Design Enterprise Studio 2023/24
Professional Summary

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Overview of Tasks Completed for Client

The project for Housing Matters (HM) lasted for a duration period of six months, commencing in October and ending late March.

The basis of our project was to redesign the HM website to be accessible, on-brand and user friendly, mainly focusing on the mobile responsiveness of the project. The initial stages of the project were to be research based and focus on user personas/journeys of the current HM clientele. We took this a step further and completed some partnership analysis (competitor analysis) as well as a constructive critique of the current webpage.

Due to the brief establishing HM being happy with their current content and our only point of change being, bringing the donation button to the forefront, the group and I completed a card sorting board with HM to fulfil the third point of their brief – "the delineation of our journeys and content for our different audience types."

Finally, once a wireframe was agreed upon by both parties and a demonstration page of WordPress was complete and we were able to move onto the live site. Additionally, the webpage needed to be SEO optimised which we successfully completed through discussions with HM but also extracting data from their google analytics we were granted access to in an earlier stage of the project.

Important Moments of Learning

The most important takeaway for me was the significance of communication, while we as a group achieved great communication together and with Housing Matters (HM), it took a while to establish such an infrastructure. However, because of the early steps we took, communication errors were hard to come by after a few meetings. I believe this was achieved after we delegated roles inside the group and outlined a designated contact point for HM but also inside our group, this meant communication passed through one person and enabled a

narrow approach with information. This built a comfortable and accessible communication method, which enabled for one voice from both parties to communicate and speak on behalf of their party. This resulted in clear communication as each task could be easily clarified if needed which reduced the amount of back and forth between both parties. Moreover, as a group we built a clear communication method with one another which enabled us to work collaboratively while away from the Foundry. This was imperative as we could help one another with a single message but also improved our communication on a bigger scale such as clarifying the topics to discuss in meetings prior to attending.

In addition to this, is to consistently reflect upon the brief, so as a group you are not diverging of the path laid out. This also applied to HM. During the period after Christmas break, we came back to a HM that was changing and evolving, meaning they wanted to make a few changes outside of the brief but for the most part still stick to the overall project brief. To include these changes, we created a Miro board to allow for card sorting, as well as a Miro board for HM to do card sorting. This enabled us to outline our findings and the goals from the brief as well as HM's new goals and objectives. Through card sorting we were able to conclude a priority list that didn't deter from the brief but also encompass HM's new design choices. This was an important lesson of compromise as well as revaluation of a project that was in motion. A similar learning curve came after attending a HM board meeting and we were able to conduct a focus group of the wireframe we had at the time. Following the focus group, we received a lot of feedback which was ultimately the cause of us redesigning the Figma wireframe. While we managed to completely the task within a weeks' time it was an important lesson of time management. During the creation of our project plan we had enabled time for feedback but not to this extent. Therefore, going forward into future projects, considering this from an early stage could lead to saving more time as well as creating a realistic project plan that factor in these potential risks/issues.

Another lesson that was quickly learned was to prepare for the unexpected, this was made abundantly clear at our group presentation in which we had prepared to showcase our timeline, planned trajectory as well as answer any questions sent our way. While our presentation was received well and showcased the work we had done, in the allotted time given to our group, as a group we were unprepared for the sheer quantity of questions we would receive. Uneven distribution in answering questions led to us looking rather unprofessional and unreliable even if all the questions were answered well and lack of preparation to have the work on screen led to us extending the time limit past the allotted time. Although the presentation ended on a good note and we managed to redeem face as well as answer all the questions presented to us, it is a situation to reflect and learn upon.

WordPress has/was the biggest challenge of the project as a group and as an individual but also the most educational part of the whole process. Every time I used WordPress to create a page I was constantly learning and revisiting old pages to improve with the new knowledge I had acquired. Challenges and problems appeared early with technical elements proposed in the wireframe perhaps not being possible in the application. Although, after some research we

successfully added said elements such as a donation form embedded in the live WordPress page instead of having to travel to a third-party page. However, our biggest dilemma was the transfer of the page from our temporary panel server to Housing Matters. While migration is possible as we had successfully accomplished it, it was also daunting to try and recreate. After talking with specialists, we were advised to use a live staging server, but this could pose a problem if HM did not have the infrastructure set, which they did not. Facing such pressurised circumstances, every decision and action was a learning curve. Managing time for transfer (migration) of the page if anything went wrong as well as communicating with numerous parties all at once and relaying it to people to keep everyone in the loop, proved a challenge but a pivotal part of the process.

Ultimately, the last step of the WordPress process was the final learning point of this project, SEO or Seach Engine Optimisation. While I had experience and knowledge in writing SEO, it was still a rather intimidating task due to every word and phrase needing to be meaningful and a good choice in the algorithm. While we had been supplied with google analytics and were capable of looking at keywords, the google analytics were rather vague and did not carry sufficient information to make clear SEO choices. Using what we had, as well as our own research into keywords, which we explored Google Ads for, another piece of software that had to be learned we successfully created a WordPress page that had been Search Engine Optimised. Once again time management was key here, we had given ourselves sufficient time to perform SEO, but perhaps not to the level we would have desired. Therefore, the key outcome of this was the process of learning SEO and implementing it into a live page as well as managing time to successfully achieve all our goals for this section of the brief but also for the project as a whole.

Working With Clients

Working with Housing Matters (HM) has proved to be a great experience, but this experience came with challenges and setbacks for the group to overcome individually or as a team. However, these are the type of experiences that will allow us to reflect upon our actions and not face a similar situation further in life.

One of the first things we noticed was choice of wording, specifically in terms of keywords. While we as a group were very happy using words like wireframes and Figma, as it was second nature to us, this was not the case for the HM board. During meetings we had to clarify words on our end, which is not an issue but was something for us to reflect upon, this became apparent during later meetings when we were talking more technically about design. To overcome these issues of interpretation, at the end of each meeting we would clarify and summarise our viewpoint of the meeting, as well as send a follow-up email which further recapped our discussions and aims in the meeting.

Another hurdle we faced was too many voices at once. Very often, at the beginning of the project, we would have meetings with different members of the team, with people making appearances very infrequently leading to many different ideas and understandings of the

project being thrown about. For a moment, the project almost lost track, however due to us creating a project plan in the early stages of the project, we never diverged off of our projected trajectory. Although, the infrequent appearances of people came to the forefront at the Project Presentation in January, when we were tasked with answering many questions about the project. This was easily overcome due to us having the work quickly on hand but as we also hosted a shared OneDrive folder with HM, from the beginning of the project, that contained all the work we covered and delivered in that presentation.

Given the opportunity to do this project again, I would work with my team more closely in-person but also online. The team and I started arranging calls online to-do work in the latter stage of the timeline, which enhanced our work proficiency and enabled for the workload to be more evenly distributed. This would have been key to completely staying on track to our project plan rather than as loosely as we did, leaving enough time to really implement feedback from HM.

Learning Contract

The learning contract was a good reflection of my life up until the point I had submitted it but also a good outline for where I want to be in the next few years. While I haven't currently achieved all of the goals in the contract, I have progressed towards them or ticked off a few of them. For example, my ability in Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects is still advancing through my internship and has not grown stagnant. Additionally, I have effectively secured myself a place to do a Digital Marketing Masters at UWE Bristol for the 2024/25 year.

Alongside these accomplishments, I have successfully 'dive[d] into the world of UI/UX', which was the first step to my long-term plan. Working with Housing Matters (HM) has given me the opportunity to work in an effective team environment as well as take on numerous pieces of feedback from our point of contact or a focus group run through HM. This has led to the creation of a piece that has advanced user experience and fulfilled the role of being the best of my ability as well as the team's ability, which simultaneously has displayed my understanding of HTML.

Top Three Tips

Early in our project my group and I designed a project plan which we shared with our client; this was helpful for delegating work but also setting expectations upon ourselves to deliver work when we specified. It is key to note that a project plan is flexible and can be reworked at all times, around eight weeks before our hand-in, my group updated the plan to better reflect where we were at the time. Additionally, due to the work being outlined to Housing Matters (HM), they were able to ask for clarity on steps we were going to be taking.

This leads me my next point – asking for clarity and feedback from the client. Due to clients perhaps only being able to meet once a week, it is imperative that each week is maximised.

Therefore, recapping and clarifying work at either the end of the meeting or with follow-up email is great to staying on target for the week.

Finally, allocating times in the week to work as a group will enable you to all work alongside one another but also see that everyone is fulfilling their delegated role, and no aspect of the work is lagging behind.