

The Problem

For this project, I was given the prompt of how music collaboration would work on an interface. This was for a proposed internship at Kanari, a startup, for their UX/UI position over this summer. I'm not sure if they went through the process in creating the app yet, but this is what I had submitted to them in Summer 2019.

The problem: Find a way to make music collaboration between music creatives easy and efficient on an app.

User Stories

First, I started with User Stories.

I interviewed users that would most likely use the app, including myself, and from there built general and specific user stories for all sorts of possibilities. Here is what I came up with.

General User Stories

- As a user, I want to add projects onto my account, add people to a team, add clients to a project, and create alerts for my team and myself so that I can organize other users and alerts easily on the main page of the website.
- As a team member, I want to be able to add/delete elements on the song menu and main song track so that the workflow is focused and improved.
- As a team member, I want to comment on a specific piece of an audio file/lyric/musical document so that other team members can discuss the element.
- As a team member, I want to comment a potential edit for a specific piece of an audio file on a track that will be playable to other team members so that everyone is able to view and hear the edit to the track for faster decision making.
- As a team member, I want access to the Digital Audio Workstation to record audio so that my ideas can be easily recorded and added into the collaborative environment.
- As a team member, I want to communicate with other members or clients of the project to communicate specific thoughts to certain individuals for project progression.
- As a team member, I want to share the final song so that the music can be sent to clients, team members, and presented to the public.
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Specific User Stories

- As the project lead, I want to gather talented, music-savvy individuals with specific roles so that I can effectively lead a group to create, produce, and complete an original song collaboratively with my vision.
- As the project lead, I want to add ideas and audio files to the main song menu so that the team can understand the vision and direction of the song.
- As a songwriter, I want to help write the pieces of the song with the team, as well as create, comment, and edit audio files so that I can help make the structure and draft for the original song in a collaborative environment, as the song process can be moved towards final production.
- As a songwriter, I want to add to the main song menu by uploading potential audio files, lyrics, or structure suggestions to build the song.
- As a musician, I want to record and display my specific musical skills in the collaborative work environment so that my work can be commented, edited, and used in the final song.
- As a musician, I want to record an excerpt of the song so that the songwriters can add it to the main track of the composition.
- As a music producer, I want to work on arranging, compiling, editing, and finalizing audio files while working with each member of the project team so that I can put together a cohesive, completed song.
- As a music producer, I want to be able to access all of the favored audio files in a structure so that I can use the selection for the final rendering of the song.
- As a client, I want to message the project lead/songwriter about my ideas so that I can have direct communication with the people creating my project.

Ideation Process

Here is my Ideation Process for the interface:

Goal: Develop an interface for easy music collaboration.

Gathered from research and from users I've interviewed that create music (including myself), there are a few key aspects that are necessary for effective and efficient music collaboration:

- **A Timeline/Schedule with deadlines**

- An area to place all of the files and documents related to the project to keep things organized
- A mechanism to upload/record music, and other files
- An easy way to communicate with those involved in the project
- A program to put all of the work together into a final song

These elements and their specifics are highlighted and made goals throughout my process of creating the Kanari interface. Below are the brainstormed bullet points I came up with while researching and deciding on the final layout of the interface.

- *How might we distinguish users?*
 - Team Roles can be as distinct or vague as the user wants, but the project lead(s) will have the most administrative capabilities over files, adding team members, etc.
- *How might we organize information of a new project for the user as they open the interface?*
 - **Develop a main menu that is efficient and has everything the user needs**
 - Set a song board/main page with the most important information and files, and place other uploads in specific folders on this page
 - Can upload, delete, duplicate, or share any file on the menu
 - Layout of main menu page
 - Project tab in menu bar where users can add and start a new project directly
 - Team tab/Client tab in menu bar so the user can communicate with others directly
 - Via messaging, as well as voice or video call
 - Messages can also contain files uploaded by the user
 - Create separate editable notification box for alerts and schedule / create an implemented notification and calendar tab in the menu bar so the project team can stay on schedule
 - Organize a preset library that users can edit and use for their own projects (media files, audio track, pre-production files)
 - Breadcrumbs
 - Users can go back to any folder they went into previously by clicking the back button on the song library or on the breadcrumb text
- *How might we allow the user to open and edit specific files that they upload/share to the menu?*
 - **Provide specific folders/pages to aid the user in completing a collaborative song**
 - Create a page solely for recording music easily with a microphone, plug in, or software instrument
 - Elements:

- Similar to any generic DAW, but if the user has programs with more settings and options that the Kanari DAW lacks, the interface can have a potential plug in (in regards to not only the DAW, but other platforms that may be used by the user)
 - Allow users to record new edits on the spot so all users can hear what the edit is if necessary
 - Allow users have the ability to add their own and have multiple editions of the same song and work on which sounds best (mimicking song collaborations in real life)
 - Determination of what edits are chosen is decided by collaborators, potential like or dislike ratio for majority vote on selection if necessary
 - Determination may also be set by conversation via team messaging so the decision is made when everyone is involved rather than sporadically
 - Music can be compared side by side in the final DAW
 - Either 2 or 3 at a time can be compared for spacing/busyness reasons
 - Compared by being played at the same time or one at a time with the other tracks if selected
- A page viewing documents of lyrics/moodboards/etc
 - Users can comment on any piece of the document by highlighting an area (unless there is a way to read in the words and highlight the specific words on the interface)
- Make all of the pages collaborative by *allowing users to add comments to every aspect of each element* (music, documents, any files) while only some users can directly edit the original work (maybe project leads only)
- How might we allow the user to share their work with others outside of the Kanari interface?
 - **Saving, Sharing finished product**
 - Can be shared on multiple social media platforms (FB, Twitter, etc) or emailed as a specific audio file
 - Can be saved as a specific audio file on the computer of whoever has access
- How might we organize the privacy settings of the interface?
 - **Privacy**
 - Administer privacy locks on files the user uploads and administrative settings that the project lead can use
 - The privacy options can be edited by the creator/uploader of the file
 - Possibly let everyone have access to all files

This is my explanation behind my design choices:

I decided to do a lot of research concerning collaborative applications and gained essential elements present in each. Platforms that I gained inspiration from included Frame.io, Trello, and Slack. The common elements found in these platforms included an easy way to communicate to others on the platform, a common space/environment where everyone involved will have access to information/material/alerts, and the ability to have the information needed for the collaboration to be in one centralized area. While combining these ideas with the steps necessary to create a basic song, I formulated an interface and experience for the user that is simplistic, accessible, but effective.

Stylistically, I chose fonts, colors, and designs based on the current ideas found on the Kanari website and adjusted them to fit the interface design.