



Laura Kneeshaw

UX Portfolio



Laura Kneeshaw is a student of Visual Communication Design and User Experience Design at Eastern Washington University. She works on the Application Design & Web Development team at EWU and is currently assisting with the website redesign. She is also a volunteer designer for Spokane Guilds' School.

Interested in the flexibility and rapid evolution of the web, Laura intends to pursue a career in web design and development.

DVR Remote App

The DVR Remote is a remote mobile app that allows the user to control their Apple TV through their smart phone. In a world of poorly designed remotes with too many buttons, it simplifies the TV-watching process by removing extraneous features, enabling DVR features, and providing a clear and visually appealing navigation to make it easy for users to browse favorite shows and channels and search for new ones.

Project Name	DVR Remote App
Summary	A mobile app that will replace the need for a regular remote and simplify the Apple TV experience.
Company	Apple
Timeframe	April 2017 to May 2017
Responsibilities	Research, design, prototyping
Platforms	Mobile Application
Design Tools	Sketch InVision Real Time Board
UX Methods	Research Content Sketches Prototypes
Key Performance Metrics	Ratings and number of downloads exceed the current Apple TV remote's ratings and number of downloads
Collaborators	P. Colin Manikoth (Instructor)
Status	Concept

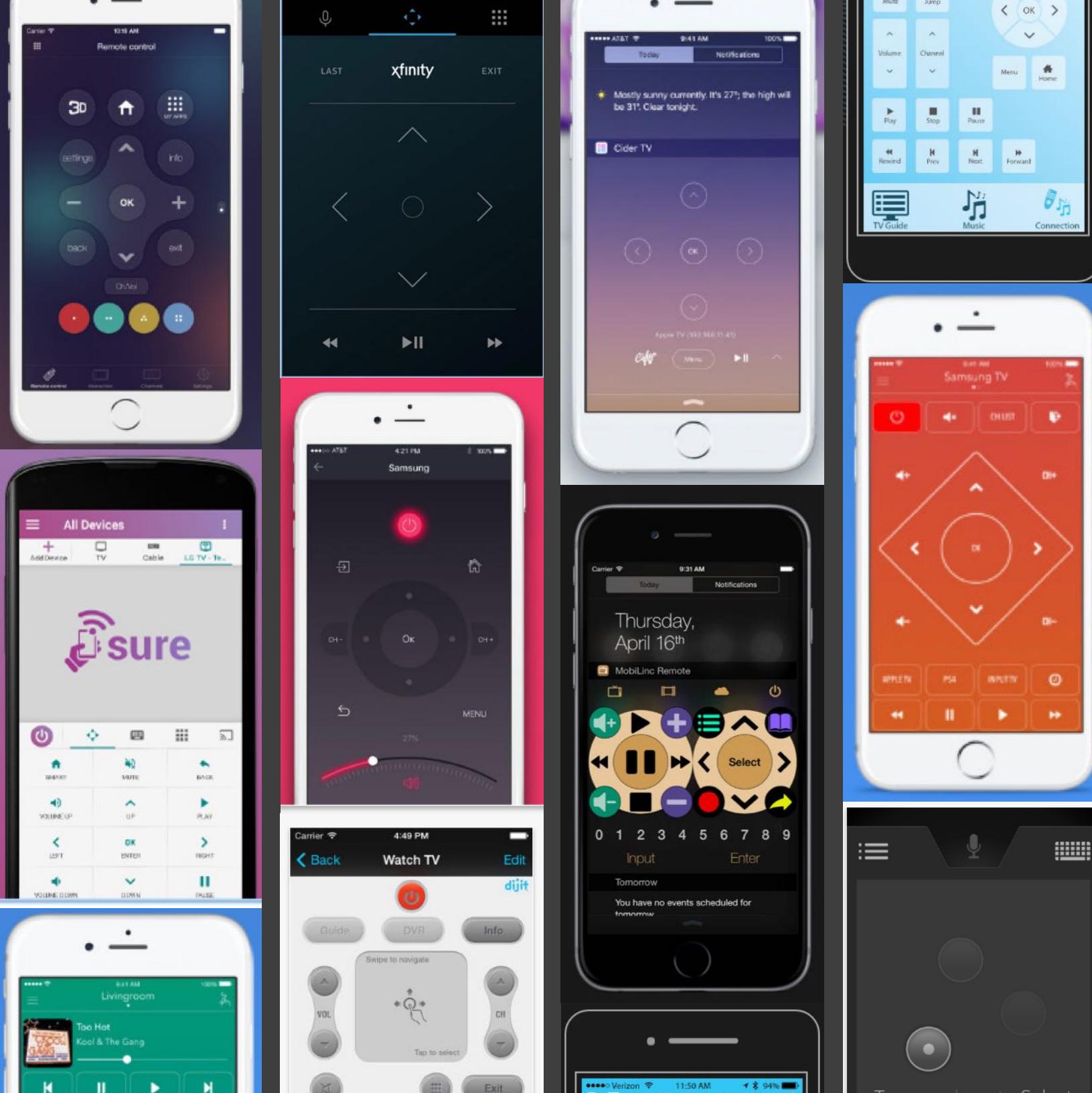
[View Prototype](#)

The Problem

Television is rapidly evolving, evinced by the rise of Netflix, Hulu, and similar services, as well as smart TVs like Apple TV, Roku, and Amazon Fire. Traditional remotes are quickly becoming obsolete. Remote mobile apps are flooding the market, but struggling to meet the demands of a medium in flux. Apple has released their own remote app for Apple TV, but its ratings are poor and it lacks core controls and DVR capabilities.

Research

There is no lack of remote apps out there. I began my research by collecting screenshots of as many as I could find. I took note of their appearances, features, controls, and methods of navigation. I also tested the AppleTV and its physical remote to see what was required to operate the AppleTV. I parsed through the results to decide which controls were necessary, which were helpful, and which were extraneous and cluttering up valuable real estate.

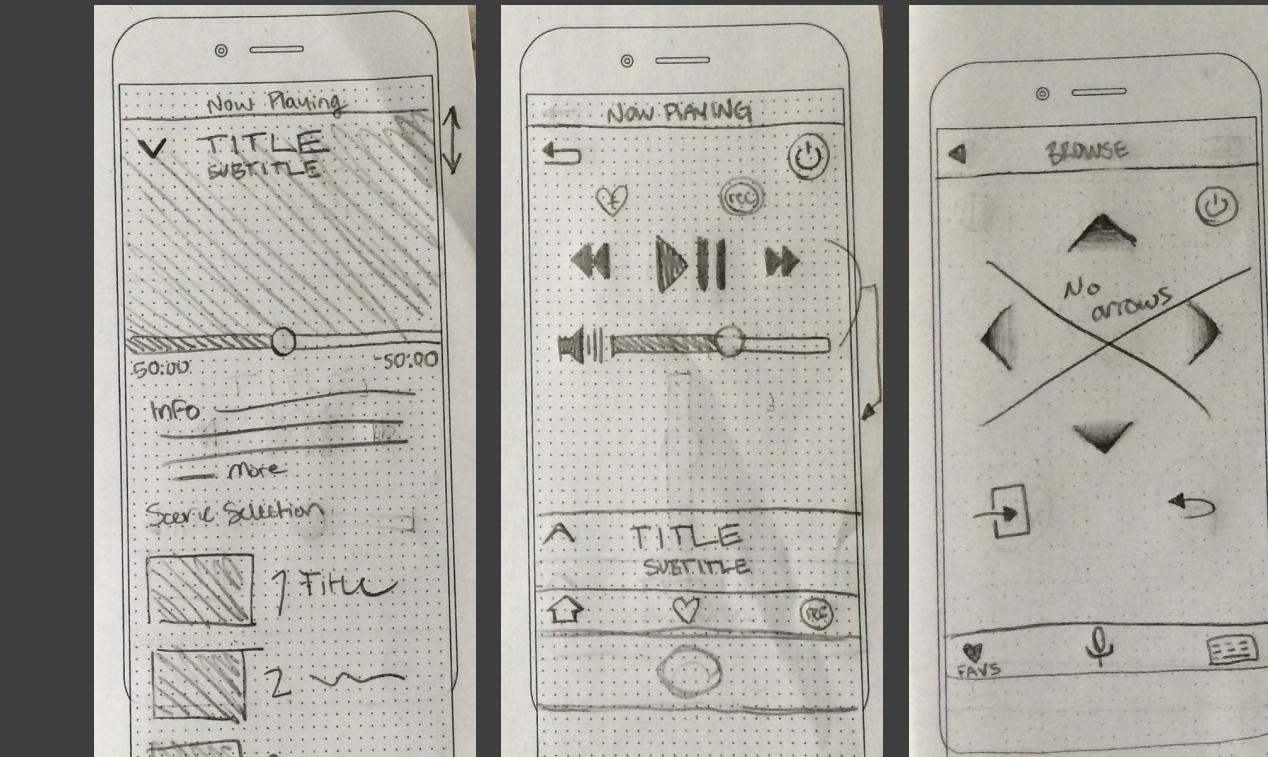


Apple HIG

I continued my research by studying Apple's Human Interface Guidelines. Apple has high expectations for quality. They value crisp clarity, functionality, and beauty. For my design to be successful, it needed to meet Apple's standards. Even more so, it needed to meet the expectations of the users. Deviations from Apple's firmly established mental models might do more harm than good.

Wireframes

After completing my research, I began sketching low-fidelity wireframes. I increased fidelity as I moved into sketch, focusing purely on layout. As I worked, I continuously referenced Apple's HIG to make sure my design was consistent with their other products. Wireframes complete, I began adding content.



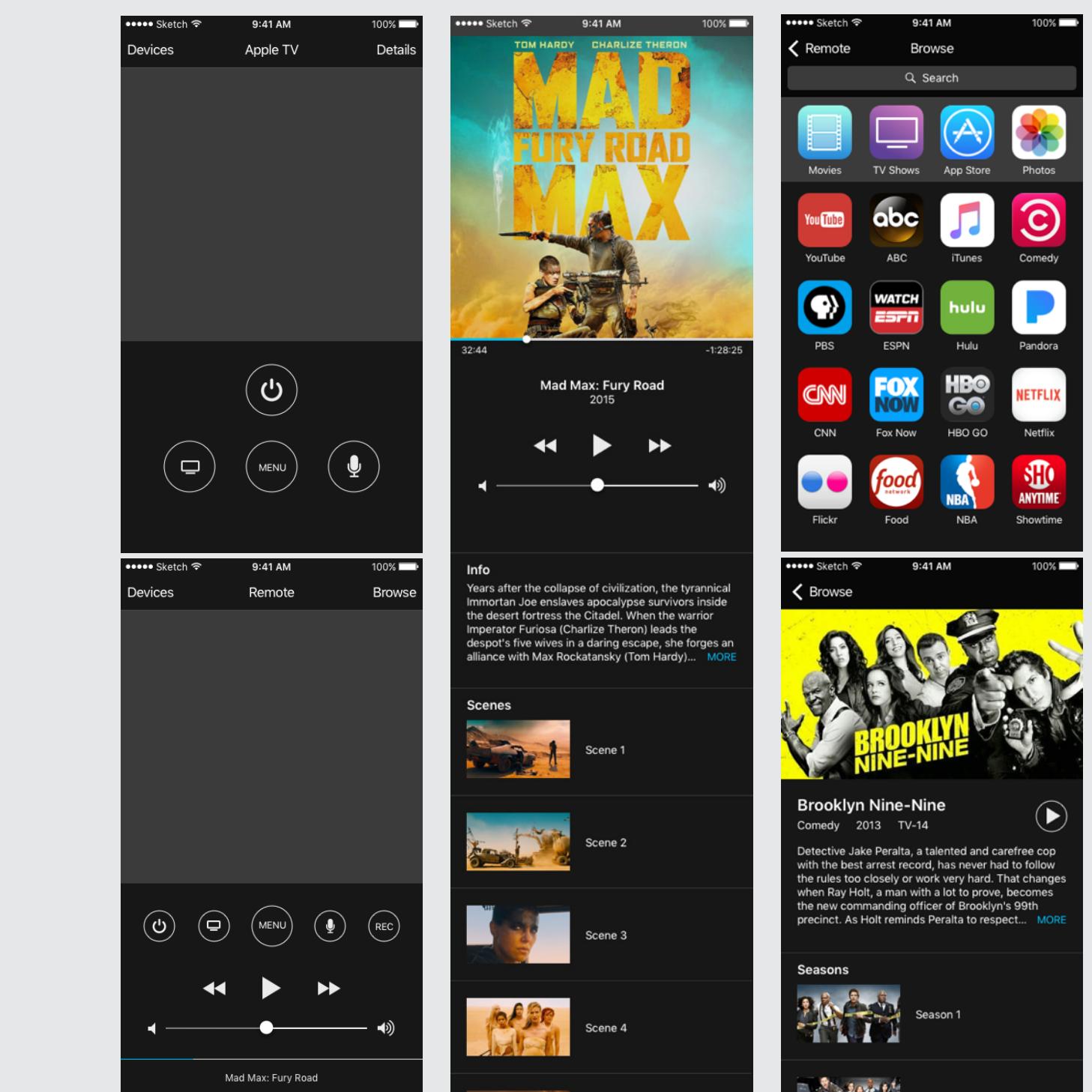
The Prototype

To display the functionality of the remote, I built a working prototype in Invision. The dark interface is unobtrusive in dim or dark rooms. Controls are based on actions and context, hidden until the user needs them. Users can fast forward or rewind, scrub through content, or use scene selection to navigate. DVR capabilities allow the user to pause and record live TV. Users can also browse apps, shows, and movies on their phone while media is playing.

Key Takeaways

Do your research. A designer needs to know how a product actually works before they can effectively redesign it.

Understand your client and your client's users. A beautiful app is little help to the client if it doesn't follow their brand guidelines. Features that seem innovative may hinder more than help a user if they break established mental models.



SpoCoLo

SpoCoLo is an as-of-yet unnamed directory of curated local content from the Spokane County area. It shines a spotlight on local culture, featuring artists, musicians, restaurants, historical landmarks, and more. Users can quickly and easily explore options for entertainment, while content creators and organizations are able to display their work and draw more viewers to their own websites and social media.

Project Name

SpoCoLo

Summary

A directory of curated local content from the Spokane County area

Client

Spokane County Library District

Timeframe

April 2017 to June 2017

Responsibilities

Research, design, prototyping

Platforms

Website

Design Tools

Sketch

InVision

Real Time Board

UX Methods

Research

Sketches

Prototypes

Key Performance Metrics

Content creators and organizations featured on SpoCoLo see an increase of interest and traffic on websites.

Collaborators

P. Colin Manikoth (Instructor)

Status

Concept

[View Prototype](#)

CONNECT



bandname.com

CONTACT

(509) 123-4567

name@email.com

9876 E Address Ave

Spokane, WA 99208



BAND NAME

BAND

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PHOTOS



VIDEOS

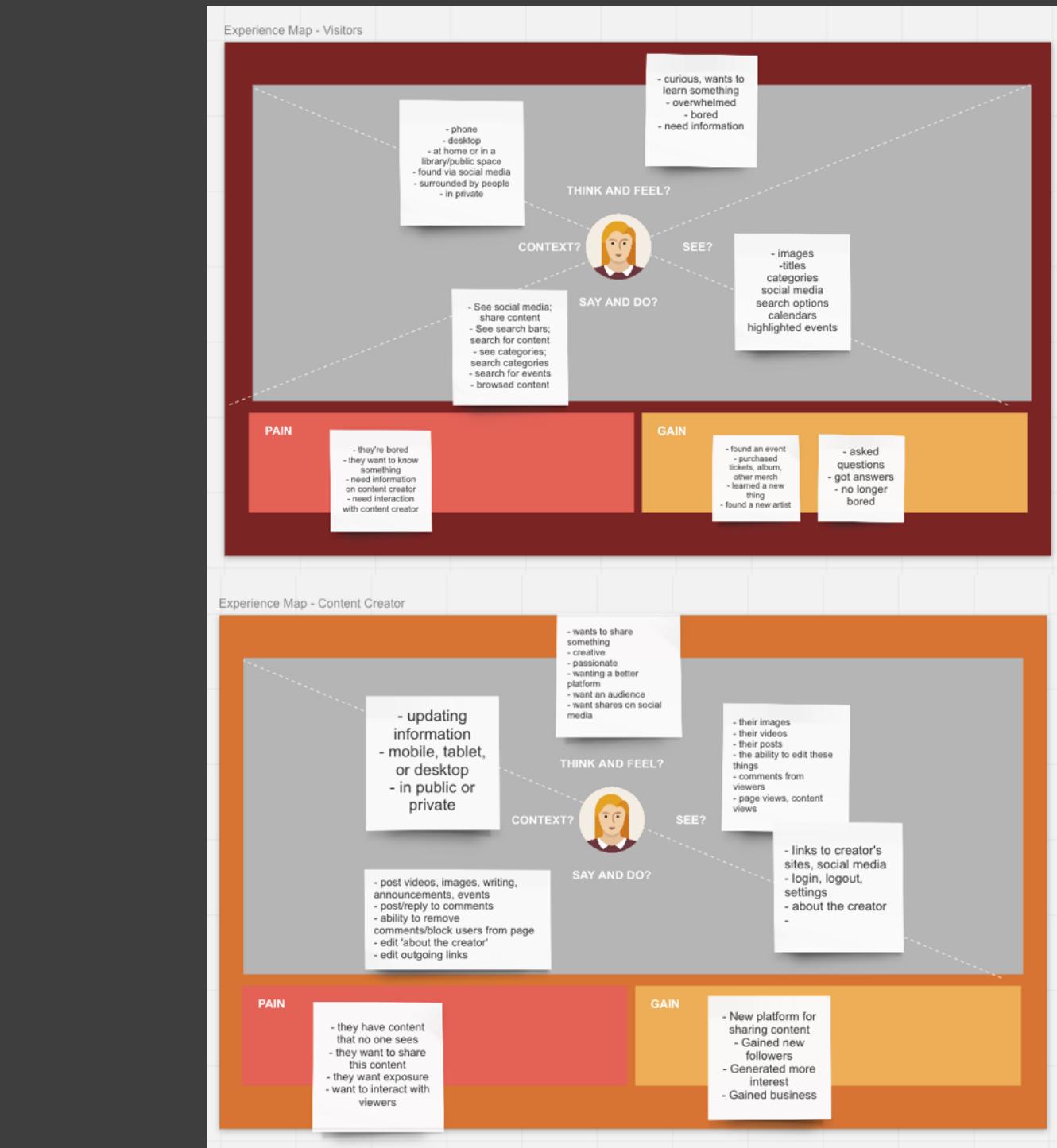


The Problem

Spokane County Library District has long been active in the community. Often they hold events and feature local creators within the Library, particularly musicians for Live at the Library. However, they lack a way to spread this content to the Spokane community, relying instead on third party sites such as Youtube. Spokane County Library approached P. Colin Manikoth's class at EWU for a solution. They needed a website with an identity separate from SCLD where they could both curate and feature local creators, culture, and history.

Experience Map

To better solve this problem, I explored the needs of the users. I divided the users into two categories: the visitors of the site and the content creators. I put myself in their shoes, brainstorming how they think and feel before using the service, what they see, and how they react and what they do in response. What problems do they have? What are their needs? What do they gain from the service? I also considered how context might affect the experience.



Research

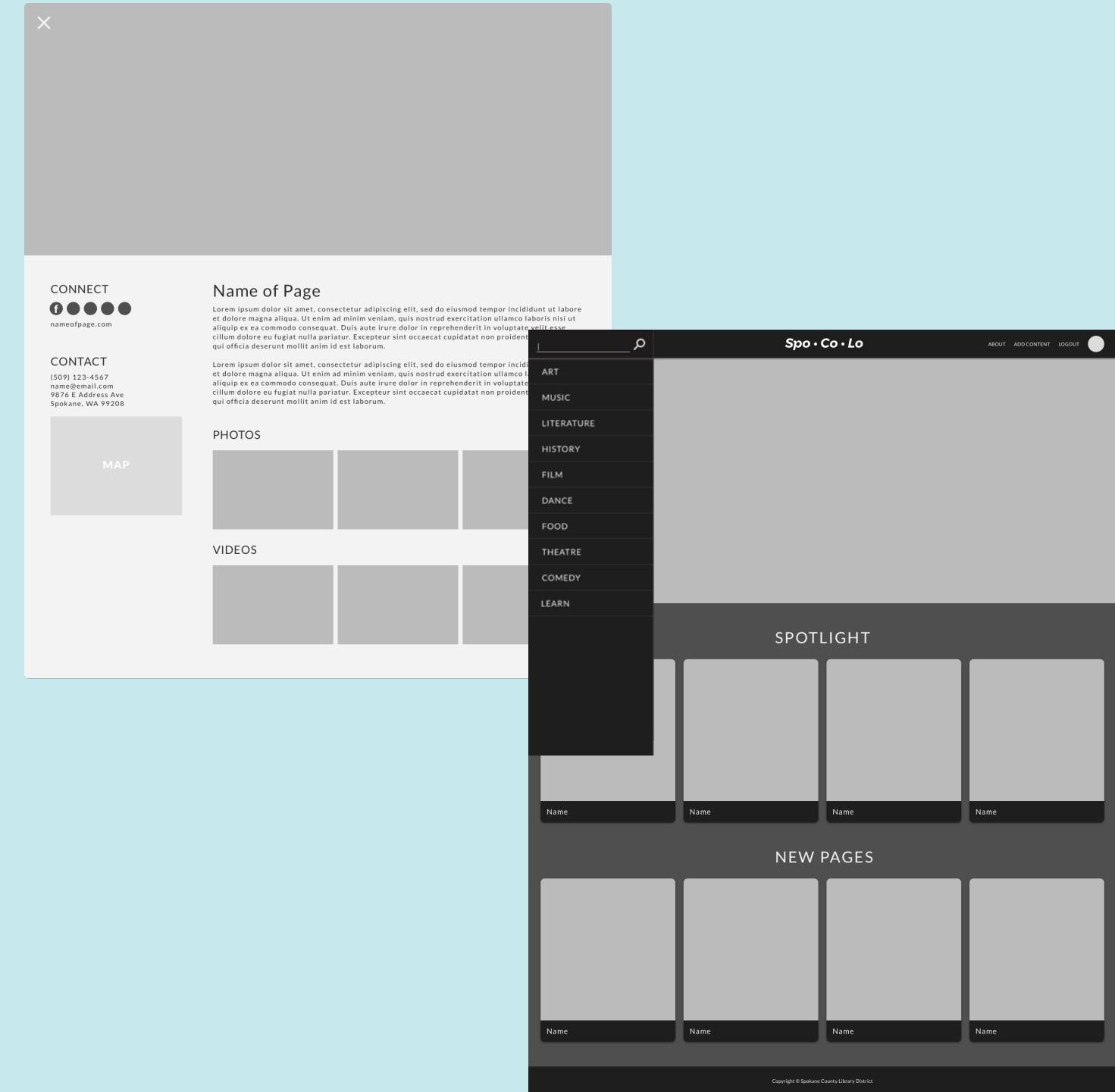
Other sites have already tackled this problem, so I researched how they organized and highlighted their content. I listed each site's features, pros, and cons. I determined what worked, what did not, and what to avoid at all costs. From this, I made notes of possible applications for SpoCoLo, taking its users, unique needs, and content into consideration.

The collage consists of six screenshots arranged in a grid-like layout:

- Top Left:** A dark-themed sidebar menu from Art&Seek.org. It includes sections for "Menu" (Art&Seek Archives, Artist Spotlight, Nasher Prize), "CALENDAR" (View Full Calendar, Free Stuff, Kids and Family, Submit an Event, Widget Builder), and "CATEGORIES" (Art, Arts & Cultural Centers, Books).
- Top Middle:** A dark-themed sidebar menu from UIkit.com. It lists various UI components: All UI /, Background, Dialogs / Lightboxes, Feedback, Filter & Sort, Hide & Reveal, Hover, Layout, List, Loading, Rounded Edges, and Scrolling.
- Top Right:** A screenshot of the Seattle tourism website (visitseattle.org). The header includes "Seattle", "Things To Do", "Food & Drink", "Lodging", "Blog", "FAQ", and "VISITSEATTLE.tv". Below the header is a grid of icons for "Sightseeing", "Events", "Arts & Culture", "Cultural Heritage", "Family Fun", and "Outdoors".
- Middle Left:** A screenshot of the Art+Seek website. It features a large image of a neon artwork with text like "ALL THAT IS REAL IS POSSIBLE" and "You are an island.". Below the image is a news snippet: "Deconstructing Words To Sculpt Art" by Therese Powell, dated April 13, 2013.
- Middle Middle:** A screenshot of the Seattle tourism website showing neighborhood sections: "NEIGHBORHOODS" with images of "DOWNTOWN SEATTLE", "WATERFRONT", "CAPITOL HILL", and "BELLTOWN".
- Middle Right:** A screenshot of the Stranger website (www.thestranger.com). It features a "THINGS TO DO" sidebar with categories like "Resistance & Solidarity", "Record Store Day", and "National Poetry Month". The main content includes a "TOP STORIES" section with an article about North Korea bombing Seattle.
- Bottom Left:** A screenshot of the Snazzy Info Window plugin for Unisharp (unisharp.com). It shows a demo window with a map and text: "Snazzy Info Window: Customizable info windows using Leaflet Maps JavaScript API".
- Bottom Middle:** A screenshot of the GridTab plugin (gridtab.com). It shows a responsive grid-based table component with a newsletter sign-up form.
- Bottom Right:** A screenshot of the iCheck plugin (icheckradio.com). It shows a demo of customized checkboxes and radio buttons.

Wireframes

Applying what I learned from my research, I determined the structure of my site. I sketched out each page, then built wireframes. With these, I built a medium-fidelity prototype. Then I conducted a round of user testing and used the feedback to refine the design. Once I was satisfied with its functionality, I increased its fidelity, adding colors and photos.





The Solution

A simple directory is the answer. Users can search with a bar or by category. Content creators and organizations are listed as thumbnails, making it easy for a user to browse through them quickly. Clicking on a thumbnail provides more information, including photos or videos, and contact information. If users like what they see, they can follow links to the content creator's social media or website. The featured and new pages sections on the home page will showcase creators and help users discover new content.

Key Takeaways

Don't reinvent the wheel. Sometimes problems have already been solved. Rather than wasting time trying to solve it again, focus on how to adapt the solution to fit the specific needs of the product.

Designers have blinders; users don't. User feedback is the best way to see what is and is not working. They might point out issues the designer would never see.



SPOTLIGHT



Name
Category



Name
Category



Name
Category



Name
Category

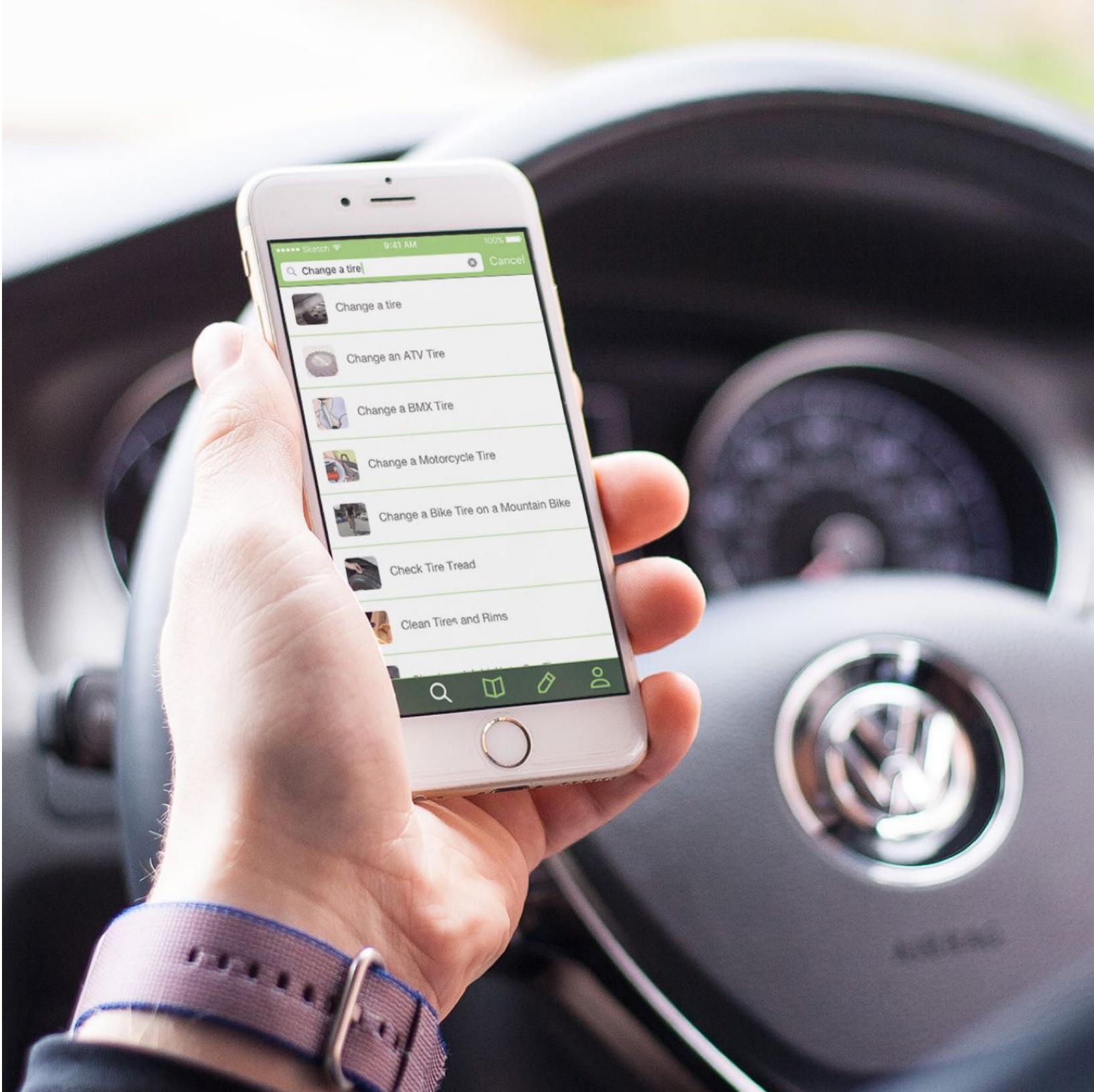
NEW PAGES



WikiHow Mobile App

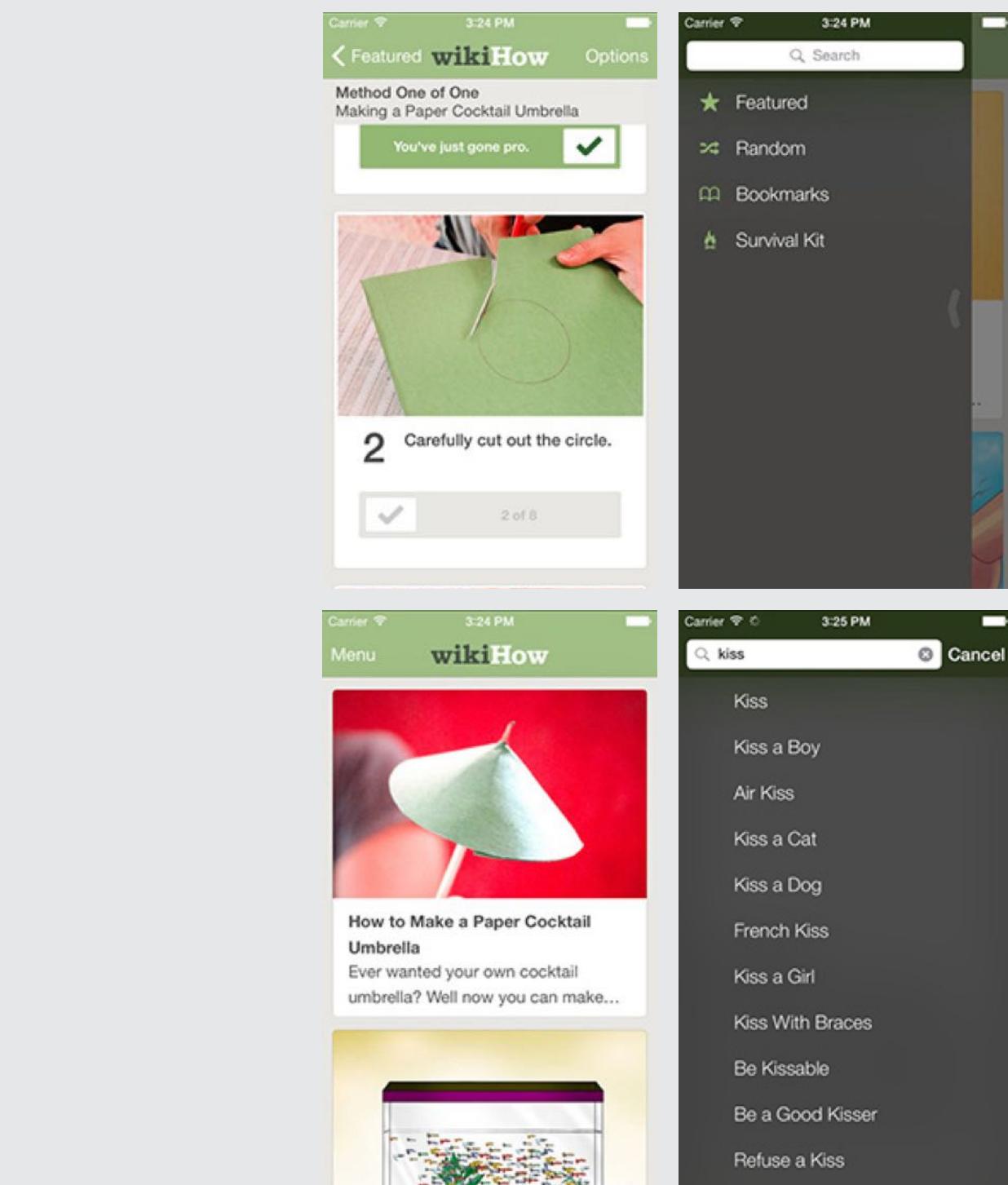
WikiHow is an award-winning, free, open source collection of how-to articles. Users can read articles, write articles, and contribute to existing articles. The redesigned WikiHow app brings the same functionality to mobile devices. It gives power to the user by making it easy to search for specific information, to browse categories and articles, and to contribute their own articles and expertise to the WikiHow community, whether they're at home or on the go.

Project Name	WikiHow App
Summary	A mobile app that teaches users how to do anything.
Company	WikiHow
Timeframe	April 2017 to June 2017
Responsibilities	Research, design, prototyping
Platforms	Mobile app for all phones
Design Tools	Sketch Photoshop InVision Real Time Board
UX Methods	Research Personas User flows Sketches Prototypes
Key Performance Metrics	Ratings and number of downloads exceed the current WikiHow remote's ratings and number of downloads
Collaborators	P. Colin Manikoth (Instructor)
Status	Concept

[View Prototype](#)

The Problem

Although the current iOS WikiHow app has over four stars in the app store, it has a lot of room for improvement. It is missing important features of the website, like browsing by category and adding articles. Some features are hidden and more difficult to get to than they should be, such as search bars and adding bookmarks. While the app is functional, it has little to offer aesthetically, diminishing the user experience.



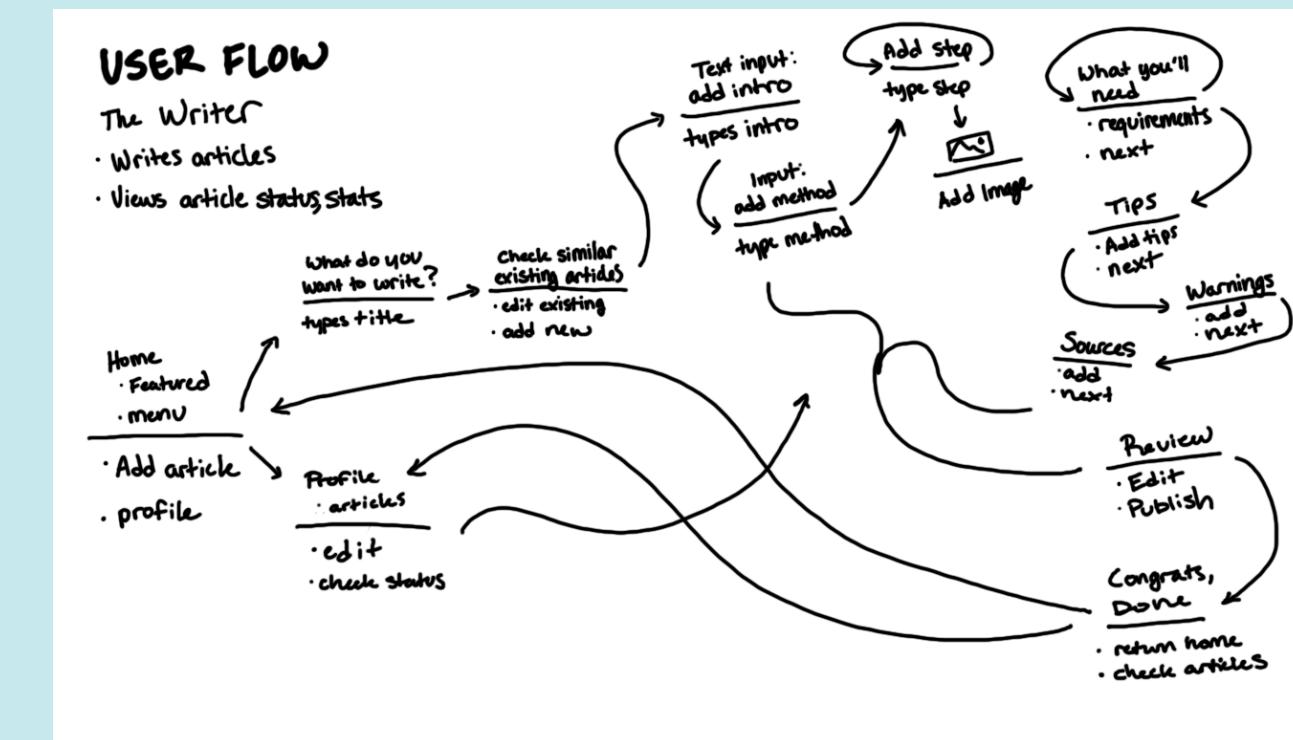
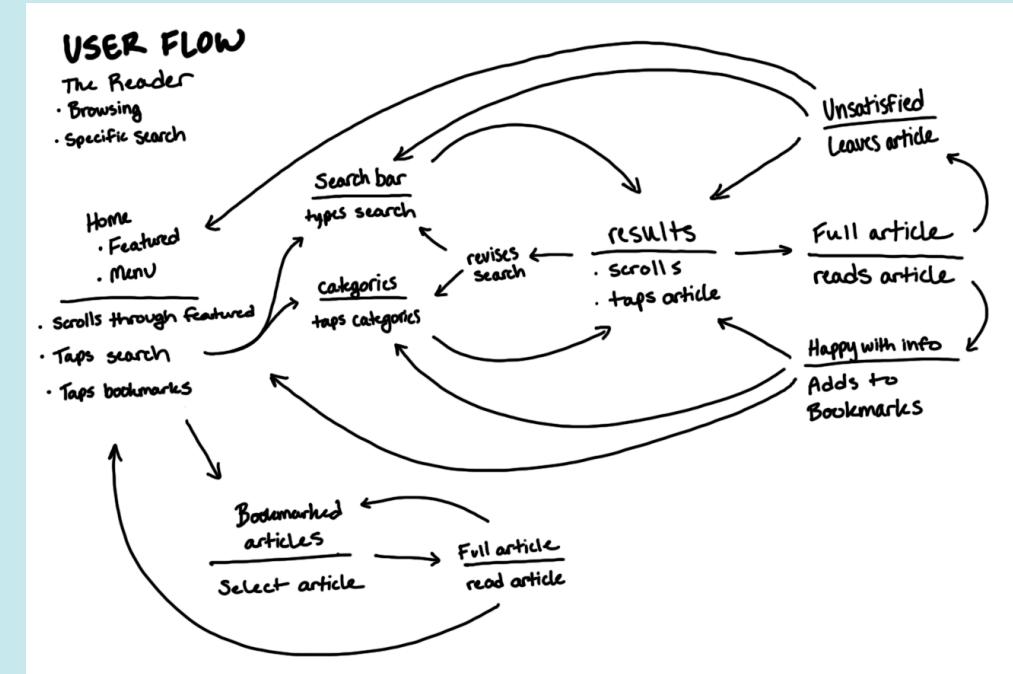
Personas

To properly assess which features of the app are required, I examined the needs of each set of users. Particularly with WikiHow, the needs of the reader might be very, very different than the writer. The writer has knowledge they want to share and wants to be able to write articles wherever they are. The reader, however, could be in any situation. They could be bored and reading for entertainment. Or they could be stranded on a deserted highway, night approaching, with a flat tire and no idea how to change it. The reader needs to be able to locate information, and quick.



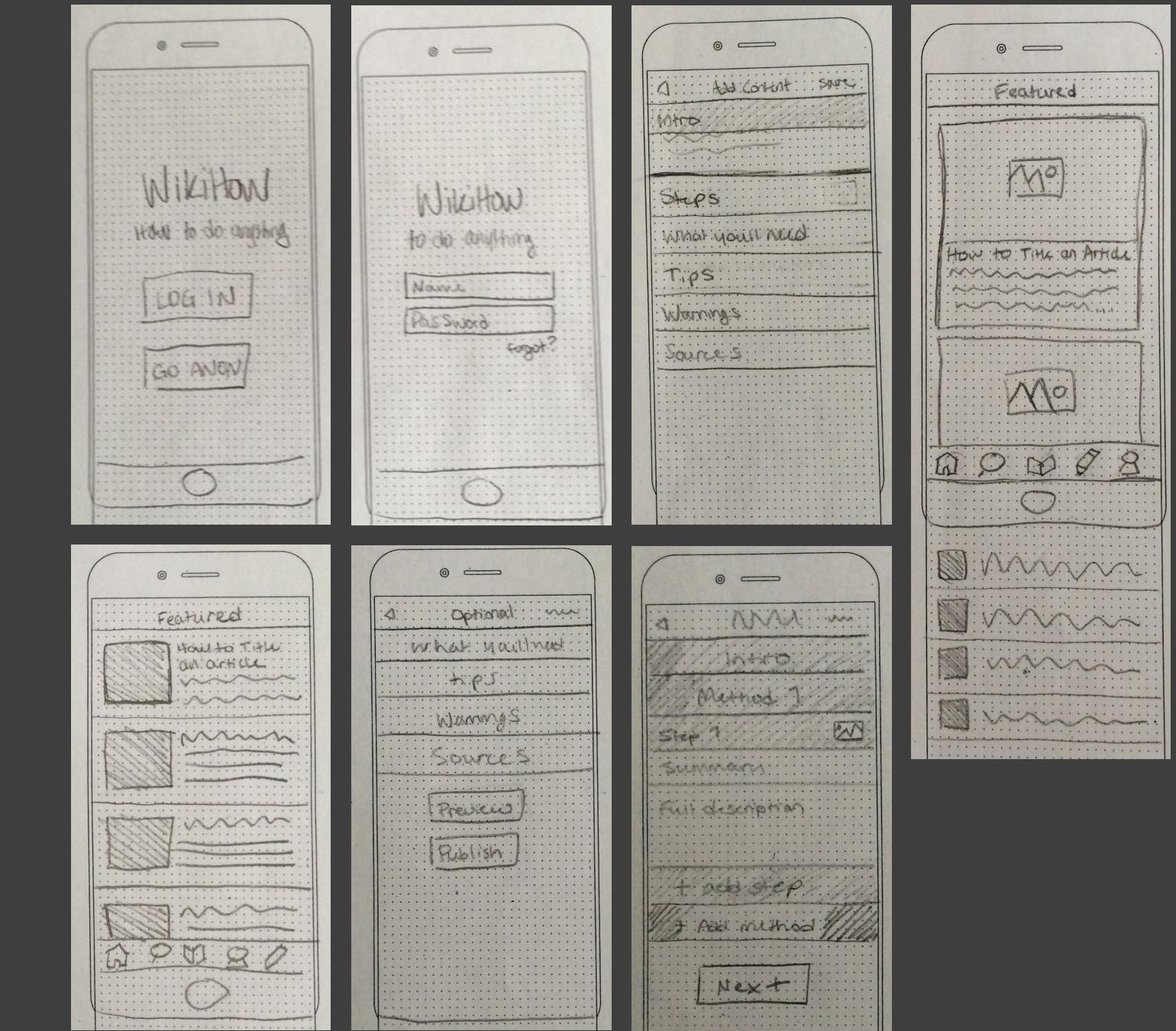
User Flows

Diving deeper into the mind of the user, I mapped out how they might use the app. How does the writer start, write, and publish an article? How does a reader find an article? What do they see, then what do they do? And repeat. By going through this process step by step, I determined what screens and features I needed for the app.



Sketches

WikiHow articles can be very detailed. They are broken down into methods, steps, pictures, tips, warnings, required materials... they are more complex than one might assume. The challenge, then, was to enable writers to add these features without making the process feel too overwhelming. Before going digital, I explored solutions through sketches until I boiled the writing process down to something simple enough for mobile. I also explored how readers might search for articles. Then I turned sketches into screens, and screens into a prototype.



The Product

The bar at the bottom of the screen, ever present, makes navigation easy. Users can check featured articles, search, view bookmarks, start an article, and view their profile, no matter where they are in the app. Readers can search for articles with the search bar, by category, or by browsing featured articles. Favorite articles can be bookmarked with a tap. Writers can view their profile and their articles. When writing an article, they can save at any time and come back to it later.

Key Takeaways

Know the user. Know their needs, and know that needs may vary from user to user. Imagine how they feel. Imagine where they might be and what might be happening to them as they use your product.

Sketch it out. Particularly with complex products, it's easier and faster to solve problems on paper than it is on the screen.

