Project Showcase Retrospective: ZRO Storage

PROJECT OVERVIEW

We were asked in our Web Development Course to develop a basic e-commerce site, as a step in the path to mastery of Web Programming in general and Ruby on Rails in particular. An Israeli entrepreneur reached out to share a plan to compete against existing local storage providers. He asked that I demonstrate basic site functionality, including ordering, user registration and log-in, payments, and more, as aligned with the CareerFoundry Web Development Course.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The true purpose was to experience, learn, and master aspects of the *Ruby on Rails* Framework. The delivery of a competitive site for storage applications was second to the goal of learning *Ruby on Rails Development*, including: Database Seeds and Migrations, ActionMailer, Routes, Authentication, Authorization, Testing, Caching, Security Models, ActiveJob and ActionCable.

OBJECTIVE

The primary objective was to complete a smoothly-working ecommerce site that could take payments and display both products and product reviews, with all the underlying backend work necessary to support these primary functions, from user registration to authentication and authorization prior to bestowing permission to post a review.
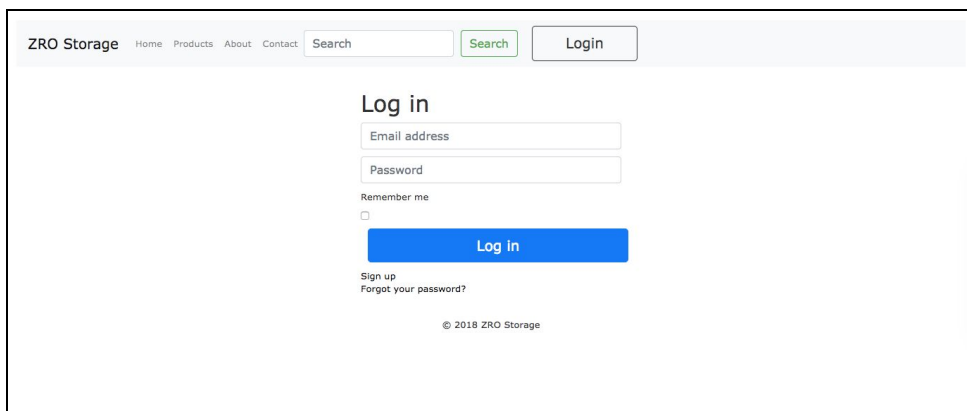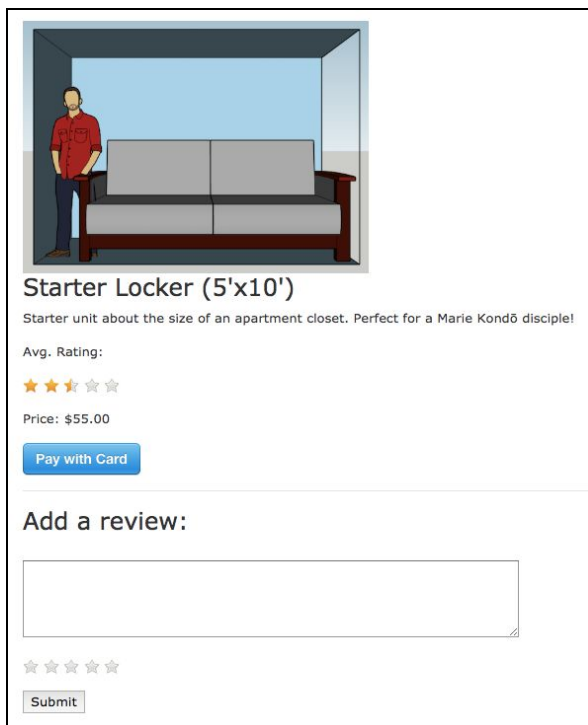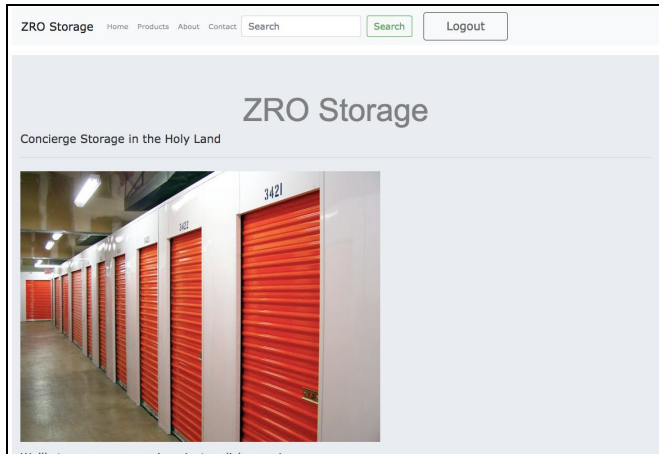
APPROACH

As a core part of the CareerFoundry Web Development Course, the site was built step-by-step, brick-by-brick in modular fashion, starting with simple pages and working upward and outward to more complex backend functionality.

CHALLENGE

The steepest challenge in the course of developing the site was getting *ActionCable* up and running, pulling *WebSockets* technology into play for instant comment updates on the Product Reviews Page. Aside from that, the challenges that came along with this project were all achievable by following the guidance of *Ruby on Rails* and *CareerFoundry* Documentation, without the direct support of a mentor.

DURATION

On the whole, while balancing all other life obligations at the time, this project took about two to three months to complete.

ZRO Storage

Concierge Storage in the Holy Land

We'll store your possessions just a click away!

Starter Locker (5'x10')

Starter unit about the size of an apartment closet. Perfect for a Marie Kondō disciple!

Avg. Rating:

★ ★ ⯪ ☆ ☆

Price: $55.00

[Pay with Card]

Add a review:

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

[Submit]

Log in

Email address

Password

Remember me
☐

[Log in]

Sign up
Forgot your password?

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What Went Well

The Rails App Web Development just works. Bootstrap Forms, ActionMailer mailers and Stripe payment gateways and more were successfully deployed to facilitate, effect and document visitors' dynamic website transactions.

The basic functionality for Product Reviews on each "Product Show" Page works beautifully, with Purchasing, Product Reviews and Average Ratings functionality together as a package being one of the stronger parts of this ecommerce demonstration.

What Didn't Go Well

ActionCable real-time Product Review Updates were challenging to set up, and troubleshooting *ActionCable* took longer than expected. *ActionCable* was a difficult skill to acquire because there are so many moving parts and customizations required to reach a working demonstration of *WebSockets* AJAX Technology.

The frontpage design is limited to the amount of storage-related artwork I could make in SketchUp 3D or find "Free for Commercial Use" online. A different project choice, such as a bicycle or cookie store or other well-trod path, might have made image and art gathering and the User Interface in general far simpler, better standardized, and more straightforward. Currently, the frontpage revolves around a Bootstrap Jumbotron design with one *Public Domain* illustration from 1869 of a comedic moving day.

What Could Be Improved

The payment confirmation page could be better developed, rather than based on a Bootstrap alert. A later iteration of the site will include a Payment Confirmation page. Competitive sites have a "solicitation screen" design element that appears on a delay and floats over other elements on the page, soliciting the website guest's phone number. Currently, the site has no way of securing website guest phone numbers or any other critical contact information for Sales to take root. Competitive sites also have a prominent phone number, to initiate the sales process, and hide the prices of each storage option until contact information is exchanged. Since this is not a real business yet, there is no Israeli phone number available at this point to post.
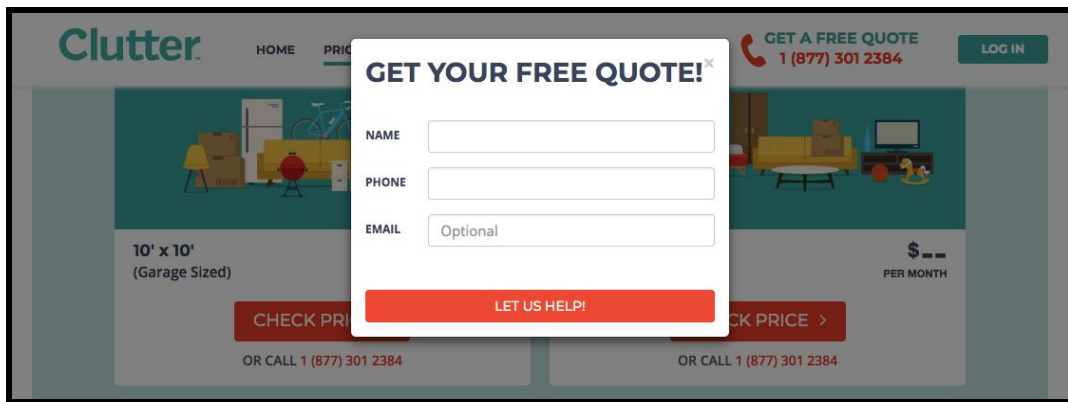
FIGURE 4: Competitive Site Clutter.com with Modal Solicitation of Name, Phone and Optional Email for "Prospects" Model
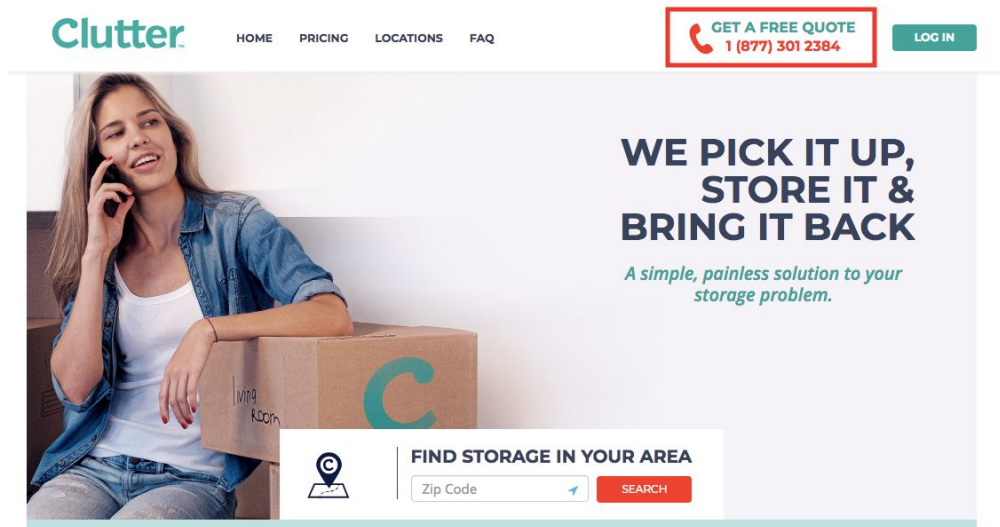

FIGURE 5: Competitive Site Clutter.com with Prominent Phone Number, Free Quote Offer, Value Proposition, and Geolocational Storage Search