Identity and Continuity:

Designing a Digital Archive for Computing and the Arts (CPAR) Senior Projects

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Background

Computing and the Arts (CPAR) is one of Yale's newer, and smaller majors. Those who declare the major get to explore the realm of Computer Science, while also selecting a "track" from Visual Art, Music, Theatre, Architecture, and Art History to focus on – it is a truly multidisciplinary program that allows students to grow both technical/quantitative acumen as well as their creative abilities. Although CPAR has gained more recognition over the years, it still is not well-known among the Yale community and beyond.

Currently, there is no archive of work former CPAR majors have done for their senior projects (there exists an archive of the CS portion, but that is only half of their senior project). This lack of visibility makes it difficult for current seniors to figure out the scope of ideas for their projects, and prevents the community from being able to see these multidisciplinary projects. In this project, I explore what different senior projects look like for students on the different tracks, and make a proof of concept website for displaying them, while noting what an ideal version of this website would look like, and all of the different considerations that come with making a project with user experience and longevity in mind.

Technology

- Figma
- HTML
- CSS
- JavaScript
- JQuery
- Python
- Flask
- Jinja
- SQLite
- CAS

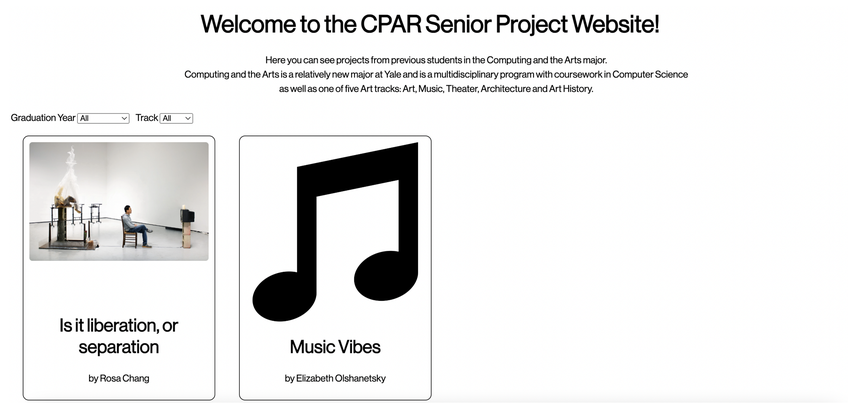
User Interviews/Research

In building this CPAR website, I wanted to make sure I spoke with fellow CPAR seniors and former students about what they are doing/did for their projects, and how they would like to display their projects in a digital archive.

I spoke with 12 CPAR majors, 3 of them being alumni, and concluded that most students wanted a way to include a combination of images, video and audio content, as well as a way to upload their code as well.

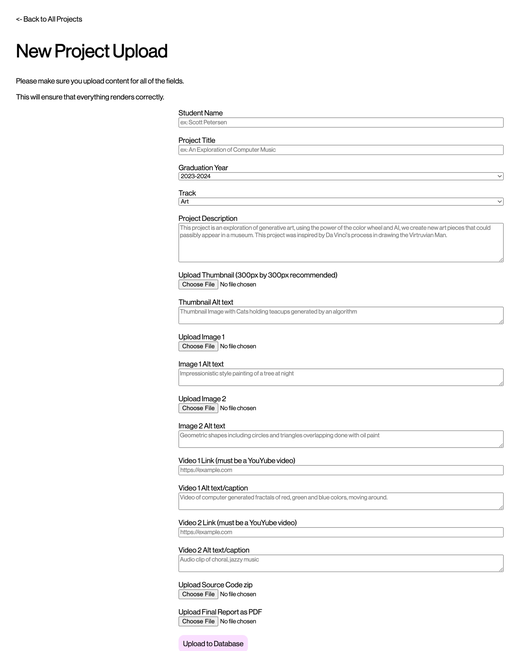
I also looked at several website builders such as Wix, Wordpress, Webflow and Cargo for inspiration. I decided I would keep the website simple and easy to navigate, as the projects themselves should be the focus.

Home Page



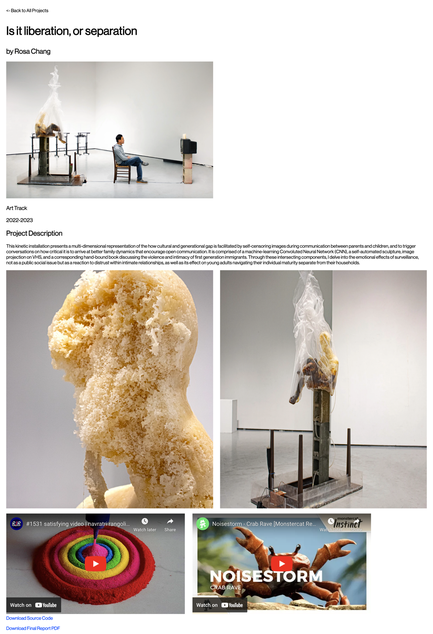
The Home Page allows you to view projects that have been uploaded to the website, and filter the projects based on track and graduation year. Uploaded projects automatically render on this page.

Project Upload



The Project Upload page allows those with admin access to add their projects (media included) to the database, which will then be automatically shown on the home page.

Project Details



The Project Details page displays information about projects that were uploaded, allowing you to see more detailed information and media including a description, images, video/audio clips, source code, and the final report. Additionally, all relevant media is required to have alt text.

Future Ideas

- More variety in media options
- Ability to add custom CSS
- Accessibility features
- Moving storage to cloud
- Improved error checking/security