**NOTE: This project is for a DHS Component. I can only discuss it in vague details.**

Overall Problem:

The hiring process is decentralized and lengthy (up to a year) causing potential candidates to drop off or find other opportunities because they have no way of knowing at which stage of the hiring process they are. At the same time, end users are frustrated because they have to use up to 3 disjointed applications to keep the process ongoing and frequently their records are kept in PDF format making record keeping not secure.

Because of a need to hire new employees, Congress has mandated to improve the process and make it a gold standard for talent acquisition. No pressure!

## Project Statement:

**Create a centralized system, a mobile/desktop app that connects three applications in one providing the end-users a clean and intuitive experience with quick access to information and status views based on their unique user roles.**

## My Problem:

I came on board in the middle of the software development process. The team hadn’t done any research and concentrated only on building features to meet deadlines.

The team is not able to directly communicate with the end users because of internal politics where intermediary was a PO; team’s only and limited exposure to end-users was during bi-weekly demos.

My immediate goals were to:

* Identify end-user problems and correlate them to user stories already in the backlog;
* Create user personas;
* Conduct research/discovery and user interviews;
* Create user journeys and story maps to identify the MVP to control feature creep;
* Create wireframes and working prototypes based on research and findings;
* Evangelize for user-centered development with the team and stakeholders.

## Solution:

* I attended ALL demos where I could ask probing questions and listen in on end-users’ reactions to the demo, their questions and requests;
* I attended UAT to look at the way how the users interacted with the working prototypes.
* After studying all the documentation, research findings and permissions matrices I have identified 3 types of users:
  + HQ personnel
    - Process on average 5K applications daily – ouch!
    - Extremely busy. Not very tech savvy on top of using outdated technology = slow computer systems.
    - Might have other responsibilities that will take them away from processing applications.
  + Satellite office personnel
    - Process on average 500 applications daily
    - Small office workers with a lot of administrative responsibilities.
    - Use outdated technology – it’s the government after all.
  + Manager/Super User
    - Have many responsibilities and generally very busy.
    - They are responsible for approving/rejecting applicants so their life is stressful.
    - Generally, must look through 100s of applicants’ information, which can possibly give anyone a head ache.
    - Mistake probability is high.
* Created user journeys and story maps.
* Created mockups and working prototypes (see attached before and earlier after mocks)
* Helped the team with implementing some of the prototypes into .Net framework, for that I had to familiarize myself with .Net and Visual Studio quickly.
* Continued working with the team on new features and identifying high risk - high impact features from low risk - high impact, etc.

## Outcome:

Together with my team we built application that’s clean and doesn’t need much onboarding to understand.

* It uses visual hierarchies and cues to progress the user through the stages of applicant checks quickly.
* The hero area presents all useful information about an applicant, which provides high level information about the applicant’s status. The user doesn’t have to look for the information to know where the applicant stands.
* Each hiring stage is represented in a “progress bar” that uses color codes to identify the status of each stage and provides cross navigation.
* Each stage has a familiar structure with grouped fields to make form heavy UI easily digestible.
* The application uses a simple navigation presenting only the information pertinent to the user without any distractions.
* Each major user initiated action generates notification to keep applicants informed of their status.
* All stages have auto-generated due date and notification system to keep them on track of the process.
* Managers/Super Users have access to a visual dashboard of the current applicant pool where they can distill to specific job types, areas or applicants and see the birds-eye view of the process.
* The application is built to be responsive.
* Application uses corporate/neutral color scheme, modern flat design based off Materialize framework integrated with Kendo UI framework.

Although, not foolproof and is still growing and building, this application has made strides from last year November when I started. The team is now working fully in Agile UX methodology for which I have evangelized and promoted during this process.