



RESILIENCE

ALICE BORG
FABIAN PAIER
IOANA COTUTIU
THORHILDUR ASGEIRSDOTTIR

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KTH

DESIGN BRIEF

We were given the design brief of pandemic media – rethinking how we interact with our environments and each other in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to the design brief, we explored the intersecting space of the pandemic and mental health. Throughout our research process we identified an opportunity area of fostering an increased collective resilience. The pandemic has left a lot of us feeling mentally stuck in our current moment, stressing out about all the uncertainties, and unable to adapt in a resilient way.

Our Response

In order to promote resilience, we've developed a design concept that empowers users to mentally travel back in time to good memories of the past. Users tag their photos, notes, and other inputs with personalized tags on their phones. The tags are later used to organize cohesive memories that are presented to the user in a thoughtful way at a meaningful time. The memories will appear as notifications periodically, but can also be scheduled to occur at a certain time, or accessed on demand. The concept works within the iOS framework, is easy and intuitive to use and requires no new download. This fits seamlessly into the users' existing flow of interaction in a non-persuasive way.

DISCOVER

A divergent phase that aims to support the identification of different problem spaces and identify how to turn them into design opportunities. To narrow down on a specific problem space, we employed open-mindedness and creativity as we talked with users, absorbed information, and delved into the literature.

Introspection

We started by reflecting on our own experience during the pandemic. The intersection of mental health and the pandemic quickly emerged and we decided this was a good starting point into our design process. Although this might have tricked us into a starting point that was more easy than interesting, it provided fertile ground to start exploring possible directions to move into.

User Interviews

We collected a diverse mix of users of different ages, backgrounds, geographical locations, and pandemic situations. We prepared a small set of open-ended questions to base our conversation in the problem space, and then allowed the interviews to progress organically, following the users' lead, dynamically accommodating a variety of directions. We noticed an intriguing pattern with our user group. Some had developed what we call a "big picture" mindset, which

allowed them to think beyond the current moment and not get so caught up in the minutiae and stress of living through the pandemic. This led us to ideate how we could encourage this type of big picture thinking for a broader audience, which in turn would make us more resilient as a collective.

“The transition itself wasn’t too difficult, the real struggle was the uncertainties”

Sort and Cluster

Using the sort and cluster method, we collected our key insights from the user interviews and grouped them into similar categories. From this, we identified three different problem spaces which we used to generate How Might We statements to convert the problems into opportunities which would allow us to gently move into the next phase.

Literature review

We submerged ourselves in subject-relevant literature simultaneous to the user interviews, uncovering what was already percolating in the problem space of the pandemic's effect on mental health. As this is such a current issue, there is a lot of information output on this topic, both clinical research and personal narrative, which helped identify findings that validated what we were hearing in our user interviews.

“The capacity for resilience is inherent in all people. Resilience is neither lucky nor passive. It takes deliberate effort”

Rosenberg AR. Cultivating Deliberate Resilience During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic. JAMA Pediatr. 2020;174(9):817–818.

DEFINE

A convergent phase with a focus on narrowing down ideas and steering the process into a more specific direction. Decision making, synthesizing, and evaluation are key factors. Here, we were able to close in on one of our predefined how might we statements and dig in deep to better grasp the nuances of the space.

Decision Making

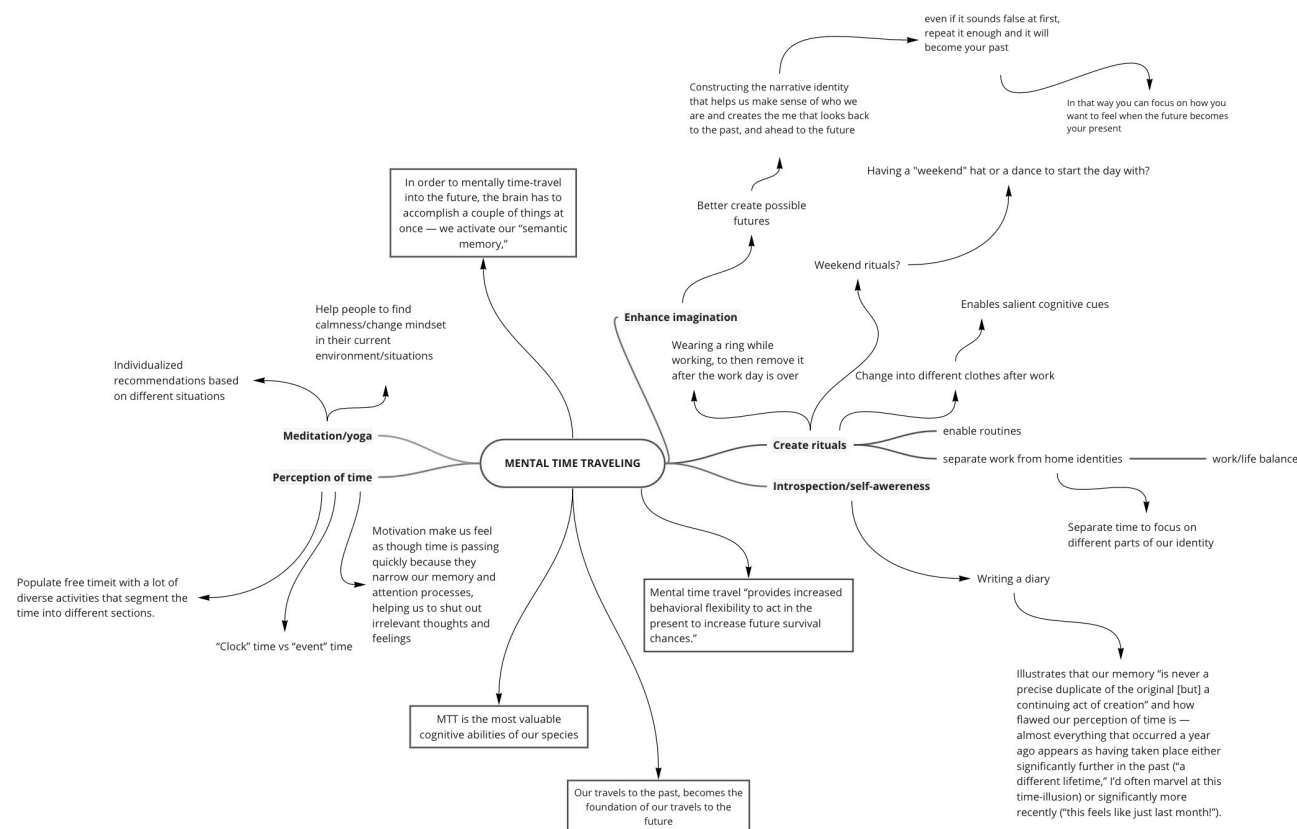
We used the method dotmocracy to make our final decision. This method allowed for rapid prioritization, balancing our favorite option with maximized opportunity for iterating forward. We chose the space of resilience, with Mental Time Travel specifically as a technique to explore the capacity for enhanced resiliency.

Resilience and Mental Time Travel

Resilience is “the process of adapting well in face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress”, in our context relating to the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The core aspect of Mental Time Travel is the unique human ability to mentally travel back and forth in time. This is an ability that is more important now than ever, since it allows people to mentally visit past memories, empowering happy emotions and conversely enabling them to imagine a bright future.

“Mental time travel as a possible solution – involves rewinding to remember the past and fast-forwarding to envision the future”

Grant A. To Build Resilience in Isolation, Master the Art of Mental Time Travel. NY Times. 2020.



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Mind Map

We used a mind map to explore and visualize different ways of Mental Time Travel, including enhanced imagination, introspection through increased self-awareness, meditation, perception of time, and rituals. This method helped realize relationships between different ideas, and how they could be merged together to inform a potential solution.

Brainwriting

Brainwriting helped formulate a new set of How Might We questions from the insights from the mindmap. This method allows every team member to contribute, and at the same time, avoid influencing each other's ideas. This resulted in the final HMW question: how might we help our audience tap into their inherent resiliency by facilitating an environment for mental time travel?

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis helped to structure the different ideas and cluster them into higher-level themes. The vision that emerged was a design that collects your feelings, insights, and energy and then present it back to you.

DEVELOP

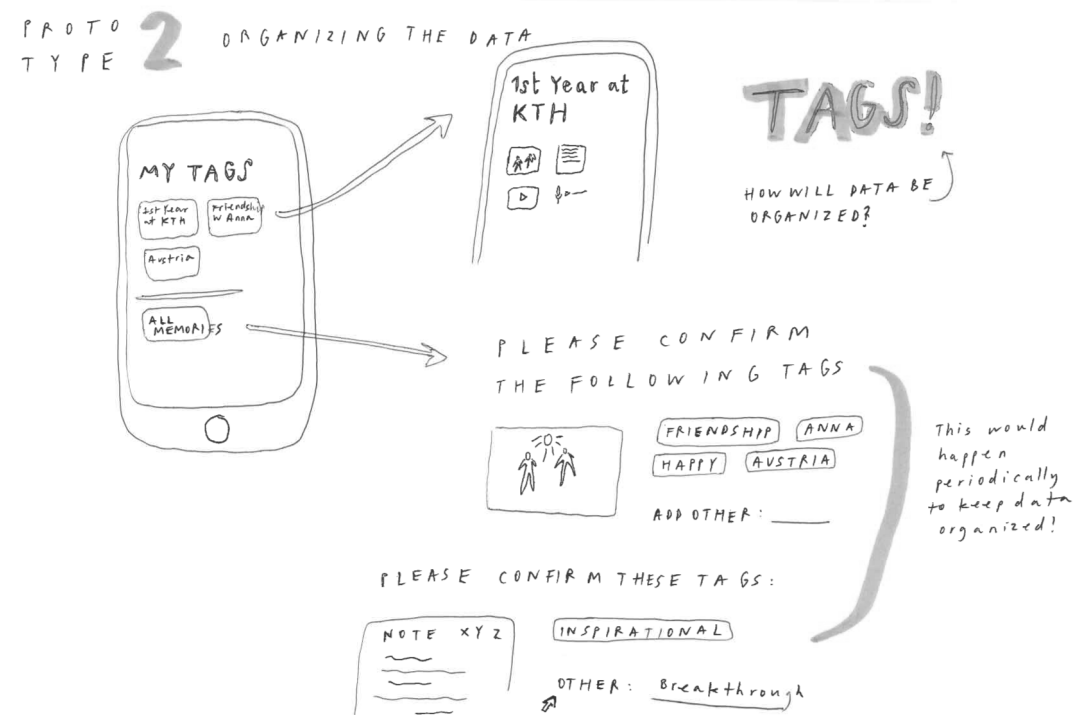
A divergent phase with a focus on ideating on the selected solution space. Once again, we focused on creativity, open-mindedness, and curiosity as we explored potential implementations within our opportunity area. Pulling from our research process we ultimately landed on a solution that allows users to dynamically tag their digital inputs and receive them through various means, facilitating an increased sense of resiliency.

Bodystorming

We used the method bodystorming to act out different solutions to our How Might We statement. A lot of different ideas and potential implementations were brought into the develop phase, but it also felt a bit overwhelming at times. It was difficult to know where to begin, and our previous realization that diaries could be used to mentally time travel limited us to thinking outside of the box. The concept had so many different possibilities, but it was something that did not feel completely right when trying to convert the ideas into complete solutions.

Brainwriting

As an alternative to bodystorming, we went through another round of brainwriting where we pushed ourselves to think outside the boundaries of the ideas we already had. We returned to our original insights as a starting point and ultimately uncovered a rich space of opportunity, including the potential use of IoT, a redesign of Apple Shortcuts and gamification to motivate a resilient mindset. Our unifying concept was integrating different modalities of input: photos, notes, recordings, and presenting them in a way that allows users to mentally travel back in time.

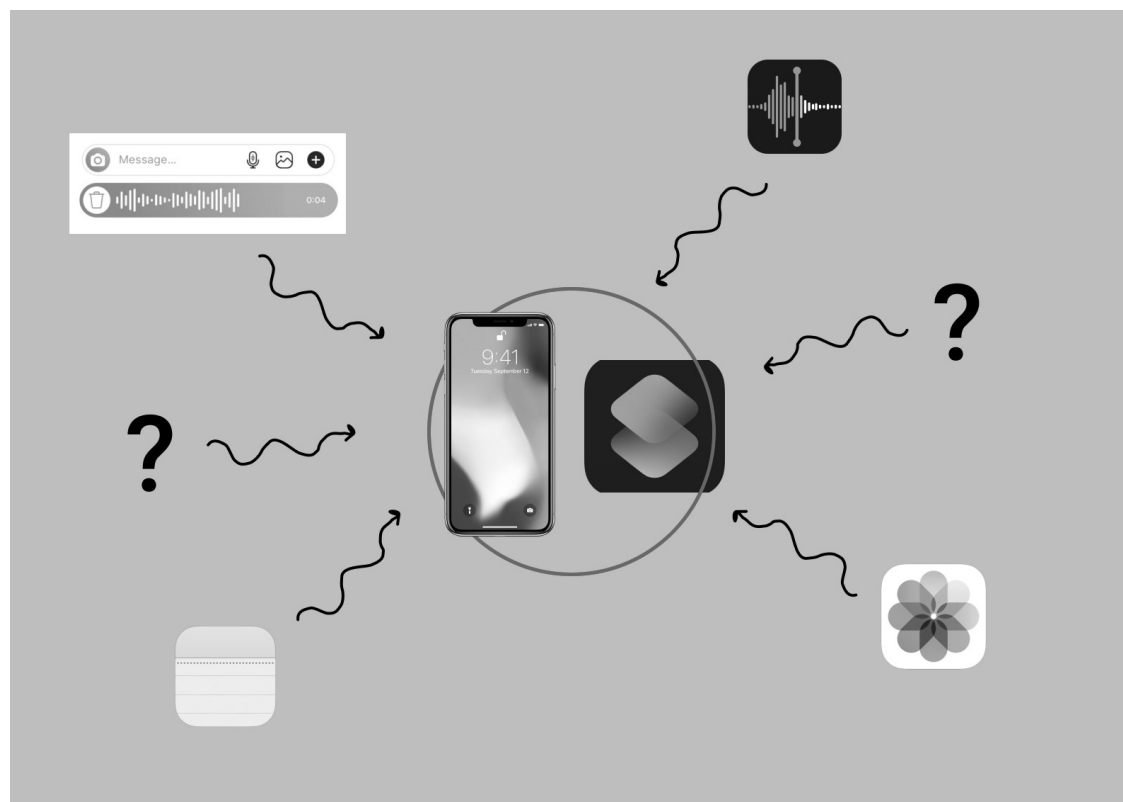


Sketching and Low-Fi Prototyping

We turned to sketching and low-fidelity prototyping to create a visual representation of the new ideas generated from the brainwriting session. Fleshing out our ideas on paper gently nudged us forward in the continued process of understanding our problem space and generating possible solutions and implementations.

User Interviews

To validate our potential solutions, we conducted more user interviews. We were specifically curious to hear how this might fit into their lives, whether they would use it or not. The response was mixed with some users' saying this concept would be "useless," but later expressing a deep sense of fulfillment when describing the process of manually revisiting old photos and text conversations. This was a striking insight – users seemed to have an intrinsic desire to reflect back on past memories through digital media, but hesitant to do so in an explicit way through a new app for example. This made it clear to us that we'd have to implement a solution that is not intrusive and has a low barrier for entry.



DELIVER

A convergent phase focusing on evaluation of the final product in terms of implementation and execution. We made use of a variety of prototyping and ideation techniques to envision the look and feel of our final prototype.

Prototyping

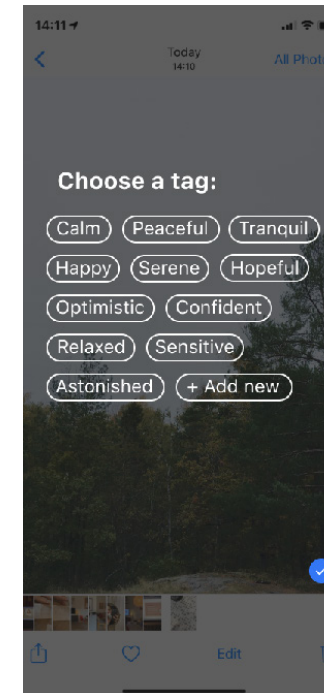
We used Figma to create high-fidelity prototypes. Below is a selection of some of the key user interactions of our concept.

Tagging

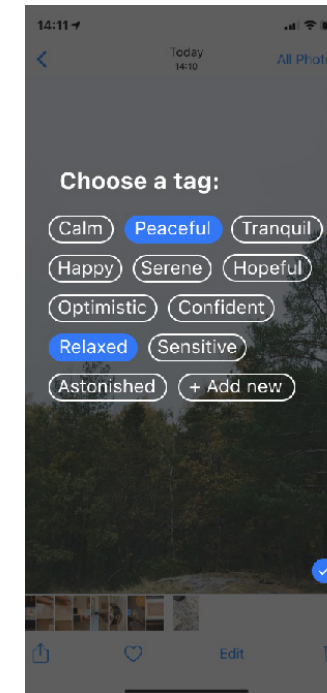
Tagging provides functionality for any type of input modality: photos, notes, audio recordings, and so on.



Take Photo



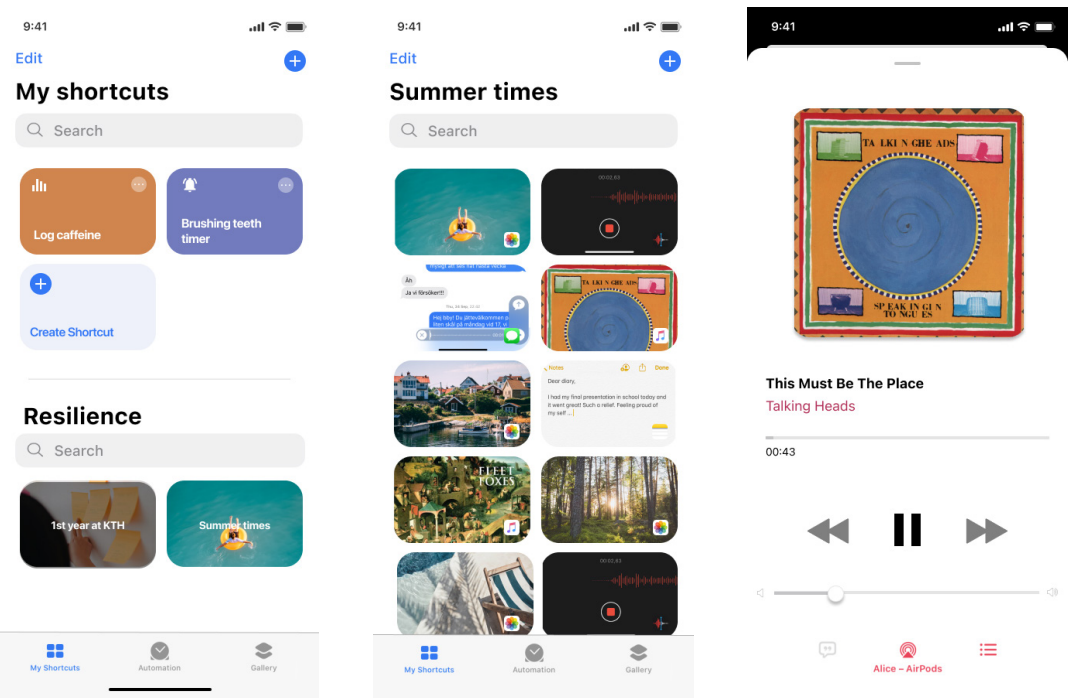
Open Tag Menu



Choose Tags

Browsing

Users are able to browse past memories, filtered by tag and input modality.



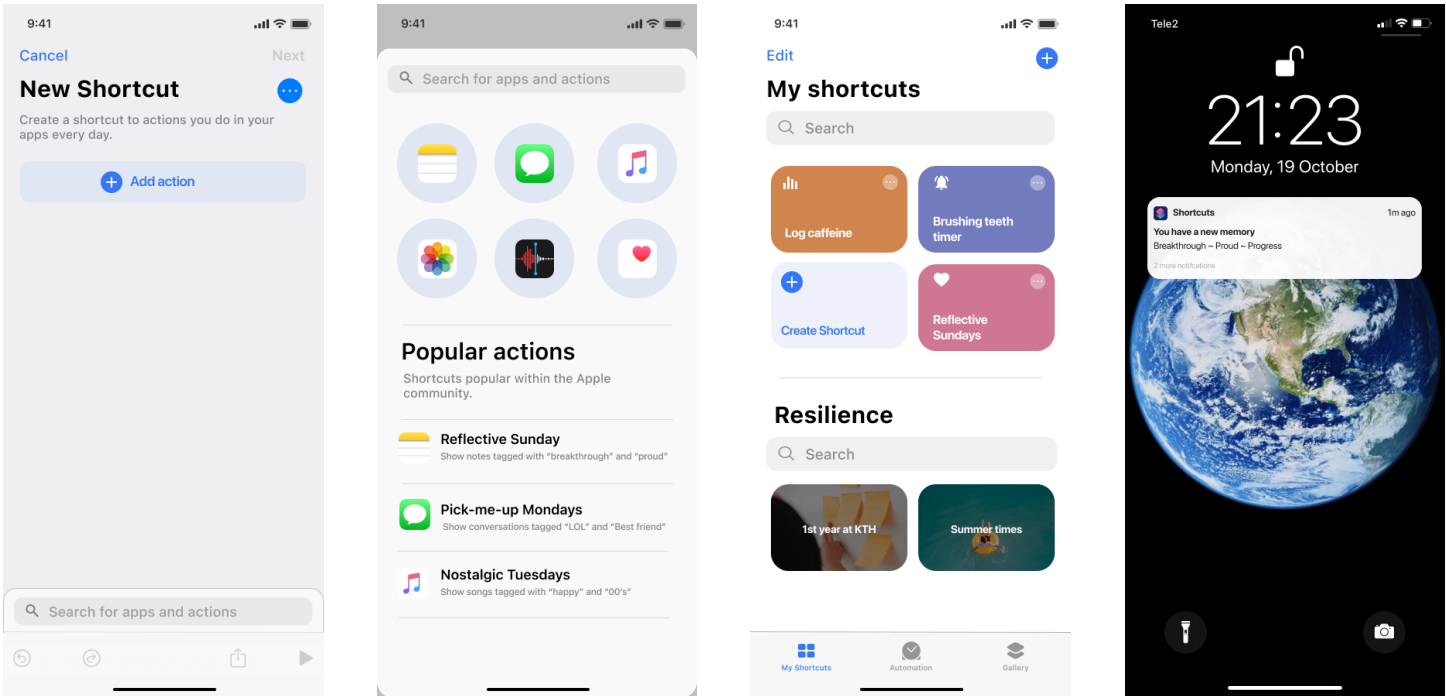
Resilience Interface in Apple Shortcuts

Tile “Summer Times” is chosen to view related media. Presented all together, or filtered further by media type

Output - Selected Media

Shortcut

All users will receive periodic notifications with memories but will also have the option of setting up personalized reminders, for example the user could choose to reflect on media tagged ‘breakthrough’ on sunday afternoons for a “Reflective Sunday.”



Shortcut Setup

Interface for Shortcut Personalization

Display of Created Shortcut

Notification

Video

We prepared a video to communicate our concept at the final exhibition. A video is a powerful way to convey the key user interactions of our concept.

Test

Before presenting the video to a larger audience, we had several of our past users look at it to get immediate feedback on the storytelling of our concept. This proved critical to our process; we garnered valuable insights and tweaked accordingly.

Evaluate

Evaluation is important at all stages of the process, in the sense of reflecting back on the initial brief and make sure that the outcome is in response to the defined problem. Further, a retrospective is essential to state what has been successful in the process, and the things that could have been done differently. Transparency is critical in the contribution of good and ethical design. To ease that process, we have been careful to document throughout the whole process. This culminated in a collection of notes from different sessions, photos, sketches, and early prototypes. To make it more compelling and intuitive, we visualized it into a process journey, which extends over all the different phases as seen below.

