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DECEMBER 2019

Giving Redburn's clients control of their research content

The homepage of Redburn's research website showcases all the latest research published daily by all teams at the company. However, this can mean the content a client is actually interested in gets lost among the noise. I worked with a team of engineers to design a process by which a client's email preferences could be used to filter content on their homepage. The result was a feed personalised to each client and editable by them at any time through a simple interface.



“**Impressive. You are a publisher. Content is king!** – comment from Redburn client to our Senior Partner on launch day

ROLE

I led the design of the new preferences page, working in collaboration with my colleagues on the CRM team to ensure that all the new features being proposed were technically feasible in the timeframe available. I also wanted to make sure that the team were comfortable that any solution would be maintainable in the long run. I was involved in the full process from discovery to delivery.

The rest of the team encompassed a group of four engineers, a Project Manager/Scrum Master and a number of senior stakeholders from the business development team.

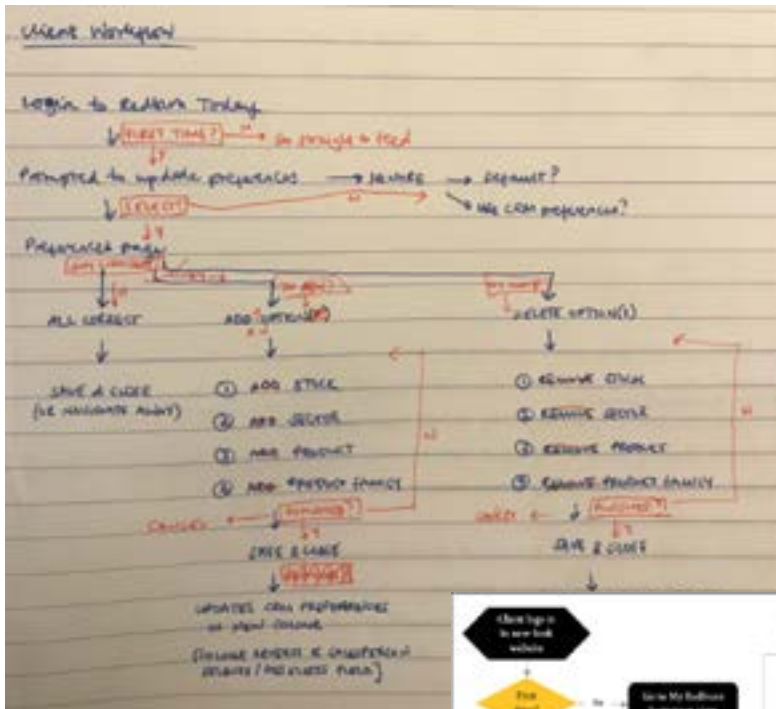
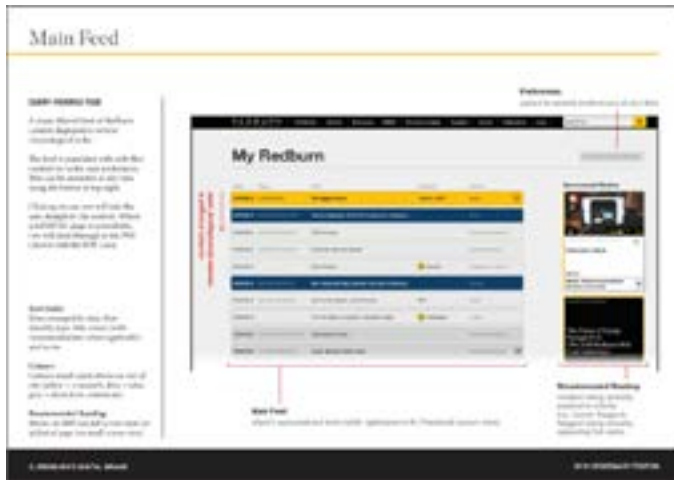
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PROBLEM

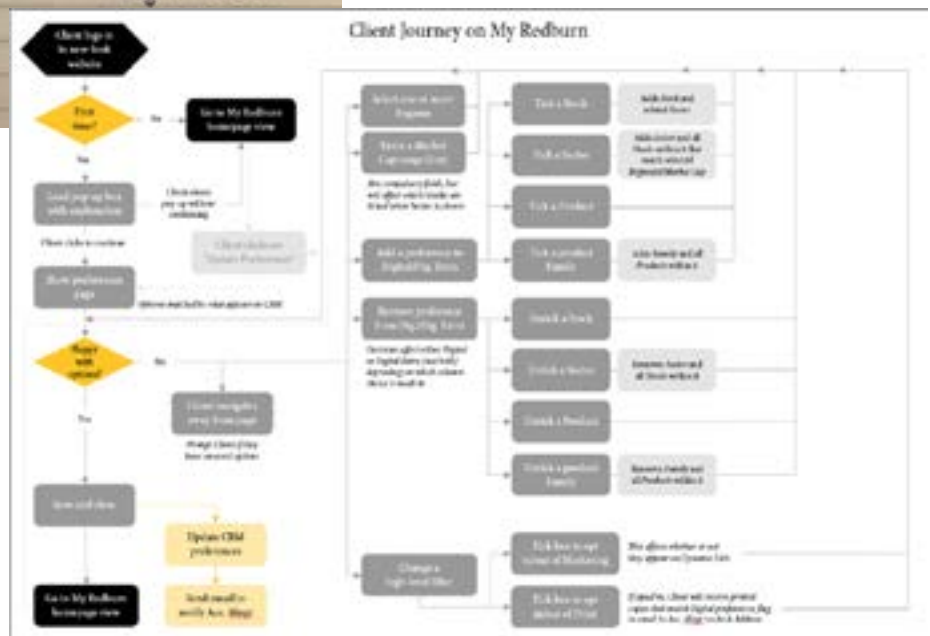
Following the redesign of the homepage of Redburn's research website, we were confident that clients would be able to now view all content quickly and easily. However, while they could filter the product they received by email to just the topics they were interested in (by requesting a change to the preferences we held for them in our CRM system), they couldn't do the same for their homepage. Our primary aim therefore was to link up the two systems so that each client received an individualised feed on the website.

We carried out some initial surveys to define requirements and learnt that additionally, under the current system, changes to preferences could only be made by Redburn staff — clients had to email or call their sales contact in order to amend which products they received. The second requirement was therefore that clients be handed control of their preferences (for both email and website content) such that they could change them at any time without having to contact Redburn. For those that wished to email or call instead, this functionality would remain.

DESIGN



Initial designs focusing on basic functionality were tested with users to ensure they worked in principle.



They were then worked up into a full client journey and a set of user stories.

Once everyone was happy that the process would work, I mocked up some mid-fi prototypes. We tested these prototypes with clients and while the overall design was approved, there was some confusion over what the various options did.

In discussion with the heads of Sales and the business development team, we added descriptions of each department and a point of contact for those with queries.

We also added tooltips on hover so that clients could see what they were signing up for. I worked with the Editorial team to provide the text for each section.



This led us to the final designs, which were then implemented by our engineering team.



OUTCOME

Since the release of the new functionality in early December, the CRM and Sales teams at Redburn have noticed a significant decrease in emailed requests from clients to update their preferences, with clients entering these choices themselves. In addition, subscribers for a key newsletter jumped from 350 to c1500 in the month following launch.

NOVEMBER 2019

Breathing life into pharmaceutical research reports

Redburn has over fifty publishing research analysts, working across a wide variety of topics, from Biopharma to Banking. Many are specialists in their chosen subject, as well as being financial experts. However, the clients reading their research will usually have little to no specialist knowledge. I therefore assist analysts to produce graphics to accompany their reports that show complex processes in an easy to understand format. These can be either illustrations or animated sequences.



“ Thank you for the fantastic effort you've made to get this over the line. The care and attention you place on product far outstrips what I have experienced elsewhere - Research Analyst

ROLE

I work as the lead designer, alongside my colleagues in the Editorial & Production Team, to produce a variety of ad-hoc illustrations and animated videos to accompany our analysts' reports, helping to bring complex research topics to life and inspire debate.

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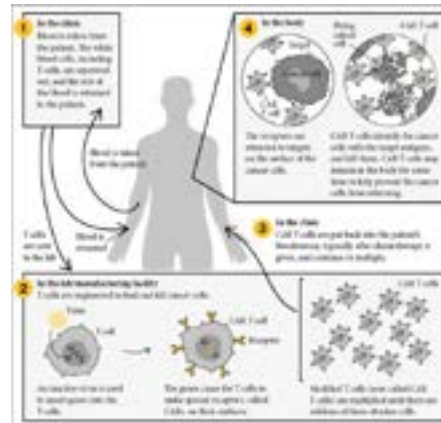
PROBLEM

In the case study illustrated here, the analyst was writing a report on the role of gene therapy in medicine. Understandably, very few of Redburn's clients are experts in this field, so the language in the report and any accompanying illustrations needed to be as easy to understand as possible.

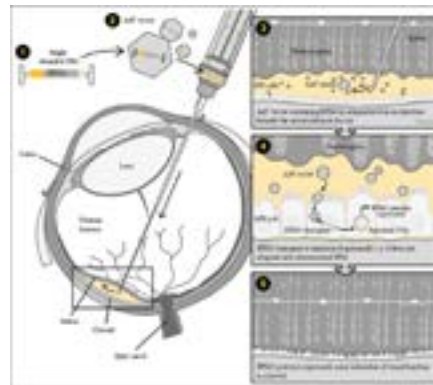
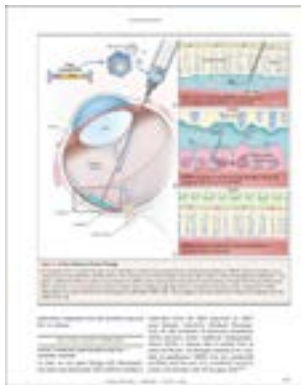
DESIGN

I produced a number of illustrations for the report. For some, the analyst had a rough idea in his head of what he wanted to show, which was then worked up through a series of iterations to produce the final version. The emphasis was on helping clients to understand a complex scientific process without them feeling overwhelmed by the detail.

I reduced each element to as simple a form as possible, using our yellow highlight colour to draw the eye to the relevant part of each section. I then worked with the Editorial & Production Team to ensure that the tone used matched the rest of the report, and that the correct styles and sizings were adhered to.



For others, the analyst had an illustration from a scientific publication to work from. Once I'd checked with the analyst that the appropriate copyright permissions had been obtained, I simplified the illustration and restyled it in our colours and styles so that it would fit with the rest of the report.



Finally, I built an animated sequence to accompany voiceover by the analyst. This was exported for use both as part of his presentation to clients and as a standalone video snippet for future marketing purposes.

OUTCOME

On publication, our Head of Sector Research commented that he thought the animation was "a really nice touch, very professional and helpful to the user". The report was also featured in Redburn's quarterly round up of high-quality content.

SEPTEMBER 2019

Redesigning the homepage for Redburn's research website

Redburn's research website hosts all content produced by the company's research analysts. Two years after launch, and with a 50% increase in hosted content, it had become clear that the homepage was no longer offering clients a clear view of the content available. I was tasked with leading a project to design a new format to include several improvements to user experience, with a focus on offering a clearer and more condensed product showcase, and improved page loading speeds.



“ I like the look and feel of the new product. Looks seriously high spec, but also identifiably Redburn and different. Great stuff! – Senior Partner, Redburn

ROLE

I led the UX design of the new homepage, working in collaboration with our Sales team to define requirements. I was involved in the full process from discovery to delivery over the space of twelve months.

The rest of the team encompassed a group of five engineers, a Project Manager/Scrum Master and a number of senior stakeholders from the business development team.

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PROBLEM

Redburn's research website hosts all content produced by the various research teams — whether research analysts, salespeople or technical/systematic analysts — and is updated live. However, two years post-launch, it had become clear that the site had outgrown its initial design and was no longer doing justice to the large volume of research published daily.

Conversations with clients (and with users within the company) increasingly mentioned that the homepage didn't seem to have the piece of research they were looking for. On investigation, the article usually was there, but if clients were unable to find it, it might as well not have been.

DESIGN

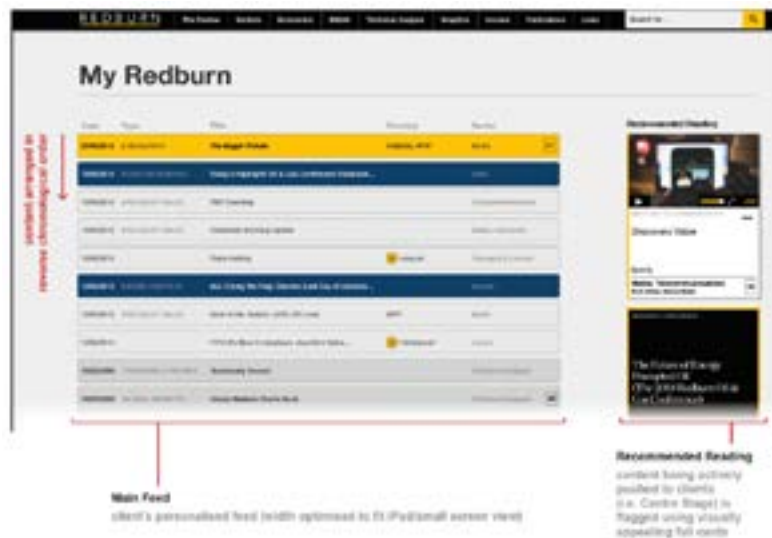
Before starting on design, I undertook substantial user surveys, gathering data from both internal users and clients to establish the specifics of users' frustrations.

The problem could be broken down into three main strands. First, the large cards at the top of the page (curated content) flag leading content successfully, but to the detriment of everything else, especially on small screens. Second, the main carousel of content shows only five articles (and fewer on smaller screens). On mobile, you see only one article before you have to scroll. Third, the large images and videos required for each carousel significantly slow down the page load speed.



The first step was to reduce the size of the cards. I didn't want to lose the colour scheme as this had proven useful for quickly differentiating content from the various teams, and was consistent across the rest of the site. I also didn't want to lose the visual impact of the highlighted cards at the top, as this is the content our Sales team is currently highlighting.

After brainstorming possible solutions and carrying out some discovery research, I decided to use a tabular format for the main feed and to keep the card layout for the highlighted content, but to move this to a vertical carousel on the right hand side instead.



This new design doubled the number of cards visible on initial page view, but I wanted to be sure that clients would understand the new layout, so I carried out further user testing. I also presented the designs to a team of senior stakeholders. The designs received approval, so I handed them over to our engineering team to develop.

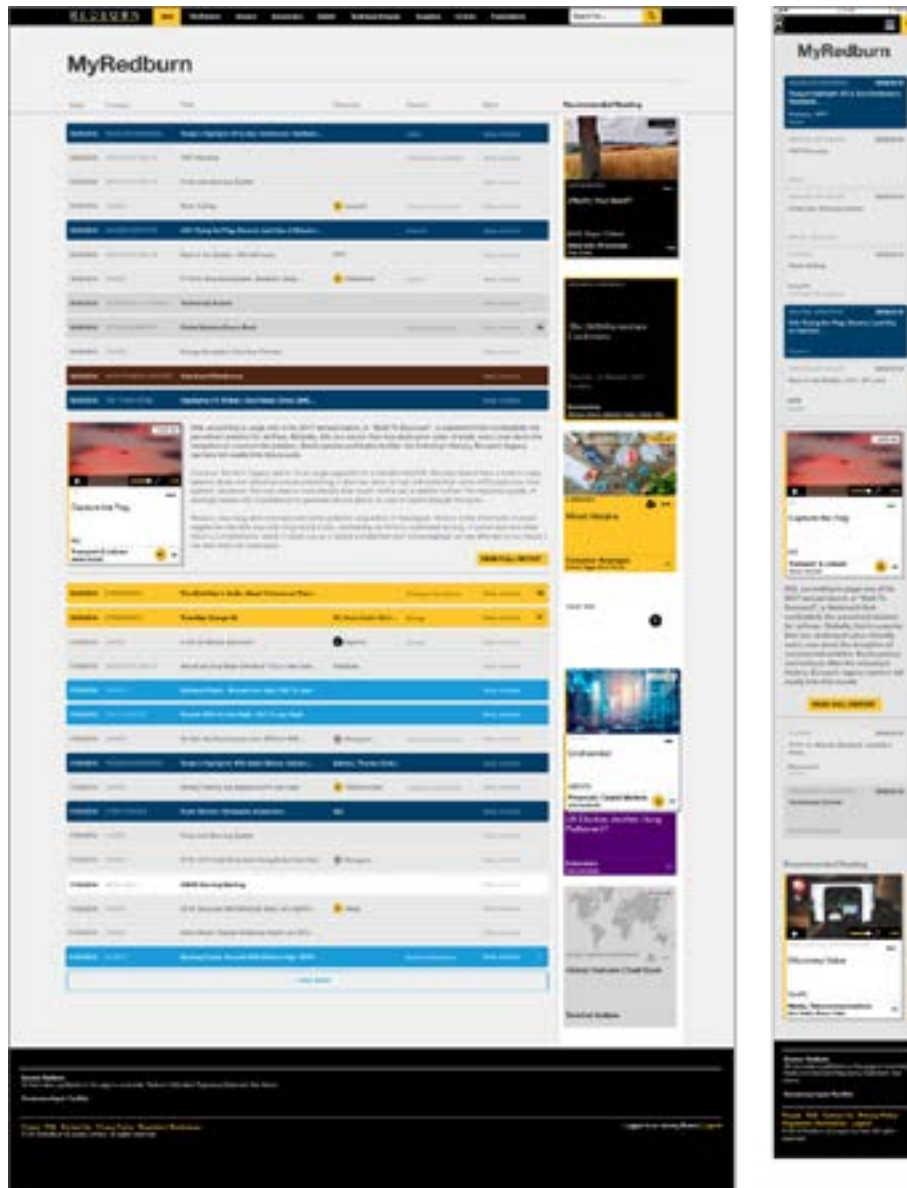
During a series of two-week sprints, we iterated on the basic layout, gradually adding in extra features as required. As the various elements were created, I ensured that they matched back to the original designs, except where to do so would not be technically feasible in the timeframe available.

As the project progressed, stakeholders continued to suggest additional features. I coordinated the receipt of such features and passed them to our Project Manager to assess whether they would impact on the delivery of the overall project. When approved, they were included within the appropriate sprint.



OUTCOME

The final design met all the original goals and was optimised for display on both full screen and mobile.



However, it was decided that full release to all clients would be delayed until the parallel project looking at client preferences was also ready, so that the two sets of new features could be launched simultaneously.

The site is now live and client feedback has been initially very positive, with both internal and external users commenting that the content is much easier to view and the page loads significantly faster.

AUGUST 2019

Helping artists with limited free time quickly find inspiration

In August 2019, I was lucky enough to spend a week at General Assembly's London office refreshing my knowledge of UX design. As part of the course, we were tasked with prototyping an app to solve a problem experienced by other members of the course in their day-to-day lives. I discovered that several of my classmates enjoyed making art in their free time, but expressed frustration that choosing what to draw often ate up all the time available. I decided to try to come up with a solution.



“ Say I only have half an hour, if I had thirty ideas, I might waste the entire half an hour trying to decide which one I'm going to do - comment received during initial user survey

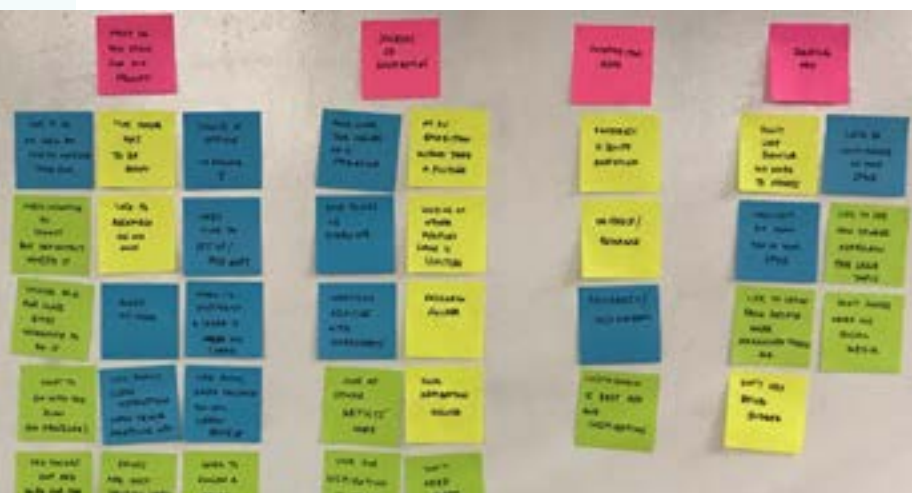
ROLE

Over the course of a five-day sprint, I researched, designed and built a mid-fi prototype for an art inspiration mobile app. I worked alongside a team of 20 other designers, who acted variously as users and colleagues as the need arose. Having this large group of people both as a test base and to bounce ideas off was hugely beneficial to finding a solution in such a short timeframe.

PROBLEM

I was talking with a few classmates over a cup of tea and discovered that all of us enjoyed making art in our spare time. Oh, that's nice, I said, what do you do? Well, I can never quite decide...

We've all been there. We have some free time and want to fill it with something meaningful — art, exercise, baking — but when it comes to choosing exactly what to do, we're stuck. And before we know it, the time has disappeared and we've achieved nothing.

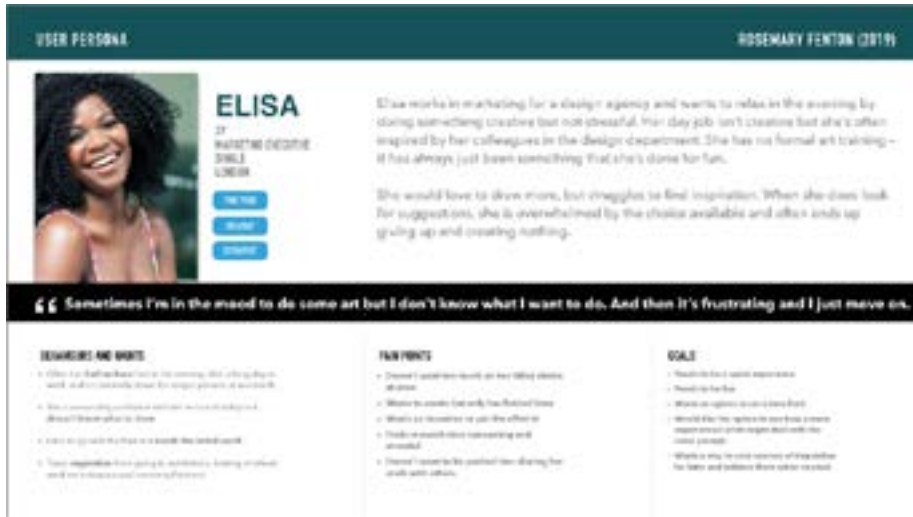


A series of initial interviews with users established two common problems: (i) when they sat down with the intention of drawing, they didn't know what to draw and (ii) even when they found a source of inspiration it proved too complicated and they ran out of time.

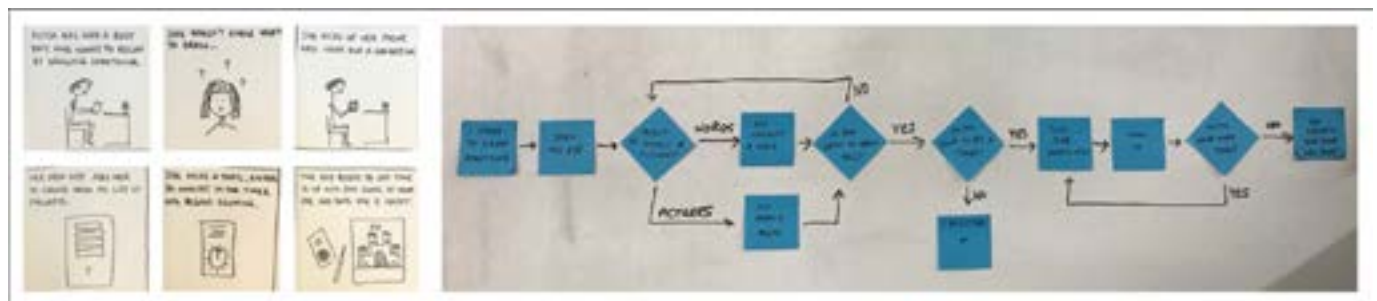
DESIGN

Initial comparative analysis identified a few competitors, such as Pinterest (which is amazing for inspiration) and Designercize (which offers a great countdown timer), but none offered answers to all of our user problems. My app could fill this gap in the market.

So our user, let's call her Elisa, needs a way to quickly decide what to draw because she wants to make the most of her free time. At a minimum, the app needs to help her decide what to draw and find a project that fits her timeframe.



I brainstormed a possible user storyboard and then built this out into an initial user flow. This established how the app might work in principle, from opening the app to having a prompt delivered and a timer counting down to a deadline.



Putting this into practice, I prototyped some very rough initial screens using paper and pen, and then got straight into guerrilla testing them on users.



Feedback from this first round of user testing was positive, but threw up a couple of problems with the design.

First, the 'drawing in progress' section didn't really work. Users wanted the prompt and the timer to be shown throughout this stage. Second, users were worried that with only a single prompt at a time, they might get stuck in an endless loop of flicking through images or word suggestions.

Satisfied that the idea worked in principle, I incorporated this feedback into my prototypes and moved to a mid-fi digital version before the next round of testing.

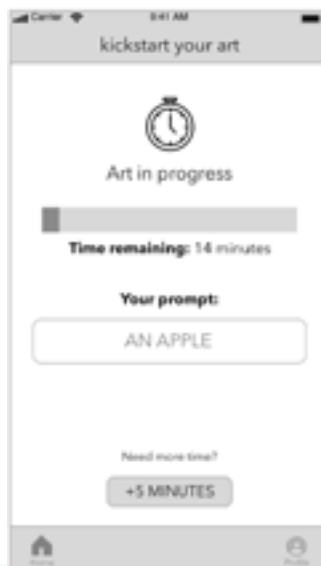


Later that morning, while eating my lunch and playing around with yet more post-its, I realised I had it all wrong — the timeframe option needed to be before the prompts. After all, that's the only thing Elisa knows when she opens the app.

This led me to the final user flow.



The final design is shown in the prototype below. Click on the image for a chance to try it yourself.



OUTCOME

At the end of the five-day sprint, I had a functioning mid-fi prototype and a preliminary user flow ready to take into the next round of testing.

Users were very satisfied overall with the ease of use and found that they could quickly choose a topic and then complete their drawing within the timeframe allocated.

I also raised several possible lines of enquiry for further investigation. For example, one user said: "I want to see the prompt/photo again on the confirmation screen," and another commented: "I like the tone, but there's too much text on some screens". The limited timeframe didn't allow for further investigation, but I would like to follow these points up at a future date.