Internship report

Multimedia design theme 16

VRDK

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Introduction

My internship was done with VRDK, a company situated in Esromgade 15 among many other tech companies and start-ups. Their main focus is on virtual reality, most specifically augmented reality, which is the technology that is being utilised in their mobile app Vileon.
The app is designed to revert images that are being focused on by the user's camera, into videos that play with that specific image.
With this technology and concept, companies contact VRDK for collaborations with campaigns, item drops and so on. Meaning the companies who approach VRDK have a fresh new approach to marketing which makes them stick out from the competition, and the Vileon app gets more downloads and use, so both parties benefit from the collaboration.

V I L E O N

Assignments

I was given a variety of tasks that while diverse, were in keeping with what I had declared my learning goals to be including. My work included re-designing the app Vileon, making new video content using After Effects and Premiere Pro, helping the SoMe with further videos and being included in the testing of the app with members of our target audience.

One of my first duties was a big one, as it was to redesign all the icons and design of the augmented reality app Vileon. This was a great opportunity for me to really test myself straight away in the field, as this app was already up on the play store and apple store for download. The icons were very blocky and a little confusing, so Joachim (one of my employers) gave me the task of changing them.

My first step was to make sure I had access to a design guide of some sort, so I could see the colour scheme, typography and so on. This is when I immediately felt that VRDK was in need of a multimedia designer as there was no such document in any concrete way, just scattered items in the shared drive.

I decided the first thing was to make an official Vileon design guide, so future designers had a clear basis as to what to go off.

This gave me the idea that maybe there would be gaps elsewhere, so I quickly started a trello board to make sure that everything I was tasked with was always neatly displayed and easily accessible. Engaging as a middle man between the development and SoMe department can become confusing without the proper means to separate work and have an overview of everything.
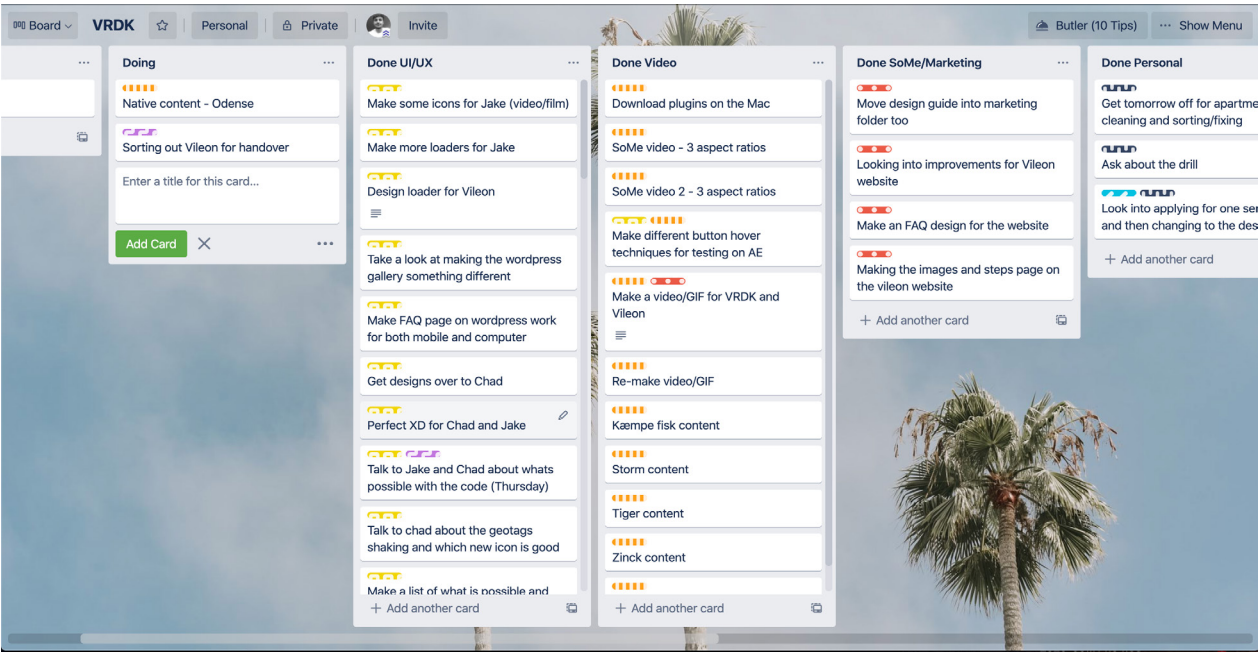

Fig 1. My personal trello board

Diary - Week 2, 31/08

Assignments

Fitting in as a multimedia designer was not just easy but a much needed necessity for VRDK itself. It became obvious that a design minded individual was really needed in a company that had seemed a bit starved of that area of UI before.

With Vileon, I was given almost a free reign to actually go ahead and come up with what I believed to be clearer and more UI friendly icons that would be easily understood. The main problem was that augmented reality apps were few and far between at the moment, so creating icons that make it clear to understand what navigational options were available was a fairly difficult task but one I really enjoyed.

Making the icons and designs made the development of my skill level XD and illustrator greatly increase. Redesigning the app using XD was a gargantuan task, which at first I deemed to be easy. Coinciding the icons that I was creating in Illustrator into the prototype, which I was making in the format for both iphone and ipad, meant that I was becoming increasingly familiar with both of these programs. Using plugins in XD to create small kanban charts to add in notes and improvements that needed to be done, meant I was always on top of my work and developing a healthy and clean way of designing.

This way of working was very much a process that all departments, especially the developers, were heavily into doing. There was always a full kanban chart on a white board situated at the head of the office to display user stories with a rating of either 1 being easy, 3 being average and 5 being hard to accomplish. The bosses always had an overview of the kanban chart and with this organisation of work and their difficulty, it was clear to see which tasks would be completed in what amount of time.
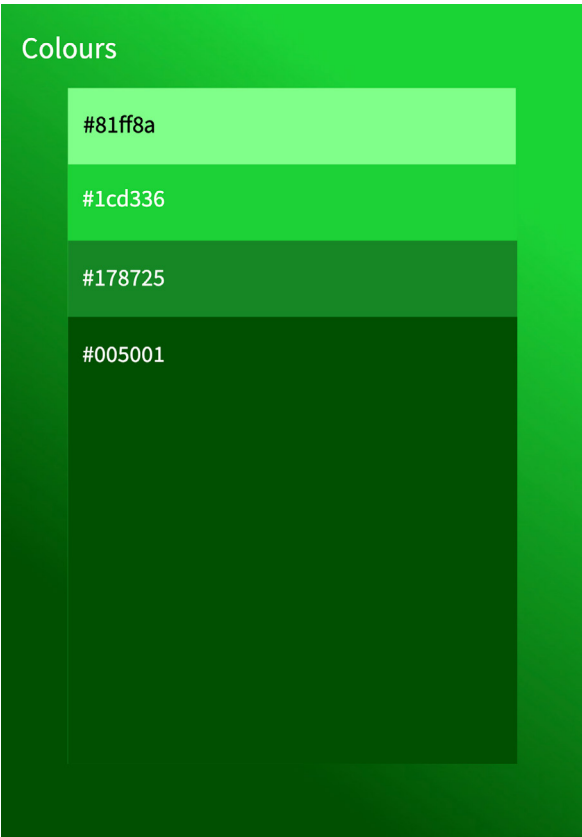

Fig 2. Colour scheme from design guide
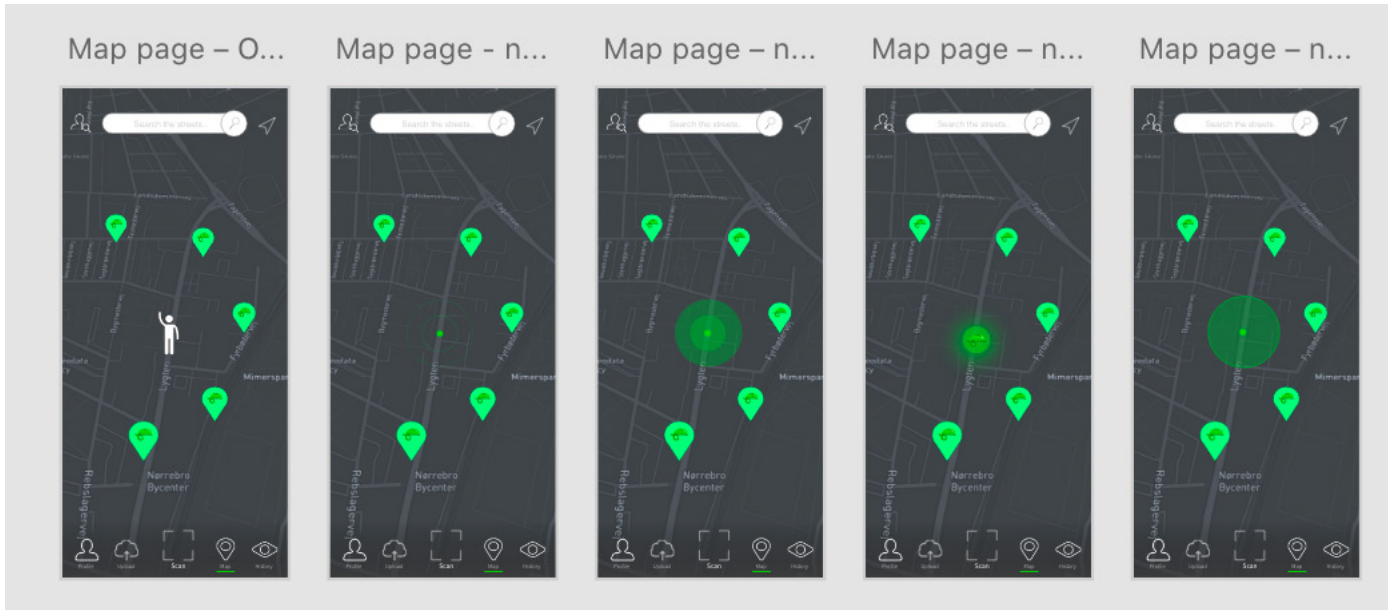
Diary - 19/08

4

5

Assignments

Fig 3. New map designs used in testing

Diary - Week 3, 8/09

One of my other big undertakings was the actual testing of the new UI that I had created and was now implemented on the app for beta testing. Vileon needed an idea of how first time users interact with the app. So me and another UI employee, who was more qualified for the testing, got to work with a plan to test the app. Because of Covid-19, we decided a zoom meeting to be fitting and chose our testees from the target audience that was provided to us by our employers of between 25 and 35.

We created a list of assignments that they needed to do before our zoom meeting using the app for the first time. When the zoom call commenced it was really refreshing to do testing with individuals who had a lot to say and were very impressive with their amount of feedback and comments. Furthermore, showing and explaining my new design ideas for future iterations of the app was a good bit of experience for someone who can be fairly shy in front of crowds as I've learned from doing presentations throughout the semesters that I can become very nervous. So doing this for a company that I was trying to impress and do my best for was a huge help in my development of this aspect of multimedia.

Cooperation

VRDK uses Slack as the main way to communicate with each other, in and outside the office. This was an extremely helpful tool in keeping communion with the main UI developer Chad. We were working very closely when it came to my icons and XD being utilised by him before each update of the Vileon app. Taking the icons straight into Unity, where the Vileon app was being developed and seeing how it would look like using the Vileon company phone. As each time a big change was made, a build was also done on Unity that was transferred to the phone, to see how it would look. Then my employers could have a glance and say what they liked/disliked as they had the final say.

The UI desks were all together in the office and this gave us all an easy way to collaborate with each other to give feedback, and help with the work we all had between one another.

My introduction to VRDK was a great boost for Chad as he now had someone else to take the root of the design and UI work using the adobe programs, then he could focus primarily on integrating it all to Unity.

So on arriving my skill set within the UI area filled a hole that was important in the actual foundations of UI. They had a very skilled professional in regards to Unity and spotting errors and making improvements in that, but not in the basics of UI. If the root is damaged then the plant will not grow, so I slotted into this and collaborated every day with a very grateful Chad.
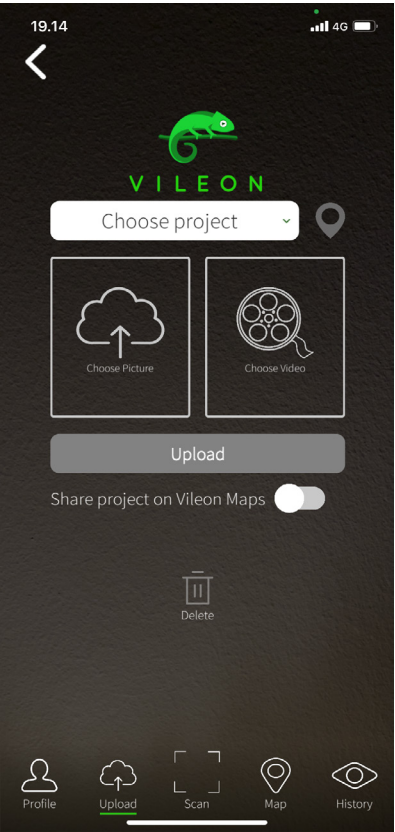

Fig 4. XD of Vileon

Fig 5. Actual Vileon app

Cooperation

In regards to my inclusion in the SoMe department, they were in serious need of a video editor and simple animator. When the Vileon app work was up to date, I was always on board to help make content for the social media department. They would have a google doc full of content ideas and a separate shared google drive from the main VRDK one where all of their content ideas were, so I could see what needed to be done and bring the concepts to life.
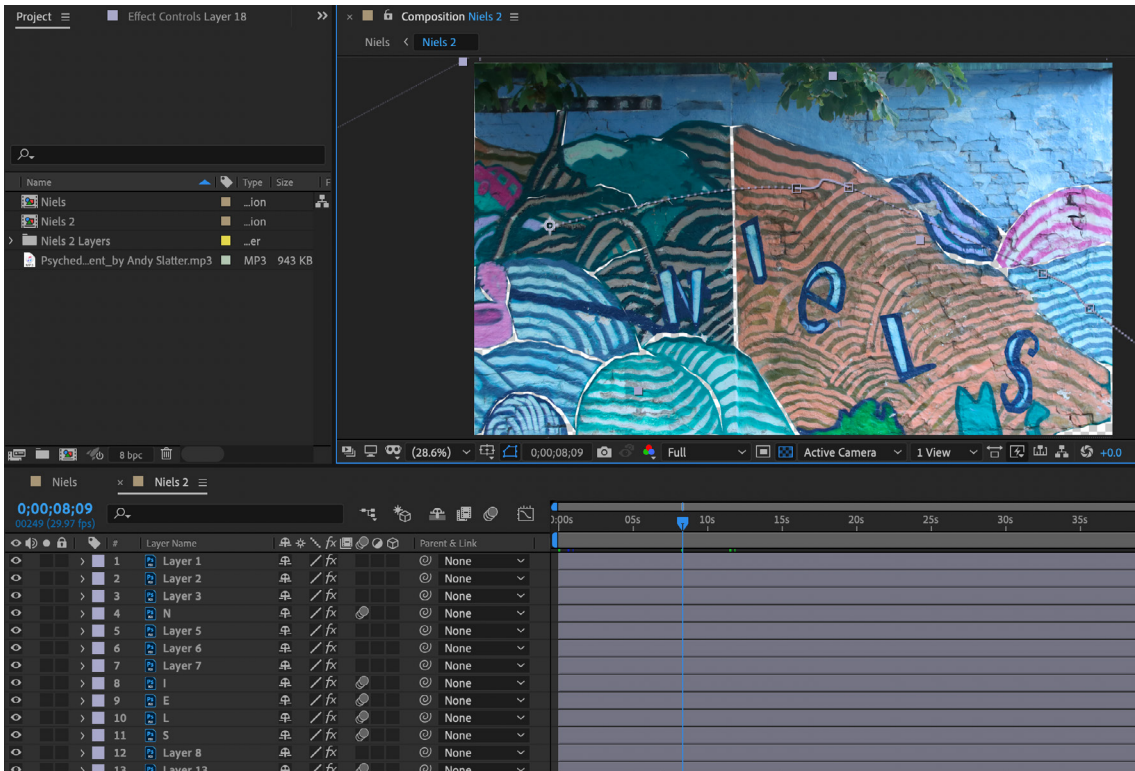

Fig 6. Some content for SoMe using After Effects

Diary - Week 9, 22/10

It worked on both sides as they now had someone to create their ideas and give them the content they needed, so it was ready to upload and they could keep to their posting schedule. Then on my side it meant I already had the idea laid out and just had to do the technical side of it and actually make it. This greatly improved my skills in Premiere Pro and massively in After Effects, which was a program that I desperately wanted to get better at. So when the work for Vileon dried up there was always SoMe to keep me busy

Communication

VRDK is a small company, with only a few employees, so the communication of tasks and how each individual is handling their workload was a very important part of working here.

Every monday, there was a meeting in the conference room, to get everybody on the same page as to what assignments everyone was doing, and what tasks could be given to employees who needed things to do. Furthermore this was extremely important for the bosses who decided whether or not user stories were needed for some of these, to estimate the difficulty of them and if they should switch the attention to other areas.

From the monday meetings and what we talked about, my employers would then decide if certain departments should have a meeting of their own afterwards.

Mainly it would be the UI and the developers who would have these meetings to discuss how hard it was to integrate certain UI features into the app. So all the icons and general UI design that I would make for the app would be looked over by the development team.

We would create user stories and again give the rating of either 1, 3 or 5 depending on how difficult each thing was. This way we could evaluate my work and see how it would translate into development. Once the evaluation was complete we put the user stories up on the kanban chart where the bosses could have an overview of everything too.
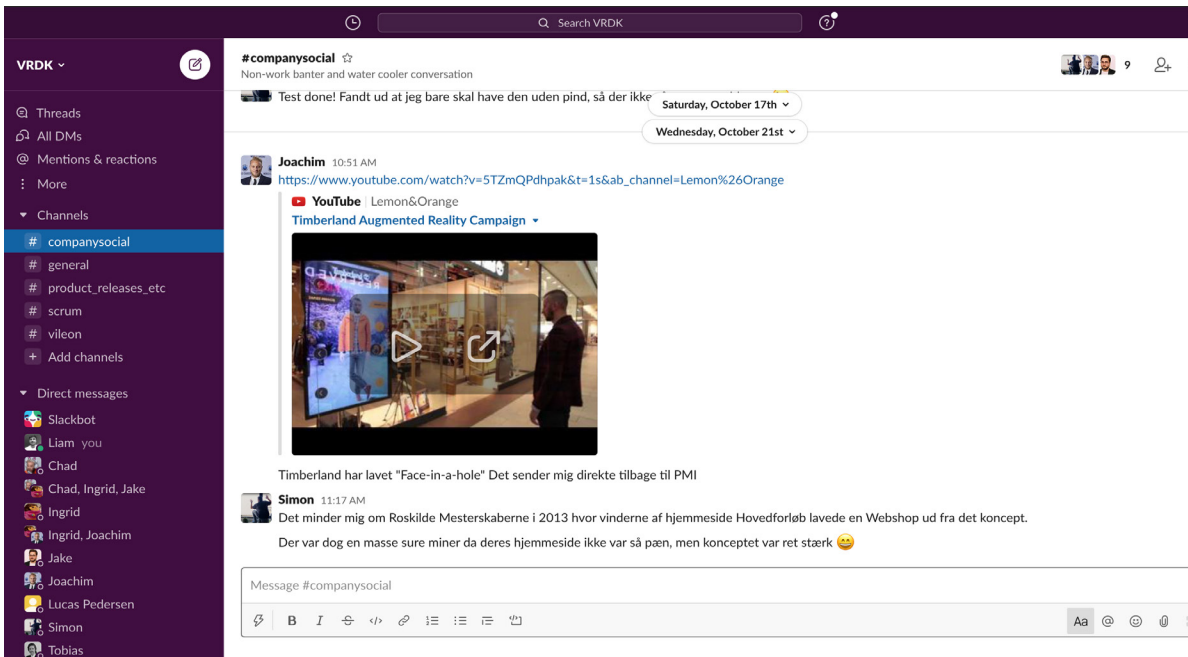

Fig 7. Slack page for VRDK

Diary - Week 1 +

Communication

They were integral in what I was creating at first, as I was always going to them and sending them all of my work to see what they would say. As the weeks went on and they started to put trust in me, it was more a fact that the developers and the UI would be in communication, over each other's shoulders, appraising one another's work and offering improvements and new ideas.

Working in this closely knit environment was amazing, as we were always there to help one another. Moreover, I guess if I had to answer who would be seeing my work, it would be anyone from the public who downloaded the Vileon app. Whether that would be for the competition with Viaplay on every bus stop, or the new maps feature that could see Vileon become a huge asset in the impending travel boom; remains to be seen.

Conclusion

During my time at VRDK I felt genuinely at home in this environment, and felt my skills in multimedia design was a huge asset to them at the time of me joining them. Learning how a small company communicates and works with its different departments coming together to create a friendly and inviting atmosphere.

My learning goals that I set myself before, I believe have been met along the way. Always learning new things and tackling new problems.
I'm extremely happy with my time here and will take the skills I've learnt into my exam work, further studies or even new job opportunities that may arise. I've given as good as I've got, and I hope the work I've done will help them in the future and all the best luck to them.