

App Design

Part 1: Intro to Figma

Workshop Recap and Extension

I have compiled a summary of what we covered in the Intro to Figma workshop, with some key tips and links to videos for review and further learning. I hope this will be helpful to you as you practice and perhaps think of using Figma in a future design project.

Happy designing!

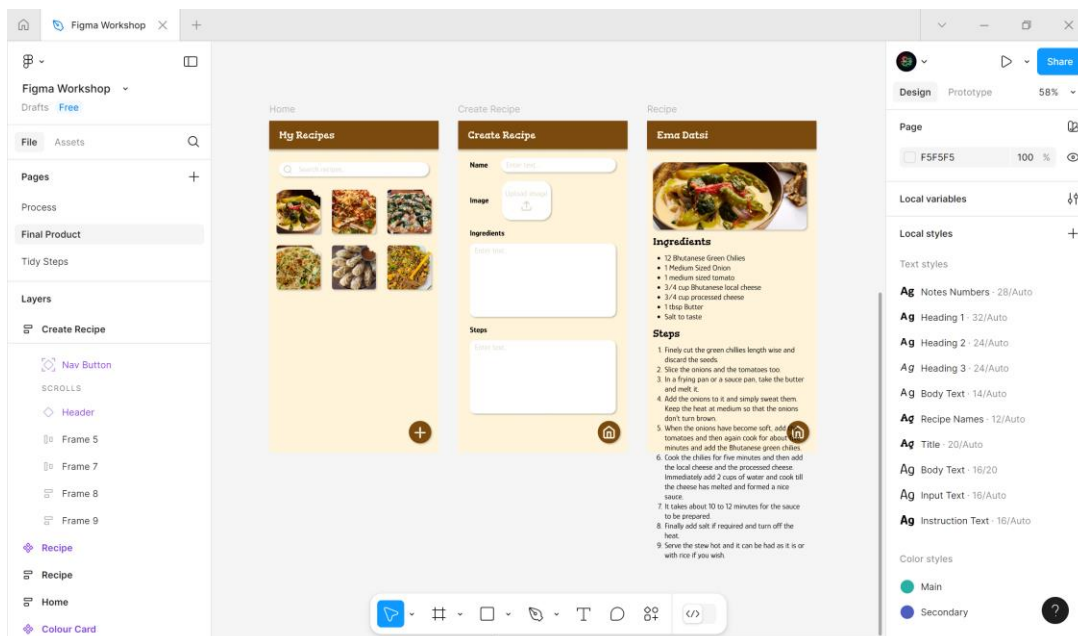
– Zoë van de Vegte

Why Use Figma

Figma is a powerful and popular design software that allows you to create complex and interactive designs. Spending time designing your app before you start to code can save you time later because you can iterate through many potential designs without having to keep rewriting your code. With interactions, Figma even allows you to visualise how your app should move between pages or adapt to different sized devices. This way, you are first considering *what* you want to make and can leave the *how* until later, when you have a complete design you are happy with. Creating a complete design in Figma can also help with communication when working in teams, such as maintaining consistency and documenting how the app should behave.

Interface Layout

When you open a design file (with the free Starter plan, you can create as many design files as you like in your Drafts folder), you will see the interface below:



The space in the centre is your canvas, where you will see all your created objects, and can select them and move them around, etc. To navigate the canvas, you can scroll left/right and up/down, as well as zooming in and out.

There are two side panels, one on the left and one on the right. The left side panel includes

- Pages in your file
- Layers in your page
 - Useful for selecting specific elements
 - Can rename elements
- Components
 - Under “Assets”
 - Includes components you created as well as library components

The right side panel includes

- Styles and variables
- Properties of the object you select (position, size, colour, effects, etc.)
- Interactions
 - Under “Prototype”
 - Includes scrolling behaviour

In the bottom centre is the toolbar (sometimes it is found at the top instead). You can select a variety of tools, including

- Selection
- Frame creation
- Shape creation
- Drawing
- Text creation
- Commenting
- Actions (includes library assets like existing icons)

At the top of the right side panel is a “play” button, for presenting your design. This is how you can test out interactions. Select the frame you want to start from and then click the play button.

Topics Covered in Workshop

We covered many topics, including

- Shapes
 - Creating (hold shift to get square dimensions)
 - Styling (colour, corner radius, effects, etc.)
- Text
 - Creating (draw textbox first, or click and start typing)
 - Styling (font, size, colour, effects, etc.)

- Styles
 - Saving and reusing styles
 - Editing and disconnecting styles
- Frames
 - Creating and styling
 - Arranging objects within the frame (constraints or auto layout)
 - Adding auto layouts within auto layouts
 - Ignore auto layout for certain objects
- Components
 - Creating main component
 - Using “instances” of a component
 - Customising instances or changing main component to affect all instances
 - Creating variants
- Interactions
 - Navigating to a new page
 - Displaying a popup (“overlay”)
 - Switching between variants of a component (apply to main component to change for all instances)

Ways to Practice

The best way to get good at Figma is to keep practicing! Experiment with the settings and combine the skills we studied in the workshop to create any design you can imagine. Even if you do not have a design in mind yourself, one great way to practice is to recreate existing designs. For example, take your favourite app and try to recreate the user interface yourself in Figma.

Videos to Review

Because Figma is so popular, there are many resources out there, and you will likely find answers to almost any question you might have with the right search. Below are just a few videos about Figma I have found useful:

- Shapes: <https://youtu.be/ue0hKThvdgA?si=eUfc7nVLAFWYbB4>
- Text: https://youtu.be/5i-ebNTjad8?si=HL-u_EiE_eXJ4TZU
- Creating Styles: https://youtu.be/gtQ_A3imzsg?si=LAaqlqRyIFKmHo09
- Components and Variants: <https://youtu.be/KnmxD8LvHmA?si=y1chNR0-Db2PZ6Ar>
- Auto layout: https://youtu.be/1odqpkfkDL8?si=eC0bsfY_xpfx9l_b
- More advanced tips and tricks: <https://youtu.be/GFYc5ZT-vFI?si=9fGFfqWQcbTZ7j9g>
- Very quick overview of many features and shortcuts: https://youtu.be/1pW_sk-2y40?si=Z1AtBV09YP_KQkYX