Reading Guide - Group project

SIMAC

CONTENTS

1. SIMAC.NL: EMBRACING SOCIALIZING DURING ONBOARDING

The Design opportunity:

A few months ago, we gathered a team of six ambitious girls from different parts of the world. Our primary objective was to conduct research and propose solutions for the problem stated by our stakeholders Simac.nl:

> "How can we enhance the onboarding process for international proffesionals at Simac.nl?"

The company came to us with the objective to attract and retain a greater number of international employees.
We were provided with a broad assignment, allowing us the freedom to explore different directions.
Hence we decided to focus our research on socializing and embracing cultural differences for newcomers, which presents an intriguing and relevant topic for us. As aspiring international professionals ourselves, this subject holds personal significance and offers a valuable opportunity for in-depth exploration.

2. APPROACH, IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Team collaboration - Agile, Scrum ban

During the course of the project, we chose to adopt the Agile project development methodology as it was deemed most suitable for our requirements. Specifically, we opted for Scrum ban, which is a sub-framework.
This choice was driven by the unpredictable nature of our project, as it allows for flexibility and accommodates changes effectively. Considering our intention to involve stakeholders and incorporate their feedback seamlessly into our progress, this methodology will prove beneficial. For a software for work distribution, we used Monday.com

- Sprint 1:

Explore onboarding process by understanding & defining user requirements

- **Competitor analysis -** During the first two-week sprint of the project, Catherine Horyna and I conducted a competitor analysis. Although we didn't receive a direct list of competitors from our stakeholders, we based our analysis on other prominent IT companies both within the country (ASML, AFAS, an interview with Goodhabitz) and worldwide (IBM, Dell EMC Corporation, Microsoft).

Our research primarily focused on the strengths and weaknesses of their onboarding processes.

Among these companies, we discovered a common trend **of providing various services to facilitate the onboarding experience. For instance, they often include onboarding videos, some of which can be found on platforms like YouTube, to introduce and guide new employees. Additionally, they utilize apps/websites and gamification techniques, facilitate exchange of feedback, and adaptation to different languages.**

It's important to note that conducting a competitor analysis can be challenging. Our goal is not to simply replicate what our competitors are doing well, but rather to gain a comprehensive understanding of their offerings. This enables us to identify areas where we can potentially improve our own onboarding process, attract more employees, and create a more enjoyable onboarding experience.

- Sprint 2:

Converging the data we have and defining user requirments by highlight prelimenary research

- Interviews - 6 interviews and 6 interview analyses were conducted (one per member). We interviewed 3 people from our stakeholder's company - Simac and 3 external proffesionals who are internationals working and living in the Netherlands. Here are the main insights from my interviewee.

In terms of career growth, which is crucial for retaining employees, my interviewee's - Denisy, company provided her with the opportunity to create her own list of annual goals. At the end of the year, they would conduct an evaluation. Denisy found this approach well-thought-out and helpful because she had the freedom to set her own improvement goals.
Our Interviewee believes that hiring more employees is the best way to enhance support for international employees. This would create an environment with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, making everyone more comfortable with each other. She also highlighted the following quote:

> "The only way employees won't quit is if they feel like they belong there."

Denisy also suggested that the company should organize more events and outings, as this would be a great addition. She mentioned that these activities would allow employees to interact outside of work, helping them develop social skills while still benefiting the company by maintaining work-related discussions.

“Company wins because people are interacting still about work, but then the employees get the benefit of developing the social skills ”

- Sprint 3:

Concepting + Design. Iterative design with lots of brainstorming

During sprint 3, we finally accomplished two key milestones: formulating the design challenge and initiating the development of solutions for the problem at hand. This progress was primarily hindered by the need to gather accurate information and gain deeper insights into our target audience. Additionally, we faced challenges in selecting a more specific direction for crafting an effective solution yet again because of the broadness of the project.

The design challenge:

POV Madklib:

Design <an application> to enable <new coming employees> in <who are trying to adapt to the new company and culture> to <improve their socialzing skills and get more acquanted with the environment and colleagues.>

Concept - Initially, we created several rough sketches to explore various concept ideas. Each team member dedicated a day to visually represent as many concepts as possible related to the topic: "How can we improve the onboarding process for international professionals at Simac.nl?"
We generated numerous concepts, but ultimately, we had to select only one. The final concept we chose is as follows:

We propose developing a platform that allows new hires to embrace their cultural differences. This platform would enable them to visualize each other's backgrounds and engage in daily or weekly challenges designed to foster social interaction among employees. By utilizing this social app, we actively promote greater social interaction among individuals.

Our intention is to introduce an app that incorporates gamification, thereby encouraging a departure from monotonous work routines and injecting an element of enjoyment. We desidned an app which will create a more engaging and vibrant atmosphere, particularly during the initial days for newcomers, as well as for long-term employees, making their experience less mundane and more stimulating.

How the app works?:

In Simac's building, there are multiple screens placed at the entrance and other areas. The app can accommodate two interfaces:

1. Big screen: It displays an overview of a world map, indicating the geographical distribution of Simac's employees. This feature enhances cultural awareness.
2. Employee phones: The app on their phones offers a simple flow. Users can spin the Wheel of Fortune to receive daily or weekly socializing challenges. By completing these challenges, employees earn rewards, which can also be seen as social statuses.

Additionally, the app sends notifications as calls to action, reminding users to invite **someone for a coffee, for example.**

Target audience: Every employee at Simac

What were the learning opportunities?

The initial concept we presented to the client involved combining two elements: a customizable Personal Development Plan (PDP) that allows employees to set their own learning goals, a platform that facilitates convenient communication and interaction with coaches and managers. Additionally, the concept included a culture map designed to foster cultural diversity and organize team bonding activities.

However, this concept didn't align well with our objectives due to its lack of clarity. I realized that an app should have a clear and singular purpose so that users understand its intended use. Our concept was trying to accomplish too many things simultaneously, which was a valuable lesson for me. Subsequently, we simplified and refined the concept to make it more precise and straightforward.

- Sprint 4:

High/Low Fidelity implimentation + Concept validation

During Sprint 4, we faced tight deadlines while refining our concept through low and high fidelity prototypes. Personally, I focused on creating the "Culture map," the engaging "Wheel of Fortune," and determining how the application could track completed challenges.

To evaluate the usability and the concept of the app, we conducted usability tests and obtained feedback from six individuals outside of Simac. Our objective was to assess how well the app functioned and understand its potential to enhance users' social experiences.

3. APPENDIX: EVIDENCE MATERIAL

Learning Outcome	Proof
Learning outcome 1: User interaction (analysis & advice)	• Used the **Double Diamond** method for design execution: Converging and Diverging insights (read more in https://sesils-portfolio.netlify.app/groupproject). • User Research to **define target audience**(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/Define%20Interviews?csf=1&web=1&e=1eQayh) • **User Requirements**(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/User%20Requirements.docx?d=wd1b3bd6846354bd891fa8bad109f19fb&csf=1&web=1&e=gxWY9E)
Learning outcome 2: User interaction (execution & validation)	• **High Fidelity** prototype on Figma(https://www.figma.com/file/7Y1S4hBJzTRaoa37VlbXz9/SIMAC-IN?type=design&node-id=31-8148&t=TcL0eVcdKyu9SQdY-0) • **Concept Validation** test(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/Concept%20validation%20test?csf=1&web=1&e=0YzWOR)
Learning outcome 3: Software design	• **GitHub** (https://github.com/workgit-code/Portfolio-S6)

	• C4 Model(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:i:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/C4%20Model%20System%20Context%20Diagram%20for%20my%20Portfolio.png?csf=1&web=1&e=pbZCVd)
Learning outcome 4: Future-oriented organisation	• **Project plan**(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/Project%20plans?csf=1&web=1&e=suMB7m) • Defining problems: **Point of View MadLib** (read more in the Reading Guide)
Learning outcome 5: Investigative problem solving	• Sub-questions and Brainstorming (could be found https://sesils-portfolio.netlify.app/groupproject) • CMD Methods: Literature study, Observation, Scenario.
Learning outcome 6: Personal leadership	• Reflection(at the end of the portfolio) • Feedpulse
Learning outcome 7: Goal-oriented interaction	• Communicate progress better with stakeholders: **Infographics**(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/Info%20Graphics?csf=1&web=1&e=yCcQKc) • Weekly stakeholder presentations and pitches

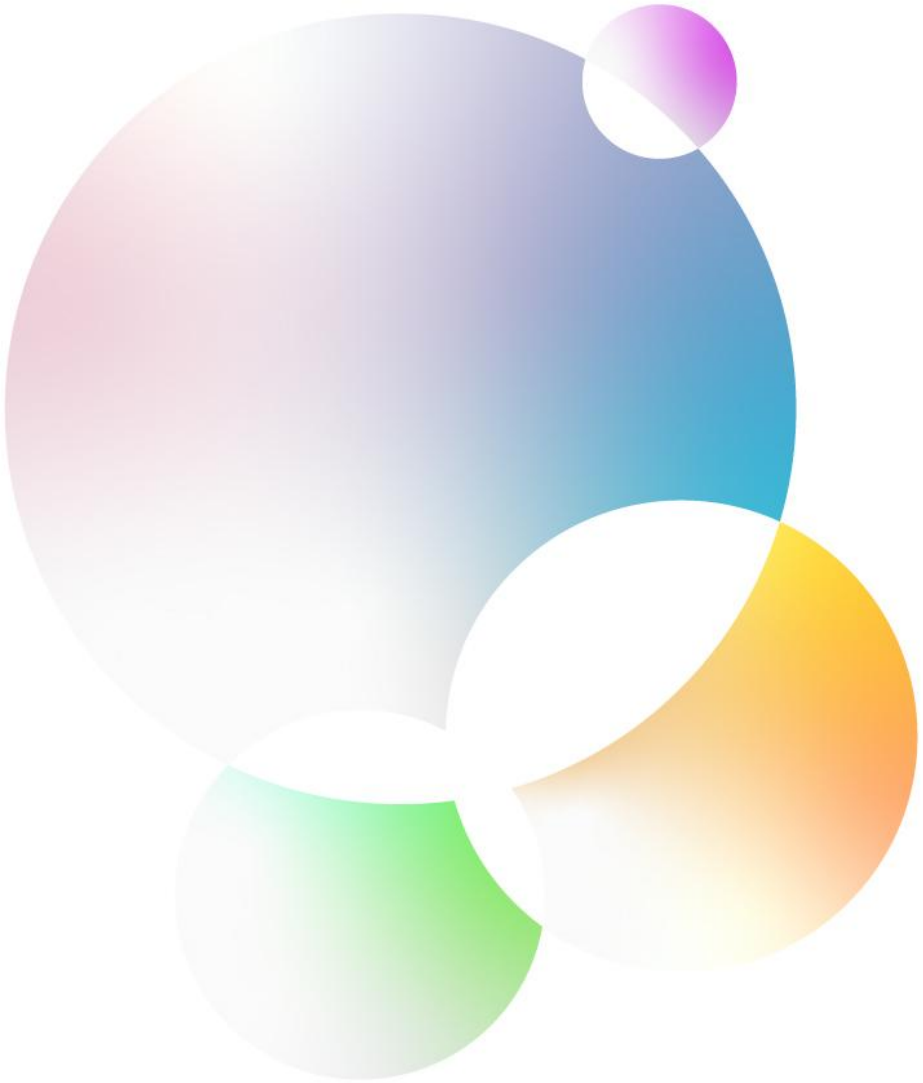
Reading Guide - International week

DUTCH DESIGN

CHARETTE

1. APPENDIX: EVIDENCE MATERIAL

Learning Outcome	Proof
Learning outcome 1: User interaction (analysis & advice)	• Used **the 5 step design thinking** method (Read more in Portfolio: https://sesils-portfolio.netlify.app/internationalweek)
Learning outcome 2: User interaction (execution & validation)	• **Video prototype of the concept**(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0ExIpVO2ZE&ab_channel=ErikHeijligers) • **Brainstorming and Ideation** methods(https://stichtingfontys-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/personal/461891_student_fontys_nl/Documents/Semester%206%20Portfolio/International%20Week?csf=1&web=1&e=eeHQF2) • (https://jamboard.google.com/d/1-MRR0-rFWagy6Befl2OsvO2c4ktQAGyQFBxbXgXYSPo/viewer?f=0)
Learning outcome 5: Investigative problem solving:	• **How Might We** method with subquestions(Read more in Portfolio: https://sesils-portfolio.netlify.app/internationalweek)
Learning outcome 7: Goal-oriented interaction	• Collaboratively working with students from different countries and with specialties.



Portfolio

Reading guide

INTRODUCTION

Within the contents of the following document, I will give insights and explanations of the individual project I have been working on for the first 4 weeks of semester 6 of Advanced media.
During those 4 weeks, I was working on answering/ investigating the Main Research question that I came up with at the beginning of the project.
It is:

" How can I design a portfolio in a way that will express my personality and the kind of IT Professional, I aim to become? "

Sub-questions:

1. What kind of IT professional do I define myself as? What services and talents can I offer to the world?
2. What kind of job profiles does that specialty of mine fit it?
3. How can I express that attitude, professionalism, and job profile in the portfolio? What information are stakeholders interested in knowing about me?
4. What kind of vibes do I want the portfolio to give?

The deliverables of the individual project are the Portfolio website and the Reading guide document.
The portfolio that I will create and develop has the goal of showcasing and proving my progress to the teachers throughout the whole semester since all of the projects that I have worked on will be explained there.
In the meantime, the portfolio should also be attractive to stakeholders and hiring companies, as well as a creative space that expresses my personality and skills.

Approach & implementation

The approach I am taking to execute the project is the 5 step design thinking system. I apply it to my workflow in a very flexible and iterative way, as the Norman Group describes. I also used the CMD method pack to help guide the research.

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking-study-guide/ (that will allow the final

Methods that I used and why:

Available product analysis

I looked at a lot of beautiful and creative portfolios by UI/UX designers and Front-end developers.
To give it a summary, there was a great variety of designs and creative storytelling techniques that inspired me further in the process.

Best good & bad practices

With this method I got to look at my design in a more critical way. Some of my findings were: Don't show everything that you worked on, but what you are proud of, It is nice to have some personal information about myself(i.e hobbies), etc.

Design pattern research

I found out that patterns such as differently shaped cursors, magazine-like layouts, muted color typography, lots of animations, white spaces, and fancy transitions(to demonstrate CSS skills) were used in the designs.

Stakeholder analysis

Who are the people that will view my portfolio? For what reasons they will come to look at it? From a teacher's perspective, directly accessing projects and the reading guide would be the priority, while for stakeholders, my overall profile also matters.

Prototyping & Testing

I did a few frames of low-fidelity testing, but I quickly switched to brainstorming and iterating with high-fidelity designs. The testing happened more amongst my team members and teachers, with some A/B and Brand testing methods.

Answering the Main Research question has two aspects of the study to it:

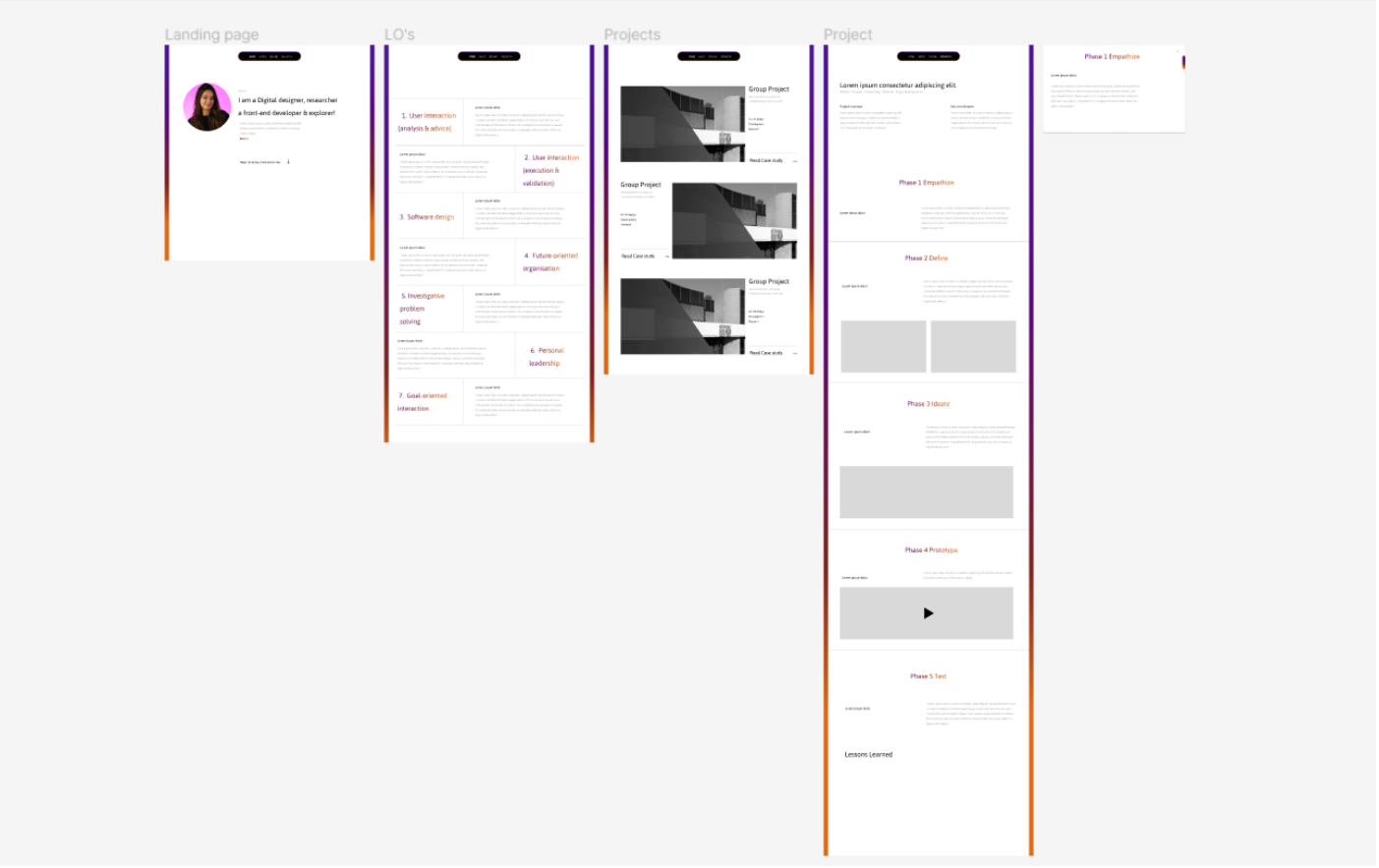
What kind of an IT professional do I want to become?
How to reflect that on the portfolio?

Thanks to the experience with my internship, the previous semester, I was able to get a glance at what companies seek and need in Media design students. I had some conversations with my colleagues and mentors, which lead me to realize that people with the skill combination of understanding users' needs and experiences and being able to build front-end applications are quite valuable.
After some self-observation, I also came to the conclusion that I enjoy working with both the psychological and technical aspects of a project. Personally, I think that If I want to be a great Digital designer who can provide design solutions I have to understand programming as well.

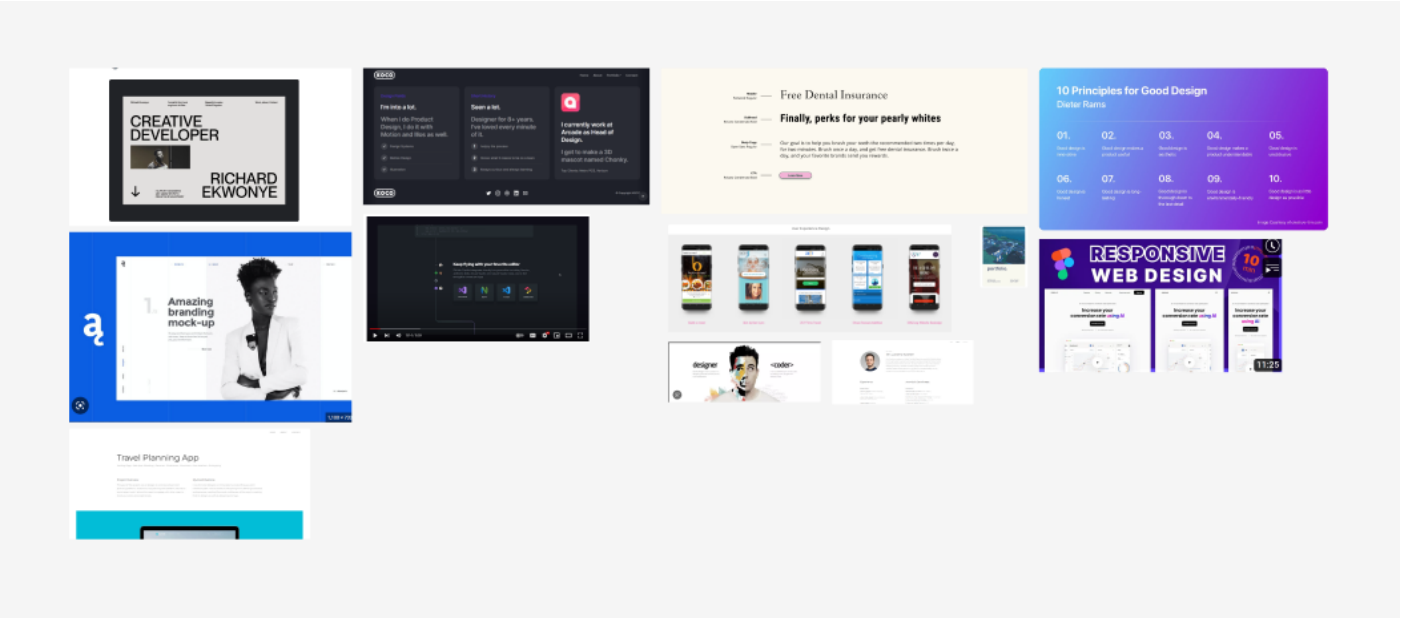
I wanted the look and feel of the portfolio to be minimalistic or as I like to say “breathable“ and at the same time modern.

From the frames below you can see that I started with a colorful design idea: I have done about 5-6 iterations of each page and I did a lot of A/B testings to choose

between the many iterations of a solution, if you want to further follow my design iteration of Figma, click here.

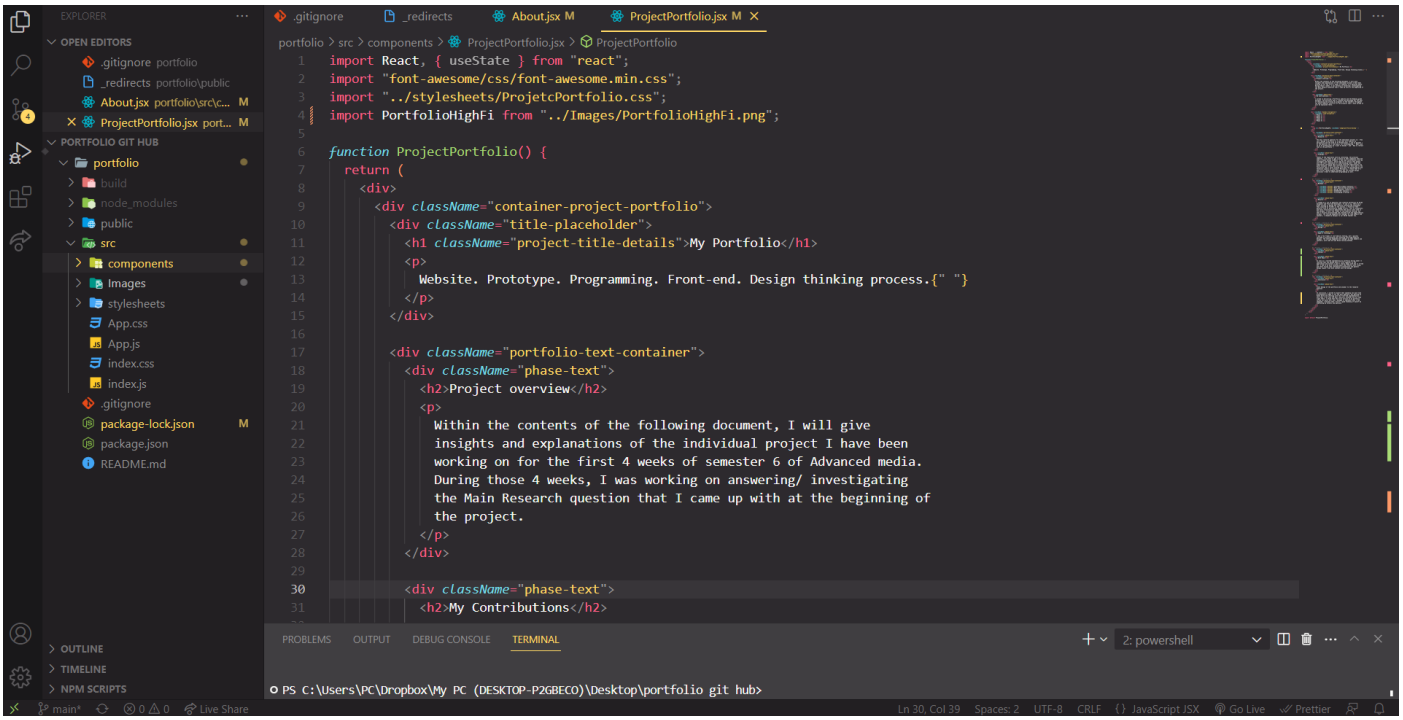


The collection of designs that inspired me(I gathered them from all kinds of websites and interfaces):



The technology used:

I used React. js and styled all of the elements myself with a CSS file for each element and organized them into sub-folders.



As a remark, If I had more time to code, I would declare global style variables in order to avoid code repetition and to provide a consistent layout through all the components. I would also map out the text from a JSON or text file to make the skeletons of the .jsx files look cleaner and more dynamic.

Reflections

During the scope of the project I had one main turn-around of how I planned my portfolio to look.
As soon as I started implementing my portfolio during week 3 I realized that the design doesn't click together on the application and overall I wasn't really happy with how it turned out. I had to do more thinking about what exactly went wrong, and after fixing some information architecture and general design layout, I was more content with the design.

In conclusion, I proved to myself that spending too much time prototyping on Figma is not the best approach, but getting my hands dirty and starting with the front-end implementation - only then I can face the most realistic problems and fix them right there.

I think that the first version of my portfolio turned out quite well and I managed to implement what I had imagined. I believe that I built a good branding of myself by expressing my talents and passions. That, of course, doesn't mean that I am fully content with the product to think that it is finished, since I would definitely work on improving it during the length of the semester.

Learning outcome	Proof
User interaction (analysis and advice)	The design of the portfolio, and design conclusions are based on online research by the methods: available product analysis, design pattern research, and best good and bad practices. I would also add the complete re-designing of the portfolio.
User interaction (execution & validation)	High-fidelity prototype on Figma.
Software development (software design)	I coded the portfolio with React.js and build my own styled component(no usage of Bootstrap or Material UI).
Future-oriented organization	Giving an answer to a future-dependent question and mapping out the plan of the project with the project plan.
Investigate problem-solving	Sub questions.
Personal leadership	Reflection, learning new skills.
Goal-oriented interaction	Asking questions and getting frequent feedback from teachers(and posting on feedpulse).