



Young ICT Explorers
Where will ICT take you?

Designless

A Markdown-based desktop publishing platform in the browser

J A K E C O P P I N G E R

YEAR 12
GUNGAHLIN COLLEGE
ACT

A PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR YOUNG ICT EXPLORERS
JULY 31ST 2015

1. ABSTRACT – max 150 words

Provide a short summary telling us about your project and what you hoped to achieve?

A Markdown-based desktop publishing platform in the browser

For plain text writing, Markdown is quickly becoming a popular document format choice for writers. It allows the author to write in plain text and use simple symbols to create structure - for example you can either use an asterisk (**really?**) for italics, or two asterisks for bold (****really!****). It is more transparent and structured than a Word document but more human friendly than HTML or LaTeX. The problem is that there is no straightforward way of designing the layout of a printed document using this format. I propose a modern web app which makes use of Markdown for writing and a drag and drop interface for designing the layout of the page. By storing the layout of the page elements in a simple plain text format, versioning software like Git could track changes of the content the layout enabling powerful collaboration.

2. INTRODUCTION – max 50 words

What inspired the idea for your project?

I discovered Markdown from the Readme pages of Github and now I use it for all my writing. I love great design so I end up having to copy each paragraph into an application like InDesign. I believe a complete writing and design solution could be immensely disruptive.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT – max 50 words

Explain the problem you are trying to solve with your project?

By creating a browser based writing and design application, users can write Markdown in the browser (or program of choice, eg. iA Writer, Vim, Emacs) and design beautiful documents - while tracking changes and collaborating with Git. Collaboration and version control for design is currently impossible.

Design and Features – max 75 words

tell us about the design and some of the features of your project?

The application will run in the browser and will have two modes, a minimalist writing mode and a layout mode. By connecting to Dropbox or GitHub the user will be able to work from any computer. I envision a nested box model interface for the layout mode where boxes are the base

unit, and can be nested to easily create complex designs - a revolutionary approach to the problem of brilliant graphic design.

Challenges Designing and Building this Project – max 75 words

what challenges did you have when designing and building your project?

Creating a great user experience in web apps is hard, but it can be done - by using modern web technologies like HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript libraries I will create a productive application. The box model structure and user experience needs to be spot on as this will be the truly innovative aspect of my application, and I will ship this part of the project in the Minimum Viable Product in Week 6 of Q3.

4. CONCLUSION – max 50 words

Does your project do what you set out to achieve?

This document is a proposal - but I hope it will.

5. TECHNOLOGIES USED

List the programs and technologies used?

Probable tools:

Development:

Linux, Sublime Text, Chrome

Heroku platform for deployment

Technologies:

HTML5, CSS3, AJAX, JavaScript, jQuery UI, Python Tornado

APPENDIX A

Insert images or screenshots or links to your project if published online (eg: Youtube video) in this section in support of your submission

APPENDIX B

Insert samples of program code here (if applicable)