



NIKA FAITH

ABLAO

ABOUT ME

Hello hello! My name is Nika Faith Ablao and I'm an aspiring UX Designer & Researcher based in sunny San Diego, California. I'm a new college graduate from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York with a B.A. in Information Science with a triple concentration in UX, Design Culture & Production, and Data Science and a minor in Business.

I'm a designer because while I see technology as a tool with the immense potential to simplify and augment our lives, I also believe that, inversely, it has the power to confuse and overwhelm. By combining clean designs that reflect our expectations of the real world with a thorough understanding of the audience, I aim to create beautiful, yet straightforward interactions that afford enjoyable user experiences.

When I'm not searching for the perfect font or mapping out the ideal user flow, you can find me doodling in my bullet journal, coloring too many things pink, practicing hand lettering, playing rugby, or playing my ukulele.



SKILLS

UX Methodologies

User Research & Persona Creation, Storyboarding, Affinity Diagramming, Web & Multimedia Design, Interaction Design, Usability Testing, Heuristic Evaluation, Full Stack Development

Design Toolbox

Adobe CC (Ps, Ai, Id, Xd, Dw, Sp), Sketch, Balsamiq, Invision, Marvel

Technical Skills

HTML, CSS, SQL, JavaScript, jQuery, d3, PHP, Java, Python

EXPERIENCE

For years I have been pursuing my passion for UX Design through the various positions I've held, especially at university.

My time at the Cornell Social Media Lab has not only given me experience in design and development, but has also given me an important perspective on the effect of technology on our society. As an intern at Petco, I carried out a thorough analysis of important customer journey flows on their eCommerce site such as the search, add to cart, or sign up flows. During my freshmen year in college, I worked at the Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source and collaborated with a resident researcher on designing creating a site to host vital information for their annual summer conference.

Cornell Social Media Lab
Jan 2017 - May 2018

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Petco Inc.
Jun 2017 - Aug 2017

eCommerce Analytics Intern

Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source
Feb 2015 - May 2015

Web Designer

THE PROCESS

My process allows the user to be the center of the design.

When approaching a problem statement, I aim to keep the users' needs and expectations at the forefront of my mind. Through a process of research, exploration, creation, and many iterations, I achieve this in my design by taking multiple rounds of user and peer feedback in order to fully understand and improve how the user would use and interact with the product in real life.

1 Research

Through user interviews, gain understanding of the users and their needs and expectations. Gather knowledge about the context that the users will use the product.

2 Explore

Create an affinity diagram with the details of the user interviews to create user goals, frustrations, behaviors, and values. With these goals in mind, brainstorm different designs that can be used to solve the problem.

3 Create

With these user goals in mind, select a design that will best address the users' needs. Create a low-fidelity prototype in order to explore wireframe concepts and important user flows.

4 Iterate

Execute an initial user test on the low-fidelity prototype and closely observe how the users interact and react to the design. Identify flaws in the logic of the design and iterate upon the design. Create a mid-fidelity prototype and execute more user tests to refine the design.

5 Develop

Conduct a heuristic evaluation of the design to further improve on the users' experience. Using this information, develop a high-fidelity prototype to fully emulate the design. Run additional user tests and iterate upon the design based on the feedback.

6 Deliver

Finalize the design and produce deliverables.

CHOWCHUMS

Date: 2017

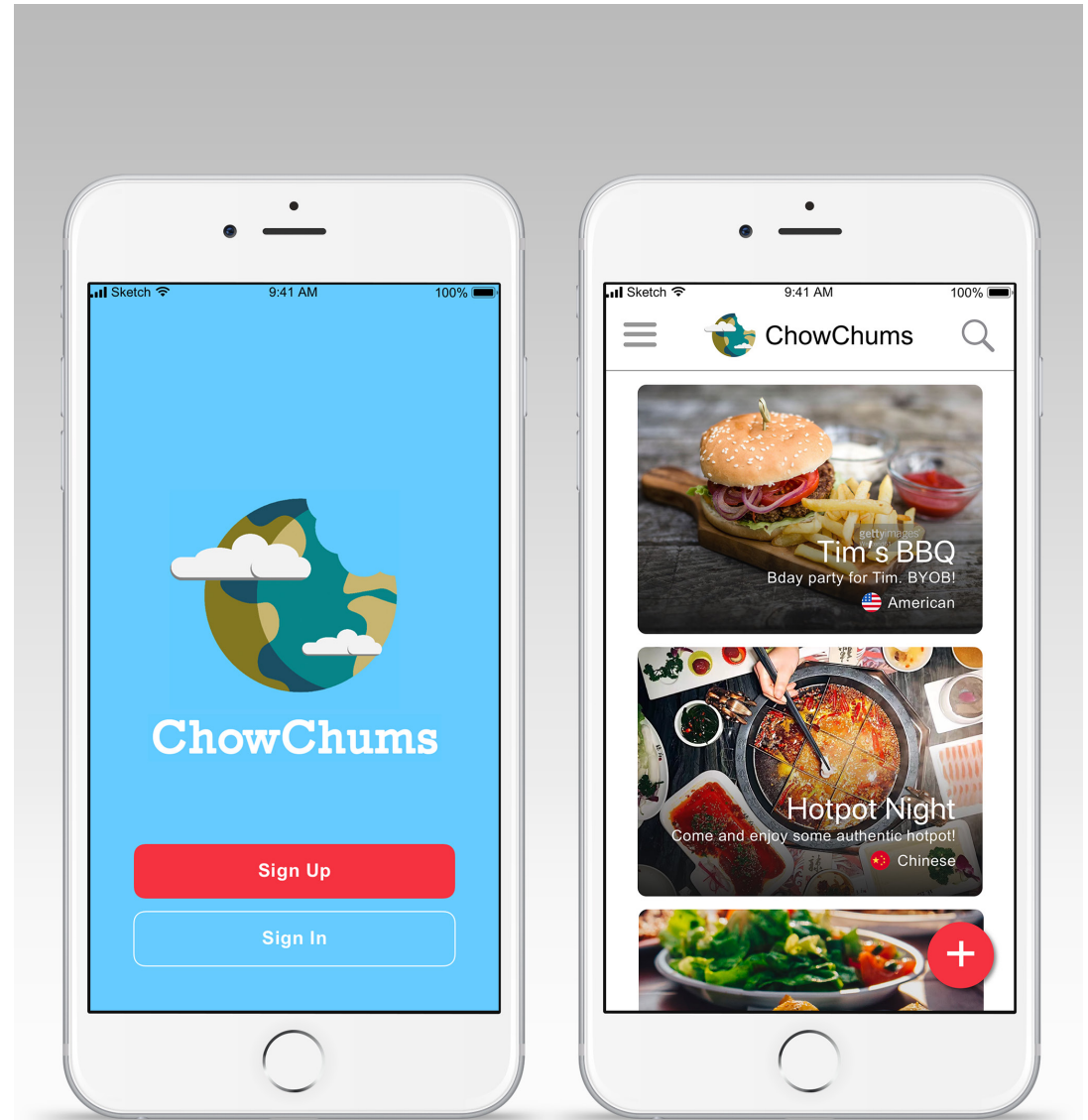
Platform: Mobile App

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Given the challenge of creating a design that aims to create a more inclusive community through technology, my group and I decided to focus our efforts on the dichotomy of international and domestic students on Cornell's campus. We needed to create a design that would provide a safe space for international students to interact with others outside of their bubble and outside of their comfort zone. The design needs to be able to sufficiently motivate both groups of students to want to meet one another.

MY CONTRIBUTIONS

- > User interviews
- > Design ideation
- > Identify design
- > Setting goals and objectives
- > Building personas
- > Creating site maps
- > Creating wireframes
- > High-fidelity prototypes
- > Usability testing



CHOWCHUMS

Overview & Goals

Class: INFO 3450 Human-Computer Interaction

InVision URL: <https://invis.io/KPEBLKEGD>

WHAT IS CHOWCHUMS?

ChowChums brings together Cornell students from all cultural and national backgrounds through the one true love of all college students: food. Through ChowChums, users can create and join culturally themed potlucks that are hosted and attended by fellow Cornell students. Eager to share your mother's baozi recipe with the world? Share a potluck called Dim Sum Night and encourage your attendees to come early and learn all about it! Is Chipotle not quite fulfilling your Mexican food craving? Join a potluck and learn new recipes from your fellow students! ChowChums creates the perfect platform to learn more about the diverse student body that you've become a part of at Cornell.

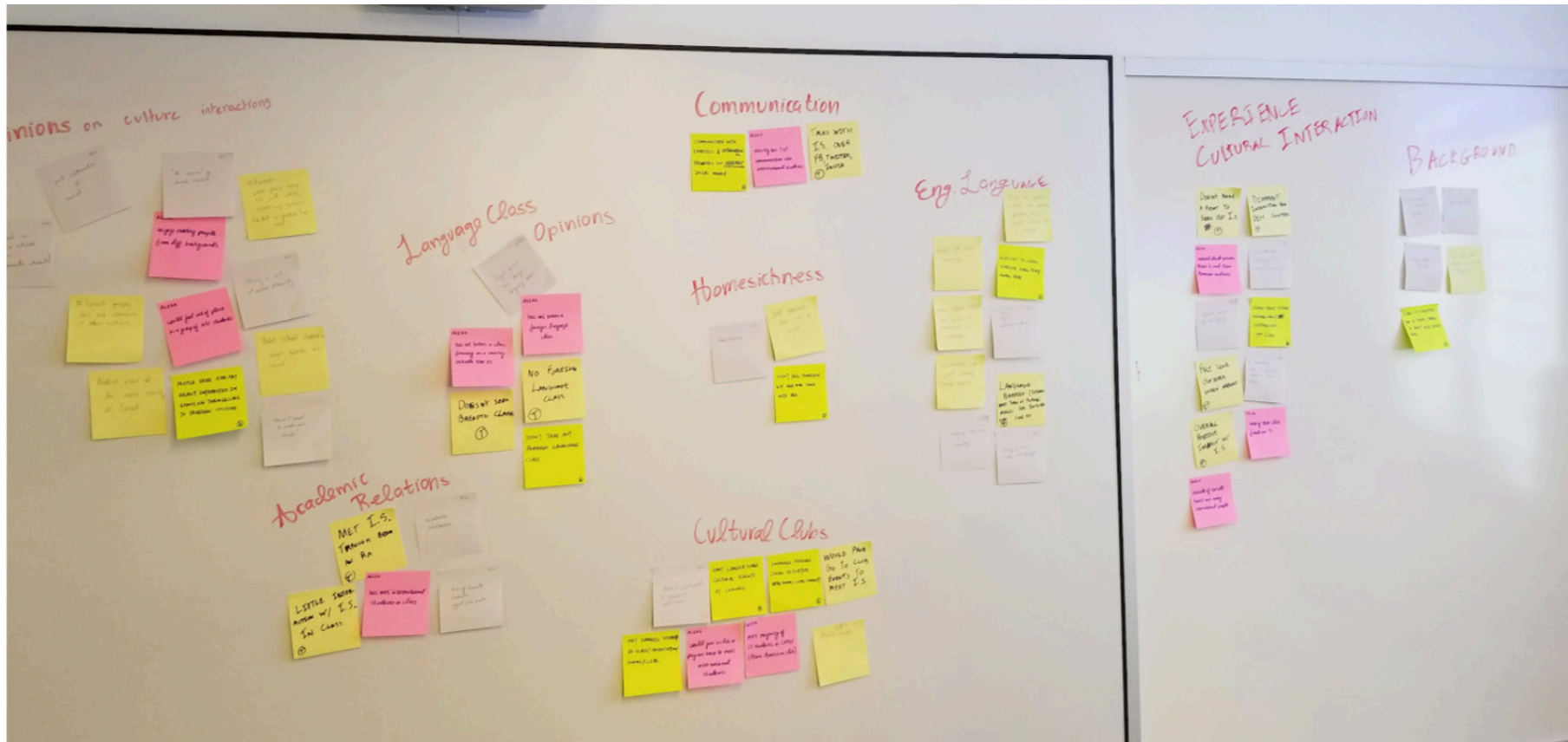
GOALS

ChowChums specifically aims to help international students find like-minded students from their home countries, adjust to American culture, improve English skills with native speakers, and alleviates homesickness. Through the app, we hope to strengthen cultural and social dynamics of the Cornell community through shared food experiences.

Primary Audience: Cornell students

CHOWCHUMS

User Interviews & Affinity Diagrams



In order to better understand our users and their motivations, we conducted multiple interviews of both domestic and international Cornell students, asking the specifically about their interactions with one another. Through these interviews, we learned that the rift between the two communities is not due to lack of opportunity to connect, but rather a lack of motivation. From our interview notes, we created an affinity diagram of the important points of each interview, grouping together like statements from each interviewee.

CHOWCHUMS

User Persona & Story Boarding

Since our user interviews had revealed to our group that the main reason for the rift between domestic and international students was a lack of motivation to reach out and maintain friendships especially on the international student side, we shifted our primary audience to be these international students, instead of focusing equally on both sets of students.

Further synthesizing the cultural, academic, demographic, information that we had gathered from our user interviews and had organized through with an affinity diagrams, we created a user persona. This persona aimed to highlight the specific needs, expectations, goals, and background of our target user group. Referring back to the persona during the design process allows the user to continue to be at the center of our brainstorm.

CYNTHIA HUANG



female | 19 yrs
International Student from China

BACKGROUND

- Moved to US at age 18 for university
- Previously lived with mother, father, and younger sister in China

EDUCATION

2nd yr undergraduate student
studies Environmental Engineering
at Cornell University

SKILLS & INTERESTS

piano, environmental sustainability

GOALS

LIFE GOALS

- Do well in academic classes so that she has higher job prospects in the U.S.
- Maintain Chinese identity while embracing new American lifestyle

END GOALS

- Assimilate within US customs and cultural norms
- Meet and befriend domestic students
- Improve English speaking and writing skills

EXPERIENCE GOALS

- Comfort and confidence in speaking and writing English in both casual and formal settings
- Overcome loneliness and homesickness
- Sociable and accepted among domestic peers

FRUSTRATIONS

- Learning English
 - Speaking english in classroom and social settings
 - Writing in english for academic assignments
- Homesickness
- Making friends
- Finding a job in the US
- Dealing with visa requirements

BEHAVIORS & VALUES

Cynthia has strong family values and pride in her Chinese heritage. She keeps in touch with her family and close friends from China through social media.

Cynthia appreciates those who help her assimilate in the US especially because she has experienced anxiety when navigated new social/cultural norms.

Most of Cynthia's current friends are international students from China, also have some close friends who are domestic students. She has previously attended events held by Chinese Student Association, during the first few months of her Freshman year, but is not actively involved.

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Design Ideation & Storyboarding

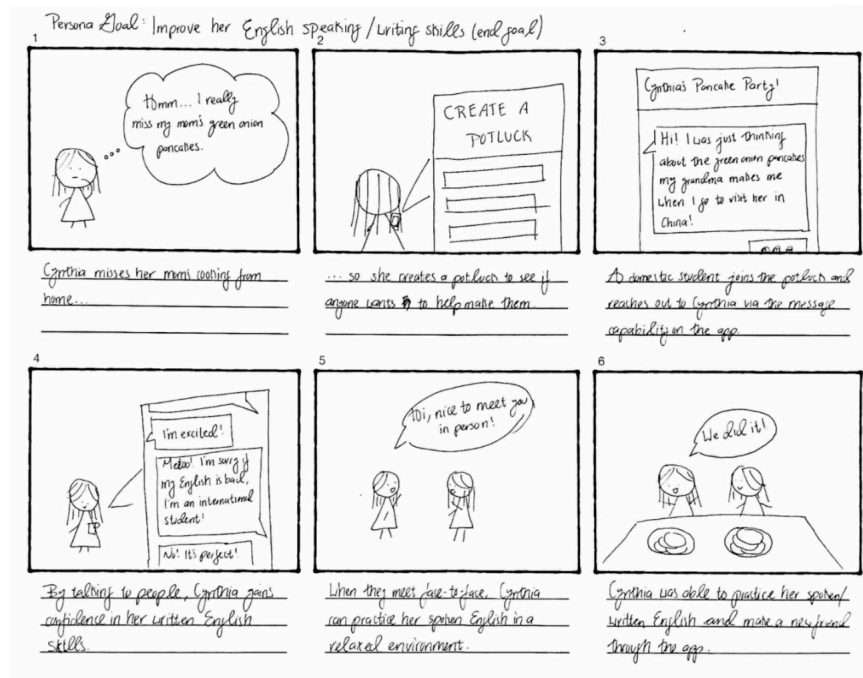
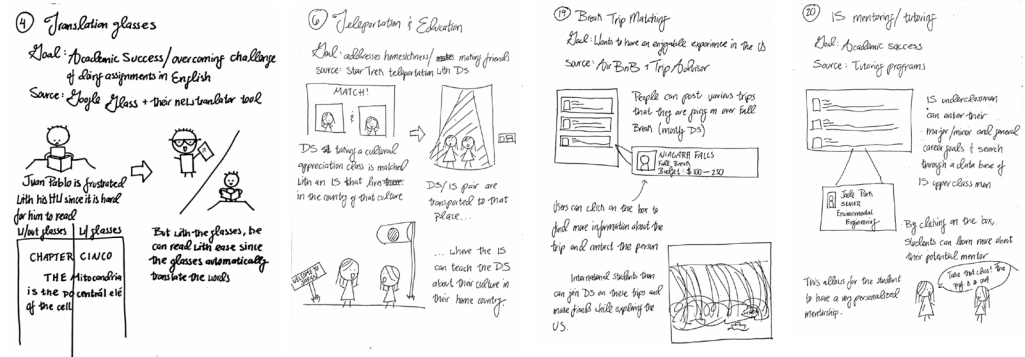
BRAINSTORM

After identifying the specific problem within our community that we wanted to tackle, my group and I had a design ideation session, where each of us created up to 30 design solutions each, from simple desktop websites that allowed domestic students to be matched up with an international student tutor (or vice versa), to more out-there ideas like creating immersive VR environments that virtually take domestic students to different countries to better appreciate international students' culture.

From these different design ideas, we eliminated those that weren't feasible, had a similar product that already exists, or didn't meet all the goals of our user persona. Through this process, we decided to design a mobile application that brings students together through one of the best cultural vehicles: food.

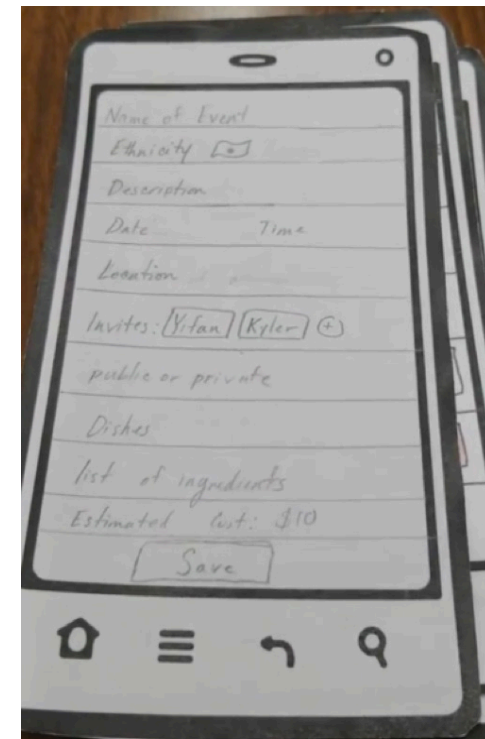
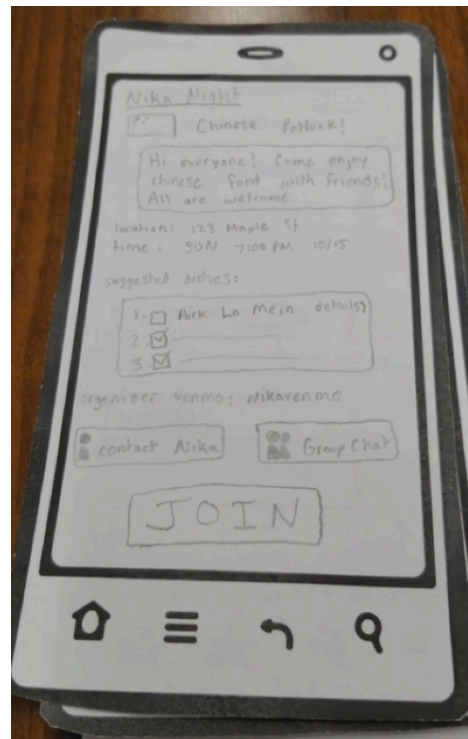
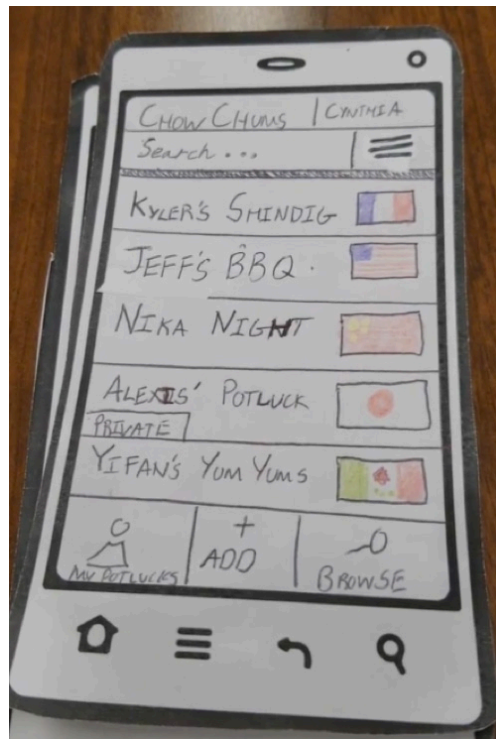
IDENTIFYING CONTEXT

Once we identified the design that we were going to undertake, we set out to better understand the context that the user would use our product and how it would achieve the goals of our persona. We were able to achieve this through creating storyboards of our user persona, Cynthia, interacting with the app.



CHOWCHUMS

Low-Fidelity Prototype & Usability Testing



With all our previously gained understanding of the users, the context that ChowChums will be used in, and the goals that we wish to achieve, we moved forward with creating an initial low-fidelity paper prototype. By doing user testing on these paper screens, we were able to discern if our initial user flows were clear enough for the user to understand, if the user could understand what the app was made for, and if the user enjoyed using the app. User feedback from the test sessions allowed us to re-evaluate some aspects of ChowChums and make changes for the next iteration.

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Mid-Fidelity Prototype & Usability Testing

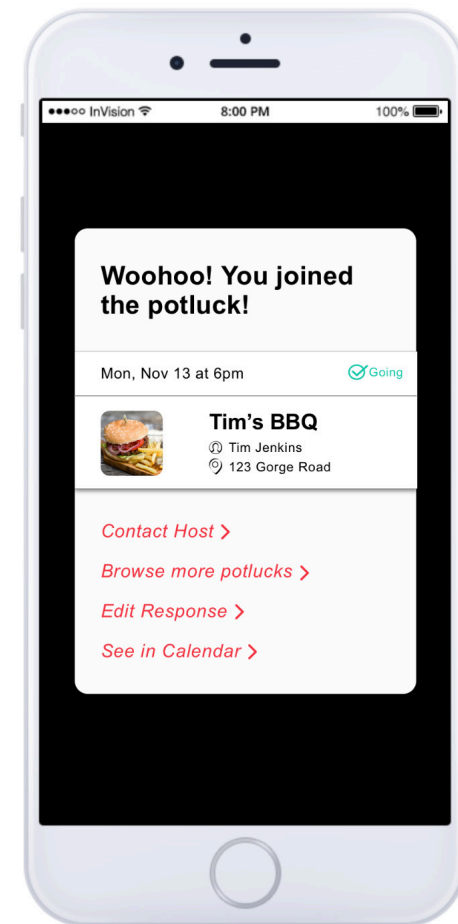
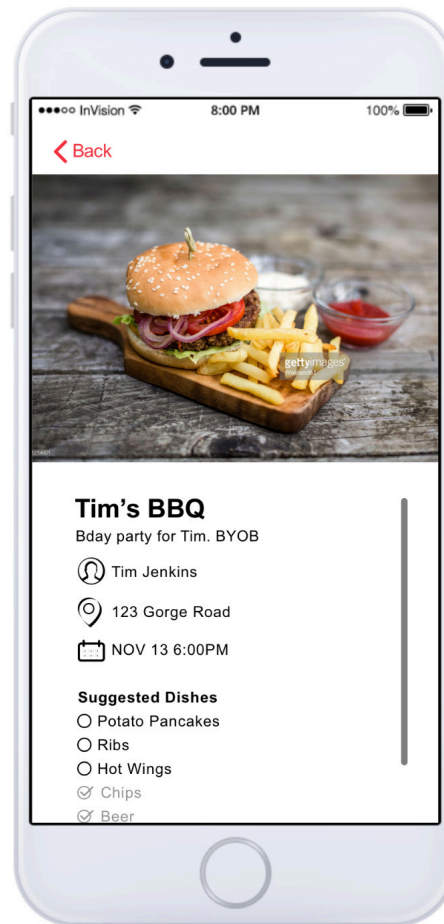
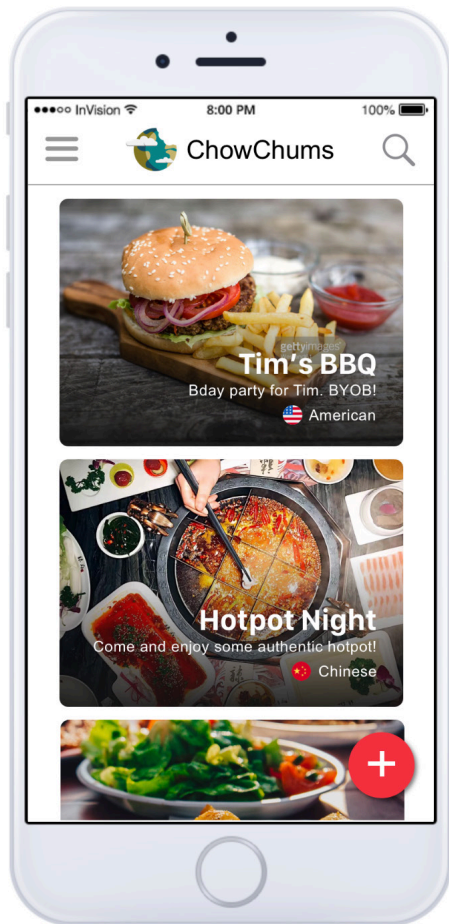


Armed with the feedback that we had gained from the first round of user testing, we created a mid-fidelity prototype with Balsamiq. This prototype is a little more fleshed out than the paper prototype and the users can interact with it by clicking through the PDF. These wireframes gave us a better basis of how to build the screens. We used these screens to conduct another round of user testing, specifically focusing on the "Join a Potluck", "Create a Potluck", and "Chat" functionalities; these are the functionalities that we expected to be used the most by users.

CHOWCHUMS

High Fidelity Prototype

After consolidating all the feedback from our usability sessions and critique from our own heuristic evaluation sessions, we made note of the changes that needed to be made in our design and created the high-fidelity prototype of ChowChums.



Petco Inc. eCommerce Analytics Internship

I had the pleasure of staying in San Diego for the summer at Petco Inc., as a Tag Management intern for their eCommerce Analytics team.

My responsibilities included:

- > creating daily eCommerce business reports
- > compiling weekly eCommerce business reports to be used by employees in the Weekly Business Review meeting
- > carrying out an exhaustive audit of all tags present and data collected on the eCommerce site; clean-up decreased page load time by 4%
- > using industry tools to evaluate the site's user flows (especially the search, checkout, and account creation flows) and identifying areas in need of improvement

I had shared with my mentor and manager that I was interested in web development and design, so I was given the opportunity to assist the Digital Production team in coding pages for the responsive redesign of the eCommerce site.

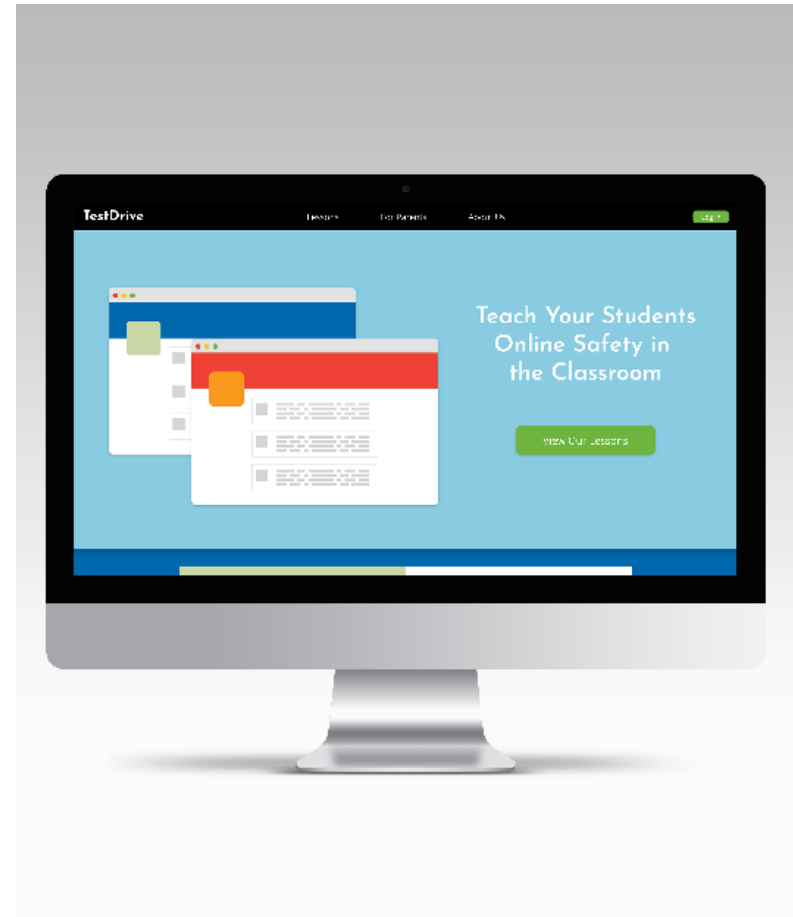


TESTDRIVE

Additional Projects

One of the projects that I had the pleasure of working on during my years at the Cornell Social Media Lab is the TestDrive site. The site was created to host lessons about safe practices on social media which the lab had created in collaboration with Common Sense Media. Some lessons that educators can find on here include lessons about safe usernames and passwords, what sites are trustworthy, and what information is safe to release online.

I took on the position of the project lead during the process and guided the team through the sketch, testing, prototyping, and development phases. Prototypes and styles guides for the site were created through Adobe XD and the final developed site was hardcoded by the team and me through HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.



THANK YOU!

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