About

Nicholas Gerofsky Byrne is a multi-talented designer, artist, game designer and animator who’s body of work covers multiple practices. They are particularly interested in UX and web design, but can work in multiple fields. Nick their education at Emily Carr School of art and design in their animation department. They transferred to Simon Fraser University’s school of interactive arts and technologies in order to receive a more formal academic education. It is here that the field of design and programing were introduced to him. They have skills and training in the programing languages Java, HTML, CSS, and Javascript. Nick has further studied video production, editing, sound design, and video compositing, as well as 3D modeling and animation, making them a well-rounded person in any number of production tasks.

Nicholas Hopes to use his multi-faceted skill set to produce their own games and media content, hopefully adding to the media presented in this collection of works, and has an interest in starting their own ventures to see certain product ideas made into a reality. They hope that all of this make them a valuable asset to any team that they join, be it in design or media production.

Sonnetto

Sonnetto is a remote music performance application for users to play music across distances with other players without having to leave their home. Sonnetto was an application created for the senior user market, created as part of a team of three people. Co Creator and designer Joshua Job was responsible for much of the graphic and Application design on this team. Nicholas however was responsible for much of the User Experience design, and this included user interviews and annotations, wireframes to determine the features and layout, and story boarding and user journey mapping to understand the use cases of the application for their audience.

Initial interviews were held in person and online with several elderly and retired musicians where possible topics for the application were explored. Questions about their music playing and music listening habits were also asked to give an idea of the field we were working in. From the questions it was discovered that many older musicians started their interest in music somewhat later in life. We also discovered that many of them used several applications to aid them in music playing. The application Jamulus came up as an application used for remote get togethers of musicians. Sibalius also came up as a software for music composition, and Youtube as a program for music instruction for one interview subject.

Once initial interviews were complete and the data compiled the team produced sets of wire frames. Several ideas were explored here, and we can see that several concepts were explored for the application which were not used in the final design. It was eventually decided by team member Josh that the project would be a music composition app and musical instrument for elderly musicians that could no longer play a regular instrument, playing notes using a node system. This would not be the final design of the project, however it would be used as the go to direction for several months. Initial concepts for social media features seen in the wire frames I produced would eventually make it into the final product.

Our initial premise was that the node system would make it easier for users to compose music by allowing them to play music at a slow speed with low dexterity, and then play it back at a higher speed. Unfortunately the concept of the music player had to be dropped due to technical problems. We simply could not get the node based music player to work in a satisfactory manner in prototypes, and our instructor eventually told us to come up with a new concept.

At this point we scrambled to change directions in our project and several new ideas were considered in this direction. The first concept we came up with was for a music player that could be used for music therapy. This concept came from research into music therapy, where it was found that playing music from the patients youth could be used to sooth and stimulate memory in music therapy patients. A story board was created by me to explore this concept further, and in this story board you can see a number of concepts being explored. This included the use of features which could be utilized by a relative or loved one of a patient to set playlists for users remotely through their account. An introductory survey would also be used in the application in order to set aspects of the therapy application such as the date and genre of music sampled.

This concept too would also be scraped however due to complications with our concept’s topic. Our team member Josh conducted an interview with a music therapist, and found that the field involved a much more hands on and personal approach than what would be provided by our program. Further, the type of music therapy we were exploring was used for patients with dementia, and discovering this group of patients for our research was considered to be outside the scope of our project.

Going back to the our research, we looked at our initial research notes and discovered that we could make improvements on one of the applications mentioned by our research participants from our initial interviews. We focused particularly on the mention of the application Jamulus, which was highly praised by one of our users but who also pointed out several frustrations with this application. Our concept was to have a version of this application which would prevent many of the frustrations that the other provided. Jamulus operated through the creation of open rooms on a board, and our competing product would solve this by introducing a friends list, and other tools for limiting room membership such as accept and reject messages to make a more private and secure version of the application. I made another story board for this concept of the application, which shows the friends feature of the application and group jamming.

Once this new version of our application was prototyped, it was time to test our program again with users. Again we tested on elderly musicians who were our particular target audience for this program. Feedback was generally positive although one user had an issue with the fact that our application was designed for the cellphone. According to them the latency and lag on a cellular network would make the program unusable on that type of device. Another user mentioned issues with the home screen icon selection option, which they had trouble finding. We made minor adjustments to the application but could sadly not convert it into a computer application in time.

All trails

For one of our assignments a team of four was tasked with making improvements on the existing trail navigating application All trails. We were asked to do user research on the product to find areas to improve, and this user research was the first step taken in this redesign. The ideal user to sample was an active outdoors person who regularly engaged in trail finding and use. We used screening questionnaires to determine the background and experience of our users, and used this to color our result. From this survey we found one user that was a regular cyclist, and another that went on walking meetups, which was close enough to our target demographic, while a few other test subjects rarely hiked or jogged.

After the initial interview we had our test subjects do a. Think allowed test of the product, vocalizing all of their actions and impressions of the All Trails application. Results were then recorded and transcribed for later analysis, where common complaints were placed on a graph to quantify the most vocalized complaints. A test was done in a lab environment for the all trails desktop application, with field tests being done for the all trails phone application From this think out loud test, it was discovered that the map function was one area of some of the most prominent frustration with web program for all trails. This was confirmed by our post test questionnaire, where users were asked about their area of greatest frustration, and to recommend features.

We were then tasked with redesigning three features of the application. I was personally tasked with redesigning the All trails trail marking program, and generates three iterations on this concept. The first fix I created was a tutorial which taught users how to use the trail marking program. This is a recommended feature which was directly mentioned by our users. The tutorial opens before the user starts marking their trail, and is colored green to match the color scheme of the application.

The second solution I came up with for the mapping application was to implement a set of path drawing tools which would provide more control over the path creation process. Several tools such as path node erasing and undo functions were added based on recommendations from the post test questionnaire, where being able to undo a mark was mentioned as a potential improvement on the program.

The final adjustment I made to the design of the map drawing page was the introduction of a map drawing icon with a pencil graphic on the side bar of the page. The existing tools existed in this side bar, yet they were not clearly marked out with any symbols or easy to find indicators. This drawing indicator and improved multi path indicators made it easier for users to find and use the path drawing feature.