Final Write Up
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Link to Final Prototype:
https://framer.com/projects/Final-Prototype--rfo0SXALBwCFb8abVHqh-dIKrl

Link to video demonstration:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dA8vmZ5eJfG_on2ec7EkJF2ZAzBkwt0-/view?usp=sharing

Problem statement

One major problem that dog owners face is finding someone to take care of their dog when they are away. Leaving your dog home alone for long periods of time is detrimental to your dog and possibly your home if your dog isn't well behaved. The most common solutions to this issue are asking a friend, or taking your dog to a doggy day care. Friends aren't always available when you need them to be and doggy day care establishments are often expensive and are prone to spreading diseases between dogs. There are a limited number of options to choose from if you have to get care for your pet and if none of them are available, it may cause you to change or even cancel your plans.

Solution Overview

What I plan to do is connect dog owners with willing dog sitters in their neighborhood who will watch their dogs when needed. This is a much more reliable way to have your pet be watched because there will always be available options. The best way to implement this service would be through an app. This app would let people search for desired sitters in their area and allow users to message them in order to set up a plan of care. My solution would introduce a reliable, cost effective way to supervise your pet.

Final Design

The final design of my application ensures that the user has all the tools they need in order to easily and efficiently find a sitter for their pet. This is shown in multiple different facets of the design. First off, I decided to have the user create an account in order to use the app. This was to help consistent users with the usability of the app. A user's profile can hold certain information about them within it to save for later. If the user has a sitter that they like and would like to consistently hire them, they can save their information so that they don't have to continually search for the same person every time. Also, it would be helpful to save information about your dogs to your profile as well. Things such as their name, size, and breed are all unchanging and would be useful to have stored in your account so that it doesn't need to be specified any more times than it needs to be.

Moving on to the home screen (figure 1), I wanted to make this function as a hub where the user can access all the major parts of the app. The largest feature is a scrolling page of sitters in your area. This displays the sitter's profile picture, a short description about them, their star rating, and how far away they are from the user's

current location. Here the user can browse the available sitters in their area and select which one they would like to learn more about. By displaying the most important details about the sitters upfront, the user can evaluate any of the sitters quickly without having to go into their profiles to learn about them.

The home screen also features a map at the bottom that displays where the sitters on the page are located in relation to the user. The map will live update as the user scrolls through the list because it makes the sitter's location relative to the user more clear. If I had shown where all the sitters are located at once, it would be way too cluttered and it would defeat the purpose of displaying the map on the home screen in the first place. If the user would rather browse the map in order to find the sitter they want, that option is available as well. If the user taps the map it will expand into a full screen view of the area. This clearly displays any nearby sitters to the user through the use of a red pin, while the user is displayed with a blue circle. This is so they are easy to identify and makes it easy to gauge the distance between the user and anyone else. The user can search around the map easily from here, expanding and minimizing the view as they please. If they find anyone they like, they can simply tap on the pin to bring up the sitter's full profile.

One of the most important things in my application is the tab bar at the top of the screen. This element is vital in the user’s navigation around the app. A feature like this ensures that they never unnecessarily get lost. The ability to go back one page and go home at any moment makes sure the user is never too far away from a familiar place. By making the home screen a button away the user can navigate quickly, eliminating the need to jump through multiple hoops in order to get where they need to be.

On the home screen where all the sitters are, the user also has the option to apply filters to the results that they see. Options include price range, location, rating, and other specific filters. This gives the user more control over the sitters that they see and makes it easier to find the best person for the job. In cases where the user has a dog with specific needs or is on a budget and can only afford to pay a sitter so much, this feature is going to prove very useful. I also made it possible to search sitters by name. If a user previously hired someone and they had a good experience with them, they can just type in their name and have them appear in the results. This eliminates any need for unnecessary searching.

The final option on the tab bar leads to the user’s profile. Like the other options, this feature can be reached from any screen on the application. Here the user can see the details about their account like email, username, and information about their dog. This is where they can change any information about themselves if need be. This is an important feature because the user needs to have full control over the details of their account. If they get a new dog or want to change emails, it is easy to do so.

Once the user selects a sitter that they would like to learn more about they can click on their profile to show the full profile for that user. Here the user can evaluate the sitter further and decide if they want to hire them. The profile contains information like a biography of the sitter, photos of them, their location, and reviews that they have accumulated. All of these features can be expanded and explored further as well. This will help the user make a final decision about the person. By providing the user with multiple forms of information, it gives them a complete view of who the sitter is. If you decide that you want to hire this sitter, you can easily message them from their profile. I

decided to allow the users to message the sitters because it allows for more negotiation between the parties. Each user's situation is going to vary, so it is crucial for a sitter to get to know what that is before any decisions are made.

Design Process

The design process has been long but rewarding. Taking my design through multiple iterations ensures that I can solve the issue at hand in the most effective way possible. Receiving feedback from my group was really helpful when determining what the users' needs were, and it greatly helped the overall usability of the system.

The process began with a very general concept. I was facing a problem and I needed a way to solve it. Brainstorming multiple different solutions was something that helped me zero in on one that would work out best for my situation. Doing things like exploring the current landscape with a competitive analysis, analyzing possible users with personas, and storyboarding possible solutions were all crucial steps in the design process (figure 2).

Next, when I had a decent grasp on what the best way to solve my problem was, I began the process of designing the application itself. I helped my solution greatly to have a foundation on which to base my later designs. It allowed me to shift my focus from large scale solutions, to more specific interactions within my design. Creating a QOC helped me rationalize different approaches to creating an application. Weighing these options and thinking about the application from a user's perspective allowed me to focus even further, and begin the creation of a low fidelity prototype.

The low fidelity prototype was a great chance to receive feedback on the design ideas that I had made so far (figure 3). Walking through it with others gave me a perspective on my design that I didn't have before. It was very valuable to receive outside feedback on things that I may have overlooked. It was also very easy to implement these changes. The low fidelity nature of the paper prototype made it very easy to make quick changes on the fly with little effort. Several iterations of user testing with the paper prototype allowed me to get consistent data on what the users needed from my application.

Finally I was able to create the final prototype (figure 4). I took the best aspects from my paper prototype and expanded on them to create the final model. Being able to create a more detailed version of the prototype forced me to work out any remaining kinks within my design. Following the process in this manner resulted in a much better product than if I were to just jump right to the end. The result of a long and in depth process resulted in a tested, effective solution to the problem that I originally sought to solve.

Impact

The impact of my application is something that will affect a large number of people. If you own a dog, you are going to have to find it a sitter at some point over the many years you have it. My solution is an easy answer to this dilemma. This will allow people to live their lives easier and will eliminate some of the stress of finding someone to watch your dog while you are away. Plans will be easier to make, your pet will not be alone for long periods of time, and your conscience can be clear knowing that your dog is in the hands of someone trustworthy.

Appendices

Figure 1

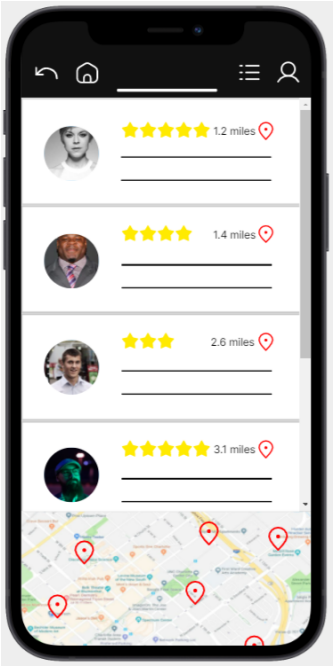

Figure 2

Figure 3

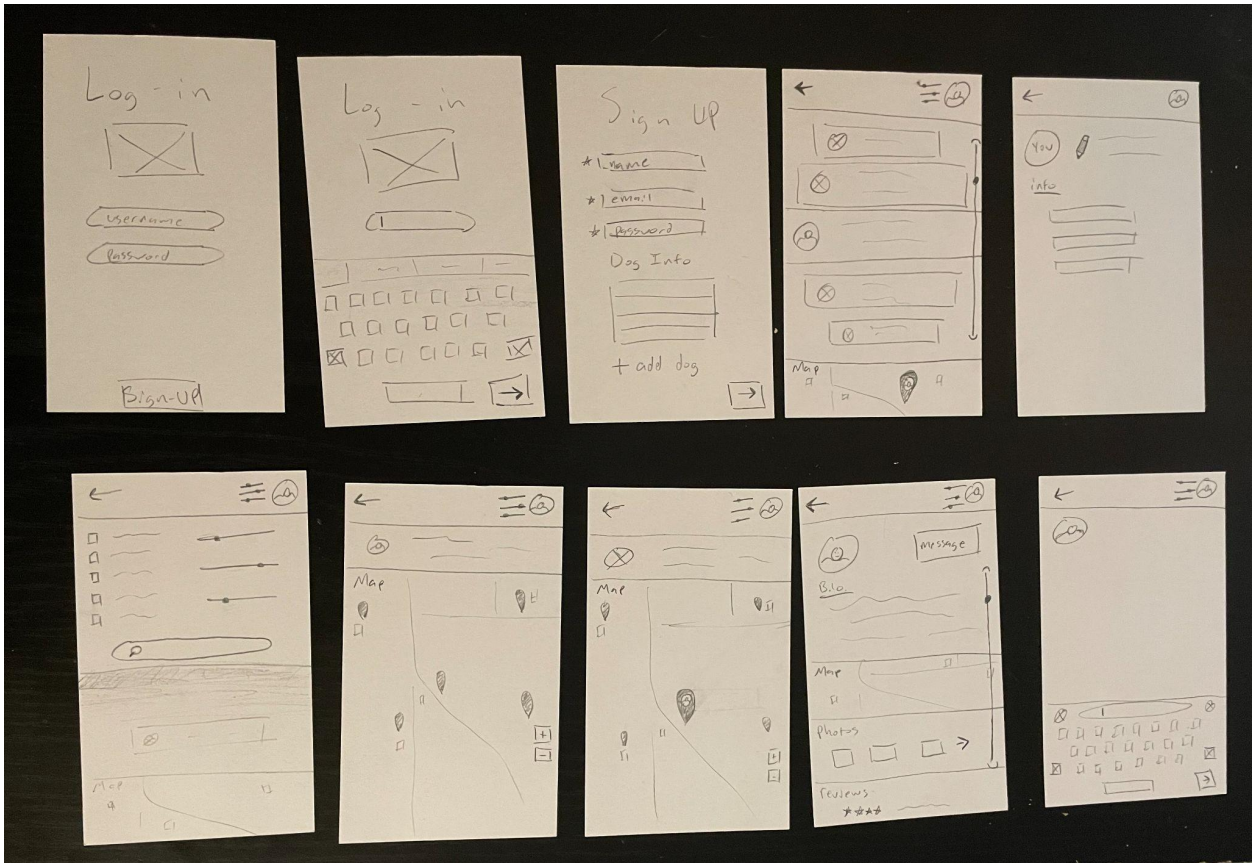

Figure 4