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Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

GCTools Design System - Mood Board Heatmap Results

Digital Collaboration Division

2018

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Research Overview

Executive Summary

The Digital Collaboration Division (DCD) at TBS is undertaking a project to rebuild and redesign the GCTools. As part of this work, the team is collaborating with partners to create a design system that will used to guide the development work and help achieve consistency across all GCTools platforms. The aim of this research was to evaluate three different mood boards to help determine which one best represents the look and feel of the government of Canada's digital professional collaboration platform.

This research included a total of 138 participants and the survey was distributed on February 6-7, 2018.

Through this study, we were able to come up with the following conclusions:

- **Mood board** – Participants believed that *mood board 3* best represented a professional collaboration platform.
- **Feedback** – Clear, colourful and productive platform that provides various options such as night mode and personalization. *"Do not sacrifice productivity in the name of aesthetics" - Participant*
- **Improvement** – Clearer instructions, communication and structure for future testing.

Participants

The total number of individuals who participated in the survey was 138.

Methodology

The heatmap click test and survey were used to produce the findings summarized in this report. Each participant was given a total of 6 click test questions and 1 multiple choice question regarding the mood boards, 1 open-ended feedback question and 3 voluntary demographic questions. The heatmap consisted of a colour spectrum made of warm to cool colours, where the warm colours represented the areas that received most attention. A higher value (weight) was given to the areas that were identified in the order of the "clicks" (e.g., first click was given more value than the second, etc.).

Data Collected

This research collected two forms of data:

- **Participant demographic**: To understand who our users are.
- **Heatmap click test data:** To identify areas (design elements) that the participants believed to best or least represent a professional collaboration platform.
- **Comments and suggestions**: To receive feedback on the look and feel of a professional collaboration platform and the survey.

Participant Demographics

Language

The survey was distributed in both official languages. The following table represents the number of surveys that were chosen either in English or French:

<u>Table 1</u>. Number of surveys chosen in English or French.

Language chosen	# of surveys
English	133
French	5
Total # of surveys	**138**

Age Group (Voluntary)

<u>Table 2</u>. Participant age group.

What is your age group?	# of participants
24 years and under	12
25 to 29 years	14
30 to 34 years	16
35 to 39 years	18
40 to 44 years	24
45 to 49 years	19
50 to 54 years	20
55 to 59 years	7
60 years and over	3
Prefer not to Answer	5
Total # of participants	**138**

Gender (Voluntary)

<u>Table 3</u>. Participant gender.

What is your gender?	# of participants
Man	56
Prefer not to Answer	11
Woman	71
Total # of participants	**138**

Functioning Communities (Voluntary)

Table 4. Participant identified functioning communities.

With which of the following functioning communities do you most closely identify in relation to your current job?	No	Yes	Total # of participants
ATIP Specialists	133	5	**138**
Communications	92	46	**138**
Evaluators	137	1	**138**
Financial Officers	136	2	**138**
Human Resources	121	17	**138**
Information Management	111	27	**138**
Information Technology	104	34	**138**
Internal Auditors	138	0	**138**
Material Management Specialists	137	1	**138**
Policy	114	24	**138**
Procurement	134	4	**138**
Real Property	135	3	**138**
Regulators	134	4	**138**
Science and Technology	119	19	**138**
Security	135	3	**138**
Service	122	16	**138**
None of the above	136	2	**138**
Other			**17**

Table 5. Participant identified other communities.

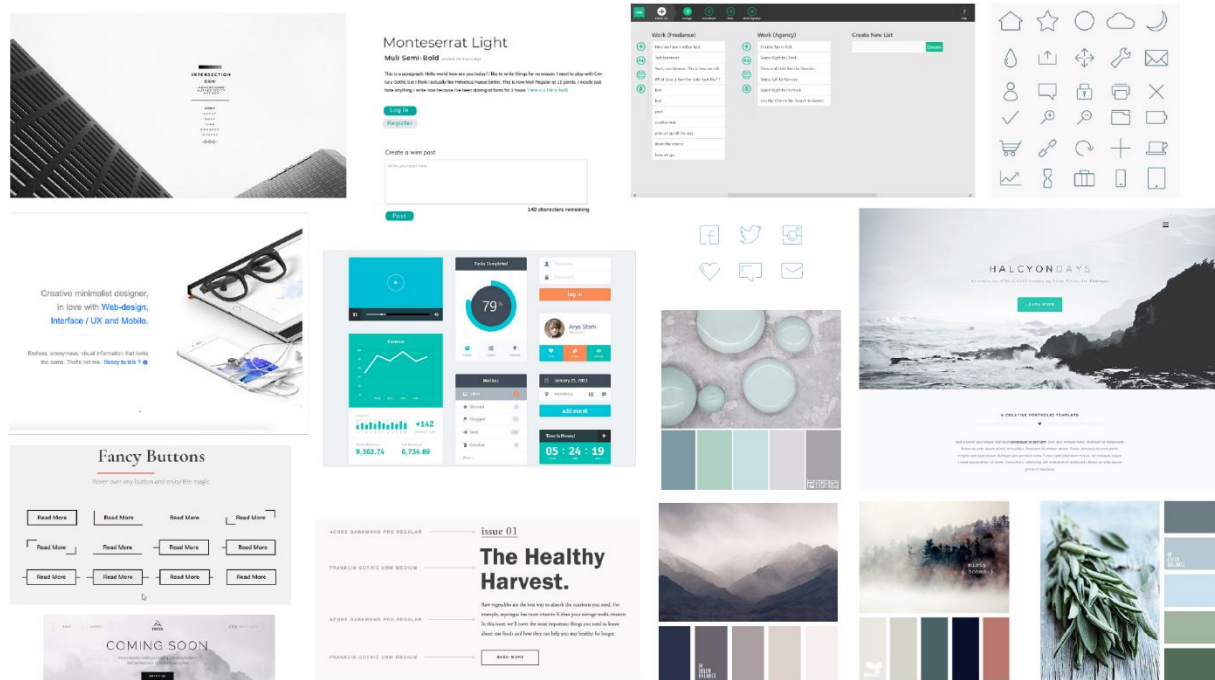| With which of the following functioning communities do you most closely identify in relation to your current job? [Other]	
Administrative	
Auditeurs externes	
Cabinet affairs	
Digital Government	
Food Safety	
Innovation	
Marketing and communications	
Open Government	
Outreach and Engagement	
Performance Measurement/Results and Delivery	
Planning	
Planning and priorities	
Project Management	
Senior Advisor	
Terminology	
Translation	
UX	
Total # of participants	**17**

Summary of Findings

Mood Board 1

Figure 1. Mood board 1.

The following tables represent the total and the average number of areas on mood board 1 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:

Table 6a. Number of mood board 1 areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	442
Average # of areas	3.18
Total # of participants	133

Table 6b. Number of mood board 1 areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	471
Average # of areas	3.39
Total # of participants	130

The following figures illustrate the areas on mood board 1 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:
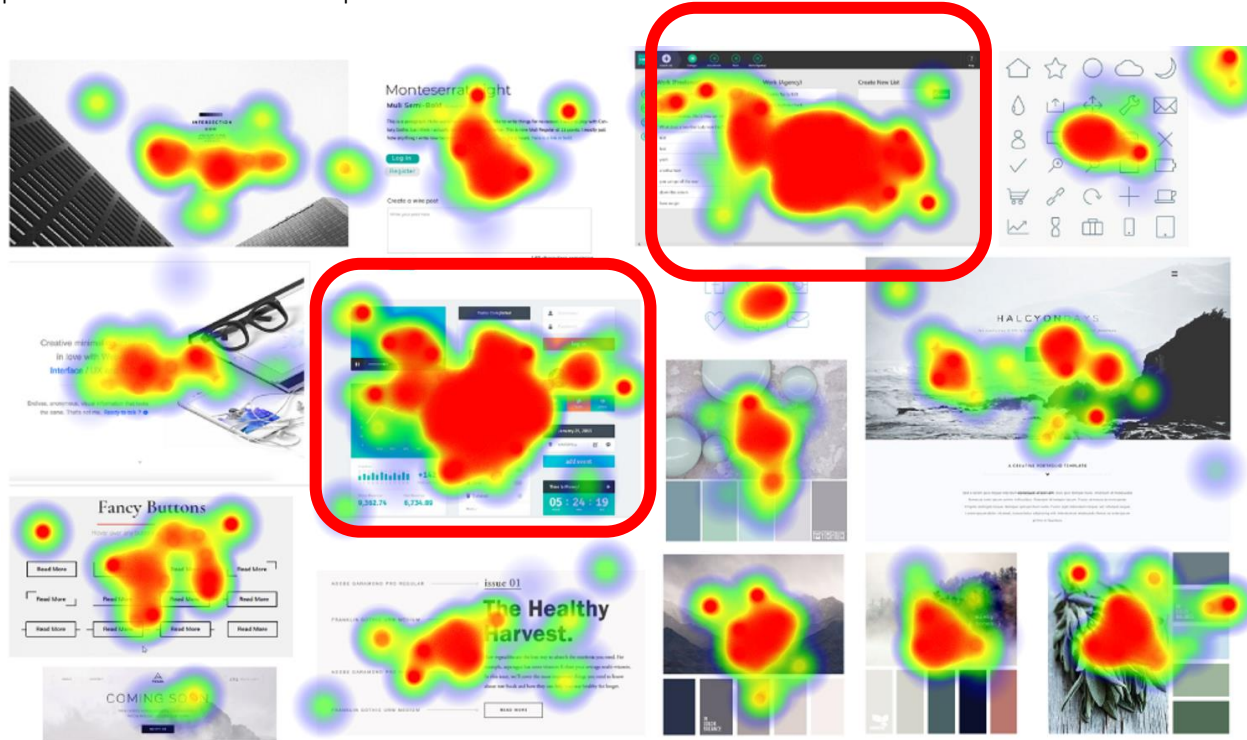

Figure 2a. Mood board 1 heatmap areas that **best** represent a professional collaboration platform
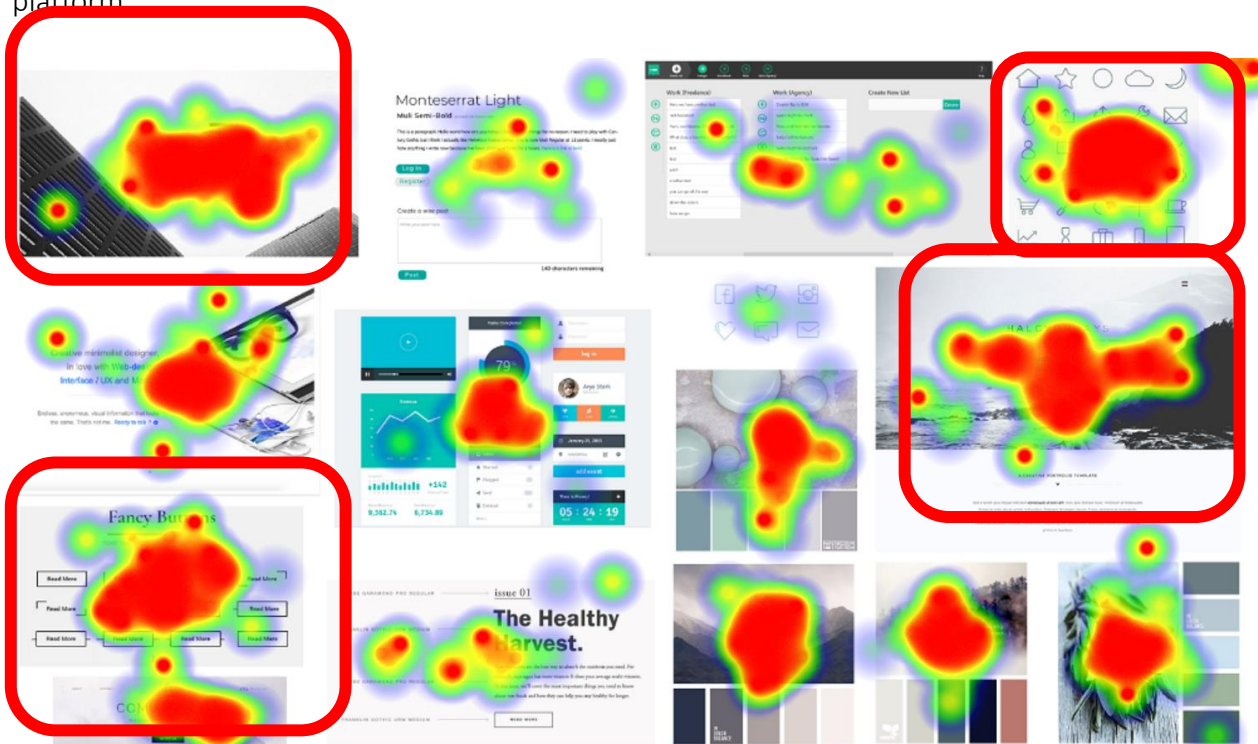

Figure 2b. Mood board 1 heatmap areas that **least** represent a professional collaboration platform.
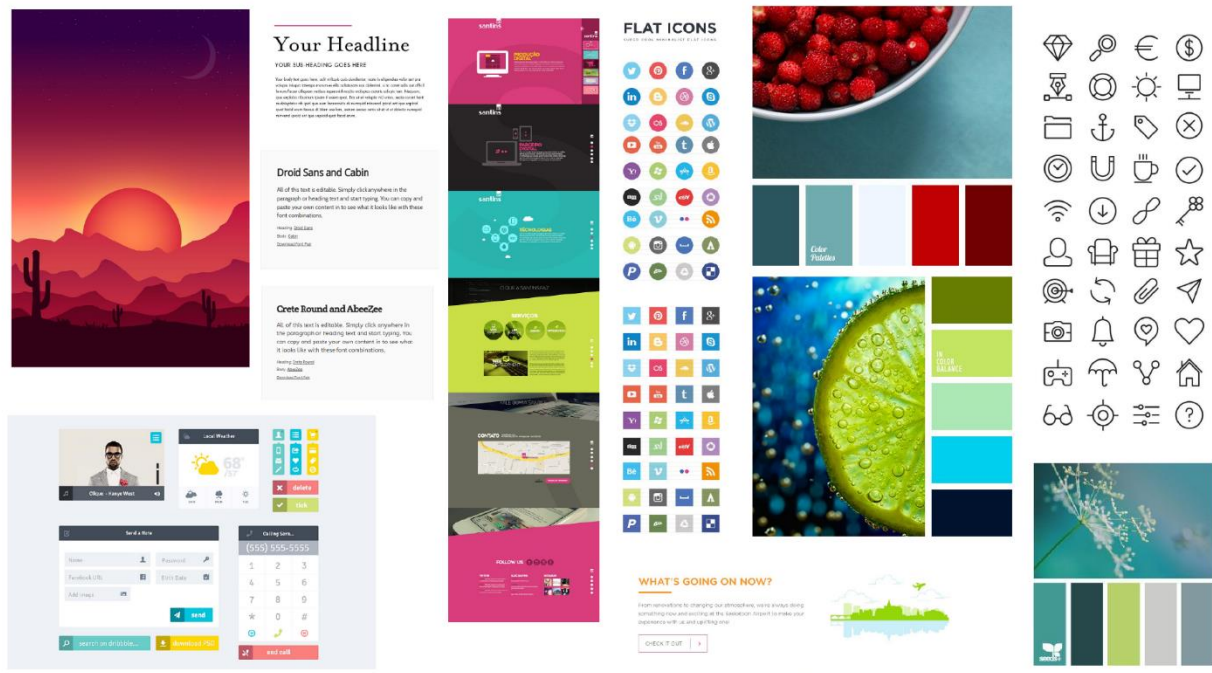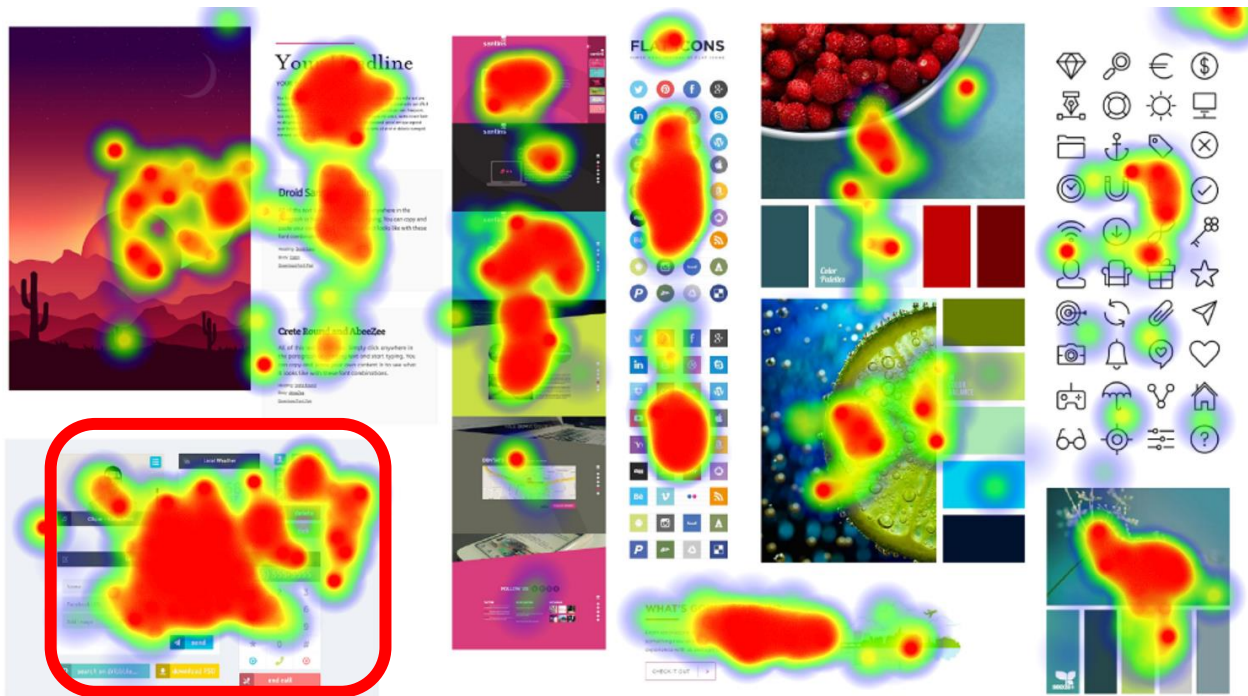
Mood Board 2

Figure 3. Mood board 2.

The following tables represent the total and the average number of areas on mood board 2 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:

Table 7a. Number of mood board 2 areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	441
Average # of areas	3.17
Total # of participants	**132**

Table 7b. Number of mood board 2 areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	456
Average # of areas	3.28
Total # of participants	**122**

The following figures illustrate the areas on mood board 2 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:

Figure 4a. Mood board 2 heatmap areas that **best** represent a professional collaboration platform.
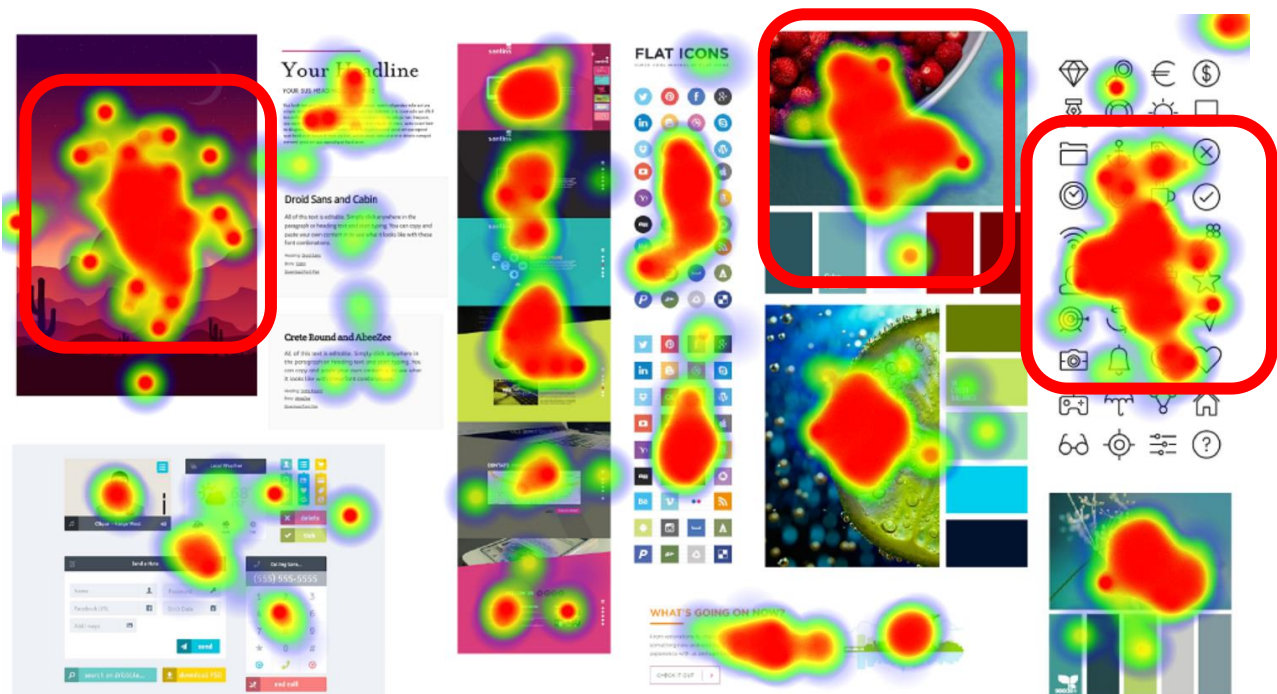

Figure 4b. Mood board 2 heatmap areas that **least** represent a professional collaboration platform.
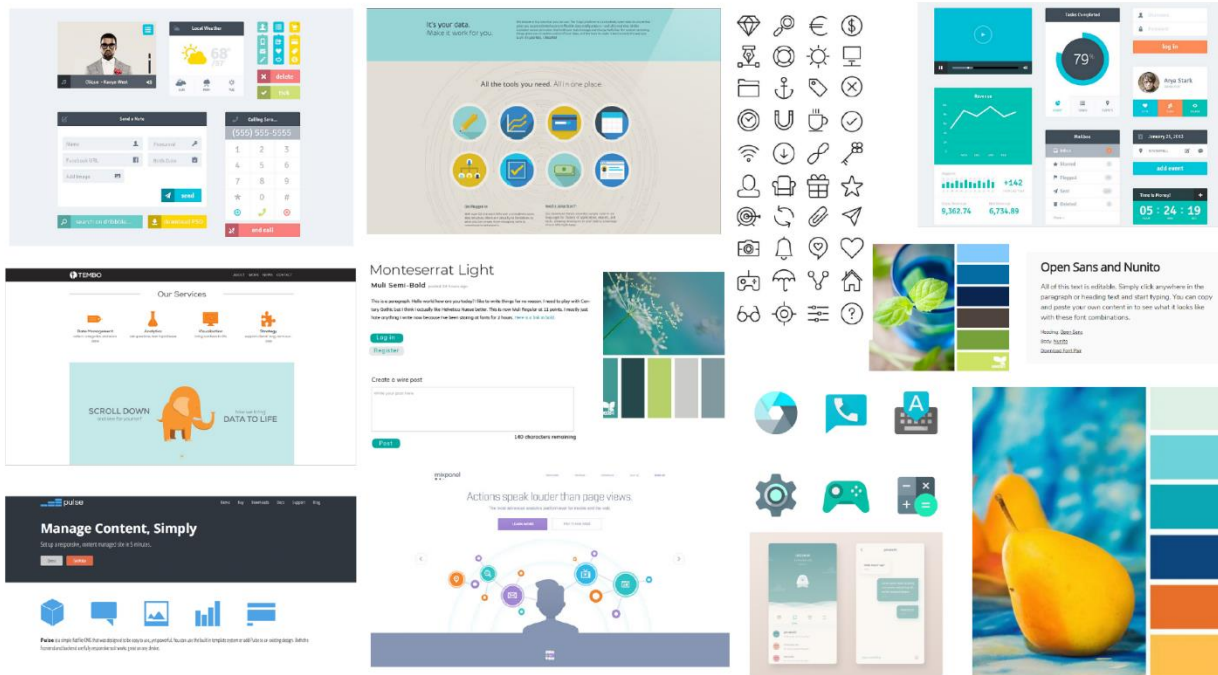
Mood Board 3

Figure 5. Mood Board 3

The following tables represent the total and the average number of areas on mood board 3 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:

Table 8a. Number of mood board 3 areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that best represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	495
Average # of areas	3.56
Total # of participants	**134**

Table 8b. Number of mood board 3 areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform.

Please click on the image below to identify areas that least represent a professional collaboration platform (max. 5 clicks):	
Total # of areas	455
Average # of areas	3.27
Total # of participants	**131**

The following figures illustrate the areas on mood board 3 that best or least represent a professional collaboration platform:

Figure 6a. Mood board 3 heatmap areas that **best** represent a professional collaboration platform.
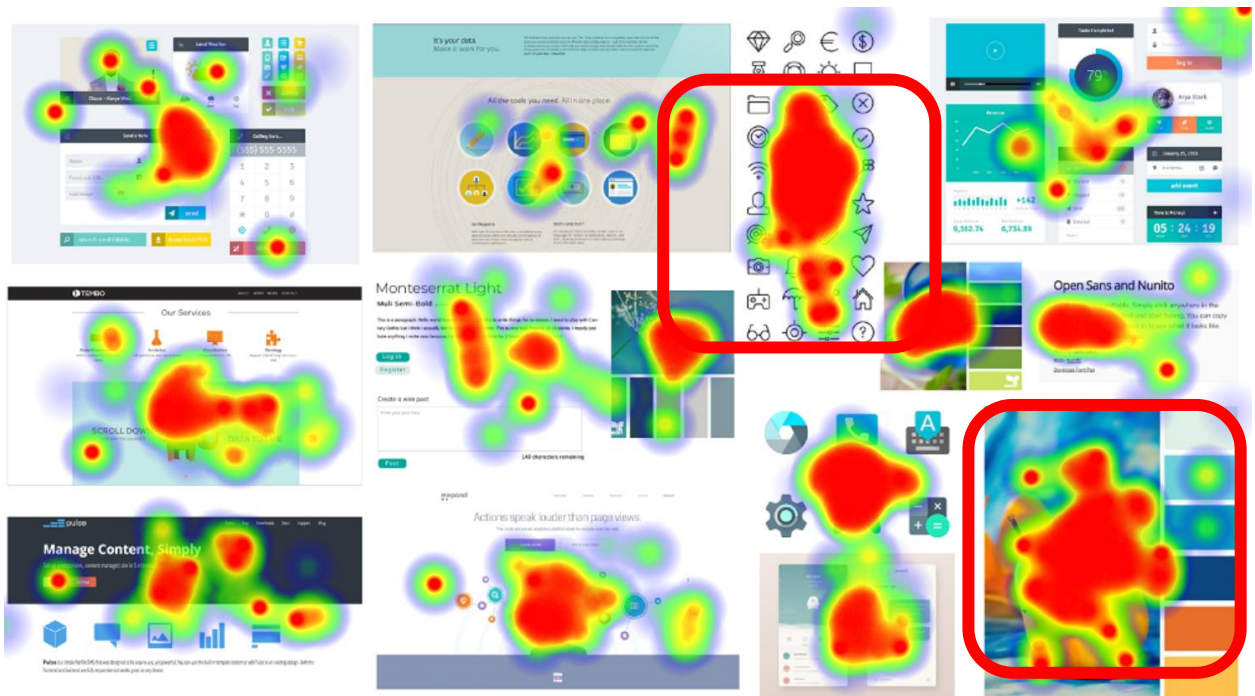

Figure 6b. Mood board 3 heatmap areas that **least** represent a professional collaboration platform.

Mood Boards Comparison

The following table represents:

Table 9. Mood board that best represents a professional collaboration platform.

Out of the three (3) images below, please select the mood board (max. 1) that best represents professional collaboration platform:	# of participants
Mood board 1	40
Mood board 2	20
Mood board 3	71
Total # of participants	**131**

Comments and Suggestions

The following tables represent various themes that arose from participant comments and suggestions.

Table 10a. Thematic analysis of comments and suggestions.

Themes	# of participants
Problems with the survey	17
Negative comments	6
Clarity	5
Colourful	3
Night mode	3
Accent colour	3
Productivity	2
Clean	2
Warm	2
White space	2
Simple	2
Contrast	1
Personalization	1
Testing	1
Music	1

Table 10b. Comments and suggestions.

Do you have any comments or further suggestions on the mood boards?
A definition of "professional collaboration platform" would be good to have with this survey. Depending on the type of business, the board would fit different circumstances. I found it really hard to continue to make the choice and didn't see much difference between one page of selections and the next. I kept waiting for a new question. I am sure there is a method behind this but it wasn't clear to me and I don't know that I gave the best answers b/c of that.
An extreme minimalistic look makes me feel like I'm not in a collaboration platform but in an advertisement or marketing site. I want it to look clean-ish but also filled with necessary information for work, I do not want to sacrifice productivity in the name of aesthetics.
Avoid 1+1=3.

Clarity of tasks such as who is online, what are the topics, what is trending (so the dashboard designs), other useful information that allows me to quickly and efficiently know what's going on and allow me to participate -- to collaborate works.

Images and fancy buttons, icons that don't convey meaning, etc. just get in the way.

Thanks for the opportunity to participate and comment.

Colour and form is so important. I want to feel drawn to these tools - welcoming, celebratory, warm, free. It should feel empowering to collaborate. Just being on the platform should be an enjoyable experience.

Contrast is nice. Visuals, buttons, and other features are also nice, not just text.

Couldn't click anything on the "Least like" questions.

found most of them too cluttered

Good propositions !

Hi, Love the idea, , being able to adjust the colour brightness and colours during different lighting environments would make it perfect.

I am a fan of the sleek, modern designs that are not cluttered, easy to use, highly customizable and offer a night mode for sensitive eyes.

I didn't find this a useful exercise. As a UX practitioner, I fail to see the value here. Also, none of the options really struck me as representative of a workplace collaborative space.

I like neutral pallets with one bold accent colour (first board with the deep red was great) some of the boards had far too much colour. I appreciate a flat design but nothing too cartoony. Something with a little more character than the stander Canada.ca would be more likely to encourage collaboration. Currently GCconnex feels a little cold.

I like the mood boards which were illustrated. They where interesting. Some pulled you to information and some would help you convey a message.

I really like the idea of boxes, but some kind of drop down menu would make navigation a little easier. Also, as far as colour, greys, dark blues and teal work great in my opinion, with a touch of bright colour here in there but nothing too flashy.

I was not able to click on some of the "least" options. I tried at work on a government computer, and at home on my personal computer.

I would suggest going for vibrant colors rather than light tones. For web tools it's better to have a very dynamic feel than a elegant chic one.
I would also go for a font like Open Sans, a bigger font size than 12 (pleeeaaaaase) and lot's of Icons (and not those ugly black one - get me some nice flat icons)

It was difficult to see what images I was choosing as there were no borders and often I thought I was just choosing a group of images making up a page but I was actually choosing one very small portion of what I thought was the page layout.

It wasn't clear to me what the boundaries were of each mood board when I was making my five "clicks". I didn't know if I clicked on one icon whether that would mean I was liking or disliking an entire board.

It's pretty much impossible to see what this survey is assessing. The images are too small to review, and it's unclear what the objective here is. Sorry to be negative but to be honest, what I care about is simple access to content and collaboration. I don't want background images or design imposed on a collaboration tool. "Moods" aren't important to me, and if the question is about choice of colours, why not offer users options to customize their own views. Think about sites like Twitter and LinkedIn where there is very little "overhead" from the site itself. The content is what is visible and the interface is very simple.

I've never participated in a mood board survey before. I wasn't entirely sure what I was being asked.

N/A

Need to have the images larger to be able to see what info it is suppose to convey. Questions on each board were difficult to see the difference/ transition between best and least professional. The question is too high above the images to see it has changed from best to least - quite confusing.

no
Not too much crowding, clear icons, flexibility based on user needs
Not very clear as to what was a single image and you couldn't remove your choice, if you chose something incorrectly.
Sprawling vistas and text are not helpful. Effective tools and quick access analytics with white space to separate are lovely
Testing
The comps that are very windows-esque are confusing to the eye - I don't know where to look first. Reads as disorganization not collaboration.
The icons without words/description wouldn't be a good fit for the govt environment as its not really clear to what it would be. Needs to be simple and clear!
The images are way too small. I can't really make up my mind in mini images that do not display the complete design. On some pages, I could not click any area (no dots appeared). It would have worked well to add a hyperlink or an enlarge option for the images. I wasn't sure if you were talking about colours or the way things were arranged on a given page.
The repetition of some of the images seems to imply that you have some preferences about what the final design is. I don't want something that looks like either extreme: a dashboard or a squarespace site. I want to see something that has useful, configurable components, minimal overall design and works. Loads quickly every time. Clear labels that describe what I'm looking at (not one word that I have to guess about). Fewer options at the top menu level (I'd rather go down a list than across the page). And finally, I want the ability to actually collaborate - versioning, not just posting flat docs. I'd take an ugly design I could actually collaborate on over a pretty one where the functions are limited to discussion forums.
There are components from two different mood boards that I liked. Suggestion: clicking on the components from all mood boards instead of the mood board themselves :)
This is less of a comment on the mood board content, and more of a comment on the structure of the exercise... In each of the images I was looking for items that would allow me to collaborate, such as chat window, video screen etc. more so than aesthetics. If you are talking about look and feel, and not about functionality, perhaps the question could have been worded differently.
This was an INTENSELY frustrating experience: 1. the images are too dense and too small to accurately assess, 2. there is insufficient distinctiveness to the various options, 3. there is no apparent way to undo a selection and it was easy to make an inaccurate selection, 4. it was not easy to understand exactly what elements on an image were being selected, 5. it was mostly impossible to say whether parts were good for "professional collaboration" without being able to assess the details of what were being selected, 6. as aggregate images they collected icon sets, implied services or dashboards, image placements (but with undetermined utility), social media icon sets - basically garbage cans of design junk - so seeing their utility in such a setting for any purpose is rather challenging. I think this is a rather misinformed, poorly designed use of Mood Boards and I would seriously question and results that one cared to make about them given the poor presentation. In general, this is an era of theme switching so users should be able to swap out themes for themselves and not live with one pre-determined theme. So I do not care about colors. And big images that are pretty are good for Facebook but in a professional space need to be kept to a minimum: professional collaboration tools need to manage communications very effectively and provide for an ability to manage an information rich environment. If these mood boards are indicative of what you are thinking, I would be very disappointed as I think it shows a misunderstanding about how busy people process information and collaborate and what kinds of interfaces they need.
Though boards with muted colours look more professional, the colourful boards are much more interesting and engaging. It would be good to be able to access all functions from one page instead of searching for it on the site.
Very difficult to chose. The images where too small.
Way too crowded. Needs more focus.

weird exercise I was kind of confused because I could not make out details. pictures did not make much sense. not sure how this relates to collaboration.

kind of zoned out on the new age pictures. felt more like nordik spa advertising than a workspace. dont really pay attention to pictures as they are mostly boring and useless unless they are of my dog or my husband or the last meal I ate. nah. keep dumb boring stock images away from me.

maybe you should include trippy music that we can all play as well while we collaborate our asses off. I think we should not just all be on the same page but the same tune as well. that would be cool. perhaps a spotify channel that a team can work off...

also I hate turquoise and blues. blah. conservative blah blah. may as well get a suit too. blue is the color of average and the inoffensive and the banal. avoid blue. turquoise is just too New Age for my tastes. I am not old enough to be a hippy and no desire yet.

what's the point of choosing the font and design before knowing what needs the system will meet? This is like Web design with photoshop in 1999

While I understand that the purpose of the survey was to gather opinion on visual elements, the questions and the presentation of options do not make sense. I would have rather skipped the first 4/5 questions and go straight to "which mood board do you like". That was the only question that made sense.

Either that, or change the questions to say, here is mood board A) - which elements in this mood board looks professional to you? And after going through a few mood board selection, then ask the user to rank which mood boards overall evoke the feeling of "professional collaboration platform".

The survey questions, as they are currently constructed, are unclear and do not appear to have clear measurable values.

Whitespace and use of accent colours is probably going to be a big thing for the development of collaboration tools, especially given the variability of resolutions, zoom levels, and hardware across the public service. One thing I noticed is that none of these mood boards seemed to have a 'night mode' with white on black text; this should be given more consideration, I feel, as I find white on black or dark text much easier on the eyes than the standard black on white.

Total # of comments	42

References

Mood Board Heatmap Results. (2018). https://mbheatmaps.azurewebsites.net/

Appendix

Compiled Session Findings

Please see the Excel document "GCTools Design System Mood Board Heatmap Results" for compiled findings.