The Student Hub |

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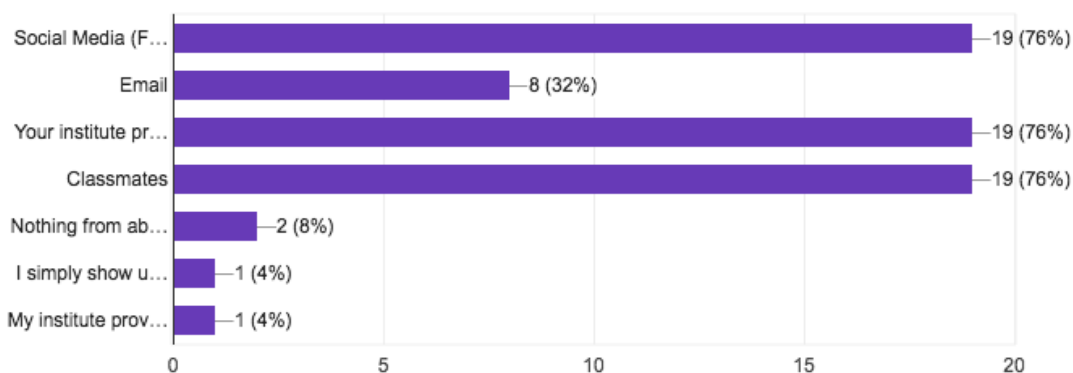Yan Li

How we found our mission, vision, value and goal

In the ideation week, we discussed a lot of ideas, big or small, about a wide range of topics, from grocery shopping to investment in Startups, from cafe shops in the neighbourhood to cyber identity that's beyond the border of a traditional society. We have ideas that are based on our needs in today's life. We also have ideas that express our dreams and wishes for the future. We are willing to do a lot and we have some knowledge in certain fields already. But it's not enough. Then we realised that what we essentially need, as students, is a network that can unite us all; a platform where we can share knowledge and teach each other more; a stage that's for showcasing individual skillset and thereafter effectively bridge every possible collaboration and cooperation to make us even wiser and stronger. In order to be able to focus more on study and unfolding our full potential, we need as well a community where we help and support each other by sharing information and making day-to-day student life much easier.

The current situation is that there are a lot of platforms, services and SoMe solutions out there already, and we, as students, use them all. (see fig. 1. below) A conclusion might be drawn here that we already have plenty and we don't need another one. Yet let's look at this situation again and think in another way: we use them all, because none of the existing platforms is dedicated to students and targeting students' needs. We use them all, because we have to do so, and even with all of them, we still get lost every now and then, here and there.

fig. 1

Where do you get study relevant information about your class? (Multiple answers possible)
(25 条回复)

Social Media (F…	19 (76%)
Email	8 (32%)
Your institute pr…	19 (76%)
Classmates	19 (76%)
Nothing from ab…	2 (8%)
I simply show u…	1 (4%)
My institute prov…	1 (4%)

So we decided to build a Student Hub, the reservoir and ever refreshing source of everything that's student-life related. Students could find study resources and teaching materials here, but it would be more flexible than Fronter; students could look for fellows with the same interests/focus, but it would be more professional than Facebook; students could ask academic questions and get instant answer, but it would be more precise and tailored than what google provides; students could read about much insights in each study field like in many other specialty forums, but they only need one login to have access to them all.

These are just a few examples of what students can get from the Student Hub. The full scope would not be restricted by the agency, nor by the structure at each school. The scope would be decided by the users themselves and it could easily expand. Whenever and in whichever area there is a valid demand for something new, it could be added. After all, the essence of the Student Hub is to meet (all) the needs of students.

The form of Student Hub would be a combination of an online archive, a forum and a community media. Because it hosts many different sections, some of which have focus on providing accurate information for users to receive, while others rely on active user input, user interaction even co-creation, we would fine-tune each section and find the appropriate solution for the particular case, which will be discussed below.

We believe in sharing as the way to develop and advance. We value original work and open discussion.

We meet the existing needs from students, and we built the bridge that opens up even more opportunities. We would like that whenever a student needs anything, he or she reaches out to the Student Hub.

As an agency

We would tightly cooperate with universities and institutes, they are both our partners and our customer. Through cooperation, we could get accurate, complete and updated information on study resources etc. and deliver them to their students. As an agency that holds all the data, we could in return provide universities and institutions with feedback/opinions/habits/preferences of their students, which would help them to have a better understanding of them and adjust accordingly. We collect (with students' permission) all the discussion on school affairs, constantly and on special occasions. This collection of students' opinions is much more thorough, fresh and "spot-on" than the reviews students are ask to write at the end of a theme or a semester.

We would also try to attract the "outsiders" of study life, be it a company that is looking for intern or employee, a local store that wants a new customer segment of students, an angel investor that is on the look out for new ideas and young talented people, or a wise and experienced that would like to help students out with their expertise. The Student Hub could provide sorted candidates for them as well.

As a digital agency, we provide better sorted information and better search solutions, so that user can easily find what they are looking for without combing through endless folders, posts or Facebook-groups. We maintain the Student Hub in such a way that it guarantees free and easy discussion, while implementing mechanism to filter out the fake and the "noises on the internet". With the students' need in mind, we analyse the shortcomings of existing digital solutions for students, we amend them and combine the good parts of existing platforms into one. We are also ready to improve our service and the platform, by for instance adding new features/sections.

We analyse, we understand, we adjust, and we evolve.

Target audience / Persona

The main target audience of the Student Hub are students. Even though they can be categorised into this one group, there are different types.

Here is a typical students:

JENNIFER

Background

Jennifer is a normal student who enjoys going to lectures, widening her horizon and learning new stuf every day. She's active on social networks and talks with her fellow classmates at the institute. As a student, she lives on a thigt budget.

DETAILS

Age:	20
Marital Status:	Single
Occupation:	On the look for part-time
Profession:	Student

Organization

Jennifer gets most of the study relevant information via Facebok but also during lectures, from teachers or tutors. Some informations are published online on a web platform that the institute provides. She thinks that most of the time it's easy to get her hands on the needed information, however, sometimes it can take long or the user experience to find the information is bad.

Finance

She lives on a thight budget and a part-time job, beside financial support from the goverment, is nearly inevitable. She's on the lookout for a part-time position and finds most of the published positions on Facebook and with search engines. Moreover, books, software and physical electronic devices need to be bought at their retail prices, who are not favourable for students. In addition to that, she doesn't really know on which products and/or gadgets she scan save money on because she's lacking these information. This may lead to acquire illegally material or electronic goods.

Other students could easily relate themselves to at least some of the descriptions above. Or, they could feel almost the exact opposite to certain points. There would a lot of students that fit some where in the middle. Students, as a big group, have many things in common, and this is the easy part while considering target audience. The tricky yet very important part is to realise, understand and cater to the differences, especially while building a platform that aims at as many audiences as possible.

The differences exist not only in their general living style and personality, they can be also very detailed and specific. For instance when it comes to study and using a online-service or an app, they have different behaviours, habits and preferences. Some enjoy browsing through online resources that might not even be related to their study field, while others just want an quick and easy answer to a specific question. Some love to show their work and welcome discussion, while others are satisfied with being just the audience. Students, regardless of their age, have different experiences with media as well. For instance, 28% of the participants in our student survey have not used an online forum before, including 24% have no idea what a forum is (see fig 2. below). And these

Have you used an online Forum before?
（25 条回复）

- Yes
- I have heard about it, but I have not used any.
- No, I do not know what it is.

72%
24%
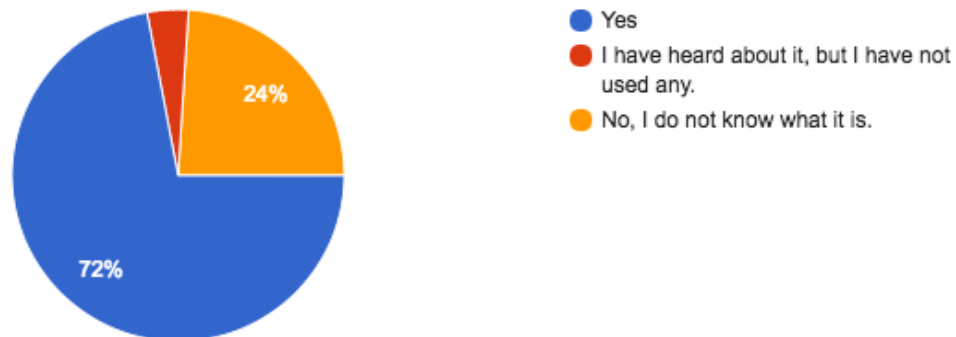
different experiences would in return shape different preferences regarding media choice among the users.

fig. 2.

All types of students are valuable potential customers for the Student Hub. We need to understand them and cater to their needs.

Focus group interview

Given that the potential users for out digital service are students of all kinds, we've conducted a focus group interview, to help gain a better insight of our target audience, and what they prioritise in a good app. As mentioned in the persona section, though our target audience are all students, there is still a major difference in the individual client, as they differ in age, personality, culture and technological capability. Some may use their phone all day for everything, while others feel it's too complicated or boring.

Participants of the focus group interview were introduced to the main concept of the Student Hub, without specifying too many details. Our aim was to make the participant grasp the idea of a helpful student multipurpose tool, and get an understanding of the wanted and needed features. This way, the participants had a chance to open their thoughts and opinions on what is important and crucial for a good app. Furthermore, it gives us as designer and developers an understanding of how students tend to use their smartphones for educational purposes.

Highlighted Results

> *"Having a multi-purpose student app, that offers a smooth user experience could really change the way students engage in educational matters. Neither Lectio[1] or Fronter offer a good design mixed with functionality. They work as they should, but no-one uses it for communicational purposes. If I wanted to ask a teacher a question on Lectio, I'd had to construct the message as an e-mail, making it almost seem too formal and important. I believe there's an app for Lectio, but it was so bad".*

> - Duki Vatovci, Information Science Student at Aarhus University

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[1] *intra platform for high school students*

"I don't really use apps for school, no. I generally don't use my phone a lot, as I'm not quite the techy kind of girl. I mostly use it for Instagram and SMS. However, I think it's really cool to have a place where you can get answers and inspiration from other students. It's a nice way of making fellow free-thinkers help each other and share free knowledge! That might actually make me want to check it out. Also a cool idea to have an overview of places with student discount, I never know where to see that".

- Signe Vinrig Rasmussen, Humanities Student at Roskilde University

" I don't really know what I'd use the Forum personally. Perhaps in the future, where I'll be looking for an internship, or professional connections. But I still think the app has some useful to offer by bringing student related handy information, like the discounts. Maybe it could also tell you about student-relevant events in Copenhagen, or maybe even parties?"

- Jonas Herting, Event Manager Student at DJMX

Conclusion from focus group interview

Judging from the interview results, it's very clear that there is no similar app that offers quite the same service as Student Hub aims to do. Participants were especially thrilled about the whole idea of sharing free information, and make that a way of helping other students out. All the participants agreed that sharing school-related topics on Facebook limits it to only being appropriate between fellow classmates or friends. When asked if they'd ask a stranger about something educational, everyone agreed it would be inappropriate or straight up creepy. Another important finding is how students talk and interact, which isn't that formal. Since the app is going to be user-based, with a broad community, the language should be in the same tone throughout the interface, to avoid formal contrast. This is how we want potential users to open up and talk with other students as they normally would.

User journeys / Service blueprints (with some comparison with existing solutions)

As a platform that aims at making students' lives easier, both academically and day-to-day, the Student Hub by definition covers a wide range of topics, offers various functions and therefore can/should be used in many ways. Each way of use, including the user in each case, should be analysed and understood, which is the foundation of building a useful and user-friendly service.

All possible sections of Student Hub could be categorised into 3 major groups:

I.   an "archive", which provides relatively static information for students to receive "passively"
II. a combination of active user input and an static archive of core info / "valuable to read" from the user input
III. a discussion section where active participation and interaction among users is the key

For each of these groups, some examples are given and discussed below, with focus on customer journeys, or rather service blueprints.

I. an "archive" of resources

A typical "archive" section would be the collection of study resources. This type is characterised by providing big chunks of information for user, who is on the receiver end. User need these information, oftentimes urgently, yet they have little influence on how these info are being presented to them. The current platform for this kind of service is Fronter, especially the "teaching materials" section. Granted, materials are grouped into folders in hierarchies, which seems to have a clear structure and should make sense. But from the user's point of view, the pain point is exactly this structure, which has way to many levels and is so static that it doesn't offer the possibility to cross reference any of the content.
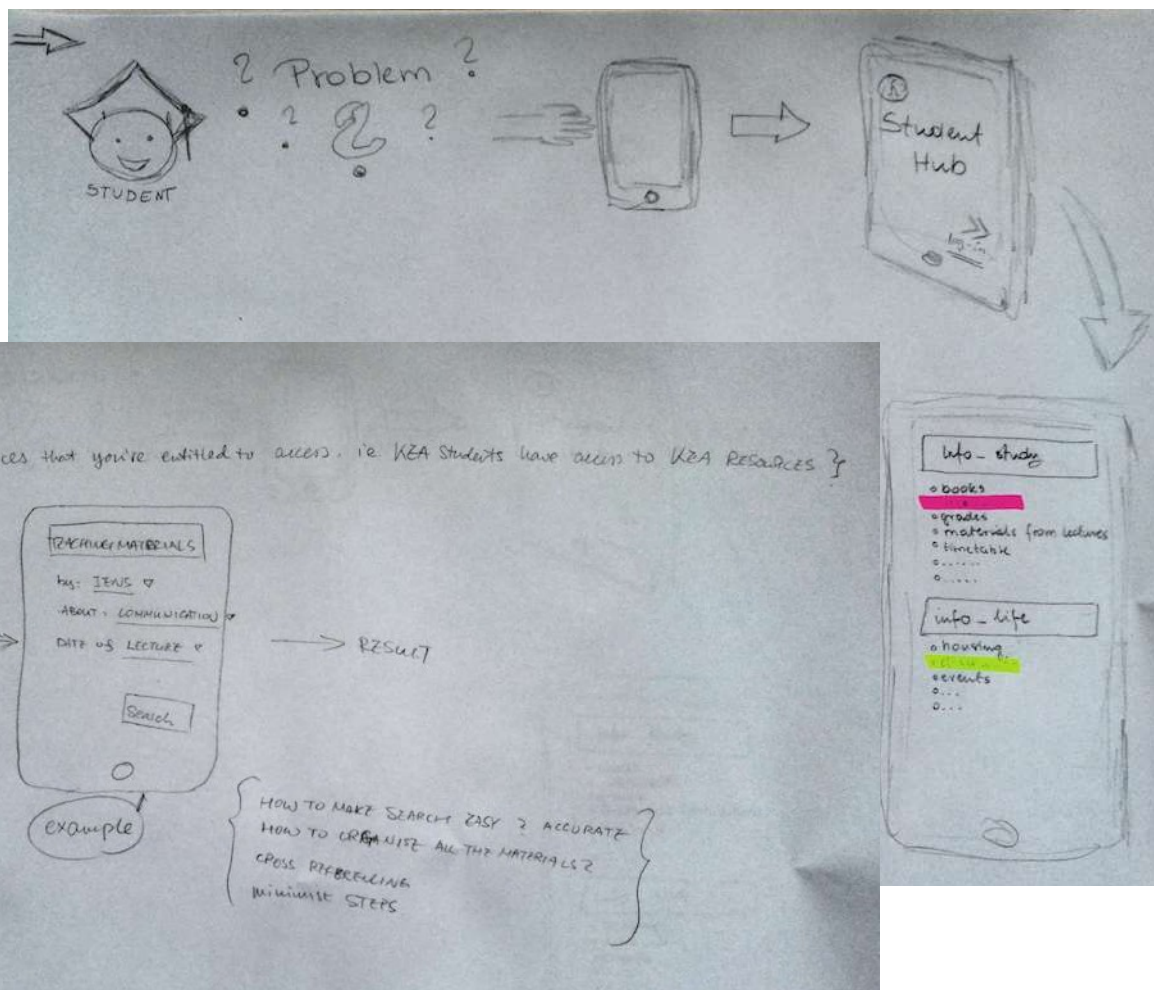

On the Student Hub, each faculty in each school would still have this dedicated place to gather and display study resources. But in addition to the structure, keywords for cross referencing and a better search engine would be offered. Search through teaching materials or slides from teachers in not the same as searching a book in the library either, because of the different natures of the materials and because of the occasions and reasons user need them, for example after class when the memory is still fresh, or before an exam when user likely barely remember the topics of the PPT file, or even in case of absence from school when user has to idea what to look for. These should and would all be considered while designing a keyword cross referencing system and a new search engine.

Extra consideration(s): student users on Student hub would use their student-id from each school as login. In this way, resources are only provided to those that are entitled to have access. For some

resources it might be beneficial if they offer open access to all students, regardless where do they study. School policies need to be investigated in this case.

II. a combination of active and dynamic input and a static "archive"

An example of such section would be the board with discount infos. It would start with a static collection with existing discounts informations for users to search through, then this collection would get bigger and be updated constantly based on user sharing new found deals and promotions etc.
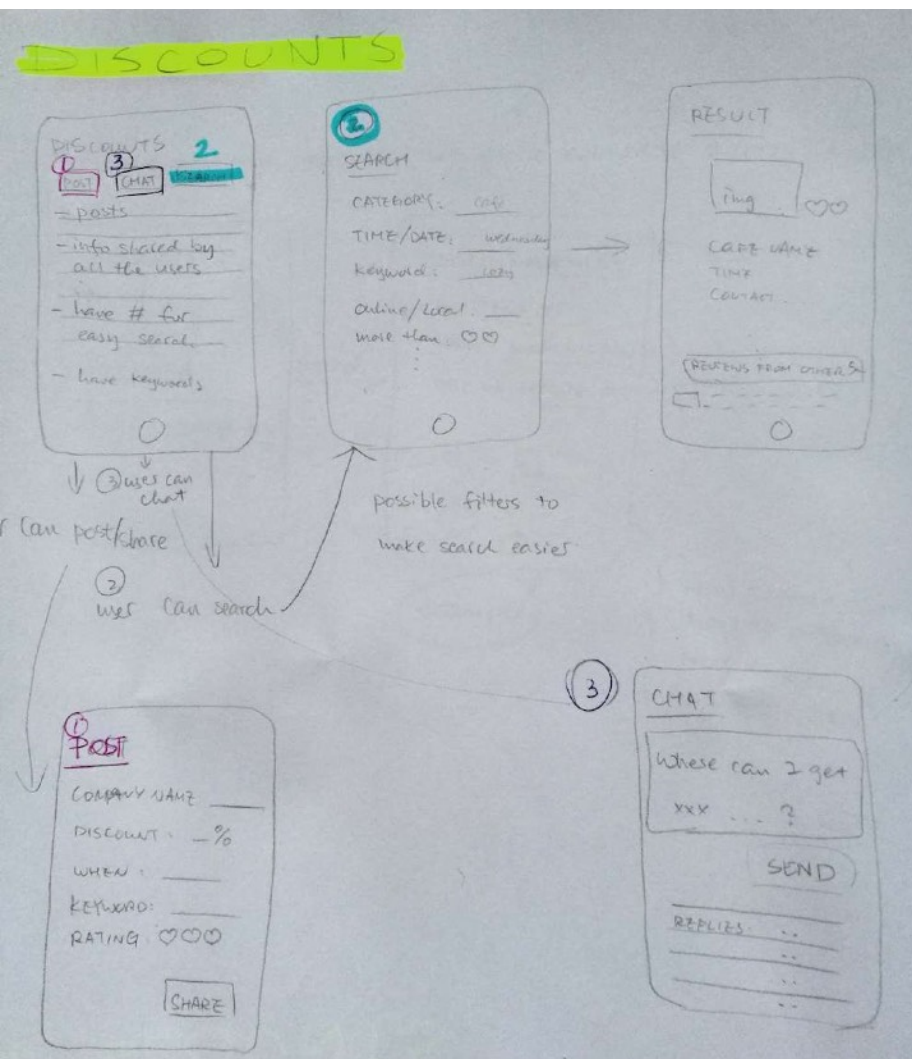
There is currently a service on the market for such a collection of student discounts called "Studiz"[2]. They publish current deals for students and offer a good search for existing offers. Compared to Studiz, the Student Hub is not the only publisher or negotiator of discounts. Every user could contribute by sharing the new deals and promotions they just got. On Student Hub the discount information is not restricted to the big brands or stores either. Smaller business like local bars and cafes have also many offers for students and currently their messages are only passed by "word of mouth", which is rather limited. The Student Hub makes sharing and accessing all kinds and all sizes of discounts information easier, which meets the need of students, ie. "discounts, the more the better!"

Because the Student Hub emphasis both on user-sharing and user-getting the information, appropriate design for each process is needed. The sharing process should be simple enough so that whenever an user encounters some deals that could be useful for fellow users, he or she should not be discouraged because of a hard-to-use sharing interface. It could be ideal when user need to type as little as possible yet offer all the essential information about the deal. A uniformed sharing format could be a solution. Uniformity also makes the archive of discounts and the searching process easier, as there would be no need to read the whole posts to look for the key informations, which is the typical issue with the traditional forum/posts approach.

Extra features and considerations: below each sharing post, users can reply with reviews for the company, discussion and comparison. These could also be integrated into the search result to

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[2] www.studiz.dk and app on both ISO, Android and Windows Phone

provide more relevant info for the searcher. A highlight post pinned to the top of the board with "deal for today" (for the kind of deals that's valid on certain days in a week) could also be welcomed and it's easily achievable with digital solutions.

III. <u>a discussion section where interaction among users is the key</u>

This type includes most of the possible sections on the Student Hub. After all, sharing knowledge, cooperation and collaboration as well as many other social aspects rely on interaction among the users.

To make discussions more focused and easy to join, different discussion boards would be created. Below are some examples of individual board or group of similar boards.

1. school/faculty/class-based boards: each school/faculty/class would have the opportunity to have its own board for their own businesses. Short term announcements from school/teachers could be pinned at the top of the board and the rest would be posts and discussions from and between classmates/alumni. For example KEA students discuss KEA related topic in KEA board, KU students discuss in KU board. MMD A17 could have its own board.
    The current solution for this is mostly FB groups and group chats. The pain point of this solution is that such discussion is rather loose and some times gets too long to follow. With school/ class matters, there is also the need for a more focused and serious discussion, which FB doesn't offer.
    Extra considerations: I would be fine to set this kind of board up with open access to any user, ie. not as an enclosed circle that only classmates/alumni are allow to join. It gives the possibility for wider network.

    - 1.1 Students opinions/feedbacks/reviews on school/faculty/class affairs
    This could be a sub-board for the school/faculty/class-based boards.

    The main advantage of a dedicated board for students feedback on school affairs is that it's open all the time. Every time any student has an opinion, he or she could simply post it, when the memory is still fresh and the feeling is still clear. With such a platform students wouldn't need to keep a separate file to note every single opinion they have in the course of the whole theme or semester and write them all down in the final evaluation.

    Compared to the current survey/evaluation system, an open discussion board could also provide more data, as the topics are not restricted by the questionnaire. Students could easily elaborate on the points they are trying to make, which is the choice that's not always given in the surveys.

    Extra considerations: here on this board, the choice of post anonymously would be offered.

2. study-field-based boards: cross-school, grouped by major
    For example MMD students from every school can talk about MMD study here, share knowledge, experience, individual understanding of the field, post questions and get answers, etc.

    Such board should give open access to other user as well, as this would be the place that unfold the full potential of knowledge and bridge between different talent.

For example, every user from the whole Student Hub can post in law-students-board, when they need some legal help, when they are looking for law students to cooperate with, or when they consider changing to law school etc. For law students, these posts, especially the legal questions and cooperation requests, provide many and real life case studies and practice. This interaction is useful for both sides.

Another example would be that anyone needs a website or an App can post in WebDev board, students with this major might want to develop this[3].

For the "insiders" of the studied-field-board, such platform provides a wider network of peers; more chance to learn something from each other. When they get questions from user from other study fields they get case studies and the chance to practice their knowledge. For the "outsiders", a dedicated board about a special study-field offer them a more reliable answer than a google search which is often based on guessing. It provides easier opportunity for cooperation among different fields as well. User wouldn't need to put up flyers at the faculty entrance anymore or ask all their friends if they know anyone that studies a specific major.

- 2.1 Purely academic boards:
This kind of board could be independent or be a sub-board of each study-field-board.
Here users could discuss specific academic topics, write insights, share academic publications, etc.
An archive of these could be very useful for current and future students in this field.

3. Student-life-related but not necessarily major-related
   For example, students that are considering study abroad can open a board and discuss preparations, extra exams etc; students that are interested in starting their own business can form a board and discuss ideas and insights; students that are preparing for specific certification can form a board to share info and practice together. Such boards holds both the relevant information and also functions as support group.

4. Fun in life
   For each hobby/interest there could be a board(all kinds of sport, gaming, etc). These kinds of boards are easy to form and maintain, because people already have something in common to talk about.
   Student associations could also use the Student Hub platform to recruit, to display announcements, to arrange events and to socialise among members. They wouldn't need to print our flyers and build individual websites. A name on the association list on the Student Hub is in itself an advertisement and they already get a huge number of audience, i.e. all the users on the Hub. They would appear more present, and by displaying this, they might be able to attract more members.

5. Housing
   Housing in general is a pain point for most students. A dedicated board about housing, both for searching beforehand and reviewing afterwards, would be a big help for many users. Such a

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[3] payment etc would be left for both parties to decide, this platform only bridge the information and bring need and supply together

board on the Student Hub would provide more reliable than some private announcements, and it would cheaper than some commercial platforms as well, as it's free.

6. Connection to outside world
   There could be an "entrepreneur" board where user can publish and discuss ideas, they will get opinions from other users, some of whom might have more experience, like companies or investors, and could offer important insights and feedbacks. Through such a board, users not only learn from their peers but also learn from the experts. By publishing and discussing the ideas and projects, more talent people might be attracted to join in.
   Another example of a board that could connect user/ students to the outside world could one where companies post ad for internship and employment.

7. Purely social boards

   A place to look for friends, partner, or just a company to en event that's coming up.

8. News, society and debate
   Students, or rather the young generation, start to form a deeper understanding of the society, and they enjoy sharing their thoughts and debate. There are various platforms in different scopes for such activity and a dedicated board for this on Student Hub would most likely be inevitable. The news being discussed on the Student Hub would not come from media sources directly, but first be shared by user from other media. In this way, the Student Hub holds only the topics that's interested by the user. Hopefully a student user base on the Student Hub could provide a first-level filter of fake news, even secret agenda etc, so users here could have genuine discussion on real issues.

Above are just examples of possible use of the Student Hub. As long as there is a need for a new board (many users wish so), they can just apply and open a new one. Some basic rules should be followed in every board but other then these, freedom and user driven should be the key point.

Communication Plan

How to reach our users?
We will make use of several factors, in order to attract our target and possible audience. We will appeal to the way they talk, the way they connect on social platforms, and the preferred way they wish to help each other and be a part of a community. We especially aim to catch the attention of young students, who most likely aren't that interested in educational matters in their free time. To do this, we'll make the app feel as if it's made by average students, keeping the language informal and direct. This gives the community feeling of students wanting to help fellow students. This is how we distance ourselves from being the authority that cooperate with universities, and appear more the students human side.

1. Purpose

   Student Hub mainly focuses on making student life easier. We want students to have a simple and handy app, which is easy to use, to deliver useful information. Our service will provide users with gathering information, sharing knowledge and being part of a

community. Our purpose is to find a user friendly solution to getting exclusive and free information.

2. Effect

Using our platform, students are in good relations with their universities. Big companies have the opportunity to source their future, potential employees. Users become more eager to learn. They also have an occasion to develop themselves because of acquiring and sharing the knowledge. Furthermore, the students will be more willing to visit student-friendly facilities, such as museums, events, study cafés etc, if they're aware they get a discount.

3. Message

We aim for students to help each other out, and have them open up their thoughts, struggles, and ideas. An undeniable part of university is the social community, and the strong bond students developed with each other. We want to expand that community and create trustworthy bonds in between other universities as well.

4. Senders

4.1 Identity of us and the "real" senders

An important part of our identify is the source of free information. We represent a social community, that relies on its users to help one another. The reliability of the offered information comes from our source of senders:

- Universities - an institution of higher education where you have access to different research. You can acquire knowledge in many ways – attend to lectures, go to libraries, check on the internet.

- Students – people who want to learn something new, explore world, looking for adventure, sometimes they are shy and they don't want to share anything with someone, sometimes they are open-minded and they really want to share their experience and socialise

- Teachers – it's a teacher's (or professor's) job to educate, but following a Curriculum. Individual teachers can share some useful and important notes, regardless of their scheduled lectures.

4.2 Wanted Identity / Image as an Agency that's behind the Student Hub:

We want our clients to think of us as a reliable and active platform, where they can get answers to any question they'd like. It requires a supportive community, to attract new students to join in. That's where we rely on fellow students, teachers and educational institutions to endorse the app. As developers we will start the first threads in the forum to break the ice. We want our users to feel comfortable with what they share.

5. Receiver

The receiver in our case is also the sender in some cases– the students. That's where a special sender / receiver relationship is created. It creates a balanced input/output of

information that is shared throughout the community. Having the receivers act as senders, we open up the possibility of growth within the community. Users can carry the acquired information to someone new, who can most likely also teach the sender new in return.

6. The communication environment

The Student Hub is a platform which takes place online. This platform in itself is part of the communication environment that the agency could make good use of. Some communication elements could be:

- Given that our users are students, we can efficiently advertise our product through social media such as Facebook and Instagram, by proposing our selling propositions. By presenting the struggle of sharing professional information to strangers on Facebook, we can effectively showcase the purpose of the app and attract new users, who can relate to the situation.

- Graphic elements – There is a useful tool for creating a readable and legible platform. Also, graphic elements will improve our navigation system. It became more clear and understandable. (More on this in our design document.)

Selling propositions:

How many logins do you have now, in order to get all the info you need?
How frustrating is Frontier?
How many times you said "I wish someone had told me that"?
How many times you wished that you knew someone in that school/faculty so that you could ask a question that 2-hour-google-search still can't answer?
How often you feel that you don't have a reliable network that supports you as a student?
How often you either don't know where to look for an answer or you got an answer but don't know if it's valid?
Where can you ask Lisa from RUC what common psychological difficulties adolescent women have, without being creepy?

These are some of the questions we could use in advertising the Student Hub, so our target audience can feel related and realise even more the need for this platform.

We are selling user-based social network for sharing thoughts and ideas among students. It's also a helpful tool to meet any student needs.

The handy Student Hub app appeals to the average student on a rational and emotional level (USP and ESP appeals). The struggles of a busy student are very relatable, even between different educational institutions. They share the same complications when it comes to practical information and student-related topics. The Student Hub is needed. This statement is based upon our personal experiences, it's "the word in the school hallway" and it's based on survey results from other students.

"I think the app is very relevant, especially for students with poor economy. It's nice to be aware of the discounts you get. It will be a nice opportunity for students going to museums, library, student cafés more".

- Rico Bintzen, 21, Sustainable Fashion Student at KEA

*"Having a place to share educational information exclusively is awesome, especially if you want to contact strangers. Facebook is too personal for that, I think".*

- Jonas Herting, 24, Event Manager Student at DMJX

Judging from these survey results above, it becomes very clear that most students don't have an official and reliable source on where to get useful student-related information. It's a matter of spreading awareness, but also providing easy accessible information to a student on the go.
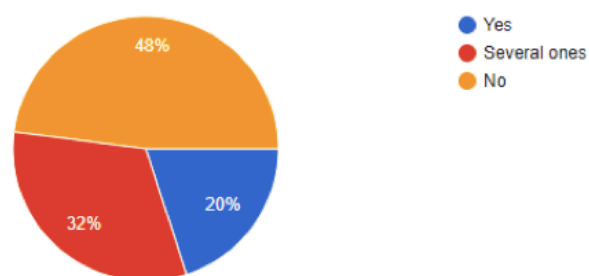
Where do you get study relevant information about your class? (Multiple answers possible)

25 responses
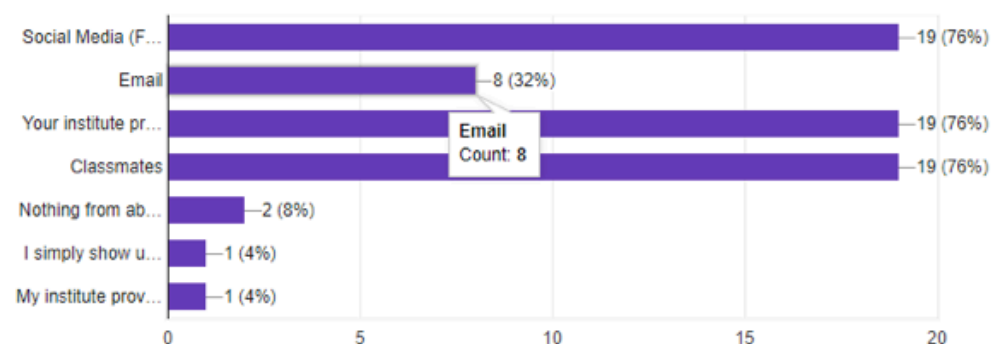
Do you know where you can get student discounts for computers, electronic gadgets, software's or everyday life such as coffee, restaurant... ?

25 responses

Do you think the User Experience of getting all these stuff and information from above is intuitive and easy to use?

24 responses
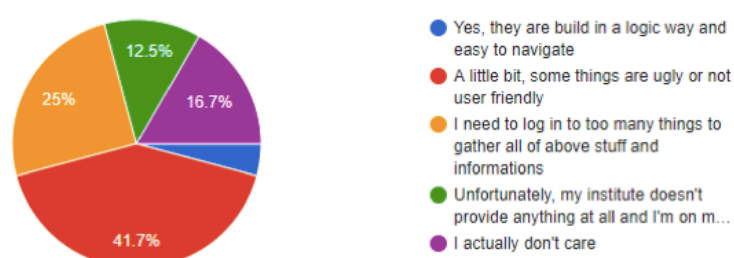
Furthermore, Student Hub will focus on a neat and simple design, easy to navigate, which would also be a selling point.

The majority will rely on their classmates, social groups, or social media such as Facebook. However, that's where the social problem occurs. In this situation the Student Hub is also the perfect app, for keeping things professional, reliable and relevant.

Extra: Description of Business Model Canvas

Business model canvas describes company's nine building blocks; going through all of them helps creating a balanced and well-structured business model.

Student hub provides all the student relevant information combined in one place. It is a place where to check lectures schedules, read books, access any kind of discounts and even a place where to connect with students from potentially all around the world!

Having partners is one of the key points, especially when the business is based on collaborations and creating connections. In order to develop Student Hub, partnerships with universities, institutions, smaller and bigger companies, existing student applications and social media platforms are important, because they provide the majority of needed information and resources as books or softwares.

There are some resources that partnerships can not provide, which means that the company's developers should be able to either collect them themselves or provides the platform for users to sharing these. In this case network, knowledge about the discounts, clubs etc and already existing customers are the elements to get.

The plan is to research and organise all the relevant information in internet, in available applications and then contact the potential partner companies. When all the relevant information is collected, the community can be created and the last point is to make a website and application describing and advertising the company's mission, vision and values. In order to to be sure that advertising is successful, multiple channels will be used.

Social media platforms such as Facebook will be included in advertising this application. The plan is to create partnerships with universities not only because they provide a lot of relevant resources, but they will be the ones telling students about this new product, which will create an image of a safe and trusted place for students. Universities provide us with a huge pool of existing customers. By creating close customer relationships the agency is one step closer to create a trustworthy platform.

When using Student Hub, a person can input information as well as read what others are posting. It is based on self-service and creating a community, where students can participate.
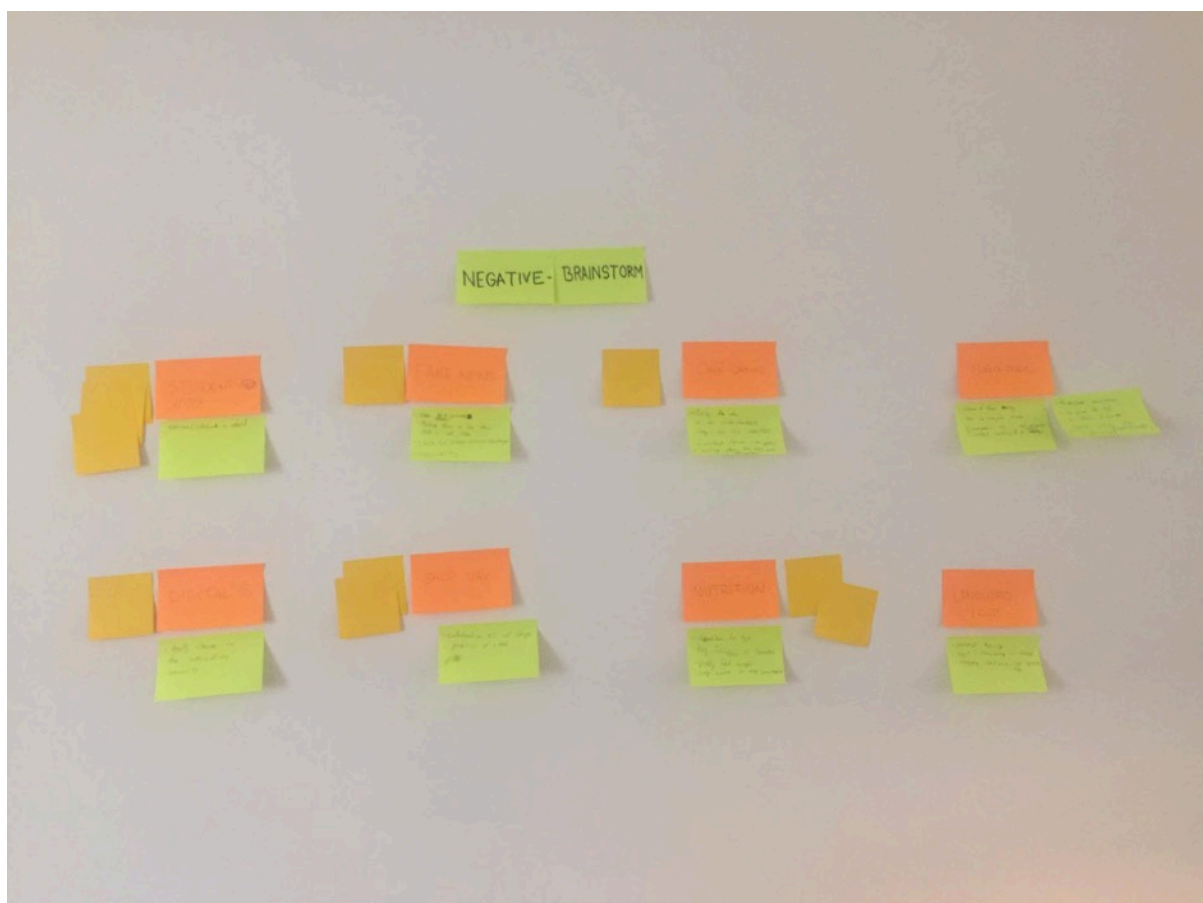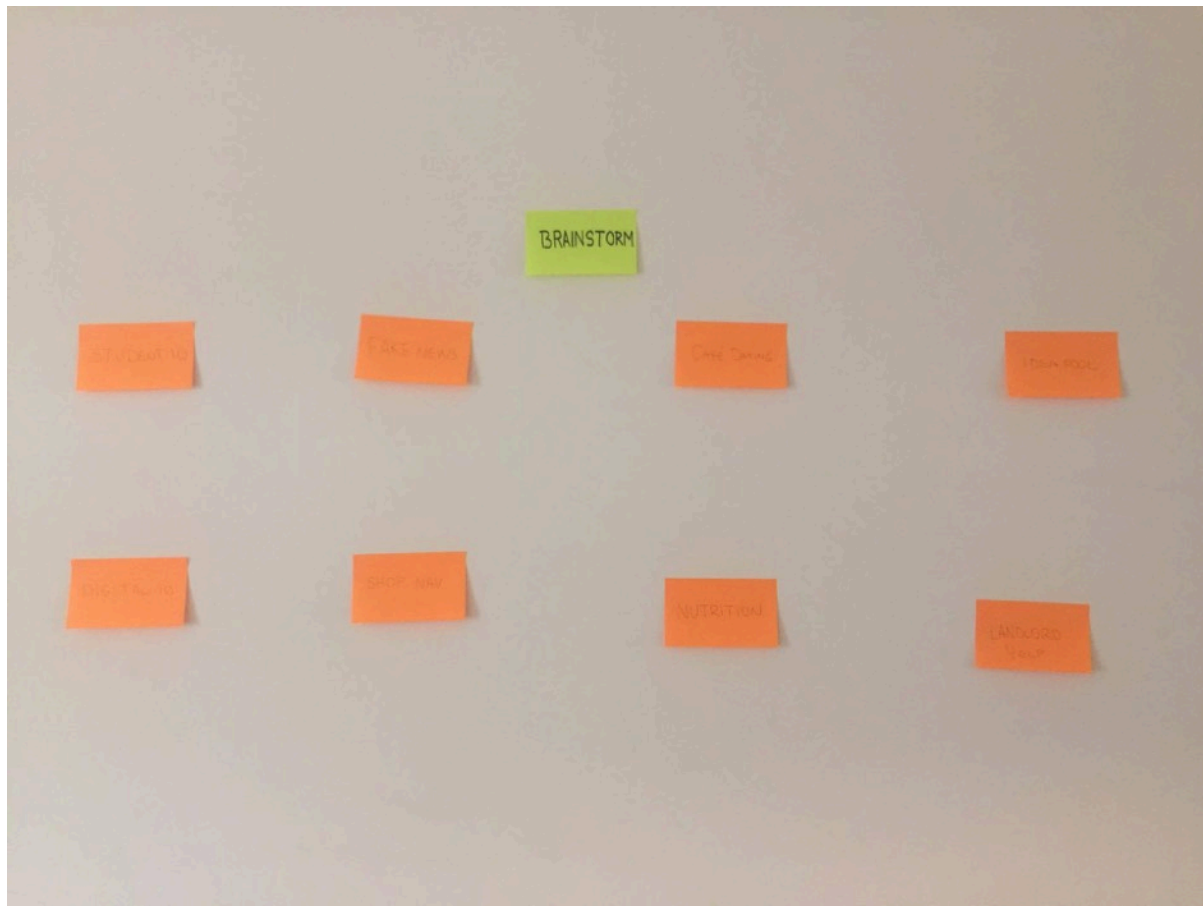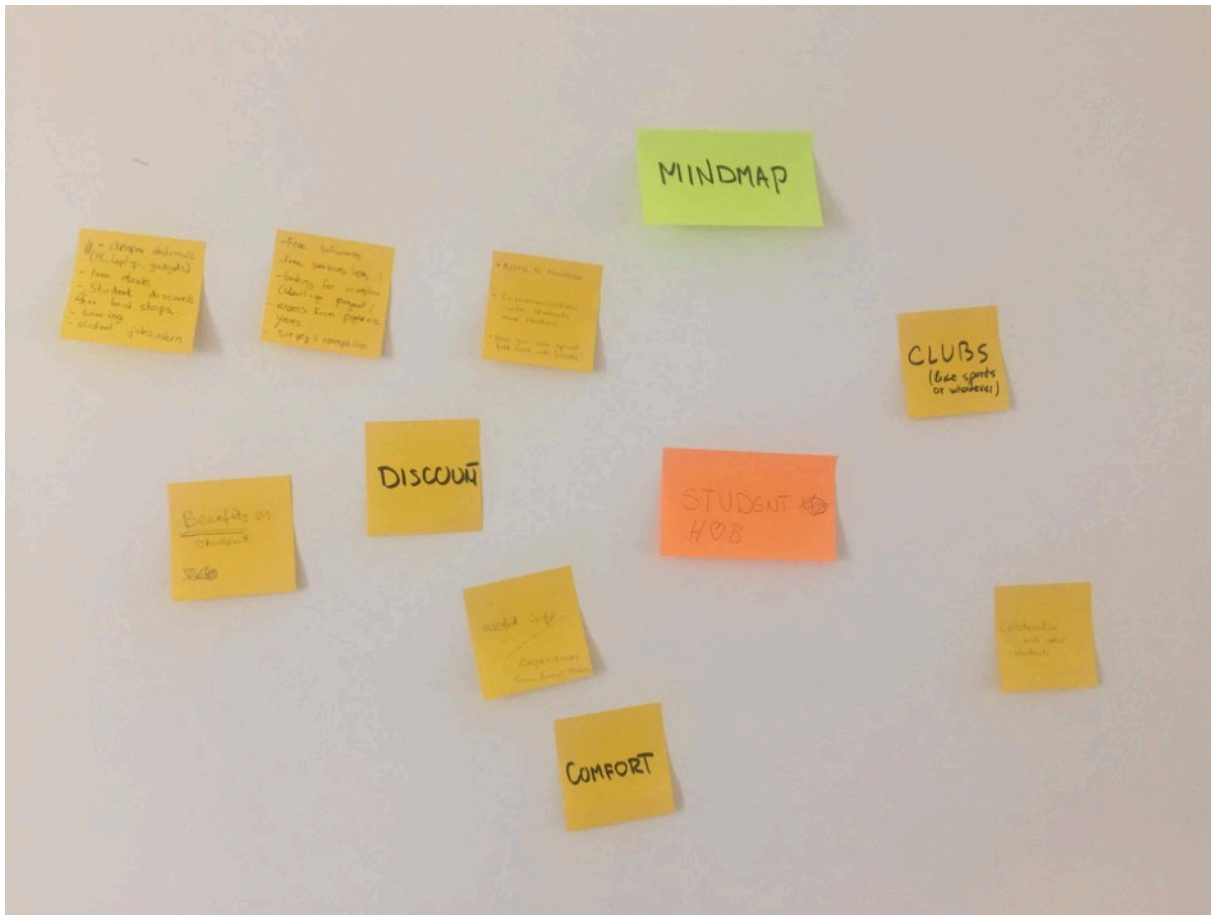
Business model canvas
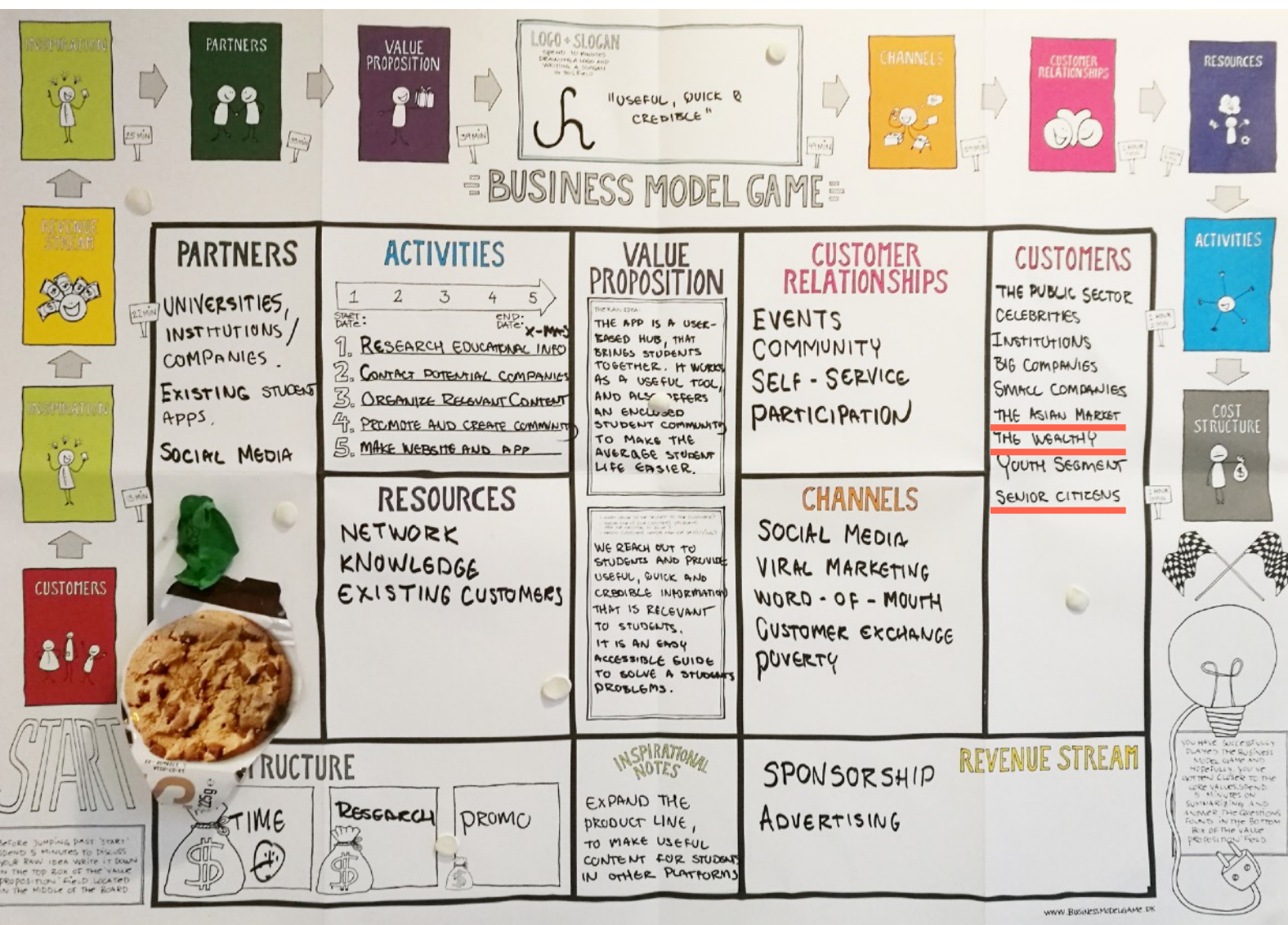
Some interesting points while drawing the business model canvas:
Be creative and turn everyone into our customer!
We can sell the Student Hub to the wealthy, the senior and the Asian market!

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