

Paper Prototype Reflection

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Prototype Link: <https://xd.adobe.com/view/8e8fe7a9-c0ac-4ce3-62af-bbf42cff3b6d-f8be/>

User interface design is an integral phase in the development of a application. A good user interface allows the user to easily navigate through the application and access any necessary information quickly. Throughout the paper prototyping process there were many improvements made to our original preliminary design. Some of these improvements include the navigation bar redesign, implementing calls-to-action on the landing page, and adding a dark theme.

We decided to use Adobe XD to design our prototype. Adobe XD is a powerful user experience design tool that supports vector design and website wireframing. We were able to create an interactive prototype that could be accessed through the internet, making the process of testing our prototype very quick and convenient. The digital prototype more accurately represented our website's usability as we could click through the pages instead of moving around paper. This method of prototyping allowed us to easily send the design to our classmates to test and comment on our design. It is extremely important to get feedback from a wide range of people to help narrow down what features need to be changed or tweaked. The link to our digital prototype can be found at the top of this document.

Initially our navigation bar included a drop down navigation menu. This menu included routes to all of the pages on the website. We tested this system of navigation and came to the conclusion that the navigation system had to be redesigned to improve usability. The routes were repositioned to line up across the navigation bar so the users could see the pages before clicking any buttons. This change also allowed us to easily implement a user image and drop down menu. Without lining up routes across the navigation bar we would have ended up with a drop down menu within a drop down menu, this would have lead to confusion when using our navigation system. While testing our system we experienced issues when determining the current page that is being accessed. Therefore we decided to implement a simple system that highlights the navigation route that the user is currently accessing. For example, if the user has navigated to the "articles by source" page the route on the navigation menu corresponding to this page will be highlighted. This should assist the user in understanding their current place on the website.

Originally the route for our user feed requirement was only visible when the user clicked on their profile photo, thus grouping the route with the settings and logout. We determined that it is an essential function for our service and it should not be difficult to find the route for it. This caused us to move the user feed route onto the main navigation bar, alongside "sort by story" and "sort by source".

The landing (home) page of our website originally included three sections, a header, a body of information, and a "click here to learn more" button that routes to the about page. We decided that it was important to push our users to create an account with our service so we added a "click here to login / sign up" button to the landing page. Getting users logged into the service is important as it gives us the ability to send emails containing their user feed to their email account.

Throughout designing the dark theme for our user interface we faced many challenges. Our initial design was grayscale and after some feedback from other people we decided to implement some colour. The grayscale design was replaced with a navy blue theme. This added some interest to our design and lowered the contrast between elements to reduce strain on the users eyes. We decided to make the dark theme a perk for creating an account with our service.

We had a clear vision of the design of our website before starting our paper prototype, however, the process proved to be very useful. We were able to receive constructive feedback from our classmates to help mold our initial design into an easy to use interface.