*Personal Project*

# Research - *How do I make a portfolio visually attractive?*

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## Context

This document describes all the research that answers the following sub-question "How do I make a portfolio visually attractive?". This research provides more clarity about what the portfolio will look like visually so that it matches my personal style, the needs of the user and provides direction when creating the first designs.

## Research Method

Literature Study

Quickly and easily search for useful information from reliable sources. This allows choices to be made and substantiated with facts.

Benchmark Creation

Get inspiration from existing designs in the same niche. By looking at what choices they have made and researching why.

Sketching

When visualising the ideas, you start to encounter design challenges that are a starting point for more research. The resulting sketches can be used to discuss and develop ideas together with colleagues and stakeholders.

Prototyping

Developing a prototype allows you to visually convey or test an idea with the users.

Co-reflection

By showing the prototype to experts, new valuable ideas can arise. These can be re-examined or tested and added to the prototype before development.

Usability Testing

By testing the design, user errors can be discovered and adjusted before further development of the portfolio.

(CMD Methods et al., 2015)

## Result

The following questions must be answered first, to answer the research question ("How do I make a portfolio visually attractive?").

- What are the latest design trends?
- How am I going to display all objects?
- Which colour pallet suits the best?
- Which fonts am I going to use?
- What will the navigation look like?
- Do the users know how to use to portfolio?

**What are the latest design trends?**
In an article from Krivec (2023) the best portfolio design trends of 2023 are discussed. I selected 5 trends that suit my personality and personal preferences and that I therefore want to reflect in the design.

1. Curated Portfolio Home Page
   To create a good user experience, I want the user to get to the part he is looking for as quickly as possible (without clicking too much). By immediately showing the projects and clear navigation on the landing page.

3. Minimalism

By keeping the portfolio minimalistic, the user can more easily find what he needs because there is little distraction from other elements, so the user only looks at what is needed. This also fits my personal style of "less is more".

6.  Dark look
    Dark look is getting more and more popular among websites and apps. Another superb benefit of the dark look is an added layer of elegance and sophistication, with an immersive and "atmospheric" experience. By integrating a dark/light mode switcher ensures users to switch them between the mode they prefer.

12. Interactive and Animated
    Animations ensure that certain parts receive attention and create a creative display. Animations can improve the user experience, but if you use them too much, it can quickly become chaotic.

18. Grid Layout with Hover Effects
    The combination of grid layout and hover effects adds a touch of creativity and interactivity that can elevate your portfolio's visual impact and overall UX. By implementing hover effects to your portfolio grid, you invite your visitors to link with your portfolio more dynamically.

**How am I going to display all objects?**
For the upcoming three questions, I looked for inspiration on Dribbble.

Option 1: **Traditional website layout.**
The landing page will contain some information about me in big text, with some highlighted projects below. The user can scroll down to see more projects. To get more information, he can click on the buttons or project images or use the menu bar/button.
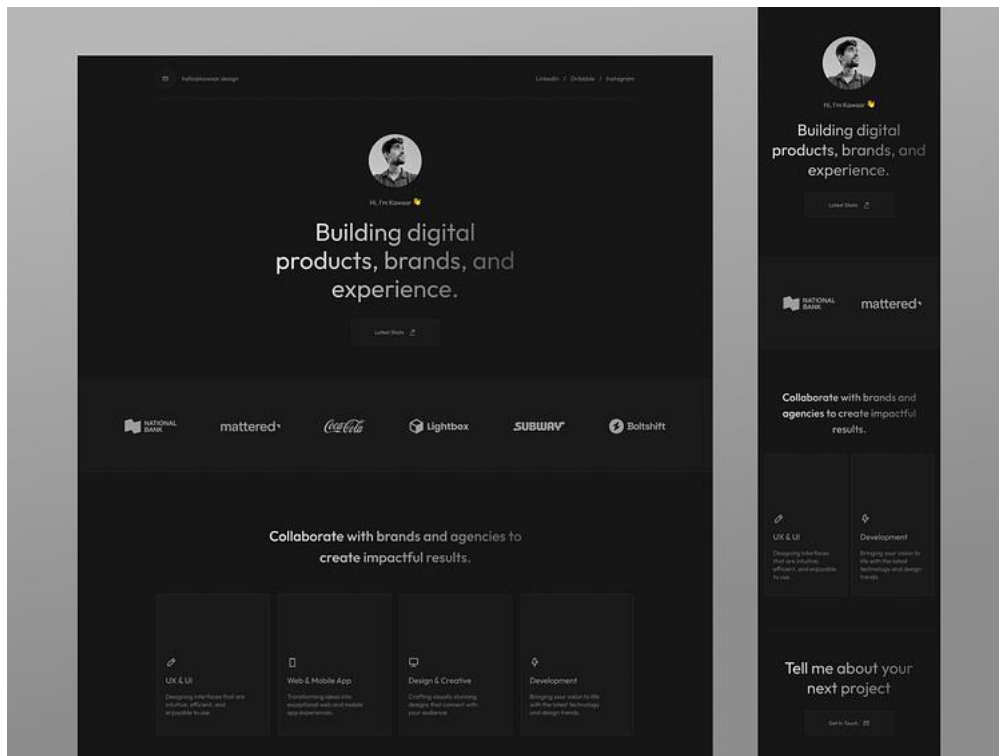
*Scroll down to see some examples.*
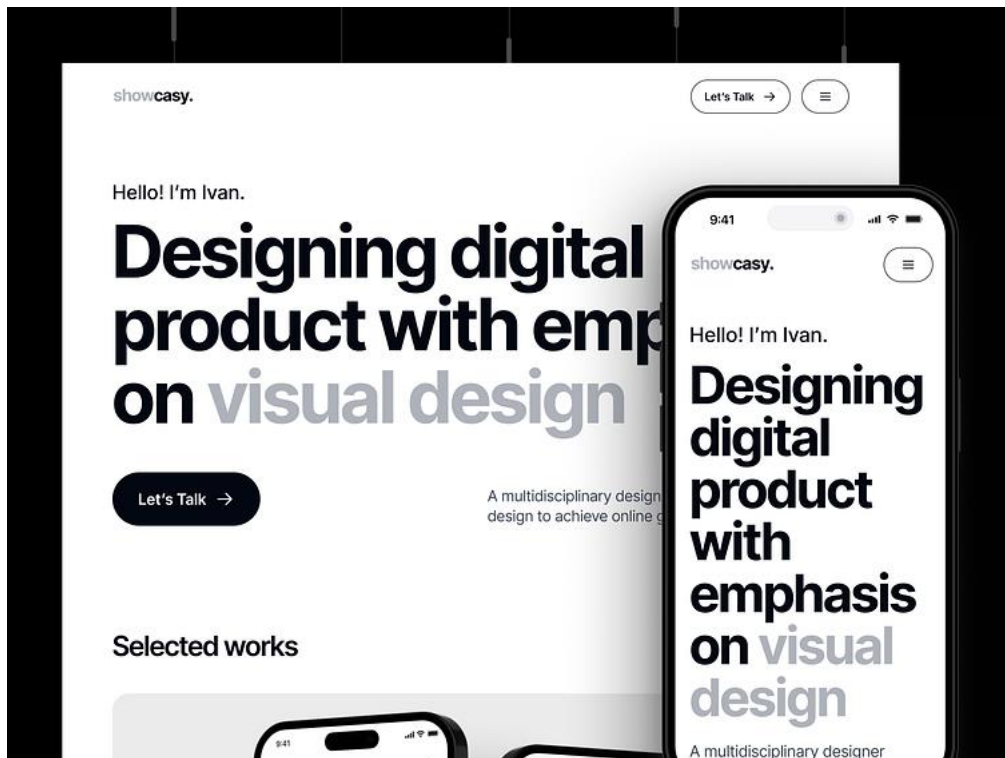
(*Showcasy - Personal Portfolio Website webflow Templates*, z.d.)
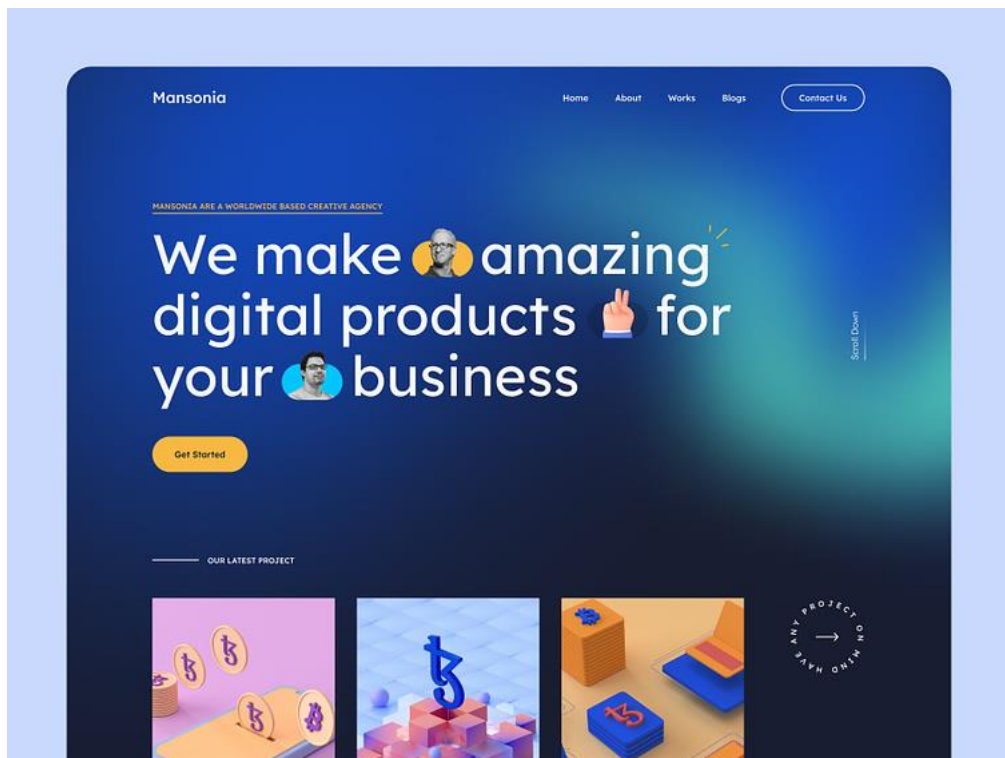

(*Agency Portfolio Website exploration*, z.d.)

(*Kawsar.design*, z.d.)

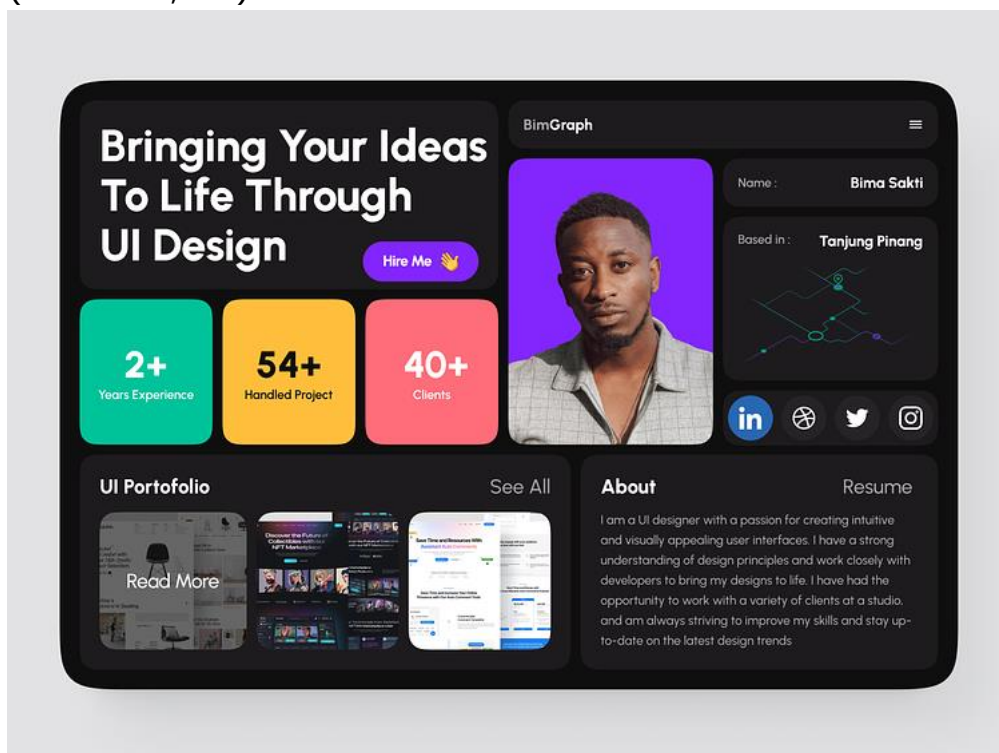Option 2: **Dashboard layout.**

On the landing page, the user can read brief information about me, with highlighted projects below. The user can click on the tiles to be redirected to the next page. These options are a lot more minimal but can cause confusion.

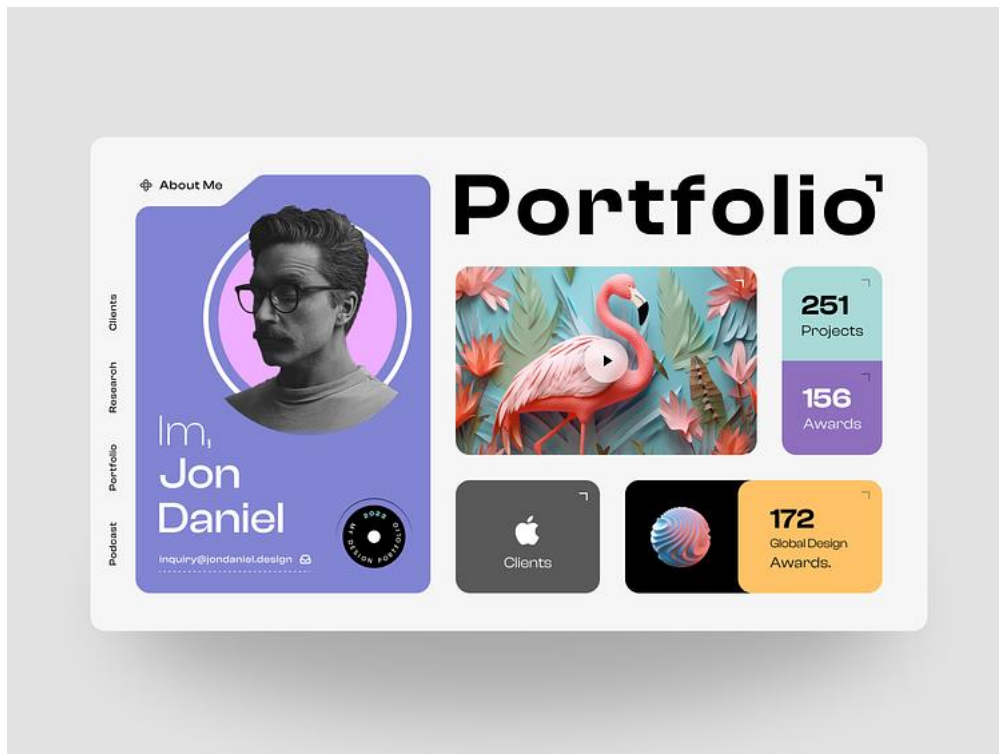To find out which option works best, I will conduct a user test later.

*Scroll down to see some examples.*
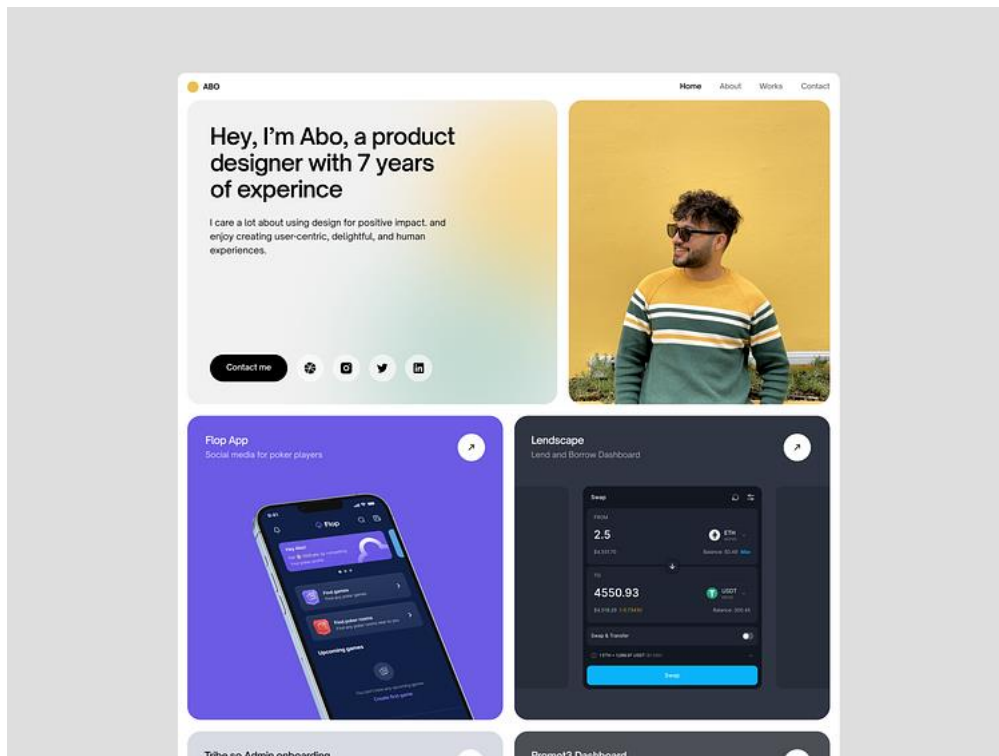
(Ghanbari, z.d.)



(*BimGraph - Portfolio website*, z.d.)

(*Portfolio Website V1*, z.d.)

**Which fonts am I going to use?**
For this project, in want to have a clean and modern look, the choice of a matching font is necessary. For that reason, I chose a sans-serif font. A blog by Hughes (2023) explains what to look out for when picking a good font.

- Use a font with at least 5 different weights.
- Use only one font (max 2 if necessary).
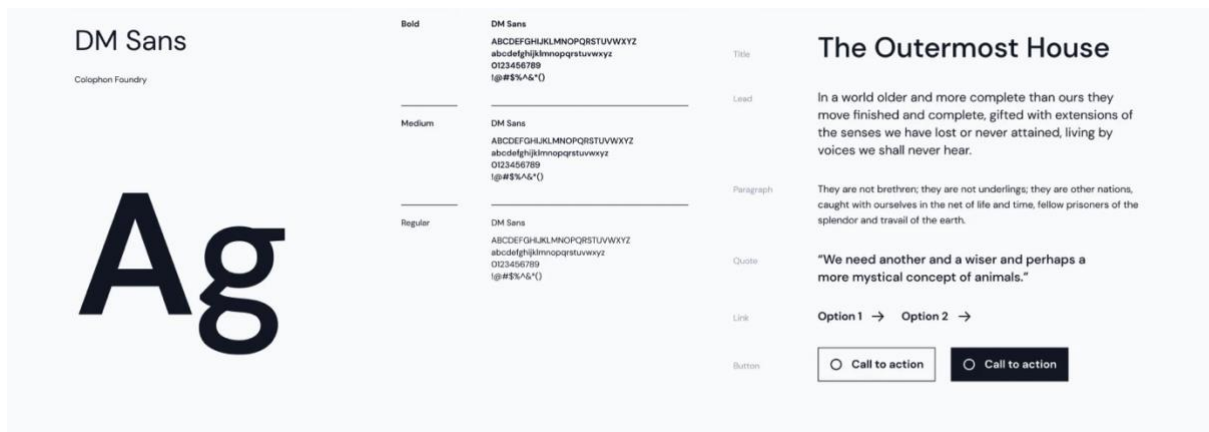- Inspect web pages to see which fonts they use.

When looking for inspiration, 3 fonts came up that appealed to me the most. I will test these with the final design to see which one fits best.

1. Poppins *by Indian Type Foundry*
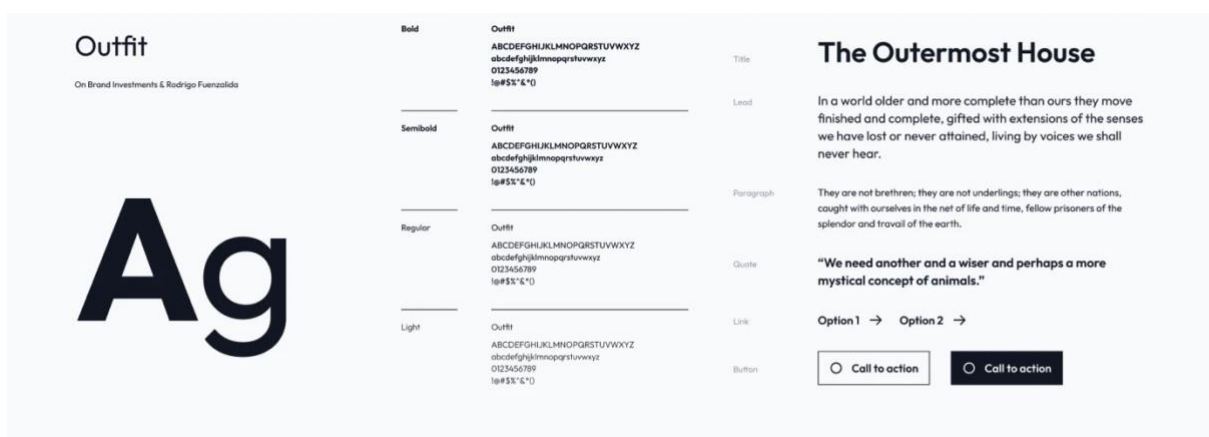
2. Outfit *by On Brand Investments*
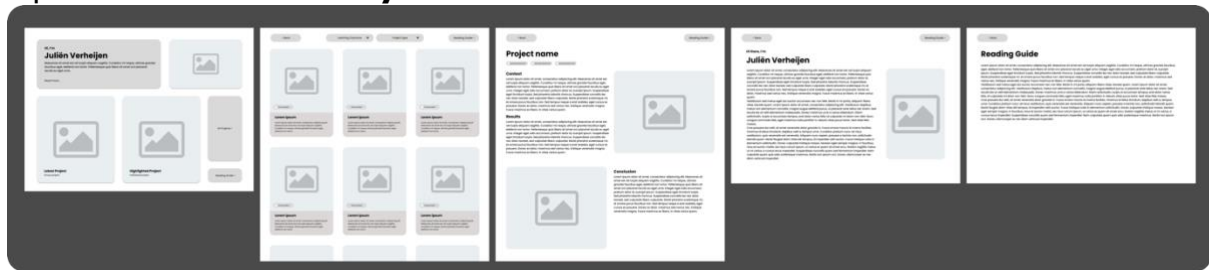
3. DM Sans *by Colophon Foundry*

**What will the navigation look like?**

In previous research ("How can users easily navigate through the portfolio"), I concluded which navigation options work best for the portfolio. So, I implemented these options in an interactive low-fidelity prototype.

Option 1: **Traditional website layout**



Option 2: **Dashboard layout**



*Click on the images to use the prototypes yourself.*

By showcasing the prototypes to Bardt van der Dennen, we concluded that the 2nd option (dashboard layout) was the better option for this project. The navigation is clear and different from a normal website. He recommends doing additional research on the layout and appearance of the dashboard. To make sure the user looks/clicks directly to the most important tile.

**How to make objects more attractive?**

An article by Babich (2021) describes different ways to add more visual weight to UI objects. Below are the ways that are relevant to the portfolio design:

1.  Size: Larger objects attract the eye more than smaller ones.
2.  Shape: Objects with a regular shape appear heavier than objects with an irregular shape.
3.  Orientation: vertical objects appear heavier than horizontal objects.

4. Colour: some colours are heavier than others. Saturated colours will gain more attention than unsaturated ones.
5. Contrast: When an element contrasts with its surroundings will appear visually heavier.
6. Texture: Elements with texture are perceived as heavier in comparison with non-textured elements.
7. Whitespace: the more whitespace near a certain object, the more attention it receives.
8. Z-depth: Elements in the foreground have more weight than elements in the background.
9. Human faces: Eyes and faces are considered as objects with heavy visual weight. Photos with human faces will always carry more visual weight.
10. Movement: Moving objects naturally attract our attention and suggest to visitors where they should look next.

**Which colour pallet suits the best?**

This colour palette was put together by taking inspiration from Adobe Color. The orange colour, according to an article by Olesen (s.d.), stands for spontaneity, creativity, optimism, enthusiasm, and positivity. This suits my personality and what I want to express with this portfolio.



#F56A01
RGB    245, 106, 1

#A8A8A8
RGB    168, 168, 168

#595959
RGB    89, 89, 89

#1E1E1E
RGB    30, 30, 30

#FFFFFF
RGB    255, 255, 255

**Do the users know how to use to portfolio?**

I created a high-fidelity prototype to find out how real users navigate through the portfolio.
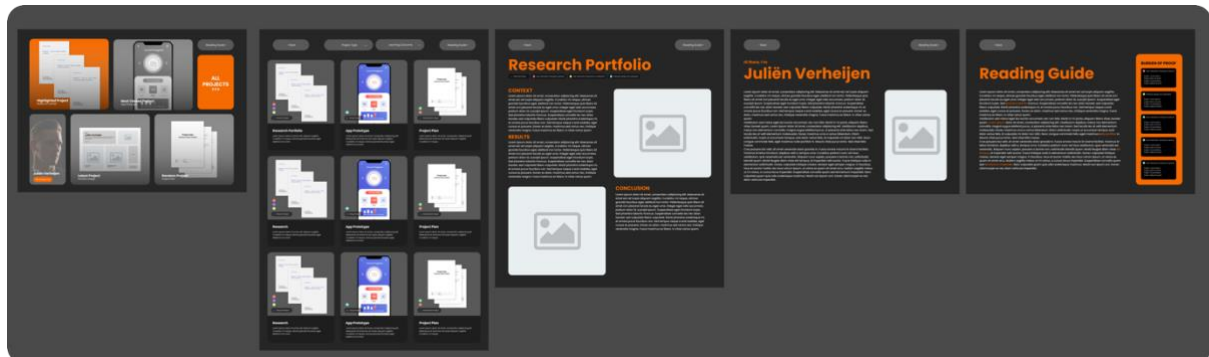


*Click on the image to use the prototypes yourself.*

The prototype was tested with a usability test using the Maze tool. Users had to indicate what they saw first and were given different tasks to navigate through the portfolio. Here you can see all the results and the feedback received.

Most important results:

1. As also mentioned in Babich's article (2021), images with human faces have a heavy visual weight, just like saturated colours. On the landing page, the decision was made to use shades of grey to make the "all projects" button stand out because of the bright orange colour. The results of the usability test show that the image with the face still attracts more attention

2. When navigating to the right pages, you can see that every user can find the right page. What is noticeable is that not all testers have read the task properly and skipped a step. Also, some pages can be reached in two different ways. from the results of the test, we see that just over half use the 'all projects' page.



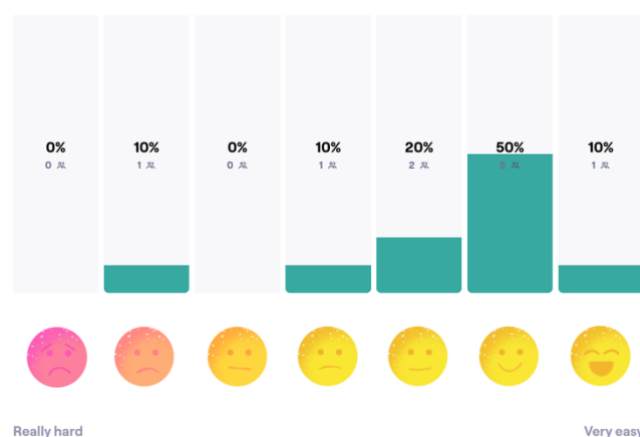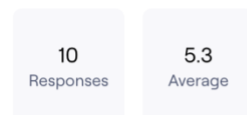**Mission's paths**
Click on a path to analyze the results for that path.
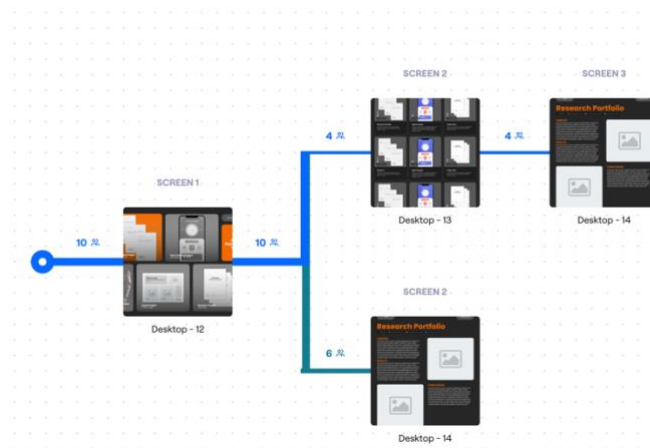
3. Most users found it easy to navigate through the design. However, there was one tester who did have difficulty with it.



**How easy was it to navigate through the webpage?**
Opinion Scale

10 Responses    5.3 Average

0%  10%  0%  10%  20%  50%  10%
0 人  1 人  0 人  1 人  2 人  5 人  1 人

Really hard                    Very easy

## Conclusion

Through this research, I was able to determine a direction for the design. This included considering the latest design trends and choosing an appropriate font, colour palette and navigation structure.

By making several prototypes, I was able to determine which design works best. The results of the user test revealed improvements that could be made to the design. It has also given new insights that can be added for a better user experience.

## Learning Outcomes

Learning outcome 1: User interaction (analysis & advice)
*By analysing the user interaction and looking at the current design trends, I can give advice how to users will interact with the portfolio.*

Learning outcome 2: User interaction (execution & validation)
*By doing a user test, I can conclude how users use the webpage and where there are areas for improvement.*

Learning outcome 5: Investigative problem solving
*This research document uses the CMD research methods. As a result, conclusions have been drawn that provide answers to the sub-questions. these answers help answer the main question.*

# Literature

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