Capstone Project 2021

Final Report

Digital &
Beyond × **Deloitte.**
Digital

Executive Summary

Digital & Beyond is a design firm that provides digital design solutions to problems clients are experiencing. Using the design thinking process, a number of steps are taken to analyze the client's situation and core needs to offer optimal solutions.

This document represents a summary of the entire three-month design project between Digital & Beyond and the client, Deloitte Digital. The client approached Digital & Beyond to tackle a problem surrounding the facilitation of activities that once took place in office but now are primarily online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A thorough research phase was conducted where multiple written articles and resources were analyzed and a number of interviews were conducted with participants from Deloitte Digital and GHD. The research confirmed existing assumptions and brought to light new challenges in the work-from-home experience that proved to be crucial in the design of the final solution. Using research leads and with the direction of the client, opportunity areas were identified and proposed. Necessary productivity tools (i.e. whiteboarding, stakeholder workshops, communication, etc) and social interaction elements including informal meetings, random and candid conversations, and the ability to define the start and end of a workday were identified as core requirements for the design prototype. Using mid-fidelity mockups of the features, user testing was conducted to measure the usability and desirability of each feature. User testing results were primarily positive, with recommendations for changes in the final prototype. Using accumulated research and user testing of the mid-fidelity prototypes, final high-fidelity prototype designs were created and visually presented to the client.

This document is prepared for and intended to be used by and between all teams and individuals at Deloitte Digital and all entities under "Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited".

Table of Contents

Introduction and Problem

The team at Deloitte Digital approached us with a problem that everyone is experiencing in these unprecedented times. Today, how we work, interact with others, live, learn, and approach physical and mental health has completed changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our existence has been altered as we resort to physical distance to ensure safety. Many establishments that would normally be face-to-face are now exclusively virtual, and by the looks of it, we can expect a future that is at least partially virtual. A large number of jobs that initially occupied office space are now completely work-from-home, through virtual tools and connectivity. Though work is possible away from a physical office, there are many challenges that arise as a result of this change, especially in the mental health of workers. A huge opportunity exists to create a research-oriented solution that addresses the needs of work-from-home while also inviting social and community aspects from the at-office work culture.

We're living through some of the most challenging times ever.

How we live, work, and interact with one another has completely changed.

Problem Statement

This project is focused on exploring ways to provide employees that are working from home with opportunities to virtually co-locate in order to better facilitate activities that would otherwise be carried out in person/at the office while also considering the mental health of workers.

Market and Competitive Analysis

Market Competitors

An analysis of competitors offering tools and services that facilitate work-from-home activities was conducted to learn how the industry is adapting and finding opportunities to offer services for today's needs. The next few pages review the companies operating in the space organized by the type of offering.

Below are companies that offer products that serve specific areas of interest when working from home.

Communication	File Management	Project Management
Google Hangouts	Dropbox	Asana
Slack	Google Drive	Trello
Zoom	Box	Basecamp

Time Tracking	Productivity	Health Focused
Toggle Track	Serene	Mindfulness
Clockify	Forest	Headspace
Harvest	Nozbe	Talkspace

Competitors Features Matrix

Market Features Analysis	Slack	Zoom	Dropbox	Asana	Toggle	Serene	Headspace	Trello	Basecamp
Productivity						✓			
Video Calls		✓							
Time Tracking					✓				
Team Communication /Messaging				✓					✓
Project Management				✓				✓	✓
File Management			✓						
Social Aspect	Opportunity area								
Team Feedback	✓			✓					
Health Aspect							✓		

The competitive matrix above outlines a wide variety of features that we believe are essential to an all-in-one work from home solution and includes many products focused on one or more of these features. Firstly, none of the above products take all of these features into account. What this means is that teams are forced to use a variety of different solutions from different companies if they want to use each of the features. This is inefficient and requires making multiple accounts with a growing number of companies. Second, we highlighted the "Social Aspect" feature as an opportunity space. By social aspect, we mean the casual social interactions that happen in the office. These can include looking over a friend's shoulder to check out their work, running into someone in the halls, coffee conversations by the machine, and more. We believe that these social interactions are invaluable. None of the products listed in the graphic consider this social aspect, and this presents us with a huge opportunity to differentiate our product and to improve the experience of working from home.

Formative Research

The formative research stage of this project contains a three-part approach to research. First, a review of articles surrounding the problem area and the market is compiled. Following, a total of five formal participant interviews were conducted with participants at various levels of seniority at Deloitte Digital and GHD. Using the findings from the articles review and interview research findings, a persona is developed that addresses the major pain points and unmet needs of the problem space.

Articles Review

An initial review of a series of related articles has been conducted to uncover emerging themes and develop a deeper background understanding of the problem space and the impact of a potential solution. Article topics range from technical tools that support work-from-home as well as overcoming mental health challenges and barriers as a result of working from home. The following pages contain the articles reviewed and key findings from each article.

Making Remote Work Sustainable For 2021 And Beyond

By **Laurel Farrer**

Retrieved from Forbes
https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurelfarrer/2021/01/21/making-remote-work-sustainable-for-2021-and-beyond/?sh=2bb04b2d24ac

Abstract and Notes

This article describes how many people are enjoying working from home, and explains the importance of companies being able to adapt to this new norm. Organizations should prioritize these tasks, for long-term success:

- Write a Policy (create a remote work policy, as the absence of this can be illegal)
- Build a Digital Infrastructure (optimize your toolkit by building a true digital infrastructure to enhance employee experience)
- Invest in Training
- Make Culture Location-Dependent (invest in creating a sense of belonging and value for your employees)

## Remote work for design teams: InVision's essential resources

By **Liz Steelman**

Retrieved from Invision
https://www.invisionapp.com/inside-design/remote-design-best-practices/

Abstract and Notes

This article presents readers with a collection of design-oriented tools to help designers and design teams operate during the pandemic. It covers tools focused on fostering creativity, aiding collaboration, and staying focused. InVision utilizes these steps for a successful remote work life:

- Foster Creativity (allow the designers on your team to continue expressing themselves and their work as they would in the office)
- Aid Collaboration (remote collaboration is a difficult task, that can be made simple, with the likes of InVision Cloud Freehand)
- Stay Focused (working from home, it is easy to get distracted, being able to stay focused on the task at hand is key)
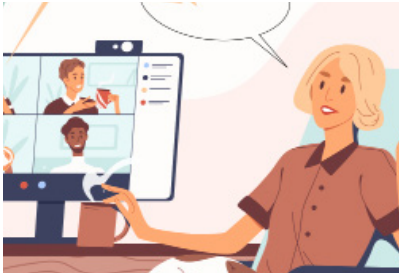
Sorry, You're on Mute: The Top Challenges of Working From Home

By **Carmen Ang**

Abstract and Notes

This article briefly displays the top challenges that people are facing when working from home. They make an important point that although these struggles exist, people still want the option to work from home post-pandemic.

"The majority of full-time employees in the U.S. are currently working from home. As a result, more people than ever are using video conferencing to communicate with coworker"

"Because of these challenges, 80% of respondents believe there should be at least one day a week with no virtual meetings."

"Despite the challenges that come with remote work, 77% of respondents believe that, when COVID is over, the option to work from home would make them happier."

50+ Remote Work Apps that Simplify Your Work-From-Home Job

By **Denise Mai**

Abstract and Notes

This article goes over a number of applications to use while working remotely. This article covers a large number of categories, not only providing a valuable list of tools but also showing how many features are necessary to successfully work from home.

Throughout the article, Google and Microsoft are primarily listed as competent tools for not only communication but collaboration as well. These softwares provide tools to solve the challenges of working from home through software solutions.

The 7 biggest remote work challenges (and how to overcome them)

By **Melanie Pinola**

Abstract and Notes

This article discusses the current challenges that people face while currently working from home, as well as the best ways to overcome them. Employees are found to be more productive while outside their normal office hours. However, the downside to this is that the workers are more vulnerable to working longer hours, and at a more intense workplace.

- Working too much
- Prioritizing work
- Interruptions (family, pets, doorbell)
- Loneliness and lack of human interaction
- Communication Issues
- Technology Hiccups
- Bad Health Habits

Why remote workers need a dashboard

By **Adam Kinniburgh**

Abstract and Notes

This article talks about how people that are going to be working from home need a dashboard. Dashboards allow people to stay productive because all of the information that they need will be readily available for the users.

- Application dashboards are incredibly important for companies who use many different products
- This gives them the ability to monitor and track the health of the services that they're using
- This also allows them to quickly see if any of the products are down/unavailable for use

FlexJobs Survey: Productivity, Work-Life Balance Improves

By **Rachel Pelta**

Abstract and Notes

This article surveyed more than 4000 people who are currently working remotely to find out what they really think. From this these were the findings:

- Work Productivity (51% of respondents said that they have been more productive by working from home)
- Cutting Commutes (36% of respondents said that their round trip commutes last two or more hours. Working from home allows them to save more money on gas.)
- Post-Pandemic Plans (Due to a better work-life balance, 65% of respondents said that they want to become full-time remote employees, while 31% of respondents indicated that they would prefer a hybrid work arrangement of working from home and in the office or a co-working space)
- However, some workers miss the office (49% of respondents said they miss seeing their colleagues, 14% saying they miss water cooler chats and 11% saying they were lonely. Also, 37% of respondents said that they miss "nothing" about the office and only 4% would prefer to return to the traditional office full-time post-covid)

## The New Office Space: 4 Ways Coronavirus Will Change The Workplace

By **Dan Ryan**

Abstract and Notes

Data across 15 million square feet of global office space shows that workplace use dropped more than 80% below historical averages in March since companies looked to flatten the COVID-19 curve by having their employees work from home. These are four ways that COVID is changing the office space and the way we work:

- Work from home will inspire more Agile Workplaces
- Demand for solo and socially distant space increases
- Proptech, Utilization Metrics, and Real-Time office data become paramount
- Cleanliness is automated

I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression
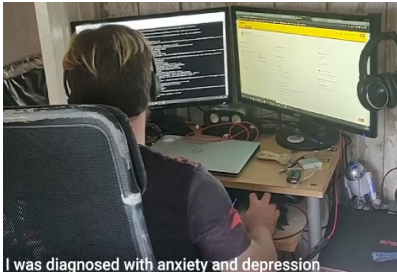
Hidden Realities

By **Philip Crisp**

Abstract and Notes

This article discusses how anxiety and depression pose heavy burdens on workers regularly, and are now amplified as a result of the unprecedented times. To combat this, companies such as Finastra are employing mental health first methods and procedures to help break down barriers. Finestra has launched the FinSupport mental health support program:

• 2/74 Access   • Free   • Accessible   • Confidential   • For employees and immediate family

The dark side of working from home: loneliness

By **Kathryn Vasel**

Abstract and Notes

This article explores the emerging issues arrived at from working from home, with a focus on loneliness, or more specifically "professional loneliness". It discusses that even though we are surrounded by folks whether it be family or colleagues from time to time over the internet, workers can still experience loneliness which has a direct impact on productivity. Marginalized workers who lacked social contact in the first place may be feeling increased loneliness as a result of the ongoing climate. The article suggests ways to accommodate the changes we are experiencing:

- Set up virtual meetings to replace the regular trips for coffee or hallway run-ins
- Don't rely on emails or messaging, prefer a phone call or video call
- Keep an open mind, loneliness can distort your view on relationships
- Managers should encourage regular meetings that aren't exactly work related, but avoid pushing too much, as it may cause burnout.

Interview Research Findings

A total of five research interviews were conducted over the course of two weeks through virtual zoom meetings. Participants held positions as designers, IT, and consulting in various levels of seniority at Deloitte and GHD. Participants were asked the questions in the previous section and notes were taken during each interview in a guided note-taking format. To better understand the interview notes, the answers to each question asked were broken down into "social interaction", "activities", "and technology". After completing each interview, notes were transcribed and filtered into emerging themes, pain points, unmet needs, and finally opportunities for a design solution.

Research Interview Planning

A paramount part of the research process is the participant interviews. These interviews aim to discover pain points and to suggest unmet needs where a design intervention might be relevant for our target users.

Participant Information
The interview process called for participants who fit the following criteria:

- Are working in fields including the design team, development, IT, networking
- Are working either remotely in an international capacity
- Are at an entry, intermediate, or senior level position in their organization
- Are working in a hybrid capacity (working in an office, and from home)
- Were at a fully remote organization prior to the pandemic

Booking Participants
Partners at Deloitte submitted the call for participants throughout the organization. Once a collection of interested individuals were found, a Calendly booking link was provided for participants to select a convenient 30 min meeting time. Participants were sent an introductory email that contained a confidentiality agreement as well as a link to the virtual meeting at their selected booking time. Virtual interviews were conducted over Zoom.

The following are themes that emerged through the interview findings.

1 **The ability to have social interactions**
Participants expressed the importance of regular and consistent social interactions at and outside of work. Social interactions include relationship building between co-workers and clients and manifest as anything from bumping into one another in the hallway to organized social events such as trivia nights.

2 **The pros and cons of structure**
Participants realized benefits from work-from-home, including regular team meetings with defined outcomes and the ability to organize one's daily schedule around work. Contrarily, participants found several negative experiences as a result of structured work, such as fatigue from extensive meetings and the inability to voice themselves in structured online meetings.

3 **Engagement with stakeholders**
In the past, workers would have the opportunity to conduct workshops and other activities with stakeholders in person and using facilities within reach, such as whiteboarding. As a result of work-from-home, it has become increasingly difficult to involve stakeholders in the design process.

4 **Constant availability**
Immediate physical access to work as a result of work-from-home results in an overwhelmingly negative experience. Participants mentioned that it is difficult to distinguish times of work and personal time at home.

5 **Essential tools**
Participants used a variety of tools as necessary to complete their assigned work. Tools used seem to be scattered and not easily accessible when they are needed. In addition, tools do not exist to better the facilitation of social interactions in a work-from-home environment.

Redefining the Research

Through a collection of responses from interview participants, an understanding can be made regarding the direction that the research is suggesting.

Initially, after reviewing the themes presented through the research findings, it becomes clear that the areas requiring attention indicate a larger problem than specified in the scope of this project. Further research is recommended to develop a thorough understanding of the problem space of working from home in the light of mental health, approaching the future of working from home and in-office in a hybrid capacity, and an ambiguous lack of the feeling of a work-based environment.

However, in an effort to provide a tactical solution to the pain points mentioned throughout the interviews relating to the original problem statement, a series of priorities can be made and addressed in the opportunity areas of this design challenge.

Problem Statement

To begin, we revisited the problem focus: "exploring ways to provide the digital product team with opportunities to virtually co-locate to better facilitate activities (e.g. whiteboarding sessions, stakeholder workshops, group coffee chats, water cooler conversations) that usually take place in person".

After filtering interview notes, research suggests that there are a number of pain points in carrying out activities that were originally accomplished face-to-face. First, challenges were identified in the engagement between the product team and client, the ability to engage in candid communication with co-workers, attend events both work and non-work related, whiteboarding with clients, and Q&A.

Prioritized Pain Points

With the problem statement in mind, the following pain points are discovered through the interview research findings.

1

Little to no engagement between contractors and clients to carry out workshops, file sharing, and communications.

2

Inability to have random candid communication between coworkers (i.e. water cooler conversations)

3

Inability to attend live events and seminars both at and away from work

4

Unable to emulate the experience of coffee chats and informal meetings

5

Difficulty finding solutions to common problems with working from home

Design Interventions and Opportunities

Using the prioritized pain points as described in the previous section, unmet needs emerge and present opportunities for design interventions. Using the data collected, a series of opportunities are suggested and defined with their respective features.

1 **A design team and client portal. Consultants can invite clients to join and collaborate.**
Features: the ability to share files and leave comments/feedback, ability to join live calls where files are presented centrally in an interactive "shared screen" mode where clients and consultants can make notes directly on files (screen drawing tool), ability to whiteboard while directly in calls to facilitate workshops, links to client zoom meetings, calendar invites and other team links, an indication of who is speaking

2 **Opt-in to a random generator that engages two individuals at random (filtered by specific teams, or the entire organization) into a quick conversation**
Features: opt-in/opt-out option, voice only, the option to select from specific groups of people to randomly meet with (i.e. within your team, "office", our the entire organization), both individuals are brought into the voice-only chat, option to "head back to work", to close the meeting, the option to schedule a coffee chat for later.

3 **A platform that streams the live event to a digital location where team members can join and chat with one another during the event**
Features: team members can join a "room" where the event video and audio is being streamed, the volume is adjusted when team members want to discuss items, text chat available

4 **Scheduled coffee chats that emulate having a coffee chat in person**
Features: ability to view the schedule of both individuals and select an open slot to have a coffee chat, ability to hold client and contractor meetings in the coffee chat in an informal way to develop client and consultant relationship, option to filter in ambiance (sounds, background).

5 **Community FAQ section**
Features: the ability for anyone to ask and answer questions and pin the most frequently asked questions

User Persona

Using the research findings, we developed a persona that describes the major pain points in the work from home experience for product designers. This persona represents the target user that the design must provide value for.

> **"**
> **While there are many tools that have helped me work from home, I really wish I felt more at the office. It just doesn't feel the same.**
> **"**

Sierra Amore

Product Designer

Background

Sierra is a product designer at a big tech firm who has transitioned to working from home because of COVID-19. Despite the big change, enough time has passed and she's become used to working from home. In fact, she's really considering taking a hybrid approach in the future, if her company allows for it.

Goals and Ambitions

- Become a senior designer at her firm
- Wants to be able to switch between working from home and at the office
- Hopes to find a solution that fills the gap she currently feels when working from home
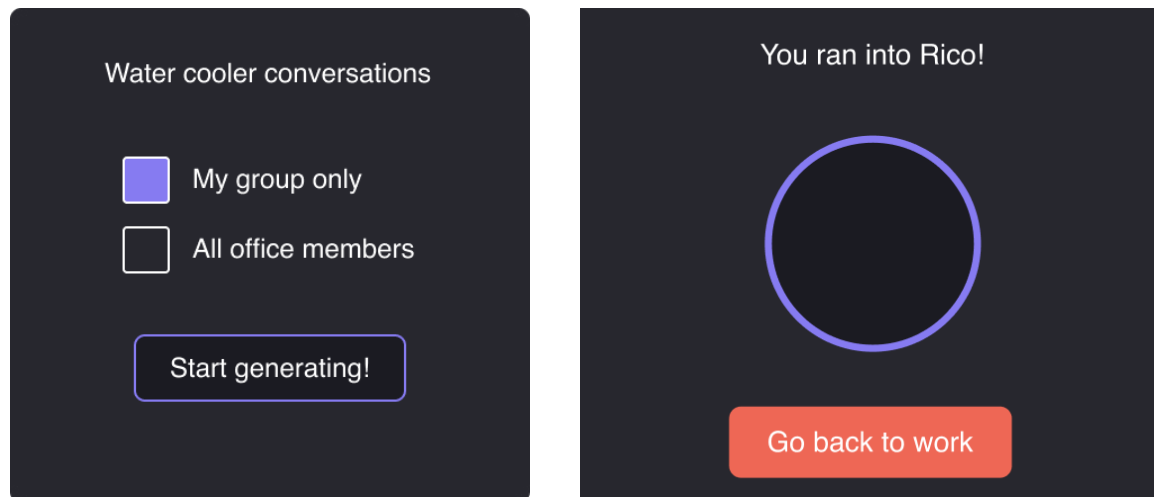
Frustrations

- She misses the social aspect of being at the office, like being able to grab a coffee with coworkers
- The current tools are helpful, but there is a clear gap

Medium Fidelity Prototypes and User Feedback

After spending some time analyzing our research results, it was time to start coming up with solutions to the pain points we discovered. We started by quickly brainstorming some ideas, and created sketches to help us note our ideas down. After the sketches, we took to Figma where we began creating our prototypes. Rather than doing low-fidelity prototypes, we decided to go to medium-fidelity designs as it allowed the participants we tested with to truly get a feel of what using our tool would be like. Because we were unsure of how exactly all of our features would be incorporated into a single dashboard, we started by user testing each of the features we had designed. We were able to test with 5 participants and had each participant share their screen with us so we could observe their actions. For each interaction, we gave the participants a prompt and then observed how they went about completing the task. The goal here was to see how easy or hard the interactions were to complete and to identify pain points early on in the design process. After having the participants complete the tasks, we then took a few minutes to interview them informally about their experience, to gather insight on what worked well and what didn't.

1.0 Water cooler Conversations

The water cooler feature allows users to experience random and candid conversations with colleagues. When the feature is on, users randomly "bump" into one another and are presented the opportunity to have a brief discussion with them.

Water cooler conversations

☑ My group only

☐ All office members

Start generating!

You ran into Rico!

Go back to work

User Testing Feedback

- Users were able to understand how to toggle between their groups and all coworkers

- Users could complete the interaction

- There were some issues understanding the language, as some users were confused by what the term "generating" meant.

2.0 Status Changing

The status changing feature allows users to indicate to their colleagues the current mood the user is currently in. This feature is used to mitigate distractions and to enable transparency into whether a colleague might be occupied.
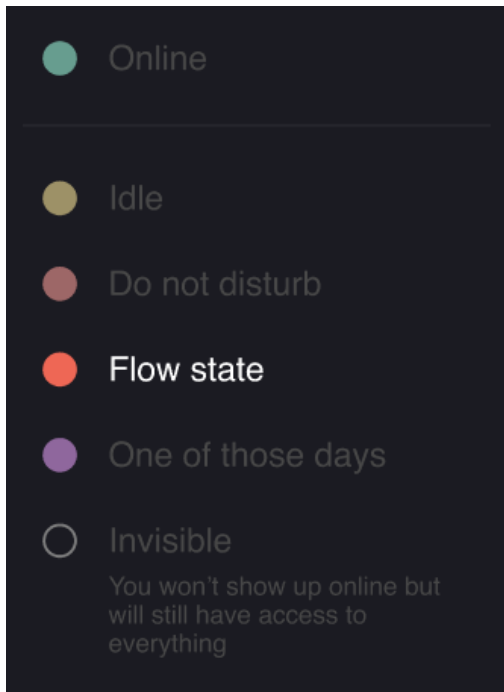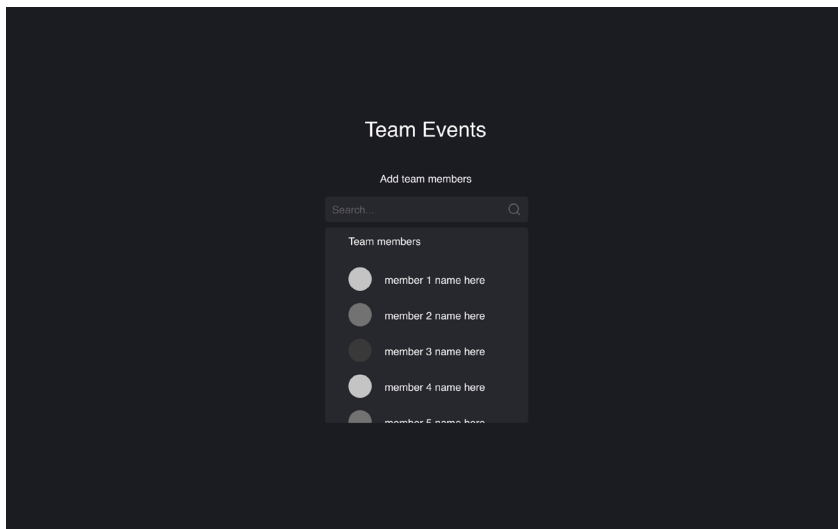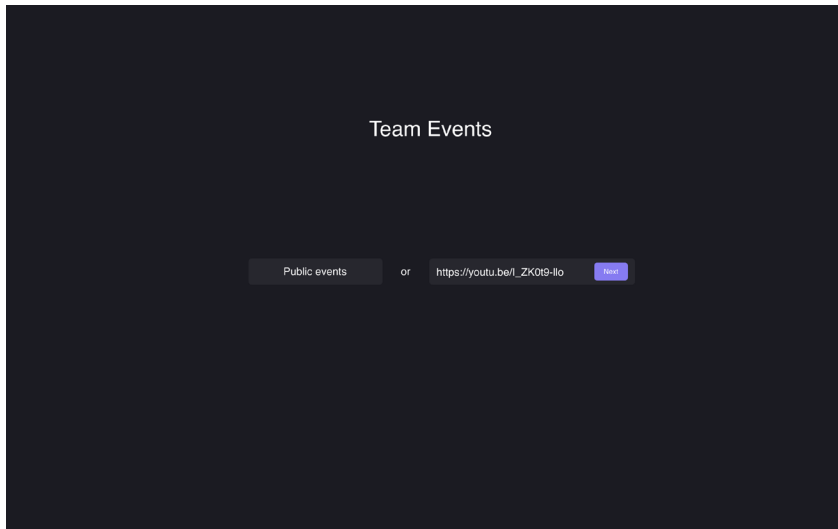

User Testing Feedback

- Users could complete the task of changing their status with no problem

- Users did suggest that we should include more options to cover more situations

3.0 Group Events

Group events allow users to share a stream to a video and invite their teammates to join the stream. This emulates the experience of attending a live event in-person, however now online.
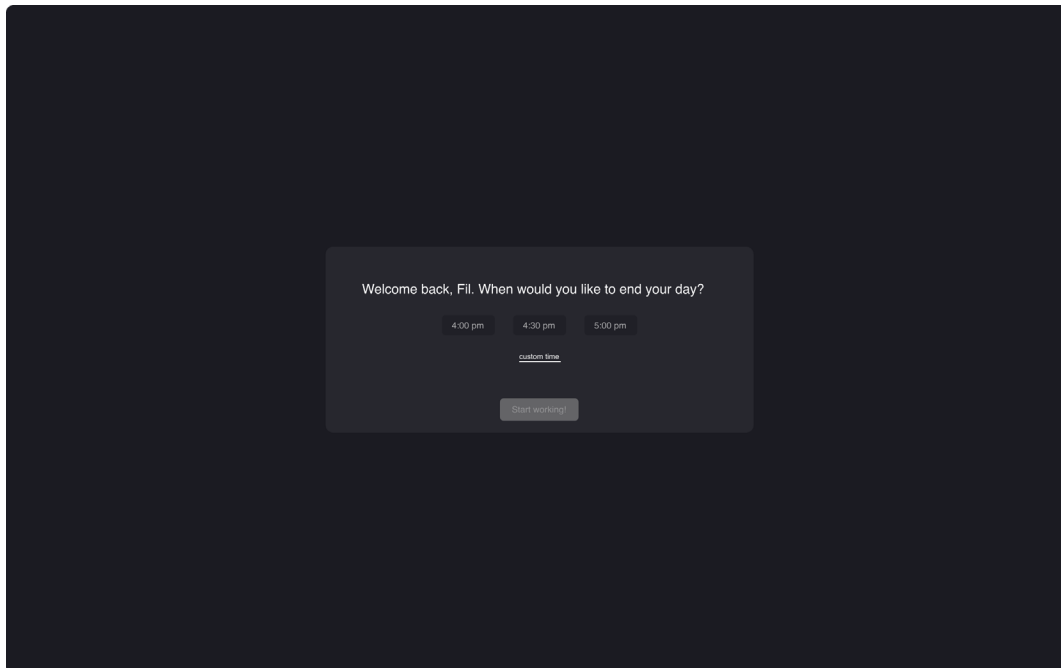

User Testing Feedback

- This went very smooth, no issues.

4.0 Checking in and out

Checking into and out of the platform allows users to set a distinction between being at work and being at home. At the start of the workday, users check-in and set an end timer and can then commence their day. At the end of the day, users are reminded of their set end time as the timer runs out. They can then check out or add increments of additional time.
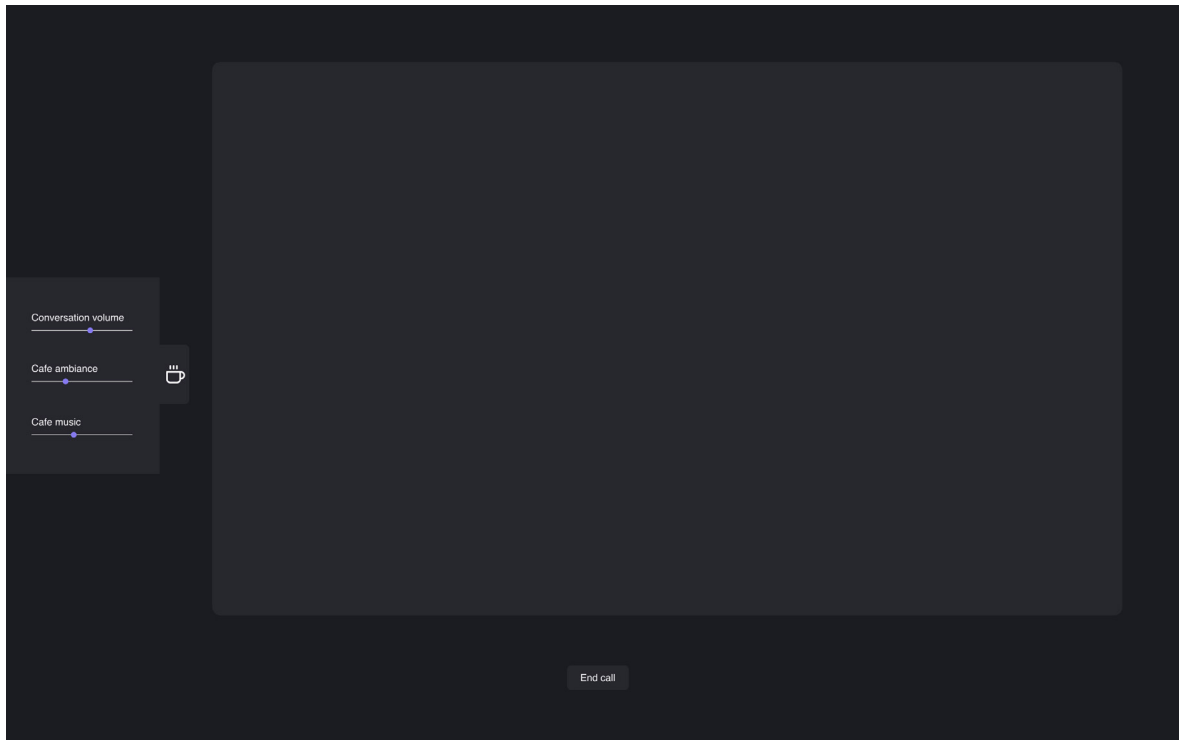

User Testing Feedback

• Task completion went great

• Users weren't sure how they'd go about adding extra time during their day in case a meeting was added, or something else came up

5.0 Coffeehouse

The coffeehouse enables informal meeting opportunities with the aid of ambience settings through background sounds and music.
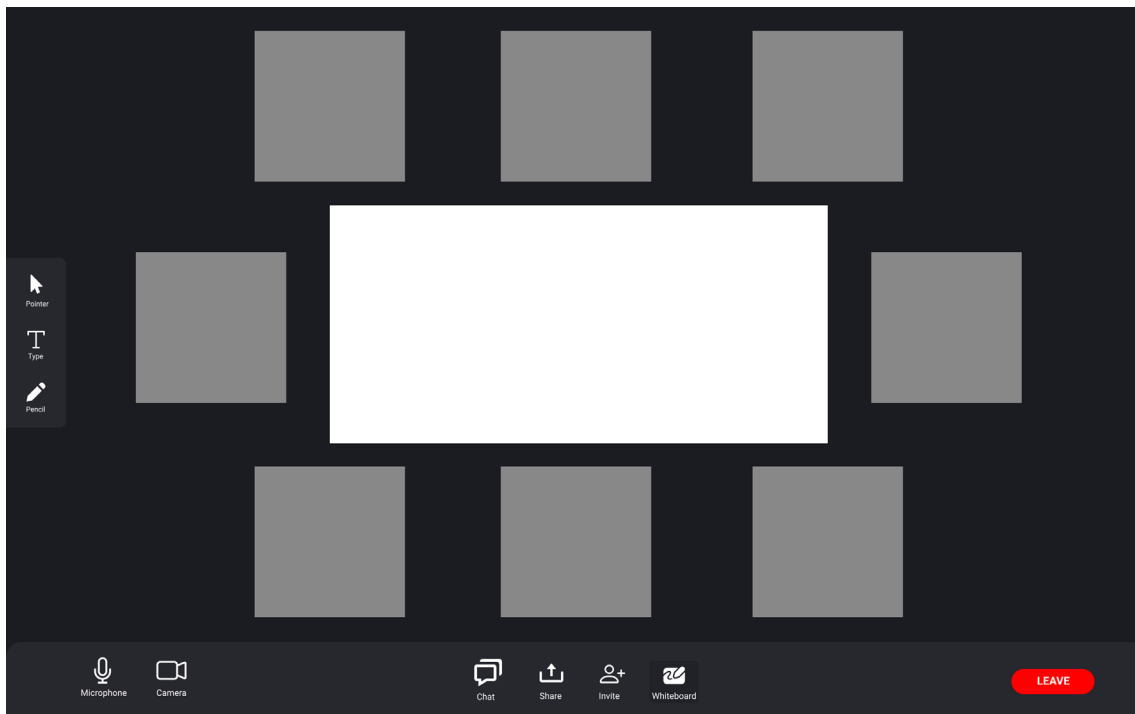

User Testing Feedback

- The users were able to complete the tasks without many issues

- They did indicate that we should include better indicators that a button was pressed

- Were able to find the ambience tab and adjust the cafe music with no issues

6.0 Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholder workshops allow product designers to facilitate workshops and co-working activities with clients in real time. Users can invite clients into the workshop and using live on-screen tools can make adjustments in real time to the document(s) and use an interactive whiteboard.
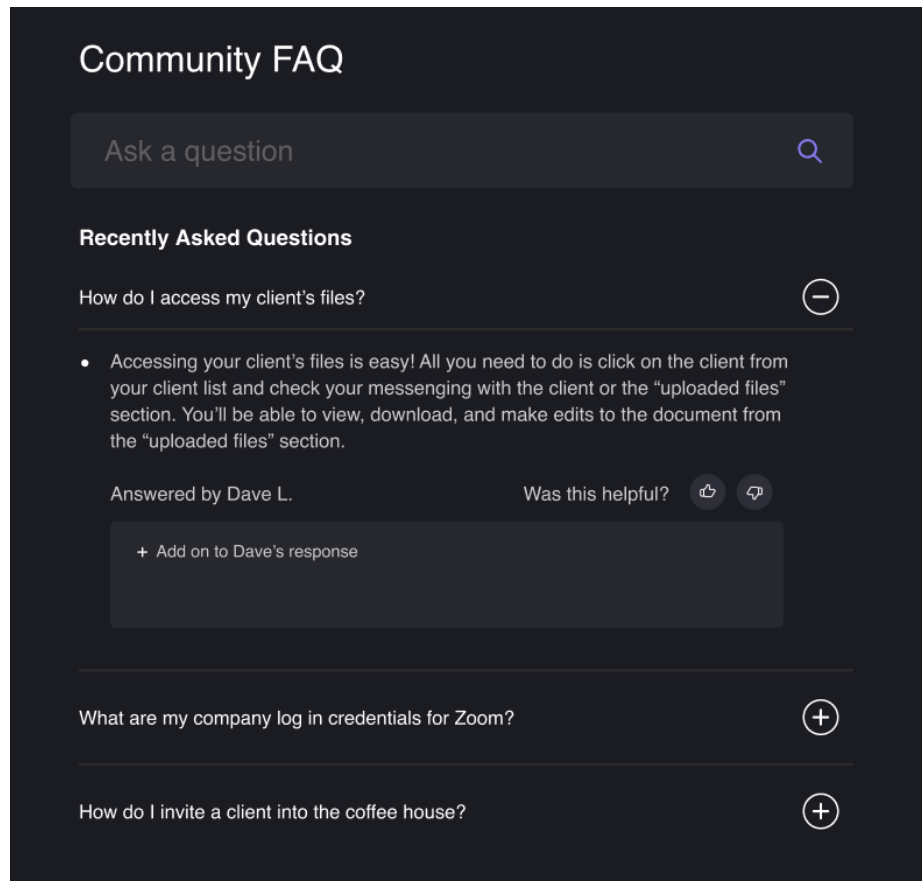

User Testing Feedback

- Users were able to share items and access the whiteboard function with no problems

- Users mentioned that there was way too much space allocated to the meeting participants and not enough to the whiteboard and document

- Participants mentioned that the layout of the meeting participants' videos was odd

7.0 Community FAQ

The community FAQ feature allows users to ask questions to their entire organization and answer other user's existing questions.

Community FAQ

Ask a question 🔍

Recently Asked Questions

How do I access my client's files? ⊖

- Accessing your client's files is easy! All you need to do is click on the client from your client list and check your messenging with the client or the "uploaded files" section. You'll be able to view, download, and make edits to the document from the "uploaded files" section.

Answered by Dave L.   Was this helpful? 👍 👎

+ Add on to Dave's response

What are my company log in credentials for Zoom? ⊕

How do I invite a client into the coffee house? ⊕

User Testing Feedback

- Users were able to complete the tasks without any issues

After completing the initial feature tests, we took that feedback and created a high-fidelity design that took this feedback into consideration. We then completed the new feature designs, and put all of the features together into a dashboard that we believed was easy to understand. Following this redesign, we took our product through a brief second round of usability testing. We invited the same 5 participants to test our tool again and were happy to discover that the results indicated a lot of success and that the problems listed from the first session of testing were mostly solved. There was some confusion surrounding why there were two ways to access settings (one in the left navigation panel and one in the top right), and users were wondering whether the different options led to different settings. Taking that feedback into account, we removed the settings icon from the top right and left only the menu item. One other area of concern was in regards to creating a client whiteboard session. Initially, we had a whiteboard included in the client menu that we wanted users to use for client purposes and a separate whiteboard that they should use with coworkers. When asked to set up a whiteboard session with clients, most participants went over to the "Whiteboard" section first, before the "Clients" section. To fix this, when users select the "Whiteboard" section they are asked whether they want to hold a whiteboard session with clients or with coworkers. If they select clients, then they will be brought to the clients section and taken to the whiteboard in that menu.

Final Prototype

The final prototype combines all research findings and user testing to produce a digital software that is useful and provides value to the target audience. The following describes the final prototype designs and functionality of each feature.

Dashboard

We wanted to create an easy-to-understand dashboard that allowed our users to quickly and within as few clicks as possible access the tools that we offer with Flex. From the dashboard, they can see any upcoming events that they added either through Flex, or that were transferred over from their tool of choice (Microsoft Teams for example). Any calendar items added on Flex directly will be added to the Microsoft Teams account calendar as well. Users can easily add extra time to their day, turn on or off water cooler bump-ins, and access the community FAQ right from the main dashboard. They can even see if there are major events available in flex. From here, all of our features are just one click away on the left side menu.
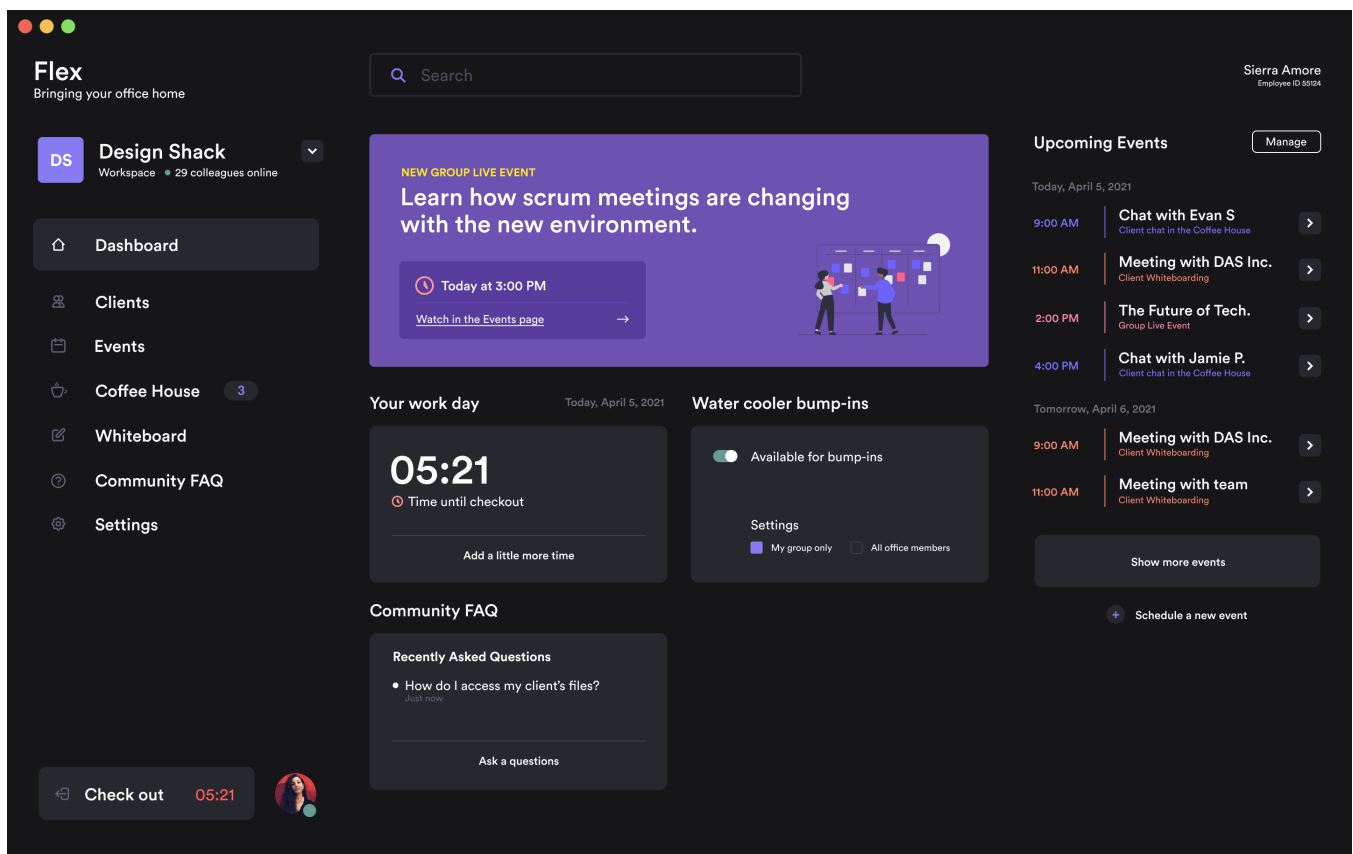
Check in and check out

We wanted to create a hard stop to the day, and we believed that the best way to do this was to create a check-in/check-out system. Upon opening up Flex, users are given the option to choose an end time to their day. This ensures that they don't work more than they have to, and acts as a concrete end to their day. Users are presented with a list of options that are based on their regular check-out times, and also have the option to select a custom time need be. After choosing an end time and checking in, a countdown starts showing them how much time is left in their workday (this can be hidden from the settings menu if users prefer). Once the end of the day comes and the timer runs out, users are notified that their day is over and asked if they are ready to check out. Here, users can choose to end their day or to work a little bit longer. If they opt to work a little bit longer, then they are presented with the option to add a little bit more time to their day. Otherwise, they get a nice positive message to indicate that they've worked hard today, and are ready to relax.
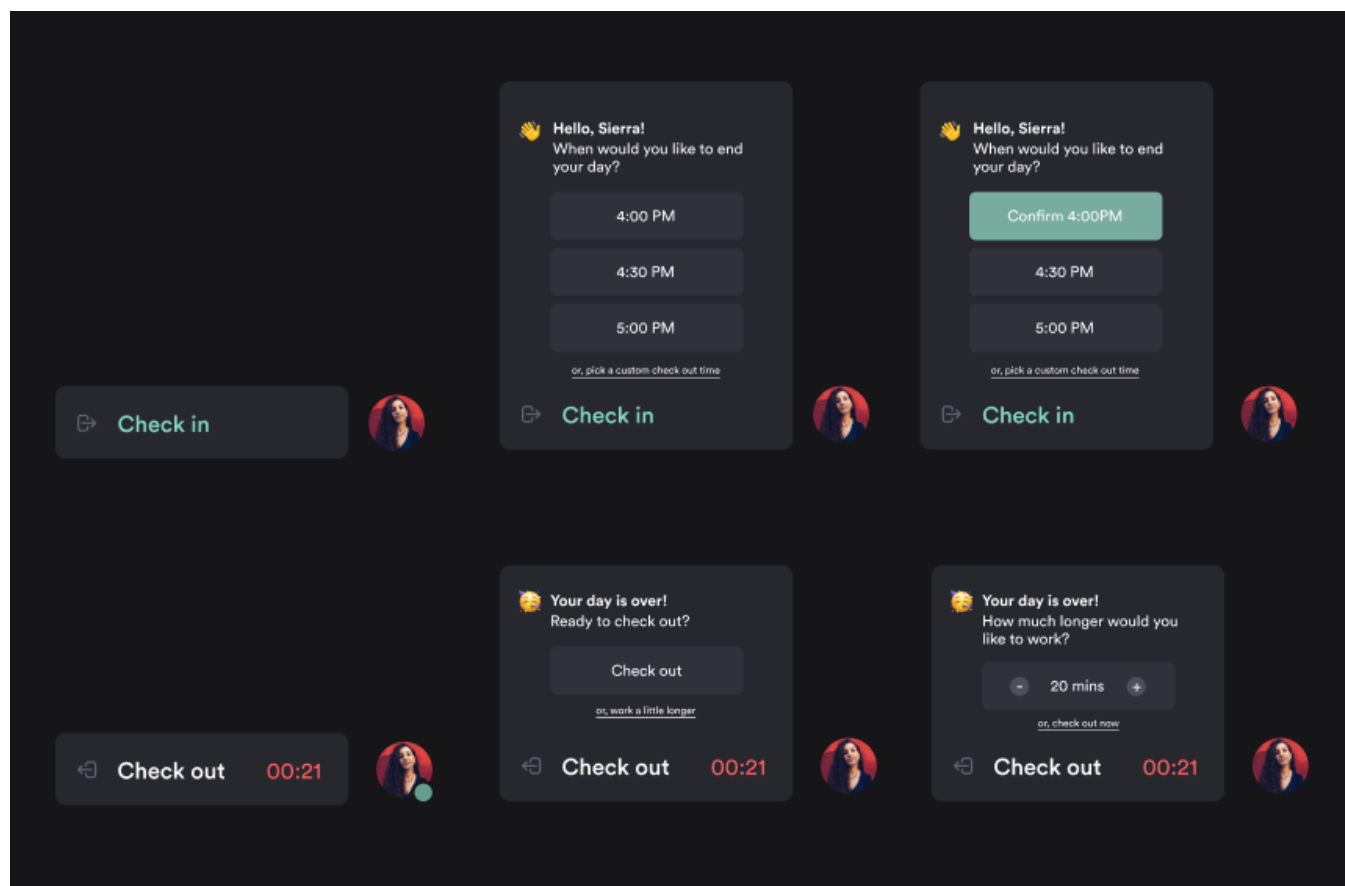
Changing status

We learned that some of our participants wanted more options when it came to their status' and so we decided to add a couple more options on top of the standard ones that come with most tools. Whereas in the office it's fairly easy to tell how someone is feeling or see what state they're in, it's not as easy to do this online. By including a wider variety of status options, our users can inform their coworkers more accurately of the state their in. If a user is in the zone and prefers not to be disturbed, all they have to do is change their status to "flow state" and coworkers will know not to bother them unless it's something really important. We also plan on adding more options to consider things like when a user is making lunch for their kids, or when they're taking their dog out for a walk.
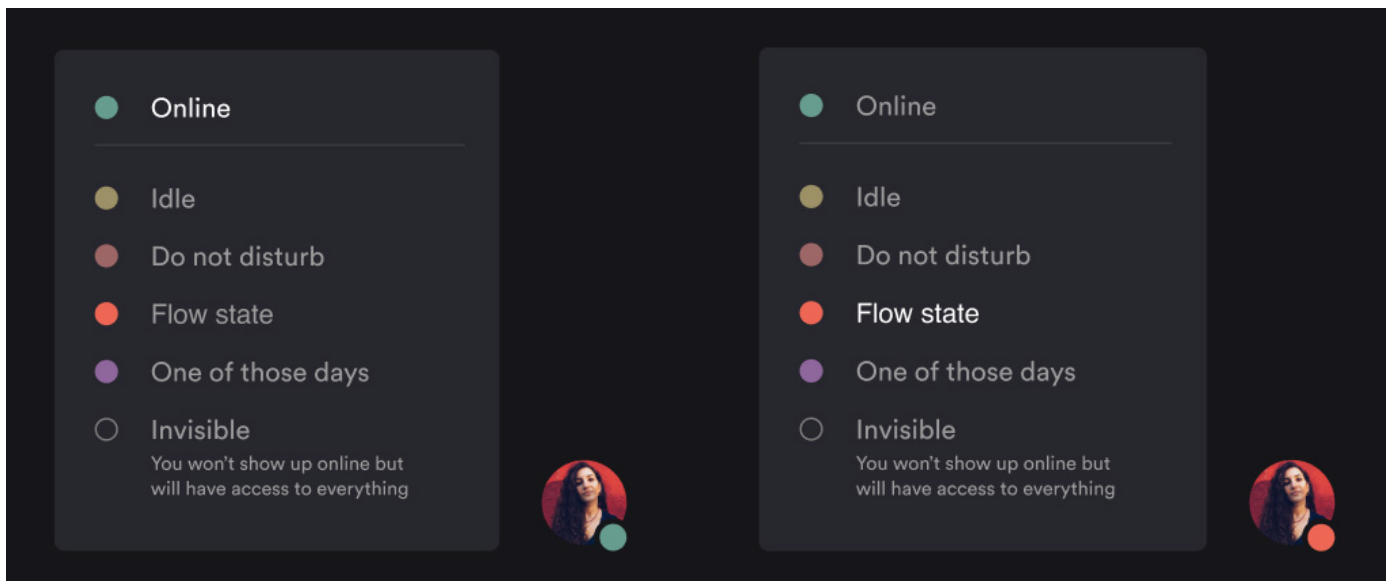
**Client area and stakeholder workshops, whiteboard**

There was a ton of opportunity to improve on the experience of working with clients in the work-from-home environment. With Flex, a user's clients get a dedicated section housing an interactive shared whiteboard, messaging, and stakeholder workshops. Our users can quickly create new workshops, invite their clients, and use the on-screen tools to share documents and make changes in real-time together with their clients. This helps our users maintain a strong line of communication and collaboration with their clients.

Digital & Beyond X Deloitte Digital
Capstone Project 2021
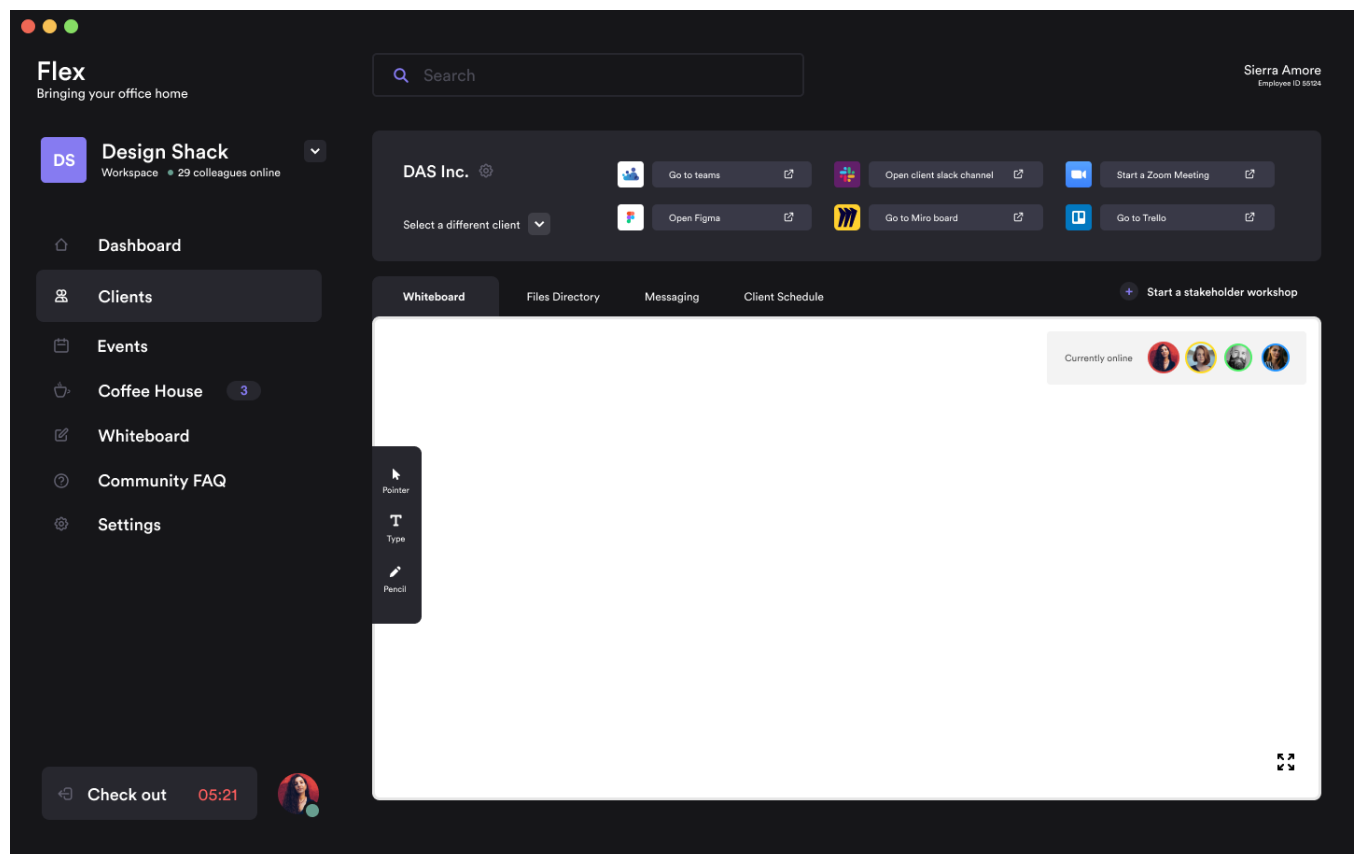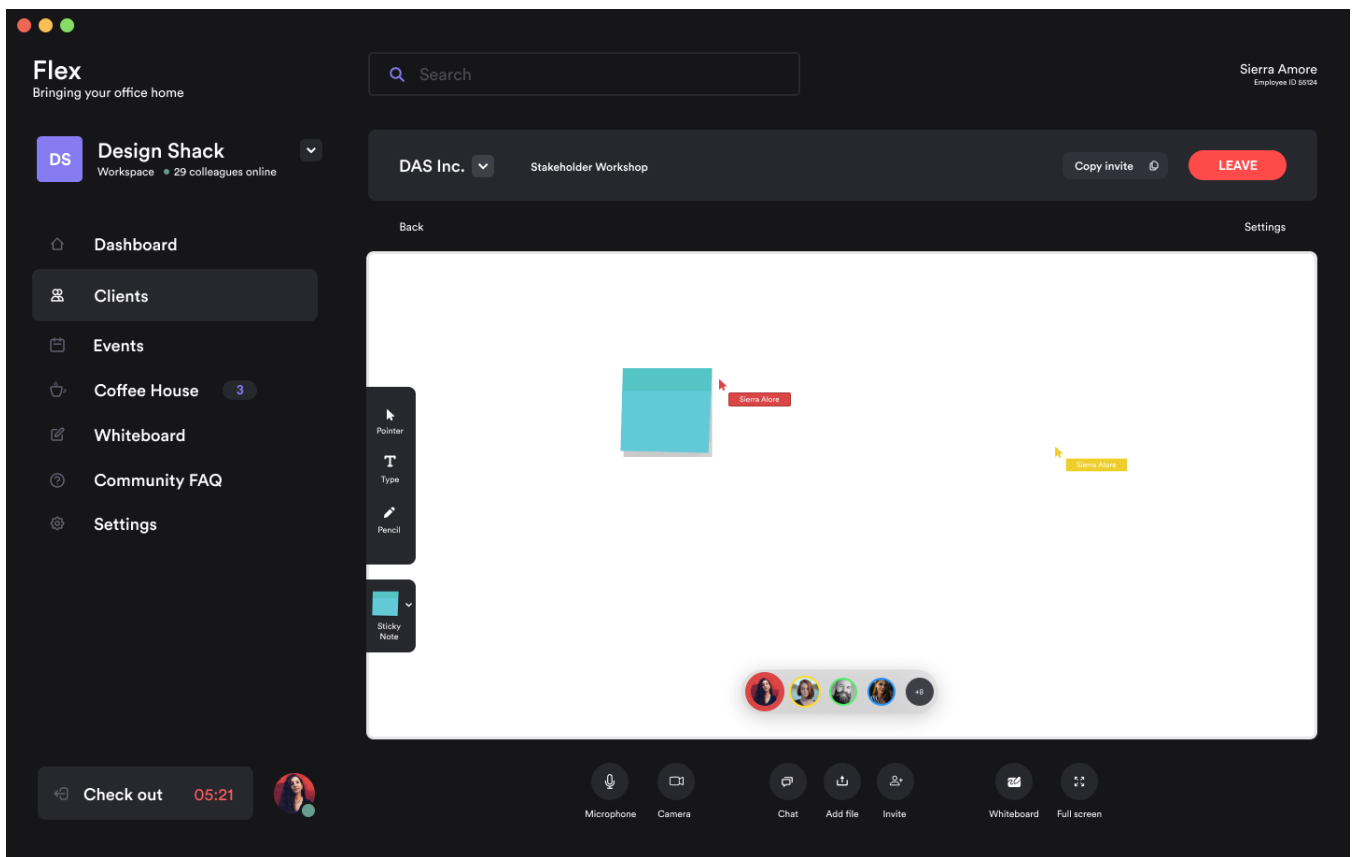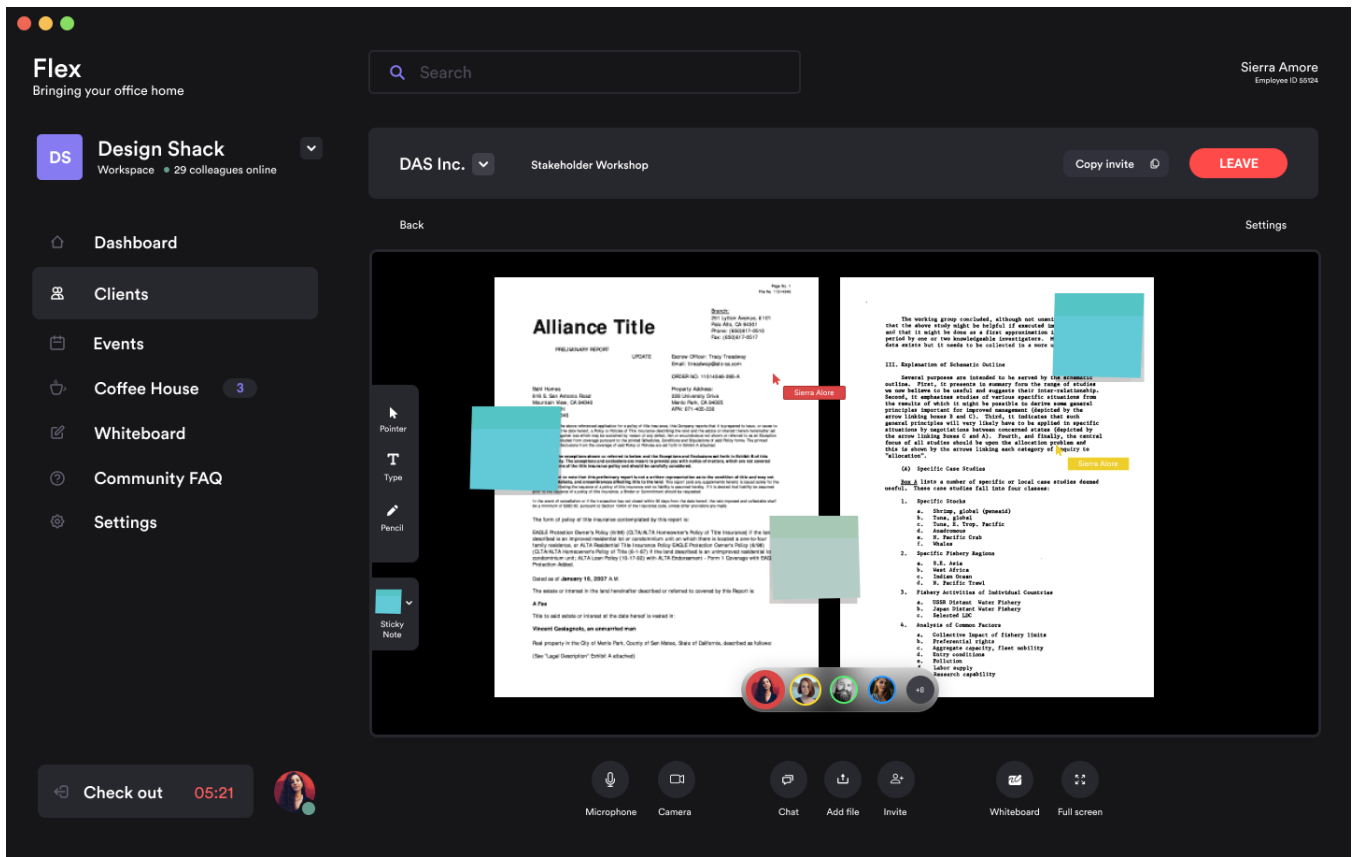
Group events

We also included a feature that allows users to easily attend events with their coworkers, or share a video and experience it together with them. For the sharing a video section, we wanted to emulate the experience of bringing a few coworkers over to your desk and having them watch a video with you. When a user pastes a link, they can quickly invite team members to the custom event, and upon accepting, the team is put into a video call with their faces at the bottom and the main video taking up the majority of the screen. This is a great way for users to experience a video together, and to bring back that feeling of quickly inviting team members over to your desk to watch something.
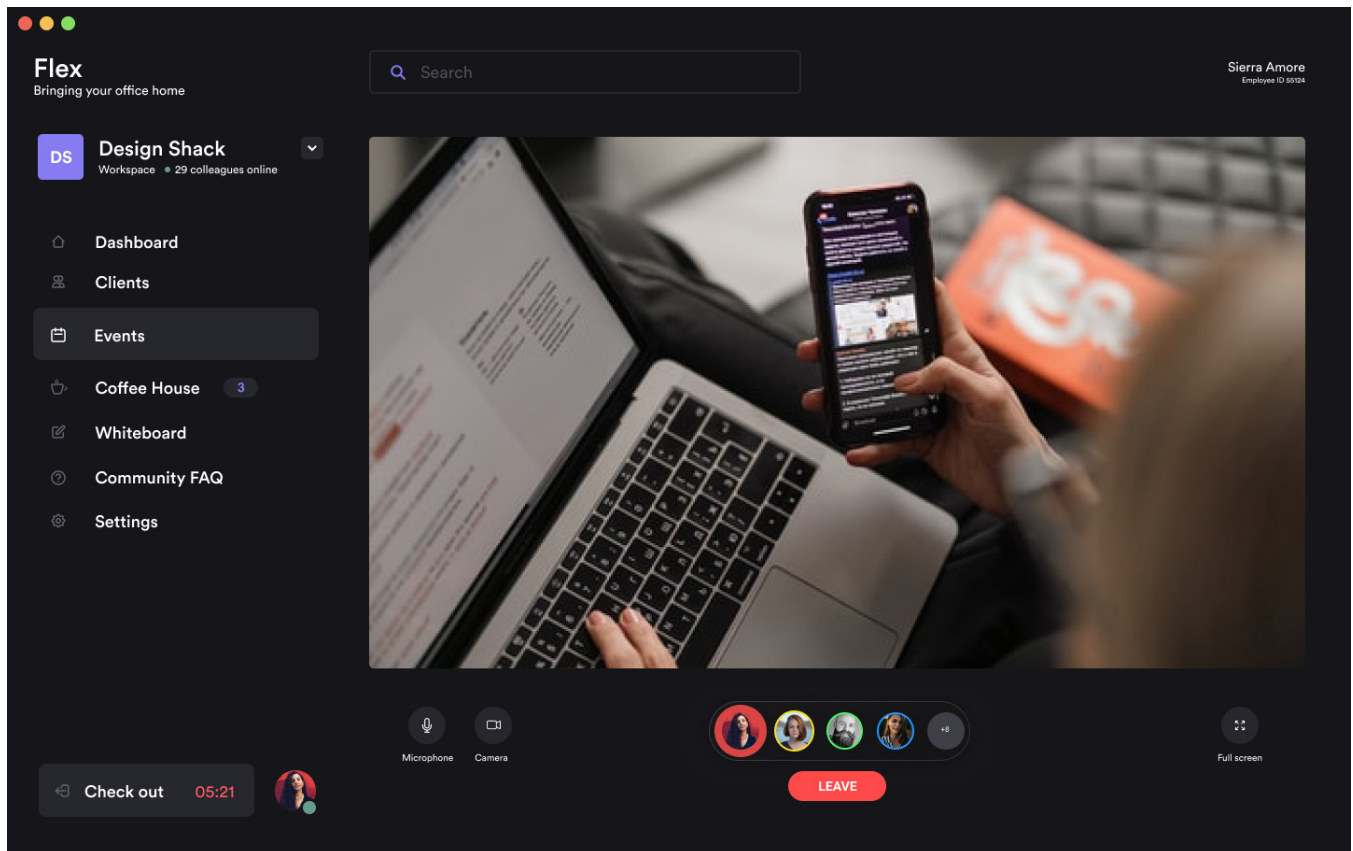
Water cooler conversations

One of the most common pain points we heard over and over had to do with people missing the experience of running into colleagues in the hallway and sparking up random conversations. With Flex, we have a feature called water cooler bump-ins that emulates that truly random experience of bumping into a colleague in the hallway.

On the dashboard, there's a section dedicated to water cooler bump-ins. If a user turns this on, they will automatically start generating a random number alongside other users who have done the same. Essentially, when two users generate the same number they will be put into a noninvasive voice call emulating the truly random experience of bumping into a coworker at work (assuming they aren't in a meeting, in which case they won't be put into the call). We've also given users the option of bumping into a custom list of people that they select titled "my group only" or a list of all coworkers. If they select their group only, they will only be matched with people from that list. If they select "all office members", then they will be matched with other office members who've selected the same option. Users will be able to customize their list of friends from the settings menu. Eventually (if the user has this feature turned on), a window will show up on the right side of Flex indicating to them that they've run into a coworker. If the users want to talk to that person, they can do so easily by pressing on "Say Hi", and after doing so they will be put into a voice call with that person. After they're done chatting for a bit, users can press "Back to work" and the voice call will end.
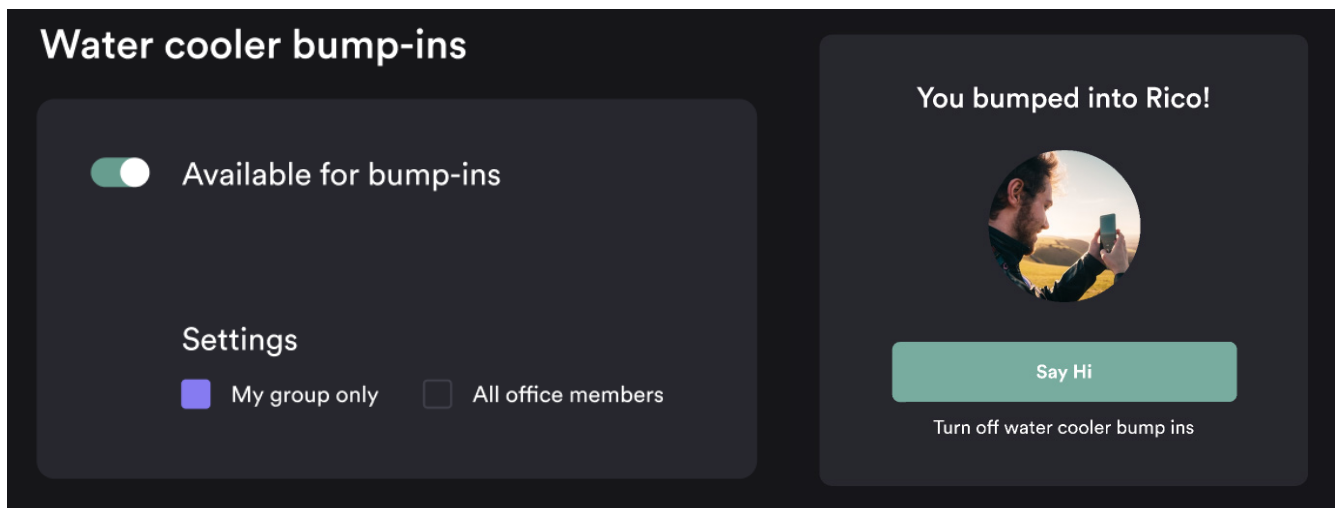
Coffeehouse

We also learned that video calls just aren't the same as being at the coffee shop with a friend or a client. With current tools, there is less time for casual conversations, and people feel forced to talk about work-related discussion only. Users also feel pressured to speak all the time during a video call since without someone speaking it's silent and that can lead to an awkward and uncomfortable experience. That the ambience a coffee shop provides is important, and also it's something that's missing in current work-from-home tools. The coffee shop is much more than just a place to talk to someone. It provides a comfortable and casual experience, one where people feel okay to talk about non-work-related things, and where taking a moment to talk about a song that's playing in the background is perfectly fine and can lead to great conversation. Sure, pre-pandemic we could invite a friend over to our place for coffee no problem. But a lot of us still chose to go to a coffee shop anyways. The ambience adds to the experience! With the coffeehouse feature in Flex, users can feel that same ambience again and can feel those familiar feelings of comfort once more. During a meeting at the coffeehouse, users can hear the sounds of a cafe (coffee machines, people having conversations in the background, doors opening and closing), and can even hear the sweet bossa nova jazz playing in the background. In addition, users will be able to adjust the volume of these particular elements to their liking to create the best possible atmosphere.
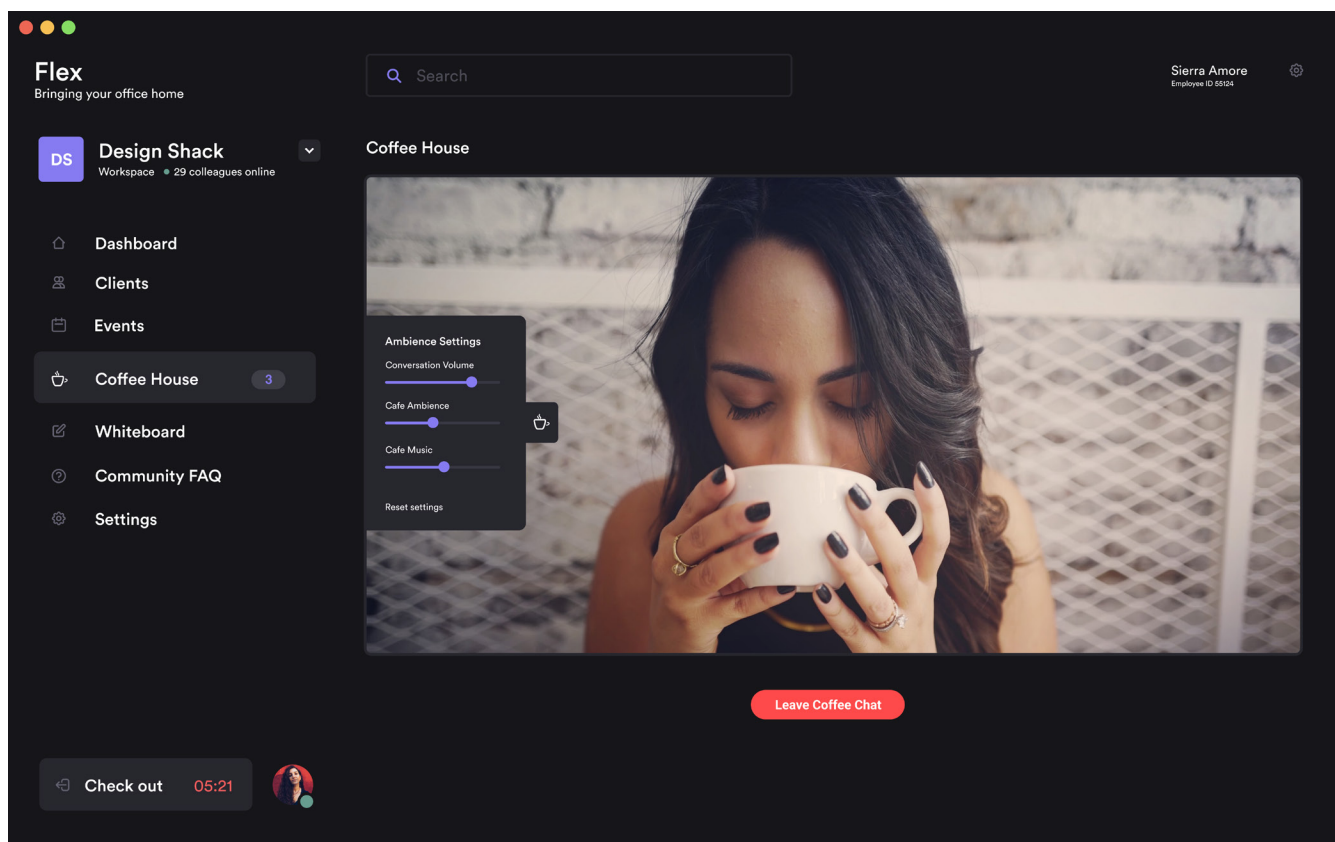
Conclusion and Next Steps

We're really proud of what we were able to accomplish over a short period of a few months. However, just because the final designs are in, that doesn't mean our work is done. There are many features we'd love to bring in future versions of Flex. For one, we'd love to bring the coffeehouse into VR. This will create the most immersive experience possible, and will create a digital experience as identical to the real world experience as possible. We'd also love to spend more time refining our mental and physical well-being features. This includes popups that inform users when they should stand up and stretch, a meditation zone where users can listen to peaceful music and unwind for a bit, and more. Finally, we would like to conduct more user testing to learn what other features our users need, and what could be improved upon. It has been an incredible three months, and we're so grateful to have had the opportunity to present a solution that brings about positive change in our new world.

Appendix

Interview Letter

Digital & Beyond

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for your interest in meeting with us! We are incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to meet with you and are beyond excited to learn how we might imagine the future of hybrid work.

Myself and two others make up the Digital & Beyond team. We are a group of User Experience Design students in our fourth year at Wilfrid Laurier University and we have partnered with Deloitte Digital to carry out our culminating capstone project. Through our partnership with Deloitte Digital, we aim to make impact and design a solution to challenges in our world today.

We are exploring ways to better facilitate the activities of product, development, and technical teams in a primarily digital and post-pandemic setting. We would like to meet with you to learn about your experiences in work-from-home and hybrid work environments. We will ask you a series of questions relating to your position and your career, your experiences working before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and finally the tools you use on a regular basis to streamline your workflow.

Please follow the link below to our Calendly booking site where you may select a time slot that fits your schedule. Please provide your name and email so we may contact you. Once booked, you will receive an email confirmation containing your assigned Zoom Meeting link as well as an invitation to sign a confidentiality agreement.

https://calendly.com/shah1906/digital-beyond-participant-interview?month=2021-03

Again, my team and I would like to thank you for your time and are looking forward to meeting with you! Should you have any questions, feel free to reach me at shah1906@mylaurier.ca

Thanks,

Fahim Shahriar

**Digital &
Beyond**

Participant Interview Details
Digital & Beyond x Deloitte Digital

Meeting Slots and Scheduling
Participants will be invited to a 30 min interview that will take place over zoom. Participants are asked to register for an open interview time slot on our Calendly.

There are dates available for booking between March 02 to March 12, and between 9 AM to 2 PM on each day. The goal is to complete the bulk of our interviews in the first week between March 02 to March 05. There is no limit to the number of participants booked, however, at a minimum four participants are required.

Link to Calendly booking site:

https://calendly.com/shah1906/digital-beyond-participant-interview?month=2021-03

Once booked, participants will receive a personal e-mail confirmation with their assigned Zoom Meeting link as well as an invitation to sign a confidentiality agreement through an electronic signature service. Additionally, they will receive information regarding the interview and necessary confidentiality information.

Participant Information and Criteria
A total of four participants from Deloitte are required for this interview plan. Participants should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Are working in fields including the design, development, IT, networking
- Who have experience working with external vendors
- Who have experience working with international teams
- Are in either entry, intermediate, and senior levels in their career
- Who have experience working in hybrid work environments (working partially in office and work from home)

Interview Questions
The following questions will be asked in the interview. Please note, as the interview progresses, our interview questions may be altered to better fit the participant's experience.

- Can you tell us about your position and your employer?
- Do you miss being in office? What do you miss about it and why?

Confidentiality Agreement

Consent, Recording & Confidentiality Release Form

Consent
I agree to participate in this study conducted by Digital & Beyond

Recording

I understand and consent to be audio and video recorded by **Digital & Beyond** during the sessions. I understand that the information and recording is for research purposes only and that my name and the information I provide will not be used for any other purpose. I relinquish any rights to the recording and understand the recording may be copied and used by **Digital & Beyond** without further permission.

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary and I agree to immediately raise any concerns or areas of discomfort during the session with the interviewer.

Confidentiality

I acknowledge that during the study at **Digital & Beyond,** I may be exposed or have access to confidential information relating to the affairs of **Digital & Beyond,** including non-public prototype(s).

I acknowledge that all such confidential information is the exclusive property of **Digital & Beyond,** and I agree that I shall not, at any time, disclose to any person the nature of this session, or any other confidential information of **Digital & Beyond**.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and you understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the session have been answered.

Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Please sign your name: _____

Thank you! We appreciate your participation.

Interview Questions

Participants were asked open-ended questions to develop an understanding of the problem space from the perspective of each participant. The following questions were asked within a 30 minute time frame.

Question	Rationale	Time allotted
Can you tell us about your position and what it looks like now as a result of the pandemic?	To better understand the person we're interviewing	3 min
(If the participant is working from home): - How do you feel about being away from the office - How are you coping without the things you miss from the office? - What do you like about being at home?	To help a) understand the interviewees' stance on WFH and b) allow us to dive deeper into the reasoning behind	4 min
What are your biggest pain points while working from home and why? - Do you have any measures in place to combat those pain points?	To discover pain points and unmet needs surrounding the experience of working from home	6 min
If you could choose between working from home, working in-office, or a hybrid of the two, what would you choose and why? - What parts of working from home, or working from the office, would you like to keep going forward?	Provides an overview of the positives and negatives of WFH, hybrid, and in-office as well as reasons why.	6 min
What are some products or tools you have been using that you consider to be essential and why? - Are there areas that are not addressed by the tools you use regularly?	Develops an idea about what is currently being used and why. Allows for a better understanding of what users' likes and needs are in the tools space	9 mins