

Helpy

by TheOpenSorcerers

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT SO FAR

The website "Helppy" is a platform created for Edinburgh College of Art's students to share their creative skills with other students who might need help; allowing them to collaborate in interdisciplinary projects for free. Every Helppy user can add one or more skills they would like to share with others, from Adobe Illustrator knowledge to Pattern Cutting or Sewing. They can rate their own level of expertise in each skill and categorize it within 16 different areas or creative fields (E.g Graphic Design, Fashion) By helping other users with their skills their work will be rated with a system of "green score" that is based on the time they have helped. Therefore, each user profile shows how much a student has been helped by others and how much time they have spent helping other users, as well as the average score they have been given after sharing their skills. All categories and skills can be searched for and filtered through the website's own search system.

In order to implement the Alpha version of this website, we have created all the necessary databases in .sql format based on the structure of a previously created schema. At present, some of them have been implemented in the front end of the website with PHP to allow some of the website's functions to work. For instance, users can register to the website by creating their own username and password. Once registered they can login and logout of the system, and can access their personal profiles to edit their personal data (full name, description, change password). The profile picture is generated via 'Gravatar'. They can add new skills to their profile by choosing from a list of skills (previously added to the database by other users) or by creating a new one and categorizing it. The user can decide his/her level of knowledge of each skill (From Beginner to Expert). Users are able to visualize the profile pages of others, which have the same format as the personal profile page, however it only displays the username, the profile picture, and details of each skill offered by a particular user (i.e level of expertise). The header is used for registration and login. When the user is logged, it displays a research box, the user name with a dropdown menu to access to the profile page or log out and the inbox icon with the number of messages unread. This navigation bar has been created to be responsive to different window sizes. Categories displayed at the home page allow all users to search for skills from the home page. The Alpha version of the website also counts with a basic html structure and the basic shape of the Front End of the message function.

The Beta version of the website will allow all users to search from the header 'navbar' at any moment and the research box on the different result pages (category and skills). We would like to get a recommendation system, where users with some availability in common will be proposed first.

The messaging function will be implemented. It will allow users to ask for help, accept or reject requests, which will also permit negotiations amongst users regarding time of work and specific conditions. Moreover, it will integrate the rating system that will allow users to give points to others once the collaboration or job has been done.

On the profile page, students will be able to display their own availability for collaboration to other users by choosing from different options (from late evening to early mornings). This will be visible to others in a calendar displaying available hours and days. This information will be useful for others to make skill requests. The profile page will also integrate the Google Maps API which will allow users to pick their location to help users within their area. The final version of the website will be tested on the latest versions of Google Chrome and Safari and will be able to respond to different window sizes.

As the system has been proven to be complex enough, we are using a scaffolding system (Bootstrap) for the html structure of the website. We are also using 'Font Awesome' to get scalable vector icons customized with CSS.

The teamwork has been working with the help of a git client (Sourcetree) that offers a graphic interface for hg and Git repositories. We have created and implemented the main CSS that will be applied to each webpage and have designed most of the screens of the website. In the final frontend some details will be sharpened to facilitate users' navigation through the site such as creating a more graphical interface for the disposition of some elements that may be currently shown as lists and dropdown menus in the Alpha version.

CONTEXT - MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid is defined by a "work provided on an unpaid basis by the extended family, social or neighbourhood networks" (Burns, Williams, & Windebank, 2004, p. 30). Mutualism and community self-help are seen to be both desirable and necessary, particularly following the time of economic crisis (White, 2011). Not to mention that the act of co-operating with another human can elicit dopamine signals, "a compound present in the body as a neurotransmitter and a precursor of other substances including adrenalin" (Stevenson, 2010). In the right circumstances, it can make us feel as good as after taking a drug that increase dopamine, and feeling of happiness (Belic, 2011), making co-operation and mutual aid a win-win action.

Nevertheless, competition is still often more encourage (Belic, 2011) and an increasingly disproportionate work/life balance, resulting less time available to invest in unpaid activities (White, 2011). Self-help and mutual aid are increasingly marginal and residual activities (Burns et al., 2004, p. 53). However, researches also indicate that most people express a willingness to 'do more' for other people in their community (Burns et al., 2004; White, 2009; Williams & Windebank, 2002). To promote mutuality and community self-help it is first important to understand first what prevents households from doing more for others in their community. The barriers include 'being a burden to others', 'having false expectations/inappropriate gestures', 'being unable to say no', 'lack of time' or 'lack of skills' (White, 2011). Not to mention that, many people do not know neighbour/college in their communities well enough to ask for help to undertake a task (Williams & Windebank, 2000). Another hesitancy to engage with mutual aid is a consequence of low levels of familiarity and trust in that community. White suggests that one of the main concerns is that the favour given to other households may not be reciprocated appropriately (2011).

He also argues that there is a real need for 'alternative approach' to encourage and developed mutual aid, with creative thinking, but also evaluating harness community self- help (2011). With this project, we want to give to communities, and particularly to Edinburgh University a tool that will facilitate mutual aid, and cross disciplinary exchange. On the same belief as couchsurfing, worldwide known hospitality exchange and social networking website, we believe that the spirit of generosity, kindness, enhance each other's lives and to become stronger in that purpose by coming together (Couchsurfing, 2014). It has the power to profoundly change the world, and 'accessory' create more interesting, collaborative projects during our study and build a network for the future.

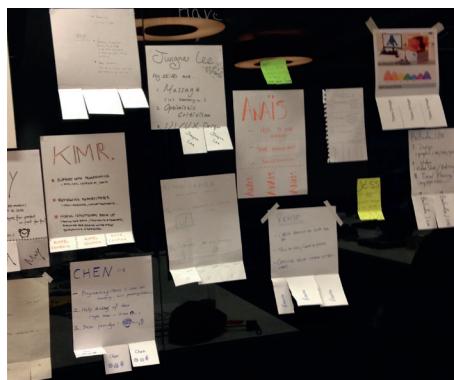
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OUR VISION AND WHY

WHERE does THE IDEA come from ?

In the course design informatics, we all come from different background with a wide variety of skills. We are asked to work with technology (eg: arduino...) with a design approach. In the class, some are brilliant in programming but doesn't have competence in any creative software, and most designers doesn't have any skills in computer science. It is the richness of this master. However, we found it difficult to know what are the skills 'available', and find who will be the more willing to help ask for it is not always easy, as argued previously.

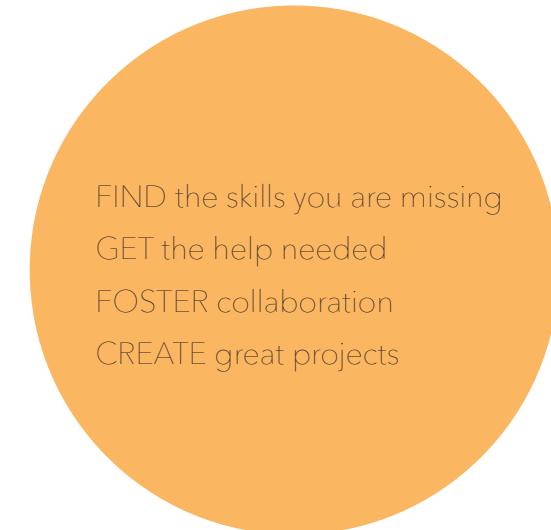


The class developed a very simple 'craft' way to deal with this problem, by writing 3 skills on a piece of paper and 3 detachable tickets to exchange help/services. However, it is very limited and we still find the need for a platform helping us to help each other.

Moreover, we believe that studying in a ECA is the great chance, however, we don't take the chance to make interdisciplinary connection, using the wide range of subjects available, from animation to fashion, photography graphic design and so on. We would all benefit from such collaboration, gaining knowledge of each other, resulting on more professional projects, and build a network for the future.

WHAT is HELPPY?

HELPPY is a free platform to collaborate, offer and receive skills.



TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Starting with Design Informatics master students
2. Then ECA
3. Widen to Edinburgh University
4. Finally, why not open it to everyone interested

INSPIRATION - REFERENCES

The Time/bank website features a clean, user-friendly interface with a yellow header bar. It includes sections for 'ABOUT', 'LISTINGS', 'SKILLS', and 'BRANCHES'. The 'LISTINGS' section shows various posts from users like 'No Greater Fiction' and 'Kirlan photography'. The 'SKILLS' section allows users to list their skills, such as 'Labor work' or 'Babysitting'. The 'BRANCHES' section is currently empty.

The Streetbank website has a teal header bar with 'ABOUT', 'OFFERED', 'REQUESTS', 'NOTICES', 'NEIGHBOURS', and 'SPREAD THE WORD'. It features a 'What's in your neighbourhood?' search bar and a 'Neighbourhood Notice Board'. A specific post on the right asks for a designer to help with a project. Below the notice board is a map of Edinburgh showing neighborhood boundaries.

Our idea came from the concept of Time/Bank (or Time Banking) and StreetBank. They are two very similar systems; both are time and skill sharing web platforms. Streetbank is an online lending system, designed to be used by neighbours. Time/bank is similar to Streetbank in the sense that is also an online system for people to connect and share.

#Time/bank#

This website is a simple time-sharing site between people, to build supportive networks and strong communities. Based on a time credit system, one hour is equivalent to one time credit. Then, credits can be used to get help from others. Time Bank members give and receive all sorts of services, such as listening and visiting, gardening and form filling, or sharing skills.

The user interface is quite simple and clear. Only one colour (yellow) is used to highlight the key points. The categories on the right side are an appropriate way for the user to choose the things they want.

#Streetbank#

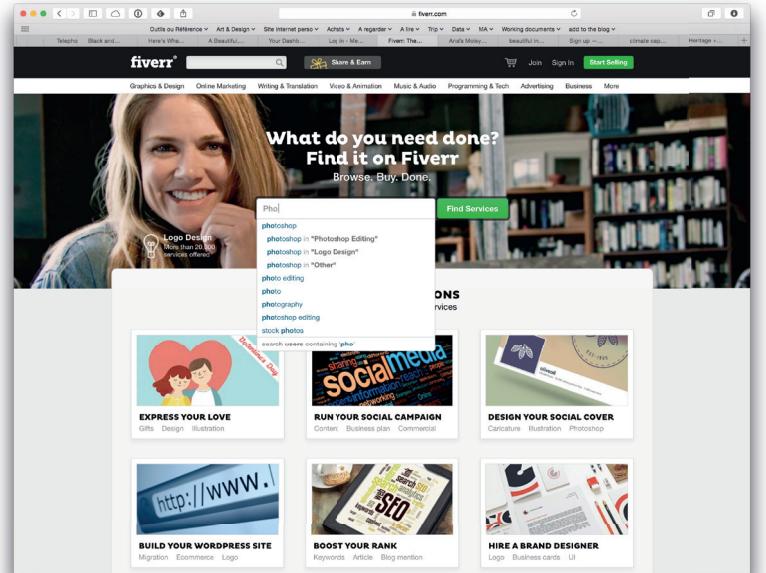
This second website is an online lending system, between neighbours, enabling the users to get rid of unwanted stuff as well as to lend tools or object. An example could be a neighbour asking to borrow some chairs, allowing engaging dialogue and building relationship in the community. It is also based on the concept of giving and receiving in the local community, but this time trying to overcome overconsumption.

The website has a good design, the information is well organised in each part of the website. With the aid of neighbourhood notice board, users in the same community can easily interact with each other.

Both web site are presenting the results as a list view. The user doesn't have the possibility to see around him where he could get help from, or offering help (in our case, if our web site was used only by University students, not having a map would not be a big issue, however if we think to about user outside university, a map starts to be essential).

#fiverr#

This website is to offer your skills for 5\$. It is going against our will to make a free mutual-aid platform. However it is a good example to determine our categories and get inspiration for our layout.



#couchsurfing#

Our first main inspiration was this website. Their motto is

"We envision a world made better by travel and travel made richer by connection. Couchsurfers share their lives with the people they encounter, fostering cultural exchange and mutual respect."

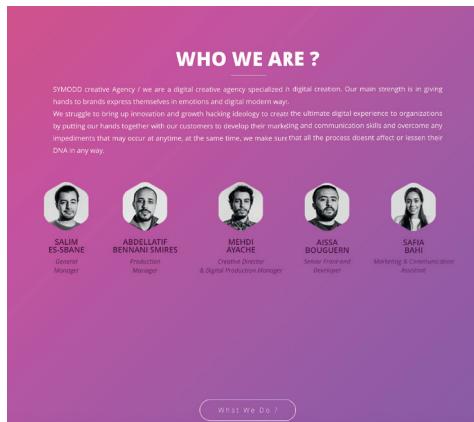
It is the value of exchange, connection, mutual respect that we would like to foster as well. Moreover, we will use as inspiration the simple way they choose to deal with the request, message and review system.

Two screenshots of the Couchsurfing website. The left screenshot shows the homepage for user 'Anais Moisy' from Edinburgh, featuring sections for 'Explore ancient civilizations with Couchsurfers' (Rome, Italy; Mexico City, Mexico; Istanbul, Turkey), 'Find Hosts Wherever You're Going', 'What's Happening Near Edinburgh' (events like 'bring your own food dinner :) Asian food' and 'coffee drinking edinburghers weekly meetup'), and a list of Facebook friends. The right screenshot shows the 'Inbox' page for 'Jungna Lee' from Tokyo, Japan, displaying messages from various users requesting stays, such as 'REQUESTED TO STAY WITH YOU THU FEB 7 SAT FEB 9' and 'Can you host Jungna?'.

INSPIRATION - DESIGN

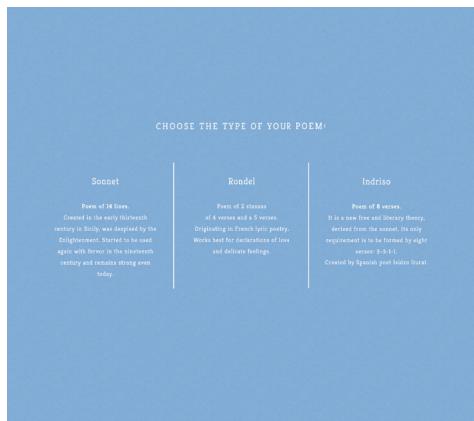
#symodd.com#

Nice color scheme, nice simple lines. But overly decorated and non-functional animations for our idea.



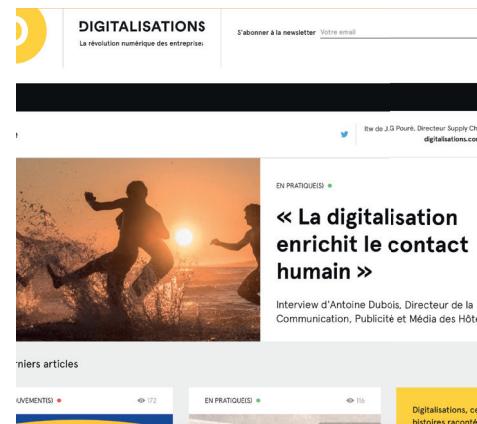
#poetweet.com.br/?lang=en#

Perfect! simple and functional designs for something like our idea. not much decoration



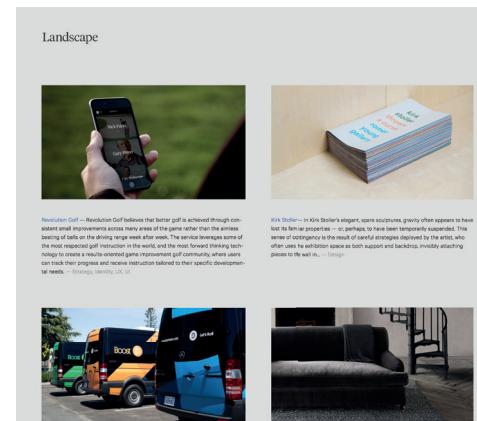
#digitalisations.com#

Good and functional color scheme, changes when hovering, typography, everything!



#thisislandscape.com/projects#

Perfect! simple and functional designs for something like our idea. not much decoration



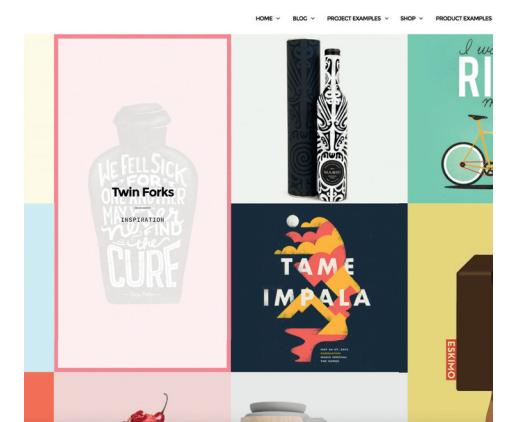
#fullstopnewparagraph.co.uk#

Simple, functional, good typography use



#themes.fuelthemes.net/?theme=notio#

Showing information when hovering i.e level and category over skill picture.



#florianwacker.de/en#

Typography and color scheme



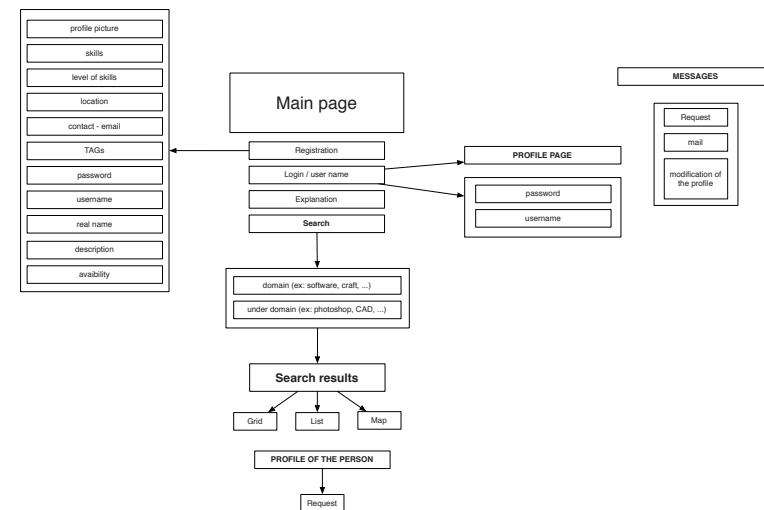
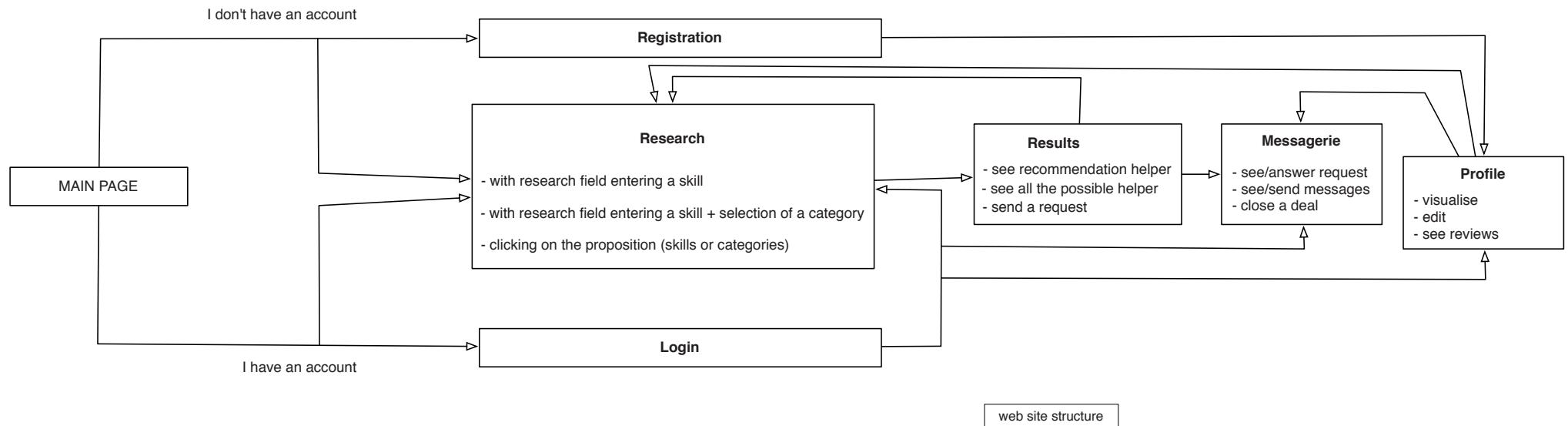
#fletcher-systems.co.nz#

Gorgeous navigation bar and typography

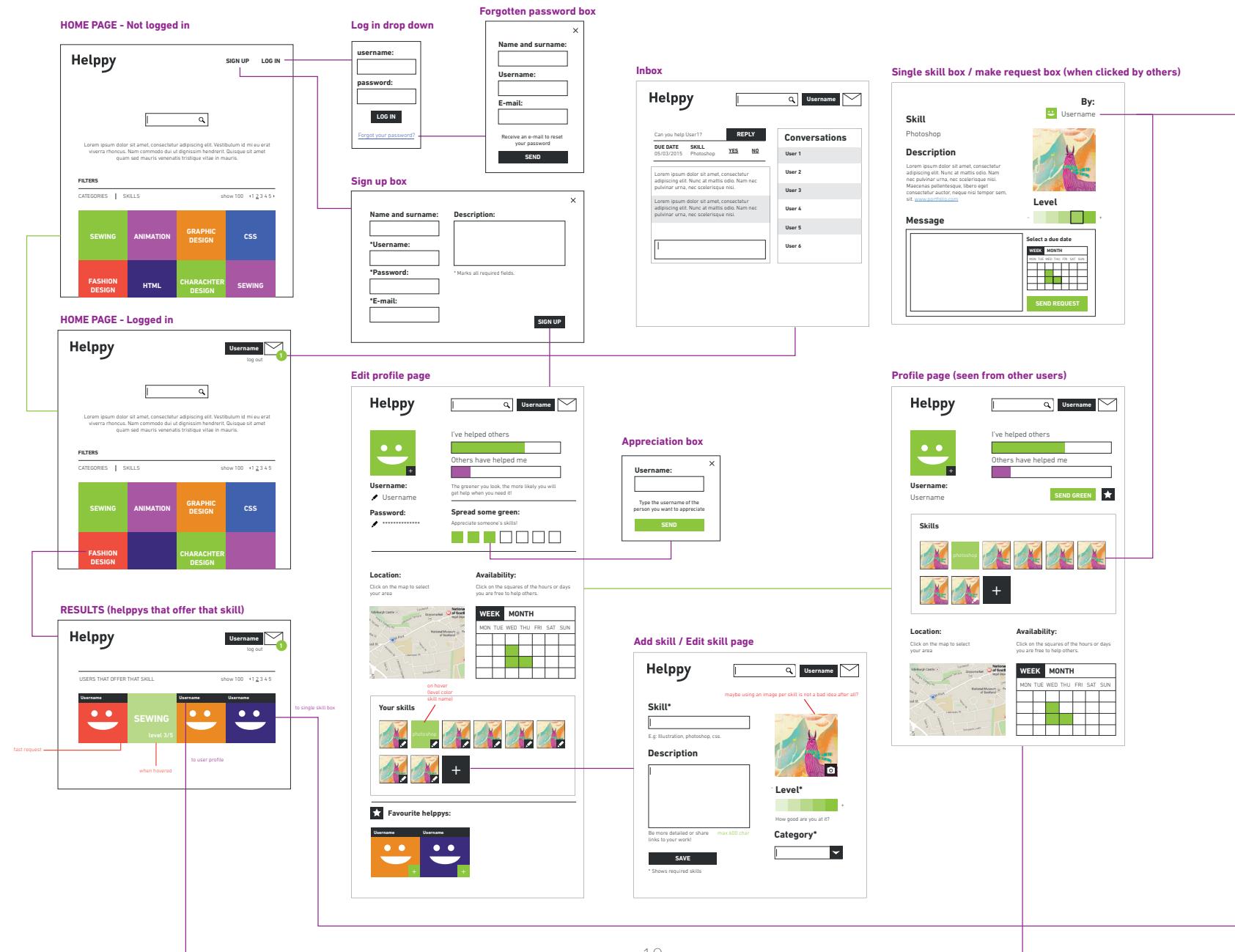


Helppy

USER NAVIGATION - FIRST ATTEMPT OF WEBSITE DIAGRAM



DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF THE WEB SITE



STYLE SHEET

Roboto font (sans serif)

text / fonts

h1

HEADERS

h2

Important messages,
short paragraphs

h3

Titles

Navigation / NAVIGATION

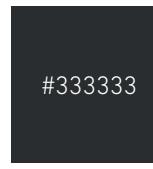
h3

Plain text

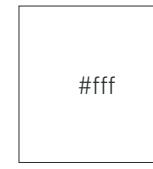
p

Helppy

website logo and colour scheme



#333333



#fff



#95C11E



#AE5199

Used in text, and backgrounds along with a 0,25px border.

Used in skill ratings and search results



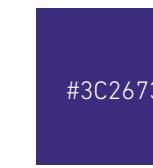
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#4859A4

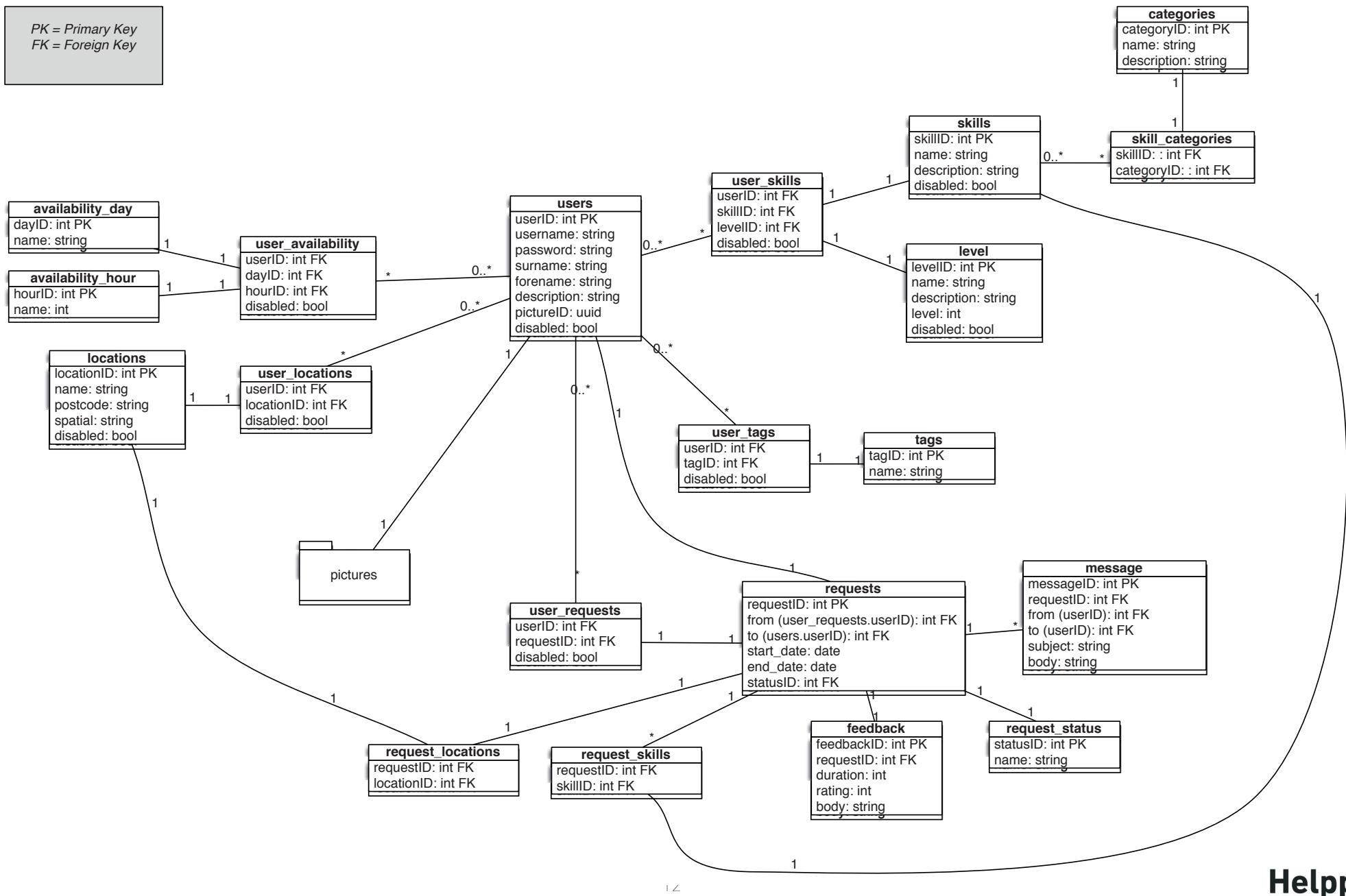


#E84234

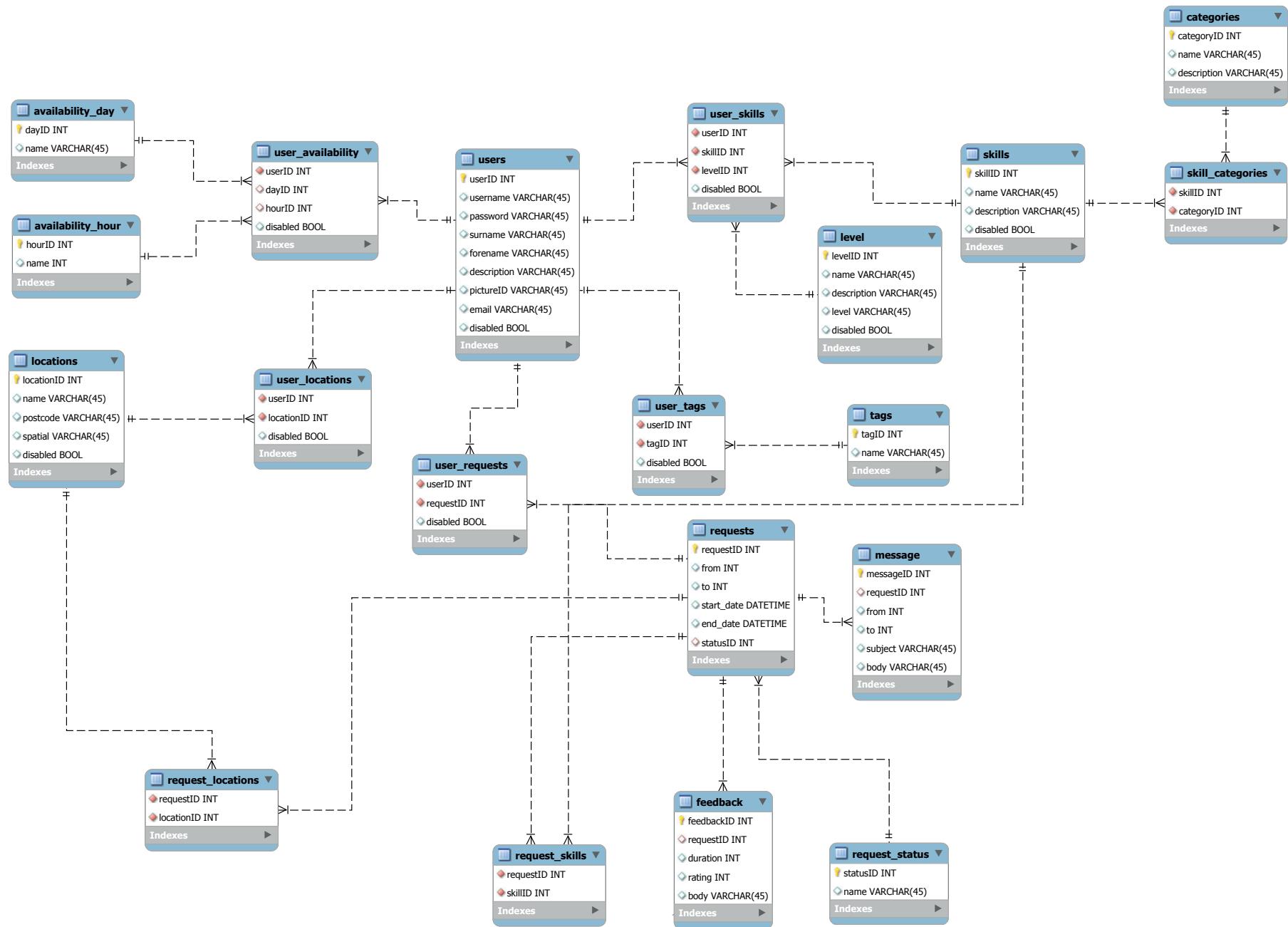


#3C2673

CREATION OF THE UML DIAGRAM



UML DIAGRAM GENERATED BY MySQL WORKBENCH



CHARTER

Helppy

is a platform dedicated to helping our users connect with each other to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects. We hope that our site can enable people to share their skills with each other on a voluntary basis, allowing an exchange of expertise and ideas which will allow new and exciting projects to flourish that might otherwise never have had a chance to be realised.

Free

Helppy is focussed on non-commercial creative endeavours. This is not a recruitment website, but rather a way for people to:

Share skills

By finding projects to lend their abilities to, our users can develop existing skills and gain valuable practical experience in creative fields. In doing so, they can extend not only their knowledge, but also their network of like minded people.

Realise projects

In non-commercial projects it can be difficult to find someone with the correct skill set to fill a specific role, particularly when funding may be small or non-existent. Helppy gives access to a pool of talent which users can search to find someone who would be willing and able to give their time and effort to help bring a project to fruition.

Trust

Our review system is in place to ensure that everyone uses the system fairly. Through this users can see the type of projects other users have been involved in, and how their contributions were reviewed by other users. They can also see how much help they have received from others and how much help they have given themselves. Through this transparency, we hope to ensure a free flow of skills and time between projects where no-one monopolises the talent on offer.

Scope

Helppy is not responsible for resolving any disputes between our users on the projects, we only seek to facilitate connections. We do however expect a level of consideration and respect between our users, and will not accept any offensive or abusive reviews on our pages.

TASKS REMAINING

1 - ~~change colour of skills based on level in the profile page and skill research page~~

2 - have the research bar working on header and home page

3 - have the about us in the footer

4 - work on layout of skill page (see the profile of others)

5 - add button to ask for skills (request skill) in the profile page of others

6 - add the same button on results page of skills

7 - add map on profile

8 - add availability and allow it to be modified

9 - work on layout on messages

10 - have all the messaging service working

11 - have the rating or review system working

12 - Increment or decrease the bars on profile based on reviews

13 - have the system of send green working

14 - work on recommendation system? if we manage to do all of the above

15 - Ask people if they want to go to profile page or stay in the same page when they register

16 - Tell people about gravatar

17 - Include level when adding a new skill

18 - To be continued...

THE TEAM: TheOpenSorcerers



#anais moisy#

Designer

architecture of the data base
structure of the web site
PHP



#mariela barzallo#

Graphic designer

structure of the web site
graphic design



#jamie young#

Designer

PHP
SQL