Part 2 - DESIGNING ALTERNATIVES

Team: TIMELESS COMPASS

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Part 2 Report: Design Alternatives for Paragon Devs

Project Description

Paragon Devs is an application aimed at supporting freelance professionals such as developers, designers, writers, and consultants in managing their work efficiently. The platform supports tasks such as job discovery, client communication, project tracking, invoicing, and payment management. It is designed for tech savvy freelancers aged 20 to 45 who work independently and remotely. This second phase of the project focuses on generating a broad range of design ideas for the application based on our earlier problem space analysis.

Requirements Summary

Key system requirements include:

- A user-friendly dashboard for freelancers to manage ongoing tasks and deadlines.

- A secure and easy-to-use messaging feature for communication with clients.

- Functionality for job posting, matching, and application tracking.

- A digital portfolio and profile section.

- An invoicing and payment tracking system.

- Mobile and desktop accessibility.

- Scalability for a growing user base.

- Strong security measures to protect user and financial data.

New or modified requirements include:

- Integrated calendar and notifications.

- Client review and rating features.

- Customizable profile sections for different freelancing fields.

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Design Space:

What requirements may be difficult to realize? Building a fully secure and seamless invoicing and payment system poses complexity due to integration with third-party payment providers. Ensuring broad platform accessibility and customization for diverse freelancer needs can also be challenging.

What are some tradeoffs that you should or did explore? A tradeoff exists between simplicity and functionality. A minimalist UI enhances usability but may limit access to more advanced features. We also considered balancing real-time communication features (which are resource-intensive) with asynchronous messaging.

Which tasks will be easiest to support? Which are the hardest? Tasks like profile creation, job discovery, and message communication are relatively easy to support. The hardest tasks include secure payment handling, calendar integration, and scaling the platform to various professions.
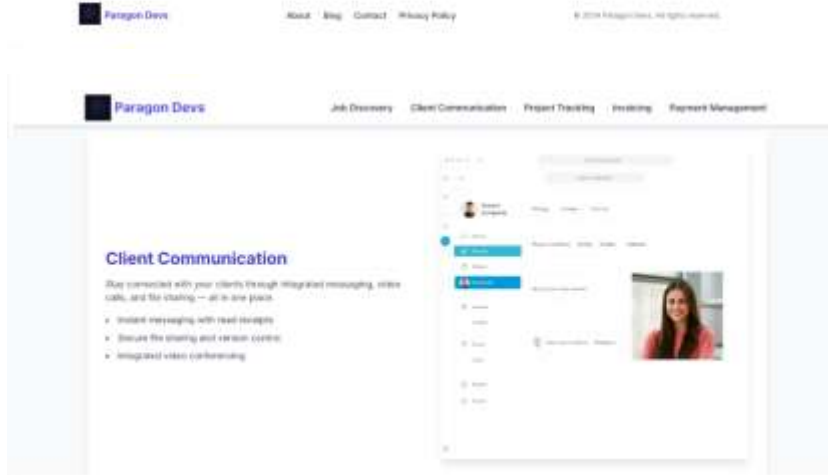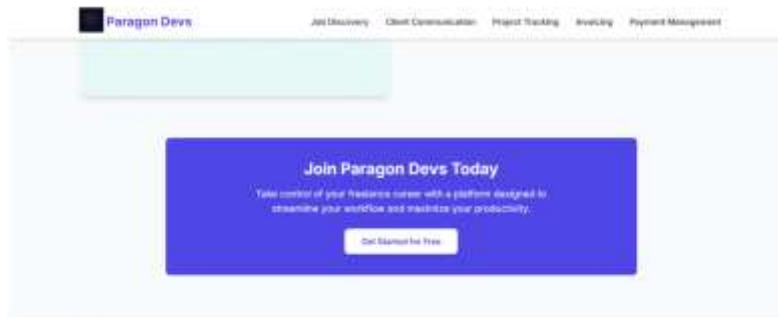
Design Summary

We considered several design alternatives during brainstorming:

- A mobile-first minimalist interface focused on job alerts.

- A gamified dashboard with progress tracking and freelance achievements.

- A classic desktop platform with tabbed navigation for each module. We did not pursue the mobile-first-only model due to screen space constraints for multitasking. We avoided full gamification to maintain professional tone. The desktop platform was retained for its clarity and support for multitasking.

The Designs

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Requirements Changes

Through testing and feedback, we added a notifications system and improved calendar integration for deadline tracking. We also added the ability for users to categorize their freelancing field in their profile to receive more tailored job matches. These emerged from interviews and usability feedback during early mockup reviews.