

design axl

Case Study

Project	Willage mobile app UI/UX and visual design
Client	Willage C&S Incubator 370 S. 300 E. Salt Lake City UT 84111
Partner	James Grady Design Axl james@axl.design axl.design

About Design Axl

We are a boutique practice that helps organizations build their brands and visually communicate the data at the heart of their businesses.

We've worked with cutting-edge clients in healthcare, technology, food/beverage, and the arts, providing them with print and interactive design, UI/UX, information design, and data visualization.

About Willage

An easy, engaging way to create your **will** and pass on your legacy.

Problem

- + Break the morbid stigma of creating a **will**
- + Create a brand + app that generates a **will** millennials would be interested in using for their parents and grandparents
- + Create a **will** that is user-friendly and intuitive
- + Create the *Instagram* for **wills**

Deliverables

User Interface

User Experience

User Testing

Information Architecture

Visual Identity/Logo

Typography

Iconography

Color Palette

Brand Standards

Copywriting

Discovery

The kick-off call is one of the most important parts of the project. That is where we get to know each other, what the needs are, and what you are trying to convey through your project. Here are a list of words collected from the kick off call with Willage.

Key words

Engaging

Accessible

Important

Simple

Active

Clear

Non-morbid

Conversational

Friendly

Fresh

Modern

Intuitive

Safe

Connected

Urgent

Hand off/pass down

Legacy

Personal Capital

Sticky

Vested

Social

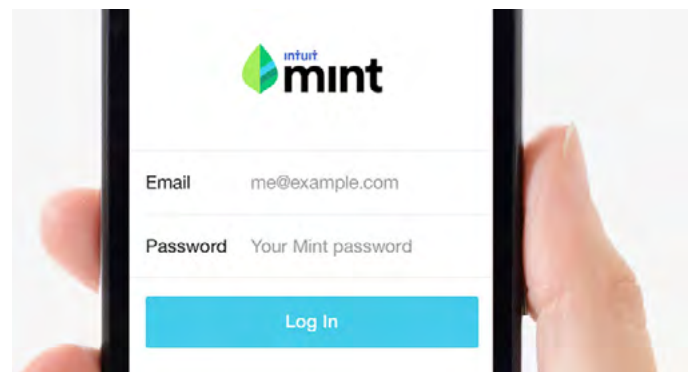
Network of Influence

Dependable

Relatable

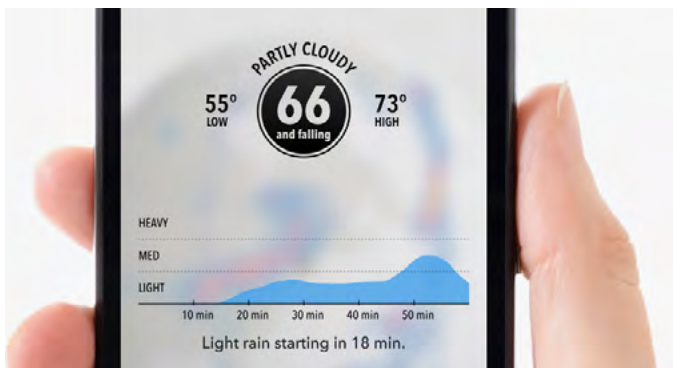
Emulation

It's important to know what you like and what else is out there when thinking about your project. It does not always need to be a direct competitor. Look at products and brands outside your industry and think about what is working for them. Are there things you'd like to emulate? Based on our discovery we identified a few other apps that related to some of Willage's key points.



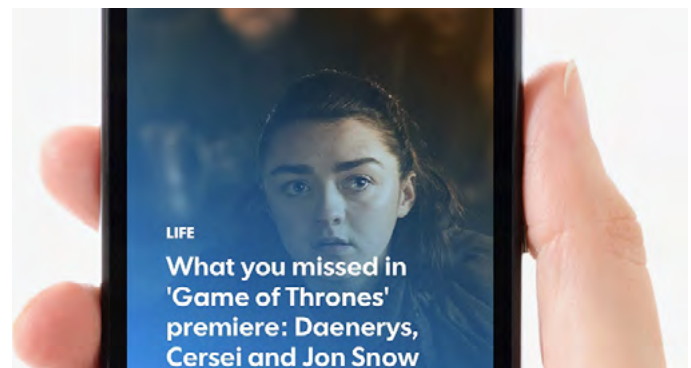
Mint (Finance)

Important
Engaging
Simple



Dark Sky (Weather)

Accessible
Friendly
Active



USA Today (News)

Modern
Conversational
Non-morbid

Avoidance

It's also important to know what to avoid. Knowing what you like and what you don't like is a very helpful conversation to have through the design process. Have an opinion and share it. Willage did not want to come across as morbid or depressing. They wanted to stay far away from legal jargon and intimidating visual language.



Visual Metaphors

Once we establish the high level brand direction, “do’s and don’ts”, and key words, we can use that information to start the design process and think about conceptual metaphors. How do we translate the discovery process into something visual? For Willage we started researching imagery that spoke to those original key messages.



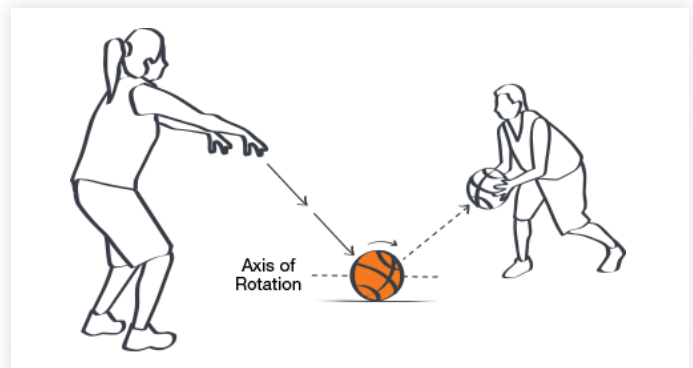
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Identity Process

Many many iterations go into the development of a visual identity. What is the right typeface; serif, sans serif, slab serif, monospace? How do we represent the complexity of your brand into a simple icon? How do we make something unique while using the most limited amount of information? These are just some of the questions that go into the logo development. For Willage many of those answers came from the discovery and visual metaphor development.



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UI Metaphors

There are millions of icons out there. Some make sense and some we just accept. In almost all cases they are a translation of something found in the real world, something that we can easily recognize that distills a function or complex idea into a simple form. For Willage we created a spectrum that iconography and UI elements could sit within: conceptual, literal, contemporary, and analog. We applied this same thinking across all the iconography in the app that all came from the visual metaphors and logo iterations.

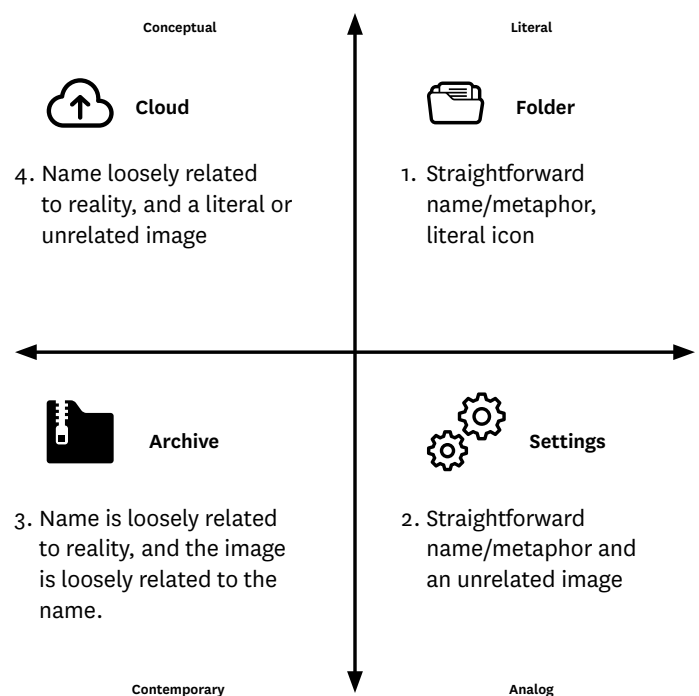


Chart: Adapted from UX Alpaca
blog.prototypr.io/some-useful-and-some-less-useful-icon-metaphors-for-ui-ad225e4fef0a



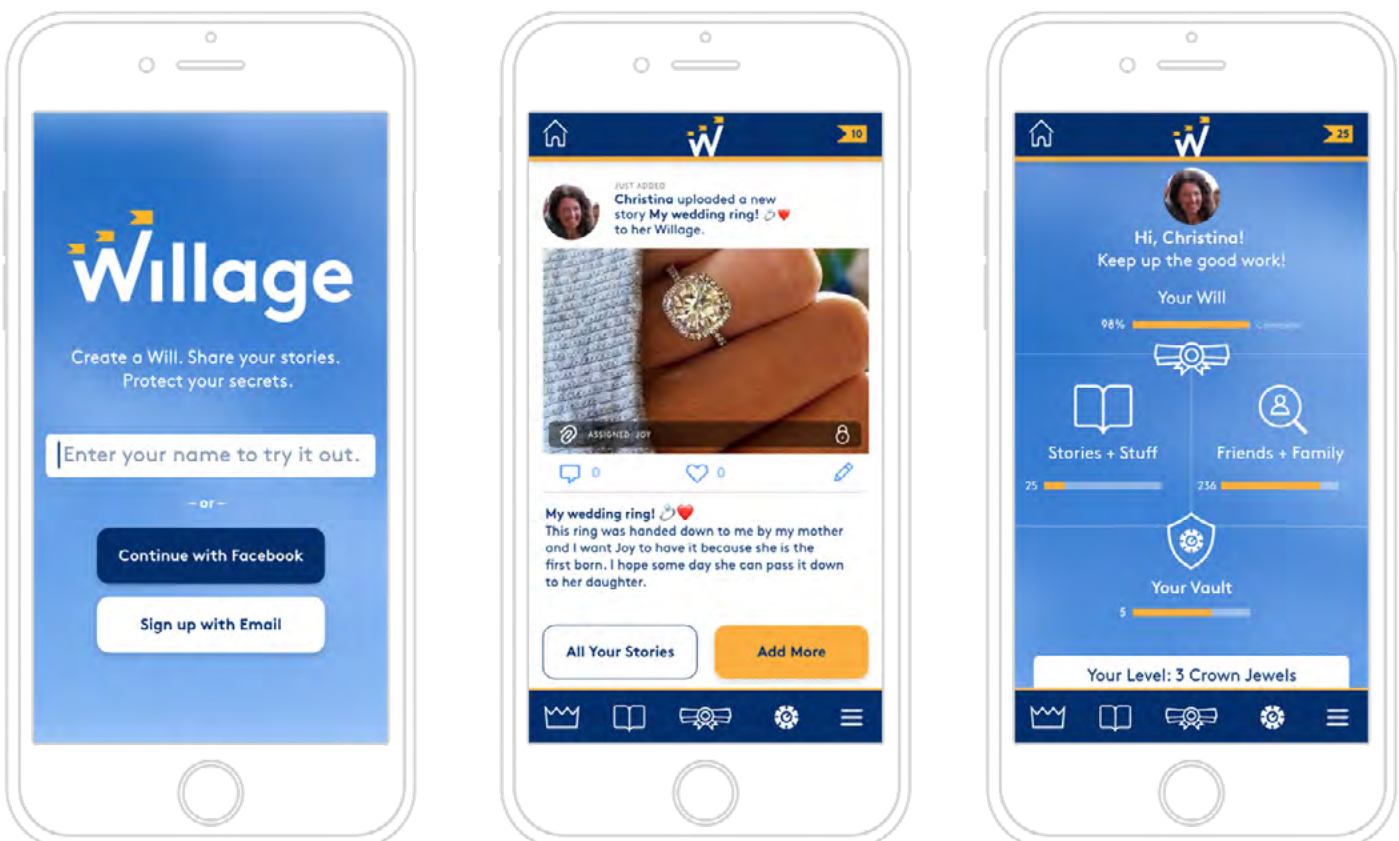
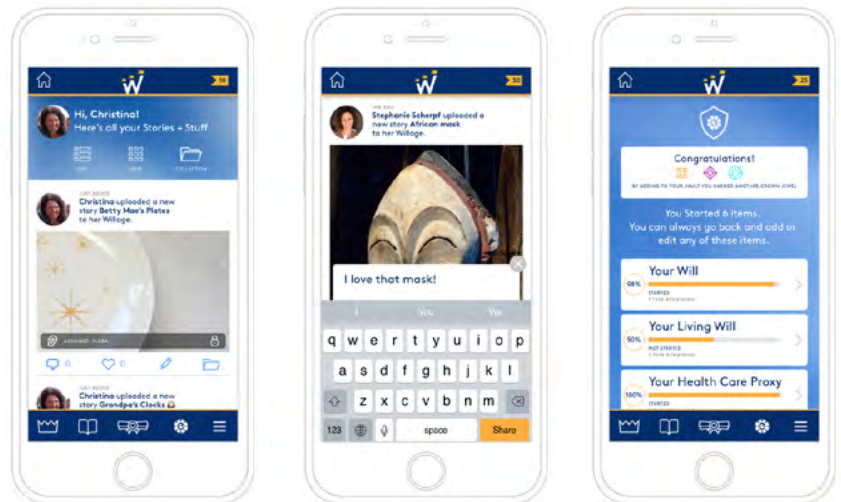
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UI Process

Similar to the process of developing a logo—once we have defined the visual language and metaphorical position of the UI we can roll that out across the main screens of the app. We also work together to simplify the language and labels to be read as intuitive as possible for users.

This is the look and feel of the app, it goes hand in hand with the users' experience. For Willage the interface and the experience needed to be seamless.

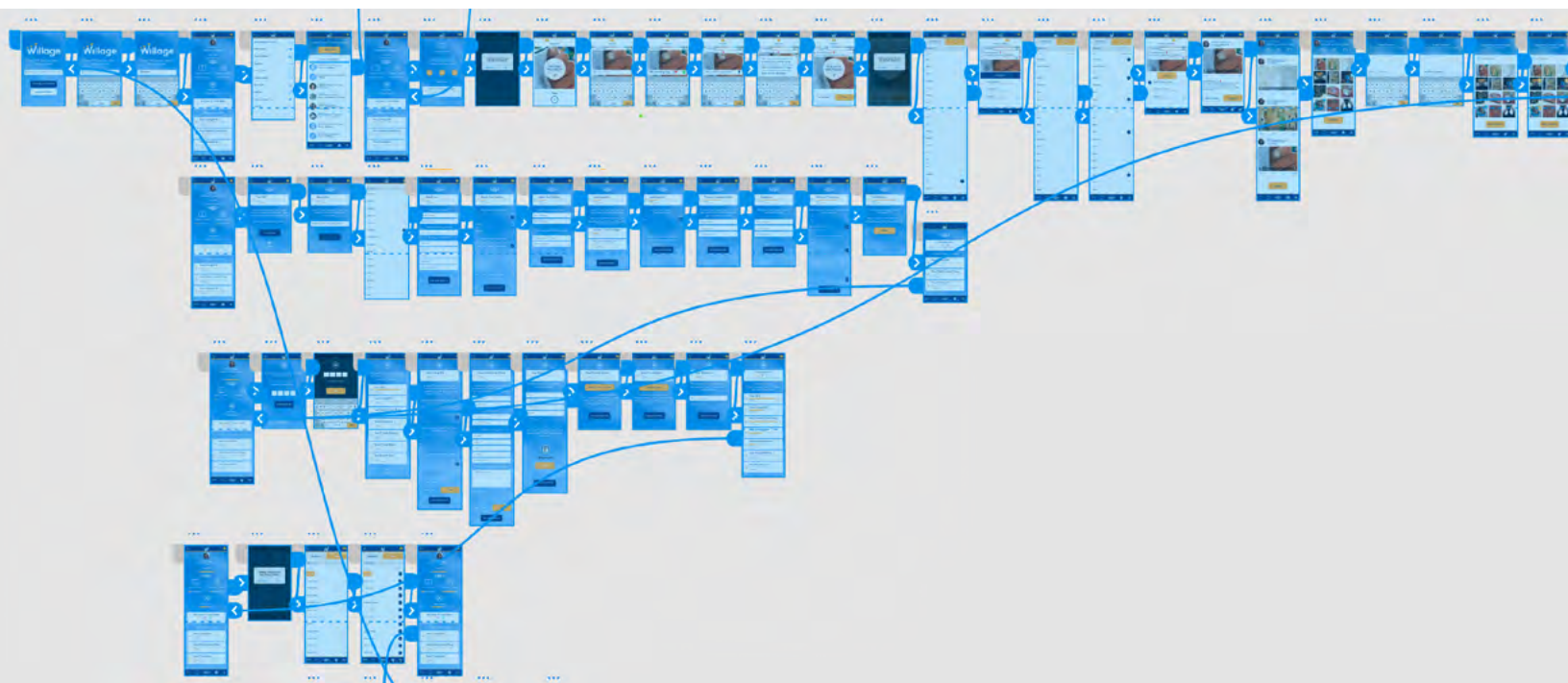
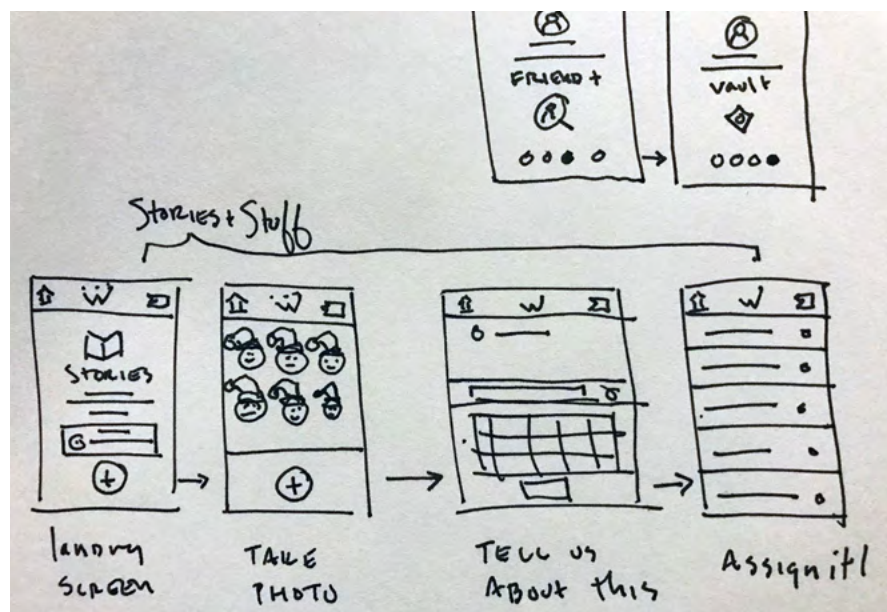


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UX Process

User experience can not just be developed on a white board. We develop many many paper sketches and prototypes, but it's essential to test a design look and feel that is on brand and close to what the final app will be like. Many hours are spent sweating the details while at the same time rapidly testing the users first time experience all the way through to the most basic pages (i.e. user settings, etc...). Willage needed more than a "minimally viable product," they needed a design and experience that felt "ready to launch" for their investors.



Outcomes

Whether working with a fortune 500 company or a start-up, the same creative process, drive, and vision goes into each project. We'll work together to create an innovative and strategic design that aims to exceeds your expectations. Each project is unique, but we'll outline a project scope and schedule that meets your goals. **Design Axl** is led by James Grady, a Boston-based designer and educator with nearly two decades of broad-based experience. See what one of the partners had to say about our collaboration.

“Design Axl brought a creative and collaborative energy to the UI/UX design process. James’ talent for aggregating disparate ideas and priorities into a useful and intuitive design was an integral component to our project. His quick turnaround time with revisions and willingness to be available at whatever hour or day we needed him allowed our project to keep an ambitious time line without sacrificing quality. I can strongly endorse James for any project.”

Steve Tassler | Vice President, Marketing | Trew Leads

Schedule and Rates

Projects are priced out at a weekly rate estimating 16-20 hours per week (one-person) on a single project. The weekly rate for up to 20 hours per week is \$1,600. Additional work/revisions is billed at \$100 per hour.

We will have one scheduled call (one hour) per week to discuss progress and questions. We work hand in hand with key stake holders, developers, and any other outside consultants needed for a particular project. For Willage we worked closely with their primary app developer, product manager, marketing coordinator, and primary investors, as needed on the weekly calls. The Willage mobile app UI/UX and visual design took approximately 12 weeks.

Week 1	Discovery
Week 2	1st round visual concepts
Week 3	Revised design based on feedback
Week 4	Establish look and feel
Week 5	1st round UI/UX
Week 6	Revised UI/UX based on feedback
Week 7	Expanded design architecture
Week 8	External User testing
Week 9	Revised UI/UX based on feedback
Week 10	Design refinements
Week 11	Near final file collaboration
Week 12	Phase 1 product ships

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Thanks!

I look forward to working with you.

James J Grady

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'James J Grady', located below the printed name.