I started a book club in January on the 3 hour train ride back to the city from Yale, where my colleague and I gave a talk at our mutual friend Laurel’s interactive design class.

It was totally a putting the horse before the cart moment because the domain name b00k.club was available and we got really animated joking about the sorts of dumb features the website would have.

When we finally met for our first book Laurel led the discussions. Because leading discussions at a graduate level was her bread and butter her questions were extremely smart/probing and resulted in really interesting longform answers. Consequently a group of near strangers got really intimate in a relatively short period of time and was able to become really close friends.

So far we’ve read the Crying of Lot 49, Volume One of Karl Ove Knausgaard’s books, the young adult series His Dark Materials (It was summer!) and now we’re onto Infinite Jest.

Anyway the B00k Club member who was in charge of making the website never really followed through so I am about to take it on as my class project.

The only real purpose the website has is to display when and where the next book club meeting is taking place. But it would be amazing and fun to also junk it up with all sorts of needless details and functionalities, in the same way that book club meetings end up being drunken dinner party slash therapy session anyway.

Asides from having it be a sort of self-satisfying and funny-because-it-is-so-elaborate in-joke for the club, ideally I would like the website to express some of the best aspects of the b00k.club experience.

And I guess the best part about B00k Club is the fact that people are down to get together to *just talk.* I’ve particularly found it therapeutic in a way perhaps because the talks are always somewhat focused on the motifs of the book, which tend to be philosophical, rather than like whether or not a celebrity is attractive.

The most interesting thing that I’ve learned from being in a book club is that the book you read sort of infiltrates your life and how you see yourself and the relationships around you, etc. As a result when we hang out with each other (a bunch of us work together at Bloomberg) we’d drop little insights from the book we’re mutually reading and have a chuckle about it, to the point where a running joke is “Save it for book club!” when we find ourselves all of a sudden in deep discussion about the book as it relates to our lives in the middle of eating a burrito bowl or whatever.

So I think a cool feature of the site is a place where you post some interesting thoughts about the book and whatnot, for it’d be beyond annoying to spam other memebers’ email inboxes (being on a group email chain is painful) and having a slack channel would be too self-important and feel like homework, but posting a quick note on a webpage that is disguised as an elaborate joke anyway would be just fine, somehow.

So in addition to being informative and a place to share your thoughts/favorite quotes the website will also be a sort of dumping ground of all club-related paraphernalia. For example ,a lot of us are too embarrassed to read Infinite Jest on the train because of the unfortunate aura of pompousness and general douchieness the book implies, so I suggested everyone print out fake book jacket covers of Sheryl Sandberg’s Lean In *“Large Print Edition”.*

So it’s a neat exercise in branding because at the end of the day this project is about distilling a very specific kind of hard to describe “fun experience” into a look and a website. And I’m excited to make this because it has a built in audience of seven (in other words it will reach its targeted audience!) and its silly content will be self-amusing and keep me going long enough at least until its completion.