BOATING APPS FOR NYC

Sources & Reviews for Rowers & Small Motorcraft

https://marynell2.github.io/mmp200/boating2/index.html

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Web pages commissioned by East River CREW, Inc.

CREATIVE BRIEF

Existing Conditions

Over the past decade, small recreational boats including kayaks, rowing boats, personal water craft such as Jet Skis, and small motor boats have increasingly enjoyed recreational access to the rivers and harbor of New York City. They share our harbor estuary, the city's largest public open space, with larger commercial traffic -- ferries, tugs & barges, cruise ships, freighters, and others. To keep everyone safe, informed, and happy on the water, small recreational boaters ("boaters") are required by the U.S. Coast Guard to prepare written reports ("cruise reports") before each trip.

Purpose of site

Apps for mobile phones already provide online sources for much of the required cruise report information. However, hundreds of such apps now exist, and some are better and more relevant than others. None of the apps provide all the information needed for a cruise report. *Boating Apps for NYC* will catalog the most relevant apps, encouraging boaters to download and use the best information for mobile phones. This provides a necessary convenience, and service for the boaters on NY harbor.

Target Audiences

Boat leaders (aka captains, skippers, or coxswains) and onshore "designated worriers" will be the primary users of the apps. However, individuals interested in safety and/or being more active boaters, can begin to understand the importance of each data point on a cruise report, and how best to locate it on their mobile phone. Leadership of large waterfront organizations will also enjoy using the apps to learn more about local waterways. Recently it has become critically important to provide safe and enjoyable boating experiences for all. The new waterfront parks -- Hudson River, Brooklyn Bridge, and the East River Esplanade -- pay careful attention to providing safe, meaningful access to the waterways for boaters of all income groups, ages, and ability levels.

Style

Since the purpose of the site is to foster both safety and fun, the site will be friendly, while maintaining its primary purpose of presenting apps that are accurate, and designed to foster safe and responsible boating practices.

Photos and graphics of a general nature will be included throughout the site, but not an image for each individual app.

Measurable Goals

Success of the website will be measured by traffic to the site, comments to the blog, shares on social media, and new apps added and approved for this moderated database. There may also be a system whereby creators of apps would make small tax-exempt cash transfers to East River CREW Inc, a 501c3 non-profit organization, each time their app is downloaded or purchased.

Content

Information about each app will include: Purpose, Cost, Operating System, Brief Moderator Comment, and App Website URL. The site will also include a blog with moderated comments.

The site specifically does not include sailboats although sailors may find value here too. In general, the apps available to them include specialized information that may be confusing to other boaters.

Functionality

The site will be sortable by Purpose, Cost, Operating System, or Moderator Comments.

Cost info will indicate FREE, or a dollar amount. Operating system will include Apple, Android, and or Apple Watch.

The site will be responsive, supporting desktop, mobile, and tablet sizes.

Giselle and Roxanne, 18 year old students from Inwood, NYC

"We never imagined ourselves actually in a human powered boat on the Hudson, even though it's walking distance from where we live."

Personal Background

Giselle and Roxanne were introduced to open water rowing at a club in their neighborhood and are now finishing up their 2nd season as recreational boaters with some experience in kayaks, rowing boats, and canoes. As CUNY freshmen they enjoy weekend rowing in their neighborhood, and helping others learn to row.

Giselle is a Communications major who is especially interested in event planning. Roxanne is in the nursing program at a different CUNY College, and they enjoy their weekend time together.

Recently Giselle and Roxanne have begun volunteering to help with sign ins and float plans for the free public boating program that originally introduced them to accessing the Hudson River.

Each owns a Samsung smartphone, and has downloaded a variety of Android apps from Google Play. They use their phones primarily for photos, music, texting friends, and staying in phone contact with their families. They often use Google to search for information.

Parents are supportive of this boating hobby, and have met the leaders there. They were originally concerned with safety issues, and often ask their daughters about the safety practices of the boating organization.

Photo courtesy of the Waterfront Alliance, names have been changed

More About Giselle and Roxanne

Motivators

Giselle and Roxanne have learned that tides, currents, weather, and other factors are critical for safe boating. They are familiar with the Eldridge Tide and Current Guide, an annual $14 paperback used by leaders to provide info for NY Harbor, but given that they must buy textbooks, they seek a more affordable way to get the information.

Goals

Realizing that some boaters find the required info online, Giselle and Roxanne decide to find the best free App or Apps to prepare the paperwork required for boating days.

Needs

Giselle and Roxanne seek an accurate, helpful, and affordable source.

Engagement & Activities

Personal Computer: Each has a PC at home, shared with other family members. The families take advantage of the free MS Office suite available to CUNY students, but since it is a shared computer, most of Giselle and Roxanne's personal interactions are on their phones.

Internet Usage: "Digital natives" who have never known a world without Internet, Giselle and Roxanne are very comfortable using digital media in almost all aspects of their lives.

Mobile: Due to news reports about horrific events, the families require that they take phones to school and work to be in touch in case of emergencies.

Social Networking: A second indispensable use of phone & computer is for building and maintaining social networks via Facebook, Instagram, and more recently LinkedIn for professional connections.

Television Shows: The Fosters, Grey's Anatomy, One Day at a Time

Magazines: People, New York, Latina,

Scenario

The purpose of the **"Apps for NYC Boaters"** website is to steer people to Apps that would be most helpful to them as boaters in NYC. Therefore, most users would use the site heavily until they had identified the best Apps to download, and return to the site to rate their app and comment on their experience using the site.

Since they each attend a different college, Giselle and Roxanne agree to meet after school at Giselle's house to look for helpful Apps.
Due to work and school, time was limited for the search and download project.
They had heard of the website "Apps for NYC Boaters" via a blog for their local boat club, and decided to try it.
When they realized they could limit their search to "Free Apps" the work was made easier.

Using the family's PC, they take turns opening links for the various Apps. While one was searching via computer, the other searched by phone.

After about a half hour of time, they identified 5 Apps they liked best. One Apps they agreed was best, and each decided to download it onto their phone. For the other 4, they each downloaded 2 different Apps, and agreed to meet in a week or so, and compare notes to see if any 2 of the 4 was best, or if they would stay with the Apps they had originally downloaded.

Several weeks later they met, decided not to make any changes, and went back to the "Apps for NYC Boaters" to rate the Apps and comment about their experience.

Since then Giselle and Roxanne have been able to work out float plans in advance, or if they had to rush, much of the information could be accessed at the boathouse as rowers arrived and signed in.

Personal Background

While working on his B.A. at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, Robert was an elite rower on the college team.
As a kid, he had canoed and kayaked at camp, and on vacations with his parents. When he decided to move to NYC after graduation to pursue a career, his family was confused – they thought he would be most happy in a suburban or small-town environment.

Robert adjusted to city life, but missed the boating he experienced growing up and in college. When he found it was possible to row outdoors without leaving NYC he was curious, impressed, and eager to know more. He visited some of the NYC clubs and organizations and became active in several. He was especially interested getting to know the cross section of New Yorkers from all paths of life who share this passion.

One great surprise was that the rowing boats of NYC are designed differently than the skinny and sleek boats he rowed at Cornell. However, he soon realized that due to strong tides, currents, and waves from commercial river traffic, the boats and safety procedures in NYC are extensive and differently detailed.

Robert figured out some of the required measurements based on college science courses, but that did not help calculate other factors required on float plans. Robert decided to try "**Apps for NYC Boaters**" recommended by college students. The website provided a means to narrow his search and identify which of the many boating Apps would be most helpful.

Photo courtesy of the Waterfront Alliance

"I never thought I'd end up here!"

More About Robert

Motivators
Becoming a knowledgeable and skilled part of his new cohort of open water rowers is important to Robert, as is the idea that access onto the water should be available to all New Yorkers.

Goals
Working a full-time job, Robert needs to most quickly identify and download the Apps that will be most helpful to him, so that that he might safely enjoy his and others' NYC rowing experiences.

Needs
Robert is looking for access to boating info relevant to this geographic area: the Hudson, Harlem, and East Rivers, plus NY Harbor.

Engagement & Activities

Personal Computer: Fluent with both Mac and PC, an advanced user who uses computer analytics at work. At home he streams videos, listens to music
Internet Usage: Extensive both for work and personally. Uses Yelp to and Time Out NY apps to find restaurants and things to do in the city.
Mobile: Uses for both business and personal calls. Does photography and listens to music. He has a paid subscription to the NY Times online, and recently purchased an Apple Watch.

Social Networking: Moderate, uses LinkedIn professionally and Facebook for friends and family.
Television Shows: PBS News Hour, Master of None, Game of Thrones
Magazines: Popular Science, New York, Forbes

Scenario

Robert has been invited on a "Row Around Manhattan," which is expected to take about eight hours, given favorable tides, currents, and winds. The event is scheduled to take place in three weeks' time.

Up until now, Robert had depended on boat leaders to plan out the row, and let him and the crew know the details such as when to arrive on the day of the row. He admits to himself that he had been a bit lazy, or perhaps too busy, to double check the information he was given. However, he is a bit worried given the planned length of the row in both time and miles: about eight hours to row about 24 miles.

He decides to double check the event leaders' calculations this time. He had heard of the website "**Apps for NYC Boaters**" from a several college students who used it for filling out float plan forms, and he decided to try the App, later at his apartment.

As he looked at selected Apps on his MacBook Air, Robert realized that some give detailed information on other areas besides New York City. It was of interest that he could use these Apps while visiting family or while on vacation. He also saw that several Apps would work on his Apple Watch. Since having an abundance of information was more important to Robert than price, Robert made his choices accordingly.

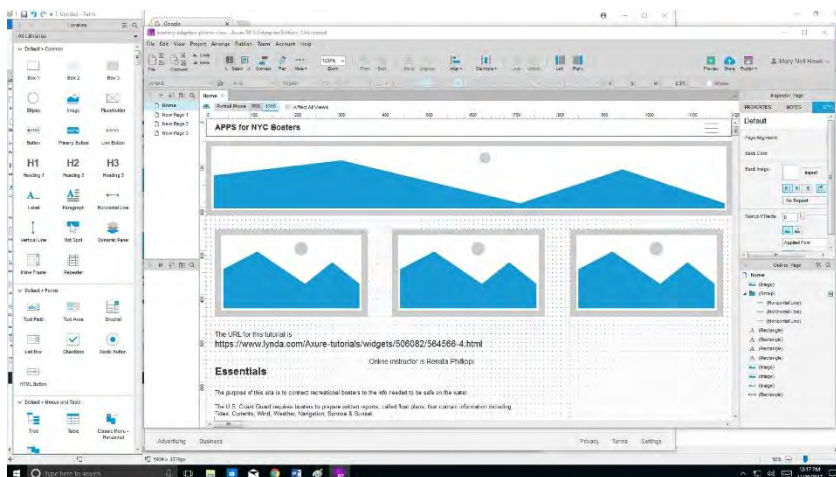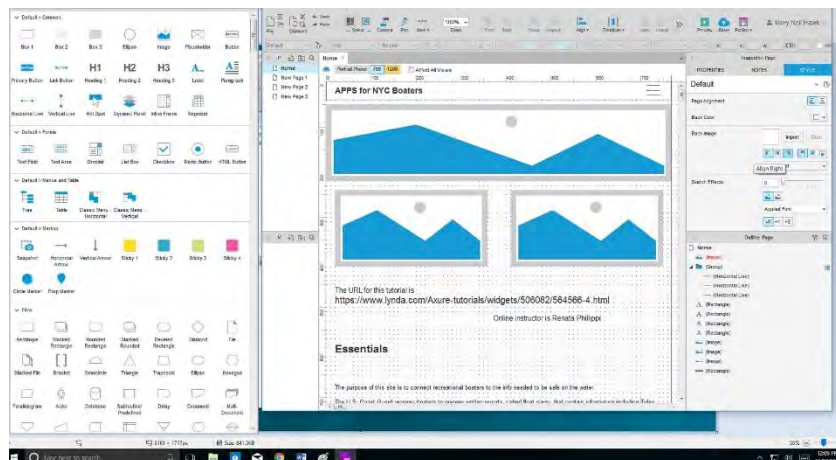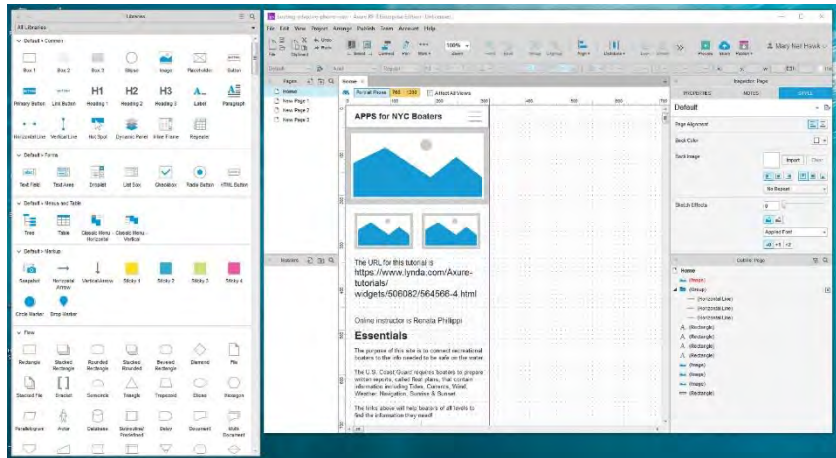Several weeks later he rated and commented to the **"Apps for NYC Boaters"** website
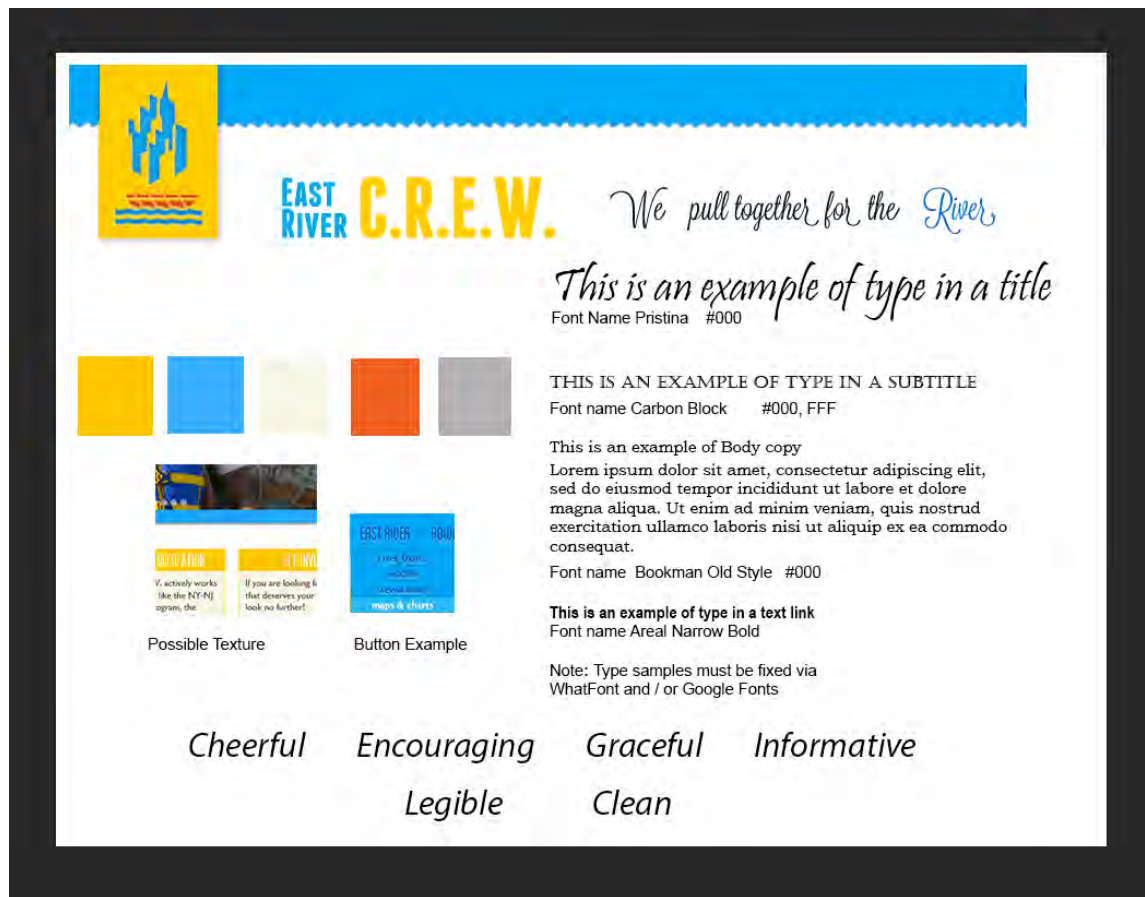
SKETCH OF MOBILE FIRST HOMEPAGE

PROTOTYPE

Axure Homepage Prototype in mobile, tablet, and desktop views. Finished website features a slideshow of various boating aps at the top and three text (not photo) columns beneath that.

STYLE TILE

This is a style Tile for the parent website, East River CREW. The site is now several years old, and some of the original fonts were not available or hard to locate.

URL for the finished site is:

https://marynell2.github.io/mmp200/boating-2.html