

Final Web Design Report for COMM5961 2017

Dec. 11, 2017

HU QIANHAO (1155101614)

Introduction

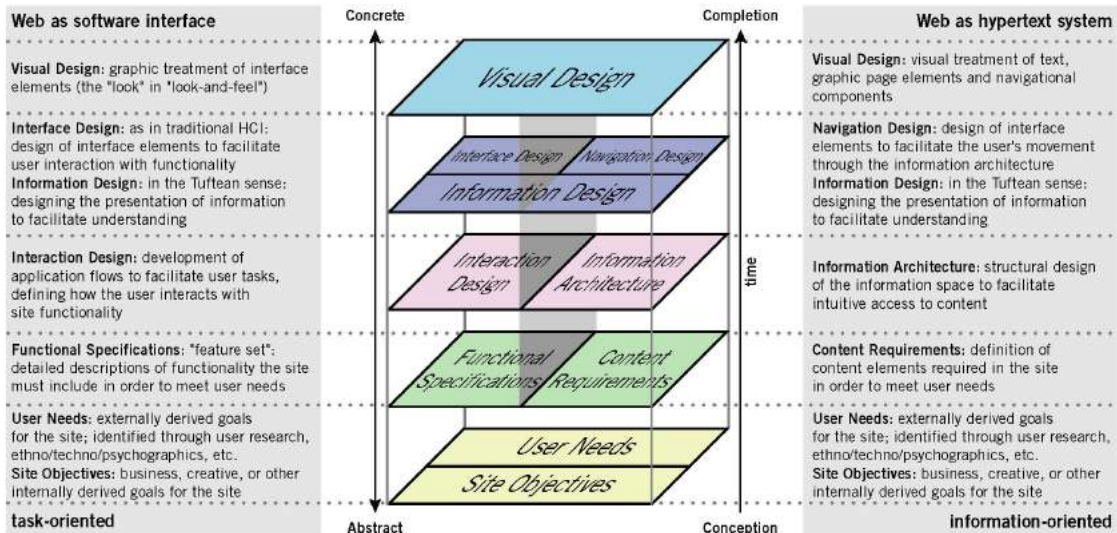
From my aspect of view, web designing is about conveying the message. There are saying that “web designing is all about utilizing the best tools”, which I’m not really into, and “web designing is all about giving the users what they want”, which I also believe in. The most persuading sentence is “web designing is all about typography”, and I found it extremely hard, especially mixed with responsive design. Back to the topic here, it is “web designing is all about constructing the five planes”, and that’s what this report is covering, according to my site’s condition.

The Elements of User Experience

Jesse James Garrett
jig@jig.net

30 March 2000

A basic duality: The Web was originally conceived as a hypertextual information space; but the development of increasingly sophisticated front- and back-end technologies has fostered its use as a remote software interface. This dual nature has led to much confusion, as user experience practitioners have attempted to adapt their terminology to cases beyond the scope of its original application. The goal of this document is to define some of these terms within their appropriate contexts, and to clarify the underlying relationships among these various elements.



This picture is incomplete: The model outlined here does not account for secondary considerations (such as those arising during technical or content development) that may influence decisions during user experience development. Also, this model does not describe a development process, nor does it define roles within a user experience development team. Rather, it seeks to define the key considerations that go into the development of user experience on the Web today.

© 2000 Jesse James Garrett

<http://www.jig.net/ia/>

Strategy

Site Objectives

The goals should be considered first literally when doing anything. It could be a horizon moving towards, a mountain climbing to, an exam to be prepared, or just some message to be conveyed. For any portfolios that aims headhunters or human resource managers, the goal should be the job, which means the portfolio itself should act like a soundbox roaring "hire me" continuously. However, getting hired is the ultimate goal for the whole flow which should also includes real life connections, interviews and solid experiences. In my opinion, the portfolio site should just act like a live hardcopy portfolio, helping the audiences, which could always be the employers, to know me well. So this site is made just to demonstrate stuff which make the audience love me. Thankfully, I may have loads of them.

It is hard to summarize the paragraph above into a single phrase that clarify the objective. The reason is because it needs to be more precise for the “stuff” I demonstrate and the “audience” that I may encounter. So here comes the User Needs.

User Needs

Websites are made to serve its users. I call them audience because this site is a portfolio and no user generated contents will be made, therefore they are indeed audience. The problem is, what kind of people are my audience? The fast answer is whoever that visit this site. Though may sounds stupid, this answer is the absolute correct one. In a world dominated by social network, personal websites are rare and the traffic can be very low, even to the celebrities, let alone a common guy like me. Therefore, whoever visit this site must got the link from me or whoever knows me well. I give it a little imagine and comes up with two kinds of personas.

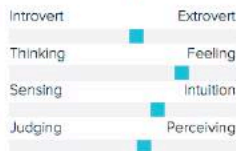
Persona: Video Game Media Expert



Most likely from Zhihu or CowLevel

Age: Around 32
Work: Editor
Family: Lonely Alone
Location: Beijing, China
Character: Lively

Personality



Interested Willing to Try Knowledgeable

Goals

- To find a person who shares knowledge and holds great opinions
- To find a person who have ability and familiar with tool chains in multimedia

Frustrations

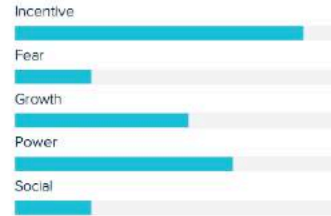
- Too much tech-savvy stuff
- Other things they may see from where they come from, such as essays about interactive narration.

Bio

This person was born in arcade hype in 80s China, and grows with knock-off Famicoms and cracked Playstations. He (She) graduated with the rise of MMOs and devoted himself (herself) into gaming industry. He (She) then suffered from the immature and money-extorting nature of Chinese gaming markets, decided to write things about rational games.

He (She) knew me and my personal site via my essays in Zhihu or CowLevel, hoping to find someone sharing the same ideas and can help him (her) in working things out.

Motivation



Brands & Influencers



Preferred Contents



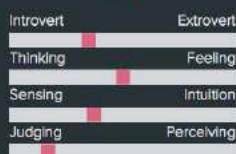
Persona: Internet Company Department Head



Most likely from my connections

Age: Around 38
Work: Manager
Family: Just married
Location: Hangzhou, China
Character: Deliberate

Personality



Busy Devoting to Work Judge of Talent

Goals

- To find a future product manager
- To find a relatively skilled rookie suitable in variety of works
- To find a potential talent for where they may have use of

Frustrations

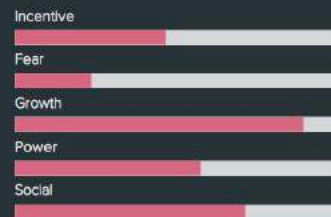
- Loads of irrelevant contents
- Mediocre visual styles
- The lack of diversity in demonstrated skills

Bio

This person got a social science diploma but ended in working in a Internet company. He (She) was astonished by the original iPhone and soon became a fan of Apple and Steve Jobs. After missing the great chance brought by Taobao, digging the business potential in Internet products became his (her) first priority. Therefore he (she) learns a lot in TED.

He (she) knew me via my connections, mostly from my University and my internship. He (she) visits my site to find my potential in working in this field, and hoping to find someone to do odd jobs in his (her) startup project.

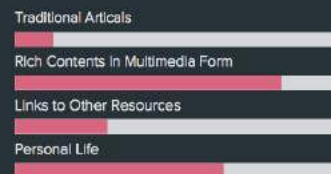
Motivation



Brands & Influencers



Preferred Contents



For those who knew me by my study in interactive narration, or simply gaming, may want to read more about the stories and how do I present them. For those who knew me by my school projects and real life connections in new media business, they may want to see the diversity of my works and the potential in it. Frankly speaking, they are seeking two different types of content with little intersection.

So the final goal for my website is here: *Satisfy these two kinds of audience using one portfolio.*

Scope

Functional Specifications

This website has one and only function, which is present whatever the audience want to see and it happens to be prepared.

Content Requirements

This website needs following basic contents:

- My Curriculum Vitae
- My collections of works
- My design works
- My development works
- The experience I have
- My latest gaming / interactive narration essay
- etc.

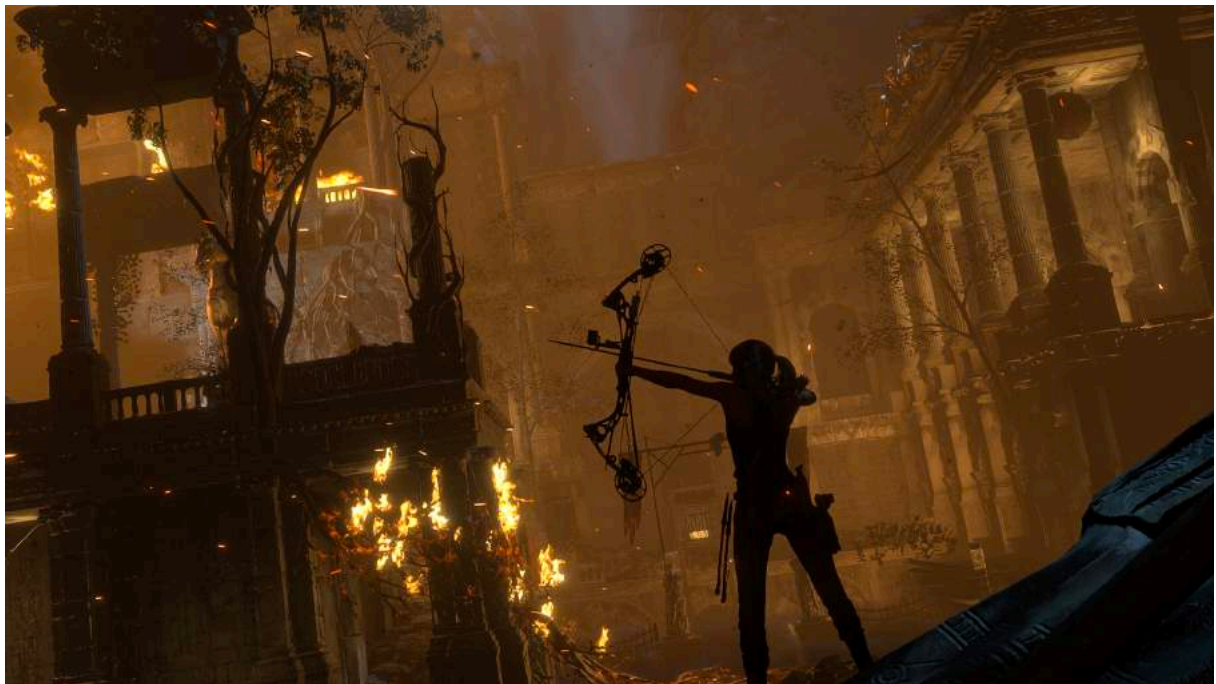
Structure

According to the studies above, I need to have a deliberate designed structure, interactively and informatively. The main problem is letting people not seeing what they don't want to see, rather than letting people see what they want to see. A traditional top-to-bottom node based website may be just too open, and it's simply weird to setup an account system, or even just a choice to

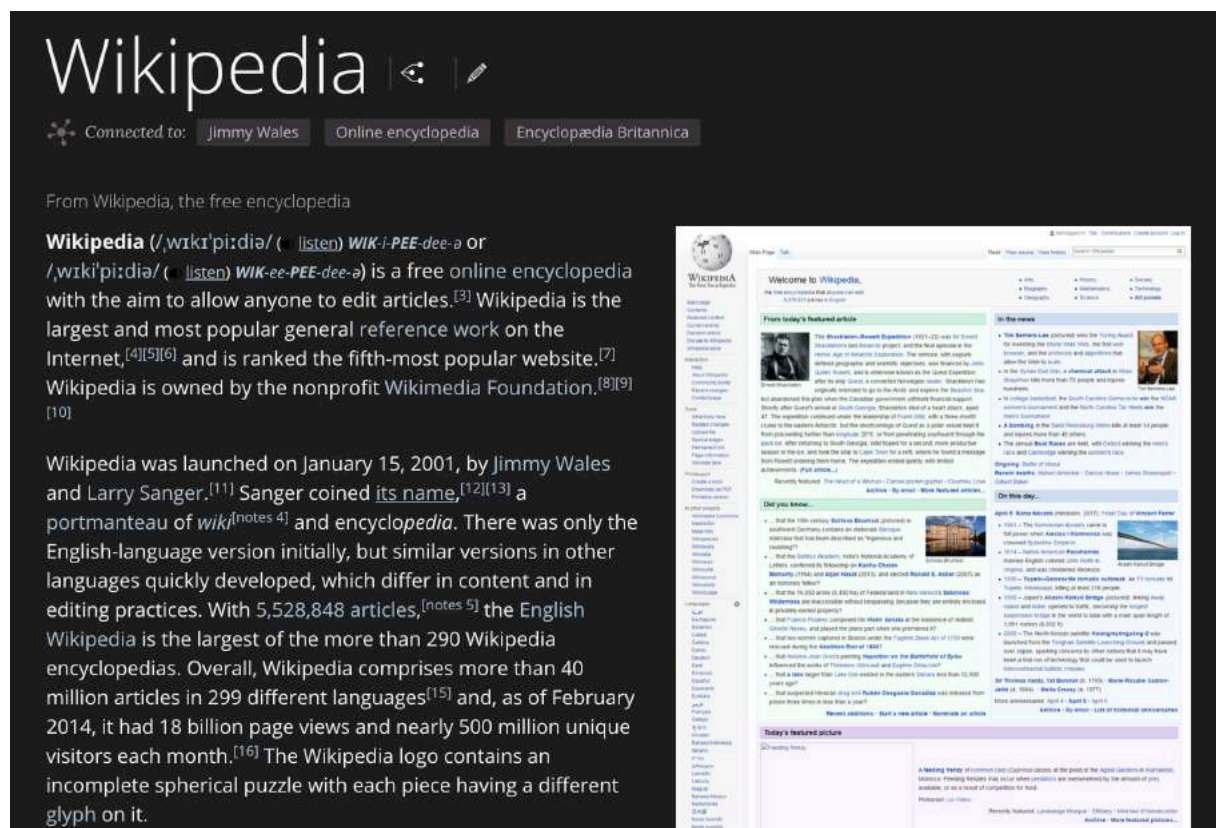
choose from different versions. It is easy to understand that nobody expects the answer to be “I’m whomever you want me to be” when asking “Who you are.” Sentences like this could be considered meticulously sly.

So explicit different information flow doesn’t work, how do I build an implicit one? Actually, it’s quite my thing because conveying message is just storytelling. It’s time for my interactive narration knowledge to play the hero.

Video games are the playbooks of implicit information flow as the designers are always trying to guide the players through the game while letting them feel that they’re clearing the stage because of their “understanding” of the game.



In Naughty Dog's *Uncharted* franchise and Crystal Dynamics' *Tomb Raider* franchise, all the objects that players can interact with are in a specific and consistent color of white, including the edges that Drake can climb upon and the rope switches that Lara can shoot at, giving the players direct instructions where their next moves are.



This reminds me of the structure of Wikipedia, one thing that often cost me hours checking out what's connected to what I need to know. Following by what's connected to what's connected to what I need to know, and the loop just keeps itself.

That is some information flow just what I need. The audience start from one thing they may know a little about it and want to know more, and they ended up learning the details of the connections.

Skeleton

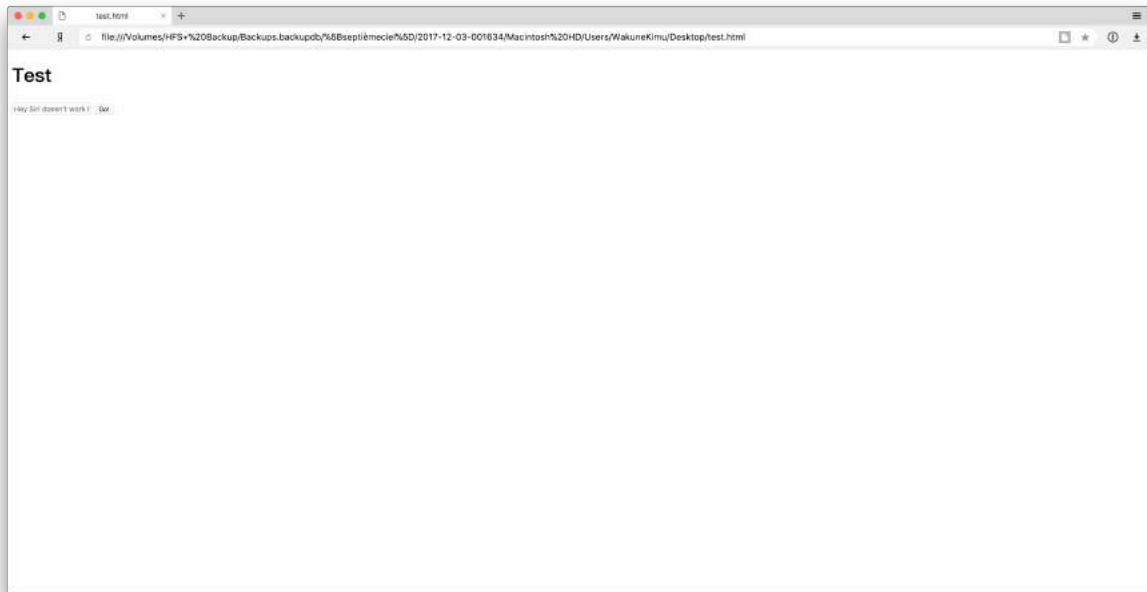
Due to the non-linear nature of the website, there shouldn't be a navigation bar or column. Instead, the implicit information flow mentioned above should guide the audience through the contents of the portfolio. So how to make this work? The Wikipedia's way is linking everything up, which is suitable but have several restrains that I don't want. First of all, it is not fully implicit since the users would know what will come up next after the page loading up and showing the links. What's more, the links works passively to the audience and they just "following" the links, not "discovering" the content by themselves.

My gaming knowledge saves me out of this again.

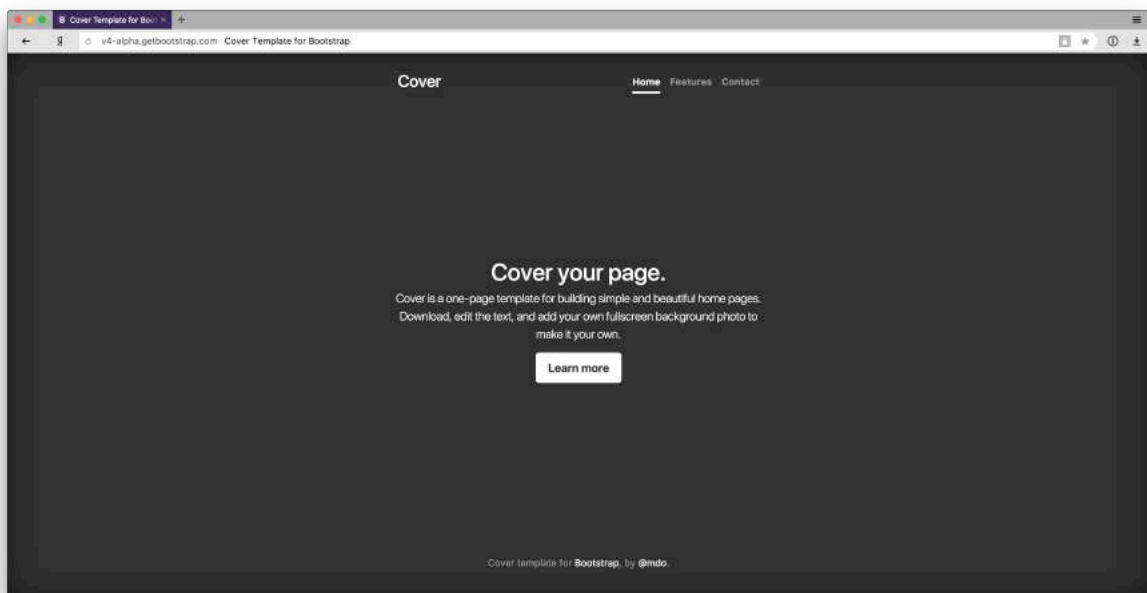


In *Her Story*, the best indie game in 2015, the player digs out a whole story of a murder case by searching any word in a database and check the five earliest video clips. In each video clip, the heroine will say something to appealing. If the player notice that, a new searching keyword comes out. The player has to pay attention and think it over and over again before getting the whole story out.

I really enjoyed this method of approach and I'd like to utilize it in my portfolio.



So the prototype of my homepage is this, a single search box.



And all the inner pages was set up by this template, of course without the navigation bar.

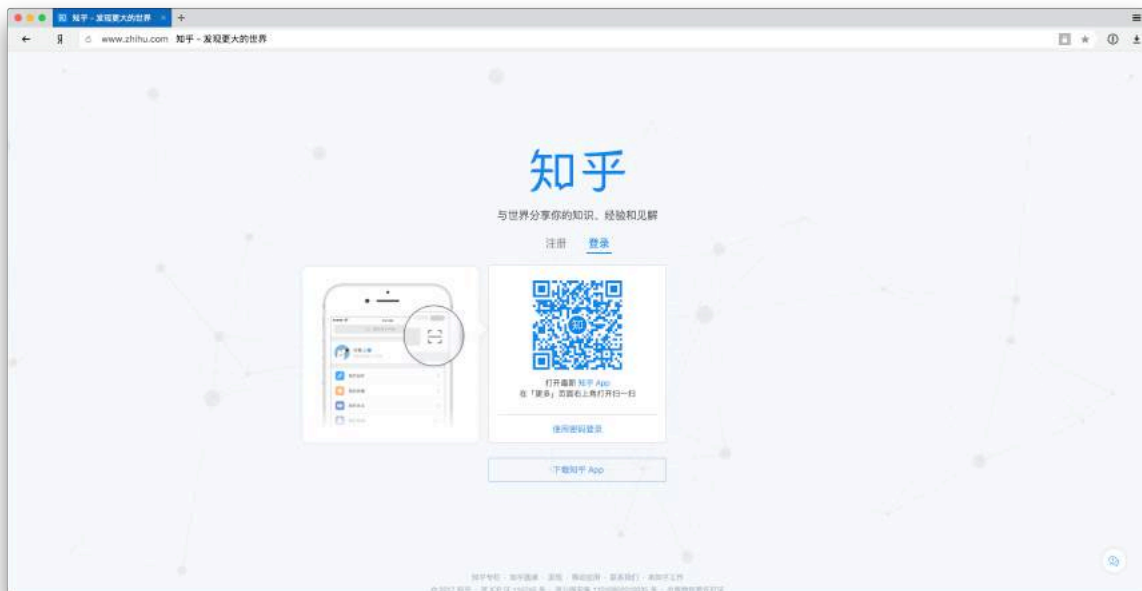
So how does it work? Due to the uncertainty what people may ask, I decide to use nature language analysis in this. First thing come up on my mind is [Google's Cloud Nature Language API](#) and it works just in the way I need. However, it relies on a backend and I can't have it under the restriction of Pantheon. Then I searched for a pure javascript library for a while and I found [nlp-compromise](#), which can extract the nouns in a phrase. Though not perfect, it is enough for my portfolio.

So here comes the final solution: The user start by visiting the homepage and type anything expected. The window redirect itself to the corresponding page if there's a bingo. After browse through the page, the user dig out new stuff and start searching again. By this loop, the user can know just exact what they want to know without encountering anything unwanted.

What's more, I decided to add something special for those who comes for my interactive narration stories. I hide an easter egg triggered by the famous [Konami Code](#), opens up a new page telling the story of my avatar and my portfolio's favicon.

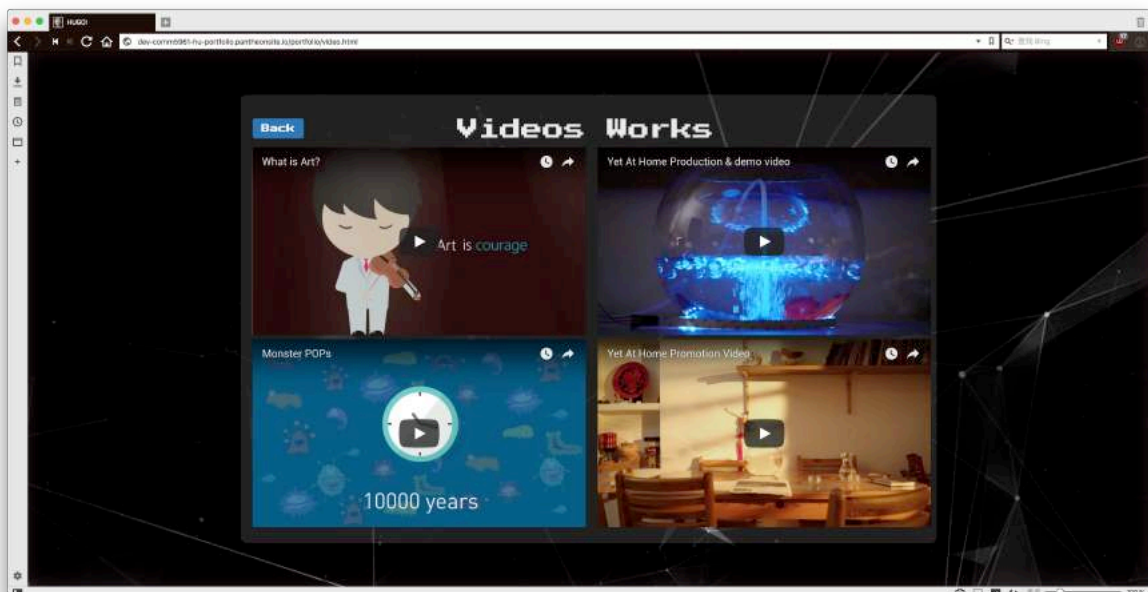
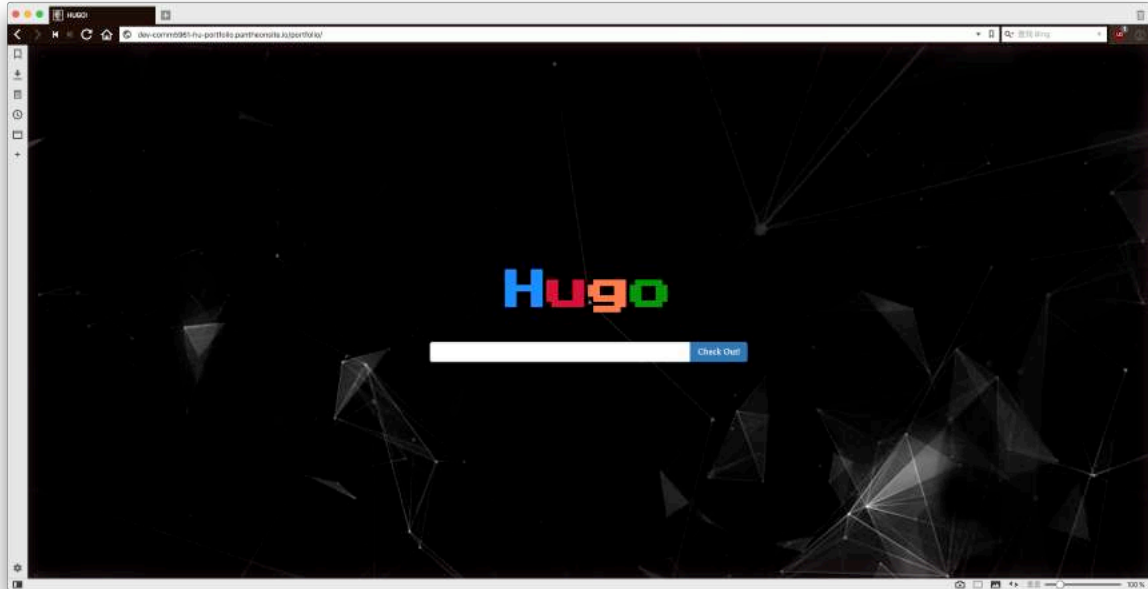
Surface

The surface level is all about coolness.



At first, I want to design some background just like [Zhihu](#), however the pure css animation results in a performance not ideal and I decide to work this out by looping a seconds length

video clip on the background. With some translucent masks and some Google web fonts, the design of the pages can be consistent in a retro game type of futuristic mood.



You're more than welcomed to [visit the site](#) and give it a try.

Usability Test

I requested 5 of my friends to visit my site and tell me how do they think of it. The questions are:

1. Can you start off visiting the inner pages?
2. Can you see the application promotion of mine?
3. Does it work in a good performance?
4. Do you enjoy the design of it?
5. How can I improve it according to you?

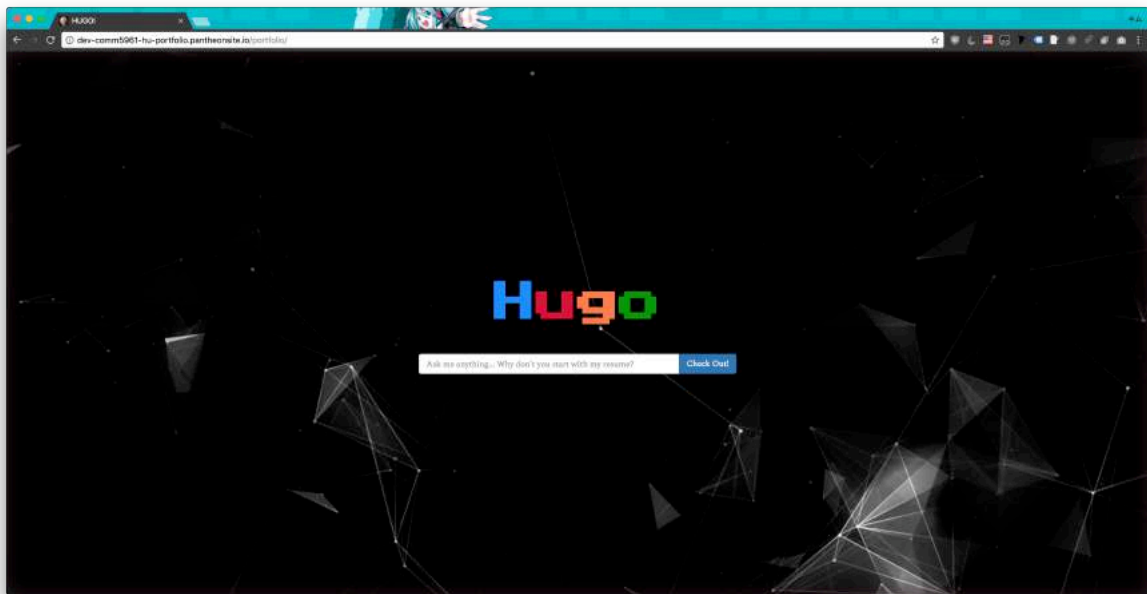
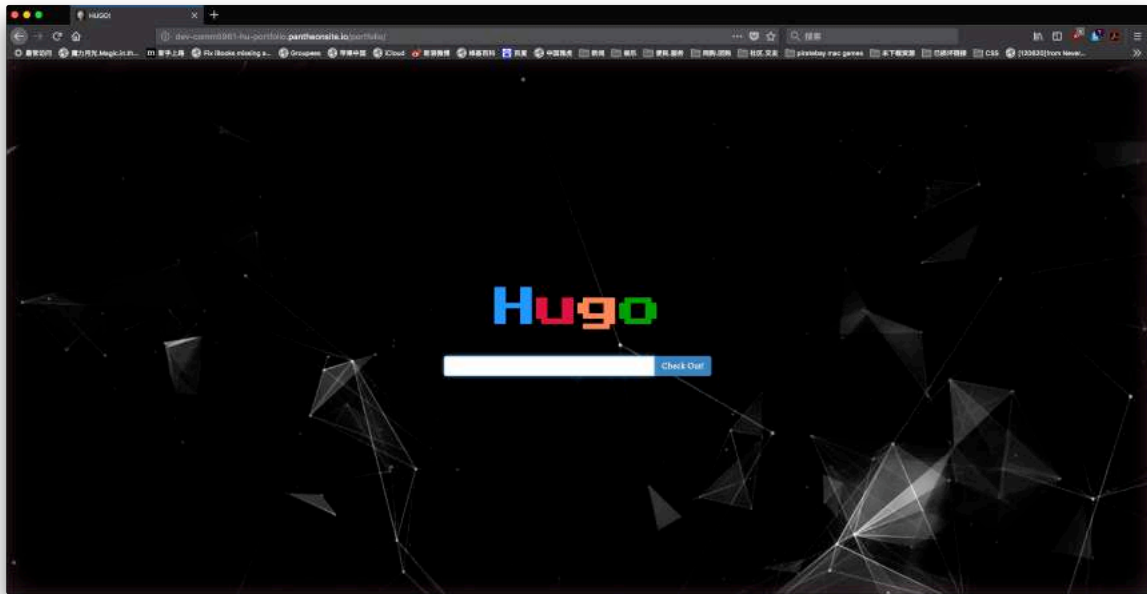
Actually all of them think my portfolio unique and creative and fun to play with. One of them encountered some network issue of the CDN in China mainland. Not all of them can find the application promotion page, but instead they found the advertising promotion page which is also good. This shows the eligibility that every user's journey can be unique and personal.

The improvement I've made the most is the title of the site. The version I used for usability test doesn't have HUGO in the title because it's named by one of the interviewee. He said that he feels using a search engine like Google so why just name this HUGO, which mix my last name with the sound of "gle".

Something they want but I can't give is the Chinese version. It's due to limitation of the compromise library, since it just analyze English. This can be solved easily if shifting to Google Cloud Language API.

A/B Test

The A/B Test I made is based on one theory: The visitors this site would serve will all have their own propose. That is, they all know me less or more and they just want to know something else in their interested sector. So if this theory don't apply, the visitors will be surely stuck in the homepage. So I made a single change to the prompt in the search box, as shown below:



Conclusion

In fact, this portfolio still a work in progress, and I'll keep improving it, hosting it on my personal VPS and shifting to Google Cloud Language API for a better analysis and multi-language support. The styles of several modules are still in raw Bootstrap which needs to be adjusted to the design guideline. However, it already can speak for itself and fun, and I'm satisfied with it.