Website and Branding Development
for The Consent Project, a civil and
social Organisation

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Summary

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to develop the brand identity of *The Consent Project*, a start-up organisation based in Enschede offering educational services on consent and social safety, and to design a website that effectively communicates its brand and services to target users. The project sought to answer the research question: *To what extent is it feasible to design a website that accurately portrays the vision and functional user needs of a start-up company?*

The project followed an iterative framework divided into 4 phases. Phase 1 involved background research, market analysis, and stakeholder interviews to understand the client's market positioning and target audience. Phase 2 focused on developing key brand elements, such as colour schemes and tone of voice, to ensure consistency across branding materials. Phase 3 centred on website development, integrating the brand identity into the design, layout, and content, with continuous client feedback to align with their vision.

In phase 4 an evaluation framework was developed to assess the website's impact on perceived brand equity, focusing on visual aesthetics and trustworthiness. While the project successfully improved the website's trustworthiness and user experience, challenges such as balancing client preferences with strategic goals and limited evaluation methods highlighted areas for improvement. The findings suggest that designing a website for a start-up is feasible but requires robust testing, clear brand alignment, and further research into practical co-design methods to better balance client satisfaction and user-centric outcomes

Results and limitations

The questionnaire evaluated two websites: a control website and the project website, both containing similar content and subpages for equal comparison. The control website served as a baseline to measure design changes, allowing quantifiable assessment of improvements or drawbacks in the client's branding approach. Using a 7-point Likert scale, both websites scored above 4 on all items. However final questionnaire results are inconclusive due to a small sample size of 12 participants, below the recommended 20. The questionnaire combined a shortened version of VisAWI to evaluate aesthetics (Moshagen & Thielsch, 2013), 4 items evaluating quality and 2 items experience (JIN Liyin, 2009). However, the shortened VisAWI lacked the depth of the full version, and the exclusion of the "Brand attraction" (4 items) from Liyin's evaluation method (2009) was a significant oversight, as it directly relates to brand equity. These limitations underscore the need for a larger sample and a more comprehensive evaluation framework in future studies.

However, the project website results are higher than the control website in every category except "colourfulness." The project website achieved mean scores above 5 for all items, indicating a positive impact on aesthetics and trustworthiness. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the project design approach in enhancing the client's brand perception. While the feedback provides valuable insights for further iterations, the higher scores for the project website hint to effects in improving user experience and brand representation compared to the control.

Conclusion

The research question has been partially answered, demonstrating that designing a website for a start-up is feasible but complex. While the project achieved improvements in trustworthiness and aesthetics, challenges such as balancing client preferences with strategic goals, integrating abstract brand values, and limited evaluation methods hindered full success. The project website outperformed the control in user experience, yet the small participant pool and reliance on a shortened VisAWI limited actionable insights. Future projects should prioritize more robust testing methods, including larger participant pools and metrics focused on brand equity, not just aesthetics. Additionally, further research is needed on practical co-design methods and prioritization strategies for brand identity development, particularly in balancing client satisfaction with user-centric outcomes. These improvements could enhance both the feasibility and effectiveness of such projects

Sources:

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3) Moshagen, M. & Thielsch, M. T. (2013). A short version of the visual aesthetics of websites inventory. Behaviour & Information Technology, 32 (12), 1305-1311. doi: 10.1080/0144929X.2012.694910