

The Personal Website Project Report

COMM 5961

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1.0. Introduction

The Design Thinking Process and UX Elements are the two significant guiding principles in web design. These two have some commonalities and they are not separated from each other, so it's better to combine them together to help produce an overall user journey and come up with an integrated web design work. In my opinion, Design Thinking tells us what to do, while UX Elements tell us how to do.

Design Thinking offers me a brand-new and comprehensive perspective and provides solutions to the established problem. It is a cycle which consists of five steps that are Empathy, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test, and it always reminds me of keeping the end user in mind. UX Elements provide me with a structured outline of User Experience and more detailed factors within each plane to be considered to realize the visual presentation. UX Elements consist of five different planes, from abstract conception to concrete completion, which are Strategy Plane, Scope Plane, Structure Plane, Skeleton Plane, and Surface Plane respectively.

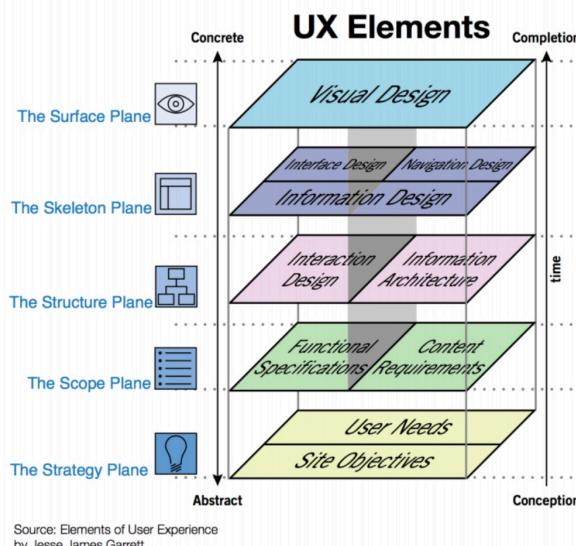


Figure 1. UX Elements

2.0. Design Thinking Journey

At the first step of Design Thinking, I should grasp the situation as a whole, and figure out what are the needs and wants of my target users. Since the major aim of designing this website is to help me win an opportunity of interview and hopefully get a job, so the users I target are mainly recruiters, including HRs and Department Managers. And the survey in this phase is just like what I should do in Strategy Plane, while in Strategy Plane I should determine what I am going to do first. After the interviews with five HRs I learn that, for graduating students, there are four elements that they regard as most important, which are education background, internship experience, previous works and professional skills. Also, they want to see something different from the digital resume. Since they click into the website is to learn more about the applicant, so they recommend adding some information about candidates themselves. One more requirement is that the website should be concise and organized, the emphases should be highlighted since HRs are too busy to check every information.

When enter the Define phase, I need to outline the information from Empathy phase and translate them into the plan. The Ideate phase needs to create an image based on the second phase, so I combined these two steps together to come up with a plan with vision after pondering details of the solution. And this is just like the Structure Plane in UX Elements, which is about the information mapping. At first, I set seven subpages which are Home, Education, Course, Portfolio, CV, Skills and About. But after watching it, my friend Kang said it's too much for a personal website and no recruiters will spend that much time to check every subpage. After taking his advice, I combined Education and Course together and put the Skills into CV. Finally, the website consists of five subpages, which are Home, Education, Portfolio, CV and About.

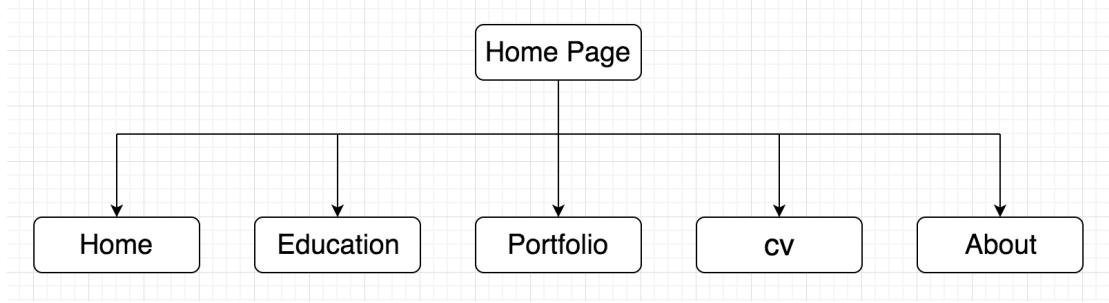


Figure 2. Site Map

As for the prototype step, it's time to transfer the vision into reality, and the physical designing should be done. And this is corresponding to the Skeleton Plane, in which the layout of each box should be determined and the wireframe is used to illustrate the structure.

The last process in the graphic design work is testing, in which the Surface Plane has been done and the prototype has been delivered. In this step, we will review the prototype, gather the feedback and make the adjustment. And in order to present the final work to the end user, many times of modifying will be conducted, and sometimes turning back to the first step and repeating each phase are needed.

3.0. Strategy Plane

To make my website more user-friendly and well-designed, and to make good use of design thinking, I need to consider User Experience thoroughly. To accomplish the whole UX journey, I should start with the most fundamental one, the Strategy Plane. To complete this stage, I should find out what are my final purposes of building this website, what outcomes I expect to achieve, and who are my target users and what are their attempts and needs of browsing my website. As for the user needs, I asked my friends and previous employers who work as HR or department manager to learn about their aims of checking applicants' digital CVs and how should I do to meet their requirements better, instead of speculating by myself.

To set the Site Objectives, I should first figure out what position I'm going to take when I hunt for a job, so I search the job description on the internet as well as consulting my friends. When I learn about Digital Marketing Manager, I

find it quite suitable for me. I knew that the duties include create and implement online marketing strategies, perform online media buying, social networking and SEO, conduct market and consumer research and analyze data to understand trends and generate forecasts based on statistics. After the collection of information, I found I'm not only interested in this job, but also qualified for this position, since my undergraduate and postgraduate majors are both New Media, so I've learned plenty of useful knowledge about social networking and digital marketing, and one of my internships is in a media and marketing services company, so I learned a lot about online media buying. Also, both internships I mentioned in my website have something to do with marketing and I also participated in some marketing campaigns during the internships.

The majority of users I target are recruiters, including HRs and Department Managers, and their main work is to find appropriate applicants and recruit them. I could merely think out this need at first, but after a conversation with a HR called Nicole He I realized that they also have the need to reserve potential employees for the future recruitment, which means leaving a lasting impression to the recruiters and keeping the contact information available are very important.

After the organization and conclusion of the information I collected, I made the table below, which mainly reflects the Site Objectives and User Needs.

Strategy Plane:

SITE OBJECTIVES		TARGET USERS		USER NEEDS
Primary goal	Stand out from numerous applicants and persuade recruiters that I'm suitable for and capable of Digital Marketing Manager. At last, have a chance to attend interview and get this job.	Primary User	Recruiters, including HRs and Department Managers in the Internet giants.	Find excellent graduates and recruit them for the company.
Additional goal	Leave a lasting impression to recruiters and take advantage of it to present myself.	Secondary User	Recruiters, especially HRs.	Search and reserve potential employees for the future recruitment exercise.
Additional goal	Make the webpage looks professional and be full of design thinking. Establish a good relationship with outstanding peers.	Secondary User	People who work in the Internet industry and webpage visitors who browse the webpage to seek for ideas or use for reference.	Find an opportunity to communicate and exchange experience with peers, browse personal websites to gain some experience.

Figure 3. Strategy Plane

4.0. Scope Plane

The Scope Plane is where I should think about what to cover and what not to cover, and I will illustrate it from Functional Specifications and Content Requirements.

4.1. Functional Specifications

4.1.1. Rapid navigation

Navigation plays a very important role in personal website, since it can make the structure clear and direct to the users. To increase the speed of page turns, I chose to build several separated subpages, instead of adopting one-page structure. When users hover over the tags, the tag will turn to green with an underline below the word.

4.1.2. Click back to the top

I think this function is very significant for users to use, since they don't need to bother to scroll up to the top. Just with one click on the green arrow icon which is in the bottom right corner, they can go back to the top immediately, which is very time-saving.

4.1.3. Download CV

I put the "Download CV" button on the homepage as well as the bottom of CV page, so that users can download my CV conveniently and easily. Also, after the click they can view it first and then decide whether to download it, so it's more user-friendly.

4.2. Content Requirements

4.2.1. Personal information

I will show my Personal information directly and strikingly on the homepage and use the picture which contains my name and education degree as the button to click back to the homepage.

4.2.2. Education background

This part contains my education journey, including undergraduate university, postgraduate university, and my core courses and grades in these two universities. I put my courses into it because one HR told me for graduating students it's better to attach your courses to show what you learned is relevant to the job you hunt for, though it's not a necessity, it can be a bonus point. In addition, I also add the scholarships I gained at the end to show my hard work.

4.2.3. Portfolio

In the portfolio part, I mainly show three types of works, which are videos, Timeline and photographs. And this is what I can update over time, so I add a "Updates" link which can link to this page directly to see my latest work.

4.2.4. Internships

From the interview with HRs I learn that internship experience is one of the important evaluation criteria, so I use one subpage to exhibit my internships. I choose two major internships that are highly related to Digital Marketing Manager, so it's more helpful to my application.

4.2.5. Contact Information

My Contact Information is shown at the bottom of every page in the footer, which consists of my Email address and phone number, so people can contact me through these two ways conveniently no matter in which page they are. Since recruiters rarely contact the candidates through adding them as the friend in WeChat and I don't like a stranger add my WeChat, so I didn't put my WeChat QR Code in it.

4.2.6. Multimedia links

The multimedia links I put are my GitHub and Sina Weibo. People can find my previous works about programming in GitHub and if they want to learn more about me, they can check over 3k Weibo posts I generated to learn about what kind of person I am.

4.2.7. Hobbies

One HR told me that if I have talents in sports or arts, it's a good idea to show them in the website, since that's what cannot be shown in the resume and it's what can differ me from others and leave a lasting impression to the recruiters. My favorite hobby is playing badminton and I achieve good rankings in some championships and won the title of "National Second-Level Badminton Athlete", so I choose this as my shining point to make people remember me.

5.0. Structure Plane

5.1. Interaction Design

After defining the target users and their needs in Strategy Plane, the specific touchpoints and actions of them should be identified when it comes to Interaction Design. The Customer journey should be started before the moment target users decided to view my website so that I can visualize the behavioral patterns (Oosterom, 2010). To figure out the specific Journey stages and Touchpoints, I asked for HRs to make clear what the real processes and steps are when they select one appropriate CV from hundreds of thousands of similar CVs, and what the significant and essential points are that attract them to learn more about the candidate. And figure out how long is the time a HR spends on one CV to decide whether the applicant is appropriate for the job or not, and what information HRs will look first, which information and format will help candidates stand out from the crowd, and how to design the e-portfolio will leave them a lasting impression.

After the question-oriented research and interview with recruiters, I generate the User journey mapping as follows:

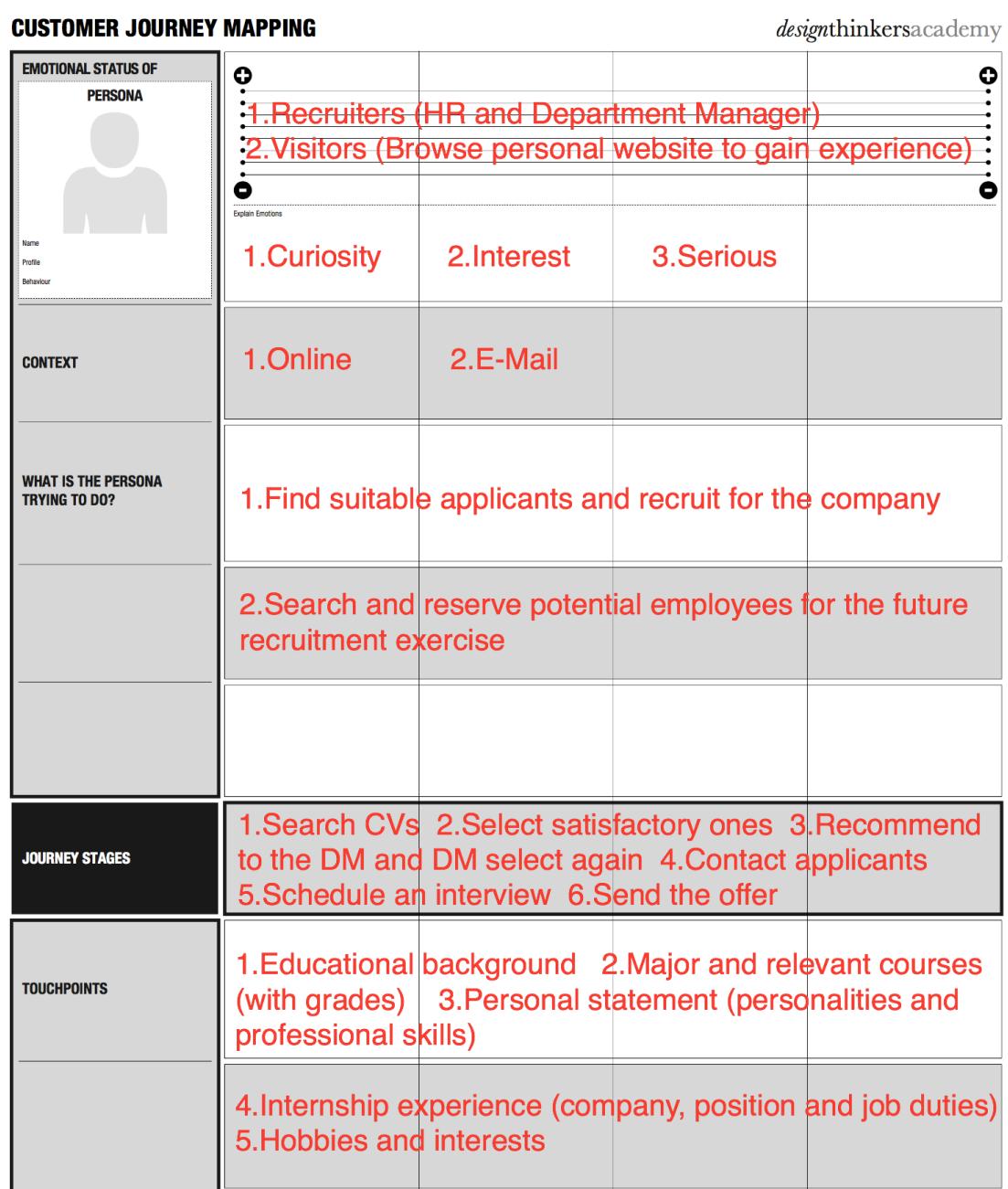


Figure 4. User Journey Mapping

5.2. Information Architecture

According to the analysis in Define phase, I divide the website into five subpages and each one contains some information essential to recruiters for reference, which are shown in the picture below.

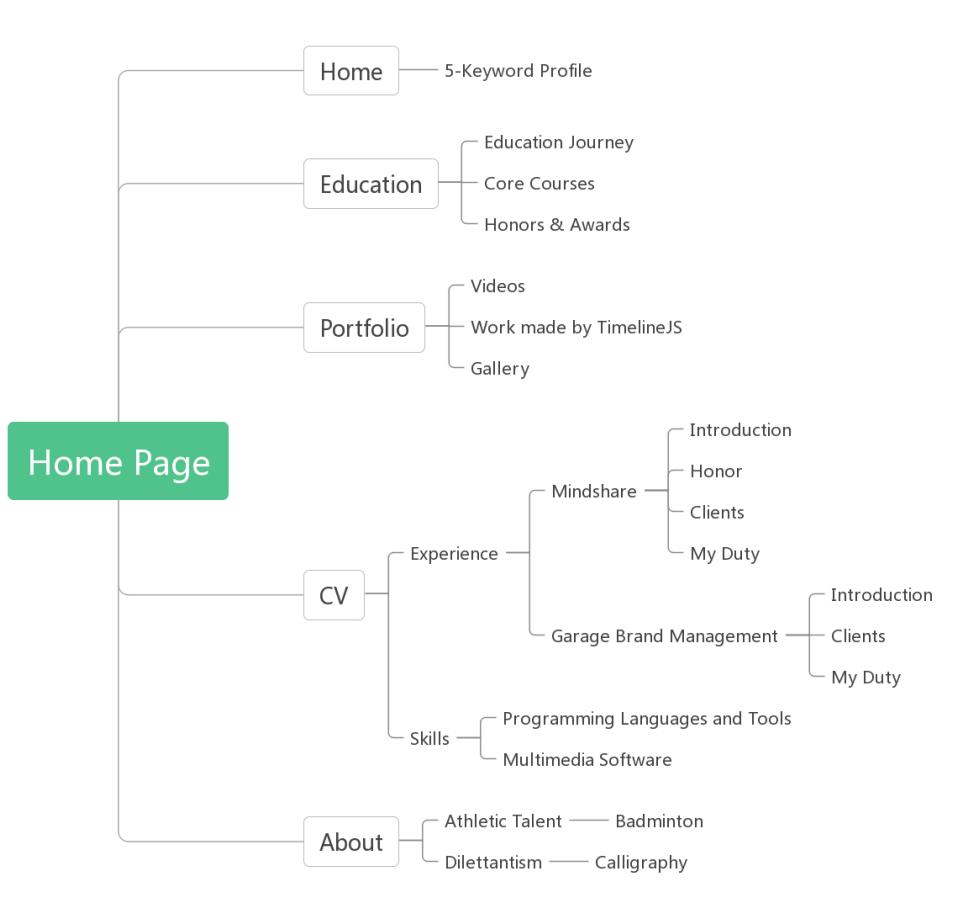


Figure 5. The structure of Website

6.0. Skeleton Plane

At this stage I need to construct the skeleton of the website to sort out a clear thought for the Surface Plane. Drawing a wireframe is a good way to think out some creative design and some good ideas will come out during this process. To keep the inner consistency and make it more user-friendly, the navigation bar at the header of every page are the same, so users won't get lost in different pages.

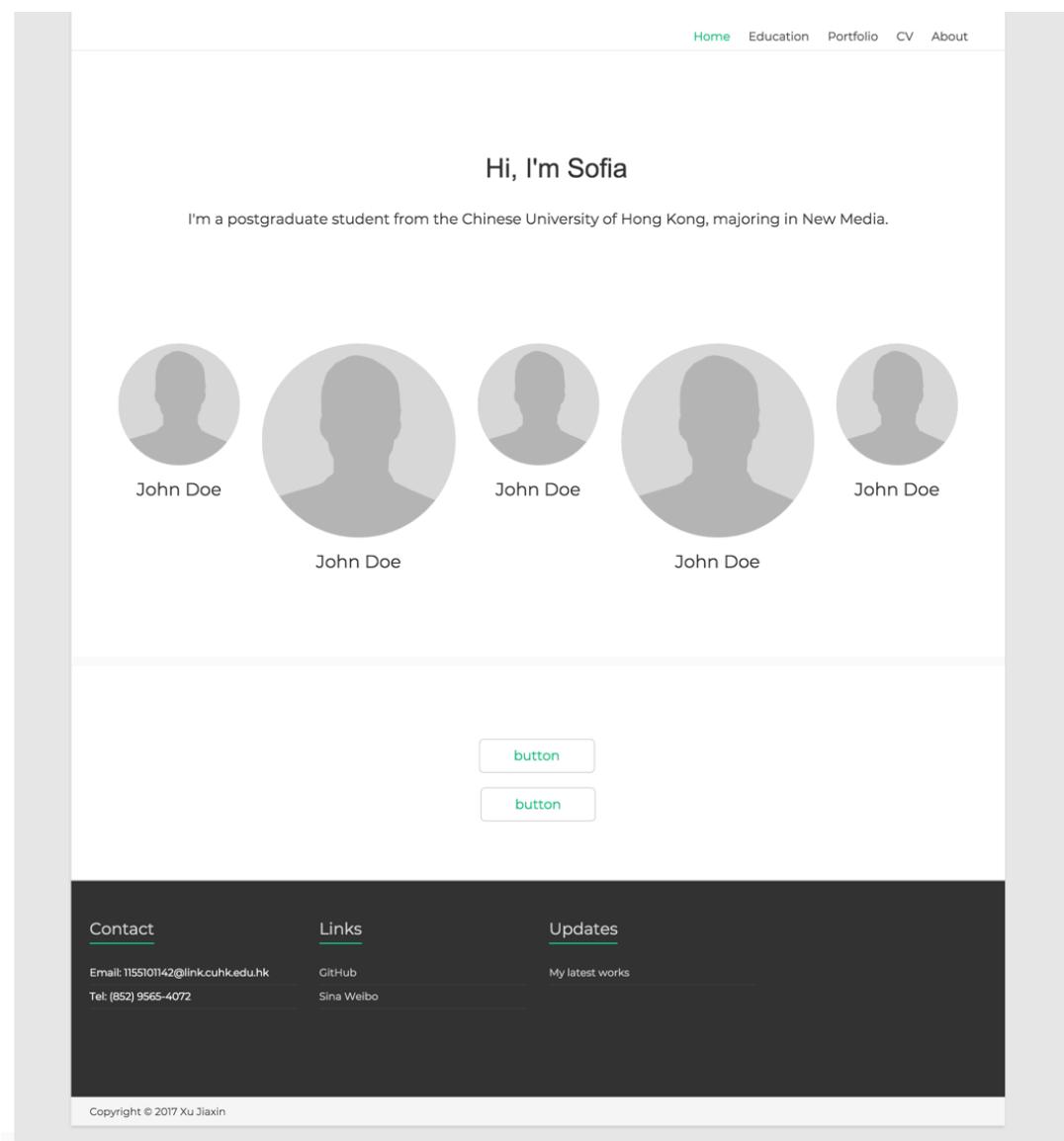


Figure 6. Wireframe—Homepage

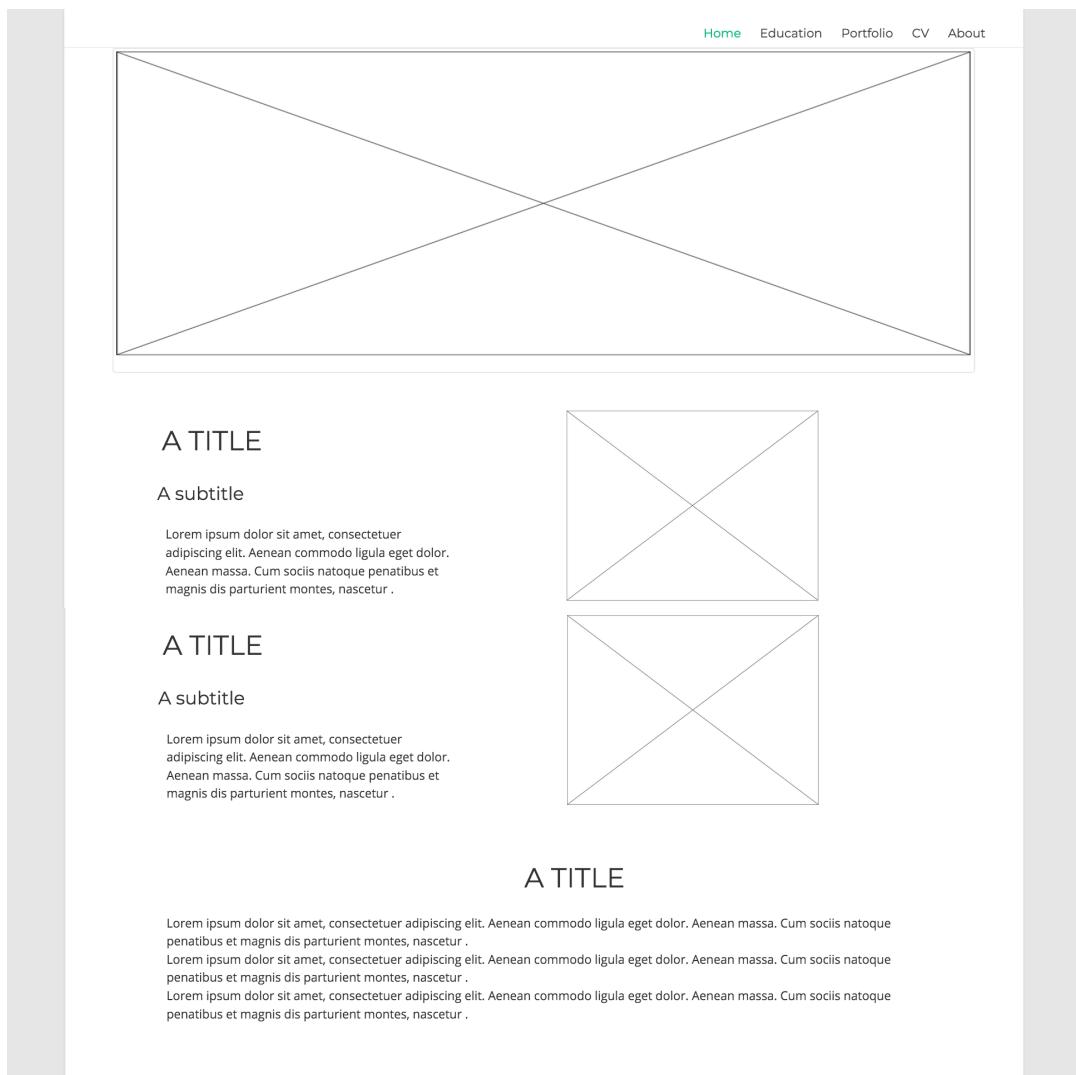


Figure 7. Wireframe—Education Page

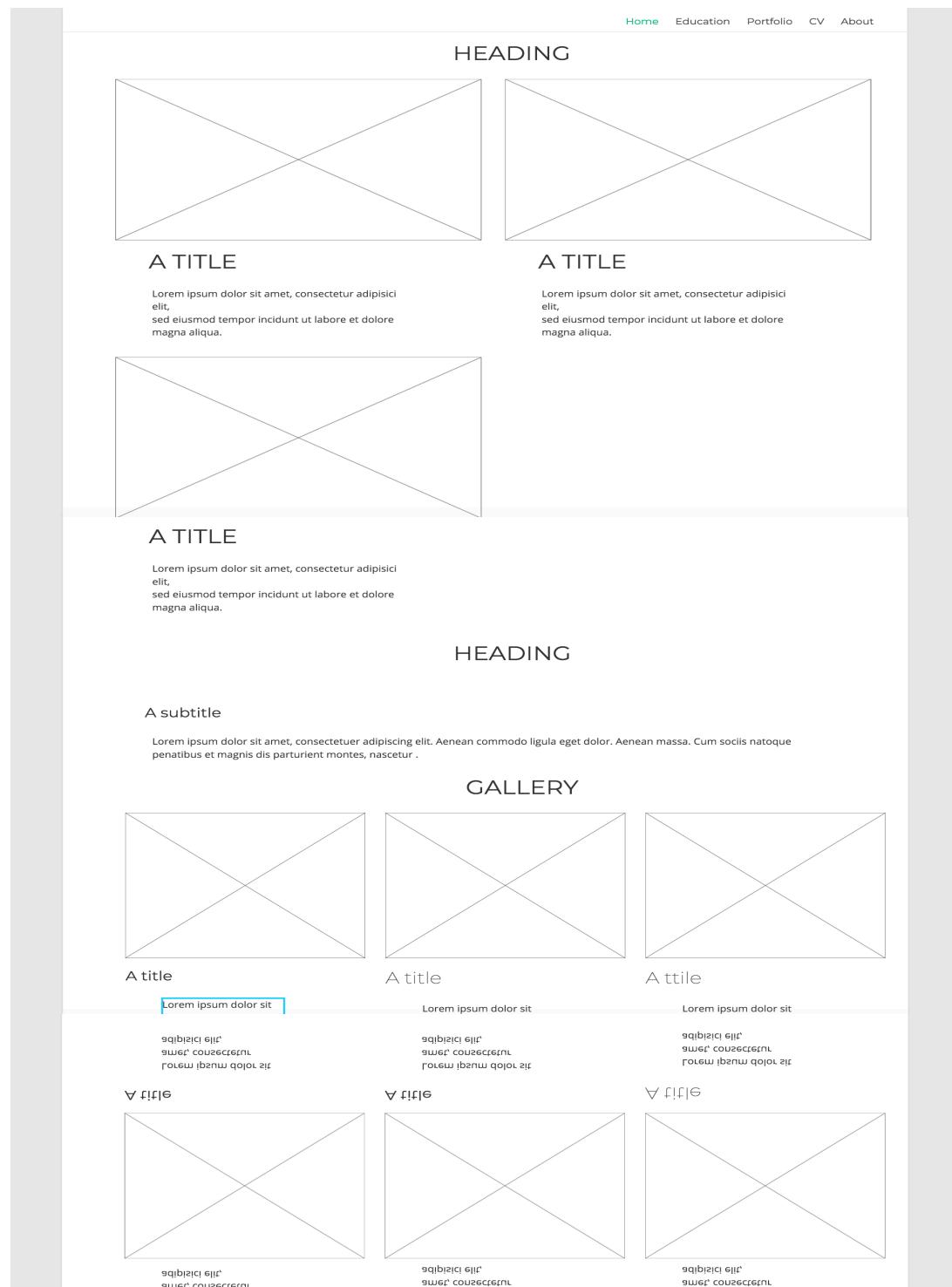


Figure 8. Wireframe—Portfolio Page

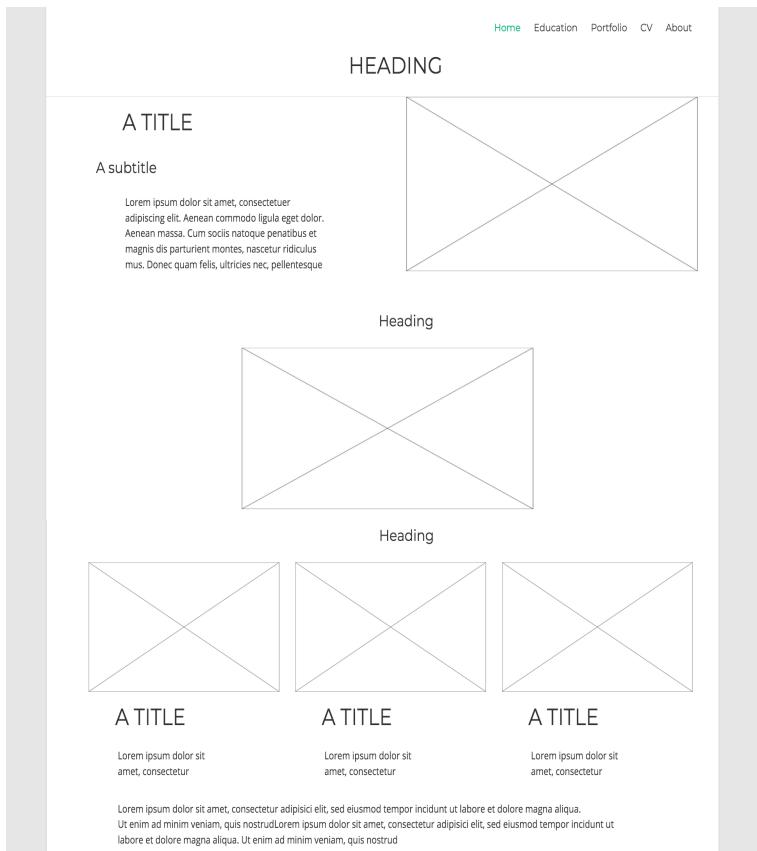


Figure 9. Wireframe—CV Page

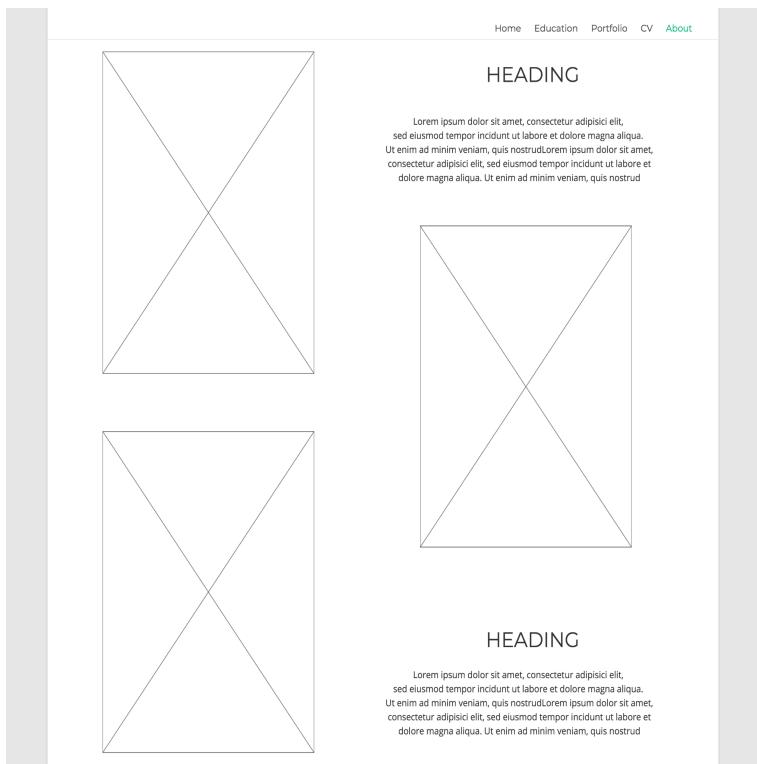


Figure 10. Wireframe—About Page

7.0. Surface Plane

This is the last plane in UX Elements and it's about the look and feel. There are some details that are a little bit different from the prototype and I will elaborate the reasons why I will make these changes and redesign them in this way. Please click this link for reference: [http://dev-my-1st-pantheon-site.pantheonsite.io/Sofia's website/home.html](http://dev-my-1st-pantheon-site.pantheonsite.io/Sofia's%20website/home.html).

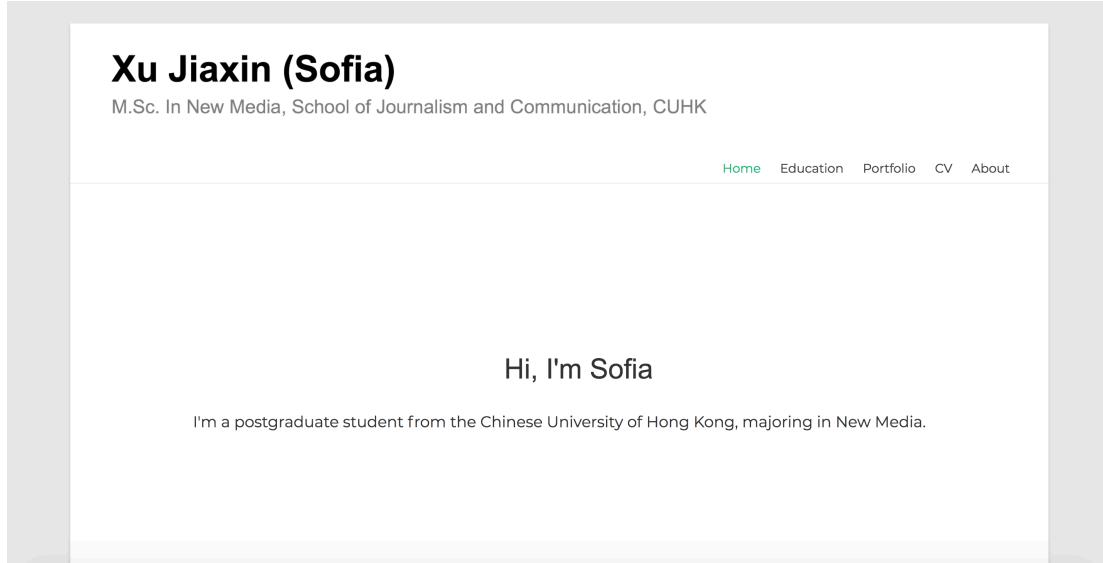


Figure 11. Homepage

This picture shows the homepage of my website, it's very simple but contains the most important information about me, and it seems to be highlighted since the pure background. And the header contains a picture which in the top left corner and a navigation bar, once users click on the picture they can go back to the homepage. Though one of my friends thinks I should add one striking photo with powerful visual impact to attract people's eyes, one senior fellow apprentice appreciates it and thinks it didn't bring a big expectation to people at first, but they will become satisfied with subsequent abundant contents and the expectation will increase as they view more, instead of feeling a little disappointed about the following pages after seeing the attractive picture on the homepage.

And the reason why I design it like this is because I guess most applicants will design their homepage with a gorgeous colorful photo of themselves, but I want to show the recruiters something different and make an impression on them. So I make my homepage a concise one, without a big picture underneath.

Instead, I use five pictures to show who I am and divide my English name “Sofia” into five letters, with each letter representing one personality of me. Videlicet, my name “Sofia” stands for Spirited, Optimistic, Frank, Imaginative and Aspiring, which are all my personal traits. I think it’s a good way for recruiters to remember me and generate a good impression about me. And I adjust the circles into the same size to make a sense of harmony and balance.

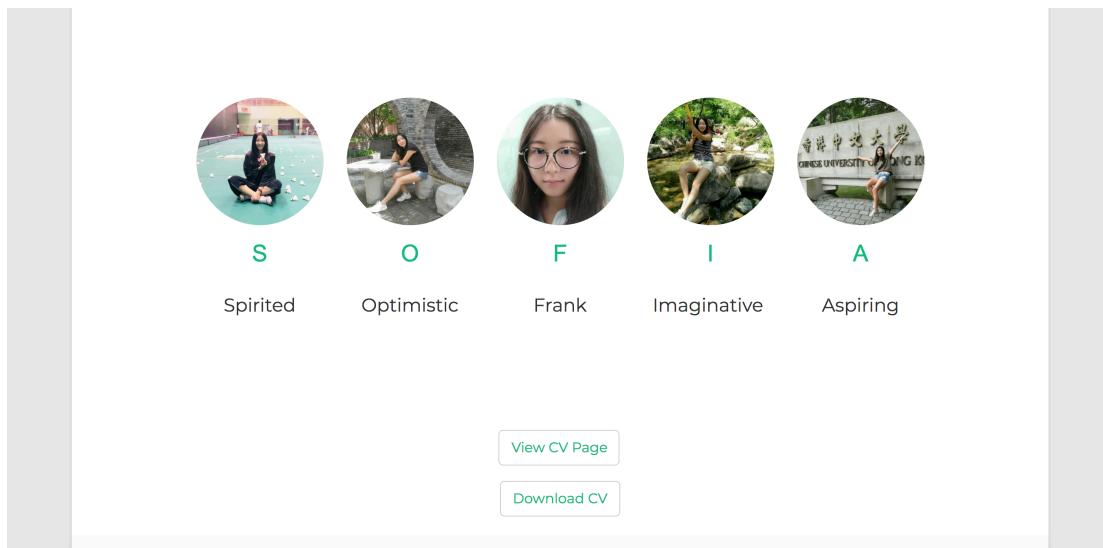


Figure 12. Homepage

Color is also one significant factor in the web design. The dominant hue of my website is green, and this is reflected in the details. For instance, the words on buttons are green, and some words I highlight are also green. Also, the color is also used to make the gradation distinct. I choose the color of green is because it's an emotionally positive color which relates to growth and vitality, and reflects that I'm an energetic person.

8.0. Test

8.1. Qualitative Method: Usability Test

The usability is about how easy and pleasant these features are to use, and is defined by five components, which are learnability, efficiency, memorability, errors and satisfaction. Hence, the questions I raise to do the Usability Test are mainly based on these factors. I come up with six questions to do the test, which are as follows:

- 1) Can you access to every page and every link?
- 2) Whether the logic is clear and well-organized?
- 3) Can you find the information you want quickly and easily?
- 4) Whether the layout is aesthetic?
- 5) Are you still interested in the website when you see the homepage?
- 6) Which places need to be improved?

As for the number of people to do the test, research shows that testing 5 participants reveal 85% of the problems, while 9 participants only reveal 10% more problems. As a result, to identify most (85%) of the usability problems, 5 people could be enough. So I invited 5 friends of mine to help me do the usability test, and 4 of them work as HRs, so that I can gain some professional feedbacks from HRs' perspectives.

Three out of five people all point out that the colors in CV page are too many, and they suggest me to cut down the number of colors, or it may seem to be disordered and lose focus. The CV page contains many logos so there are many colors, but the real reason why people think the colors are too many is not because the logos, it is the number of colors in the words. At the beginning, I used different colors in text to match the different colors of logos, so there are seven colors in text. After modifying the colors, I just turn the words I want to highlight into green, and leave others still black, so it looks fresher.

And one mentioned that it's not very easy to find my major in the storymap of education journey, which should be an important information for recruiters. To solve this problem, I add my major just behind the university name and separate them with a dash.

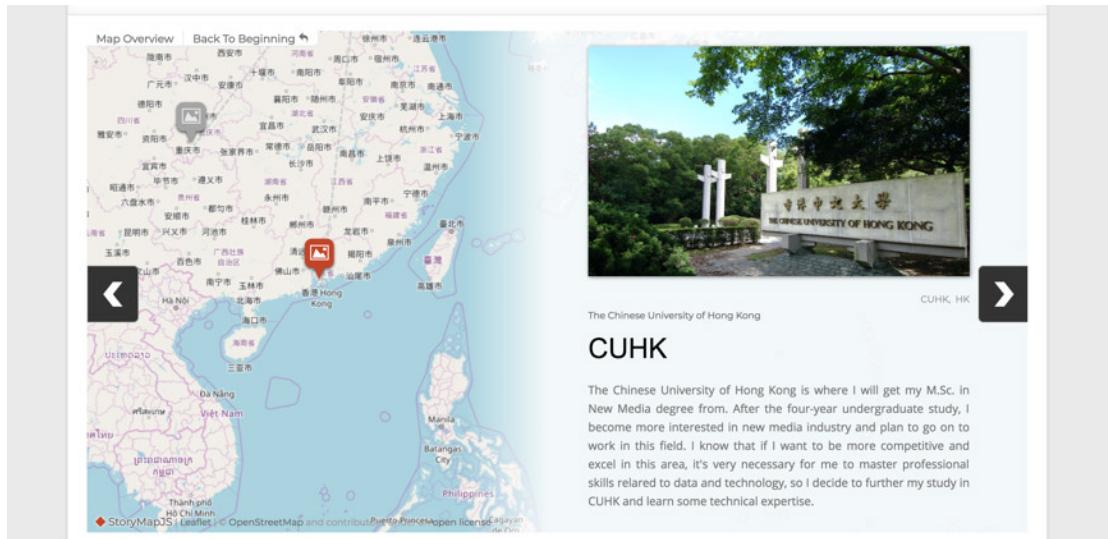


Figure 13. StoryMap before modification

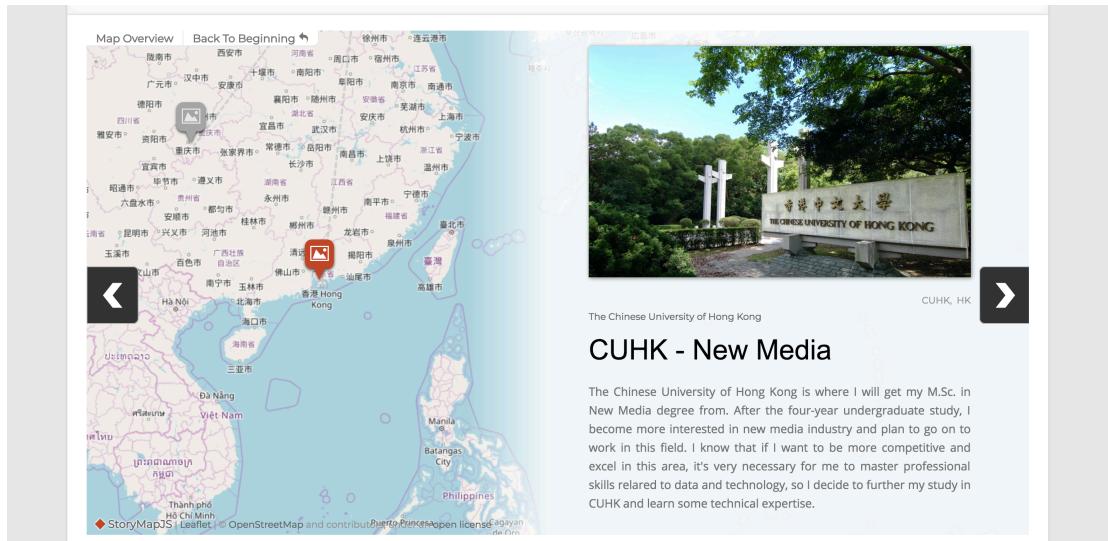


Figure 14. StoryMap after modification

Before the Usability Test, I didn't set the access to download the CV, since I thought people just enter this website via my CV, so there's no need to set a button to download again. But my friend Wei who works as a HR reminded me that, CV is not the only channel for recruiters to enter your website, they may see it through social media or even shared by others. I quite agree with him so I add two accesses to download my CV on homepage and CV page.

One friend also mentioned that it's quite confusing when she saw the internship experience for the first time, since the number jumped from 3 to 2 at this page and it took her some time to figure out the hierarchical relationship

between these two parts. The reason leads to this confusion is because I only use numbers to list the order for two different types of content. The “My Duty” part is about the first internship while the “2. Garage Brand Management Corporation” represents the second internship. To address this problem, I sort out the list of “My Duty” in English letters and use “* 2.” to represent the number of internship. Also, I use the green color to show the main information and draw a light horizontal line to separate these two parts. As a result, the structure becomes clearer and the gradation becomes more distinct.

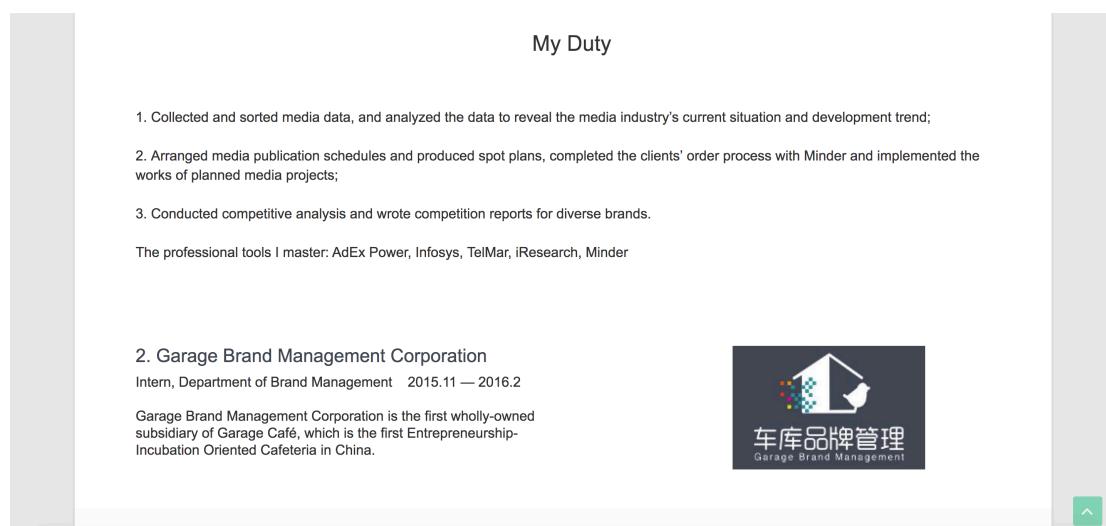


Figure 15. CV page before modification

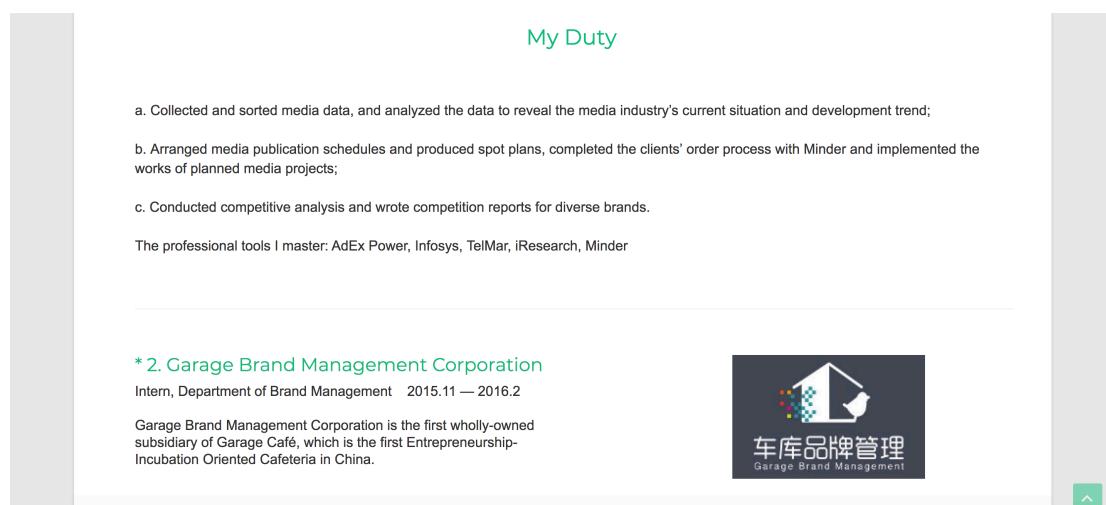


Figure 16. CV page after modification

8.2. Quantitative Method: A/B Test

I did A/B Test on three pages, which are Homepage, CV page and Education page. The duration of Homepage and CV page is 4 days and for Education page is 5 days.

To gain enough samples, I sent the link of my website to some WeChat groups, most of these are online communities especially for HRs, so that I can also collect some professional feedback and suggestion. At first, I tell the group members this link is my personal website made by myself and ask them for some advice, but my friend Starring Wang who works as a HR suggests me to use “electronic resume” instead of “personal website”. Since he said, “your primary objective of sending this is to prompt people to click the link, most people in this group are HRs and they are more sensitive to resume rather than personal website, so it’s better to show the keyword they are interested in directly”. Hence, I use the word “electronic resume” when I send it to the HR’s community and use “personal website” when send it to my friends who are interested in my work, and I find it did make sense, more people would like to open the link and make a comment on it. From this I learn that the user journey happens throughout the entire process, not only should we consider it when we do the design thinking at the very beginning, but also think about it in the whole course.

8.2.1. Homepage

The variation I made on Homepage is that the original copy contains “View CV Page” and “Download CV” buttons while there’s no “Download CV” button on version B.

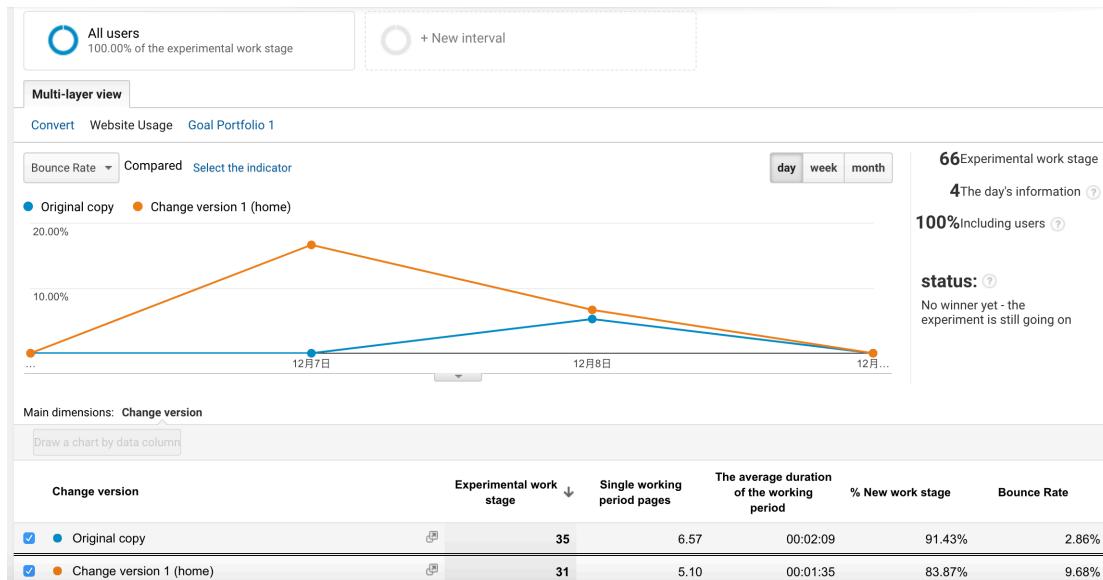


Figure 17. A/B Test on Homepage

In my website, Homepage is the initial page people enter, so how to keep the users and decrease the bounce rate is the key point, that's why I choose "Bounce Rate" as the metric on this page. From the result we can see clearly that the bounce rate of original copy is much lower than version B. Also, "single working period pages", "average duration of working period" and "percentage of new work stage" in original copy are all higher than version B, which means the original one with the "Download CV" button is better.

8.2.2. Education page

The biggest variation I made on this page is that I moved the "Honors & Awards" part to the Education page, which used to be in the CV page, and I also widen the page margin. Since two HRs mentioned that the awards I wrote are almost all about scholarships so they are more related to Education.

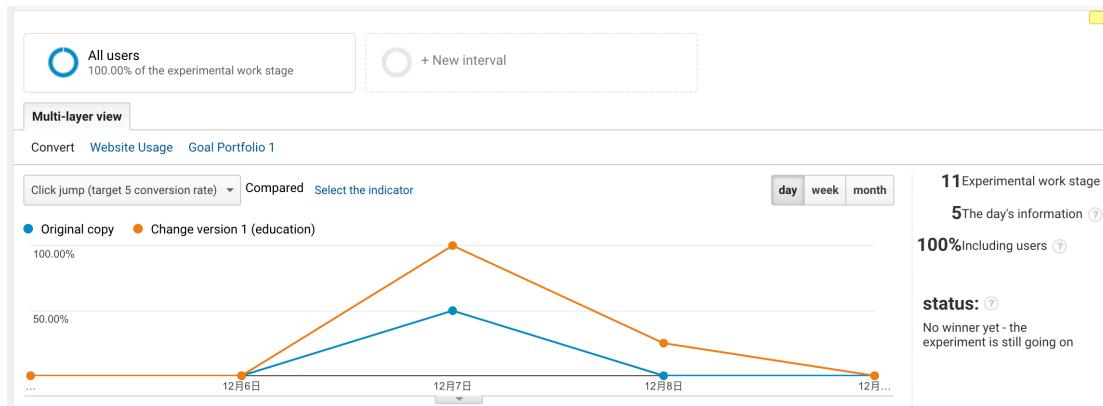


Figure 18. A/B Test on Education page

What the result shows is that, the percentage of “click jump” action in version B is higher than that of original one, which means more people will click buttons on this page to jump to next page.

8.2.3. CV page

To be corresponding to what I've done in Education page, I removed the “Honors & Awards” part from this page, and adjust size of some words to make it more readable.



Figure 19. A/B Test on CV page

It is clear that, after removing the “Honors” part, the “Experimental work stage” and “Average duration of working period” are both higher than before. So transferring the “Honors” from CV page to Education page is really a successful change.

9.0. Dashboard Design

After launching the website, data collecting and analyzing are needed to be done to evaluate the effects and outcomes, so that we can see whether the goals are achieved and which places should be paid attention to and modified. By tracking their behaviors, I can figure out where I can improve to create a more comfortable user experience by analyzing the data, so as to increase the duration on every page, generate more actions in pages with interactive design, jump to more pages to learn more about me, and most importantly, pay attention to me and consider giving me the chance to take an interview.

In consideration of the fact that most people who access to my website are the new visitors, it's important to find out their actions and experience, so I add a new segment called "New visitor", and analyze it together with "All users" to see what are the differences between them. And below is my customized dashboard.



Figure 20. Dashboard in Google Analytics

From the first two pictures on the left side I know that my website attracts 134 users in total, and among them 109 are new visitors. The majority of users are new visitors, so it's important to leave a good first impression for them. Though the overall page views are 1081, only 50% are for new visitors, so almost half are repeated visits.

The bounce rate of my website is just less than 3% and people stay on it for nearly 6 minutes on average, which reaches my expectation. But the Average page retention time is not that long, it's merely 50 seconds for all users and for new visitors it's even shorter, which is only 33 seconds. The reason why the average duration of the working period is quite long while the duration for each page is much shorter may because people leave the page without closing it, so maybe they didn't stay at that page but the page is still open. To test whether this hypothesis is reasonable, I add one more metric which is "Percentage of leave". And it does prove the percentage of leaving the site from certain page is quite low, which is only 12.4% on average, and that means people are likely to do other things with the web page still open.

To monitor whether users visit different pages as I expected, one metric called "Single working period pages" was added. It shows that the average pages for new users to visit are almost 5, which is equal to the total pages I have. However, this doesn't mean all the new users visit all five pages on my website, since there must be some repeated data, but it shows that they are likely to visit as many pages as possible.