

PROOF-OF-CONCEPT SOLUTION

PONAMAC

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Adobe XD prototype link:

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/c28db68d-603f-4a65-8eab-1d1ca10ad518-97de/>

1. Introduction

This report aims to present the proof-of-concept of the online t-shirt shop UX prototype and the justification of design as well as content decisions. It portrays the problems identified that inspired to create this brand and how those problems were bridged by Ponamac's solutions. Ponamac is a sustainable camping t-shirt brand whose mission is to give back to nature through planting one tree for each t-shirt purchase.

2. Problem

2.1. Overwhelming product choice

One of the recurring problems faced throughout the brainstorming phase was that many popular fashion websites were very overwhelming. ASOS, one website we referred to regularly, has tens of thousands of products ranging from clothing to skin care for both

men and women. If you didn't come to this website for something specific, scrolling through pages and pages of products became very overwhelming and tiring.

There is even an article we came across while doing research titled, *"The Golden Rules of Shopping On ASOS, From A Seasoned ASOS Veteran"*, where the author goes into detail of how to shop through ASOS' over 80,000 products without getting overwhelmed. ASOS is not the only culprit who overwhelms their customers with thousands of products. Fast fashion companies like Forever 21, H&M, and Zara are also guilty of offering way too many products on their online shops. This became the first issue we wanted to address; *how can we as web designers create a visually appealing web shop for t-shirts and other products without overwhelming the consumer?*

2.2. Negative environmental impact of fast-fashion

The trend of over offering products to attract all types of shoppers then brought up the discussion of fast fashion, and how the mass production of clothing is taking a huge toll on the environment. In an article from Ideas For Us, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating global environmental solutions, the author discusses the environmental and social impacts that the fashion industry has on the Earth and its resources. Some of the findings included:

1. The fast fashion industry produces 1.2 billion tons of CO2 per year. This is equivalent to more emissions than air travel and international shipping.
2. Fast fashion is responsible for producing 20% of global wastewater.
3. *"Making a pair of jeans produces as much greenhouse gases as driving a car more than 80 miles."*
4. 60% of clothing produced in one year is tossed away into landfills.
5. One t-shirt takes 2,700 liters of water to make. That is 1,350 days of drinking water for one person.

The combination of these two issues, fast fashion companies overwhelming consumers with product choices and the amount of waste it creates, was the problem we identified in the t-shirt market. This is what we wanted to focus on and address with our brand and the UX elements of the mobile website. While we certainly aren't the first to think of designing eco-friendly and sustainable clothing, it would be the combination of creating a sustainable brand that also showed through our website features, which we will go into more depth later on in this paper.

3. Solution

The result of our research is an easy to navigate website, with minimal products and minimal product waste. These solutions go hand in hand, because with a smaller product portfolio consumers are able to find products easier and there is less production waste at the end of the day.

3.1. Smaller Quantity

Offering a smaller number of choices on our website will leave the consumers feeling less overwhelmed and more likely to continue their purchase journey. Customers will come to the website knowing exactly what is offered, and will not have to search for hours looking for something they want to buy.

This also results in a smaller number of clicks. Consumers are always one click away from going back to the home page, to their shopping cart, or to the last page they visited. We tried to minimize the number of times consumers have to click the actual back button on their browser, which can sometimes lead to issues or can deter the consumer from continuing to use our website.

This solution also addresses the issue of over production. By offering only a limited number of products in unisex sizes, this avoids having to make t-shirts that are in both “men’s” and “women’s” cuts. This way, we will never have too much inventory, and with less inventory there is a lower chance of unnecessary product waste. Any products leftovers would be reused in the next production process.

3.2. Multiple Uses

In addition to offering less products, our brand idea was to create a t-shirt company that makes sustainable, eco-friendly products but with trendy designs that would allow it to be used for many different occasions. This would combat the need for consumers to buy more than is necessary, and would cut back on the over-production of clothes in the fashion industry.

For example, one of our t-shirts can be used to go camping as it is made with a nice, sturdy material. At the same time, because it’s made with a breathable fabric and the prints are trendy and modern, it can also be used as a casual day to day t-shirt. By using the t-shirt more than once, we’ve eliminated the need for so many t-shirts in a consumer’s closet.

4. UX Details

The user experience was always our top priority when creating the webshop, with a common goal of the user having to click as few times as possible. We always asked ourselves *"could we make this even simpler?"*, while making sure that the user could get back to the main page or where they were before from any page throughout the buying process. We created a menu bar at the top of the page to help with exactly that. Our initial idea was to place it at the bottom of the page, but we had to do some alterations after realising that some mobile devices wouldn't be able to show it.

4.1. Fighting overwhelmment

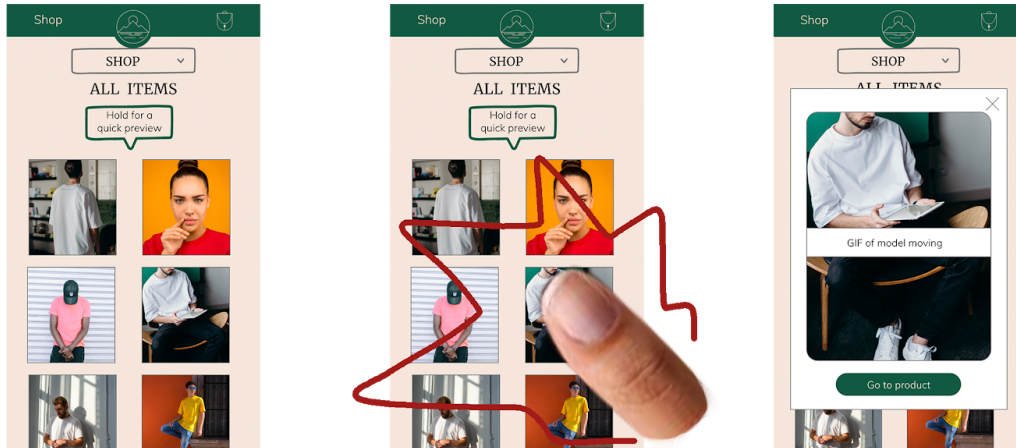
As previously mentioned, we uncovered in our research that our interviewees often felt overwhelmed when shopping online. This could be caused by the user having too many items to choose from, or if the user couldn't easily get back to where he/she came from. Our solution to these problems, besides from making our collection unisex and limited, was to create a dropdown menu. This gives them the option of filtering the items and only seeing the relevant t-shirts on the shop page. Furthermore, we added clear arrows on the product description page, to give the user the option of going back to the shop page, in case that they wanted to keep browsing.

4.2. 'Hold to preview' option

Another feature in our webshop is our 'hold to preview' option. By holding their thumb over the image of an item, the user gets to see a person moving around in that particular t-shirt in a GIF. The window is easily closed by clicking outside of it. If the user wants to take a closer look at the product, they have to click the 'go to product' button in the preview window. This will lead them to the product description page, where they can read about the details of the product, see several photos of a person wearing it and eventually choose their size and add it to their basket.

This journey was created to minimise the amount of clicks that a user had to spend to get a closer look at an item as well as avoid the user getting lost when having to go back and forth between the pages. Since this isn't very common and might not be an intuitive feature for the user, it was important to us to guide them through it.

We came up with some different solutions during a brainstorming session which, amongst others, involved a pop-up window that the user had to close to make sure that they'd seen it. However, we agreed that this might be irritating for the user, and since we were working with the goal of having as few clicks as possible, we chose to insert a little textbox encouraging the user to hold on the items they liked. Through our think-aloud tests, we confirmed that the users almost subconsciously noticed and read the little box. It was easy for them to preview the products before deciding on the one they preferred. (see [visualisation on the next page](#))



4.3. Conventions

Following conventions, we made our logo the 'home button', after having done a few think-aloud tests to reassure that the users instinctively knew where the button led to. We did have to make some alterations though, after finding out that the logo was too small and unclear. Our solution was to make the logo button simpler and bigger, to highlight its function.

Another focus for our prototype was to clearly notify the user when the item had been added to their shopping bag. We did this by creating a big pop-up page with a confirming message as well as the options for the user to continue shopping or go straight to check-out.

5. Visual design

The Ponamac website can be broken down into fundamental elements of visual design. Line, color, shape, texture, volume, value were grouped and described as main tools used by designers to create a visual design. The goal of our visual design was to be minimalistic, remind users about nature, make it easy for the user to understand the layout, and to create flow.

5.1. Colors and fonts

The design process started from choosing colors and fonts. We agreed on the idea that dark-green, beige, and mustard colors are earthy and remind people about nature, but at the same time are contrasting and it is easy to combine them. We used these 3 colors as a background color, button color, font color. Chosen colors helped to connect all the pages of the website visually.

Fonts have been chosen regarding our goal to create a soft, minimalistic style. Therefore, we used a serif font family for headings, and we used a san-serif rounded font for the content text to create a contrast. Fonts created a visual hierarchy on our website as headings and paragraphs have been written in different fonts, so users can understand the structure of the website. The font color depends on the background color, but only 3 colors were used which are listed above.

5.2. Lines and shapes

We used lines and shapes to create buttons and our logo. The logo is an illustration of mountains and the sun with our brand name Ponamac in a circle. To create it, we used lines, shapes and text. Minimalistic style has been kept as a main criteria for the logo. The logo represents the idea of our brand, which is minimalism, sustainability as well as being close to nature. To create buttons, we used circle and rounded rectangle shapes. Smooth angles create a soft visual design, but at the same time it is easy for users to recognize buttons on the website. Buttons are used in global navigation, social media icons and link buttons. All of them are contrasting with a background color, so it is easy to navigate through the website using buttons.

5.3. Gestalt laws

The layout can be explained by the Gestalt laws we used. Our goal was to create a balance between elements, so we needed to follow some of the Gestalt laws and layout principles.

Symmetry

First, it is easily noticeable that vertical symmetry has been used on the “shop” page. All items are aligned into 2 symmetrical columns with the same size images. Additionally, vertical symmetry is used in “added to bag” and billing pages. All buttons and fill-out forms are aligned in one column and create visual balance. Horizontal symmetry has been used in “We think you’ll love” section, images can be scrolled to the side and aligned with the

same spaces between each. The footer is made with horizontal symmetry as well. Important information and social media links are aligned in 2 symmetrical rows.

Similarity

The law of similarity has been used by creating social media icons. They are made in the same shape, color and style, so it groups buttons and the user can understand that it is a section of social media contacts. The law of continuation can be noticed on any of the “shop” pages as well. User can see that the list of items continues, so the user scrolls until the end of the list.

Figure ground

The figure ground law can be found on the website. A section about “Do good with us” contains an illustration of a t-shirt and trees, however it is a flat illustration, so there is an illusion that these figures were cut out from the beige-colored background.

5.4. The 5 seconds test

To understand how users perceive the design, we did a 5 second test and got 15 responses from our target group (20-30 y/o, Europeans). Users were supposed to look carefully at a mood board with 3 colors, 2 fonts and some illustrations related to our concept.

Questions we asked:

- *What is the brand concept you think it is?*
- *What do colors remind you about?*
- *What type of t-shirts do you think the shop sells?*

Summing up the answers, all respondents understood that the idea of our brand is hiking, camping, nature-related and sustainable. Colors reminded them about nature, autumn, coziness, warmth, campfire, and sunset meaning that colors we chose had the desired effect on the users. By analyzing a photo of our mood board, the users could understand that the t-shirts we have in offer are sustainable, perfect for outside activities and have nature inspired prints.

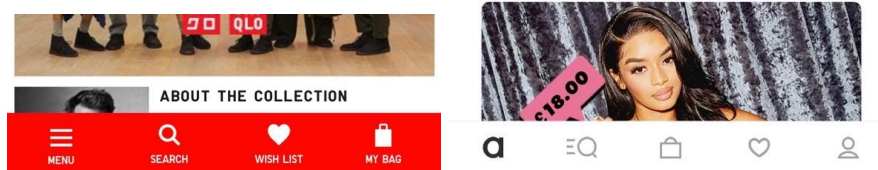
6. Content decisions

6.1. Menu

The sections within the menu button are divided into three categories:

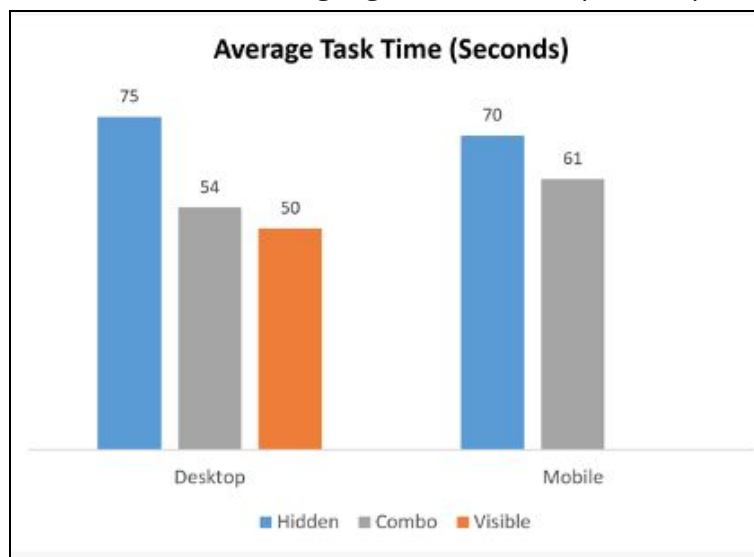
- Shop
- Logo/home button
- Basket (backpack button)

The buttons were carefully chosen to cater to the user's needs and provide a clear overview of key options on the website. Despite many competitors using hamburger navigation, we wanted to provide users with a simplified experience and decrease the number of clicks leading to search or purchase. Additionally, bigger brands usually are linked to a larger product portfolio which justifies the usage of hidden menu allowing the user to see all the product categories upon clicking on the hamburger menu.



Examples of competitors' menus

Visible navigation is proved to be providing a better experience than the hidden one (Pernice and Budiu, 2016). Therefore, a visible navigation was chosen due to the small number of tabs on our website and to highlight the most important parts of the website.



Average task time on mobile and desktop with hidden / visible or combo menus

Pernice and Budiu, 2016

As portrayed, the hidden navigation increases the average task time what can result in the user's frustration and dropping out of the purchase flow journey.

Navigation buttons

- Shop button

Allows the user to easily navigate to the shop section and start the purchase flow.

- Home button

The home button is displayed as a logo what is a usual practice and, as proven by our a think-aloud test, discoverable by users. The logo as a home button is displayed as bigger and more visible than the rest of the navigation options in order to highlight its purpose (Loranger, 2017). Additionally, including the home page button improves UX and SEO as a result (Lymer, 2020). It allows customers to always go back to the very beginning what impacts the number of sites visits resulting in improved SEO. It also creates a less frictional experience for the user as they will be able to easily return to the homepage.

- Basket button

The basket option allows the user to see the status of their basket and easily enter the purchase flow and finish the transaction. As a camping-related brand, we presented the basket icon as a backpack to make it more fun and engaging icon for the user.

6.2. Footer

Footer is a crucial part of the website which allows to include some important information that was not crucial enough to be put in the main navigation bar. Therefore, we placed another **home anchor button, about us, privacy, T&Cs, contact and SoMe icons**.

- Contact information

It is a vital page for customers to reach out about products, shipping or any issues that have emerged and our brand wants to provide the user with easily locatable contact details.

- About us

We believe that showing the story behind our brand and products is important to enhance the brand image and make consumers understand who makes their products and what is the motive behind them. Therefore, including the About Us page allows us to create more personal interaction with the user.

- SoMe icons

SoMe icons further expand the connection with the user and take users for a journey to our different channels where we portray different sides of our brand – daily activities, offers or any extra information.

- T&Cs and Privacy policy

Those pages ensure the user that their information is secured and they can easily review the terms when purchasing the items. This makes the transactions more secure for both the user and the company.

6.3. Shop page

The shop page displayed a dropdown menu to allow the user to navigate through the products depending on the category. We divided the products into:

- View all
- New arrivals
- Bestsellers
- Collection #2

Therefore, this way of dividing allows the user to explore all the products at once or see only new products or the best-selling ones. Additionally, for people more familiarised with our brand, there is also a button to see the older collection.

Shop page also contains microcopy to guide the user to use 'hold to preview' and decrease the number of clicks. This is meant to shorten the journey and make it easier. The preview image would display a gif of the t-shirt to include more engaging visual and attract the user's attention.

6.4. Product description page

This section contains product description, material, delivery and sizes to educate customers about the product/care and available sizes. This is an essential part of the purchase flow to inform the user about the key information in their decision-making process. Moreover, underneath the product, there is a reel '*We think you'll love*' products to extend the purchase interest into adding more products into the basket. This would work on past purchases of different users who purchased similar products. Therefore, this will familiarise them with the wider product portfolio and increase the chance of additional purchase.

6.5. Shopping flow

The shopping flow was designed according to the usual standards including the necessary steps. However, to increase the interactivity of the flow and leave a positive mark in the customer's mind, we added a gif of packing a backpack on the confirmation page. This allows adding humour and interesting spin to a repetitive purchase flow.

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