



Versatile

An application for the creative writer

Project proposal

How can I help writers create and share their work?

Can mobile devices be used to this end?

Can I create a distraction free creative environment?



Project proposal

Versatile is an application for the creative writer.

Versatile is text editor that provides tools for:

- creation,
- sharing, and,
- critiquing poetry.

Easter Wings

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory;
For, if I imp' my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Competition

- VersePerfect - unmaintained
- Jotterpad - not cross platform
- Normal text editors - usually not good on mobile

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Contextual inquiry

User groups:

- Creative writers
- Readers of creative work
- Critics and teachers of writing
- People trying to get into creative writing



Interviews

Interviewed four participants

- A slam poet
- A regular student
- A rapper
- A professor in the English department



Interview technique

Semi structured interview. Because:

- Writing is an intensely personal thing
- People do it differently
- I Learn more information
- Conversational tone

Screening

- Screening question - do you write or journal?
- Recruitment method - word of mouth and random selection.
- Went to campus cultural events like:
 - Lounge
 - Poetically minded
 - Brown bags

Sample interview questions

- How often do you write?
- Under what conditions do you write?
- Do you interact with other media when you write?
- Do you use your phone to note or record thoughts, if so how?
- What kinds of things do you keep track of when you write?

Insights

- Feedback - continuous feedback (more experienced)
- Idea generation - help getting into the habit of writing (beginners)
- Revision process - multiple versions of the same thing (more experienced writers)
- Creative work space - aural and visual prompts

Observations

Finished poems	Drafts	In-progress	Workflow
Stored in PDFs	Apple pages	Spread between pages and notes	Notes -> Pages -> PDF
Hard and soft copies	Hard and soft copies	Hard and soft copies	Type -> Print -> Type
Recorded and written	Phone notes	Phone notes	Phone -> Write -> Record
Tumblr blog	Text editor	Text editor	Notes -> Text editor-> Blog
Paper or phone	Paper phone	Phone	Paper <-> phone

User stories

As a consistent writer, I need a way of making copies of my revisions so that I keep track of all the permutations of my ideas



User stories

As a busy professional I need a reminder system to remind me when to write and what to write so that I can make a habit out of writing.

As an amateur writer I need to be prompted on what to write so that I can learn how to generate ideas.

As a professional writer, I need to share my writing with peers so that I can get detailed feedback from them.

User stories

As a reader, I would like an easy, non-invasive way to comment on a writer's work so I can help writers grow.

As an digital native that writes, I need a to be able to share my writing on popular blogging platforms so I can share my work with my usual readership.

Requirements

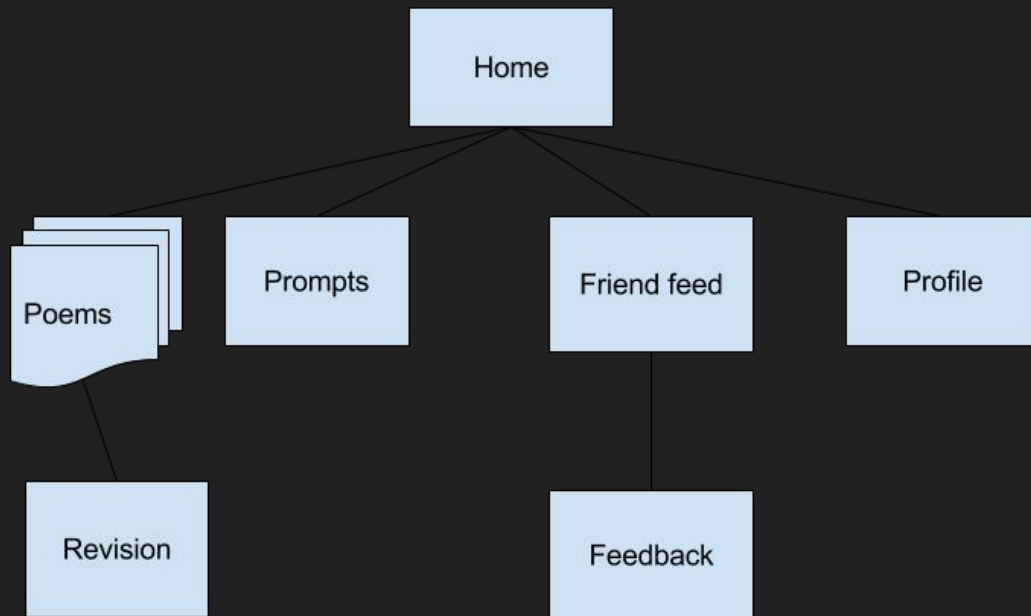
Casual user:

- Notification and prompts
- Community for writing and sharing
- Guiding tools (rhyme and scanning)

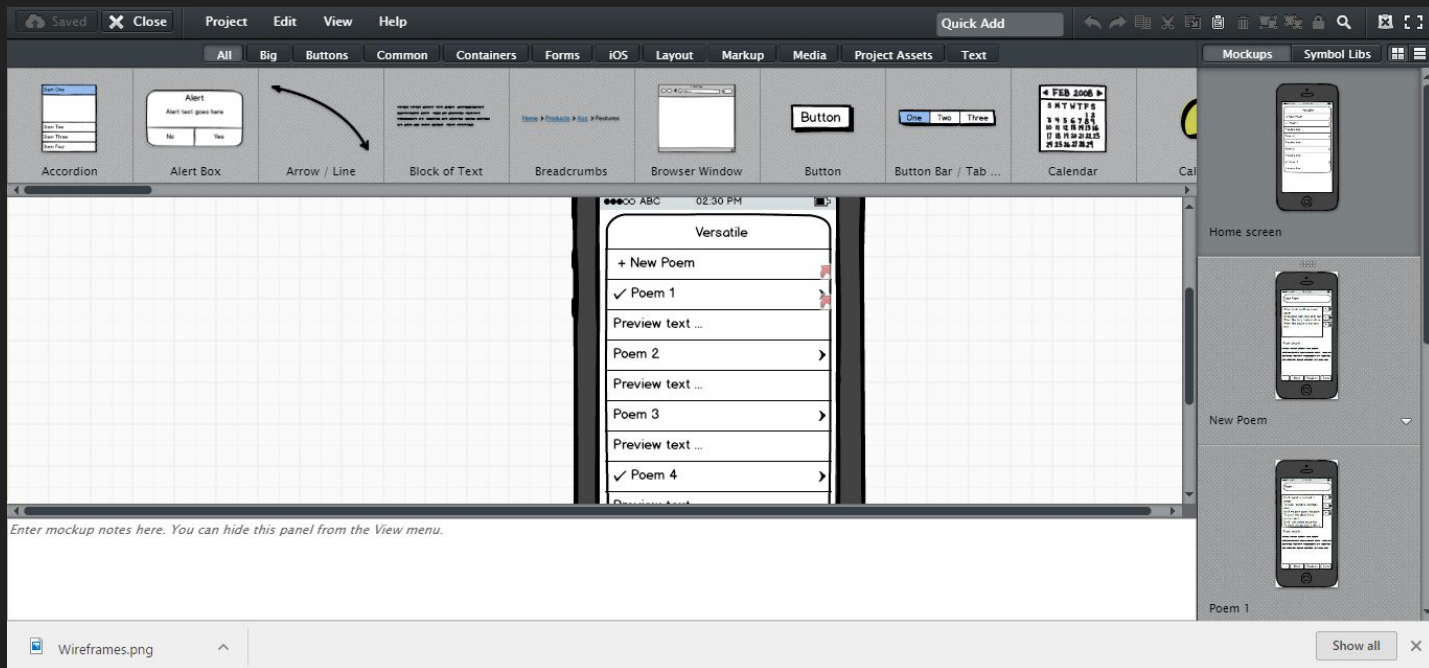
Serious user:

- Revision
- Sharing and feedback
- Ability to change form
- Add other media

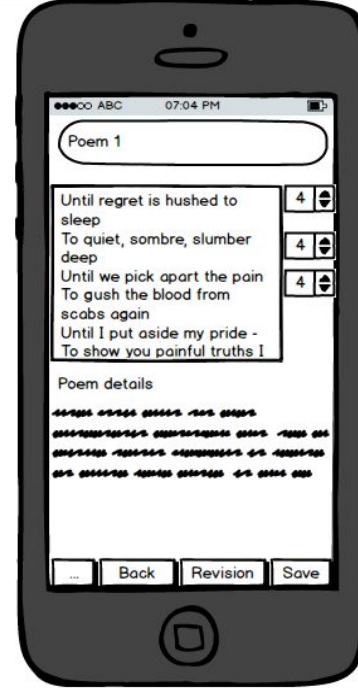
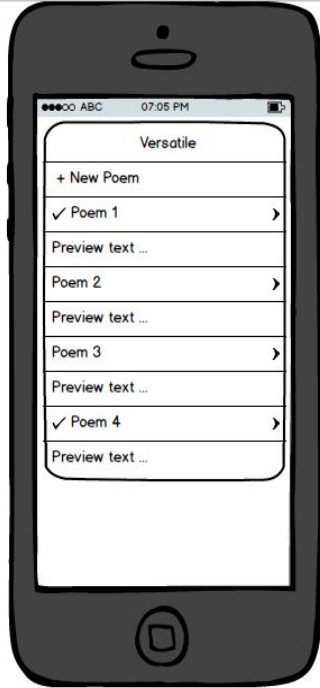
Site map



Initial design



Initial design



Initial design

- Mock up made in Balsamiq.
- Menu page showing poems immediately.
- Stayed faithful to site map
- Minimal visual clutter - included only parts of application that allowed for navigation
- Preloaded with “Lorem ipsum.”

User testing

Testing centered on how intuitive the design is:

- Creating and revising a poem
- Browsing poetry
- Prompts

Ran two testing session - one Lo-Fi, one Hi-Fi.

Observation prompts

- Create a new poem
- Create a revision for that poem
- Change the font on the poem/margins
- Mark the poem as done
- Share the poem
- Read a friend's poem
- Critique the poem
- Get a writing prompt

Observations

- Navigation was intuitive to most - minimal design.
- Most users didn't know what "revision" meant and avoided the button - opting instead to go back and press and hold the list.
- Users requested that there be a way to move from the prompt to writing a poem
- Add custom colour scheme
- Sharing and review were difficult to mimic on mobile and users found the process unintuitive.

Demo