicants, as he wanted to make sure his prospective employees were good at writing. And the second important thing comes to applicants' previous working experiences and achievements as editors in new media industry, according to my supervisor.

The recruiter from China Daily Website said it was okay to have a personal website but not that necessary. If applicants attempt to show their websites, they should keep it simple and easy to browse through. And for a content editor position, it is best to have previous articles of applicants showcased on the websites as well as some reflection on their previous professional experiences related to new media content production.

And both of my friends also agreed that applicants for editor positions should display a collection of their previous works on their websites. And those works should be closely associated with the channel they apply for. For example, if I attempt to apply for an editor position at arts & culture channel, articles on films or music will suit better than those on sports or politics.

SITE OBJECTIVES		TARGET USERS		USER NEEDS
Primary Goal	Showcase my previous commentary articles on arts & culture that might impress recruiters with my writing ability.	Primary User	Employers in charge of arts & culture channel at big new media companies in mainland China	Search for students who are with prominent writing talent and eligible for an editor position.
Additional Goal	Feature my skills and works related to web design, photography, audio processing and video editing, which employers have listed in the recruit requirements.	Secondary User	Employers at online film & music magazine companies in first tier cities of mainland China	Search for students who are sensitive to cultural issues, and good at writing, multimedia manipulation, and data analysis.
Additional Goal	Visualize my previous educational and intern experiences associated with arts & culture and the new media industry.	Secondary User	Owners of top-rated publishing accounts related to arts & culture on social media sites in mainland China	Search for content contributors or students who can help to create and manage content.

Figure 2 Target user persona identification

Thus, based on the results of my research, I profiled my target users and generated the journey map of how they will engage with my website as follows (see **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** below).



Figure 3 User journey mapping

Scoping Plane

Grounded on target users' needs and the objectives of my website, I sketched a list of functions and content that I planned to place on my personal website. The basic criterion for me to choose a function was to see whether it offered help and guidance to employers when they started journey on my website; as it would have been difficult for them to spend time entering my website, I was supposed to embed functions that lead them to find what they want in a short time. Meanwhile, I selected content according to the responses from the employers I interviewed and recruit requirements post by arts & culture channel of new media companies. I attempted to put the content that my target

users want to see most.

Function Specifications

1. Language Switching Button

Though I targeted employers from mainland China, I still considered employers from Hong Kong or overseas. Thus, I created both Chinese and English versions for my website. And a language switching button is put in my website's top left corner for foreign employers to switch to English version or Chinese recruiters to switch to English version immediately.

2. Easy-to-use Navigation

A simple navigation bar is placed on the top right for employers to go directly to the section about me where they want to know more.

3. Featured Buttons on Landing Page

As the employers I interviewed said what they liked to see most on applicants' websites were their portfolios. So one of the two buttons featured leads employers directly to my portfolio section below. And the other featured button Download Resume is prepared for employers who start their journey from my website rather than digital CV, so they could easily find where to download my digital CV.

4. Back to Top Button

In case employers would end their journey at my portfolio section on the homepage, a Back to Top button is put below the portfolio section for employers to turn back to the landing page and use navigation to browse other sections.

5. Drupal as Backend

Although I didn't have sufficient time to use Drupal views and Json to create content on my website, I employ Drupal to store my previous works, digital CV, experiences in Timeline JS, and create a backend-based contact form. In the future, I would explore more in using Drupal as backend to actively manipulate content and data on my website.

6. Timeline JS

In order to make my experience page more interactive and lively to employers, I adopt two Timeline JSs to showcase my educational and professional experiences respectively.

7. Contact Form and Social Media Links:

For employers who take interest to contact me at the end of their journeys, I placed a formal contact form powered by Drupal as well as social media links.

8. Responsive Pages

As it would be very possible for employers to browse my website by mobile phones in a mobile-first age, I have also created a mobile version of my website to make it responsive to small screens.

Content Requirements

1. Name and Branding Sentence on Landing Page

To capture employers' attention immediately, I put my name and a short branding sentence that best describes my specialty on the landing page.

2. A Short Introductory Paragraph

To help employers get an overview of what I have for an arts and culture column editor position, I placed a short paragraph describing my understanding of arts and culture as

well as previous experiences in writing for arts and culture.

3. Articles on Arts and Culture

As employers at arts and culture channel of new media companies care most about applicants' writing ability according to pre-research, I showcase my best affective and commentary articles on music, films, paintings, theaters, books and cultural phenomenon in the portfolio section, hoping to impress the target employers. And Chinese articles are displayed in Chinese version of my website.

4. Skills and Works

As employers also hope their prospective employees to be proficient in manipulating multimedia skills, I showcase my skills including web design, photography, filming and video editing, audio processing in the second page, with a relative work attached to each skill to add credibility.

5. Educational and Intern Experiences

Interviewees also mentioned that intern experiences related to an editor position are also important, so I placed my previous intern experiences in the third subpage in the form of Timeline JS, with testimonials attached. Also, I added my educational experiences on the subpage in case employers want to know.

Structure Plane

In structure plane, I organized the functions and content I selected in Scope plane into hierarchical structure. Basically, there are six sections constituting the first level of the

navigation bar of my website: Home, Portfolio, Skills, Experience, Resume and Contact. But I merged the Portfolio section into the Home section to address its importance, so that employers might simply click the featured button View Portfolio on the landing page to make the page scrolled down and view my portfolio. And only Experience section has two subsections; one is internship, and the other is education. And the switch between these two sections is enabled by a switch button on the navigation bar of that page. Detailed arrangement of the information on each page is shown in Figures below, sketched through a software named Pencil.

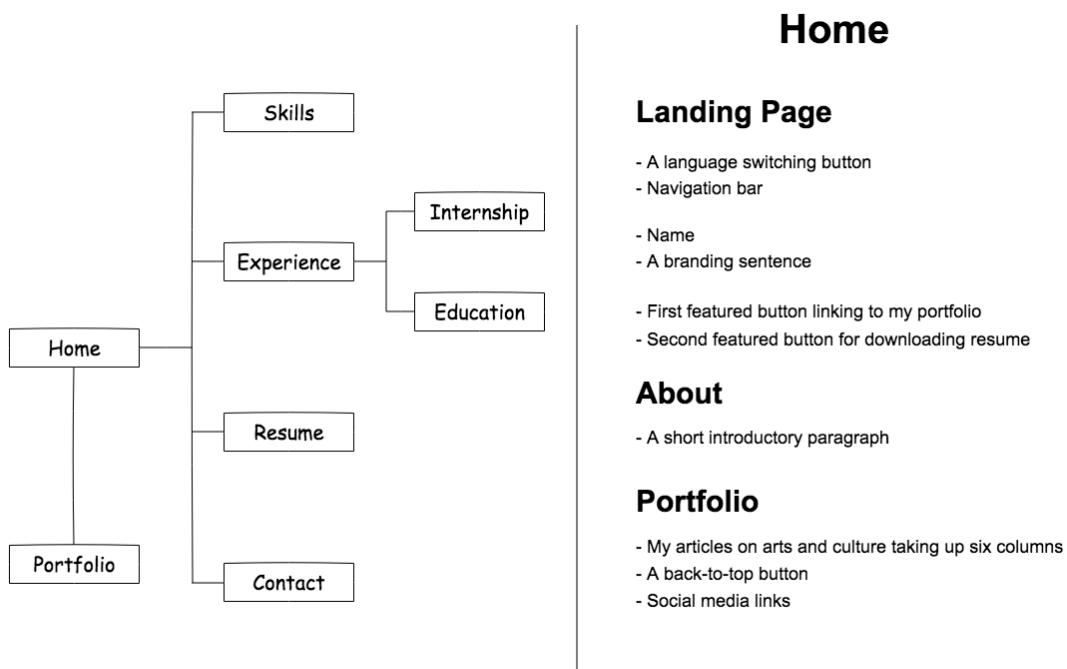


Figure 4 Sitemap and information architecture of Home page

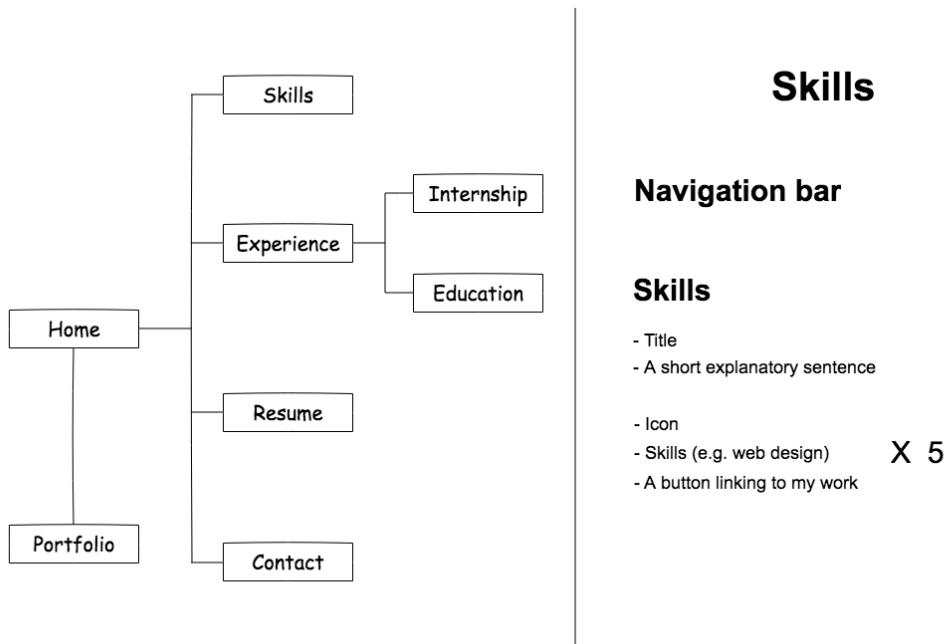


Figure 5 Sitemap and information architecture of Skills page

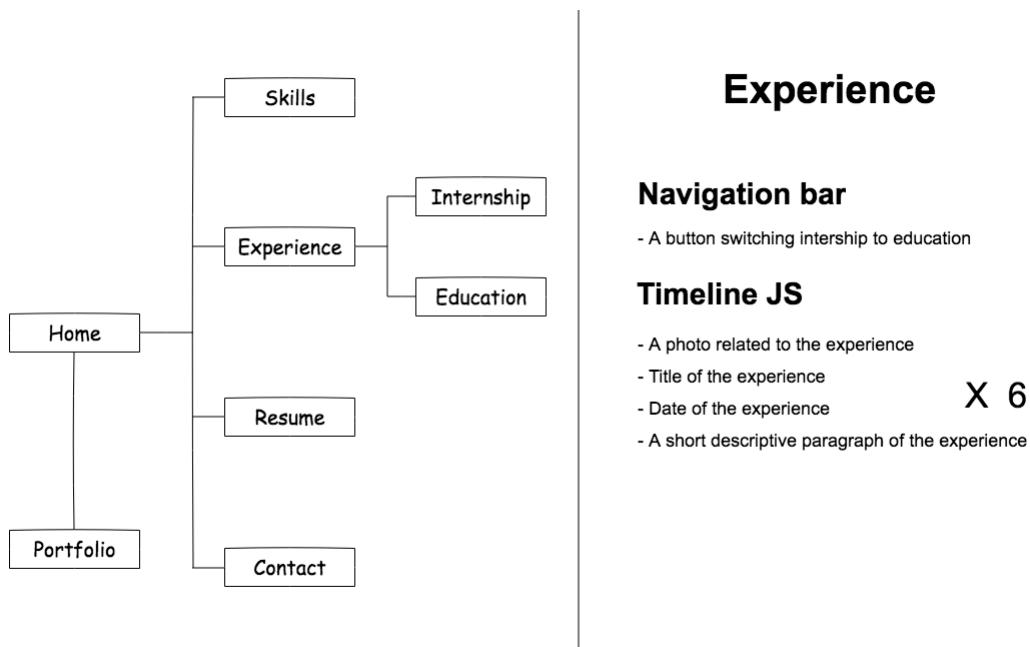


Figure 6 Sitemap and information architecture of Experience page

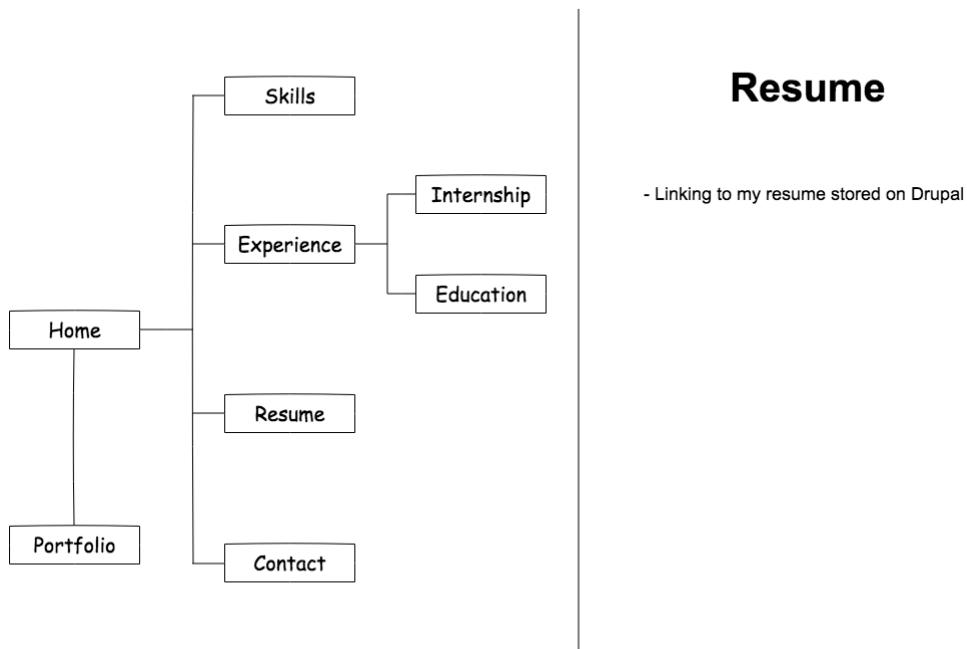


Figure 7 Sitemap and information architecture of Resume page

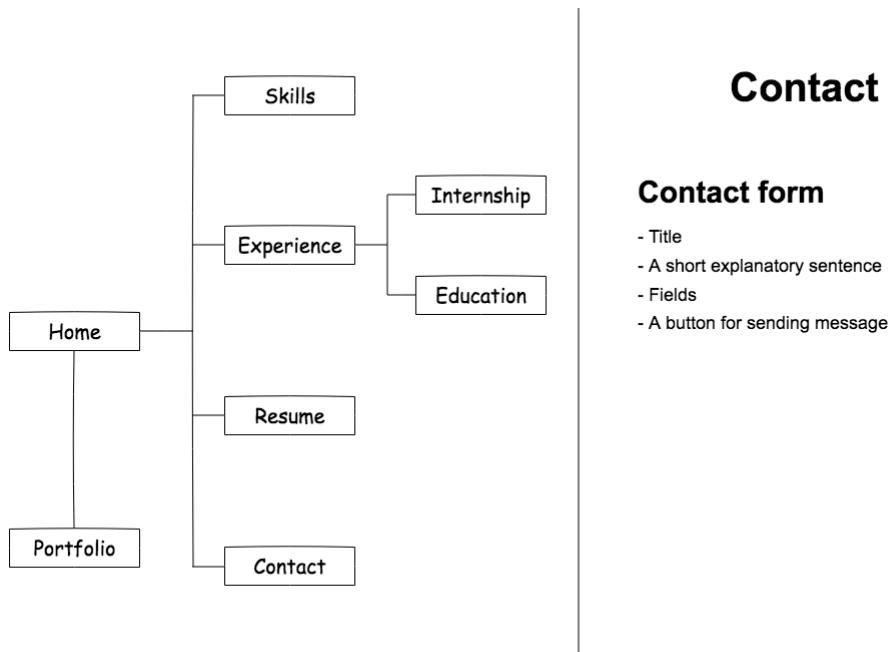


Figure 8 Sitemap and information architecture of Contact page

Skeleton Plane

In Skeleton section, I sketched a basic wireframe through Mockingbird for my personal website, to figure out in what layout and hierarchy should different information on my website be visualized and how navigation and key buttons on the site guide and facilitate employers' journey.

According to the information architecture, I used five pages to display the content, including Home, Skills, Experience, Resume and Contact page. As mentioned in Structure plane, I integrated the Portfolio page into Home page, and attempted to link this section with the landing page by both a featured button named View Portfolio set on the landing page and the Portfolio section on the navigation. And a back-to-top placed under the bottom of Portfolio section would lead employers back to the landing page and go to view other sections through navigation. Also, I added quite many interactive animations on the Home page, for example scroll animations allows content on my site to show up livelier little by little when employers scroll the page down. Amplifying hover effects are applied to each column of article in the Portfolio section, which remind employers that the images in the section are clickable.

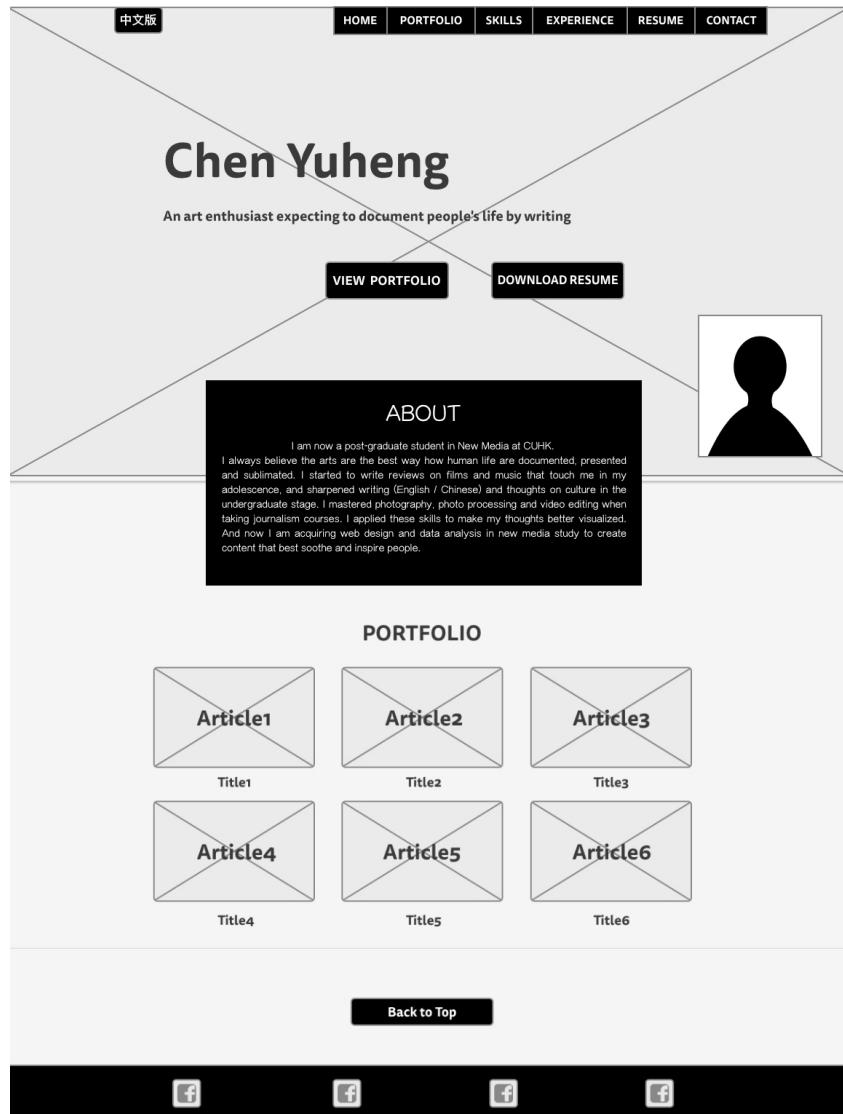


Figure 9 A wireframe of Home page

In each Article page, a short film clip in the format of GIF was implanted on the top of each article, in order to get users more involved into content of my articles. Also, photos were attached throughout the text.

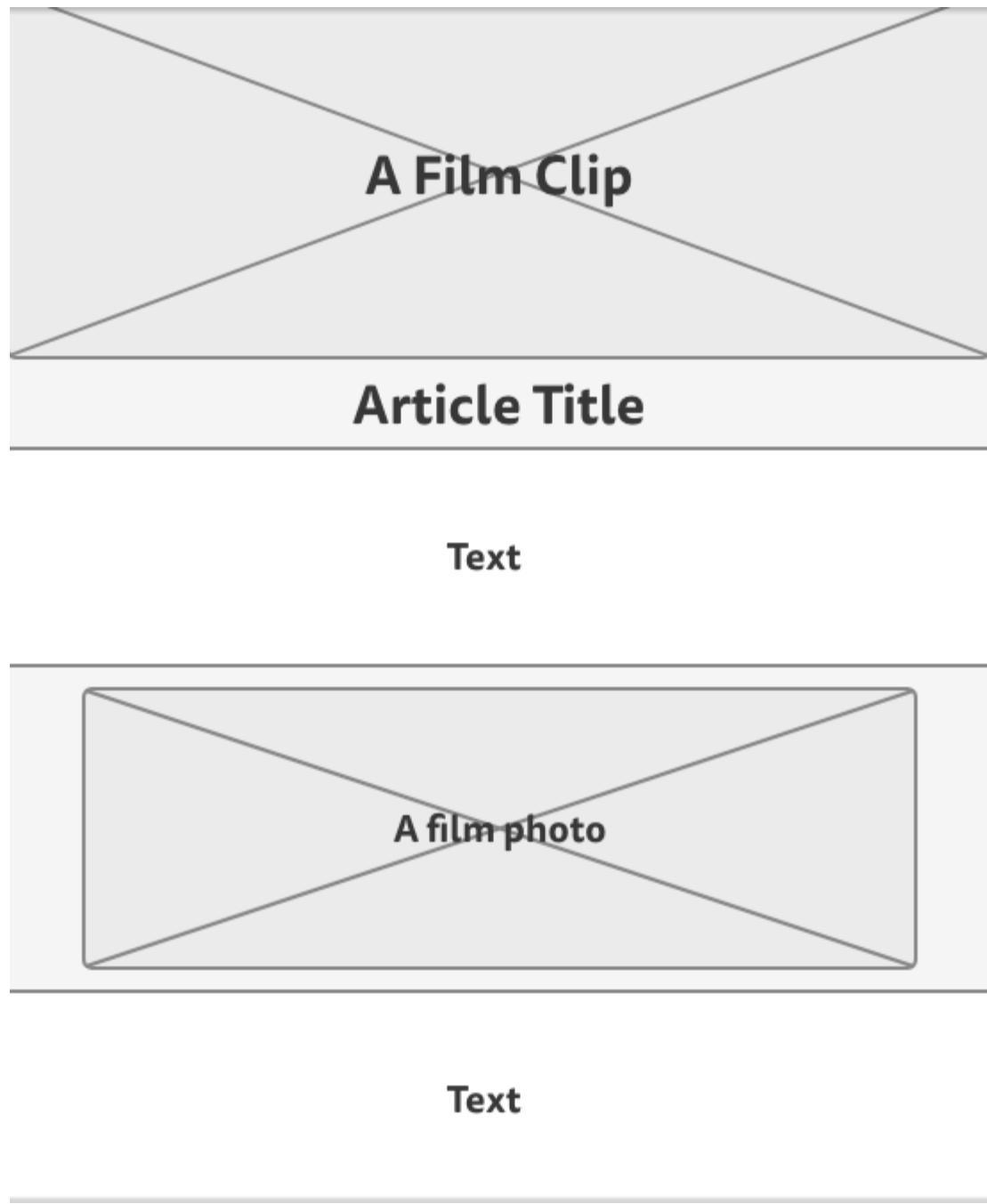


Figure 10 A wireframe of Article page

on the Skill page, primarily navigated to by the navigation bar on the Home page, I attempted to feature the View My Work button attached to each skill, as employers may click it to view my previous work related to a specific skill of me.

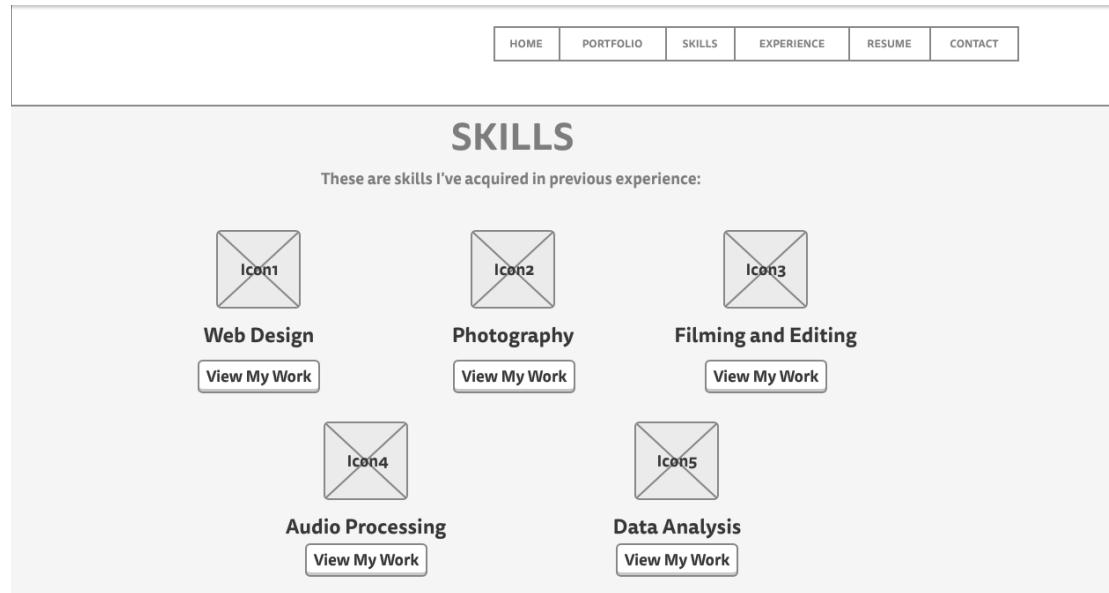


Figure 11 A wireframe of Skills page

The Experience page is divided into two subpages, namely internship and education.

And the switch between these two pages is enabled by a switch button set right beside the navigation bar of the page.

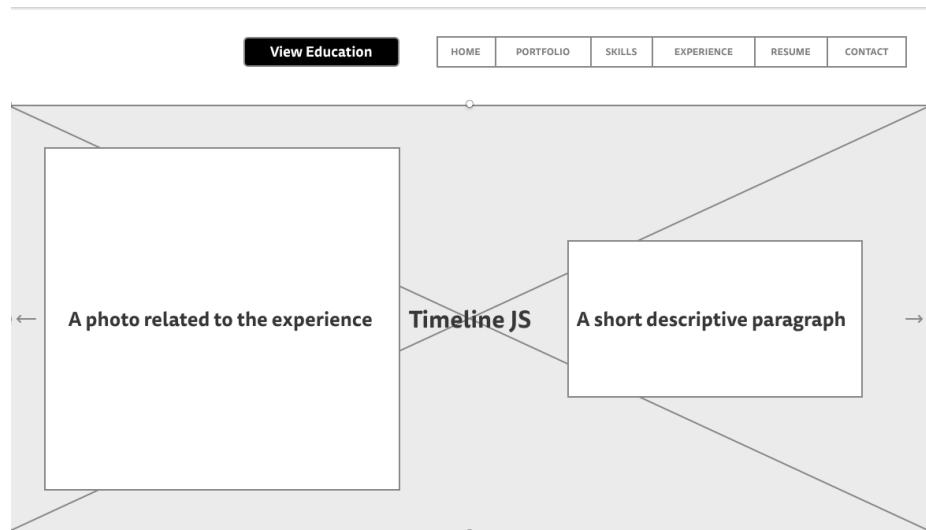


Figure 12 A wireframe of Internship page

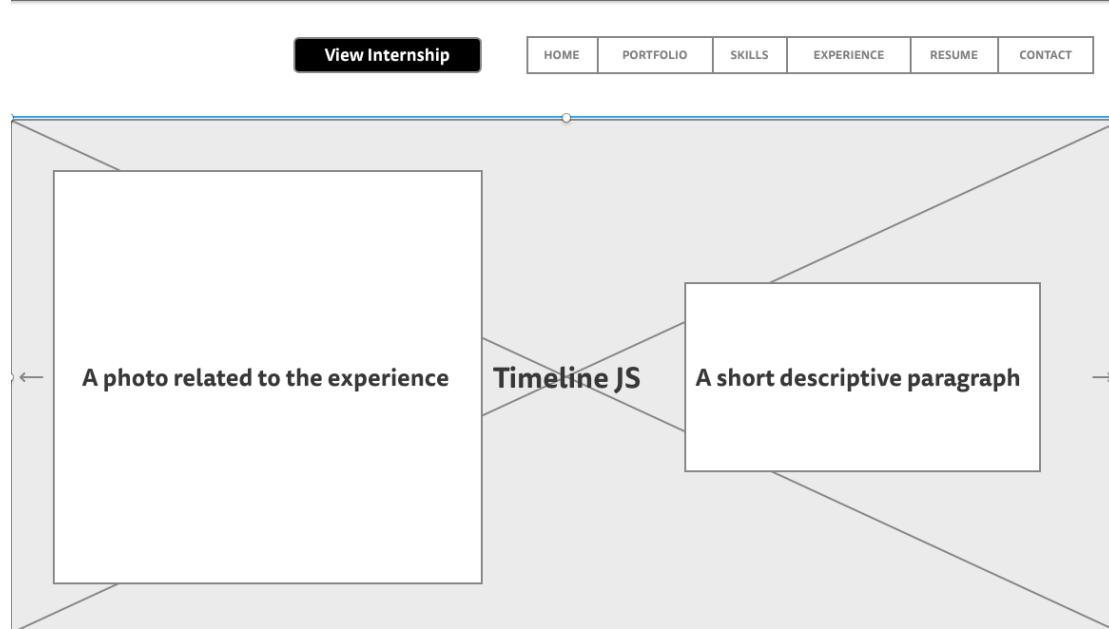


Figure 13 A wireframe of Education page

I don't show the Resume page, as the Resume button on the navigation bar of each page connects directly to an external PDF file of my CV stored on Drupal. The Contact page is also connected with other pages through the Contact button on the navigation bar of each page. Thus, employers might view my resume or contact me on whatever pages of my website.

The wireframe shows a 'Contact form' with a sub-instruction 'Complete all the fields below to send us a message.' Below this are four input fields: 'Your name *' (with a red asterisk), 'Your e-mail address *' (with a red asterisk), 'Subject*' (with a red asterisk), and 'Message*' (with a red asterisk). At the bottom is a 'Send Message' button.

Figure 14 A wireframe of Contact page

Surface Plane

Based on the wireframes of my website, I made decision on images, colors and typography I am planned to use on my website. The basic criterion for me to choose visualized elements was to see whether they were consistent with the tonality my website aimed to convey.

Images

As I targeted arts and culture channel, I aimed to covey a more humanistic, cultural and retro tone through my website. Thus, I set a picture of an art gallery's wall as the background image of my landing page, which features four painting frames at the bottom. I arranged the layout of buttons and text in accordance with the position and shape of the frames, to made them a supporting point of my landing page. Also, I used Photoshop to replace the photo in the last frame with my own portrait, and I let my right hand in the portrait out of the frame, which should be behind the frame, to revive the static image.

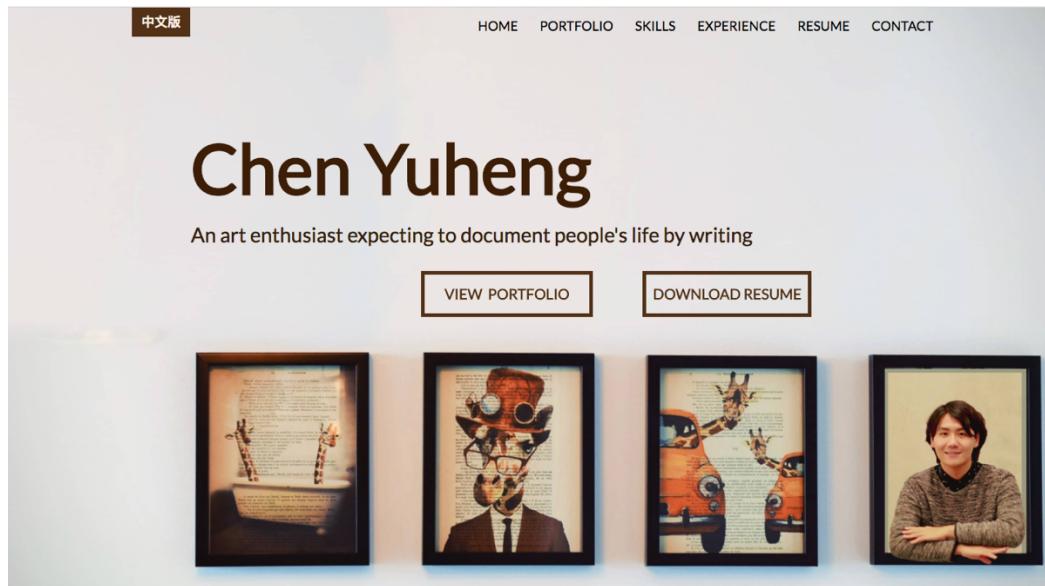


Figure 15 Home page

When I chose covers for columns in Portfolio section, I showed favoritism to intriguing photos, usually featuring interactions between characters in the image, to attract visitors. And one of them in the GIF format displays a short film clip.

A screenshot of the Portfolio section of Chen Yuheng's website. The title "PORTFOLIO" is centered at the top. Below it are six thumbnail images arranged in two rows of three. The top row includes a photo from "Cape No.7: Postcolonial Culture and Indigenous Identities", a photo from "Power and Resistance: A Brighter Summer Day", and a photo from "Léon: The Professional; A Stylistic Analysis". The bottom row includes a painting from "Reflection on The Cliff Walk at Pourville", a photo from "Critique on Lend Me a Tenor", and a photo from "Review of On the Road". At the bottom is a "Back to Top" button.



Figure 16 English and Chinese versions of Portfolio section

Color

An interplay among brown, yellow and black was primarily employed on my website to consist with the retro tone. By addressing the interaction between black and yellow, I attempted to bring the atmosphere of an art gallery alive on my website. The overlap of boxes and colors in the middle of my website was expected to add to the third dimensionality of my web page.



Figure 17 About box in the middle of the Home page

Typography

Again, to fit to the tone my website conveys, I selected Optima and Century Gothic, two simple and humanistic font styles for my homepage, and Optima was dominantly used throughout the Article pages.

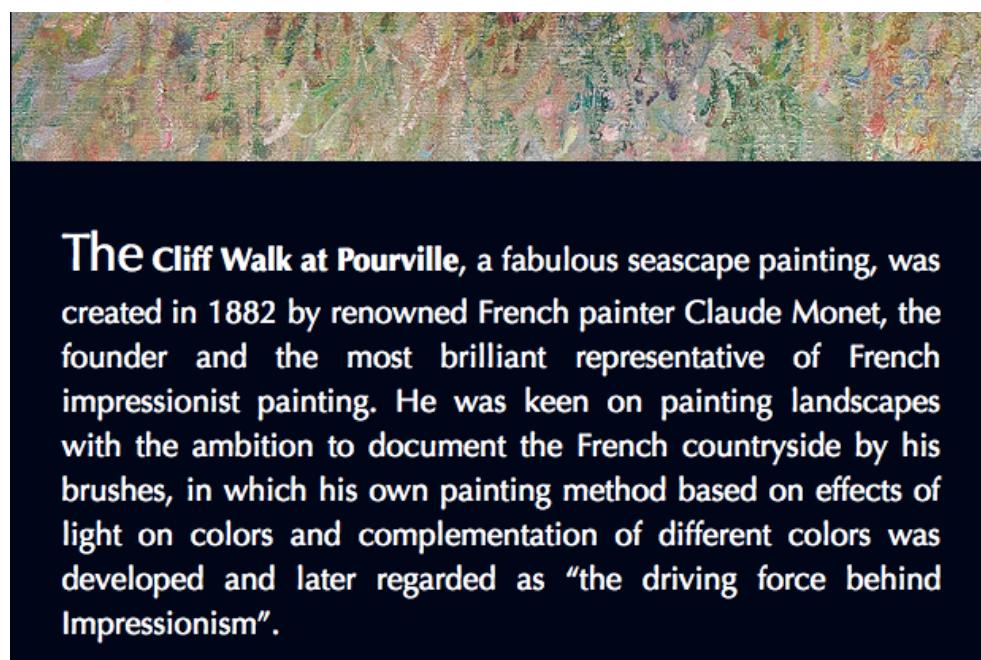


Figure 18 The first paragraph of Article 4

But for Skill and Contact page, I used Sans-serif, as it was simpler for browsing and I didn't have to put retro font styles in Skill and Contact sections.

Test

After finishing the five planes of User Experience and a prototype of my website was created, it came to the last part of design thinking process: Test. For testing I employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to detect problems of my design so that I could make some adjustments. For qualitative test, I adopted usability test to examine whether my website is appropriate to find information and easy to use, while for the quantitative test, I performed a A/B test through Google Analytics and used Google Analytics to build up a dashboard for examination of user behaviors.

Usability Test

To test the usability of my personal website before delivering it to my target users, I invited five of my friends to join the test. One of them had experience working for a human resources department; one was from computer science background; another one had worked as an editor in Tencent, and the other two came from social science background. In the first step, I allowed them to browse freely on my personal website and voice their opinions whenever they felt uncomfortable, and I took some notes whenever problems were found. In the second step, I assigned them the task to find my educational experience on my website, and also I did some records whenever their

movement slowed down. Overall, the test took around 5 minutes for each participant. And three of them used computer to browse my website, while two of them used mobile phones.

As a result, below are problems of my website detected by test participants as well as the adjustments I had made.

Problems detected	Adjustments made
No navigation offered after viewing portfolio	Added a back-to-top button
Article pages not opened in new windows	Added target=" _blank" after the page link
Lack of interactive effects on the Home page	Added interactive effects
Long response time after buttons clicked	Compressed all the images displayed
CV should be viewed before downloaded	Deleted download="" after the CV link
No Chinese version for mainland users	Created the Chinese version
Irresponsive to small screens like mobile phones	Created mobile version for my website

Figure 19 Problems detected and adjustments made

However, there are still another two problems I can't resolve at this stage. One is that I found the font style of Chinese characters changed in less-known browsers on Windows system like the 360 Browser in mainland China. Also, the navigation bar toggle in mobile version of my website created through Pingendo 3.0 responded for a long while when participants clicked the button, so they might ignore the navigation bar in the mobile version as they couldn't wait for it to expand.

The reason why I assigned participants to find my educational experience was that I wanted to know whether the switch button on the Experience page was prominent enough for them to notice. But the result showed 4 of them felt difficult to find the button, even though I had altered its color and moved it from the left to the middle. Therefore, in the future, I would create a dropdown list for the Experience section on the navigation bar and make professional experience and educational experience paralleled with each other.

A/B Test

In the Portfolio section, I used to set a GIF image as the cover of my article to attract users' attention, but some of the test participants told me the GIF images might have lowered the response speed of my website. I had to decide whether I should keep the GIF image as cover or not. Therefore, the basic objective of the A/B test on my personal website was to discuss whether users stay longer and browse more pages on my website with an animated element or not. So I created a vibrant version for my website without the GIF image as a cover of the article.

PORTFOLIO

Cape No.7: Postcolonial Culture and Indigenous Identities

Animated Cover

Power and Resistance: A Brighter Summer Day

Léon: The Professional: A Stylistic Analysis

Reflection on The Cliff Walk at Pourville

Critique on Lend Me a Tenor

Review of On the Road

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PORTFOLIO

Cape No.7: Postcolonial Culture and Indigenous Identities

Static Cover

Power and Resistance: A Brighter Summer Day

Léon: The Professional: A Stylistic Analysis

Reflection on The Cliff Walk at Pourville

Critique on Lend Me a Tenor

Review of On the Road

Back to Top

Figure 20 Original (top) and vibrant (bottom) versions of Portfolio section

Overview

The test was initiated from 4th December 2017, and ended on 11th December 2017, lasting 7 days. A total of 528 sessions had been conducted on users.

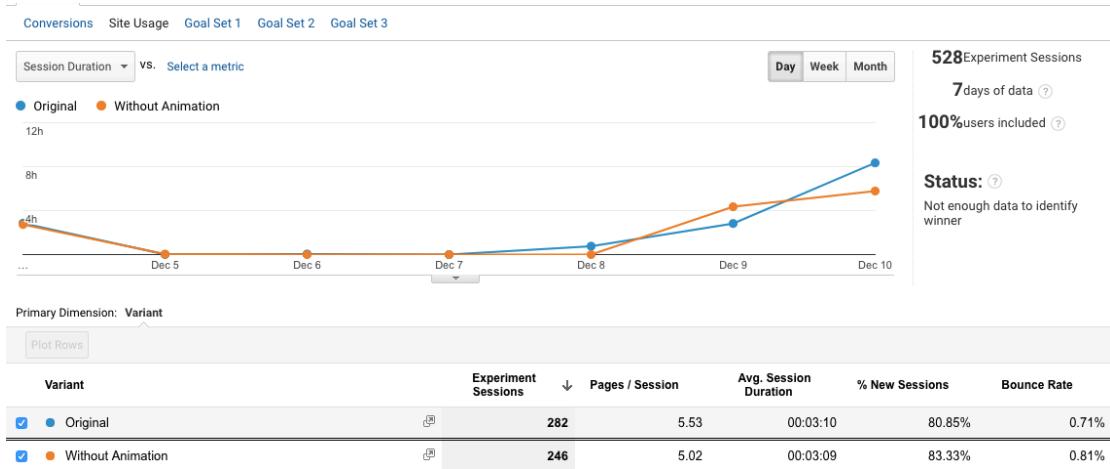


Figure 21 Chart of session duration of the websites in the A/B test

Prominent Results

Before analyzing the data, it is important to note that I updated a new version of my Homepage on 9th December 2017 during the A/B experiment, so that might influence the results by making the disparity between original version and vibrant version less prominent. Thus, when referring to concluded statistics to support the findings, I would also refer to the chart to view the results set before 9th December 2017.

The first chart below indicates that the original version with animation generally made users to browse more pages on my website. Users browsed an average of 5.53 pages on the original version, while the vibrant version without animation only made their users go over average 5.02 pages. And the disparity was even more significant before 9th December 2017.

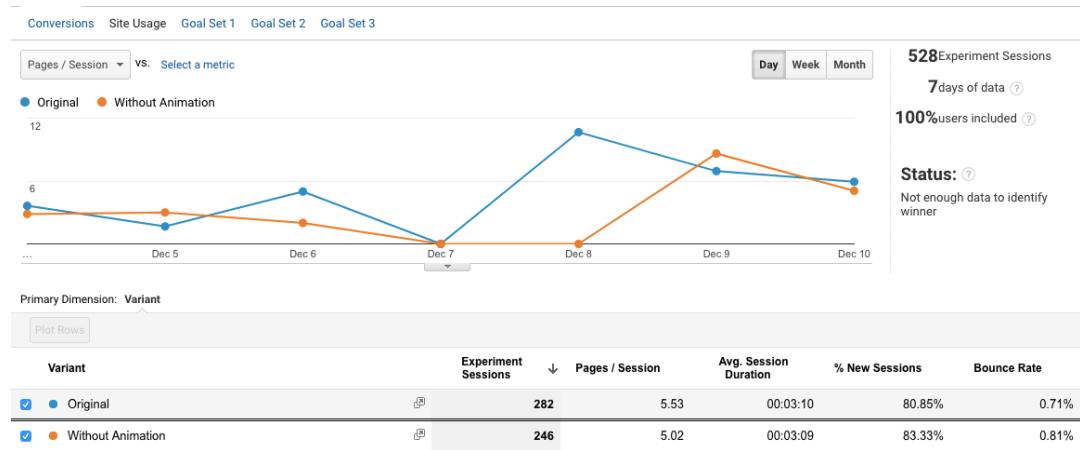


Figure 22 Chart of pages/session of the websites in the A/B test

The concluded data of average session duration shows the time users spent on the homepage of both versions are almost equivalent at 3:10 and 3:09 respectively, but the result might be affected by the latest update, because according to the chart, the average session duration of the original site was much higher than that of vibrant version without animation.

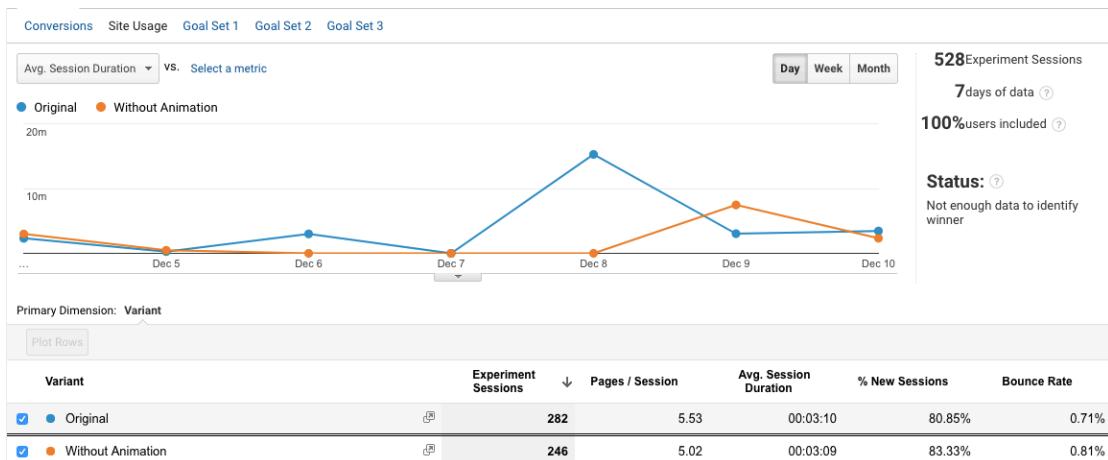


Figure 23 Chart of average session duration of the websites in the A/B test

The third chart tells the discrepancy in the bounce rate, one of the most significant indicators, between the original version and the vibrant version without animation. The original one tended to retain users better with a bounce rate of 0.71%, while the bounce

rate of the one without animated element hit a higher bounce rate at 0.81%, though still low.

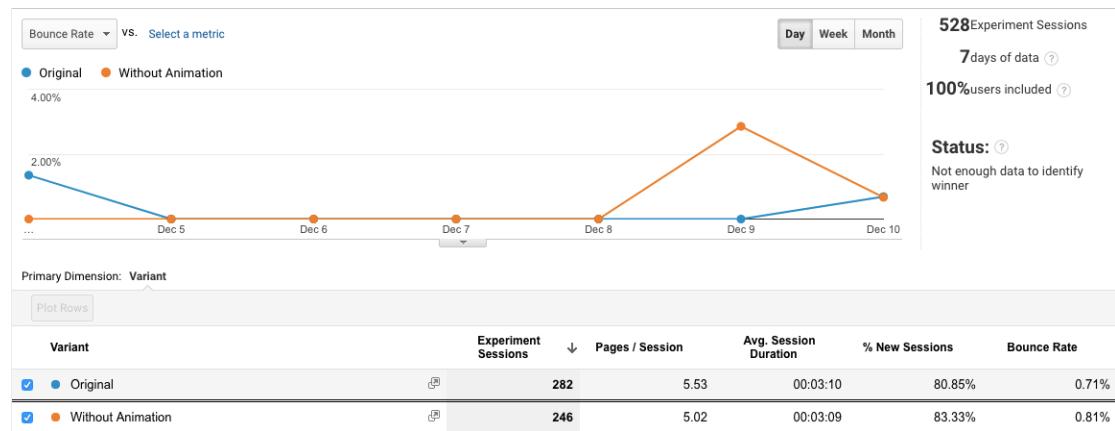


Figure 24 Chart of bounce rate of the websites in the A/B test

Therefore, in regard of a better performance of the original website version with an animated element in pages browsed, average session duration and bounce rate, I may stick to using the animated cover for my article on the film in the future.

Dashboard Design

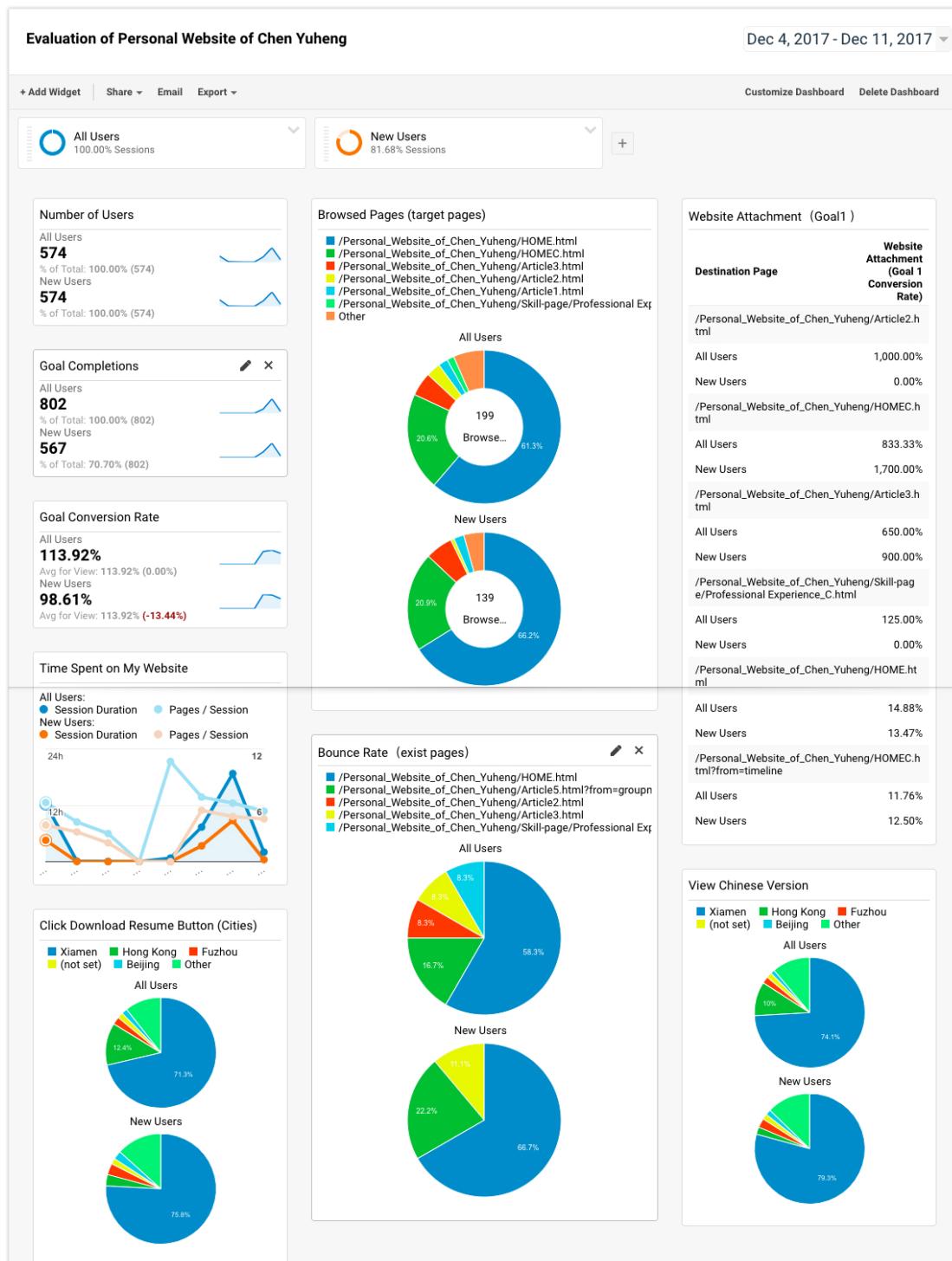


Figure 25 Customized dashboard for personal website of Chen Yuheng

After I published my personal website, I attempted to use Google Analytics to monitor how my website performed by analyzing users' behaviors. But the data seemed scattered in Google Analytics' homepage, thus I decided to build up my own customized dashboard that integrated all the metrics I wanted to know into a huge statistics entity.

The most basic metrics I added on my dashboard are the total number of users who visited my site, the time they spent on my website and also pages they browsed. There have been 574 users visiting my site in 7 days, and the peak came on last weekend regarding time users spent and pages they browsed.

The second collection of metrics, also the most important ones, I placed on the dashboard were the goals I set and the conversion rate of my website. Actually, I set 13 goals, but only 3 goals have been achieved. First goal was to have users click the Download Resume button on the landing page of my website. 179 users have achieved this goal, and I attempted to know where they came from by relating the goal with their geographical locations, and that might imply where I should hunt for a job. Except for users from my hometown, users from Hong Kong ranked second in clicking my resume. The results of the second goal related to pages browsed indicate that article pages are where users like to go, apart from two homepages, and that means the featured button on the landing page and the animated cover over the article work well. And the results of the third goal show 252 users would like to enter the Chinese version of my website,

who I also decided to know about their locations. In total, my goals have been achieved for 802 times. The conversion rate is a bit too high at 113.92%, and it may because I just set some easy goals for users.

In the last part, I was interested in the bounce rate and the exist pages of my personal website. And I related the bounce rate to pages where users left most from. I found users usually bounced from home and article pages. Thus, in the future, I might build better navigation for users to jump from article pages to other sections of my personal website.

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