HOUSEHold. Renting responsive website

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Project overview

The product:

HouseHold is a website and app that offer houses to rent. The typical user is between 24-34 years old, most users are young adults who have recently become independent or have become independent a few years ago. HouseHold goal is to make the experience of renting a house easier and more secure to tenants, helping them to feel less anxiety and better feelings.

Project duration:

May 2023 to July 2023

Google
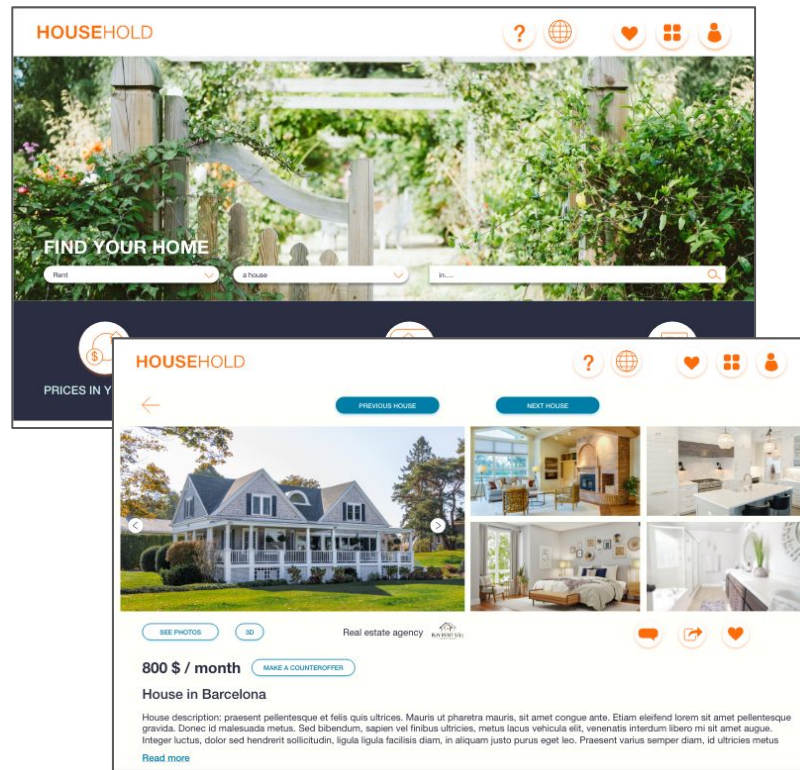
Project overview

The problem:

In the renting process, tenants feel low security, no confidence in realtors or homeowners, disenchanted, and some of them fear the unknown. The renting process is complicated, offers don't represent reality and it is a nuisance for tenants having to show the house to new possible tenants.

The goal:

Design a HouseHold website & app user friendly by providing clear navigation, offering an easier process, giving more aids to tenants and owners and helping tenants to gain confidence and security in the renting process.

Google

Project overview

My role:

UX designer designing HouseHold website & app from conception to delivery.

Responsibilities:

Conducting interviews, paper and digital wireframing, low and high-fidelity prototyping, conducting usability studies, accounting for accessibility, iterating on designs and responsive design.

Google

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

Google

User research: summary

I conducted user interviews, which I turned then into empathy maps to better understand the target user and their needs, then created personas to synthesize users needs. I discovered most target users resort to websites to rent houses. However, many renting websites have a complicated process and give low security to tenants. This causes tenants to feel disenchanted, be wary of real estate agents and homeowners and feel insecure and anxious. Increasing the feeling of nervousness in the process of changing homes.

User research: pain points

1

Low confidence

Offers don't represent reality. Sometimes realtors and homeowners deceive tenants. This cause tenants to feel insecure, vulnerable and disenchanted.

2

Added responsibilities

Homeowners sometimes burden their tenants with responsibilities that are not their own, like showing the house to new tenants.

3

Complicated process

Usually, the website process of renting a house is complicated and cause the users to feel misled and confused. Tenants have to run and compete to have their chosen house with little margin.

4

Increased anxiety

Some users feel anxiety about changing homes and not finding a house equal or better to their current home. Not having guides in those websites to help users find something that meets their needs increase their anxiety.

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Persona: **Julia**

Problem statement:

Julia is an office worker who wants to rent a house and needs to find a house that meets her needs and facilitates the process of finding a new home, because she have had a lot of bad experiences before and needs to gain confidence, security and better feelings during the process.

"The challenges I have had to rent have made me feel very uncomfortable and I have had numerous anxiety attacks. I have become absolutely disenchanted with renting."

Goals
- Find something that fits her needs.
- More access to social benefits.
- Homeowners attention.
- Gain confidence and security in the renting process.

Frustrations
- Low security.
- No confidence on realtors or homeowners.
- Complicated renting process. Disenchanted.
- Can be homeless after 5 years. Vulnerable.
- Offers don't represent reality.
- Showing rented house to new tenants.

Julia

Age: 32
Education: University degree
Hometown: Spain
Family: lives w/ roommates
Occupation: office worker

Julia is an office worker that has experience in renting, but she has too many bad experiences. She feels disenchanted, misled and vulnerable with the renting process, rented houses, realtors and home owners. She needs to find something that fits her needs, more security, gain confidence and more access to benefits.

Google

Persona: **David**

Problem statement:

David is a temporary worker who wants to rent/buy a house and find a house that meets his needs and something that gives him security in the rental process. He needs a long rental because he feels a lot of anxiety in the process of changing houses and he fears not finding something equal or better.

"*I have a lot of worries, nervousness and fear of taking away that comfort zone, I would look for something that looks like what I had or improves it. Having to move houses it's a big bummer.*"

Goals
- Buy a house or having a long term rental.
- Having something of his own.
- Finding something equal or better than current house.

Frustrations
- Moving houses.
- No confidence in homeowners and realtors.
- Fear to the unknown, change and exit comfort zone.

David

Age: 27
Education: medium degree
Hometown: Alicante, Spain
Family: lives with partner
Occupation: Worker without fix contract

David works in unstable jobs and feels really worried and anxious about changing his rented house. He wants to find something equal or better than his current house but doesn't have confidence on house ads, websites and realtors. He fears the unknown. He has some social benefits that help him with his house. He lives with his partner.

Google

User journey map

I created a user journey map of Julia's experience to help identify possible pain points and improvement opportunities.

Persona: Julia

Goal: Have an app that facilitates the renting process and help her with its critical points to experience this process with security and confidence in an easier way.

| ACTION	Search a house	Get in contact	Visit the house	Sign the contract	Move in
TASK LIST	Tasks A. Define roommates (if shared house). B. Search on websites and talking with people. C. Select interesting houses.	Tasks A. Get in contact with the number provided of the selected houses. B. Select day and time. C. Meeting in the house.	Tasks A. Visit house with owner or realtor and consult doubts. B. *Visit other houses. C. Reserve selected house.	Tasks A. Meet with the owner or the realtor. B. Pay and sign the contract to be sure of having the house. C. Making accounts (if having roommates).	Tasks A. Collecting and transporting belongings. B. Check and clean the house. C. Adapt the house to you. D. Search for benefits.
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Nervous about finding roommates and be quick to find a home that meet the needs. Excited for the new house. Overwhelmed by tons of houses and websites.	Stressed for possible problems with owners and realtors and finding the right date to visit the house.	Excited to visit the house. Accelerated to find quick the definitive house. Tired for spending the day visiting apartments.	Stressed about finishing the process before anyone else get ahead with the house. Distrustful with the realtor/owner. Vulnerable. Upset if she has the feeling that she has been taken advantage of	Tired for the process. Happy to have a new home. Concentrated and excited in adapting the house.
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Having something to inform types of renting and buying methods. Including a roommates functionality in the app and sharing selected houses and opinions via app. Having in the app groups to share, add and commenting favorites. Favorites function. Filters to specify needs. See if someone (known or unknown) recommends the house and its comments.	See an availability calendar to select a time and date when everyone can or cannot meet. Sharing a location. See transport possibilities to the specified location.	See comments of other people who has visited the house. Having in the app a house specification sheet of each house. Having an indicator of visited houses and the possibility of adding notes. Reserve selected house via app. Having some kind of house guarantee. Think in a way of visiting the house without being there for those who are far of the location and have to make big travels to see the house, maybe some videocall with possible comments or virtual reality.	Chat in the app to meet to sign the contract or having the possibility of sharing and signing the contract via app. Functionality to pay in separated accounts to divide between all roommates or paying one and having the receipt.	Possibility of receiving boxes in an specified location or contacting someone to transport your belongings. Possibility of contracting a cleaner. Section of decoration tips. Section of links to social benefits.

Starting the design

- Sitemap
- Paper wireframes
- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

Google

Sitemap

The first stepin the design phase was creating a sitemap to make a clear information architecture that let users have an easier navigation experience.

The structure followed was overall hierarchical combined with a little sequential part in the rental proposal. The dark grey rectangle indicate the sitemap origin. Rectangles with blue background indicate sections, rectangles with white backgrounds indicate the sections content.

[Click here to see sitemap in detail](#)
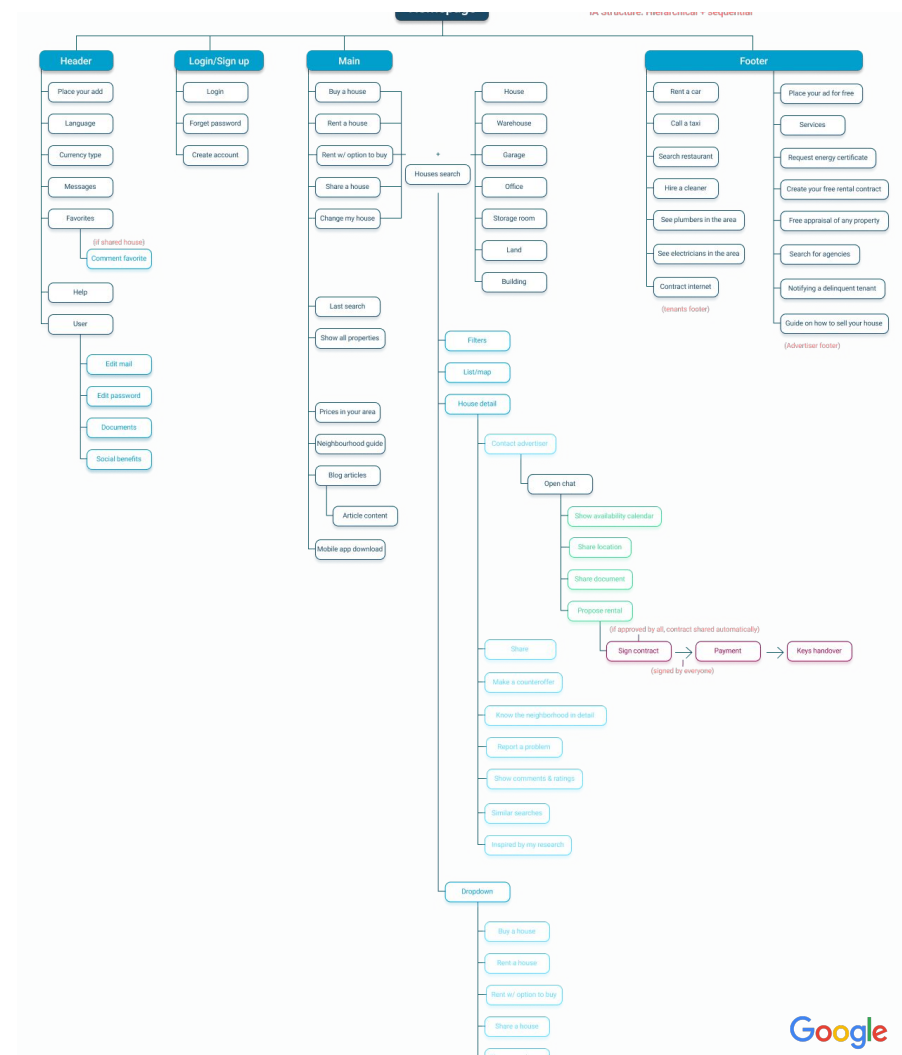
Paper wireframes

Next, I sketched out paper wireframes for each app screen, keeping the user pain points about navigation, low confidence, anxiety and added responsibilities in mind.
The home screen wireframe variations to the right focus on showing the website options in a clear and synthesized way.

Red stars were used to mark the elements of each sketch that would be used in the refined paper wireframe.
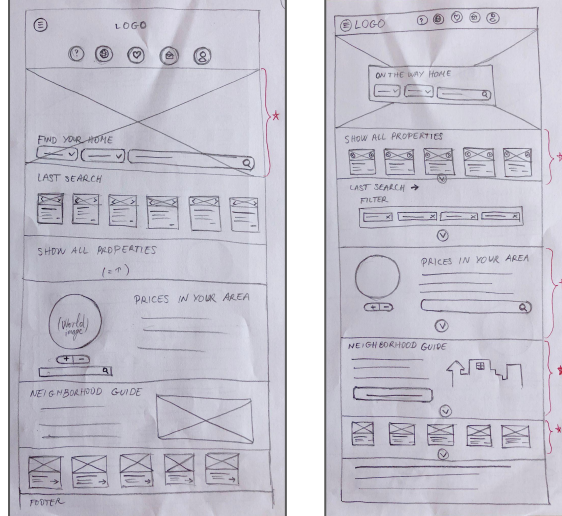
Refined paper wireframe
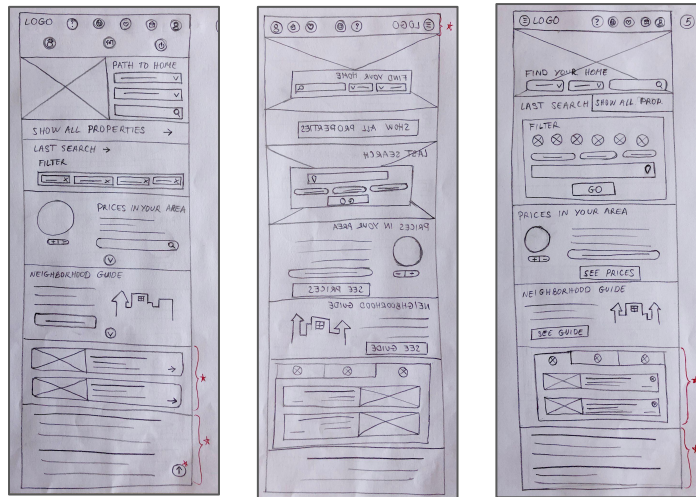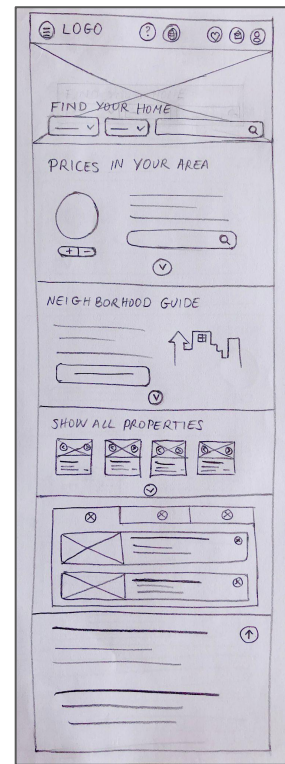
Paper wireframe
screen size variation(s)

Renting websites are very used on mobile devices, so I worked on designs for additional sizes to make sure the site would be fully responsive.

Google
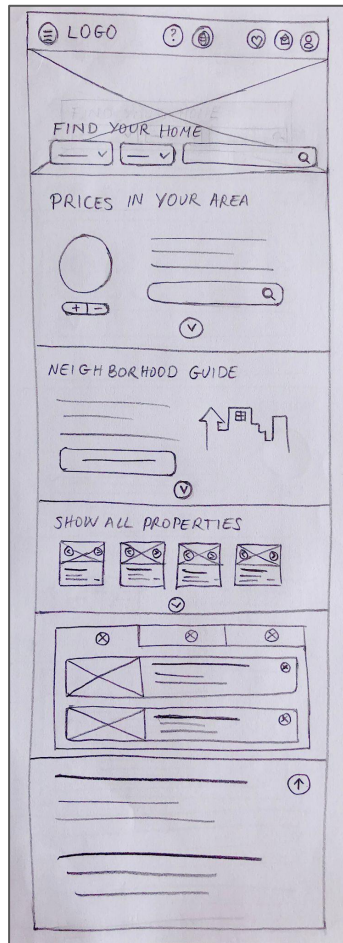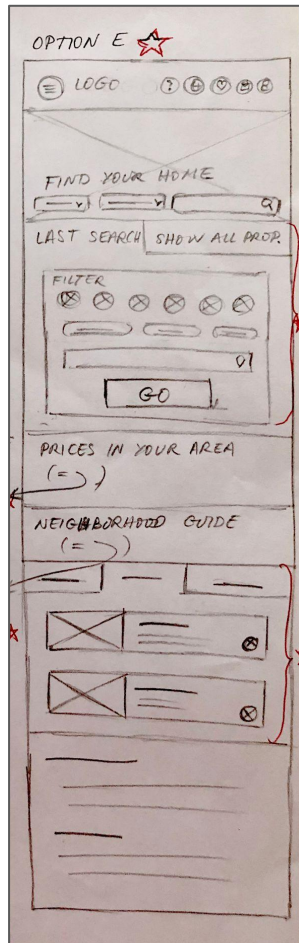
Digital wireframes

Moving from paper to digital wireframes made it easy to understand how the redesign could help address user pain points and improve the user experience.

Prioritizing clear sections, useful button locations and visual element placement on the homepage were key on the high fidelity design.
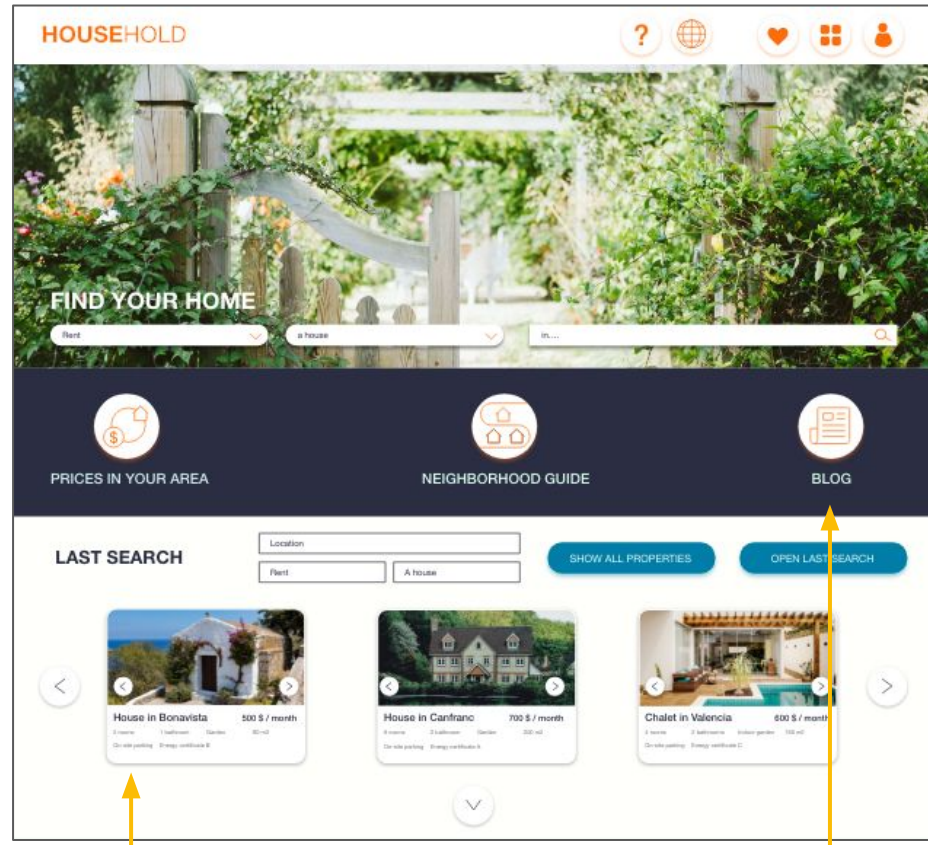
Quick access to house searches and recommendations.

Easy access to sections and a contrasted colors to distinguish icons.

Google

Digital wireframe screen size variation(s)
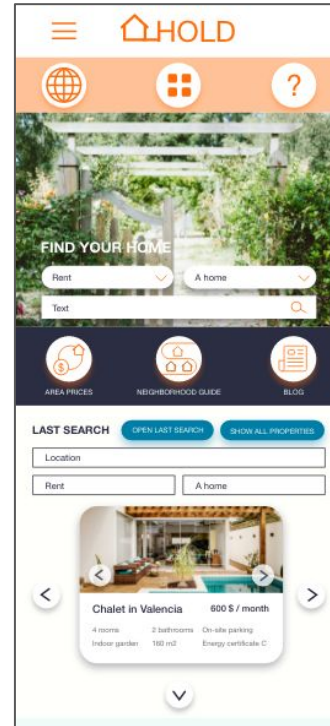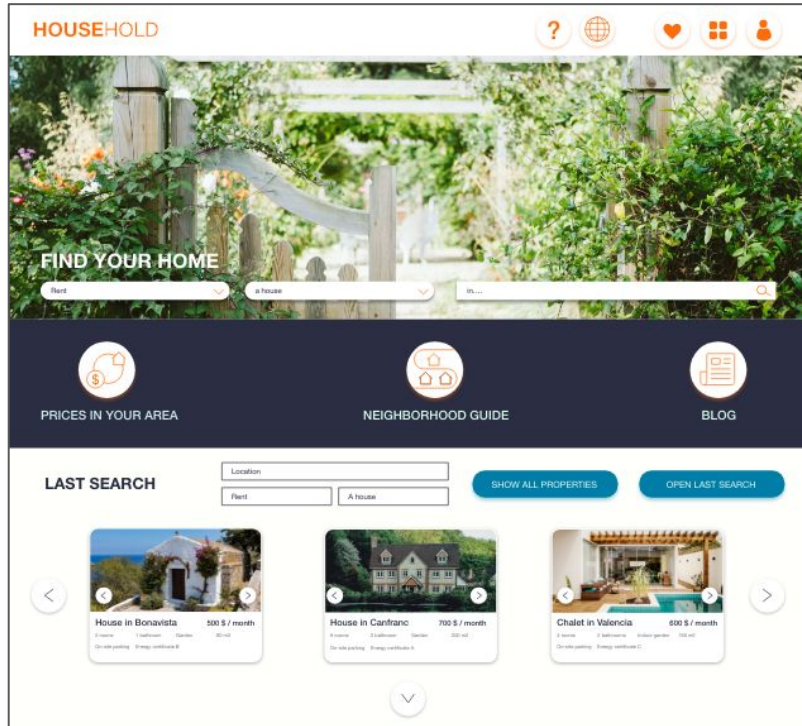
Low-fidelity prototype

To create a low-fidelity prototype, all screens involved in the primary user flow of renting a home, and some extras were connected.
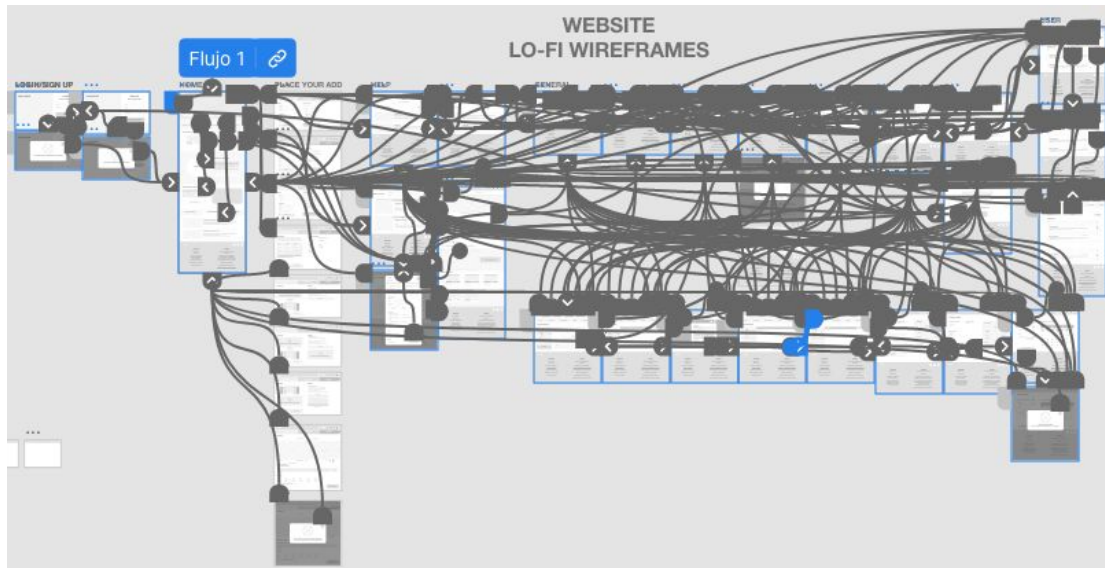
View HouseHold mobile low-fidelity prototype

View HouseHold website low-fidelity prototype

Google

Usability study: parameters

Study type:

Unmoderated usability study

Location:

Spain, remote

Participants:

5 participants

Length:

20-40 minutes

Google

Usability study: findings

Insert a one to two sentence introduction to the findings shared below.

1

Navigation hints

Some actions success were not indicated when completed. This caused confusion to participants about if the action was completed.

2

Anxiety changing houses

Some users have a lot of anxiety about changing houses and finding something worse. Similar searches section is added to help users find something that satisfy them.

3

Distrust

Most participants didn't trust homeowners, realtors and renting websites. The rating section has been added to provide other users opinions and experiences and give security between users.

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Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Google

Mockups

Based on the insights of the usability study, I made changes to improve the site's renting flow. One of the changes I made was in the chat section, adding above the send button a section to write and incorporating up old messages to place elements in a more logical way.
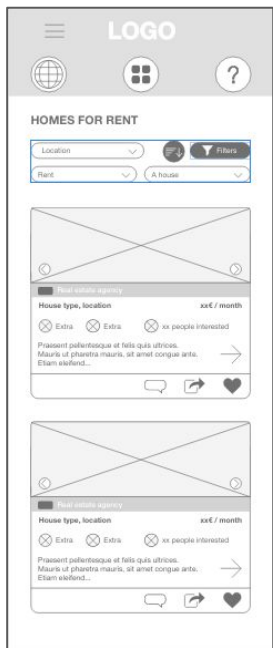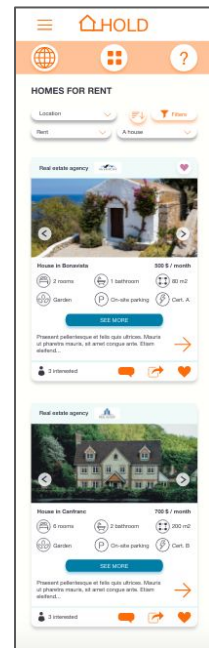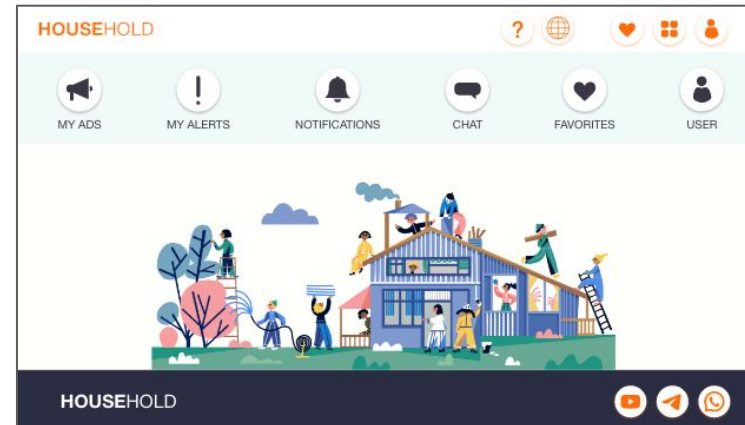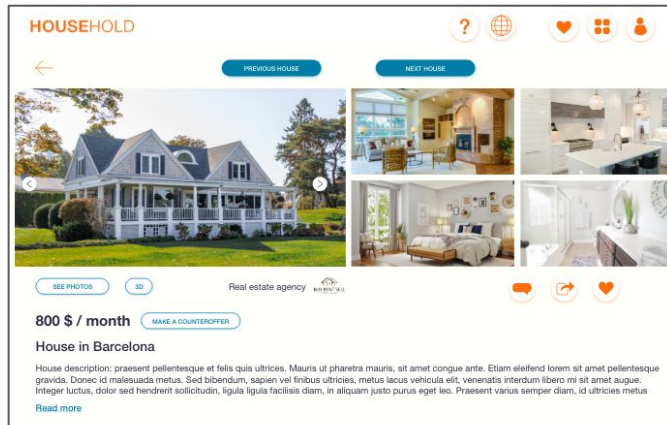
Before usability study
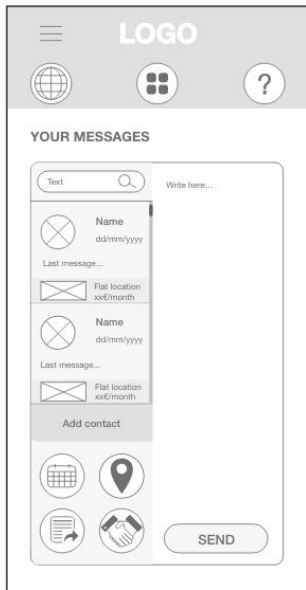
After usability study
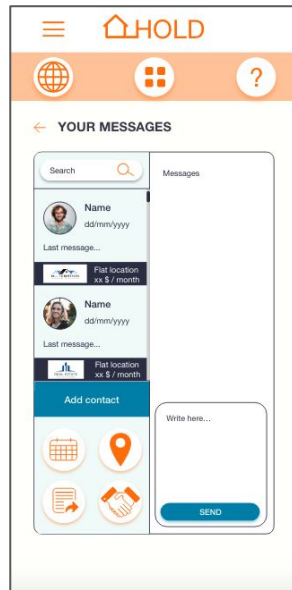
Mockups

To show in a clearer way house detail elements and make easier the access to house data, I added a Show more button and redistributed card elements.
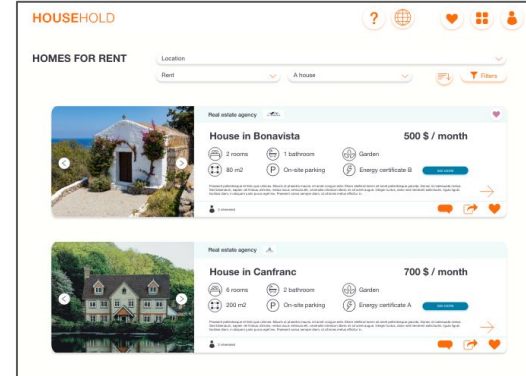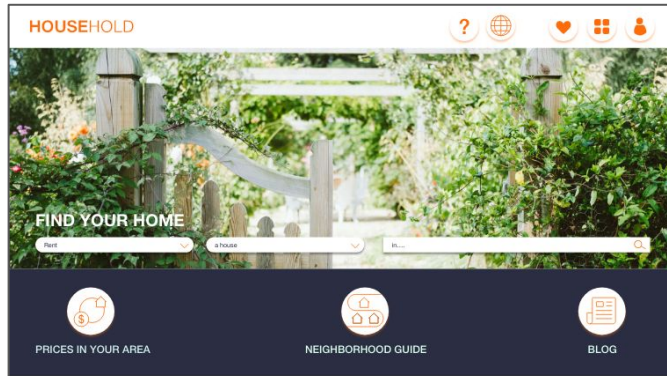
Before usability study

After usability study

# Mockups: Original screen size of key mockups

Mockups: Screen size variations of key mockups

I included considerations for
mobile screen sizes based on
the website wireframes. Users
rent houses on various devices,
so it was important to adapt the
app for mobile devices so that
users have the smoothest
experience possible and could
use the app anywhere.

Google
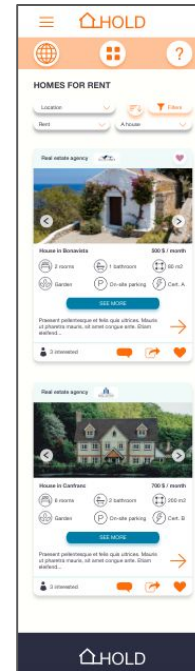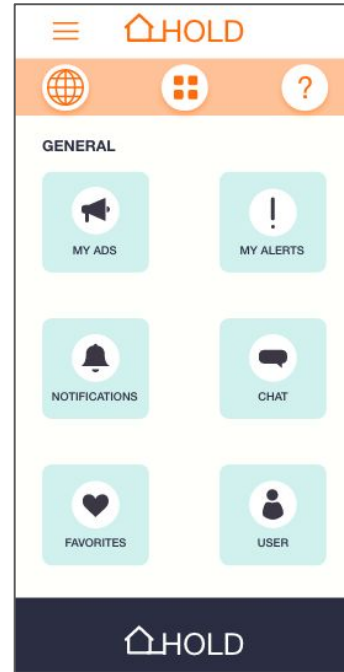
Website high-fidelity prototype

The hi-fi prototype followed the same user flow as the lo-fi prototype, and included the design changed made during the process to the final prototype.
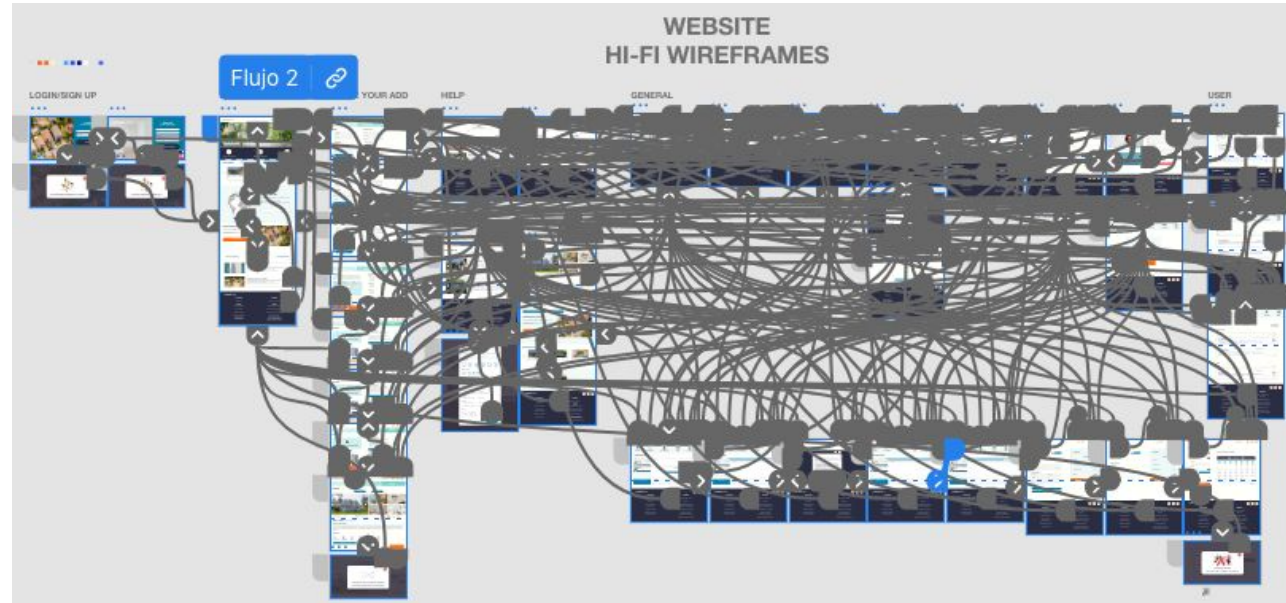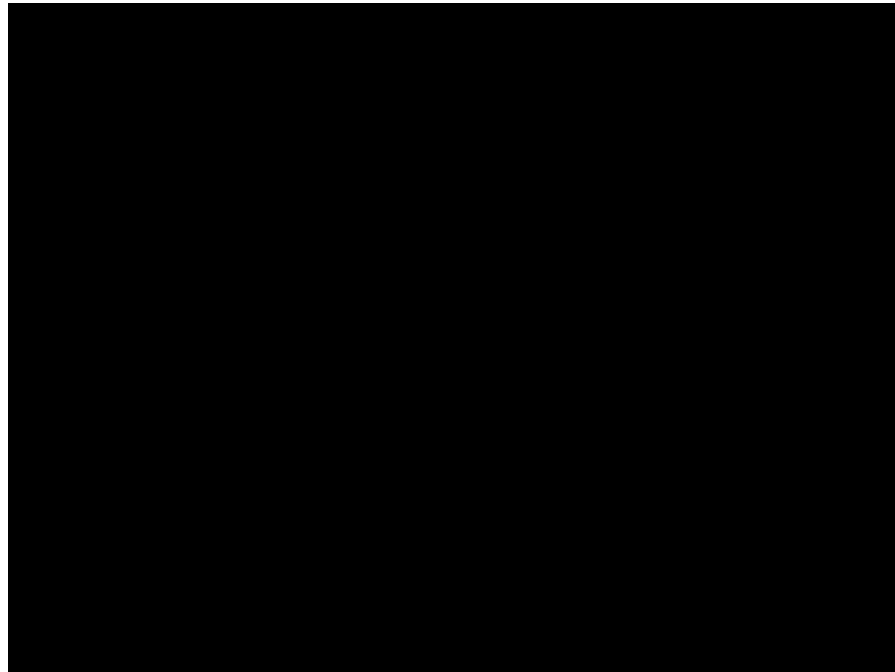
Mobile high-fidelity prototype

The hi-fi prototype followed the same user flow as the website hi-fi prototype, the app design was adapted to the device.
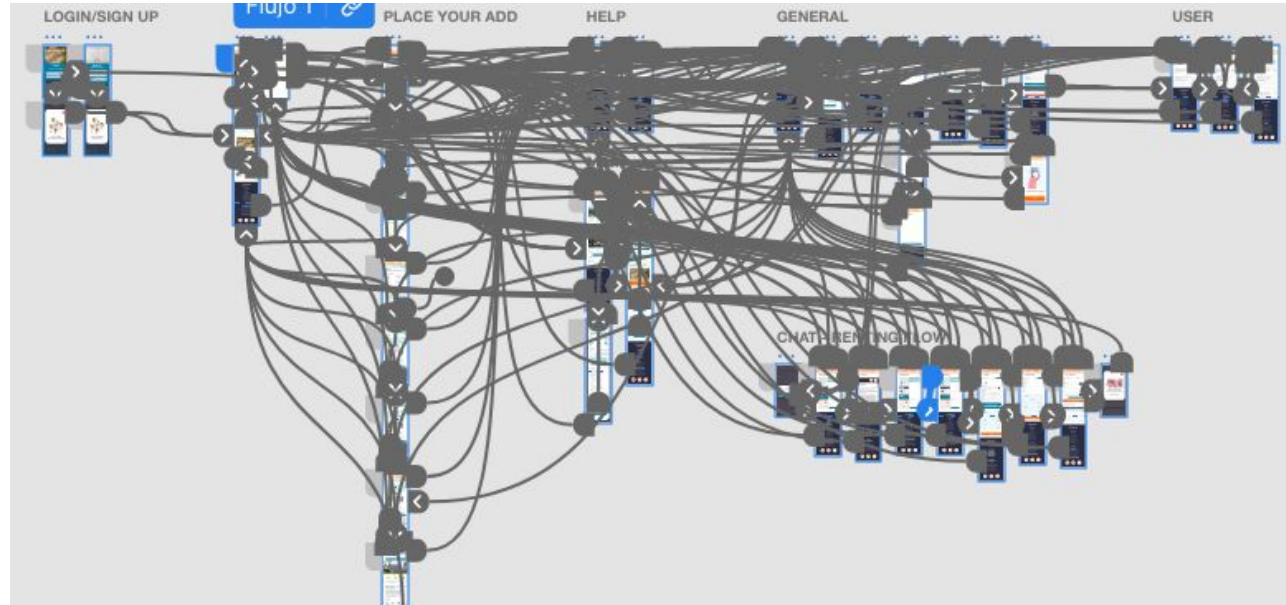
Website high-fidelity prototype

Sample of the prototype in action in the renting flow.

See HouseHold website hi-fi prototype.

See HouseHold mobile hi-fi prototype.

Google

Accessibility considerations

1

All colors used in the app were contrasted in color blindness tests and proved with text to check colors accessibility.

2

A flashy color was used to icons so users can find them easily and distinguish icons, added to a circle with shadow. Call-to-action buttons have a different shape and color to guide the user through the flow.

3

Headings with different text sizes were used along the app for clear visual hierarchy.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Google

Takeaways

Impact:

Study participants shared that the design was intuitive to navigate through, demonstrated a clear visual hierarchy and had interesting features.

What I learned:

It is really important to empathize with users environment, needs & pain points to build a good application. It is necessary to take into account possible user-ends to consider all possible user paths.

Google

Next steps

1

Adapt the application to horizontal mobile & tablet formats and vertical tablet format.

2

Incorporate gestures to facilitate to use the app with one hand, improve voice control and introduce voice commands.

3

Identify any additional areas of needs and iterate on new features.

Google

Let's connect!

Thank you for reviewing my work on the HouseHold's renting app!

If you want to see more of my work, or would like to get in touch,
my contact information is provided below:

Email: anaaldfer@gmail.com
Website: https://anaaldeguerfernandez.github.io

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