





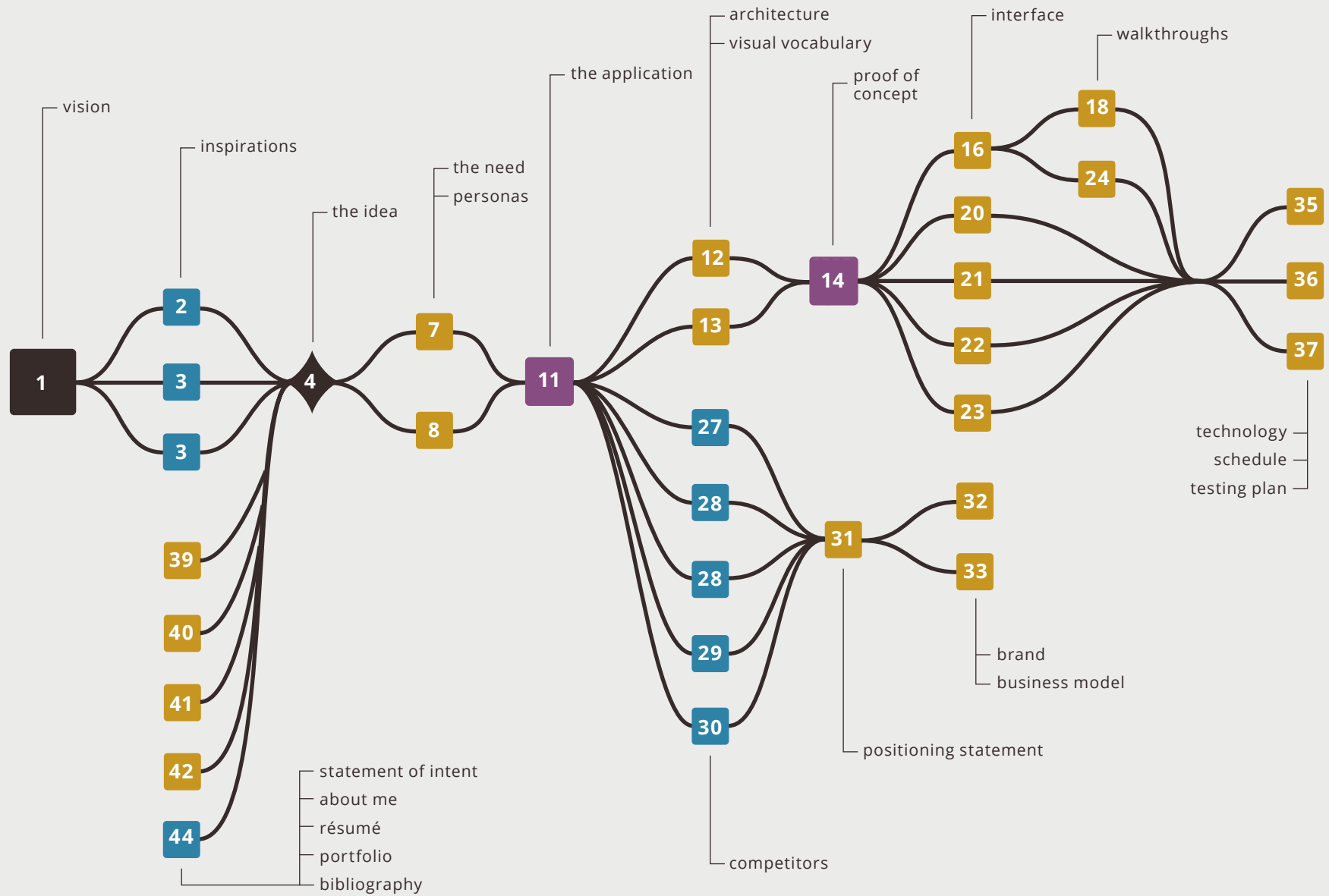
Bloomcase  
MFA Thesis – Midpoint Proposal

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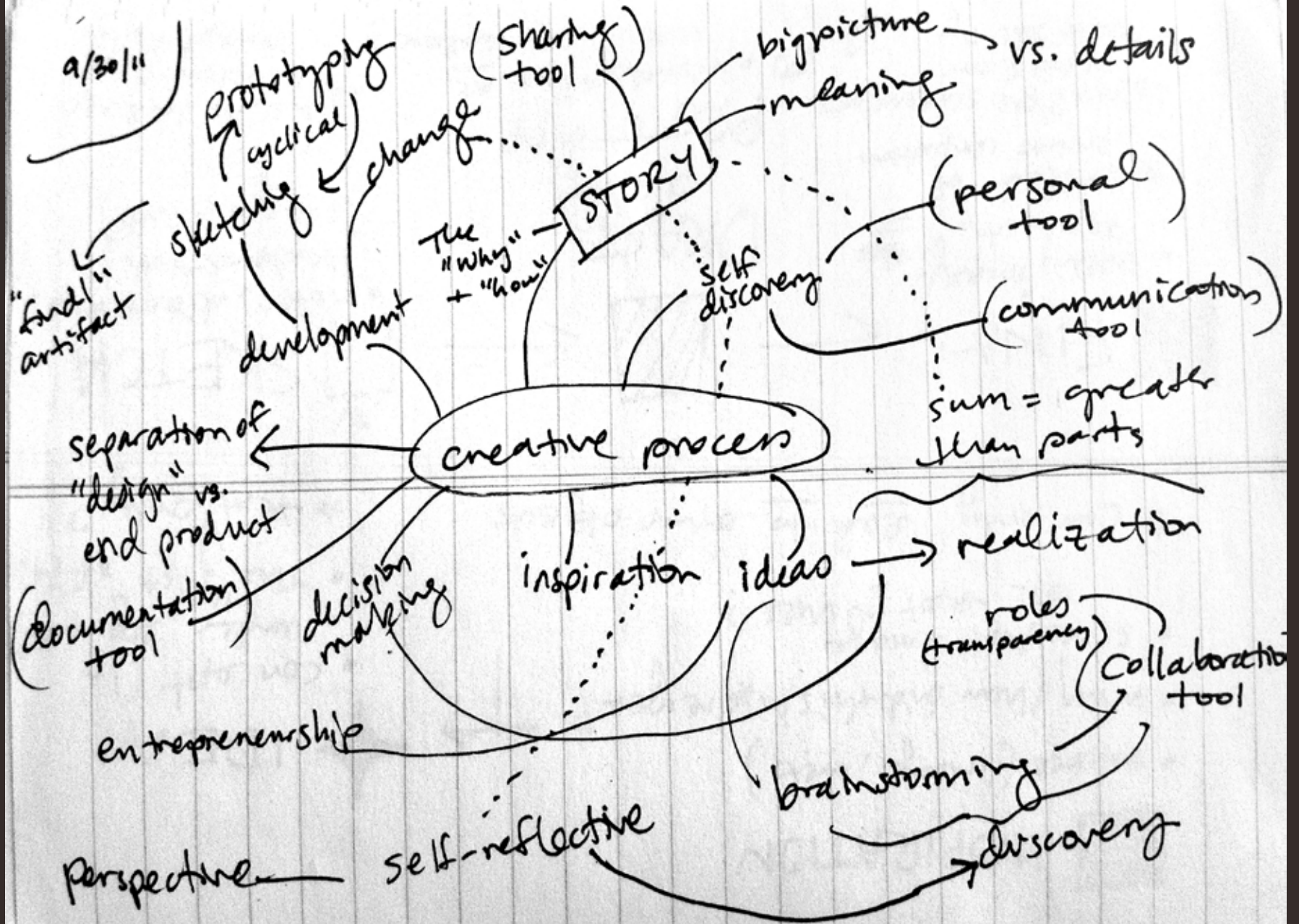
View Bloomcase online at [www.bloomcase.com](http://www.bloomcase.com)  
Contact the author at [www.meganerinmiller.com](http://www.meganerinmiller.com)

A midpoint thesis proposal submitted to the  
Academy of Art University School of Web Design  
& New Media in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

# table of contents



9/30/11



# vision

*Creativity and creative problem-solving are gold in today's world, yet most creative people do not have a platform to showcase their creative process.*

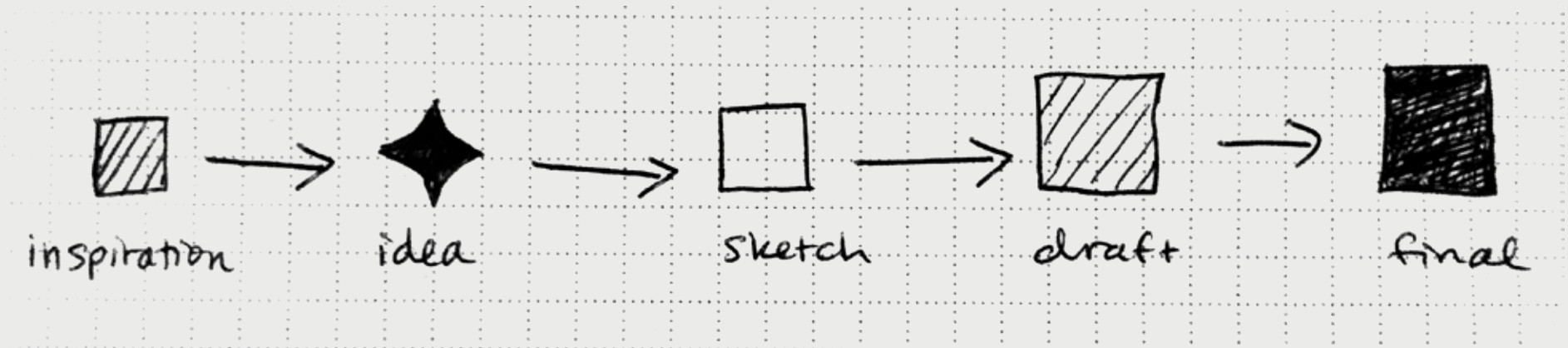
In many academic, industry, and freelance situations, being able to communicate the creative process is just as important as showcasing the finished product. Artists, architects, product designers, interaction and web designers, and even entrepreneurs need a way to tell the story of their creative process, highlight their problem-solving skills, and showcase their work in greater depth than ever before.

In my conversations with other creative individuals, I have realized how often they struggle with finding a way to showcase their work that can be true to their unique process and methods. I believe that there can be a flexible tool for doing just this.

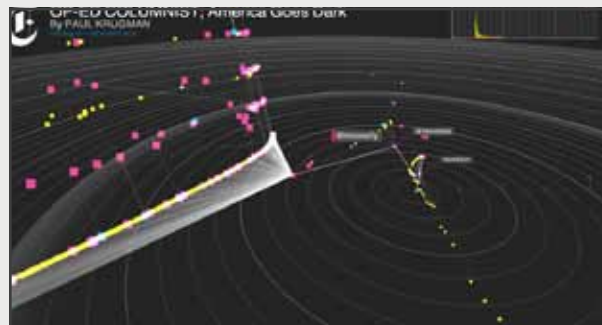
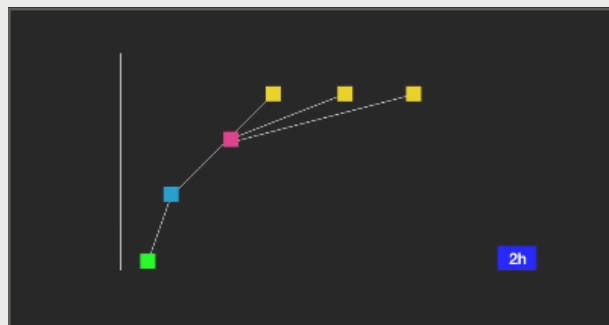
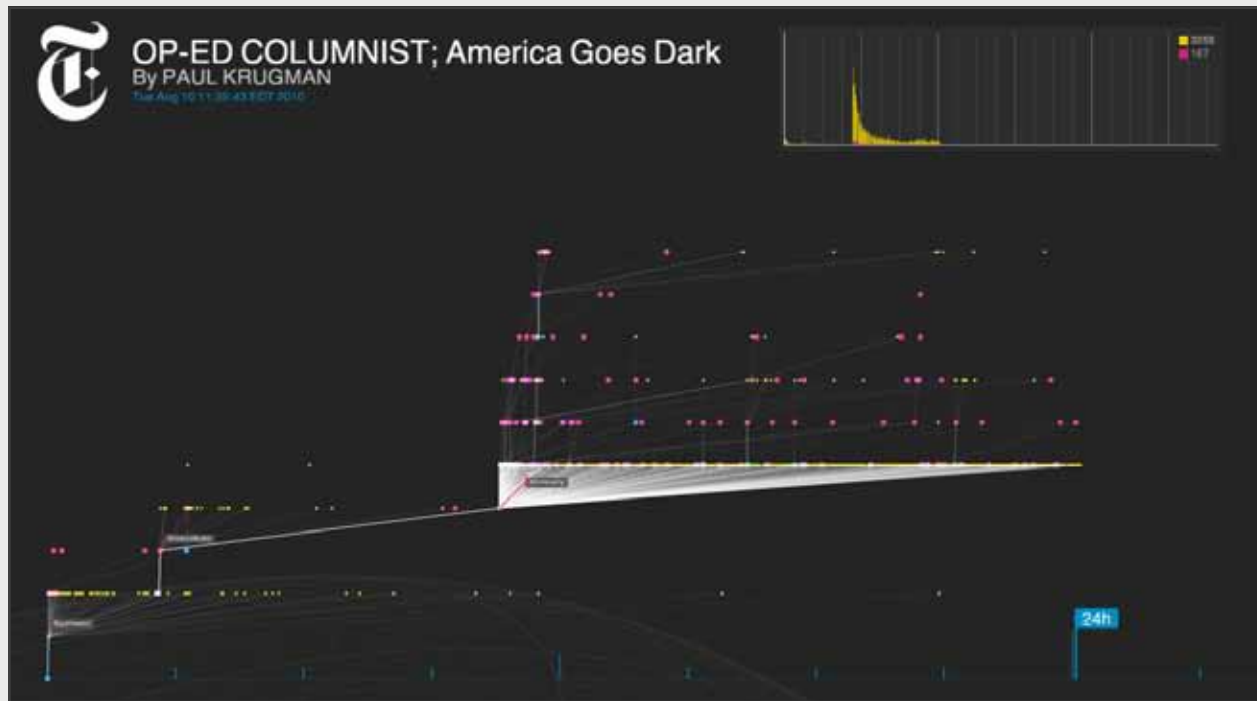
My thesis work began with asking a series of questions: How can I show the evolution of a creative work, the development process, the collaborative nature of a project, the inspirations behind a work, the moments of decision along the way? What if there was a simple way to document and showcase the backstory of a creative work, and a common visual language for doing so?

I envision a tool that will allow creatives to document, curate, and highlight their process as well as the finished product. This tool can be a flexible and scalable platform enabling the construction of a dynamic, powerful, visual portfolio that tells the story of creative work. This tool can also be a platform for brainstorming, collaboration, and networking — a platform for developing creative work, not just documenting it.

In this proposal I outline my inspirations behind the idea for this project, the needs of my target audience, and my solution for creating a new tool for showcasing the creative process.



# inspirations



## Cascade

<http://nytlabs.com/protect/projects/cascade.html>

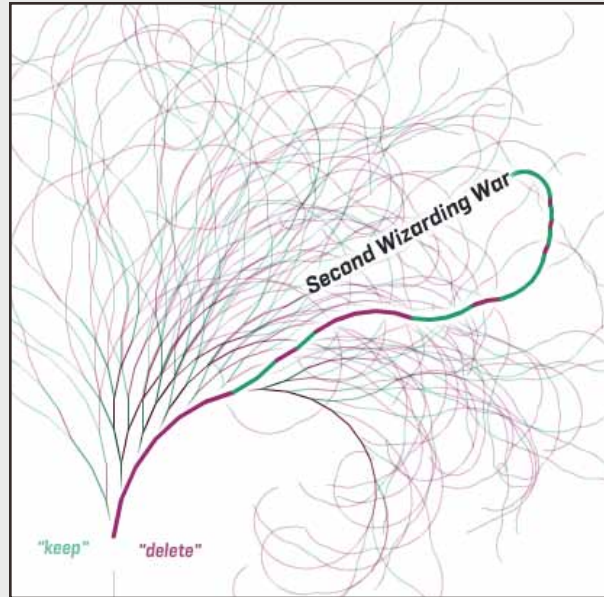
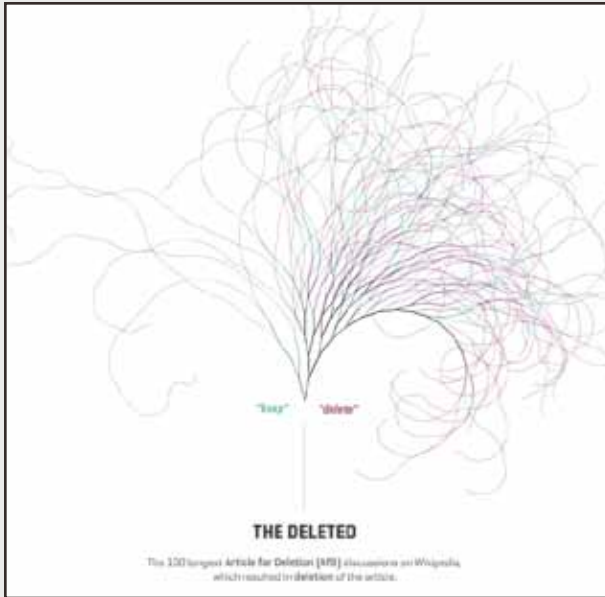
New York Times Company Research & Development Lab

Cascade presents a new way to browse the sharing activity of New York Times articles through social media. The visualization provides new insight into the propagation of information, showing connections between users, stories, and communities.

I first saw this project presented at the Eyeo Festival in June 2011 by Jer Thorp, Data Artist in Residence at the New York Times. He shared the fundamental principles used to make the visualization, including the basic code used to make the interconnected node structures. This visualization of links and connections over time inspired me to think about how I could visually represent the evolution of a creative project and map the development process.

*Left Top: Side view of the Cascade for a New York Times story. Bottom Left: Basic principle of node connection over time for a story. Bottom Right: Close-up of the perspective view of the Cascade.*





## Notabilia

<http://notabilia.net>

Moritz Stefaner

Notabilia (left) visualizes the deletion discussions on Wikipedia, highlighting the nature and shape of collective decisions about the inclusion of a topic. This visualization shows complex decisions in a simple and intuitive way, allowing the user to explore with a sense of serendipity. Notability inspires me with its simple and fun interface, and its clear presentation of progression, decision-making, and conclusion.

## Friends & Students

I have been very inspired by the creativity of my fellow designer, musician, and artist friends. Watching them in the process of creation, discovery, and decision-making has shown me how deeply important it is to show the story of their creativity. At Stanford I taught a course for three years titled "Technology for Artists" in which I enabled students to create web portfolios. In watching them struggle to show their own creative process, I have been inspired to create a tool to help them better showcase their creativity.

**Bottom Left:** My friends Jack and Natalie.

**Bottom Right:** An architecture student from my class.



# the idea



*The idea is to rethink the traditional portfolio format to showcase the creative process through visual storytelling, create a scalable and flexible tool for creatives and innovators, and in the long run create a platform for collaboration.*

## Introducing Bloomcase

Bloomcase lets you tell the story behind your creative work. Through Bloomcase, you will be able to map inspirations, ideas, sketches, drafts, and final work in a visual interface that tells the relational story of your creative process. The platform will allow you to share a curated public view of your creative work and development process through “gallery” and “story” modes, allowing you to show points of decision, the brilliant ideas that transformed your project’s concept, the inspirations that sparked it all, and the steps you took to develop the finished work.

Bloomcase will be a scalable interface, useful for showcasing small-scale projects as well as complex development processes. You can decide how in-depth you want to go in documenting and showcasing the backstory of your work. If you are a creative of any kind, you will be able to use Bloomcase to build dynamic and intuitive maps of the backstory of your finished work. You will be able to show the sketches behind the painting, the iterative development process behind the product, or the path of ideas behind the company.

## Visual Interface

Through a simple intuitive interface, users can add and link artifacts of their creative process in a dynamically visualized relational map. The interface will support a collection of web links, images, textual notes, and in the future, video and audio. Each artifact will be connected to other artifacts uploaded as part of a project. The user will define whether something “developed from” or was “inspired by” another artifact. Based on these relationships, and time-stamp data associated with each item, the artifacts will be visualized in a relational and loosely chronological map.

## Telling a Controlled Story

Users can add notes/comments to each artifact, and select whether the artifact should be made public as part of the backstory of that project. In this way, users may choose to keep an entire project private, or to only showcase highlighted moments along the project’s journey. Alternatively, a user may wish to share all steps of the project, keeping all artifacts and notes public.



## Public Presentation Modes

There will be two public modes to view a project — gallery mode and story mode. In gallery mode, users can choose to showcase their projects in a more traditional manner, showing large, splashy images of finished work, with the option for a visitor to view the backstory of the work. In story mode, the user can choose which artifacts to include in a narrative-structured “tour” of their creative process. In this mode, visitors will “step” through artifacts in the project, reading notes from the creator and learning about the development of the finished work.

## Creative Collaboration

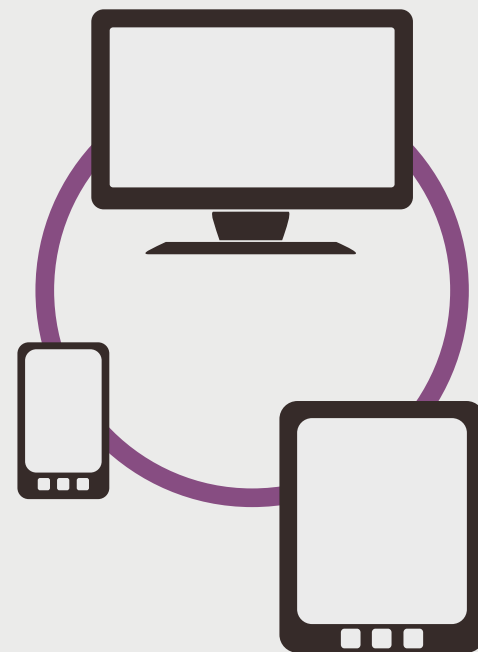
Bloomcase can eventually become a platform for collaboration. Although this functionality will most likely not be present in the first iteration, Bloomcase will eventually be an ideal tool for brainstorming, idea generation, and documentation of collaborative projects. Similar to Google Docs, I envision users creating “shared” projects, in which each user can add artifacts and comments, and users can collaborate through private chat and project notes.

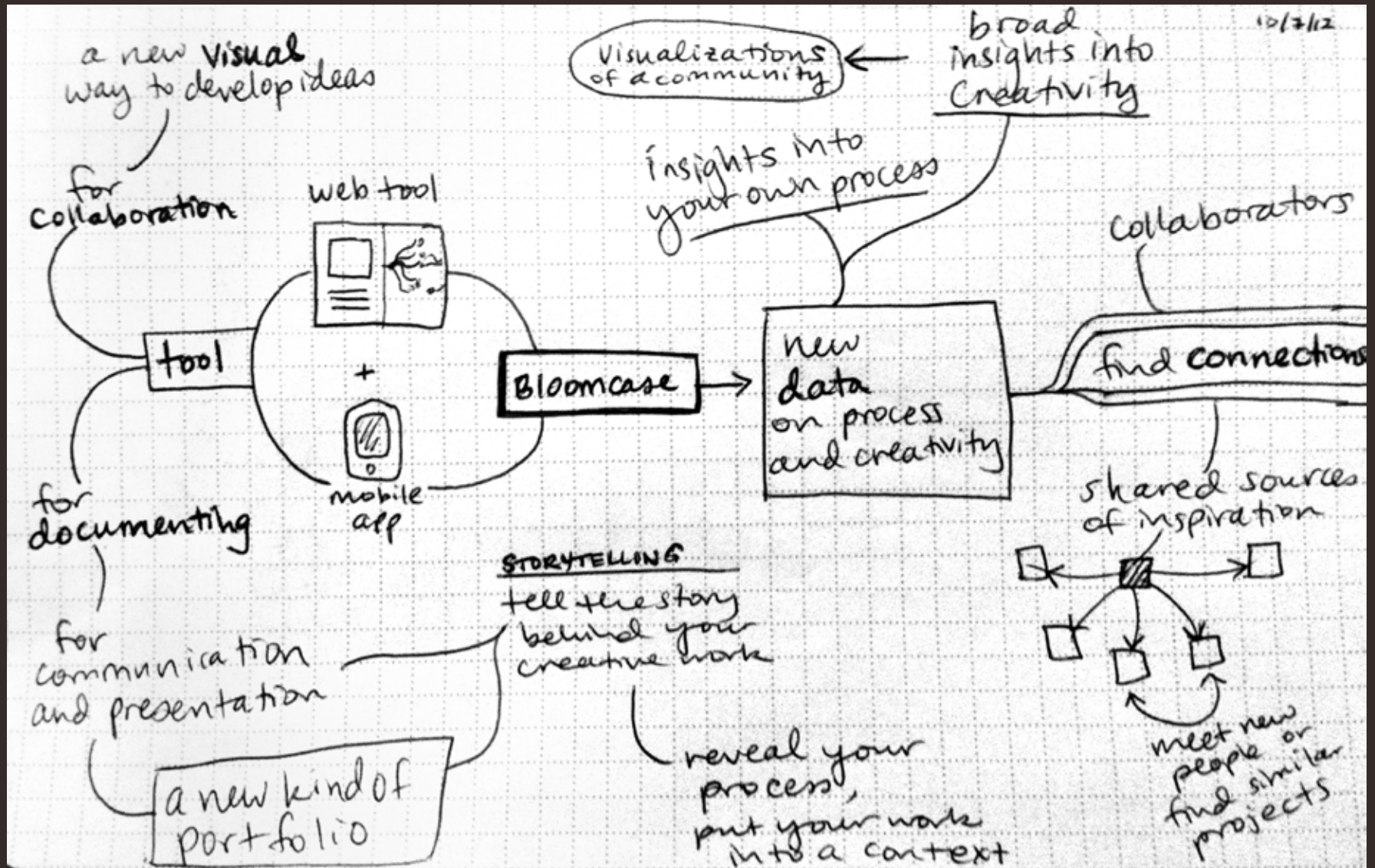
## Multi-device Strategy

Bloomcase will need to take advantage of mobile devices in order to become truly useful. Applications for iPhone, iPad, and Android will be designed to take advantage of the functionality available and the user habits related to those devices.

For example, the iPhone (and other smartphones) are small screens, but these devices are always kept with their users. These smartphones are the most intimately available mobile devices, and Bloomcase will take advantage of these as agents for collecting artifacts to add to projects. Through a simple interface that allows a user to either type a note or snap a picture, the user can quickly add artifacts to their projects.

Tablets on the other hand have larger screen capacities, and are more suited to hand-drawn sketching. Thus this capability will be added, as well as more complex actions such as visual interface for connecting, sorting, and moving artifacts within projects. These mobile apps can be a source of income for the project, supplementing the free account that will be available to anyone online after a simple registration.





**Mind map** – Bloomcase will be a tool on many levels such as documentation, communication, storytelling, collaboration, and gaining new insights into creative process.

# the need

Bloomcase will enable unique, visual storytelling for a large user base of creatives and innovators. Within our increasingly connected yet isolating world of technology, we need new ways of communicating that take advantage of the tools available at our fingertips to bring us closer together in understanding.

## What are people struggling with?

Creatives and innovators are in need of better tools to tell the story behind their work. For example, there are a million good designers showcasing their finished work, but what was their process? Companies more and more are looking to understand a person's potential, their problem-solving capabilities, and their creative process — not just their talent.

## Why is Bloomcase relevant?

Bloomcase uniquely addresses the need to showcase process, whether that is physical development of a creative work or mental process behind the conceptual development of work. This flexible and scalable tool can be relevant to a number of different constituents and industries, providing a new way to reflect on and expose creative process and problem solving.

## Case Study #1: Design Student

Laurie is an undergraduate student in architectural design with a focus in interior design. She is applying to internships and graduate schools and wants a way to highlight her creative process and not just her finished prototypes to her potential employers and future faculty. She uses Bloomcase to create a curated online portfolio that shows key points along the path of creation for each piece. She includes the public link to her Bloomcase portfolio in her applications instead of having a personal website.

## Case Study #2: Multimedia Artist

Kay is a multimedia artist and designer. He creates installation exhibits at festivals, museums, and galleries. He regularly documents with photos each step of his creative process when setting up a new installation. He is giving a public talk at a conference and wants a unique way to show the process he went through in developing his most recent work. He uses Bloomcase to make a public narrated photo slideshow presentation of his creative process that his audience can follow along with online at his Bloomcase profile.

## Case Study #3: Entrepreneur

Jason is a young entrepreneur. He and his friend David are starting a company together and want a way to document the decisions they make in the company formation process. They use Bloomcase's collaboration feature to document their notes and thought process in real time. Later they will use Bloomcase's public presentation mode to help tell the story of their company's formation.

## Case Study #4: Web Professional

Mica is a user experience professional working for a company that designs websites and web applications. She is working on streamlining her team's process, and decides to use Bloomcase to create a map of the ideal project timeline and work flow. She takes one of her client's projects as an example and places it into Bloomcase, adding notes to communicate with her team about each phase of the project. She uses Bloomcase to propose this new streamlined process to her teammates and supervisor.

# personas



## Laurie

Architectural Design Student

Age 21

### Wants

To show the creative process behind portfolio work, not just the finished work

### Needs

Tool should be flexible, controllable, professional, and have great design

### Loves

Late night study breaks with friends, creating miniature models of big buildings

### Fears

She might never get a job

### Hopes/Dreams

To get an internship in New York at a well-established architectural firm



## Kay

Multimedia Artist

Age 28

### Wants

To share his recent projects with his audience at a conference presentation

### Needs

Tool needs to support photos and video embedding

### Loves

His Nikon DSLR

### Fears

That no one will understand his talent

### Hopes/Dreams

To get an installation in the MOMA some day



## Jason

Young Entrepreneur

Age 24

### Wants

To share how his brilliant idea came into being, because it definitely is brilliant and worth sharing

### Needs

A tool that will work on the fly, respond fast, and sync between all his devices. Needs to keep his work private until launching his business

### Loves

Brainstorming ways to solve big problems

### Fears

That his ideas are not good enough to find investors

### Hopes/Dreams

To become known by others as the “idea” man



## Mica

Web Professional

Age 35

### Wants

To streamline and understand her team’s process, focusing on increasing efficiency

### Needs

To document the team’s process to uncover areas of improvement. Needs it to be private and accessible and editable for the whole team

### Loves

Beautiful design, useful tools, to connect with other designers and get/give referrals

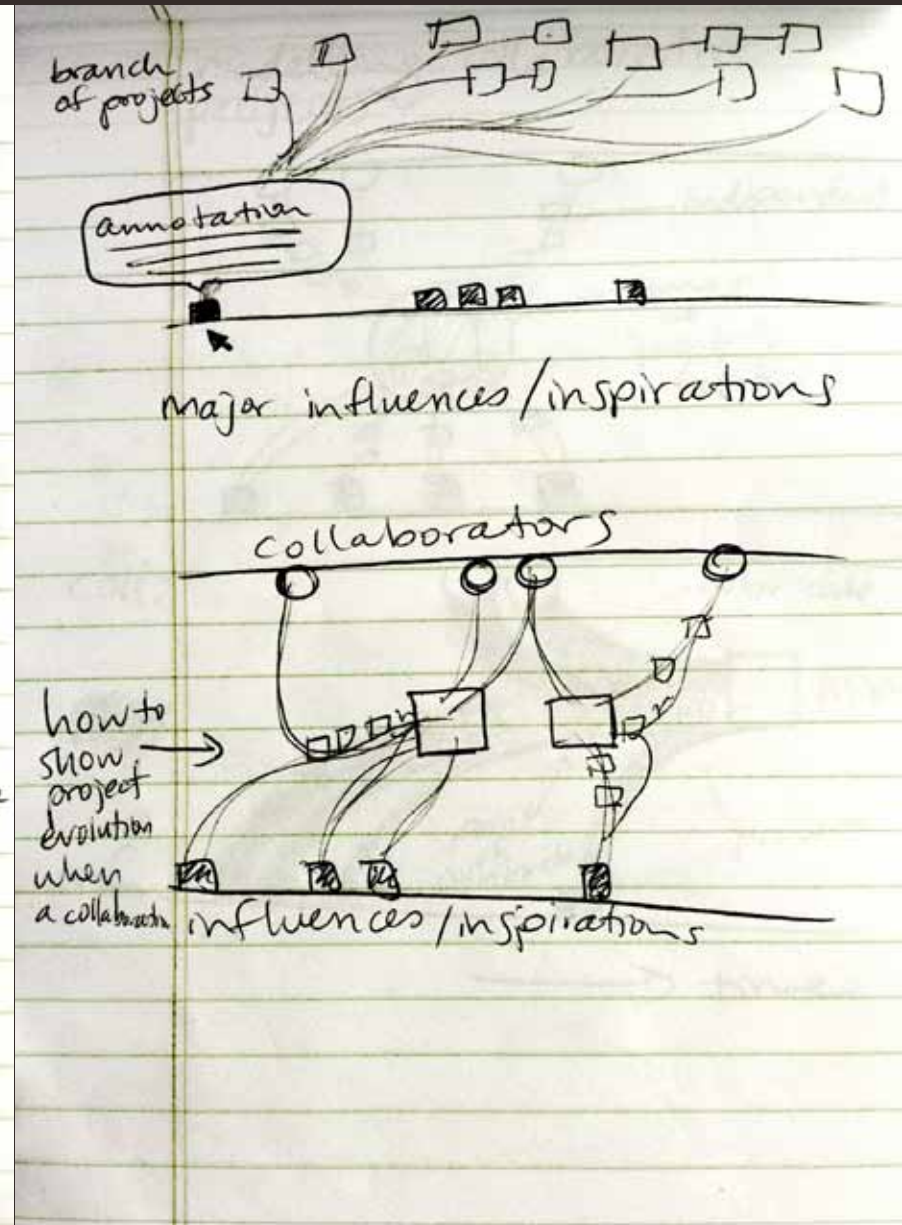
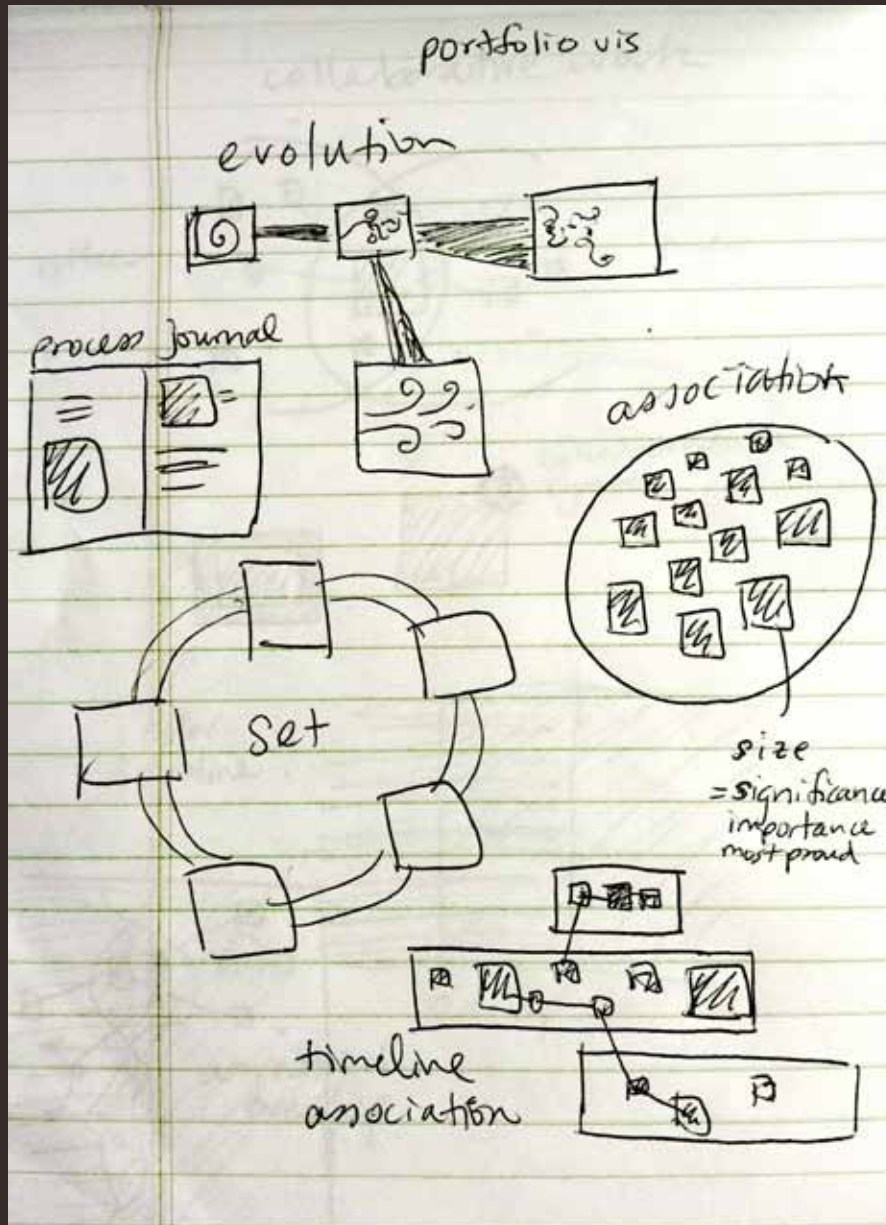
### Fears

Wasting time might lead to not meeting deadlines

### Hopes/Dreams

To revolutionize how her company works





**Some initial sketches –** These were some of the initial sketches I made when I was first developing the idea for Bloomcase in June 2011.

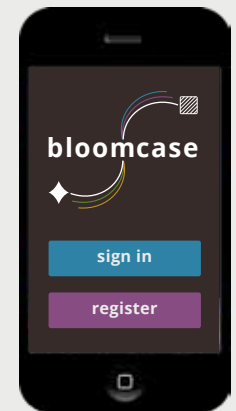
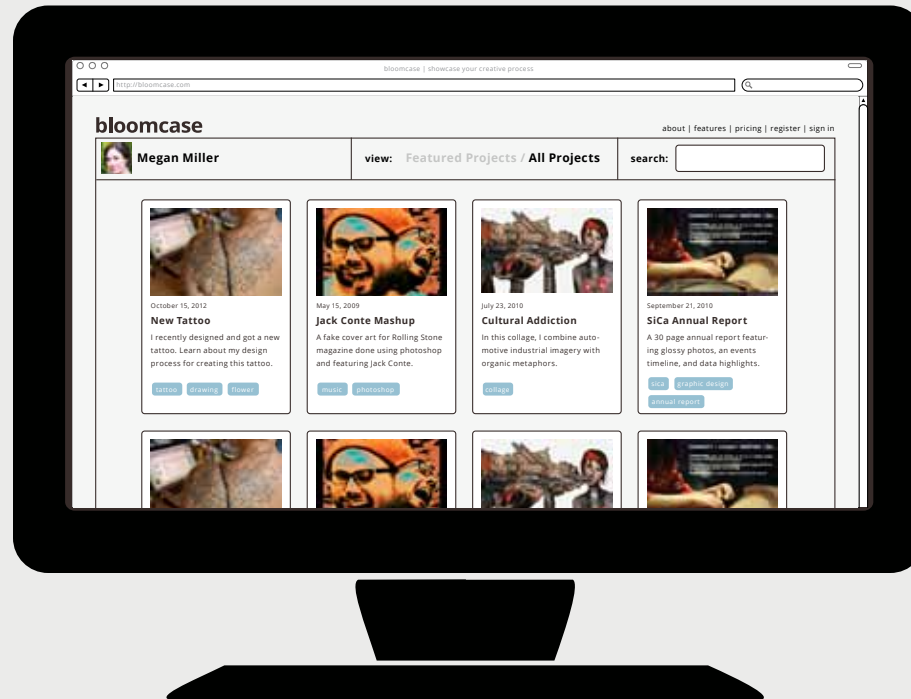


# the application

Bloomcase will consist of an online web application and an optional mobile application that will sync with a user's account. The web application will be developed first, and the mobile app will be a future phase of the project.

Bloomcase will feature public projects to anonymous users through an online project gallery. Anonymous users will be able to access, view, and share projects. Authenticated users will be able to log in to create, edit, and publish projects.

In the following section, I will outline Bloomcase's functionality and show wireframes of various screens.



# information architecture

Bloomcase has a publicly available interface that lets people browse projects and view people's profiles. There are a limited set of actions that an anonymous user can take when browsing the public interface, such as sharing projects.

When logged in, users will have access to their dashboard, which is the gateway to their projects, collaborators, connections, and other projects and people using Bloomcase.

The diagram to the right outlines the information architecture and actions associated with anonymous public viewing and authenticated access.

## Public Interface



## Actions:

- Share project
- Share artifact
- Send message to creator

## Actions:

- New project
- Edit/Delete project
- New artifact
- Edit/Delete artifact
- Manage privacy settings
- Invite/remove collaborators
- Share project/artifact
- Favorite a project
- Connect with other users

# visual vocabulary

In order to tell a visual story of creative process, I have developed a visual language that articulates five different kinds of artifacts that are fundamental to the creative process:

**Inspirations**

**Ideas**

**Sketches**

**Drafts**

**Final work**

These five kinds of artifacts are the underpinning of my visual mapping structure and provide a framework for articulating the creative process.

By using this visual vocabulary of **inspiration**, **idea**, **sketch**, **draft**, and **final**, you can create flexible and scalable maps of the creative process. The process map on the next page uses the visual vocabulary I have outlined to showcase a recent creative project: the design and completion of my fourth tattoo.

## Inspiration

An inspiration could be a website, a piece of art, an event, or even a conversation with a friend. Inspirations could also be considered “influencers” in that they are providing context around the work in progress. By including inspirations into your process map, you can show what influenced your work.

## Idea

An idea is the moment when you get that creative spark and something clicks. Acknowledging and articulating when ideas occur is an important part of defining the overall structure of your creative process.

## Sketch

A sketch is a brainstorming artifact, a very rough draft that might outline an aspect of your idea. Sketches are rapidly created, and often are crucial to developing a concept, exploration, and narrowing in on specifics.

## Draft

A draft is distinct from a sketch in that you are testing out what you consider to be a more final concept, and a more fleshed-out version of your project. In the case of web design, for example, this might be a prototype of some kind. This type of artifact allows people to distinguish a rough sketch and a more finished draft but not a final product.

## Final

A final artifact reflects finished work and is included in the gallery view of your projects in Bloomcase. This could be a snapshot of your final painting, a gallery of screenshots of your finished design project, or a final business proposal for your startup.

# proof of concept: my fourth tattoo



## An organic tattoo

I have three tattoos already, but they are all astronomy or physics related. I had the idea that my next tattoo would be more organic.



## My wedding flowers

I chose dahlias as my flowers for my wedding, which took place on July 21, 2012.



## Dahlia tattoos

I did a lot of research and found many pictures of other people's flower tattoos. These were inspirational as I was thinking about mine.



## Dahlia outline artwork

I found this piece of art online, and immediately loved it and thought it was the perfect starting point for my tattoo.

## First sketches

I began sketching some ideas of what this organic tattoo might look like. I knew I liked flowers, but perhaps organic patterns as well.



## My tattoo as a memory of my wedding day

After my wedding, it hit me that I wanted my tattoo to be meaningful, and that if I chose dahlia flowers, my tattoo could be a reminder of my wedding day and the commitment that I share with my husband.

## Sketching ideas

I spent some time sketching ideas. At first I was very interested in incorporating patterns into the tattoo and not just a flower image.





### A beautiful flower

This photo I found of a dahlia online was the one I decided to trace for my second flower.



### 1st Inking Session

The first inking session took two hours, and my artist, Todd Tauscher of Hold Fast Studio in Redwood City, did an amazing job on the outline.



### 2nd Inking Session

I decided to not get any additional color on my tattoo... yet. At the second inking session, Todd simply added more line-work and detail.

### Finishing the first flower

I finished the first flower by removing the extra graphics from the original artwork I had found, and retracing it to make it my own.



### Adding the second flower

I traced the flower photo I had found and retraced my first flower so that the scale and line weights would match.



### Final draft of the outline

Once I added the leaves, I decided I was ready to schedule my appointment. I printed it out at the exact size I wanted on my back.



### Considering Color

Before my final inking session, I played around in Photoshop to consider whether I wanted to add color to my tattoo.



# interface: story mode

The process map on the previous pages illustrates the storytelling aspect of my visual vocabulary, though it is not laid out like you would see it within the Bloomcase application interface.

I have mentioned earlier that Bloomcase will provide two different modes of showcasing your projects — **presentation mode** and **story mode**. Story mode will show this visual process map and tell the behind-the-scenes narrative of each step along the map, whereas presentation mode will show a more traditional portfolio slideshow of the final work (see sidebar sketch).

## Story Mode

On the next page I show a wireframe of what story mode will look like, with an artifact selected from the map and shown in the preview pane on the left.

## Navigating the Map

A visitor looking at this project can step back and forth along points of the story from within the preview pane on the left or by clicking artifacts on the map to load them into the preview pane. An indicator (blue circle) will show them which artifact they

are currently viewing in the preview pane. They can also hover over other artifacts (see “A beautiful flower” tooltip as example) to get a preview of that artifact before they select it.

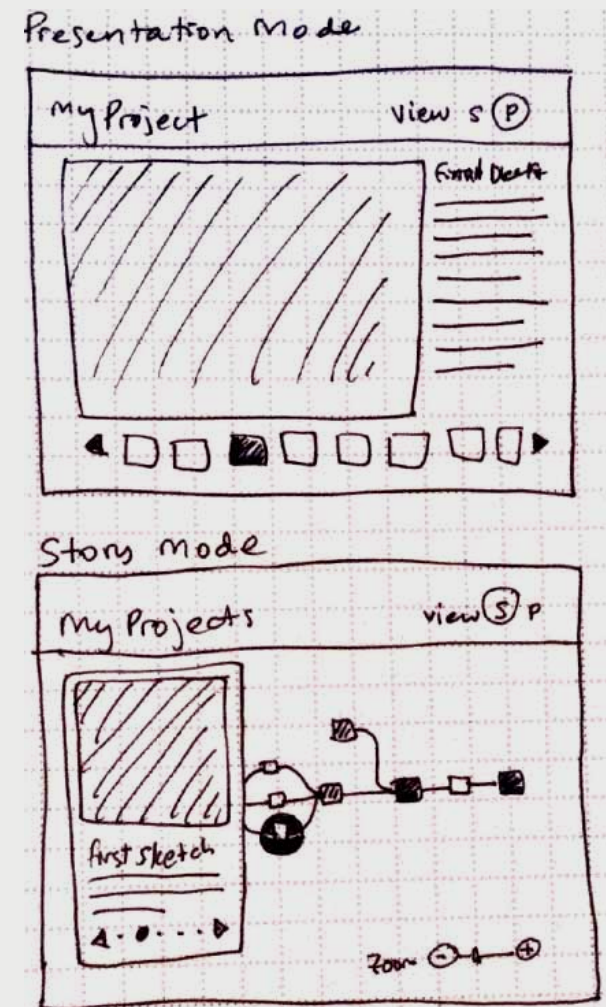
The user can zoom in and out to show all or a portion of the process map as they follow the steps of the story. By clicking on the “canvas” behind the map, they can drag the map to re-center what they are looking at.

## Private Artifacts

Artifacts are grayed out on the map if they are private and not included in the public presentation. Visitors looking at a project cannot see an on-hover preview of private artifacts and are not able to click on them to view their contents, but private artifacts are left on the map to illustrate the scope of the project.

## When Logged In

Authenticated users can edit their project’s title and description, and add tags and collaborators. From the toolbar they can add new artifacts to the map and connect them with other artifacts already on the map.



Sketch illustrating presentation mode vs. story mode.



**bloomcase**

[+ new project](#) | [my projects](#) | [my profile](#) | [my account](#) | [logout](#)

**New Tattoo** *last modified 10/28/12 by Megan*

**view:**



presentation



**edit:**



tags



collaborators



**add:**



idea



idea



sketch



draft



final



final



October 10, 2012

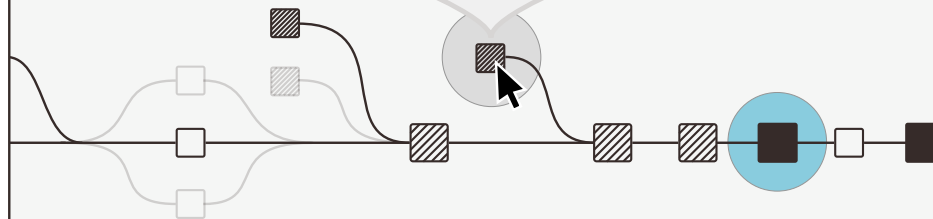
## 1st Inking Session

The first inking session took two hours, and my artist, Todd Tauscher of Hold Fast Studio in Redwood City did an amazing job on the outline. He was even able to capture the texture of my ballpoint pen in his line work.



### A beautiful flower

This photo I found of a dahlia online was the one I decided to trace for my second flower.

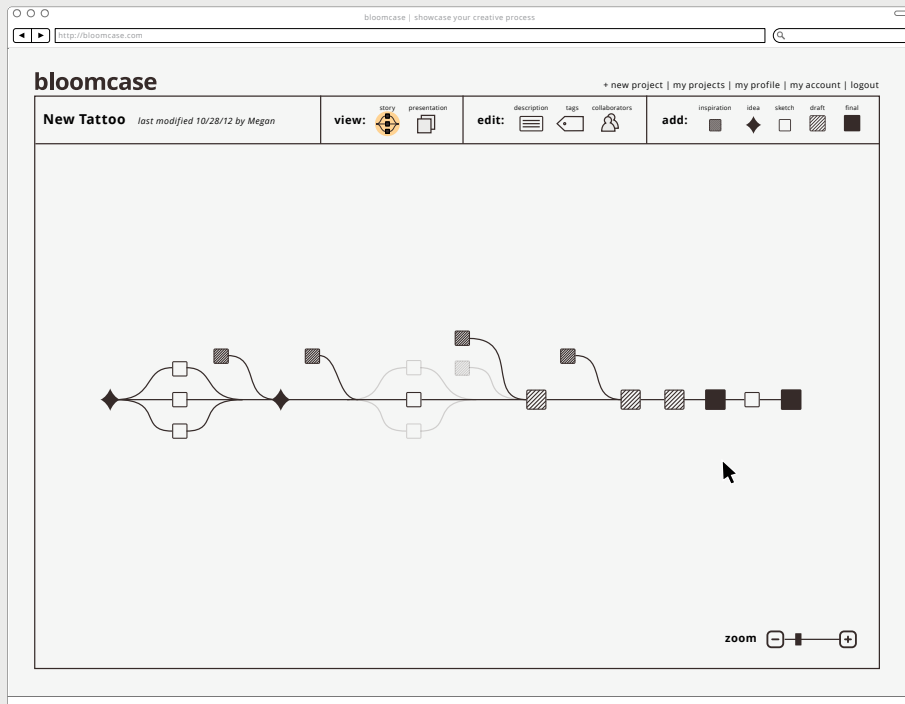


zoom 

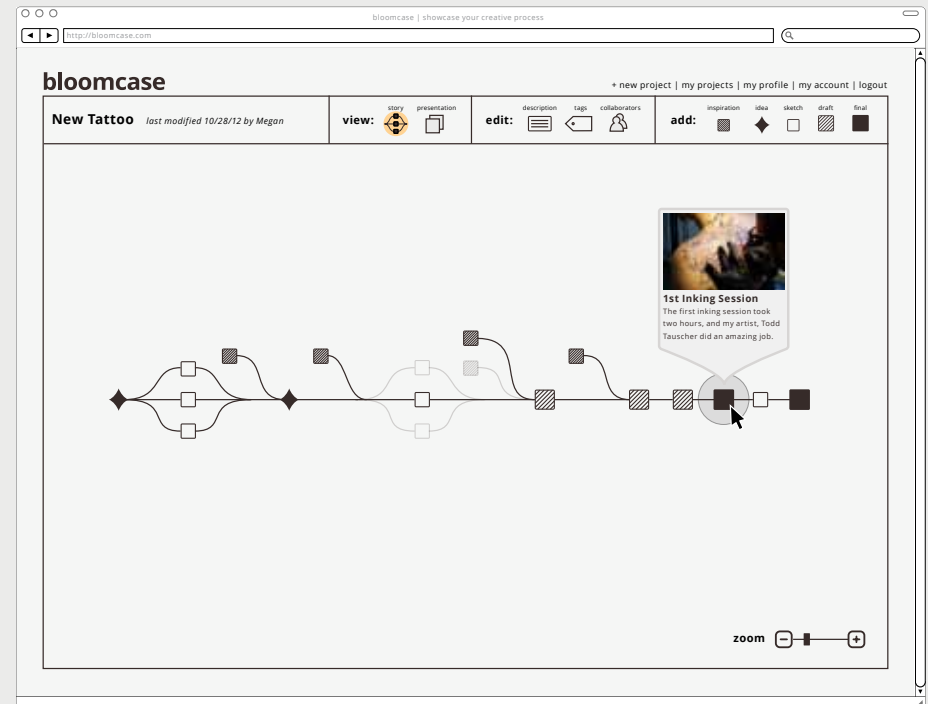
# walkthrough: story mode

The following walkthrough shows the stages of the interface as you enter and begin to view a project in story mode.

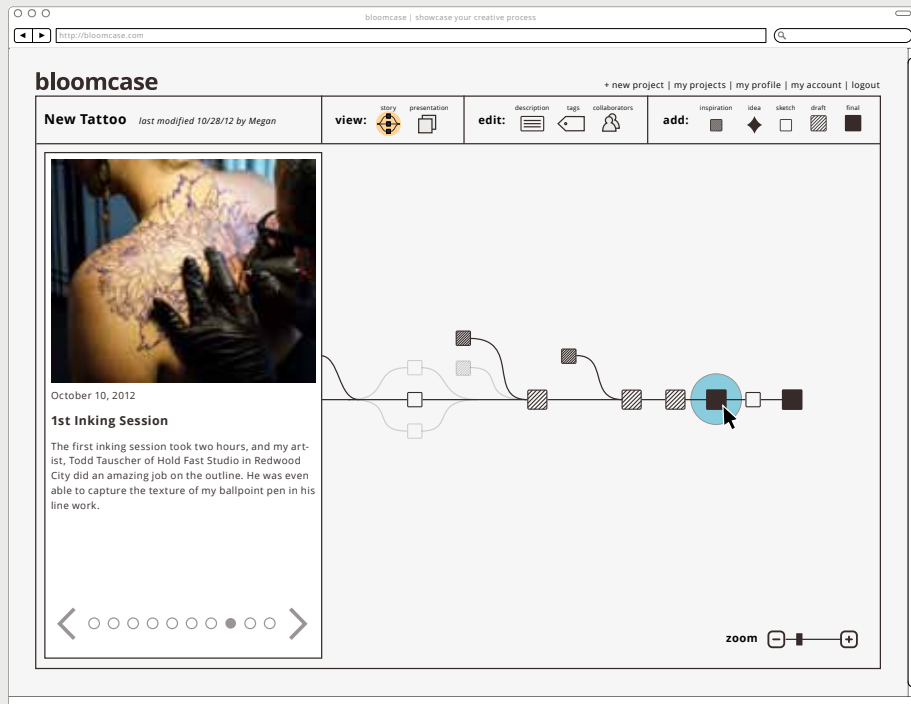
1) You have just opened your project.



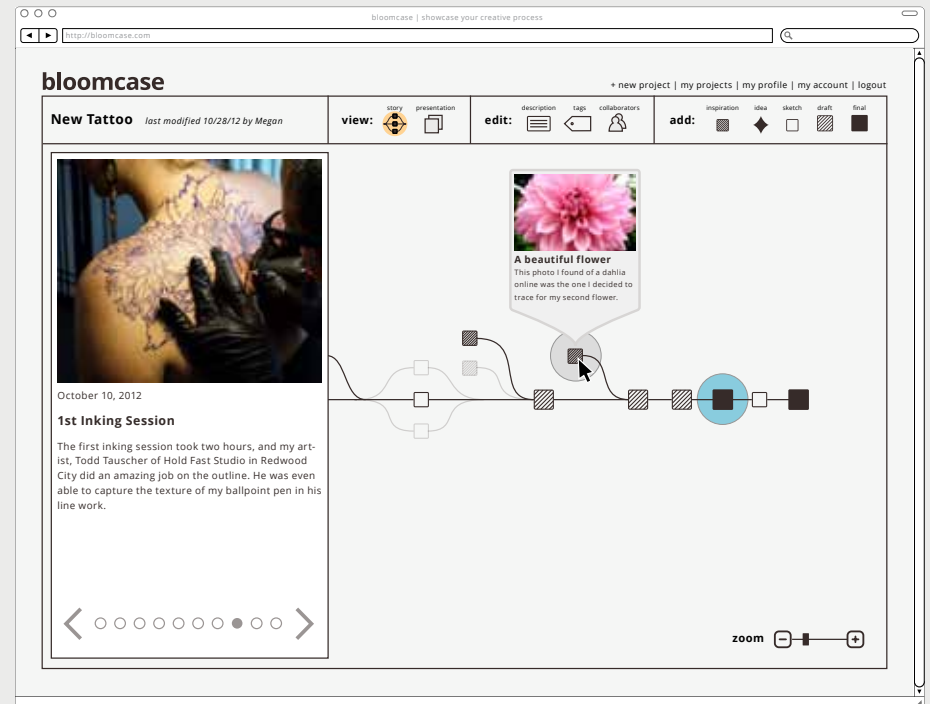
2) You hover over an artifact on the map to see a preview of it.



3) You click on that artifact to load it into the preview pane on the left.



4) You hover over another artifact on the map to preview it before selecting it.

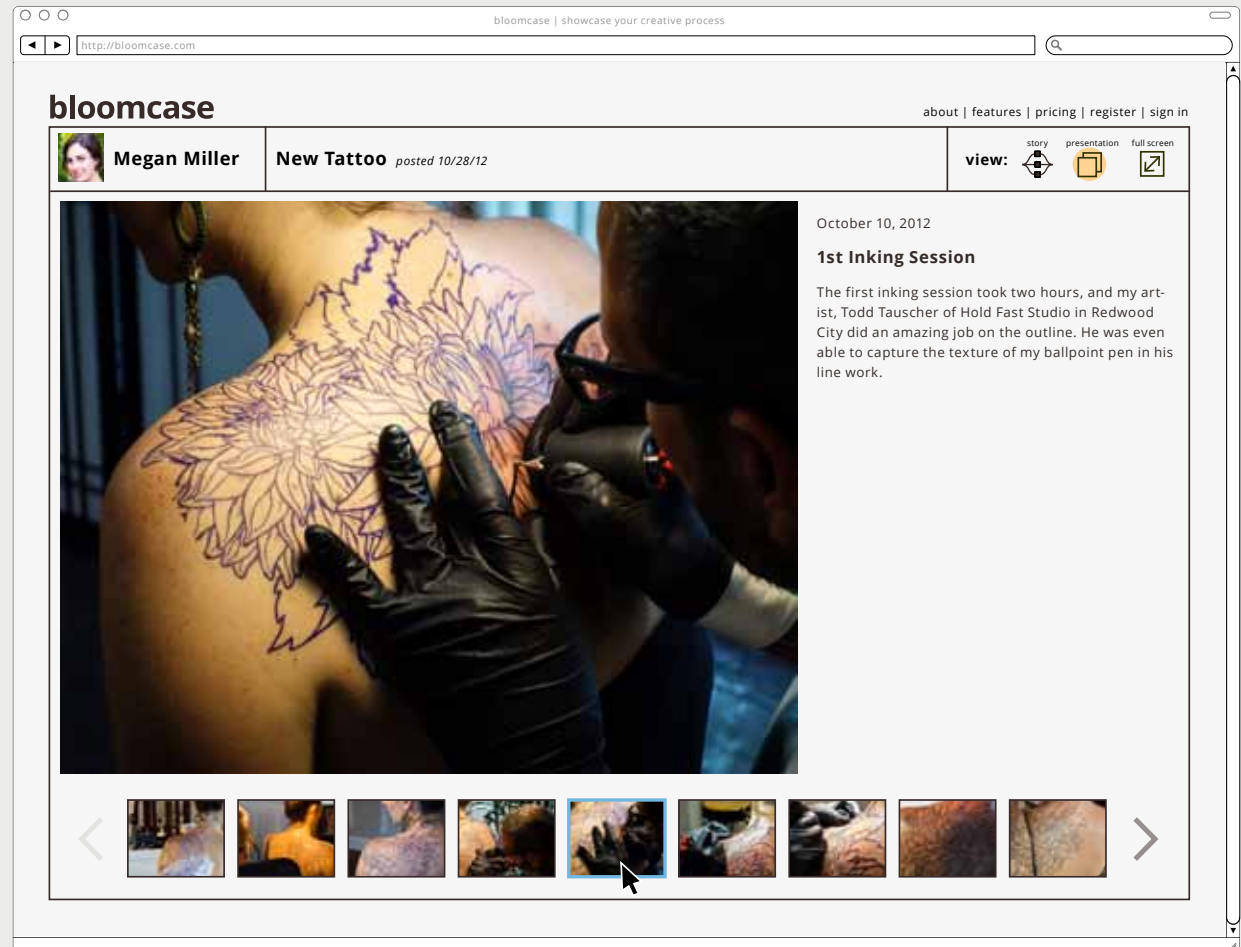


# interface: presentation mode

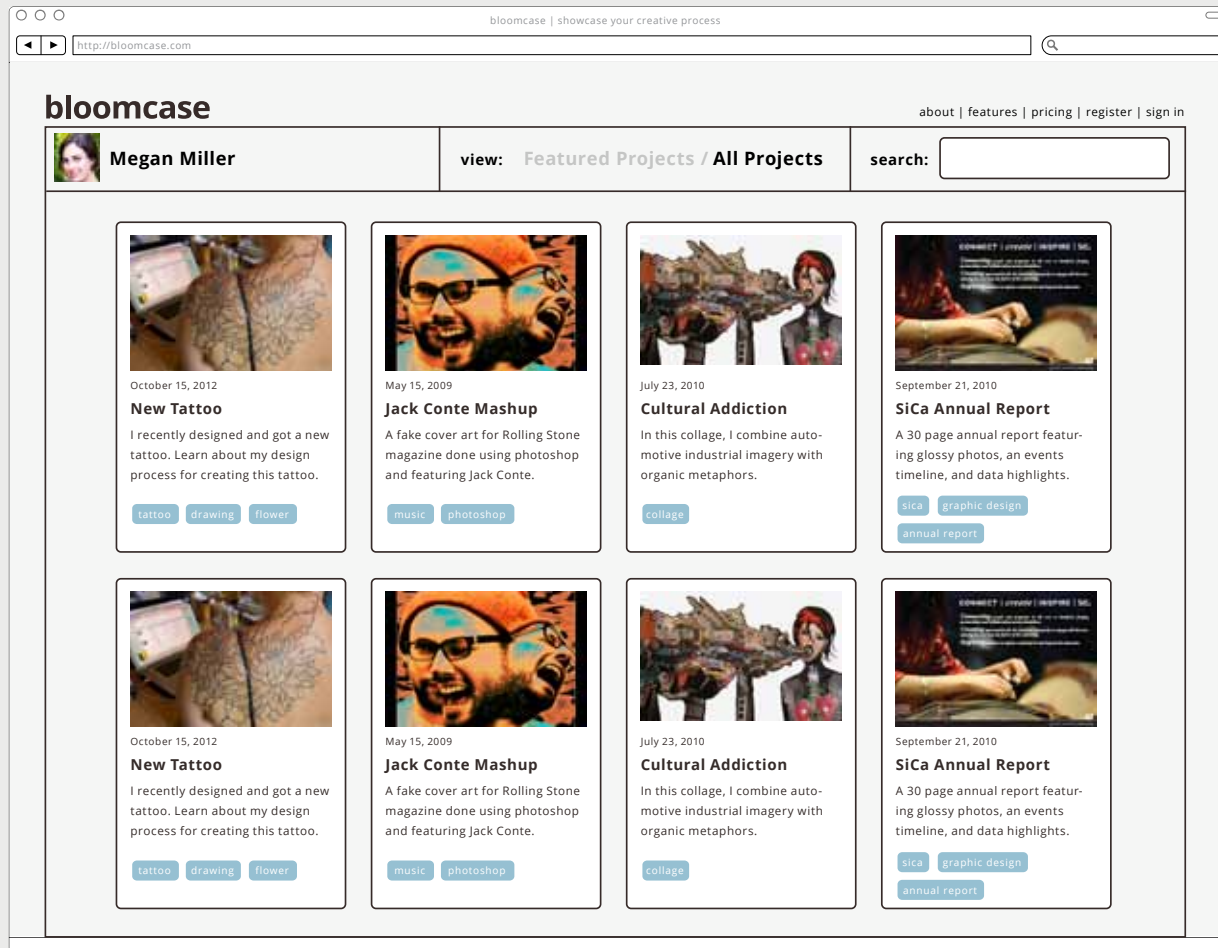
## Presentation Mode

Presentation mode offers a more tradition portfolio viewing experience, showing only final work with annotations. This mode is great for showcasing finished work and for skimming through several projects before deciding which ones you want to look at behind the scenes.

Presentation mode will have a gallery-style display, showing thumbnails of the items in the gallery and providing slideshow functionality. Presentation mode will also allow viewers to enter full screen mode for a more slick slideshow experience.



# interface: project gallery



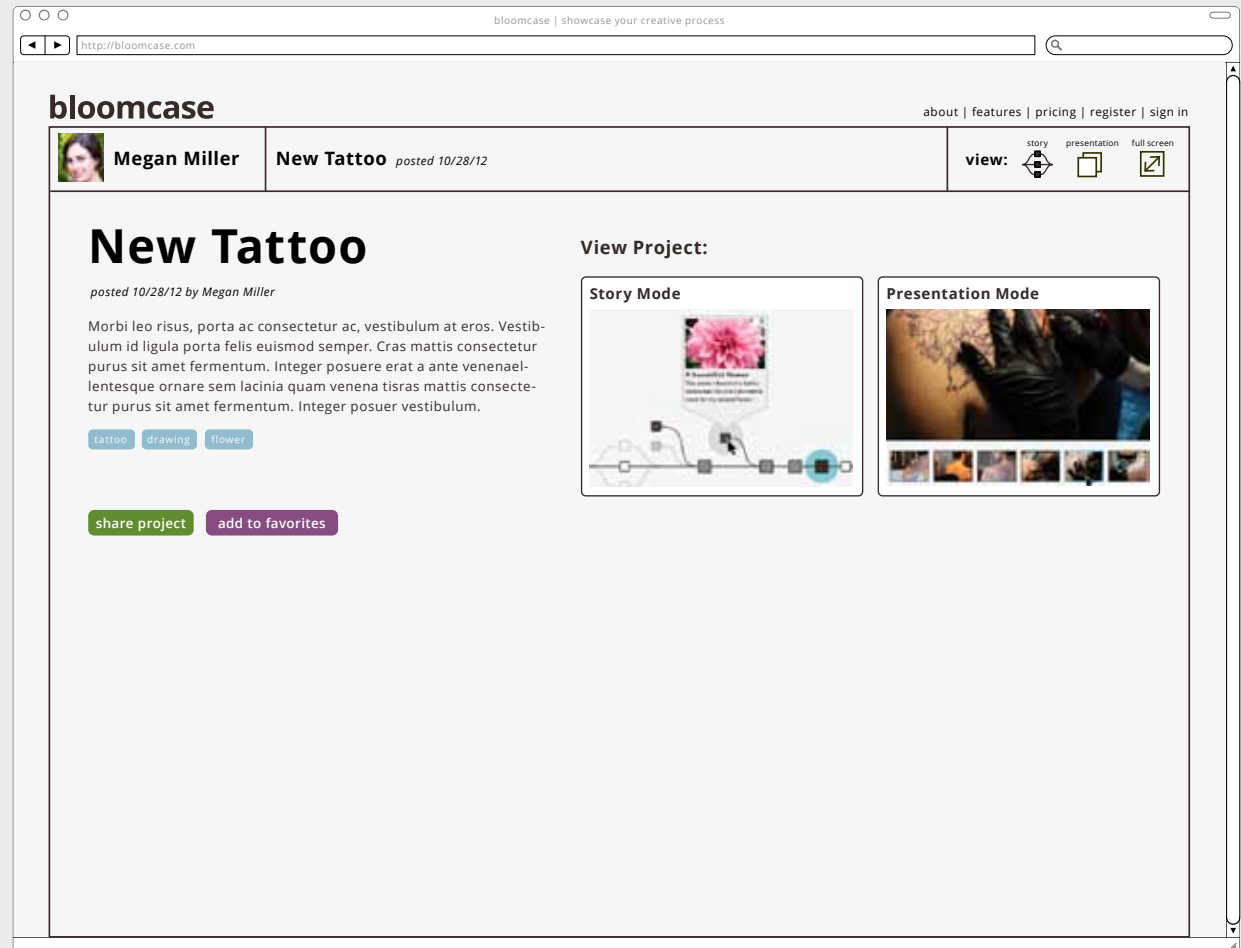
## Project Gallery

The project gallery shows all of a user's projects, showing a thumbnail, a short description, and keyword tags for each project. A visitor can search the user's projects by keyword.

# interface: project page

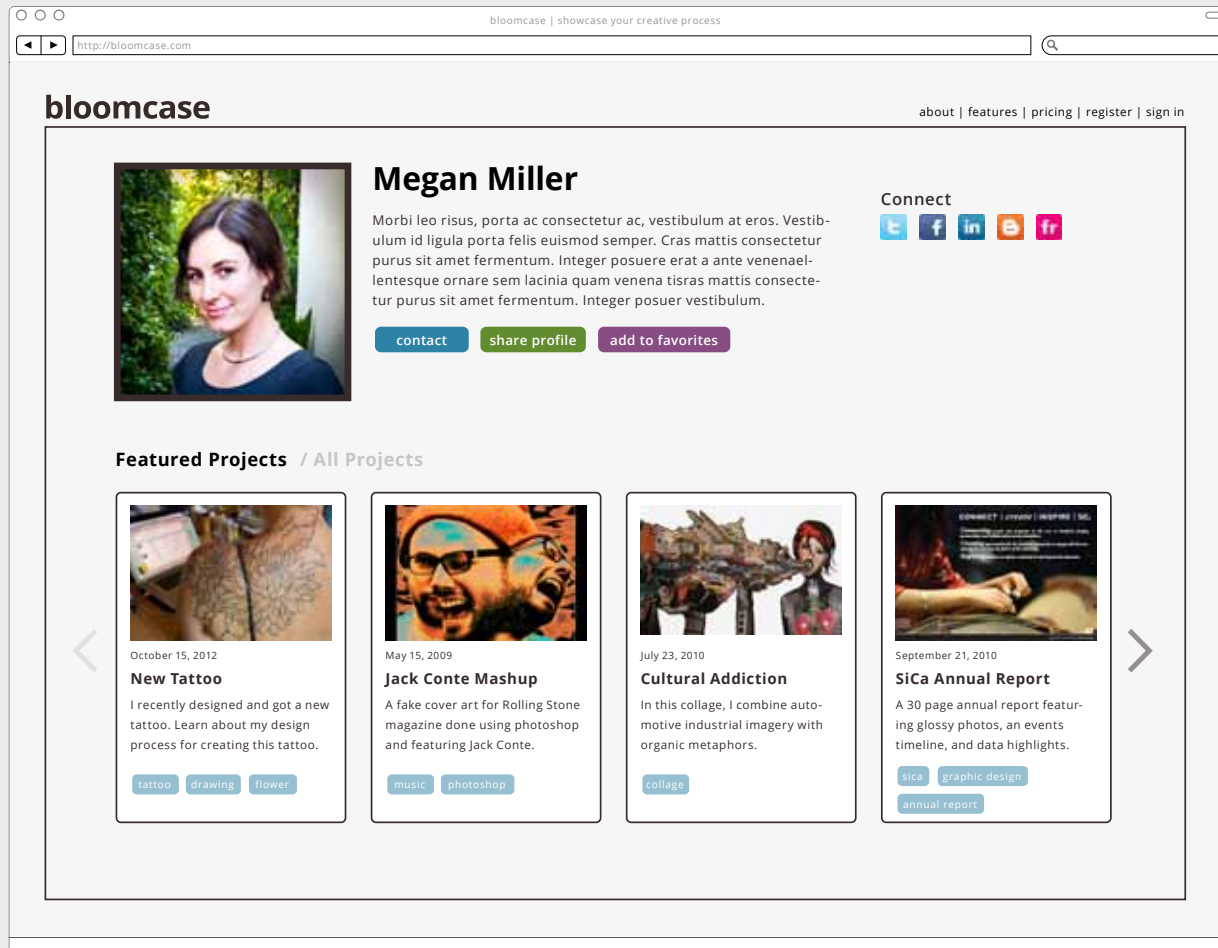
## Project Page

The project page gives an overview of the project and prompts a visitor to launch into either presentation or story mode. A visitor can share this project or add it to their favorites.





# interface: user profile



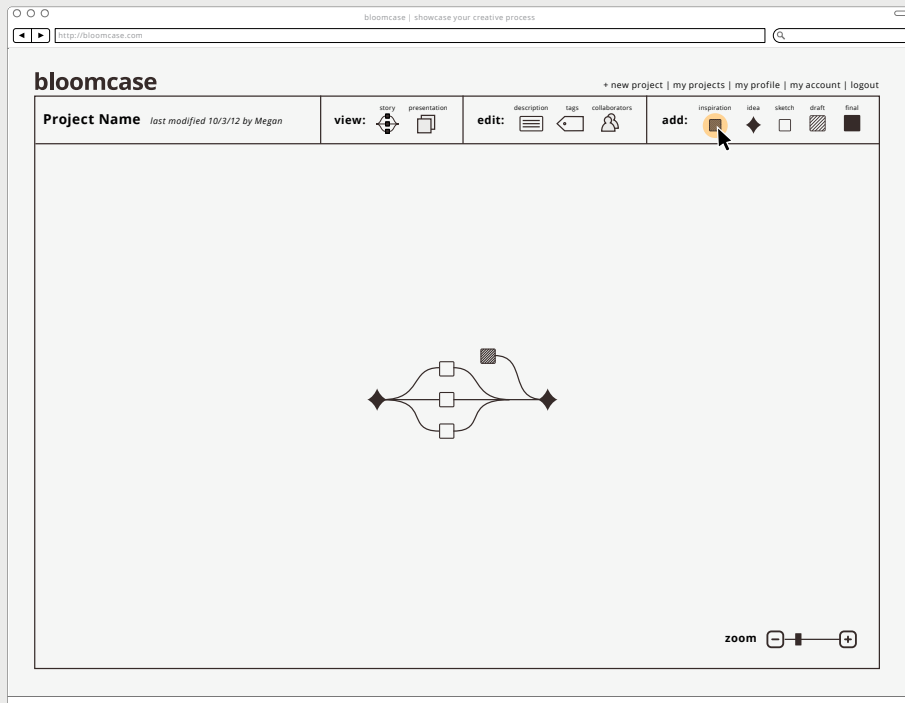
## User Profile

The user profile page functions as an About page for the user's public profile. It contains a short bio, links to connect on social media, and ways to contact the user (if user wishes). The profile page also shows projects featured by the user.

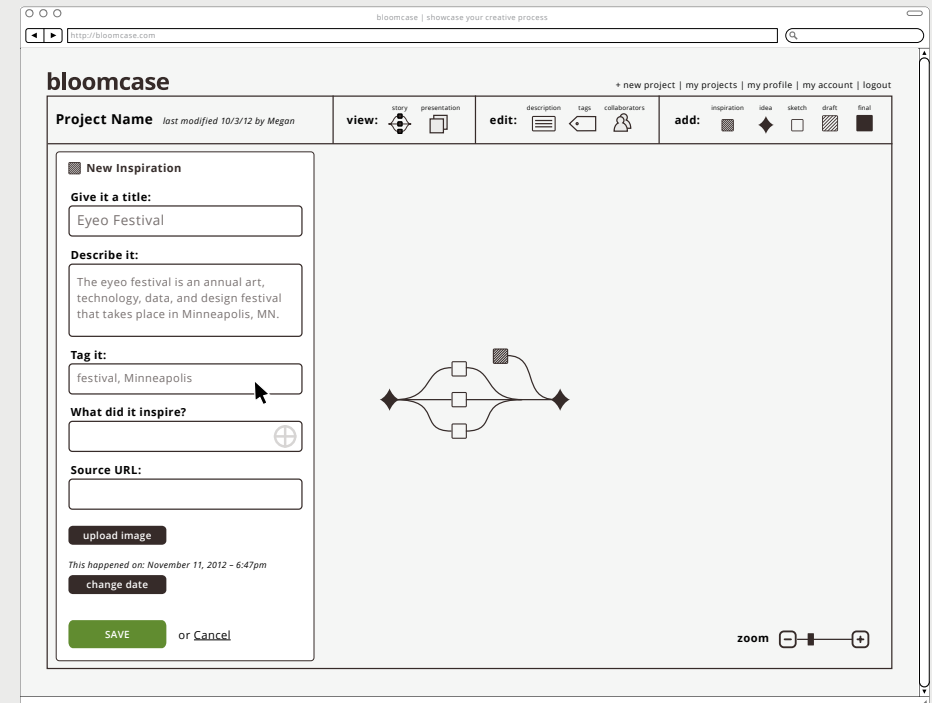
# walkthrough: adding an artifact

The following walkthrough shows how to add an artifact to a project and connect it with other artifacts on the map.

1) You have opened your project and click on the add “inspiration” icon.



2) The “New Inspiration” form appears to the left. You fill out the basic details.



3) For the “What did it inspire?” field, you click to use the target to choose the artifact it inspired.

**New Inspiration**

**Give it a title:**  
Eyeco Festival

**Describe it:**  
The eyeco festival is an annual art, technology, data, and design festival that takes place in Minneapolis, MN.

**Tag it:**  
festival, Minneapolis

**What did it inspire?**

**Source URL:**

upload image

This happened on: November 11, 2012 - 6:47pm  
change date

SAVE or Cancel

4) On release, you see the name of the artifact you chose appear in the field as text.

**New Inspiration**

**Give it a title:**  
Eyeco Festival

**Describe it:**  
The eyeco festival is an annual art, technology, data, and design festival that takes place in Minneapolis, MN.

**Tag it:**  
festival, Minneapolis

**What did it inspire?**  
Make a chart in D3

**Source URL:**

upload image

This happened on: November 11, 2012 - 6:47pm  
change date

SAVE or Cancel

5) You fill out the rest of the fields and click save.

**New Inspiration**

**Give it a title:**  
Eyeco Festival

**Describe it:**  
The eyeco festival is an annual art, technology, data, and design festival that takes place in Minneapolis, MN.

**Tag it:**  
festival, Minneapolis

**What did it inspire?**  
Make a chart in D3

**Source URL:**  
http://eyecofestival.com

upload image

This happened on: November 11, 2012 - 6:47pm  
change date

SAVE or Cancel

6) You now see your inspiration on the stage connected to the correct artifact, and a notification appears to confirm you have successfully added your new inspiration.

bloomcase | showcase your creative process

http://bloomcase.com

**bloomcase**

+ new project | my projects | my profile | my account | logout

**Project Name** last modified 10/3/12 by Megan

**view:** story presentation

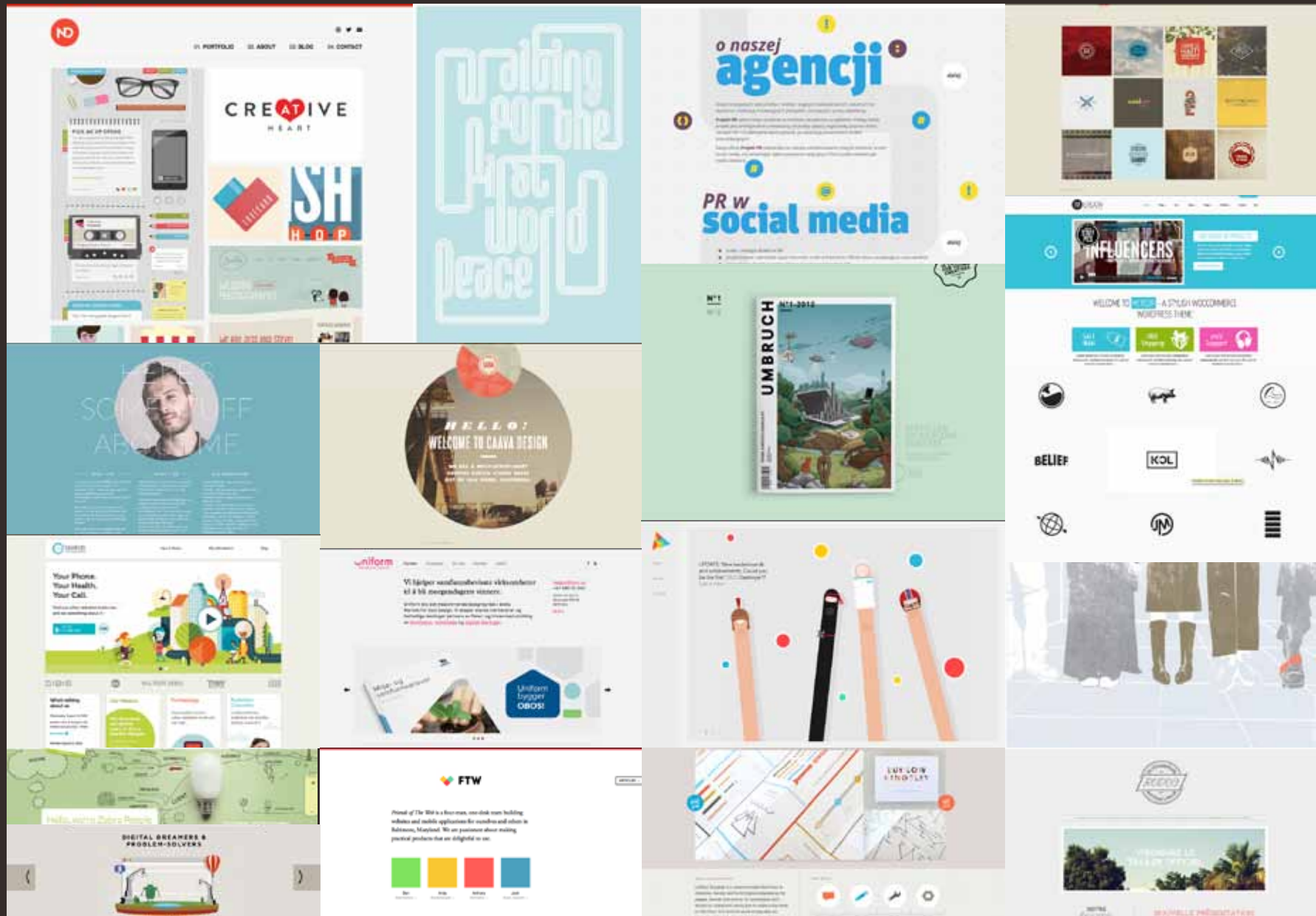
**edit:** description tags collaborators

**add:** inspiration idea sketch draft final

Success! Your inspiration, "Eyeco Festival" was added!

**eyeo festival**

The eyeco festival is an annual art, technology, data, and design festival that takes place in Minneapolis, MN.



**Moodboard** – A collection of websites and graphic design that captures the feeling I want to create with Bloomcase.

# competitors

So far as I have been able to tell, there are no completely direct competitors to Bloomcase. I have not been able to find any tools that create visual process maps and allow people to document and share their creative processes.

There are, however, competitors for specific aspects of the tool, for example:

- Timeline storytelling tools
- Mindmapping tools
- Collaboration tools
- Genealogy mapping tools
- Portfolio hosting websites

For each of these aspects I have found a competitor to compare with Bloomcase's proposed functionality. In this section I will outline the criteria for comparison and explain how Bloomcase will stand apart from the competition.



## Tiki Toki <http://www.tiki-toki.com>

A tool to create beautiful interactive timelines that you can share on the web.

**Category:** Timeline storytelling tool

### Key Functionality:

- Add/edit artifacts on timeline
- Embed media
- Timeline navigation
- Social sharing
- Storytelling

### How this is similar to Bloomcase:

Tiki-Toki allows users to craft stories told in a linear, timeline-like fashion using tooltip-type slides placed along a timeline. Tiki-Toki allows users to embed media and images, and share these timelines across the web.

### What this tool is lacking:

Tiki-Toki does not have the ability to create process maps, only one-dimensional linear stories, anchored by specific date/time stamps.

### What I will take as a lesson from this competitor:

The introductory example on their demo page is a great way to educate potential users about the product and what they can do with it. I would like this kind of transparent introduction to Bloomcase. Also, the way that slides are displayed on the timeline is very similar to how I was envisioning artifacts being portrayed as part of Bloomcase's interface. I plan to revisit Tiki-Toki's UI as I design Bloomcase.

# competitors



## Mindomo

<http://www.mindomo.com>

A tool for creating mind maps online.

**Category:** Mind mapping tool

### Key Functionality:

- Add/edit artifacts on mind map
- Multidevice synchronized applications
- Connecting artifacts on the map visually
- Adding/embedding media
- Sharing mind maps
- Presentation mode

### How this is similar to Bloomcase:

Mindomo provides a visual way to map ideas on a two-dimensional "stage," and offers sharing and presentation functionality across multiple devices. Mindomo allows embedding multimedia and images into the map, and allows users to connect nodes on the map using a visual interface.

### What this tool is lacking:

This tool, though it can show process, does not provide the visual language or framework for communicating process linearly through time. It is a more decentralized tool, not focused on process but on brainstorming.

### What I will take as a lesson from this competitor:

Mindomo is a good example of a web application interface that provides a lot of controls in a simple way. The way it translates to multiple mobile devices will be something to look at as I am developing my ideas for the Bloomcase mobile application.



## Behance

<http://www.behance.net>

A tool for showcasing and discovering creative work.

**Category:** Portfolio hosting website

### Key Functionality:

- Add/edit projects
- Share and discover projects
- Tag and categorize projects
- Artist profile pages
- Project galleries



### How this is similar to Bloomcase:

Behance offers similar functionality (and very robust at that) for artists to create online profiles and portfolios of work. Behance has a similar interface for featuring projects and artists' work as I am envisioning for Bloomcase.

### What this tool is lacking:

Behance does not provide a good way for artists to tell the backstory of the work, or the behind-the-scenes project development. It does not have any sort of visualization component, and does not allow a way for users to share the inspirations behind their work.

### What I will take as a lesson from this competitor:

I will definitely be looking at Behance for examples of how to display artist profile information and project galleries. The "card" display of projects is similar to how I was envisioning Bloomcase's project gallery. Behance is also a great example for social media integration and keyword tagging.



### Ancestry.com

<http://www.ancestry.com>

A tool for creating family trees mapping genealogy.

**Category:** Genealogy mapping tool

### Key Functionality:

Add/edit "node" – i.e., family members

Connect people on the tree

Visualization of connections

Mobile application (synchronized)

### How this is similar to Bloomcase:

Ancestry.com allows users to connect "nodes" on a visual family tree, similar to the way I want Bloomcase to create visual connections between evolution of artifacts. Both are time-based, and show the "evolution" over time.

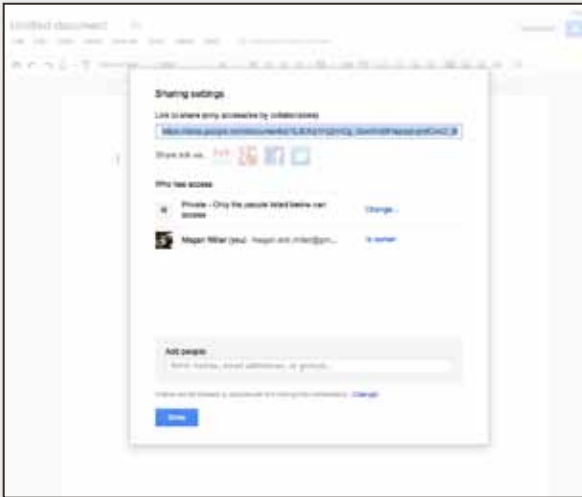
### What this tool is lacking:

This tool simply shows a linear genealogy and does not allow for collapsed timelines (multiple people cannot lead to the creation of only one person). This tool is very specific and of course does not cover anything outside of genealogy mapping.

### What I will take as a lesson from this competitor:

The interface for how "nodes" are added to the family tree timeline is interesting, and provides another take on how to create these timelines. I will also look at how Ancestry uses a mobile application to add value for its users.

# competitors



## Google Docs

<http://docs.google.com>

A tool for document creation and collaboration.

**Category:** Collaboration tool

### Key Functionality:

Add/edit content in real time with collaborators

Manage sharing permissions

View revisions and annotations

Live chat with collaborators

### How this is similar to Bloomcase:

In the longer term, I hope that Bloomcase can be a tool for collaboration. I see Bloomcase sharing some of the basic functionality of collaboration as seen in Google docs: sharing, permissions, and real-time editing and annotation.

### What this tool is lacking:

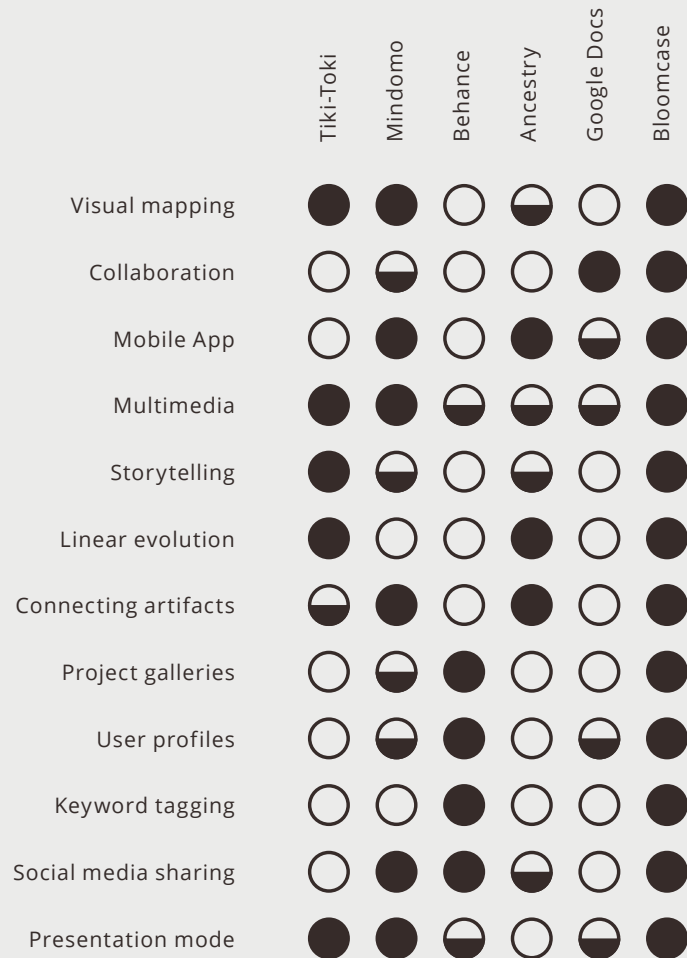
This tool provides the sharing and collaboration component but none of the visualization, process mapping, or project portfolio component.

### What I will take as a lesson from this competitor:

I will look to Google docs as the industry standard for collaboration tools, as it is certainly treated that way. In particular, I will be looking at how Google docs manages permissions, handles revisions and annotations, as well as how it integrates live chat.

There are many more websites and tools to take as examples for comparative functionality to Bloomcase. These are just a selection representing the aspects I will be comparing when looking at competitors.

# positioning statement



**Comparative Analysis** — This chart shows a comparison of various features across five competitor sites.

Bloomcase will combine a collection of valuable features into one single simple interface, providing people with a new tool for visualizing and communicating their creative process and finished work.

Bloomcase will stand apart from its competitors in its unique and innovative combination of features, using visualization, drag-and-drop interaction, visual storytelling, and sharing and collaboration to highlight work in a way that has never been done before.

# brand

## Elevator Pitch

Bloomcase will provide creatives of all kinds a unique way to share their creative process and the story behind their creative work using an innovative visual language to create dynamic process maps.

## How others will describe Bloomcase

Innovative, fresh, clean, useful, creative, deep, informational, elegant

## How Bloomcase will make them feel

Empowered, creative, insightful, professional, organized, validated, talented

## Differentiation

Bloomcase stands apart from its competitors by fusing the concept of the portfolio with mindmapping and timeline visualization. Bloomcase will provide a simple, elegant solution for showcasing the complexity of creativity and the stories behind creative works.

## Credibility

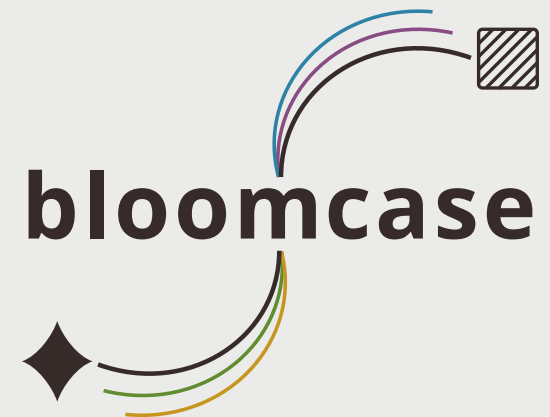
Through word of mouth, social media, and blogger recommendations, Bloomcase will reach its target market on trusted networks to establish credibility. Through its professional interface and public presentation mode, Bloomcase will soon become respected as a way to present a project portfolio.

## Relevance

Now more than ever before we need a way to visually present our creative process. For job interviews, college applications, or tools for education and communication, it is important to be able to tell stories and share process. Bloomcase is extremely relevant to anyone in a creative or entrepreneurial industry.

## Sustainability

This tool will only become more useful over time. There are so many ways to expand on the tool, as well as the public presentation through creative visualizations of the community and projects stored within Bloomcase.



*"Show your creative process"*



# business model

## Target Market

There is a large potential user base for this product, if marketed correctly. The most obvious niche market is creative professionals and students, though all people creating products or projects might find the tool useful. Bloomcase is relevant to many sectors of industry, including startups, web and mobile applications, arts, entertainment, product design, architecture, and many more.

## Pricing

Bloomcase will have the following pricing options:

### Free account

The free account with the online web application will include a limited number of projects of a certain scope (limit 100 artifacts per project, or limited uploads to 100MB), and limited number of collaborators per project.

### Paid Monthly or Annual Subscription

The paid subscription account with the online web application will include an unlimited number of projects of large scope and unlimited collaborators.

## Mobile Application

To use Bloomcase on your smartphone or tablet, you will need to purchase the application, which will cost \$2.99 and can sync with a free or paid account.

## Start-up Costs

Initial investment will be needed to develop the application and market the product.

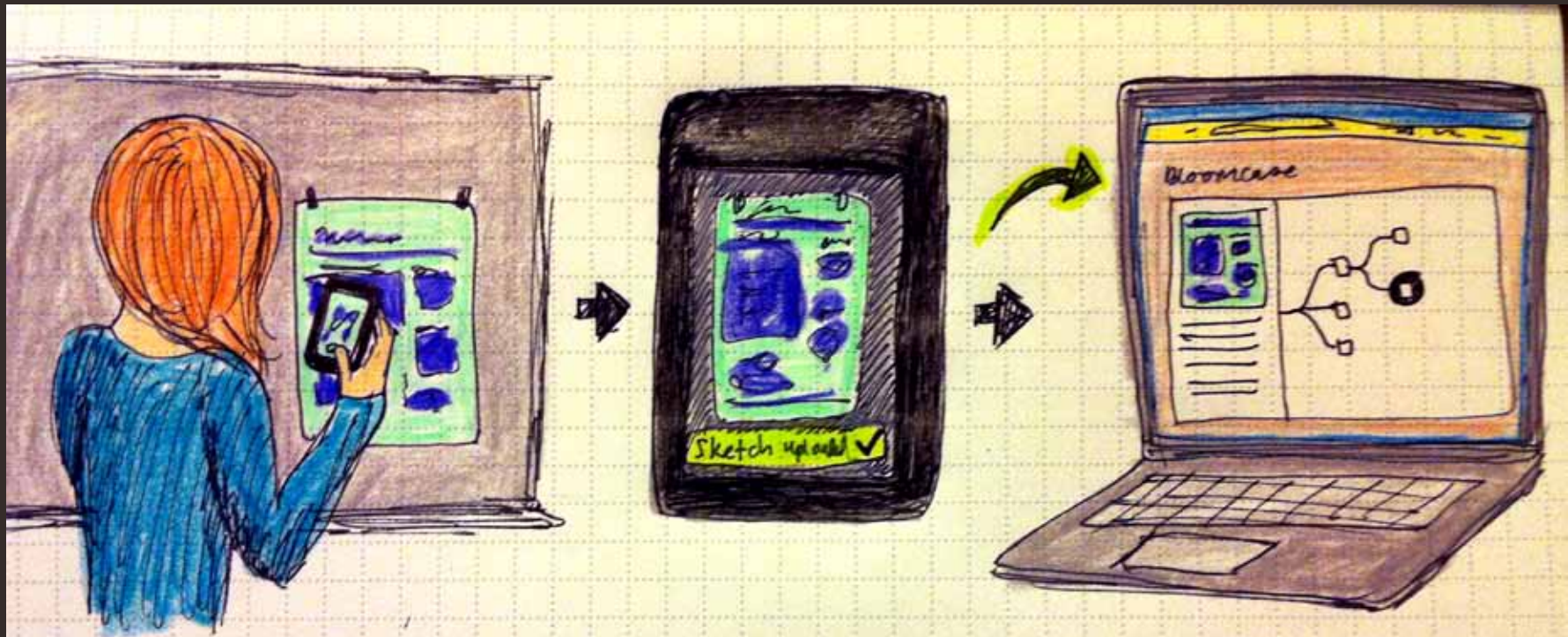
## Ongoing Costs

Ongoing costs include development, maintenance, security, customer service, accounting, and marketing.

Specifics on start-up and ongoing costs will need to be developed after prototype phase in order to pitch to venture capital or other investors.







### Multi-device shifting + synchronization

Take a picture with your smartphone Bloomcase application and it adds to your project stage.

**Multi-device shifting and synchronization** – Bloomcase will allow users to snap a picture using their smartphone or tablet and add it as an artifact to their project. The mobile app will allow for simple actions such as adding a new artifact to a project, taking a picture to associate with an artifact, connecting an artifact with others within a project, and adding basic text and tagging information to an artifact.



# technology

## Content Management System

The main technology requirement for Bloomcase is to have a robust content management system to store and maintain each user's content. Ease of creation and maintenance of content will be key to adoption. For this, I will be using the open source and widely used **Drupal** platform.

<http://drupal.org>

## Data Visualization

For visualizing this content, and to do so in a way that it is viewable across all devices and operating systems, I will use **d3.js** — a powerful javascript library for manipulating documents based on data. D3 uses HTML, SVG and CSS to create interactive and dynamic visualizations within the browser.

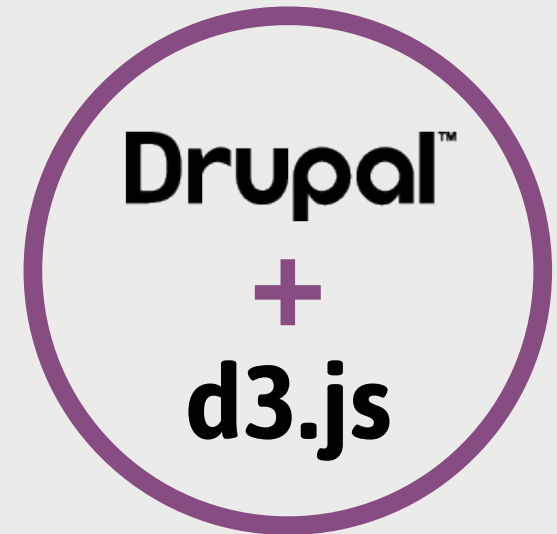
<http://d3js.org>

## Drupal

- Provide user login and profile management
- Store, create, modify content
- Track node relationships
- Resize images and media
- Host multimedia content
- Mobile API
- Feeds API

## D3

- Show relationships visually
- Dynamically place nodes and views on screen
- Change context and comparison of data
- Provide visual transitions and interface



# schedule

## Fall 2012

### Coursework

d3.js class at GAFFTA (completed)

### Goals

Finish midpoint book and presentation  
Request thesis redirection  
Begin building prototype using D3  
Build basic Drupal install

### Midpoint Presentation

## Spring 2013

### Coursework

WNM 801-12: MS: Group Directed Study:  
Scripting Interactivity & Web Services  
  
WNM 801-16: MS: Group Directed Study:  
Content Management Systems

### Goals

Build basic D3-Drupal integration  
Test users adding content  
Develop interactive elements  
Finish building out Drupal framework

## Summer 2013

### Coursework

WNM 801-10: MS: Group Directed Study:  
Visual Design

### Goals

Develop Drupal theme  
Refine user interface and interaction  
Develop application  
Conduct user testing

## Fall 2013

### Coursework

WNM 801-19: MS: Group Directed Study:  
User Experience 2

### Goals

Conduct user testing  
Develop application  
Prepare for final presentation

### Final Presentation

**Note:** Since this project is a redirection from my previous thesis project (*Apartment Grown*), I only have four directed study classes left to take to graduate. As I have been working hard developing this idea outside of the classroom, I do not feel that I need to take additional coursework to complete my thesis.

# testing plan

Since Bloomcase will present a new and innovative visual interface, significant user testing and an agile development process based on the feedback from those users will be important. In order to do this, I plan to develop Bloomcase in stages, creating prototypes at each stage to test with my users. I already have several people identified to test my prototypes.

## Phase One

The first prototype will simply be the visual map showing several projects, the contents of which will be generated by users ahead of time. This prototype will rely on CSV/JSON to store the test data, and use D3 to develop a proof-of-concept prototype for the visual mapping functionality. Here I will test scalability of the map and basic visual information presented in the map.

## Phase Two

In the second prototype, I will link the D3 visual map to real data in a database (preferably generated by Drupal). I will also begin developing my Drupal installation to house the basic framework for creating and maintaining project content. At this stage, I will

do testing regarding the user experience of entering in content and interacting with the visualization. Testing will occur on a non-Drupal prototype at this phase while I am developing the Drupal/D3 UI integration.

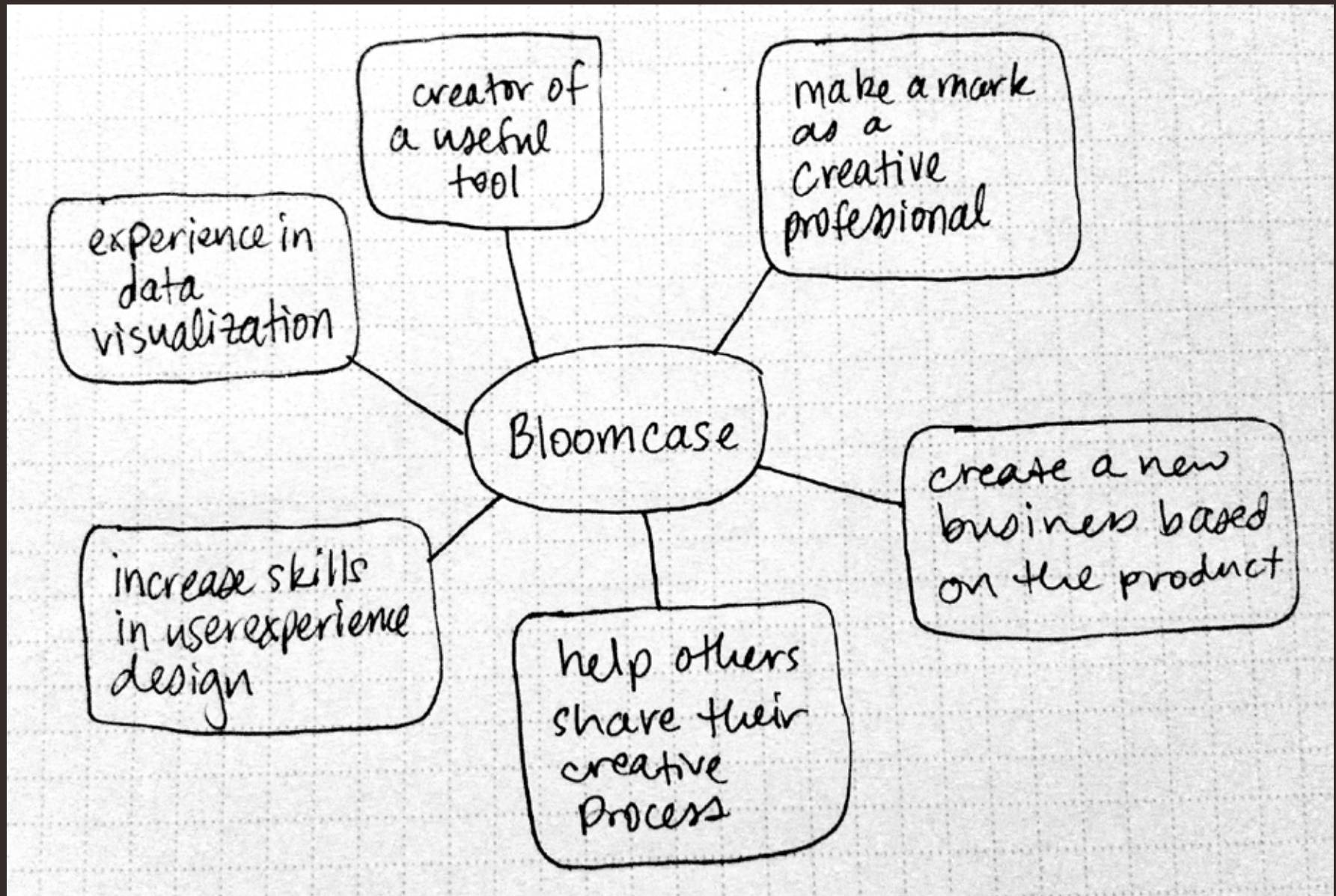
## Phase Three

Once I have built the Drupal/D3 integration, developing the interface through which users might move, add, or edit objects on the screen will be key. At this phase, I will be doing a series of rapid user tests of the prototype as features are developed, incorporating feedback into the development process.

## Phase Four

In the last phase, I will be further developing the application — focusing on the user experience of the product as a whole, including generating a new account, creating a new project, and adding artifacts to that project. This phase will focus more on the high-level view of the application.





**The possibilities –** How I see Bloomcase helping me grow as a creative professional.

# statement of intent

I have always been interested in the documentation of process. I have folders of sketches at home, and for each creative project I work on, the act of documenting my creative process gives me more insight into my own work and informs my decisions. I am an artist, photographer, musician, graphic and web designer, and user experience designer. Through my many creative endeavors, I see the relevance of being able to share the story of my creative process and the decisions and steps taken along the way.

At Stanford, I developed and taught a course for three years titled “Technology for Artists,” in which I taught arts students the skills necessary to develop their own unique website portfolios. My passion for giving creative individuals a tool for showcasing their creative work is evident in my commitment to this course. Many of the students that took my class are architecture and product design majors. These students (more than the others) understand the need to share their creative process, and documentation is a fundamental part of their discipline.

For example, architecture students rarely will get the chance to even see one of their designs become reality — the process is the finished product for them,

and it is the main component of their portfolio. These students know that developing a strong personal statement and showing how their process defines them as an architect is key to their success, though despite this awareness, they often have trouble figuring out how to tell their story. These students’ needs have directly inspired the concept of Bloomcase.

Bloomcase will be directly relevant to my career as an interaction and user experience designer. This project will give me a chance to develop skills in information visualization (aesthetics and programming skills), application development (designing and deploying an application for a large user base), and interface design (visual and typographic style as well as brand development and marketing), making me a strong candidate for innovative design firms around the world.

The technical challenges of this project are an important part of my career goals. I want to break into the world of data visualization. To do this, I need to learn new programming skills. This project can be a point of entry for me to develop these skills and connect with the growing community of information visualizers in the Bay Area and beyond.

In creating an application that can be useful to the creative community, I hope to set myself up as an innovative contributor to creative thinking and an educator and authority on the creative process. This project will align with my desire to develop an online educational program for creatives, in which artists, designers, and other creative individuals can take online webinars and courses to develop technology and presentation skills. In addition, I hope to develop this into a strong business plan and a source of income. Bloomcase will be a jumping off point for my online business goals.

More than this, Bloomcase excites me, as it will be a scalable, useful tool for creative thinkers of all kinds. I am looking forward to the challenge of designing a simple, elegant, intuitive interface.







## about me

I am a graphic and web designer, educator, and communications strategist with a passion for quality, usability, and functional design.

I currently work as the Web Designer for Stanford Web Services where I create custom designs, templates, and themes for Stanford University, as well as work to improve the user experience for the Stanford Sites Drupal service.

Previously, I worked at the Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts (SiCa) managing the Arts at Stanford website and creating dynamic, compelling communications and marketing materials to promote the arts across the university and beyond.

On the side, I have run a small graphic and web design business, providing one-stop-shop identity, collateral, and web design/development services for solo entrepreneurs, small businesses, and startups. I specialize in providing a comprehensive approach to communications, design, and the web, and creating unique materials and tools that support day-to-day and long-term operations and goals.

In addition to my work at Stanford, I have designed the curriculum for and developed a specialized class for

arts-focused students: Technology for Artists. Topics covered include introduction to HTML, CSS, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Illustrator, usability, typography, rich media, and the end result for each student is a web portfolio. This class has typically had a waiting list of up to eighty students.

I graduated from Stanford University in 2006 with a BA in music composition, and I am currently working part-time toward an MFA in Web Design and New Media at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco (expected graduation date of December 2013).

Other interests include music composition, visual arts, photography, backpacking, camping, swimming, cycling, traveling, Bikram yoga, gardening, cooking, and spending time with my beloved family, friends, and cats.

*Connect with me online—*

**My Website:** [www.meganerinmiller.com](http://www.meganerinmiller.com)

**On Twitter:** @meganerinmiller

**On Facebook:** [facebook.com/meganerinmillerdesign](https://facebook.com/meganerinmillerdesign)



# résumé

## Work Experience

July 2012–present

### Web Designer

Stanford Web Services

#### Primary Responsibilities

- Create web designs based within the Stanford brand
- Develop Drupal themes for use on Stanford Sites service
- Improve user experience of Stanford Sites service
- Provide design and user experience consultation
- Help design and develop new Drupal features

2008–present

### Owner and Founder

Megan Erin Miller Design

#### Primary Services

- Small-scale web design, development, and theming
- Logo and identity development
- Stationary and newsletter design
- User interface design for web applications
- Usability assessment and user experience consulting
- Communications and social media strategy consulting
- Technology training
- Ebook cover design

2008–2012

### Communications Manager

Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts

#### Primary Responsibilities

- Website design and construction
- Marketing materials design and production
- Annual Report production

- Enewsletter design and production
- Multimedia content production
- Content writing and press releases
- List management and building

2005–2011

### Arts in Student Life Coordinator

Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts

#### Primary Responsibilities

- Program design, development, and administration
- Outreach and marketing
- Grants management
- Enewsletter design and production
- Website design and construction
- Focus groups and feedback
- Student advising

## Teaching Experience

2010–present

### Guest Instructor on Adobe Photoshop

Arts Intensive Program, Stanford University

2009–2011

### Creator and Instructor of Technology for Artists Course

Stanford University

## Awards

### 2011 Dean's Award for Outstanding Achievement

Stanford School of Humanities and Sciences

#### 1st place, "Site Maps and Flow Charts"

#### 2nd place, "Storyboards and Walkthroughs"

2010 Academy of Art University Spring Show

### Editor's Choice Award for Window Farms Exhibition

2010 Maker Faire

## Education

2008–2013

### Academy of Art University

MFA in Web Design & New Media

2002–2006

### Stanford University

BA Music with a concentration in composition

Graduated with distinction

## Skills

### Content Management Systems

Drupal 6 + 7 (front-end development, theming, configuration, administration), WordPress (development, configuration, custom theming, administration)

### Coding

HTML, CSS, PHP, MySQL, ActionScript 3.0, Javascript, D3

### Software

Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash, After Effects, Logic, Final Cut Pro

### Web

Google products (including Analytics), Firebug and other development tools

### Other

Photography, Digital Video, Audio Recording, Blogging, Podcasting technologies

# portfolio



## Open Framework <http://openframework.stanford.edu>

October 2012

A sophisticated responsive base theme for Drupal.

As part of my job at Stanford Web Services I design and develop responsive Drupal themes for use across the Stanford campus. Open Framework is a new, sophisticated responsive base theme that is used as the foundational theme layer in the Stanford theme stack. Created in collaboration with a colleague at Stanford, this theme is open source and was released to the public with positive reception in November 2012 at the Bay Area Drupal Camp.



## Arts at Stanford University Formerly at <http://arts.stanford.edu>

January 2012

A community-driven website portal for the arts at Stanford University, built in Drupal.

This website was an incredibly large and complex Drupal project that involved content strategy, Drupal theming, Drupal development and configuration, data and content management, and communications strategy. The website was replaced in September 2012 after I left my position at SiCa. You can learn more about the project on my portfolio website.



## Apartment Grown <http://www.apartmentgrown.com>

May 2010 – June 2011

My first thesis project idea — a tool for documenting and growing your apartment garden.

After a full year of refining my concept, developing prototypes, and conducting user testing, I determined that the project was not a sufficiently viable idea to pursue as my thesis work. Apartment Grown would have enabled users to track the growth of their plants, get recommendations for apartment gardening projects, keep a garden journal, and go through tutorials to learn basic gardening fundamentals.



## The Edibles Encyclopedia

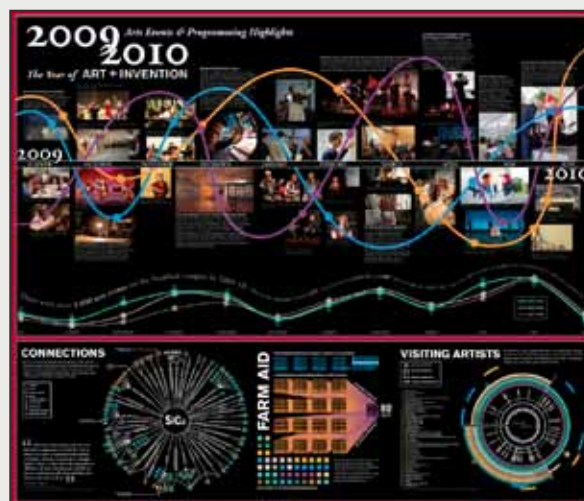
<http://www.ediblesencyclopedia.com>

May 2011

An interactive infographics approach to container gardening focusing on how and when to plant edibles in your container (or backyard) garden.

The Edibles Encyclopedia features information about which plants grow best in what temperatures, how much soil you need to plant each kind of plant, and when (compared to your first spring frost date) you should plant outdoors or inside. The site is built in HTML, CSS, and Javascript.

◆ *Read more about these projects online at <http://www.meganerinmiller.com/portfolio>*



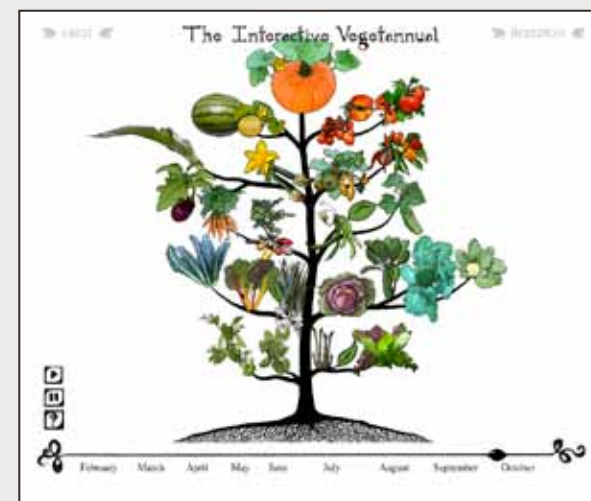
## SiCa Annual Report 2009-2010

<http://arts0910.stanford.edu>

September 2010

A print and interactive annual report featuring information visualization and storytelling techniques.

This project featured a set of complex print and interactive infographics. The fold-out print poster was distributed across campus to 3,000, and the interactive report was featured in the Stanford Report.



## The Interactive Vegetannual

<http://www.vegetannual.com>

December 2009

A Flash-based exploratory animation showing how crops grow throughout the season.

The Interactive Vegetannual is inspired by Barbara Kingsolver's book "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle." It is meant to inform, educate, and illustrate the powerful concept of the "vegetannual," a hypothetical super-vegetable invented by Kingsolver to show how food crops grow throughout the season.

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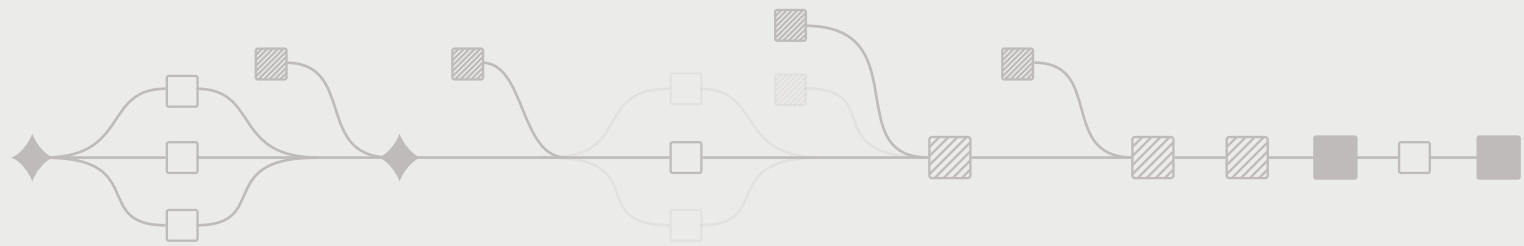
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*Tiki-Toki*. Web. 12 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.tiki-toki.com>>. An example of timeline creation tool



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