SUMMARY

"Creating a platform for design events: market research, launching the MVP and marketing strategy"

The thesis at hand deals with the design process of a webpage consisting of design-related events, researching the potential benefits of the product, confirming the need for it via market analysis and providing a solution through the creation of an MVP (minimum viable product). In addition, the role of the designer in the development process and creating the marketing strategy are described.

The topic came from the need of the client, NOPE Creative, and the hypothesis that there are no means in the design community to find vocational conferences, workshops and meetups. At the current moment, there is not one cohesive place to find design-related events and to find them via search engines, one has to know already what they are looking for. That is why the practical output of this thesis is an MVP of a curated but community managed design event webpage that allows the user to filter the events by location, category and topics. This way, designers can find suitable events for themselves faster and more efficiently, which should cause them to visit professional events more often and therefore give more incentive to organizers to create more events, which benefits all community.

To validate the need for this kind of product, a survey, which was answered by 52 volunteers, was created. It confirmed that there is a necessity for a platform of design events. The respondents showed great motivation to study, which was hindered by not having a uniform source of information available and not having enough knowledge about occurring events. The conducted literary research claimed that attending vocational events is not only beneficial on multiple levels for the attendees themselves, but also their employers and the whole community. It was also described how people who are searching, tend to be satisfied with the first reasonable result, which might not be the best possible one. People tend to make bad decisions if they think they have enough information when in reality they don't. This misunderstanding can happen when people have trouble with finding enough data or even because of information overload. This is why there needs to be one cohesive platform for designers to search for professional events by being able to filter out the unnecessary information.

The design process started with groundwork: creating a brief, user story map and planning the minimum viable product. Then the wireframes were created, taking into account all the research conducted, the brief and the MVP. Then the user interface was designed upon those wireframes. The whole process was iterative and done while constantly keeping the client updated and receiving feedback from them. After the completion of the design views for desktop, tablet and mobile versions, the assets were prepared for the web developers at gotoAndPlay. The designer and project manager oversaw and assisted the development process which will end with the completion and launch of the webpage.

To ensure the userbase and longevity of the platform, a marketing strategy was created. The website was named WhereTo.Design which is also the name of its domain. Besides creating the name, domain and buying the web hosting service, the strategy included the creation of a Facebook page, using marketing analytics environment, compiling a media list, choosing the mediums to reach target group, creating marketing materials and all related visuals, contacting the representatives of the target group, regularly posting in social media, monitoring media to find content for the page and gathering feedback from the community to implement it.

This thesis was made possible by many parties: the client NOPE Creative, who commissioned this work; web development partner gotoAndPlay and Marianne Võime, who consulted on the creation of the marketing strategy. The whole idea of the platform is based on the drive of the community. It is developed in the hopes that in the future it is sustained by the more proactive volunteers who want to add new events.