

# Conceptual statement

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Flattie has been a rollercoaster of a project, mainly because of the constant scope change throughout the whole development cycle, even when the due date was only 3 weeks away. That fact, however, did not in any way deter us from reaching our initial goal, which is to inform students of the current housing situation in Auckland and show them where they can find a place to live. What I imply by inform is to educate them on the current renting prices and what their reasonable expectations should be. In order to achieve that goal our team had to meet a few criteria: reach out to as many people as possible and have access to certain datasets and APIs. The first criteria was met by choosing a platform - the Web since it is a platform agnostic medium. As for the available data, that was a challenge on its own. Albeit the vast availability of different datasets, picking the right one was crucial, since it would affect every step of the project development, as we have learned. We had to consult with Figure.NZ and after significant consideration, we settled with MBIE Rental bond data ([mbie.govt.nz](http://mbie.govt.nz), 2016) and TradeMe API ([developer.trademe.co.nz](http://developer.trademe.co.nz), 2013). An issue arose straight away, which we realised was universal for almost all governmental datasets - their data requires plenty of prior manipulation in order to become usable, that almost feels as if the concept of open and accessible data is completely defeated.

The project development cycle was set up and structured during the idea development stage with goals to be met at the end of each week, initially we have even implemented a Scrum Agile methodology, yet we quickly came to realise that a set structure is not going to work out due to a different class timetable for each team member as well as us being relatively inexperienced in Agile. We ended up following a more relaxed approach, assigning an area to work on for each member and then discussing the progress during our weekly meetings. That worked well in the beginning of a project, during a stage where we had to learn certain software, JS libraries, and APIs. However, that mellow approach did not do us any favours with the deadline date drawing nearer, as we did not know how to take our learned material and put it into something practical. That is when we came up with an idea of 48-hour weekend hackfests and just within two weekends we were able to produce an MVP. I have personally come to a realisation that when something needs to get done in a short period of time, a hackfest is the answer, it simply puts a person in the right mindset.

The ever changing scope was the result of us being uninformed to an extent, in other words, we did not realise what we were getting ourselves into and the complexity of technologies we were about to use. I am mainly referring to React JS, a framework which requires a significant amount of prior knowledge and practice we simply did not have. It also became clear that a complex approach is not always the best, as we managed to achieve roughly the same result with vanilla JavaScript.

All things considered, the final application ticks almost all the points of our initial goal, I feel the only area in which we could have done better is informing the users of the current Auckland housing crisis, that could have been done by spending more time adapting available datasets and implementing more of them in the final app.

## References:

[1] Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. (2016, October 7). Rental bond data. Retrieved October 31, 2016, from <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/housing-property/sector-information-and-statistics/rental-bond-data>

[2] Developer API Reference. (2013). Retrieved October 31, 2016, from <http://developer.trademe.co.nz/>