



The Problem

As part of the Menon Labs Fellowship, our task was to design a recipe generator widget that could be implemented onto grocery store websites for a start-up called PlantJammer. The start-up aims to reduce household food waste by allowing users to find recipes that use ingredients they already have at home. Our goal was to create a widget that helped people find recipes using household ingredients, while also promoting products from the grocery store's catalog.

We had a six-week time frame to complete the project and since we were using an API provided by PlantJammer, we had limitations around the type of information we had access to and had to continuously work around bugs that came with the API.

The Process

My team consisted of a project manager, two developers, and myself as the sole product designer on the team. I chose to start the design process off with some research to gain more insight into what a few user pain points were and how we could create a widget that could easily fit into most people's routines.

After researching I designed some general user flows and wireframes. I held a few one-on-one interviews to test the wireframes in terms of intuitiveness and organization. From there I took what I learned from the interviews and jumped into prototyping due to the tight project timeline.

Once the initial prototype was complete, I handed the design off to the developers and made adjustments as necessary. We also held another round of interviews to test the widget for minor tweaks that could be made before officially completing the design and submitting it.

The Solution

I came up with a widget design that allowed users to start off by browsing recipes or inputting ingredients to come up with customizable recipes. I also included a shopping list section for people to ingredients from recipes and allow for easy shopping afterwards. If we had more time, it would have been great to test the widget with more people and see how well it came up with recipes and how easy the widget was to use for new users. Another thing that would have been good to see would have been how well the widget encouraged people to buy products from the grocery store's catalog.

Reflection

The most challenging part of the project was that a lot of things did not go as planned and we had to be very flexible and ready to make changes to the design constantly. There were issues with the API we never expected to face and some limitations with what the developers could do since they were also just university students learning as they went. Overall, I think things went smoothly and my team was great, so we handled these problems as efficiently as possible. I learned a lot in terms of how to come up with intuitive designs and how to gather feedback during user testing. I think I would definitely like some feedback on the UI of my design to see what areas could be more accessible or visually appealing. Even then, I'm very proud of the final product we created and if we had more time, I