Design & development of an online innovation hub for students

Tim van der Kooi

This assignment is concerned with the design and development of a website for FutureTech Salland (In short: FutureTech). This is an innovation hub that facilitates internships for students at six connected companies. The goal of the assignment is to answer the following question: **"How can FutureTech expand their innovation hub for students via the internet?"**. This will be achieved by following a design process that involves research, design, development, and evaluation.

To find out what is required for the design of the website a research was conducted. The brand elements of FutureTech and websites of competitors and other relatable brands were analysed. The target audience of FutureTech was interviewed and market trends examined. It was concluded that the design needs to be minimalistic, work on mobile devices and appeal to the younger generation. The design should use brand elements of FutureTech to create a unique style but use a familiar layout to make the design easier to understand.

Before starting the design the pages were analysed by doing a card sorting test. Users were asked to rank and categories cards with pages. This resulted in a basis for the navigation bar and the sitemap. For the design of the pages, first sketches were made on paper and later worked out on the computer. Three concepts were conceived for a landing page and tested by showing each design for five seconds and asking questions. After some more iteration this process resulted in the final landing page design, Figure 1. The rest of the page were also first sketched on paper and then made into a prototype within Figma. This prototype was used to test the user flow for finding internship and information on the website. For the home page another test was conducted. The subject were asked to speak their thoughts out loud when scrolling through the pages. This data was used to make the final iteration and arrive at a final design.

Figure 1 – Final landing page of FutureTech Salland's website

The next step is to implement the final design using WordPress. The design is translated into a WordPress website. Content is created for all pages by FutureTech and is adjusted to be more search engine optimized (SEO). Animation are added to make the design more engaging. The website also need to accommodate the secondary user, the administrator. A dashboard is designed that allows the client to add, edit and remove internships and content to the website. As well as viewing applications and statistics.

The website is evaluated by the target group and the client to ensure that it is sufficient. The requirements were used to validate the website design. The design was found to be visual pleasing and aligned with the target group. The website has been designed with growth of FutureTech in mind. The client has been instructed how to add content, and they found it easy to use making the website easily expandable for the future. However, some improvements and recommendations can be made. It is recommended to add social proof in the form of experiences on the homepage following the design. More evaluation can be done to improve the website. User feedback based on content can directly be implemented by the client. More emphasis needs to be placed on the SEO score of the page when the client adds content, some current page can also be rewritten with this in mind. Documentation also needs to be made available to make the site more easily maintainable. This will result in a good future for the website of FutureTech Salland.