

INFO 360 Autumn 2015

The Story of



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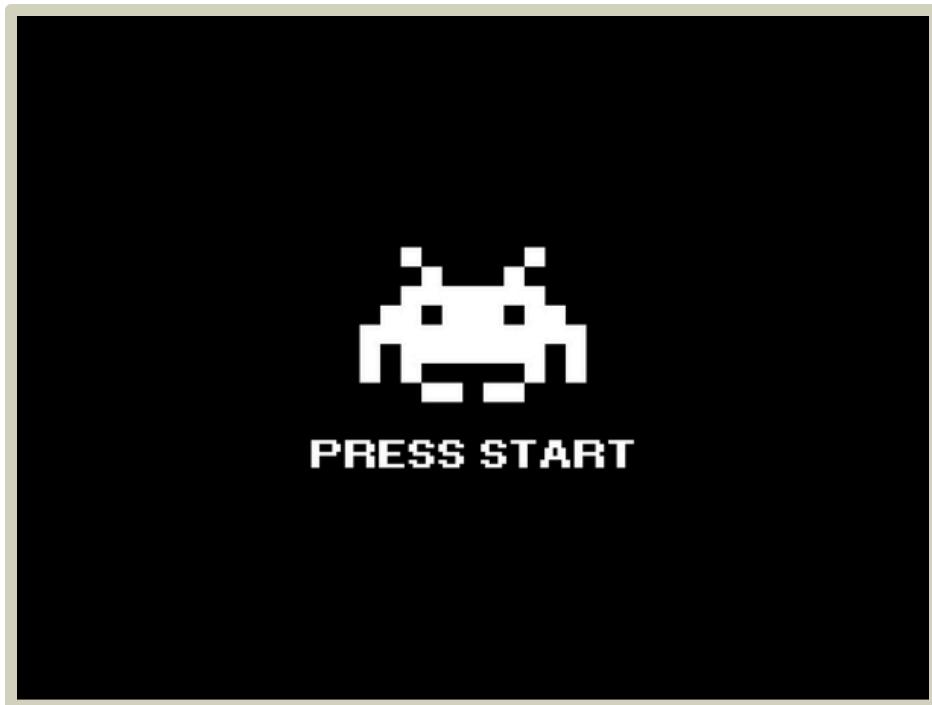
Introduction

“LevelUp” is a mobile application, which centralizes all sources that an iSchool student at the University of Washington may search through to find events that could help them in their (hopefully not) everlasting search for a job.

The process, including each train of thought that passed through my skull, lies here for you to see how this application was designed. We start from a vague question, which soon transformed into a mission for my team to explore. Every single choice we had to make for the design: the what, the how, the why, and the where. They are all written here to guide you through each step that my team and I took to end up with our final specification.

So here it is –

This is the story of how “LevelUp” came to be.



Defining the Problem

On the first day of class, I was given a whole hour to find a “Problem.” Of course, out of a million things that were wrong with the world, the one that struck us deep within was the single question that most university students are consistently seeking an answer for:

Where can we find a job?

However, it didn’t take long for the team to see that the question was way too broad and vague. Our first two peer reviewers informed and reassured us that this problem is a combination of too many issues and that it would help us should we look for something that is more related to us.

Then, Meera, one of my teammates, suggested that there are plenty of resources available for our fellow undergraduate informatics majors attending the Information School. However, most people seem to have trouble utilizing those said resources: career fairs, mock interviews, employer sessions, seminars, résumé workshops, and much more. Then, complained my other teammate Troy,

“Well, It’d be great if there were a place where all these things were organized and easy to process!”

This one statement transformed our problem into one that is more defined, relatable, and somewhat fit for us to tackle at:

Why don’t we use our job resources?

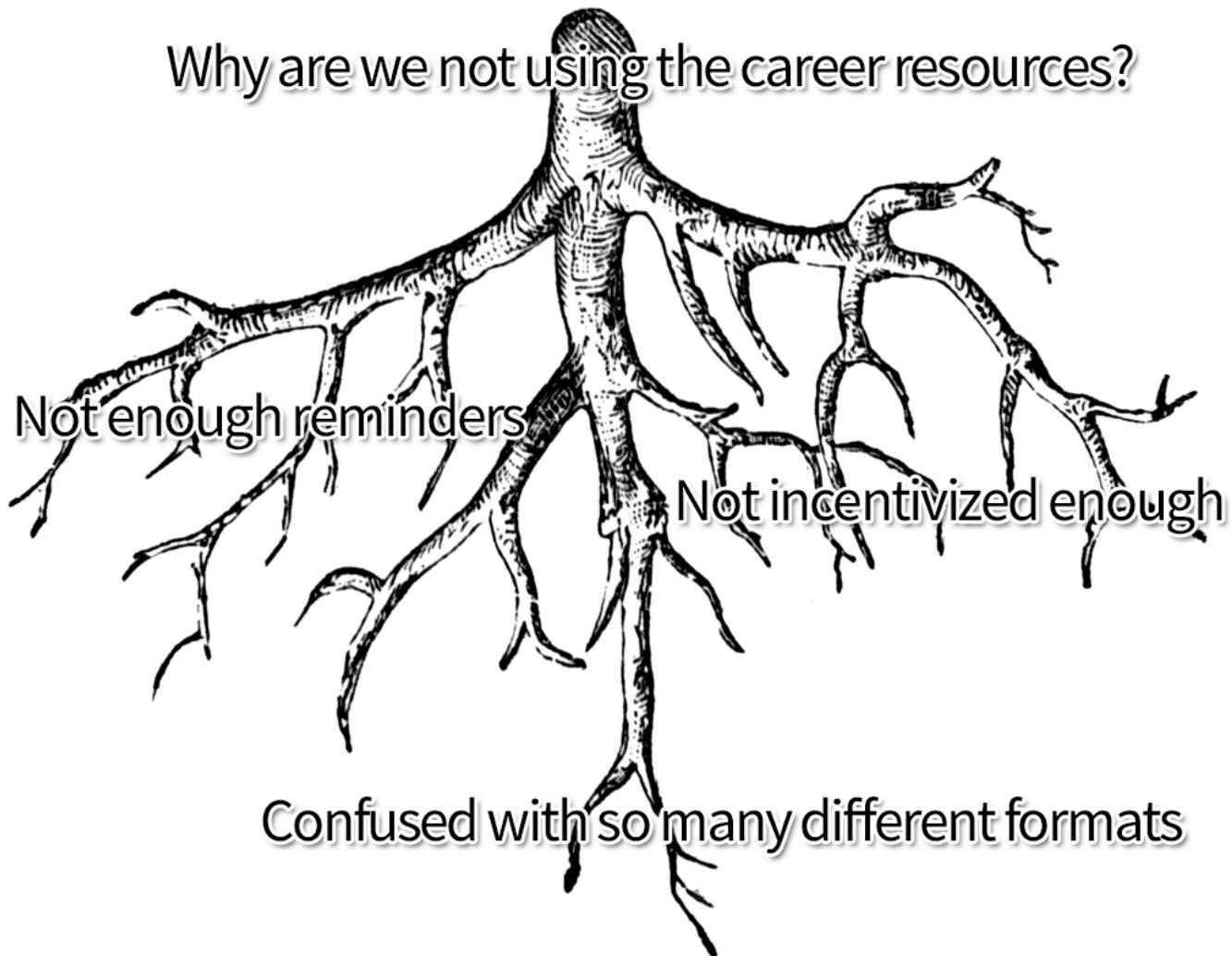
Which then turned into our fully developed design question after a few revising sessions:

**What will *motivate* and *inspire*
students to fully *utilize* the already
existing job resources?**

Find the Root!

We realized that the unused career resources that are abundant on campus were a problem. Our next task was to find the cause of this problem would be. In order to find a better solution, we interviewed our fellow classmates.

This allowed us to draw out common factors from the interviews as major causes of the problem:



After this user research, we were able to kick-start our brainstorming process to find a solution!

Brainstorming...



Sometimes quantity IS better than quality. To officially begin the brainstorming of our design solution, we were given a task to come up with 40 different design ideas that may address our design problem. This was an extremely difficult task that had me resort to ridiculous ideas that involve drones and blimps. These are my very own diagrams:

SNS ad	Huskyjobs	iCareers	Email List
News Letter	Live Stream	Calendar	Free Food
LinkedIn	Stickers	CheckIn	SMS
Posters	Bulletin Board	Reviews	Game
Exp	Retreat	Rating	Event Committee

clothing tent	requirement	map	forum
info desk	carpool	blimp	profile
no system	showcase	vote	time survey
drone	dance party	drop-in	job shadow
student-made	w/ alumnis	employer made	mass-advising



There it is!

Our group as a whole accumulated a total of 120 ideas! There were not too many that were useful, but we found a solution that potentially addressed the common factors in why our interviewees were not attending the career events:

Gamification of the Process!

The Chose One

As the weeks went by, we were also able to evolve our design question into something more specific as well:

How can we create an information centralized environment where the iSchool undergraduates will find attending career events more enjoyable?

In search of an idea that could turn the process of job searching to something fun, we fell in love with the idea of turning this process into a game. The initial concept and idea was generated from the web app “Practice-It,” which allows UW students to earn points for solving practice computer programming problems and compete each other in a ranking system. Similar system existed for the iSchool’s very own courses such as INFO 101 and INFO 466. This idea was legitimate, but there were a few obstacles that we needed to beat first:

1. What features should be included in the game?
2. Should we focus the application on centralization of the event information or the “fun-ness” of the game itself?
3. Where should be the line between game and reality?
4. Should career events be kept as a serious matter only?

Our team members each had a different approach to overcoming these questions; therefore, we each decided to come up with different prototypes and vote to choose one, thus finding our Chosen One.

My idea was that the fun part from most games nowadays is derived from competition and ranking systems. Therefore, I thought that simply implementing a system that ranked users based on points earned from attending career events would be enough “gamification” to incentivize our users. The rest of the application can be focused on providing various ways to centralize and organize event information in forms that different users may find comfortable in using: list-view, calendar, and map.

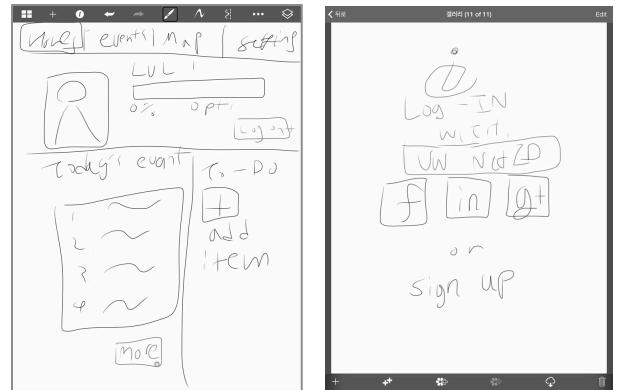
This idea won it all and thus was nominated as our **Chosen One**.

Solution

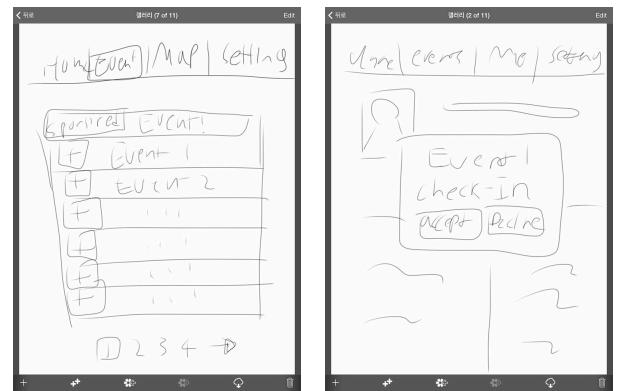
Next was the decision on which platform should we be designing the application for: Computers, Smartphones, Tablets, Wearable Technology, etc. Creating a web page sounded like a great idea at first because it would be able to show a lot of information at once on one screen. However, I believed that creating a web app wouldn't differentiate "LevelUp" from its predecessors and that using mobile devices as a platform would be much better for giving the users consistent notifications and alerts on the go! The rest of the team agreed with me as well. We slowly developed the design to be more and more professional, and this is the process of the design evolving:



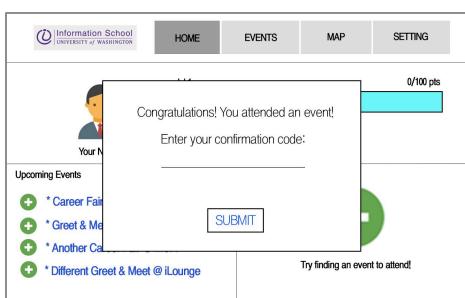
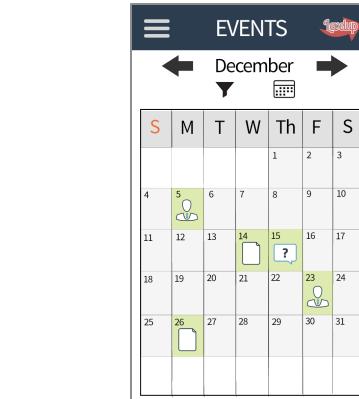
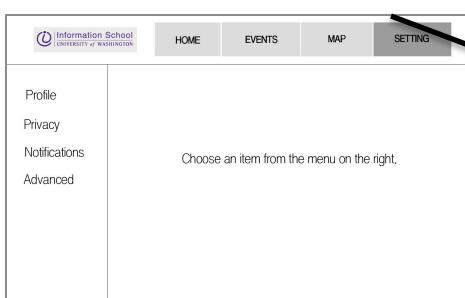
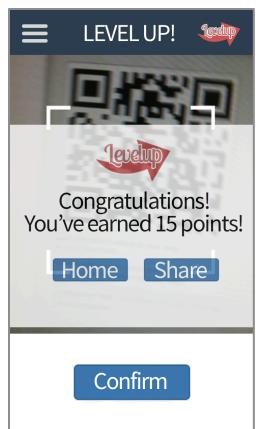
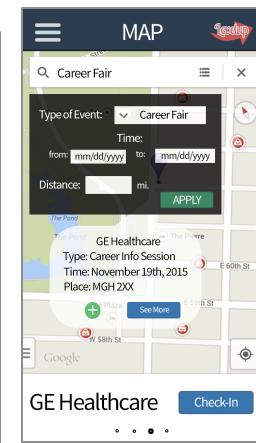
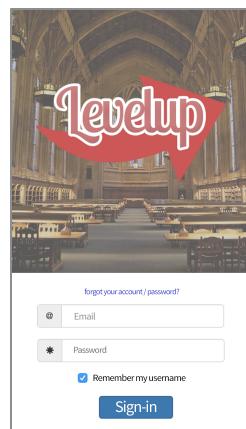
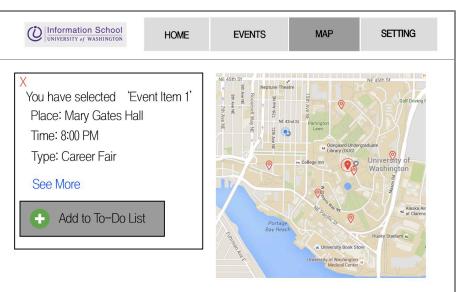
Stage 1 (top right)



Stage 2 (left)

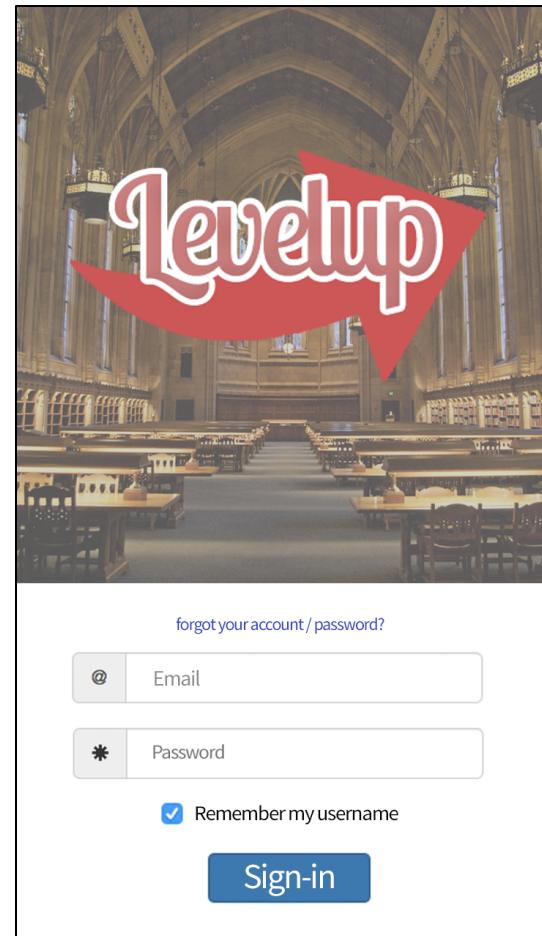


Stage 3
(bottom right)



Conclusion

In just a span of 10 weeks, I was able to design a great looking application with two other people! To think that it all started from a vague question and a tired complaint from a teammate is almost insane. We specifically crafted this solution to fit the needs of the potential user base of the application. As our design process became more extensive and complex, so did our plans to “level up” the students of iSchool.



The End