The background of the poster features a collage of various technology-related images. At the top, there's a close-up of a computer monitor displaying multiple windows and a keyboard. Below the monitor, a large white scroll of paper is unrolled, showing several small mobile phone screens with different apps. To the right of the scroll, there's a standard computer keyboard. In the bottom right corner, there's a dark smartphone screen showing a grid of icons. The overall theme is digital communication and information.

WRITTEN BY :

YOANA CHURKINA

READING GUIDE

February - June
2023

Portfolio

The assignment

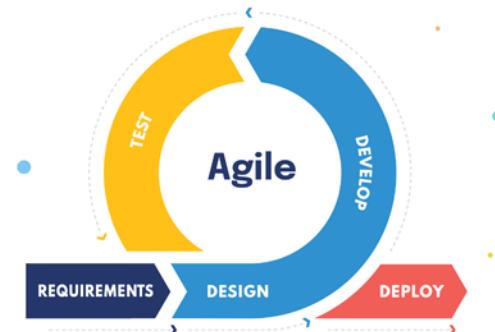
Information about the assignment

Our teachers gave us the assignment to create a portfolio for the first four weeks. This is something important for me because I would like to present myself in the best possible way in front of the world and show my capabilities. The question that best represents what my portfolio represents as well as the goal of this semester is: "What kind of IT professional do I want to be?".

Workflow and Methodology

For these four weeks, I was using the *Agile* methodology in this way which helped me to be flexible during the project if something goes wrong. In the project plan, I said that the sprint will be one week, so I stick to it.

I believe that everything went smoothly by this I mean that I was going as I planned in my project plan that I did.



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Since the project is pretty dynamic. I chose to use the *Design Thinking Method* because I can do different iterations and if something did not go as I planned it or it needs more research I could easily go one step back. The methods that I used were the *CMD* ones. They are based on the *DOT framework*, but there are more relatable to the UX/UI methods. An example of the *CMD* method is the trend analysis that I made at the beginning of my research.



The DOT Framework - ICT research methods. (n.d.).
https://ictresearchmethods.nl/The_DOT_Framework

Process and Results

Understanding

The first step I did when I understood the assignment is to look at what other designers did for their portfolios, how they structured their designs, and what colours they used. In this way, I made a small *competitor analysis* which help me to find out what are the good and the bad practices for creating a portfolio but also to inspire myself and to get an idea of what I would like to present to the world. Who I am and what do I want people to know about me? For this, I used different Youtube tutorials as well as websites such as awwwards(Awwwards Nominees, n.d.) and Behance (Behance, n.d.).

After I inspired myself by the design of other UX/UI designers, I made some small research about what are the *trends* for 2023. I did this because I wanted to make sure that my design would not look old-fashion. Also, one designer needs to know what are the trends right now, but also not put all of them if they are not relevant to the case that he is doing. Something that at the moment is trendy is the 3-D icons, however, I, personally, do not like them, so I did not include them in my design. Nevertheless, I like to have purple and pink colours in my design, so I searched for trend palettes that I include in my design. Moreover, I like doing design with glassmorphism that's why I used them in my design.

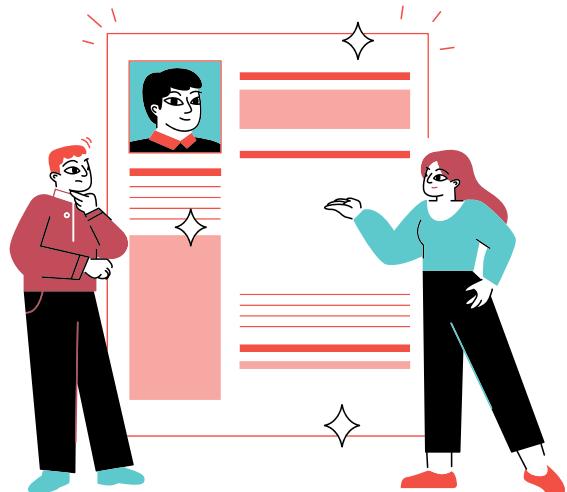
1- Carroll, C. (2022, November 6). A Look Ahead to 2023's Web, UX & UI Design Trends - 28 Predicted Trends for 2023 | Bootcamp. Medium.
<https://bootcamp.uxdesign.cc/28-predicted-ux-product-design-trends-for-2023-80cd19f4cc53>

2- Sërgushkin, D. (2023, January 17). 23 Places to Find UX and Web Design Inspiration in 2023. Medium. <https://uxplanet.org/23-places-to-find-ux-and-web-design-inspiration-in-2023-f39086a9b07>

Process and Results

Understanding

Another thing that I did is a *mood board* there I started brainstorming what colours and typefaces, I wanted to have in my design. My initial idea was to be black and white, but during the process, I started thinking that I wanted to be more playful and represent my creativity and myself. That's why I got to the idea that I want to have some sunset colours. Also, something that I wanted to have in my design is to have lines.



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Exploring

Since I was not sure how exactly my design will look as well as the limited time of the project, I started directly to implement *high-fidelity prototypes*. I got through some until I got to the point where I believe it is closest to what I wanted to have. In the beginning I used gradient as a background, then I did it only purple, but I was feeling that it was crashing, so I kept the purple but I put a white background. Also, I changed a couple of times the typeface until I find the best one.

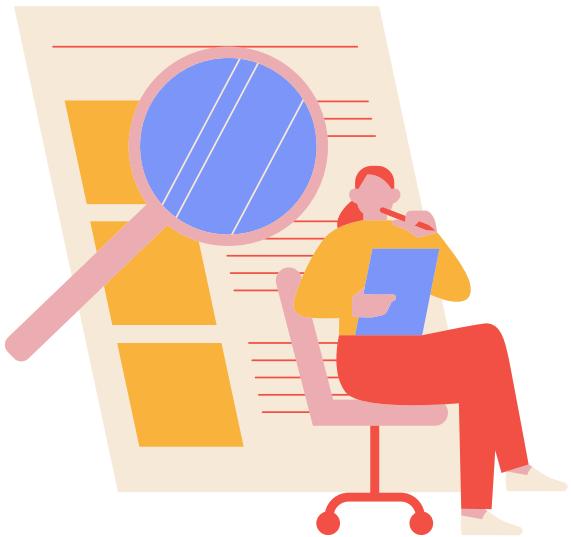


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Process and Results

Exploring

Another method that I used is the *UI Architecture* as again and here I went through different iterations before going to the final version of my structure for the design. This helped me with the coding part. I did a small brand style guide which to help with the components of my design.



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Materializing

I did a *peer review* with a couple of my fellow students who gave me feedback for my design as there I showed what I did and my other iterations. Based on it, I put more white space and removed some elements that made the design look more simple and clear.

I used *MosCoW* analysis as a method. This was important for me because I wanted to set some goals that I can achieve and not achieve. Since I have a lot of things that I want to have but the time that I have is not that big, I was supposed to put some borders to make some expectations of what I want to have and do not have.



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Process and Results

Materializing

I was doubting which is better to use a template or to do it without but after some brainstorming, I came up with the idea to use *React*. The reason is that I can develop my coding skills in this way and I can experiment with different coding methods. As I have already mentioned for the limited time that we have I was thinking to use a framework such as *Bootstrap*.

However, when I was brainstorming, I realized that my design is specific and it would not work. That's why after some talks with people with software backgrounds, they advised me to use *styled components*, which I had never heard of before. This is a React-specific CSS-in-JS styling solution that creates a platform for developers to write actual CSS code to style React components. This makes my work look cleaner and more professional and if someone wants to see my code it would be presented in a structured way.

Based on 360-degree feedback from my fellow students, I received positive feedback for my planning skills, structured approach, timely delivery, research documentation, and empathy in design. However, there are areas for improvement, such as creating more minimalistic plans, highlighting key research points, being open to change in group work, thinking beyond limitations in problem-solving, and not taking feedback personally. Overall, I have good qualities but need to be more flexible and open-minded.



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Conclusion

In conclusion, I am proud of myself. I believe that I achieved my goal. Now, I know that I want to be a UI designer that has critical thinking and is ready to do as much as needed interactions, to create the best possible project. Nevertheless, this will help with nice research that can validate the concept and the design. Another thing that I need to take into account in the future is not to be too strict with myself and what I want to deliver since sometimes pleasing everyone is not the solution. These months I have learned a lot and I know what I want to do. I went through a lot of ups and downs but this is the process of learning.

The assignment

Information about the assignment

This project involved six individuals with different backgrounds. Our shared passion for UX/UI and the problem we needed to solve brought us together. Our client was Simac, a Dutch-based company in Veldhoven, with two assignments to choose from. We opted to tackle the challenge of onboarding non-Dutch people into the company. Currently, the majority of employees at Simac IT NL are Dutch, while the job market is providing more and more international and qualified candidates. Our team members had experience dealing with cultural differences in Dutch workplaces, and we believed we could leverage our knowledge and experience to help Simac address this problem.

It's worth noting that the broad nature of the project is what defines the assignment. There are no specific requirements expected by the stakeholders, but they do wish to deeply explore and validate a hook. Our research question, "*How can Simac become more attractive to non-Dutch people?*" encapsulates the *project's goal*. Our team will focus on the onboarding process, which can be a sometimes dull and overwhelming experience, particularly for international individuals who don't speak Dutch and face cultural differences.

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Workflow and Methodology

I have a strong passion for organizing my life and daily activities, which is why I aspire to lead and organize people around me by planning and executing successful events. To achieve this, I conducted *literature research* on project management methodologies that would best suit our project needs and goals. After careful consideration, I determined that Scrum-ban was the ideal approach as it allows for flexibility and adjustments throughout the project, particularly when there are no concrete user requirements as in the case of our project.



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To further my knowledge and skills in this area, I completed several Scrum courses for Scrum Master. This experience provided me with valuable insight into the role of a project manager and helped me determine if this is a career path I would like to pursue in the future.

Process and Results

Exploration

I conducted a *literature review* of the documents provided by Simac to understand the current onboarding process at Simac. One of the documents was a feedback survey from their employees, while the other outlined the flow and best practices that Simac can implement.

Based on these documents, I discovered that there are four stages of onboarding, and most employees feel overwhelmed on their first day due to the many tasks they need to complete. Another interesting finding was that many employees do not use SimacWeb.

Process and Results

However, the company is doing some things right, such as personalizing the onboarding process based on individuals and assigning a "buddy" for the first few days. These insights provided our team with valuable information to guide our project.

As there are various steps involved in the onboarding process over several months, I created a *customer journey map* to visualize it. The map includes a general overview, as well as two more specific maps detailing the first day and first week at work. Since many actions are happening these days, our team decided to create the maps early on.

I participated in *expert interviews* to gain insights into how Simac and other companies conduct their onboarding. An interesting fact that was confirmed is that employees are not aware of the full capabilities of SimacWeb, and there are too many Word documents involved in the Simac onboarding process. Another company I talked to mentioned that they switched their company language from Dutch to English. They emphasized the importance of everyone feeling like an expert in their role and taking initiative.

Our team conducted several brainstorming sessions, including a *Design Sprint*, where we identified problems in the project. This helped to gain an understanding of the project's scope and what we could look for in the research. The second session was the *Dark Side*, where we aimed to bring a fresh perspective to the assignment. 8 hooks were generated during this session, but we narrowed them down to 3 of the most interesting hooks, some of which could incorporate elements of the other hooks. This process helped us to clarify potential solutions.



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Process and Results

After we gather some information and inspiration about the project, the step was to make primary research by *interviewing* the employees in Simac who are non-Dutch and employees in another company where we can understand their onboarding experience. I conducted one interview and I was a chairperson in another role where I was *observing* the participant's reaction. I got interesting findings as the person who I interview does not have language difficulties in Simac since I thought that this will be a major one.

The next step that we needed to do is *analyze the interviews*. First, I did my own. Then based on all analysis I created an *empathy map* which helped to filter users' emotions, feelings and thoughts about the onboarding. Based on them my team members created personas and user requirements.

However, based on the client's feedback we missed some key elements that's why we created an *affinity mapping* on the interviews' analysis. From there I found out that the socializing part was something that was not that much developed at Simac, especially for bonding international and non-Dutch people. This is one of the key points in the project because the next step was finding a solution to the problem.

After the whole information was gathered, the focus was on the socializing part. Sometimes solving a problem means that you can focus only on one part of the project rather than solving the whole problem. NADSCY put some requirements on what we have to do. From there each of us was supposed to do a concept. I wanted to think outside the screen because I was inspired by international week while I was creating my concept. However, it is not legal to track your employees and we gave up on this idea. I made *sketches* and *pitch* them in front of the team, the teachers and the client

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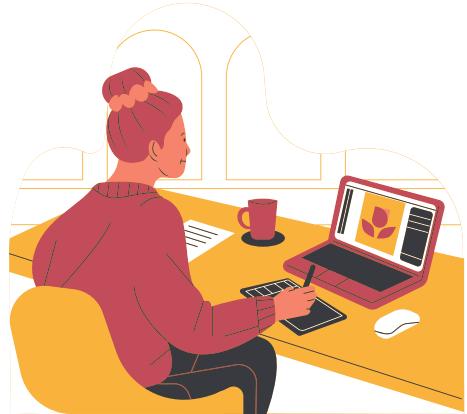
Process and Results

In the end, we selected all key features from each idea and created a concept. The concept includes a screen on the wall that Simac has and an app that had the function of PDP. I did *wireframes* because I wanted to improve my design skills. Most of the time I am doing sketches and jumping into high-fidelity prototypes, that's why I investigate how to do wireframes and understood that they are different types. Another reason that I did the wireframes is that the team had a lot of different designs. In this way, we could choose the best one and show the layout clearly of the app. However, we had *a pitch in front of our clients*. They did not like that much the idea of the PDP because it is more HR related and does not bond that much with the employees.

Taking a risk and starting the whole concept from scratch was scary since it was the end of the semester. The whole team went through a lot of different interactions until we got to the final one. A *challenge-based app for new employees, fostering interaction and collaboration. It includes a world map highlighting cultural diversity within the company. The aim is to create an engaging and inclusive work environment*. This time NADSCY verified the idea after it was approved.

The division of the task gave me to create the Scanning and Congratulating part of high-fidelity. The verification will happen through image recognition. I found a plugin that makes image recognition. It is not the precisest one. I went through different iterations. Another thing that I tried to make is to be interactive as much as possible.

At the end of the project, I did *testing* where I could verify the design and the concept itself. The results are pretty positive. The goal that I put at the end to simple, easy-to-navigate was achieved. The user will use this app with his co-workers and he rates the app *9 out of 10*.



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Conclusion

This project was one amazing opportunity for me. I believe that I grew a lot as a professional. I learned so many lessons. At the beginning of the project, I was lost and I did not know what I want to do, now I can say that I know what I want to do as being professional and I am motivated to follow it until I achieve it. I learn that sometimes if you want to achieve great things and be more creative, you need to take risks and get out of your comfort zone. Moreover, I believe that my design thinking changed. I trying to think more simplistic and minimalistic. I believe that this project was one successful experience and I am thankful to my team, teachers and stakeholders.

International Week

The assignment

Information about the assignment

In this assignment, we worked with a total of eight people that were from different universities all over Europe. There I and my team were supposed to find out a solution for the scope of one week. Our client was the Cruyff Foundation.

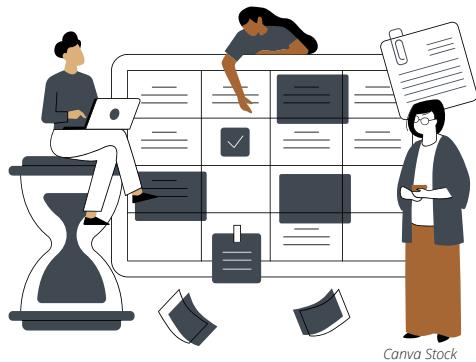
They have in total three different types of playgrounds, but we focused on their Schoolyard 14. There are 14 games, and we were supposed to create a new game, a fifth one that needs to be innovative and involves some technology. The games need to be reached by any kid which means disabled kids (physical problems, poverty, etc.) Research shows that 25% of all children do not exercise enough. This is supported by research showing that the school period is the most inactive period of the day. A negative effect is a decline in motor and social skills. In addition, 15.5% of all elementary school children are overweight. Our solution was based on Sustainable Development goals. So, if I have to define the project in one sentence, it would sound like this: "*How can the integration of synthetic media, mixed reality, artificial intelligence, and/or big data in the design of Schoolplein14 and its surrounding environment effectively encourage children and young people to engage in outdoor play and physical activities?*"



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Workflow and Methodology

The methodology that we were supposed to use and I believe is the most suitable for the project was the "*Design Thinking Method*". The method is useful and flexible, which makes it good since the time is short and sometimes we needed to go back a step back.



Process and Results

Preparation

The project was one week extra where we can meet each other and understand more about ourselves and introduce each other. In this way, we could know what are our strengths and weakness, so this helped us to know each other. During this week, we had to create avatars and a poster that summarize some information that we got from the inspirational meetings and each other. I was responsible for patching all the information and getting the things that inspire us.

Execution

The first day was a huge adventure because on this day we met in person and understood the assignment that we need to work on. When I understood what is the problem I did a *company research* and what are their values for example. This helped me to visualize the better the whole picture.

I suggested creating some questions that we wanted to ask the Cruyff Foundation representative because this was our key point to understand more about the assignment itself and what they want from us and what is for them a good game. Creating this *expert interview* was the starting point of our project.

Process and Results

Then we did a *brainstorming* session each of us was supposed to come with us much as possible ideas about how we can solve the problem. After that, I *pitch* our ideas.

The team was having an idea of what we wanted to build, but most of us had never been on these playgrounds, so we decided to see them and *observe* what kids are going there, what games they are playing etc. The results were interesting as the court is always busy and the kids do not care that much about the weather outside for instance us, so they play even when the weather conditions are not the best. After that, we did a quick brainstorming session where we discussed the findings.

However, creating a concept without researching it is pretty hard to make. Based on the project plan I was supposed to do *literature research* about the technologies out there that can make our game more interactive and interesting for the students. I excluded the VR possibility because this would not make the kids move that much and communicate with each other. I focused on AR, projectors and Haptic feedback, and Motion tracking. As for Haptic feedback I never heard of it and it was interesting to find out that there is such a technology out there.

Based on my research we decided to include Motion tracking in the game and have the Haptic feedback in the bracelets.

After the whole information was collected, each of us was supposed to *create a concept* as we had some stuff that was required to have. Then all of us were supposed to *pitch* it and from there we came up with a concept that included most of our ideas as I have already mentioned based on my research we included projectors, avatars and Haptic feedback.



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Process and Results

Since I want to understand what kind of IT professional I want to be? - this is my goal. I decided to help with creating a *high-fidelity prototype*. I created a small guide which to help us to develop our prototype. The colours and the typefaces I wanted to be happy, colourful and made as a kid is making a painting because it will be closest to their age. I wanted it to be simple to use since the kids will use it and the main focus should not be how fancy is the screen, but to play the game.

I made a *C4 model* because this will clarify our concept and when it needs to be developed by ICT specialists they can see what type of technology is needed, but also and the client to know what kind of specialist they are looking for.

At the end of the project, we need to deliver our product in a shape of a video.

Something interesting and exciting that happened during this week was that I was doing a take-over of Fontys ICT on Instagram, which helped me to understand if I want to go into the field of creating content for social media.



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Conclusion

To summarize, The Dutch Design Charrette was one amazing experience because I started thinking beyond the screen. I knew that there are architecture and internal design, and they are also doing design thinking methods.

However, this project taught me that even UX/UI and the technology that we are studying now can help me to solve such a problem that I had. So far, when it was something about creating a solution, I was limiting myself to thinking only about the mobile app or website. Moreover, working with different people with different studies was also an amazing opportunity because you see the project from a different perspective an example is the perspective of architecture or e-commerce. Overall, I think that I grow as a professional.

Proof of the Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Proof
Learning outcome 1: User interaction (analysis & advice)	<p>Always take into consideration who is my target audience, find out what is there on the market, more about my clients and their values.</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#understanding (in the Understanding section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#understanding (in the Understanding section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#exploration (in the Exploration section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#definition (in the Definition section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#ideation (in the Ideation section)</p>
Learning outcome 2: User interaction (execution & validation)	<p>I was doing constantly validation the design I was doing as well as doing sketches, wireframes and high-fidelity prototypes:</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#prototyping (in the Prototyping section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#materializing (in the Materializing section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#materializing (in the Materializing section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#exploring (in the Exploring section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#exploring (in the Exploring section)</p>
Learning outcome 3: Software design	<p>I used ReactJS as well as different libraries which helped me to boost the process of working, and doing C4 models: More info in the Materializing section:</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#materializing (in the Materializing section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#materializing (in the Materializing section)</p>
Learning outcome 4: Future-oriented organisation	<p>In the beginning, I created a project plan and also I set a goal at the beginning of the project. More info in the summary part:</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#planning (in the Planning section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#understanding (in the Understanding section)</p>

Proof of the Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Proof
Learning outcome 5: Investigative problem solving	<p>In each project, I was using CMD methods and working on a sub-question that could help us to solve the problem :</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#genInfo (in the General Information section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#gInfo (in the General Information section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#generalInfo (in the General Information section)</p>
Learning outcome 6: Personal leadership	<p>I did 360-degree feedback, as after each project I reflected on how it was for me if I developed and what I need to improve</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#materializing (in Materializing section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyPortfolio#conclusion (in the Conclusion section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#conclusion (in the Conclusion section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#conclusion (in the Conclusion section)</p>
Learning outcome 7: Goal-oriented interaction	<p>For this learning outcome, I talked with different stakeholders as teachers and fellow students to get the best view of my projects. I asked my semester coach to have Feedpuls after the meeting we have. As well as participating in the international week:</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#prototyping (in the Prototyping section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudyInterWeek#preparation (in the Preparation section)</p> <p>https://yoanaportfolios6.netlify.app/caseStudySimac#ideation (in the Ideation section)</p>