

Scaffold



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Capstone Project

Abstract

Nearly a million jobs are posted to Craigslist each week that range from landscaping to construction. Craigslist, and similar online platforms, offer little protection or assurance to both job seekers and job posters. Other services that do, such as Labor Ready, require strict guidelines and a long hiring process. Our team has addressed these issues with the creation of Scaffold.

Scaffold is an online communication platform that connects people seeking to work with people looking to hire through a quick, direct, and dependable process. Unlike our competitors, we are not an employer, but simply connect our users. With two-way anonymous reviews and a managed messaging system, personal safety is the backbone of Scaffold. Scaffold minimizes potential abuse and provides a space for local micro-economies to flourish.

Discovery Brief

Our project benefits local employers and/or individual homeowners who need to fulfill labor shortages. Our project also benefits unskilled laborers (college students and/or older, experienced unskilled laborers) in finding temporary work. We conducted a comparator analysis and researched current processes to define our project.

Summary of Research Findings

When we began this project, our initial audience was very broad. We recognized that we needed to spend more time researching our project space to refine our specific gap. First, we created two different surveys to retrieve information from (1) local employers and (2) temporary day laborers. We emailed the employers survey to a list of Seattle general contracting companies and received a few replies. We also emailed the laborer survey to mailing lists we thought fit the audience we were trying to research.

One of our initial thoughts was to consider immigrant workers as one of our main audience groups, as they are a very underserved group in our community and could benefit greatly from a service that could help provide a safe and reliable way to secure temporary jobs. In order to learn more about how we can effectively help this demographic, we reached out to Ricardo Gomez, an Associate Professor and Chair of the Information & Society Center (ISC) in the iSchool, who had worked very closely with Casa Latina, an organization that specializes in training and helping immigrants find work around Seattle. In addition to this, we had an extensive interview with an immigrant who has first hand experience finding temporary labor.

From these conversations we came to the overwhelming conclusion that we would be unable to help this demographic without drastically changing direction with our project. Essentially, most of that specific audience has limited access and training to the technology that would let them make full use of our service, and that specific demographic would also be highly suspicious of any service that wants to add them to a list. For these reasons we decided to reevaluate our audience and instead narrow it down to the following personas.

Personas

Nikki / Owner of a landscaping company in Seattle

Nikki owns a fairly successful landscaping company. Through smart networking and referrals, she has recently started to get interest from people with much larger projects than she's previously done. Unfortunately, these larger projects are still too few and far between to require bringing more workers to her team of five. Instead, she would like to find a source of reliable labor that can quickly meet her temporary needs during projects. Nikki has tried using Craigslist, but as expected, Craigslist has given her some unreliable results. She has also tried

reaching out to a temporary labor agency, but the agency had more paperwork and regulations than she'd like to deal with. Nikki would like to continue finding workers through referrals and connections through a more streamlined process. Nikki would prefer to feel like she knows who she is hiring, and has a good idea of their skills and work ethic. Nikki has more than enough tools and equipment, what she's really lacking is the people power.

Lisa / Homeowner of multiple houses in Seattle

Lisa owns a few houses throughout the Greenlake area. Due to the rainy season in Seattle, many of the homes need some minor fixes on either leaks or roofing problems. She has been diligently trying to fix the houses to ensure her tenants are happy, but cannot find the time to schedule all the needs in a timely manner. She usually has her family members help when they have time, but right now there is too many problems. She wants to find experienced unskilled laborers to help her out, because she has the money to hire a few extra workers. She has tried posting job openings in front of her homes, as well as flyers at the local community centers. However, she has not heard back. She also tries Craigslist, but she gets worried because she has been getting sketchy results. She wants to find experienced people, as well as workers she can trust.

Tommy / Student studying pre-med at Seattle Central Community College

Tommy is a student at Seattle Central Community College looking to make some extra cash for personal needs. He is taking prerequisites currently, and is hoping to transfer to UW and apply for the School of Medicine. Because their program is so competitive, he wants to put all of his efforts into his schooling and can only work on weekends. During the weekend he hopes to work temporary jobs such as landscaping and yard work. His uncle Jerry knows a few homeowners, and has been getting Tommy some work. However, Tommy only works about one weekend a month. He's hoping to fill his weekends with more jobs. In order to find more work, he started going on Craigslist. Unfortunately, the one job we found was a bad experience. He was paid less for the amount he worked and was treated with a lot of disrespect. After this experience, he doesn't trust most postings on Craigslist and is looking for a better way to find easy weekend jobs.

Dan / Recently laid off from Turner Construction Company in Seattle

Dan has worked various landscaping jobs after he got laid off from the Turner Construction Company in Seattle. Providing for a family of four was difficult enough working in commercial construction and now it seems impossible. Everyday Dan wakes up with stress and concern knowing that he does not have a secure full time job. Despite his eight years of experience, he was let go due to the company not having enough work and needing to downsize due to market

needs. Dan searches on Craigslist and newspaper ads to find temporary jobs. Last week he painted a shed for an old crank, which shorted him twenty dollars. On particularly useless mornings, Dan has preserved some hope by driving his truck through the suburban sprawl and approaching work sites. He is often complimented on his professional behavior and advice, but repeat employers are few and far between. Dan wishes he could fly a banner over the area advertising his skills, maybe then work would find him.

Comparator Analysis

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Labor Ready (LR) | http://www.laborready.com |
| 2. Craigslist | http://seattle.craigslist.org |
| 3. Elance | https://www.elance.com |
| 4. TaskRabbit | https://www.taskrabbit.com |
| 5. Casa Latina (CL) | http://casa-latina.org |
| 6. Angies List (AL) | http://www.angieslist.com |
| 7. Minyawns | http://www.minyawns.com |

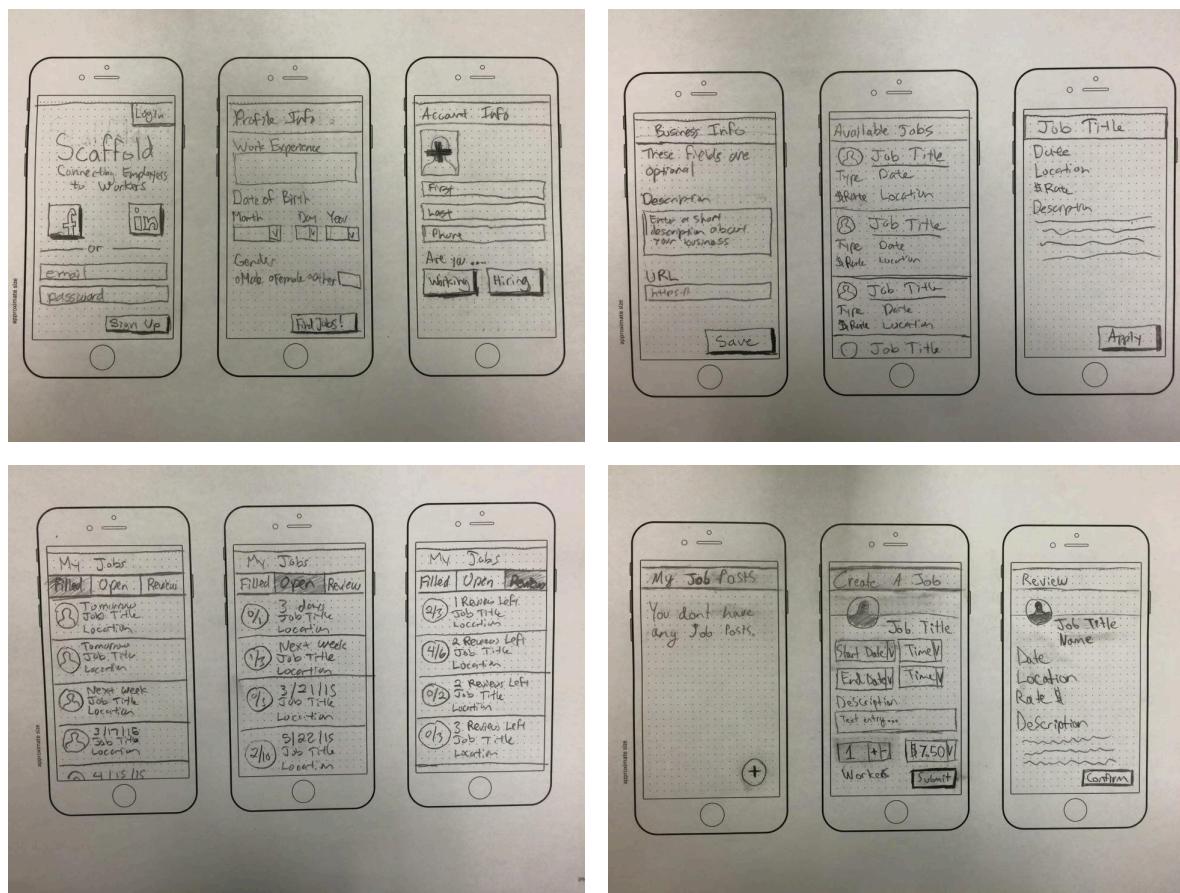
	LR	Craigslist	Elance	TaskRabbit	CL	AL	Minyawns
Application Process	Apply at location, hope the dispatchers like you	Email random people and hope they aren't murderers.	Free account; discover job postings and bid on them.	Interview, background check, training, then you can bid on local jobs.	Workers - come in person. Specifically to their Day Workers' Center Employers - Online Order Form	Members need to create an account and buy individual deals Business owners need to register	Workers and Employers are able to sign up with either an email, LinkedIn, or Facebook.
Verification Process	Background check, paperwork.	None	Portfolio, previous work, reviews.	Background check, paperwork.	None via website. Personnel at Casa Latina physically	iCompli - audits companies and protects their brand, help builds trusted brand	Minyawns personally "verifies" some minions, otherwise there is a "manual verification process" but it doesn't actually exist. Employers must provide a valid card (debit/credit)
Review System	None.	None.	Both ways.	One-way, employers to rabbits.	Casa Latina has personnel who reviews	Reviews are verified by iCompli (here)	Employers can review minions after a job.

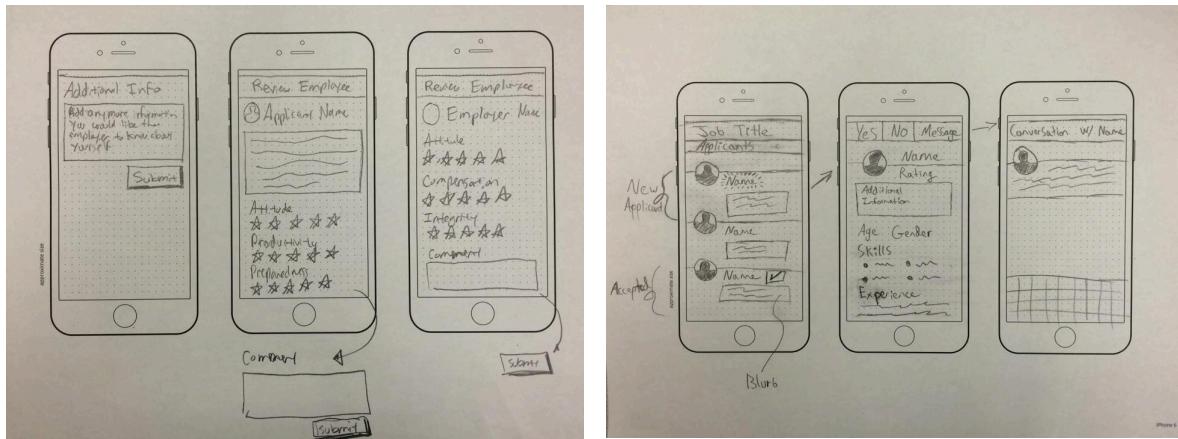
	LR	Craigslist	Elance	TaskRabbit	CL	AL	Minyawns
Payment Process	Through LaborReady	None.	Through Elance.	Through TaskRabbit	Donations go through https://www.networkforgood.org (Assuming) Payments are in cash to the department	Have to have an account to pay for a product, PayPal, probably other ways too! (Don't know for sure, didn't make an account and see the options)	Payments are received through PayPal after the minion completes the job. Minyawns takes a percentage of the earnings.
Account Creation	Not a lot of online tools, although it can help speed up the process at the location.	Not required for seekers, required for posting.	Free accounts for everybody. Requires email, name, and country only.	Anyone with a credit card can be a poster, must apply to be a rabbit.	Account creation is only to get emails and news updates from Casa Latina	Create an account with zip code, email, and password - this is to become a member Members can get up 70% off of deals Different account registration for companies	In both cases, employer or worker, a user needs only a Facebook, LinkedIn, or email address to create an account. Pictures, bios, and contact info can also be added.
Discovery	Automatically paired up with employers if skills match up.	Browse long list of job postings, lots of scams and pyramid schemes.	Search and filter job postings by skills required. Bid on them with custom statements if you want the job.		Laborers who go there will be able to take classes, attend workshops, and Casa Latina will provide them jobs	Search by location, you don't have to be a member to search for deals	There are lists of both active Minyawns (sortable by verification status) and open job postings, which can be sorted by type and keywords.
Resources	Provides resources and training	Nothing	Expected to have all necessary tools and experience.	Depends on the job posting.	Casa Latina provides resources to the laborers that go to their centers. They provide education, training and job opportunities	Sells resources, all services will provide all necessary resources to perform the task (furnace inspection/tune up)	Minyawns does not provide nor arrange for the neither access nor distribution of any job related resources.

Conceptual Design

Once we honed in on a specific audience, we moved forward in designing the web app. We started this process with creating user stories and sketching out the most ideal use of the web application. With our personas in mind, we created four main stories that determined specific features we wanted to implement in our final project. From here, we created user flow diagrams to ensure proper functionality and overall steps on how to use the service. We concluded that the web app needed to serve both the worker and employer in similar ways, but a few different ways as well. With this in mind, we focused on the actions of posting a job, finding a job, applying for a job, and accepting a job application. We created a paper prototype to show potential users and test our initial thoughts.

The following shows photos of our original paper prototype.





We tested our original paper prototype with four potential users. The following is a table that shows the changes we made after receiving feedback from our users and why we made those changes.

Feature Changes	Rationale
Remove email field on the new user page	Already on landing page, can be confusing to enter it a second time, if user uses Facebook to sign in then the email is already saved and user doesn't need to see it
"Work experience" as label for worker's job experience	Originally labeled "biography" but users were confused as to what type of information to write here
Remove "hire" and "work" check boxes and change into action buttons	Didn't know how to express "next" or "submit" buttons, so changed the check boxes into buttons
Remove age field and change to date of birth	Age is dynamic and date of birth is static
Remove the option to add a photo for a new job post	Users were confused as to why a photo would be needed for a job post - compared to other companies and photos were not used
Change the "next" button to "submit" when applying for a job	This page is a review page after you enter all the fields of the job post and "submit" is better because the steps are essentially done, there are no next steps

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Change the "next" button to "submit" when applying for a job	This page is a review page after you enter all the fields of the job post and "submit" is better because the steps are essentially done, there are no next steps
Create a tab section of the types of job postings	It was confusing for users to see all job posts by scrolling - some employers may have a lot of posts
Change work experience text box to specific fields for a job title, job description (250 characters or less), and date/end dates	This helps users understand the type of information wanted in this area of the account - we limit the number of jobs to 3 so users who do not have any experience do not have much to compare to a user who has 3 past jobs
Remove the personality area in the review section	Didn't make sense for users to review a personality - attitude is a better word and option to review a worker and/or employer
Added gender to account information page	Gender is something that is used in a lot of the comparator apps
Change the date in the job postings to show "today" or "tomorrow"	More recognizable for employers and workers to get notifications saying "today you have a job" or "tomorrow you have a job that is not filled" etc.
Business information should be changed to "optional information"	The employer needs to create an account so ideally it is an individual, not a business

Design Blueprint

Our UX lead created the final wireframes using the software Axure. The process focused on user flows and features, which included feedback from potential users of the web app and our Capstone classmates.

Mood Board

Our final mood board uses a very specific color scheme inspired by the working conditions of the construction industry. We were initially targeting construction as the type of unskilled labor that would be the most popular type used in our web app. White is used as a background color to keep the overall look and feel of the app very clean. The light grey is used as text and/or simple line breaks on the pages. Since orange is the main color, we use to highlight job posts and profile information. The blue color is an accent color that highly compliments the orange and used for action/notification symbols. Additionally, we use a soft sans serif font throughout the web app to continue the clean look and feel of the app.

Mockups

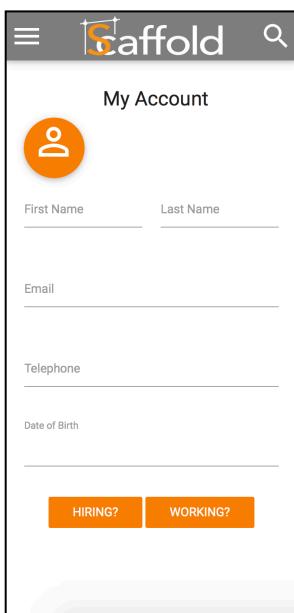


Figure 1

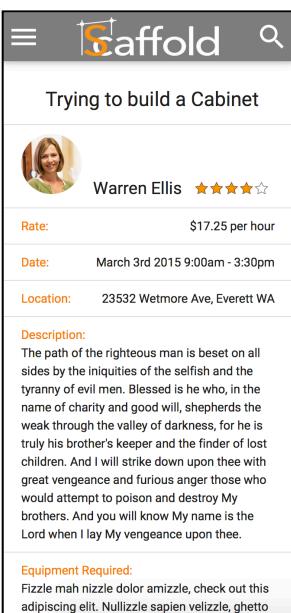


Figure 2

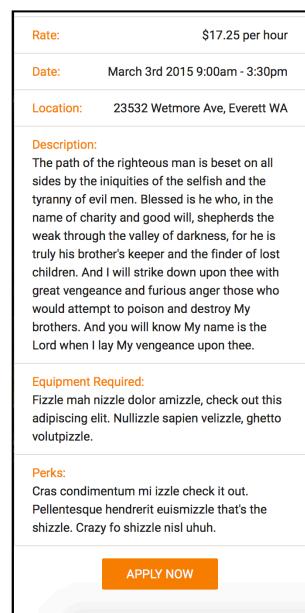


Figure 3

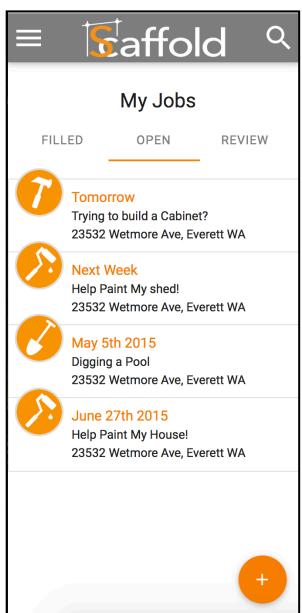


Figure 4

Figures 1-4: Figure 1 shows the account creation and landing page of the web app. Figures 2 & 3 show an example of a job posting. Figure 4 shows the dashboard of an employer. There are three different tabs that show the employer's filled job posts, currently open job posts, and previous job posts that have been finished that required a review process for the specific workers that finished the job.

Wireframes

Find our final wireframes on Axure: http://1licdx.axshare.com/-p=iphone_frame_for_desktop_view

Usability Testing Methodology

We conducted user testing with five college-aged students. We used the “think aloud” process and asked all our users to talk about their actions while testing our online service. For each tester, we assigned a user role and asked specific user objectives to complete. For example, we assigned a tester to be an “employer” and asked if they could post a job. We left it very open ended for the kind of jobs the employer could post because we wanted to get as much feedback as possible with the openness.

User Testing Script

User Role: Worker

Hello. Thank you for choosing Scaffold as your online platform to find local temporary work. Please use the following link to start this quick process in finding work for this weekend: <http://scaffold.rocks>. We ask if you could please explain aloud what you are doing and why. For example, “I am signing up as a new user because I want to find work to do this weekend.” If you have any questions throughout the test, please let us. We appreciate you taking the time to test our online service. Thanks!

User Role: Employer

Hello. Thank you for choosing Scaffold as your online platform to hire local temporary workers. Please use the following link to start this quick process in finding workers for this weekend: <http://scaffold.rocks>. We ask if you could please explain aloud what you are doing and why. For example, “I am signing up as a new user because I want to find workers to help paint my shed this weekend.” If you have any questions throughout the test, please let us. We appreciate you taking the time to test our online service. Thanks!

Key Findings and Recommended Improvements

We received a lot of positive feedback after completing five user tests. The following is a list of our key findings:

1. Signup/login page was very confusing
2. Profile photo is way too big
3. No option to signup as both an employer and worker
4. Sidebar drop shadow was not visually appealing
5. Didn’t know to scroll to enter more information on a page (ie. adding work experience)

There was more feedback about our color scheme and other nit-picky details, but overall, we felt that the most important feedback was about the logic and functionality of our online service. As for improvements, we had a lot of bugs that were known before starting our user testing. The signup/login page will have 2 distinct options. As for the profile photo, we will definitely change the sizing to make sure it looks visually appealing on a mobile phone. The option to use our online service as both an employer and worker was part of our original ideation period. We had a long and thorough discussion about this functionality and though we agree our users should be able to do both, it was out of our scope when we initially started this project. We would definitely consider this functionality for future versions. Other feedback we hope to implement to ensure our sidebar looks visually appealing and that scrolling is available on specific pages when needed.

Final Project

Find our final working prototype of our web application at <http://scaffold.rocks>. Find our pitch video at the following link: <https://youtu.be/DDui7FneeV8>. The following are a few screenshots of Scaffold.

Join the team and connect with people in your community. It only takes seconds.
[Learn more.](#)

Email _____

Password _____

I'm new!

First Name
Alissa

Last Name
Martin

Bio
College student looking for weekend jobs

Worker

Employer

Skills

Rate: \$15

Date: 6/07 2:00 pm to 6/07 9:00 pm

Location:
12117 SE 204th St, Kent, WA 98031

Description:
Build dog house

Login or signup as a new user.

Change your account photo and edit your details. You can sign up as either a worker or an employer.

Post jobs as an employer and apply to jobs as a worker.

