Exploring the Explore Page

redesigning through reflective
transformative design process

BSc Graduation Assignment July 2016

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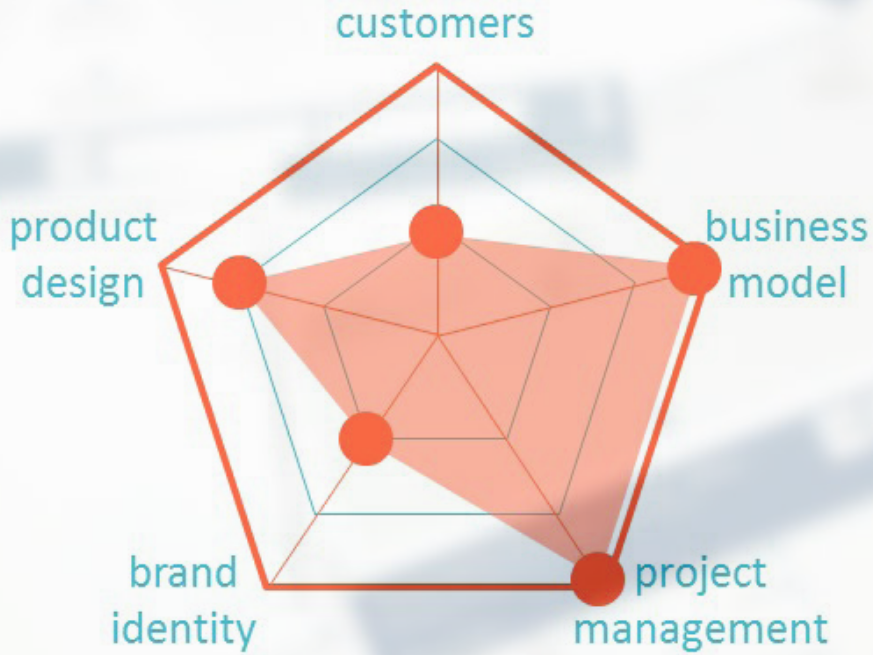
Explore INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



next

creatlr

Preface

During my study Industrial Design Engineering at the University of Twente, my vision and preferences towards designing have been evolved significantly. At first, it was my everlasting childhood goal to become a supercar designer. Now my BSc Industrial Design is almost finished, I have lost the indispensable interest in technical ingenuity. After three years of study, it has become clear to me that I have strong feelings about user experiences and user behavior. In addition, throughout my personal growth as a designer, the passion for graphic language and brand personalities have increased.

With this project, I have found a niche for academic research in line with my personal skills and interests. This research report describes my BSc graduating assignment that reflects my academic road up till now. During this project, my vision and beliefs as a junior designer got the chance to be expressed in a challenging way. I am delighted to say that I got the confidence, freedom and space to advance design thinking into design doing. With this approach, my skills were used to achieve a meaningful result.

Before introducing my project, I first want to seize the chance to pay tribute to a few individuals in specific. This experience was by far the most intense and challenging in my life so far. Besides using my acquired skills and knowledge throughout the past three years, I have acquired many new insights and perspectives from inspiring people. This achievement could not have happened without Jelle Stienstra (former mentor) who combined his criticism with useful feedback and inspired me with the design doing philosophy. A philosophy that is strengthened by improvement through a reflective transformative design process. Niels Hoogendoorn (company supervisor) who was at all times open to integrating my suggestions and improvements into the platform, the entire open-minded DesignLab team who supported my research and let me use the facilities and my family who always believed in my determination to make this project a success.

Thank you for this invaluable and elevating experience, I hope you will enjoy reading and become inspired by my work.

Content

Preface 4
Content 6
Summary 8
Glossary 12

Report Structure 14
Research Approach 14
Unique Selling Points 16

Introduction 34
- Background 36
- Project Objectives 38
- Business Environment 38
- Context 40

Final Concept 42
- Explaining 43
- Functioning 45
- Prototype 47
- Scenario 48

Iterative Process 50
- Study Direction 53
- Core of the Tool 55
- Ideate, Validate & Create 57
- Project Phase 59

Paper Prototyping 61

Pre-Analysis 69
Analysis 73

Interview Design 76
- Stakeholder Interviews 77
- Dreamteam 81

Design Doing 84
- Job Stories 84

Module's First Week 87
Target Group Division 87

The Five Target Groups 89
- 1/5 Honors Program 89
- 2/5 Project Groups IDE 91
- 3/5 EU Funding 95
- 4/5 Master Course HID 97
- 5/5 DesignLab 101

Future Research 103

Personal Experiences 104

Epilogue 106
References 107

Summary

Exploring the Explore page is a concept that improves the search for tools for all Creatlr users. This concept is a result of extensive research and experiments following the reflective transformative design process. The concept is an improvement of the already existing Explore page of Creatlr. This page is designed to inform and guide users to the tools that would fit their workflow. Nevertheless, many new and inexperienced users from the University of Twente have struggled with finding tools that would benefit their projects. In addition, the users were not convinced of the added value and advantageous options of Creatlr's products and services. In other words, students and staff pointed out Creatlr's bottleneck; the Explore page's effectiveness. Following the Lean UX Methodology, user experience gets improved gradually by addressing the bottlenecks and improve them to the next bottleneck's level. (Gothelf, March 7th 2011) By this way, the overall user experience will be increased continuously.

This project highlights multiple aspects. First of all, Creatlr's tools and platform are used extensively, examined and mapped in order to get a better understanding of Creatlr. Besides this, the DesignLab's vision, students, staff, and backgrounds are investigated. Thereafter, target group experiments are designed and executed in order to find out what had to be improved for optimal use. All these aspects of research, experimenting and designing are executed and achieved according to the reflective transformative design process. This design approach is based on an iterative process that results from multiple experiments and reflections. (Hummels and Frens, 4-9 April, 2009) The design choices are made on the basis of experimental knowledge. The quality of the design is created by the principle of design by doing.

The result of the design process is the Intake window on the Explore page. This Intake is the result of many iterations and experimental knowledge. The Intake helps users to find the right tools that fit their projects and goals easier and more effectively. Users get a portfolio of workshops on the basis of their answers to five questions. These questions are designed to figure out users' situation and focus. The questions can be answered in a dynamic way by moving bullets in a radar plot and filling bars. With this dynamic design, users can easily reflect and weight their project priorities and focus. The portfolio will be selected based on the combination of the Intake results. This portfolio consists of five tools with one workshop located in the middle of the screen. This centrally situated tool can most of the times be used in combination with several other tools. The strength of the Intake is that it also suggests follow-up tools after using one of the workshops. After finishing the Intake, the values of the answers still can be changed; at the top of the portfolio window. At that spot, users can adjust the values of the answers given during the Intake and directly see the impact of these changes. This has the advantage users are not tied into their first perceptions.

The prototype of the Intake page is developed on the basis of iterations and reflections. Unfortunately, for the time being, I was not able to make it fully working and branded. The concept can still be improved and requires extended research before developing an associated database and a concept that can be tested and launched. Nevertheless, this project resulted in identifying Creatlr's major bottleneck from the target groups' perspectives. The key to improvement of the platform is made clear via recommendations on the basis of the reflective transformative design process.

Samenvatting

Het onderzoek naar de Explore pagina is een concept dat het zoekproces naar tools verbeterd voor alle gebruikers. Dit concept is het resultaat van uitgebreid onderzoek en experimenten volgens het reflectief transformatief ontwerp proces. Het concept borduurt door op de reeds bestaande Explore pagina van Creatlr. Deze pagina is ontworpen om gebruikers te informeren en te leiden naar tools die passen binnen hun workflow. Ondanks deze ontwerpgedachte hebben veel nieuwe en onervaren gebruikers van de Universiteit Twente moeilijkheden ondervonden gedurende de zoektocht naar bruikbare tools. Bovendien waren de gebruikers over het algemeen niet overtuigd van de toegevoegde waarde en voordelen die Creatlr's producten en services met zich meebrachten. Met andere woorden, studenten en staff hadden hiermee een knelpunt van Creatlr aangekaart; de Explore pagina's doeltreffendheid. Volgens de Lean UX methode neemt de user experience geleidelijk toe door het grootste knelpunt te verbeteren tot het niveau van het volgende knelpunt. Op deze manier zal de totale user experience continu toenemen.

Dit project benadrukt verschillende aspecten. Ten eerste, Creatlr's tools en platform zijn intensief en veelvuldig gebruikt, beoordeeld en in kaart gebracht om zo meer inzicht te krijgen in de mogelijkheden van Creatlr. Daarnaast is de ontwerpvisie van het DesignLab en de achtergronden van studenten en staff onderzocht. Vervolgens zijn er doelgroep experimenten ontworpen en uitgevoerd om uit te zoeken welke specifieke onderdelen van Creatlr verbeterd kunnen worden voor een optimaal gebruik. Al deze aspecten van onderzoek, experimenten en het ontwerpen zijn uitgevoerd en bereikt volgens de speerpunten van het reflectief transformatief ontwerp proces. Dit specifieke ontwerp proces is gebaseerd op een iteratief proces dat het gevolg is van verscheidene experimenten en reflectie momenten. De ontwerpkeuzes zijn gemaakt op basis van experimentele kennis. De kwaliteit van het ontwerp is gecreëerd door de kennis vergaard via het design doing principe.

Het resultaat van het ontwerpproces is de Intake op de Explore pagina. Deze Intake is het uiteindelijke resultaat na vele iteraties en experimentele kennis. De Intake helpt gebruikers om de juiste tools voor hun project sneller en effectiever te vinden. Gebruikers krijgen een scala aan workshops gepresenteerd, speciaal samengesteld op basis van hun vijf antwoorden uit de Intake.
De vragen van de Intake zijn ontworpen om achter de situatie en focuspunten van de gebruikers te komen. De vragen kunnen op een dynamische manier beantwoordt worden door het verslepen van punten en het vullen van staven. Met dit dynamische ontwerp kunnen gebruikers gemakkelijk hun prioriteiten en focuspunten wegen en vergelijken. Het portefeuille bestaat uit vijf tools met één workshop gesitueerd in het midden van het scherm. De centraal gelegen workshop kan in de meeste gevallen gebruikt worden in combinatie met verscheidene andere tools. De kracht van de Intake is dat deze suggesties laat zien van bruikbare follow-up tools na het gebruik van één van de workshops. Na het afronden van de Intake kunnen de waardes van de antwoorden nog steeds aangepast worden, namelijk bovenaan in het scherm. Op deze plek kunnen gebruikers direct de invloed zien van het veranderen van de filterwaardes. Dit heeft als voordeel dat gebruikers niet compleet vastzitten aan hun eerste percepties.

Het prototype van het Intake model is ontwikkeld op grond van iteraties en reflecties. Jammer genoeg was ik voor nu niet in staat om het prototype volledig werkend en in de stijl van Creatlr te maken. Het concept zal verbeterd moeten worden en vereist tevens uitgebreider onderzoek voordat een bijpassende database en een testversie ontwikkeld en getest kan worden.
Desondanks heeft dit project geresulteerd in de identificatie van Creatlr's knelpunt vanuit het oogpunt van de doelgroep.
De sleutel tot verdere ontwikkeling van het platform is duidelijk kenbaar gemaakt via aanbevelingen op basis van het reflectieve transformatieve ontwerp proces.

Glossary

Reflective transformative design process:

a flexible and open design process. This approach values design actions as an essential generator of experiemental knowledge.

Workspaces:

the digital place on the platform where you can add people, tasks, and workshops.

Workshops:

the name for a tool or canvas that can be used for multiple purposes.

Templates:

a canvas design for various purposes to boost creativity, strategies and visual communication.

Toolkits:

a set of matching workshops.

Card decks:

a pile of pre-filled smart sticky notes.

Science2Design4Society:

using the latest results in technology to find solutions to real world problems.

HID:

Human Interaction Design.

IDE:

Industrial Design Engineering.

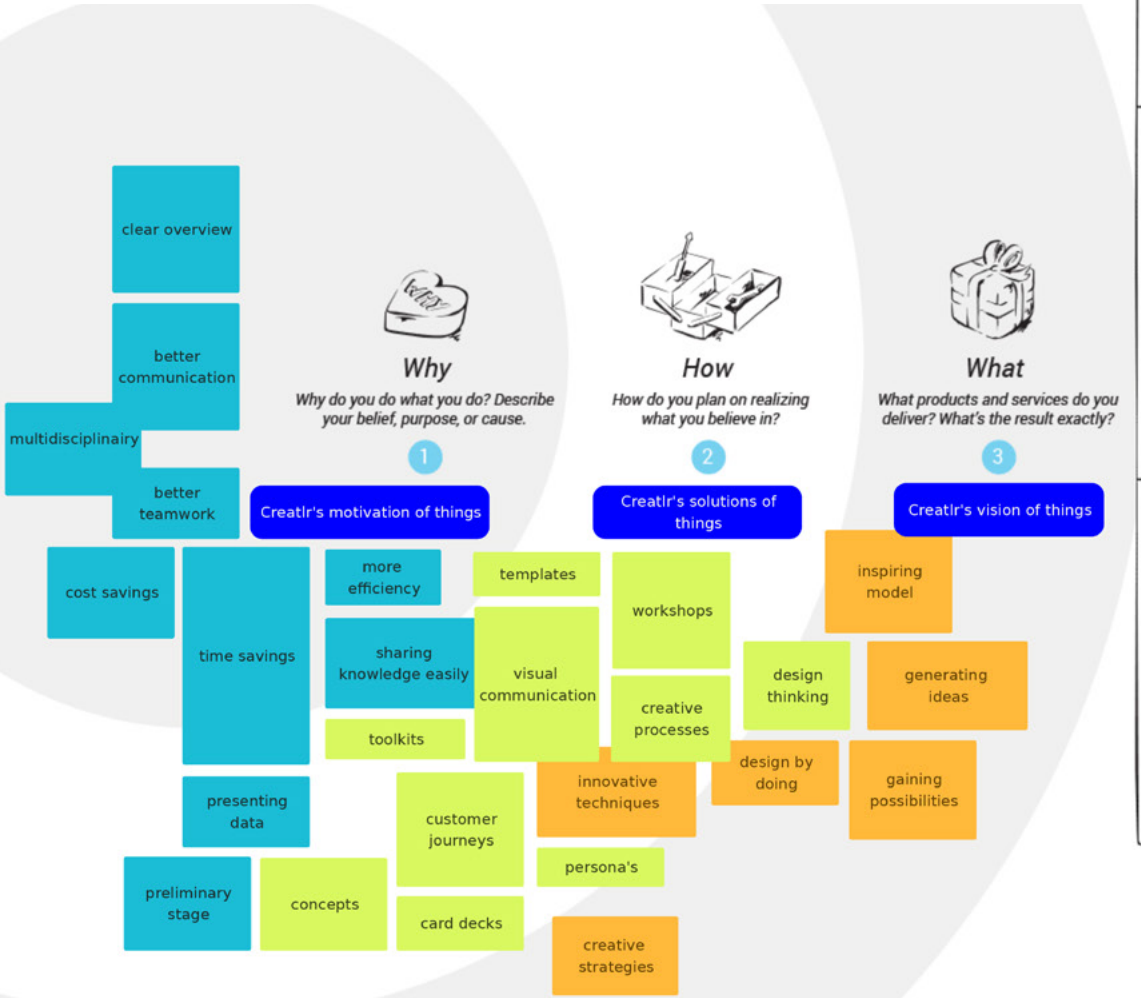
Report Structure

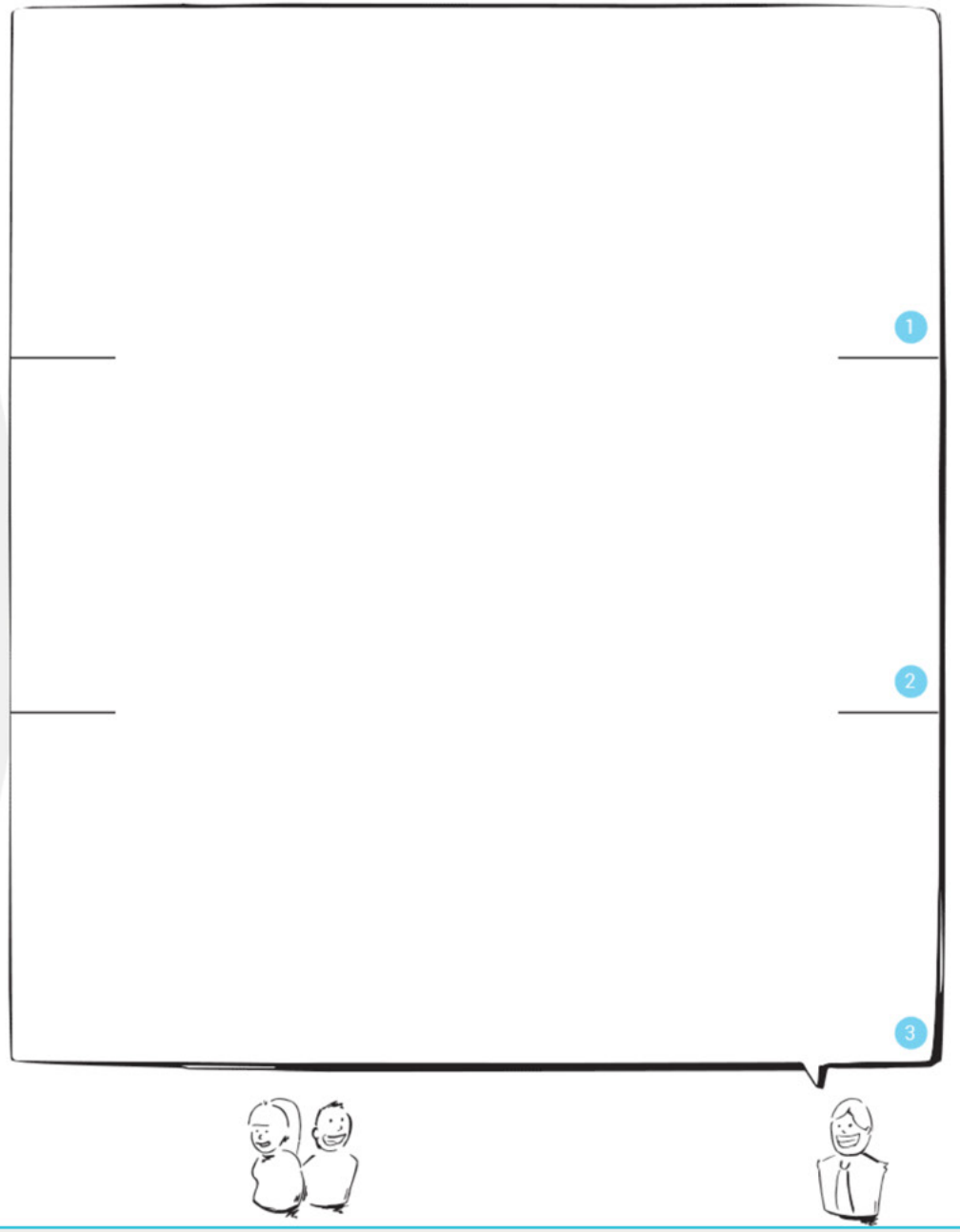
The strategy of this report is designed to empower the design approach; the reflective transformative design process. Instead of describing the process in fully chronological order, the choices made during the design process are substantiated extensively. In this structure, the final design will be presented first. On the basis of this concept, the steps, and process choices are highlighted. The reflective transformative design process is based on many iterations. The more iterations, the more moments for reflection, the better the final product. Another core value is learning by doing instead of designing by rather thinking. Design actions are the generator of experimental knowledge. Design doing also includes the visualization of important steps and activities. These visuals are important in reflecting and improving the product as well as in informing the reader. (Hummels, 2009) Creatlr has combined and integrated multiple design methods which have proven to be a success on other creative platforms, such as Canvanizer, Mural and Stormboard. The integration of design thinking tools and a social community on one single platform creates new values and advantages. The Golden Circle Pitch Canvas forced me to look thoroughly to Creatlr's values. From this canvas, multiple unique selling points are extracted.

Research Approach

In most cases one of the first important steps of a research process is to make a list of requirements. A list of requirements is fundamental in making the most out of a design process.
It is a traditional and frequently used tool which enables designers to rate and reflect on designs. Despite the proven value of this tool, my design process does not include a list of requirements. For this project, I have used a completely different approach. The requirements of my project result from extensive research and experiments. Instead of making design conditions myself, requirements are created by the target group itself. The requirements are based on the results of interviews, experiments, and tools. This approach also involves a customized project brief. The initial project brief is adjusted because the traditional design approach does not fit this project well. Therefore, the project brief is adjusted and now better reflects the research approach. Creatlr has a presumption that universities are a sector where significant progress can be made. Universities are clouded with multidisciplinary projects and creative minds which could benefit from a platform and approach like Creatlr. Despite this presumption, Creatlr has not yet started an extensive research to find out the opportunities. On the basis of learning by doing, the main research question can be summarized; how and why does Creatlr fit within DesignLab's design ambitions?

The DesignLab has become the narrowed scope of research because that building represents the core of multidisciplinary cooperation at the University of Twente. The knowledge needed to answer this question provides the data to give a valuable recommendation. This recommendation will be a resource that will contribute to future development.





creatlr Search tools Create Explore

Create your visual thinking toolkit

Work smarter with over 200+ tools. Join over 60+ organizations that shared their visual thinking tools.

Explore tools

Templates

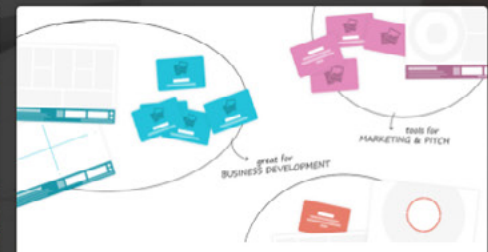
Get on the same page with templates. The use of templates has sky-rocketed since the success of Business Model Canvas. Over the years, more than 150+ templates for various purposes have been added to Creatlr. A template can be used to boost creativity, communicate visually and teach methods. It's a visual

Explore all templates

Card decks

Make everything as simple as sticky notes and literally put the options on the table. Together with templates they boost creativity and communication. Create things faster and visually. A card deck is like a pile of pre-filled smart sticky notes.

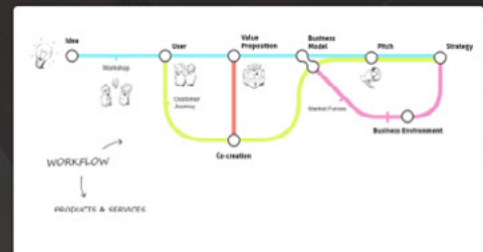
Explore all card decks



Toolkits

Each toolkit is a collection of visual thinking tools that work well together. Toolkits usually have a theme, are similar, fit similar usecases or solve similar problems. Find toolkits that fit your workflow.

Explore all toolkits



Products & services

Product and services can be anything from a workshop, training or keynote to a product you sell. We've developed a way to visualize workflows and better communicate services.

Explore products & services

Featured tools | Featured organizations | Search

Featured templates

Agile Kanban Canvas Easy template
Organize anything with anyone in a visual way.
1

Blue Ocean 4 Actions Framework Canvas template

Featured toolkits

Business Model Environment toolkit
Do you have your Business model all figured out...
1

Change Management for Businesses toolkit

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

Over two hundred productivity tools
available on one single platform.

A screenshot of the former Explore page when the Create and Explore parts were seperate on the homepage.

creatlr

Search tools

Create Explore

Templates Card decks Toolkits Products Search

Templates

Get on the same page with templates

Work smarter with over 100+ templates from project management and strategy to design.

The use of templates has sky-rocketed since the success of Business Model Canvas. Over the years, more than 150+ templates for various purposes have been added to Creatlr. Why?

- Give everybody a clear overview of what you're doing.
- Improve communication with co-workers & clients.
- Better collaboration with and involvement of stakeholders.
- Save time and discussions while speeding up the decision process.
- Good templates are well tested, based on proven methods, optimized for best practices and work well with other tools.
- Templates improve offline & online workshops, presentations and education.
- Templates are a perfect medium to preserve and exchange knowledge within or between organizations.

Toolkit development

Can we help you with anything?

Creatlr is an open platform. If you can't find the tools you need, you can create and add them yourself. We are always happy to help!

Proper toolkit development requires experience. Thanks to our 'design principles' and sketch database, we developed over 150+ quality tools to boost creativity and communication among colleagues and clients.

Toolkit development | Templates | Card Decks | Design principles | Sketch database

Contact us | How we create your toolkit

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

The tools and templates are proven to be successful.

Explanation of templates' purposes, strengths and advantages on the Explore page.

Unique Selling Points

Both tangible and online use are possible.

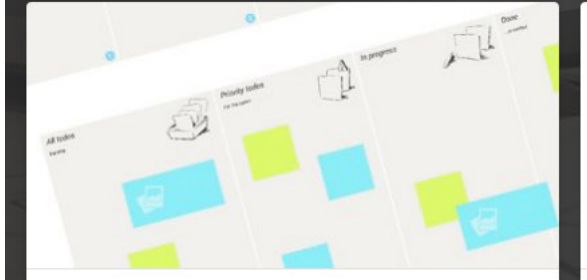
Discussion between three students of the design honors program using creative materials such as sticky notes, markers, and a Creatlr tool. This Creatlr tool, an Empathy Map, was used in A3 and A4 format. The A4 canvas is visible in the photo. Despite the two different sizes, both formats were barely used as intended. I expected that the A3 canvas would be used more extensively because a lot of sticky notes fit better on that size of paper. However, my assumption turned out to be wrong; both sizes turned out to be equally in ease of use.

Search all templates

There are over 100+ templates available for a growing number of usecases. You should try a search!

Search all tools

Featured templates



template

Agile Kanban Canvas Easy

1 Start workshop

template

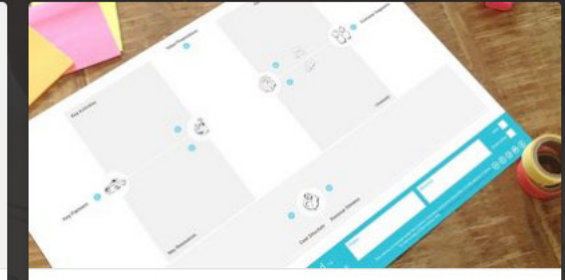
Blue Ocean 4 Actions Framework Canvas

Start workshop

template

Business Model Canvas

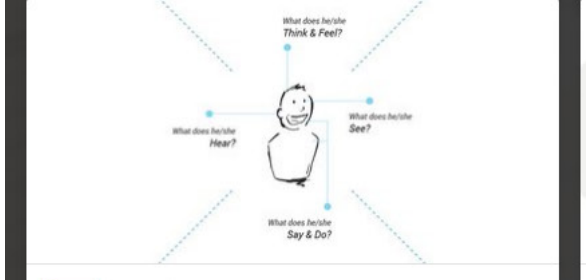
1 Start workshop



improved template smart tutorial

Business Model Canvas Redesigned

1 1 Start workshop

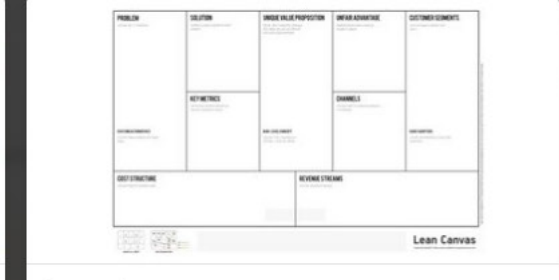


new template

Empathy Map

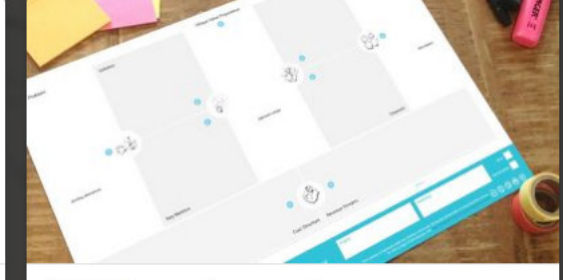
improved template

Golden Circle Pitch Canvas



template

Lean Canvas



improved template smart tutorial

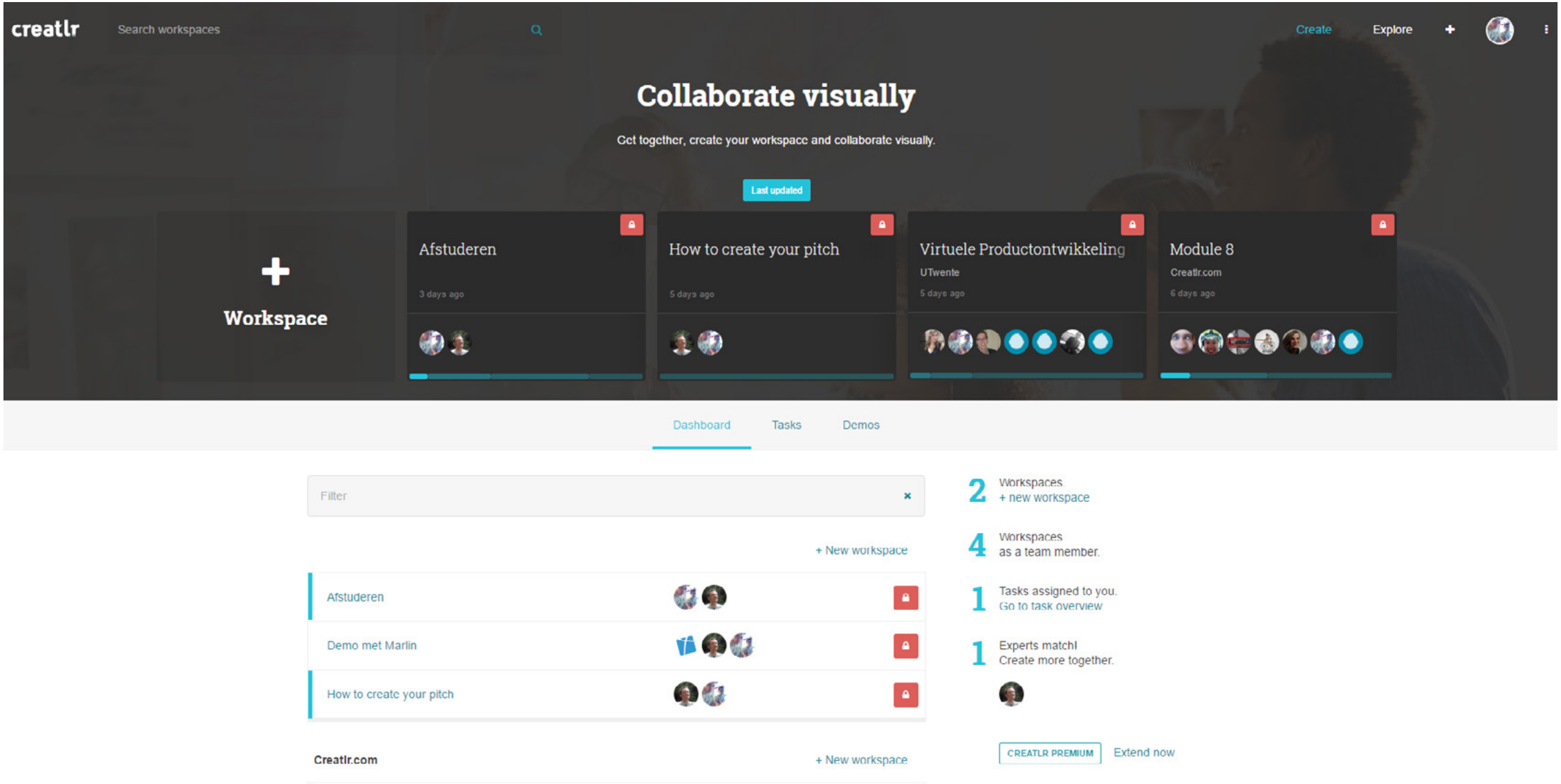
Lean Canvas Redesigned

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

Recognizable template design for optimal integration.

Frequently used tools redesigned for easier use.



this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

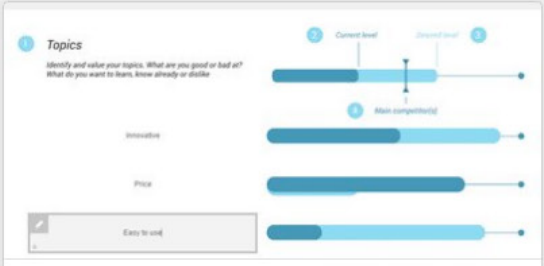
Unique Selling Points

Possibility to create multiple workspaces.

Get together with a team and create or join workspaces and start collaborating visually from the personal Create page.

Marlin's design thinking Toolkit

+ Add all workshops to workspace



new template

Knowledge map

Start workshop

template

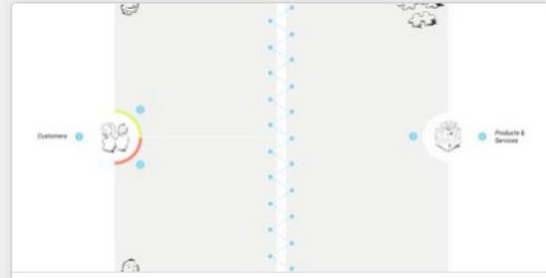
Product Market Fit

Start workshop

improved template

SWOT Canvas

Start workshop



popular template smart tutorial

Value Proposition Design Canvas

1

Start workshop

card deck

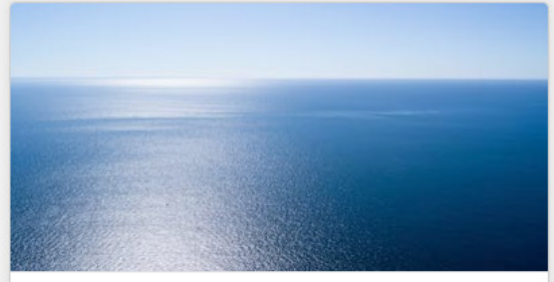
Sticky notes

1

improved card deck

Trends

1



toolkit

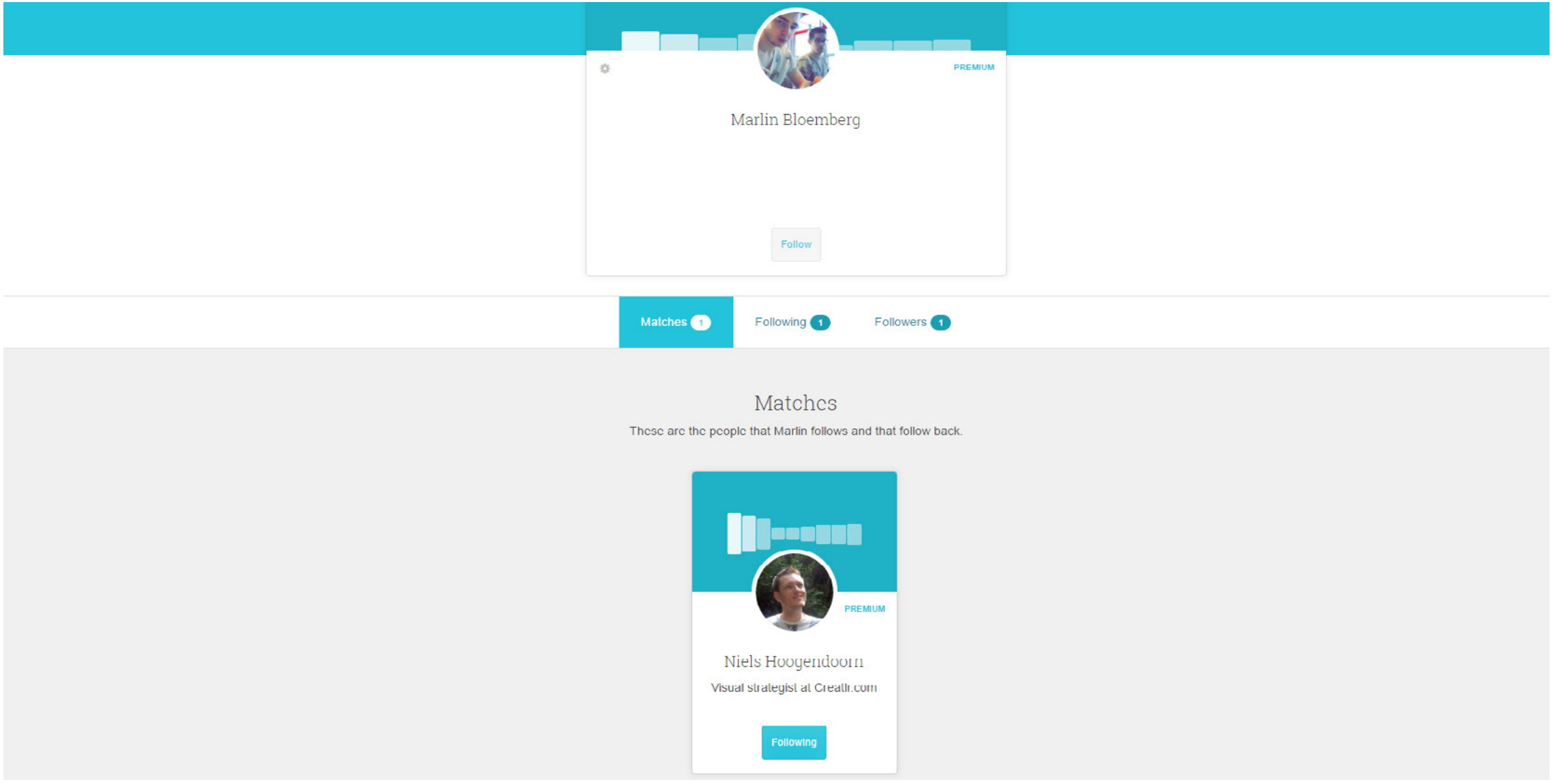
Blue Ocean Strategy

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

Like tools and create a personal creative profile

By liking tools it is possible to create a personal DNA. This DNA is visible for the entire creative community and visualizes personal expertises and interests.



this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

Follow people and make connections to start a creative network.

By following people in the environment it is possible to start creating a social creative network.

1. Required expertise

project workflow tasks workshops

The knowledge & expertise that you need for a successful project is based on your workflow: how you think/want to get from A to B.

task task Roadmap Canvas task task
Golden Circle Pitch Canvas Stakeholder Canvas Empathy Map
Value Proposition Design Canvas Persona Canvas
Agile Kanban Canvas Easy task Stakeholder Canvas
Team Canvas Knowledge map Knowledge map Knowledge map
Knowledge map Knowledge map Knowledge map
Knowledge map Knowledge map Knowledge map
Knowledge map Knowledge map Knowledge map

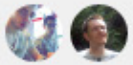
2. Available expertise

team experts organizations

In order to make this project a success, you need the right team. Your building blocks? Experts from within, or outside your organization.

Team from this project ▾

Select a team or organization.



3. Missing expertise & Suggestions

difference suggestions awareness missing expertise

The difference between the required and available expertise is what we call a 'knowledge gap'. The expert profile below shows a visualization of the gaps in each of the 9 categories. Please note that this is not hard science. The calculated values gives awareness and a first step towards improving your project and team. The rest requires interpretation and a human touch.

Unique Selling Points

See which people and what expertise's can add value to a project.

There is the possibility to analyze a project's workflow and see what knowledge gap needs to be filled. Find out which experts in a team are suitable for certain missing expertises and improve the project.

this screenshot was taken on the 22th of June 2016

Premium for users | Premium for organizations

Pricing and plans (for users)

CreatIr Premium - Powerful extras for design thinkers with deadlines

Free

€ 0

Free forever. Even for power users, colleagues and clients

Get started!

- 5 projects
- 5 team members
- Unlimited workshops
- Your design thinking toolkit
- Access to 200+ design thinking tools

YOU HAVE THIS

Premium

€ 10

per user per month, billed annually

Extend now

- Everything that's Free
- Unlimited projects
- Unlimited team members
- Branded environments
- Theme support coming soon
- Live collaboration at workshops
- Export workshops as PDF
- Create video & image cards
- Unlocked Agile view
- Advanced project analytics
- And much more...

14 day trial available

Custom

€ 5 - 8

per user per month, billed annually for education and large organizations

Contact us

- Everything that's Premium

14 day trial available

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Unique Selling Points

Free use as well as premium subscription available.

Free forever. Weigh the differences with Premium and see what pricing plan fits the use the best.

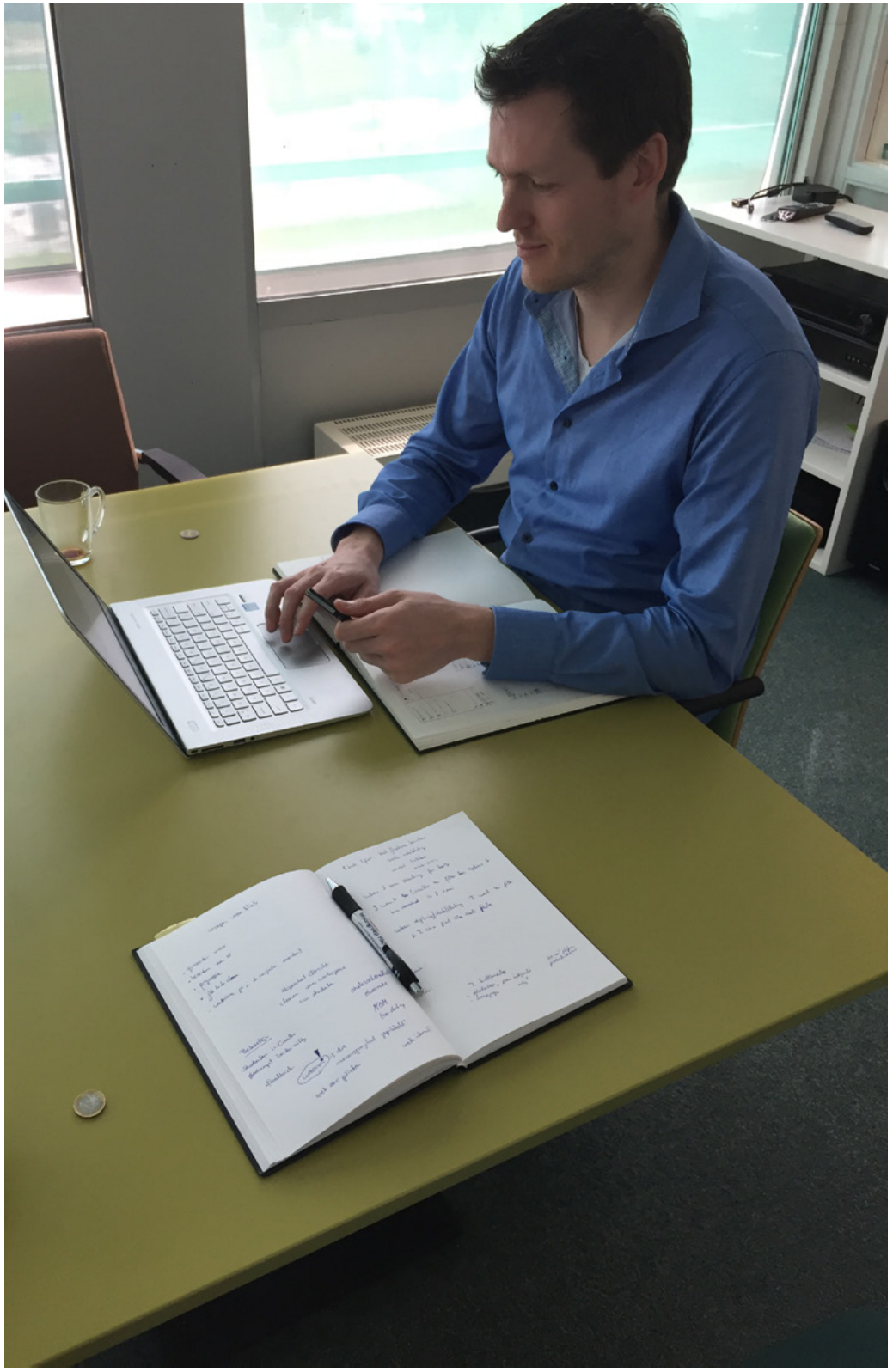
Introduction

Besides the continuous process of improving their products and services, Creatlr also looks ahead to their future and the opportunities beyond their current customers. Therefore, Creatlr is very curious about the possibilities to increase their customer range. Related to this subject, Creatlr offered an assignment that provides the space for investigating what is needed for Creatlr to make the most out of knowledge institutions in terms of use, cooperation, and implementation.

Comparable to most of the organizations, the DesignLab is ambitious and continuously innovating and improving. This hypothesis is based on the powers of persuasion the DesignLab exposes to the students, the entire university and the wider world. (Evers, 2016) The DesignLab has set up a new program, named Science2Design4Society, that comes along with an innovative design approach. This approach is also implemented in the floor plan with different areas designed for specific design stages. In order to maintain state-of-the-art knowledge and high-quality education, it is of great importance for the DesignLab to keep up with the technical development and optimize their education to this. Creatlr is convinced they can add value to this situation.

The biggest challenge of this assignment is to find out what is needed for optimal use by students and staff and how universities can take advantage of Creatlr's methods and knowledge.

Creatlr is a young, small and open-minded company where innovative ideas and improvements are being noticed and get the value they deserve. Creatlr's strengths are their transparency and cooperative power. After all, you are designing for your customers, so why not pay attention to their vision, ideas, and proposals. Therefore, the opportunity to discover the best possible integration of two worlds and translate this to a prototype with associated recommendation was a worthy challenge.



Background

At the moment there are many different platforms, such as Canvanizer, Mural, and Stormboard, focused on proven design methods, promoting productivity, and efficient cooperation. A few of these design methods are the use of traditional sticky notes, real-time collaboration platforms and export options to visualize progression or results. All these platforms create value for people who try to achieve their goal the most convenient, efficient and fastest way possible. The largest part of this sector concentrates on only one single aspect. Yet, Creatlr distinguishes themselves from their competitors by integrating and sharing all methods, social options, and tools on one platform. The social options include the possibility to follow people, like workshops, create a creative network and see which experts and expertises could benefit a project. Following Creatlr's vision, design thinkers do not longer need to have multiple accounts, visit different websites and waste valuable money. The option to pick your specific needs at one website and proceed to the next one is still possible, although with the launch of Creatlr this option has become obsolete.

Creatlr is inspired, influenced and created on the basis of knowledge extracted from proven literature about productivity strategies and visual communication. The CEO of Creatlr is a visual strategist himself who has raised different important methods in order to clarify what drives Creatlr in general. Creatlr's ambition and vision are strengthened by a few fundamental and valuable lessons during a design process that I faced from the beginning of my project. Firstly, it is important to design towards an ultimate goal, otherwise, it simply cannot be achieved. It is not possible to make the most out of a project and its team without an ideal. Secondly, try to feel user experience, in order to foresee and acknowledge mistakes. Finally, be and stay open-minded in order to be convinced that there is always space for improvement. Otherwise, the feeling of satisfaction will come too early.

My aim for this assignment is to start with a fresh perspective and a set of skills that benefit the project. The experience in user experience design and interaction in combination with a thorough drive and the use of the reflective transformative design process will guide this project to a success. My thoroughness and sharp little eyes for crucial details will contribute to Creatlr's development and will be useful in finding hidden bottlenecks and bugs.

Guaranteeing the validity of this entire project can be seen as high-risk in my opinion. This is caused by the fact that I am part of the target group myself. Assumptions can be used, although cannot be taken for granted. First, these assumptions have to be validated and reflected by the rest of the target group. Processing these steps require a professional approach where personal behavior and experiences do not affect the experiments nor results. Nevertheless, being a student myself can also be used as an advantageous. As mutual students, there is less pressure during conversations. Other students do not feel the principle of hierarchy as they do with the staff.

this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Project Objectives

The objectives contain a recommendation based on the results of extensive research and experiments, the use of Creatlr's platform and tools by myself and visualization of the design doing process in the final report. In case the current platform with related tools is insufficient, there is the option to redesign a tool or platform page on the conceptual scale.

Business Environment

In order to graduate as a BSc Industrial Design Engineering, the University of Twente gives students the possibility to show their acquired skills, knowledge, experience and approach in a BSc graduating assignment. The uniqueness of this assignment is that it can be experienced in a business environment. The opportunity to be part of a company involves new experiences, provides professional situations and takes different perspectives of designing.

The pursuit to find a challenging assignment in an inspiring environment had started. Earlier than expected, the new company of Niels Hoogendoorn, called Creatlr, crossed roads with me. After the first contact on the phone, a coffee meeting was arranged.

This introductory meeting showed interests from both parties. Subsequently, Creatlr offered me an assignment that, until that moment, never got the dedication and importance it deserved. The cooperation between student and employer was quickly arranged after framing and concretizing the three months project. Hereby the mutual trust and belief in an inspiring and open-minded collaboration were pronounced convincingly. The opportunity to join and enhance a professional company was accomplished.

Creatlr is a company focused and specialized in creative and visual strategies for teams in a business environment. Through integrating design thinking methods, a social platform, and productivity tools, Creatlr has become the largest design thinking platform in the world. In other words, Creatlr has the most design thinking tools hosted on one website. Organizations, design thinkers, and innovators already use, share and collaborate via this platform. At the moment, Creatlr offers methods, tools and workshops for companies to innovate. Innovation through visual collaboration, sharing knowledge and gaining new efficient strategies. All this in order to improve the communication, efficiency, and cooperation within teams and cut costs.

Context

To briefly explain the choice for the research field, the University of Twente is chosen because of their diversity in curricula and facilities. These different curricula come along with a great variety of people. The communication and collaboration between people also show its variety in other sectors such as the relations with companies and staff. The university wants to reduce the gap between student projects and business cases in the professional circuit in order to connect curricula better to the labor market. (DesignLab, 2016) This example indicates the progressiveness of the university. A quality which is reflected in the ambition to stay competitive with other technical universities around the world. At present, Creatlr has a wide variety of users. Since the university has a wide selection in curricula, this makes it the perfect research field for this project. Furthermore, the selective use of my connections at the university can benefit the project's pace and quality. Due to the fact that the threshold is lower to come into contact with acquaintances, the introduction of my experiments and planning of meetings can be more effective. In addition, informed acquaintances are often very open-minded to experiments for research purposes. Connections have shown to find it easy to give negative feedback while unknown people of the target group are more reluctant and less transparent.

Creatlr is a social platform for / by design thinkers that combine productivity tools with knowledge sharing. (Creatlr, 2016) With this combination, Creatlr wants to enable users to integrate these aspects into one single platform. Creatlr's platform connects people of and within companies and organizations that want to share their knowledge and design thinking tools in both offline as well as online environment.

The world is changing, technological development has more impact than ever before. This has a direct influence on the success rate of companies. Due to the lack of knowledge how to innovate, the demand to find solutions to this has become higher and higher. With Creatlr's design thinking and visual communication methods, organizations can create, share and learn visually. Via a wide arsenal of templates, toolkits and card decks Creatlr promote teams to work more visually and collaborate better gain efficiency, improve communication and reduce costs. The difference between Creatlr and their competitors is that they have integrated many different aspects of design thinking on one platform. Normally, users need to visit multiple websites to achieve the same. Thereby users also need to maintain multiple accounts and pay for subscriptions. Creatlr has taken away this threshold.

creatlr

the platform by / for design thinkers

click here to visit the Explore page

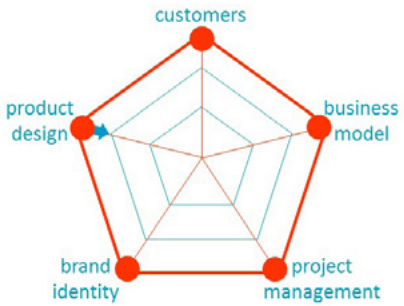
Explore INTAKE

run through the INTAKE and find out which tools can contribute to your project

Click here to start INTAKE

Explore INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



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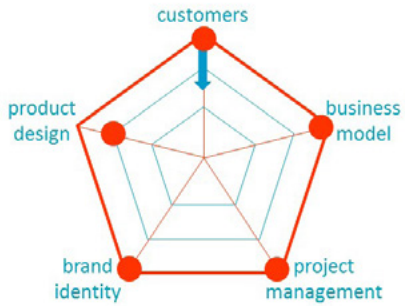
Explore INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



next

Final Concept

Explanation

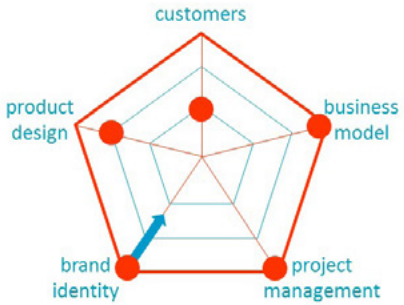
This explanation is the prototype of the optional intake. When users arrive at the Explore page of Creatlr, this intake can be done in order to find the right tools to obtain goals efficiently. The intake can be started by clicking on the Explore Intake button in the middle of the Explore page. After clicking, the Intake will start in a pop-up screen. This screen can be closed at any time during the Intake. Despite the option to close the Intake, all users' data will be saved, whether users fill in one question or all five questions. On the basis of the answers given, an algorithm will provide a portfolio of useful tools.

Since most of the students and staff are inexperienced in using productivity tools and Creatlr's platform, an intake is designed that will help people to find the right tools that do fit their projects and goals. This prototype design is not especially intended for rather the university target group. Every user, inexperienced or master, can use the intake in their favor. By doing the intake, no unnecessary search problems will occur anymore. The intake will guide users by means of a few effective questions to a portfolio of workshops that is focused on their situation. These suggested tools are compiled on the basis of users' choices and priorities.

Users of the university have major problems in finding tools that really support their process. In most of the times, these platform users do not directly get the added value of the tools for their projects. Thereby, these users are not convinced of the advantages and miss out on great visual design methods. With this Intake, users will figure out faster which workshops are particularly useful for their team or project. This clarification has been achieved by three important features. At first, the Intake's filter options are, after ending or finishing the Intake, visible at the top of the screen. By this way, the filter values, that eventually define the workshop portfolio, can be changed. The result of the changes can be seen right away. The second feature that improved the platform are the short introductory texts and example videos at each workshop. This additional feature is not unique. Nevertheless, the place of the tutorials is now in the right spot. By watching the short videos, users can see how to use the tools and therefore get the most out of them.

Explore
INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



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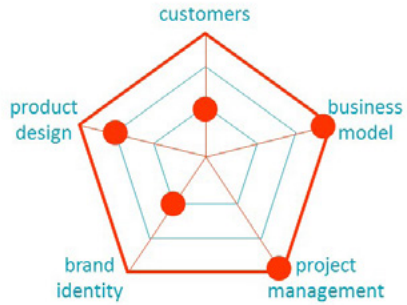
Explore
INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



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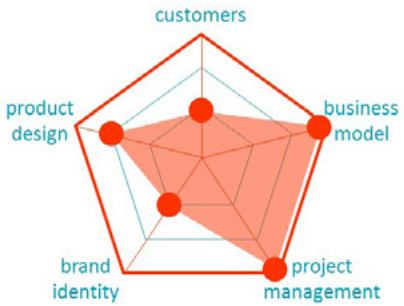
Explore
INTAKE

what do you want to focus on?



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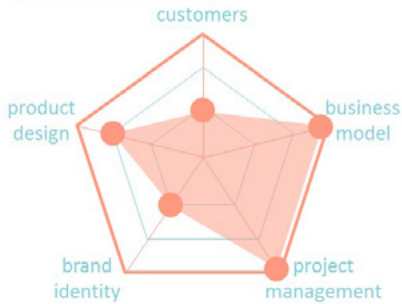
Explore
INTAKE

how much time do you want to use Creatlr until your deadline?



next

Final Concept

Functioning

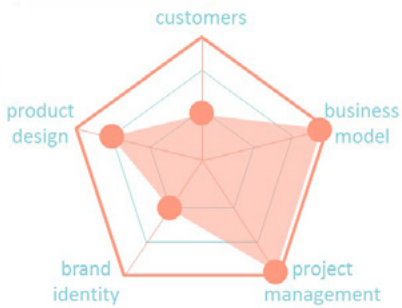
The Intake consists of five questions. These questions can be answered by pulling bullets and rods to the desired spot. The first question is in the form of a radar plot. The remaining questions are in the shape of a bar. Easily adaptable values have the advantage that users can create ratios and become more freely to change the values. All the workshops can be used with a wide-angled approach. This means that there is no hard line if workshops can be used or not. Nevertheless, tools can vary in effectiveness. Therefore, five questions are designed that undermine users' situation and priorities. On the basis of these five questions, a portfolio of potential workshops is presented. In the middle of the screen, the most relevant workshop to begin with is at the heart. In the surrounding area, a few follow-up tools are situated. Since multiple workshops can be suggested on many occasions it is up to the user which workshops will be used. When users adjust their filter values, the workshop portfolio will be reorganized. In this way, users can see which tools fit their direction and goals the best. At the same time, users remain free and flexible in their actions.

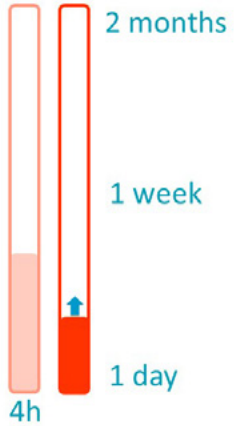
The first question of the Intake is directly an essential one. With the fill-in of the radar plot, the main focus is adopted. Hereby, the minor directions indicated by the user can be neglected. With only filling out the radar plot of question one, the database can already generate a certain amount of useful workshops. The five directions in the radar plot are chosen on the basis of the workshops common goals. The common goals are divided into five different aspects. Since the Creatlr workshops do have a lot of overlap qua directions, the radar plot is a considered choice. The advantage of a radar plot is that there is the possibility to combine directions within one method.

From the second question, the question can be answered by pulling a rod in the vertical direction. By this way, a bar is filled with the desired volume. The values of the answers are next to the bar. This bar remains the same at the top of the screen after closing or finishing the Intake. By this, values can be adjusted very easily using recognition instead of remembrance. For question three to five, the same applies.

Explore
INTAKE

when is your deadline?

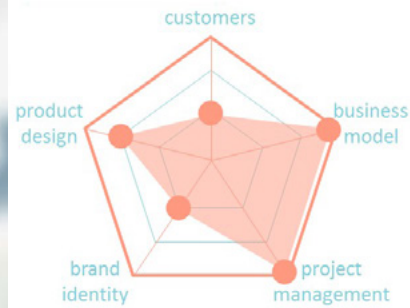


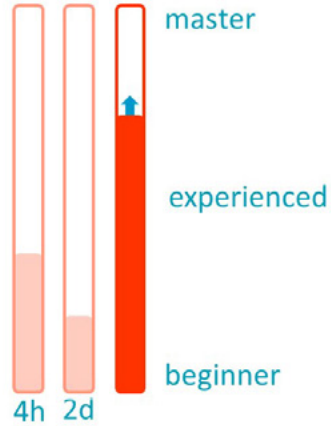


next

Explore
INTAKE

what is your experience with the use of Creatlr and other tools that support your project?

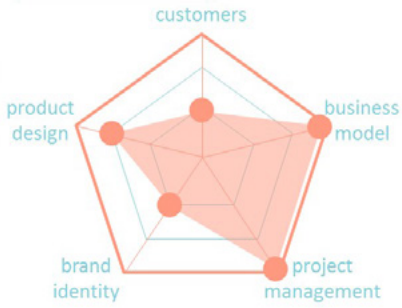


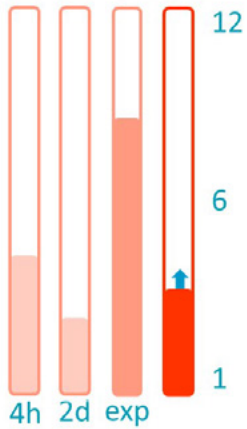


next

Explore
INTAKE

with how many stakeholders are you working on your project?





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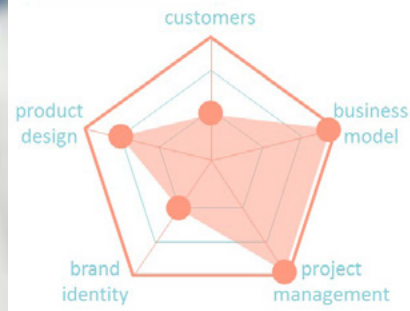
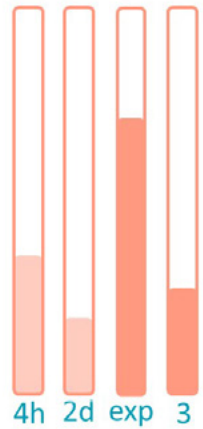
Explore
INTAKE

with how many stakeholders are you working on your project?





finish

Final Concept

Scenario

When inexperienced users are on the Creatlr website, a few scenarios can occur. Firstly, users are searching for workshops that match their goals. Secondly, users have already created a workspace and want to go from A to B to achieve their objectives. Thirdly, users are using workshops and want follow-up tools that can boost their project. Of course, there are more imaginable scenarios, although these three represent this target group to a large extent. In all three scenarios, the inexperienced users could benefit from the new Intake.

For the users who are trying to find workshops for their project, the Explore page is created. Job Stories indicated that users, especially inexperienced users, like to know with which combination of workshops they could achieve their goals in a creative and visual way. (Klement, 2013) This page gives a little explanation about the featured workshops. When users are on this page, the Intake button will be in the middle of the screen with the following text on it: “Find the tools that fit your workflow”. (Creatlr, 2016) By clicking on this button, the Intake pops-up in a new window in front of the regular Explore page. This screen can be closed anytime by clicking on the top right button in the pop-up window. This button is not included in the prototype, although this feature is a standard button used on many occasions.

The intake starts with a radar plot in the middle and a corresponding question above. The question is: “What do you want to focus on?” The radar plot is a pentagon with five key terms at each corner. These five key points each represent their own direction. Users have to move five bullets to both the inside of the pentagon as well as to the outer edge. The position of the bullets represents the importance. The more the bullet is situated in the outer area, the more important the direction is. After moving the bullet to the desired position, the button “Next” leads the users to the following question. Thereafter, users can see the pentagon of the first question is faded and set aside to the left. The faded edit means that the question is finished, although the values can still be adjusted at any moment by clicking on the faded pentagon. When this happens, the user goes back to the pentagon in full color. By this way, there can we switched between questions during the Intake. However, this can only be done backwards. That is not possible because the selective questions are in order of importance and therefore not advantageous to skip. From the second question, the answers can be set by filling a bar via a rod. By pulling the rod, the bar can be filled to users’ situation. The same applies to the remainder questions.

The second question is: “How much time do you want to use Creatlr until your deadline?” With this question, the Intake tackles the workshops’ feasibility. When users do not want to spend a lot of time using Creatlr, automatically the fundamental tools will come out on top.

The third question in line is: “When is your deadline”? This question addresses the stage users are in. The deadline of users have an impact on the effectiveness of certain tools and thereby this needs to be filtered. When user’s deadline is close, a few tools will have less impact than being used in an early stage.

The fourth consecutive question is: “What is your experience with the use of Creatlr and other tools that support your project?” With this question, the users’ experience is verified. Hereby, inexperienced users will get tutorials before starting workshops. With this additional help, the intention is that people with little experience can get more out of their time using Creatlr. Moreover, this target group is less likely to be deterred due to high entry levels or unclear situations.

The last question is about: “With how many stakeholders are you working on your project?” This question indicates the users’ situation when it comes to their team or stakeholders. This question is ordered last because the answer adds the least value to the suggested portfolio of workshops. Most of the tools are perfect for both individual use as well as collaboration in teams. Nevertheless, a few tools do better stand out when used by teams. Moreover, the fifth question also reminds users of the fact that visual collaboration cannot be performed with stakeholders having no Creatlr account. Therefore, a short message will show up with the tip collaborating visually is the most effective when every stakeholder is involved and joins the Creatlr network.

Iterative Process

The choice to redesign the Explore page does not fall from the sky. Since the recommendations of the different target groups point in the same direction, the bottleneck of Crealtr's platform is exposed. The Explore page simply does not support and guide the users as intended. Many users do not know where to start and have problems with finding the tools that fit in their project. The Explore page turned to be the main source, after the Home page, where people end up in demand for information about tools and their purpose, advantages, and use following the customer journeys of different target groups. This is the page where most of the users expected more guidance. My assumption is that not only users from the university have difficulties with finding the right tools. That is why the solution for this problem certainly has a positive effect on all users visiting the Explore page. Therefore, the Explore page can gain a lot of progress. The intention to design an Intake in specific result from an idea after thinking about how to promote guidance during exploring or searching for tools. From the target groups' job stories the demand for improved filter options and guidance in successive tools was high. The challenge was to combine these specific needs in a situation where they can be integrated.

Merely improved filter options do not tackle the problem when users want to be assisted in their search and choice for workshops that fit within their goals and focus. Via an Intake, it is possible to implement larger and clearer visuals compared to standard filters. Since users have pointed out they are falling short in guidance, the idea to create an Intake seems not to be an odd concept. The content of the Intake has changed continuously throughout the experiments. Firstly, I designed a lot of possible filter options. The filter options were verified after presenting these to several target groups and my former mentor. By this way, the questions, options, answer design and functionality result from iterative and reflective design steps. Beforehand I did not know what specific questions could lead to a specific portfolio.

For the prototype, I have chosen to use a portfolio of twenty workshops that represent Creatlr's range of tools. Hereby, I can pay close attention to the experiments and related iterations. The shortlist of tools is based on my own experience of user friendliness, comprehensibility, and relevance with the present curricula in the DesignLab. The user friendliness and comprehensibility are verified by using several tools myself and assessing the possible usefulness.

Since this prototype will be a result of an iterative process, the approach is to design on a small scale. With this starting position, the prototype can be improved by many quick and small steps for the time being. When the prototype shows its effectiveness after iterating and redesigning, the entire concept can be scaled up at once. In case the results of the prototype would fail, less time has been spent and lost compared to designing a complete prototype. All the results, iterations, and reflections of the prototype are based on rather the portfolio of tools chosen, not the entire range available on the Creatlr platform.

The five categories are eventually chosen on the basis of an iterative process. At first to clarify the eventual design, the five categories are designed regarding the twenty representative tools. These categories differ from the nine categories that Creatlr is currently using; User-Centered Design, Business, Marketing & Communication, Trends, Project Management, Graphic Design, Product Development, Software Development, and Service Design. (Creatlr, 2016) The deviation has one major reason; the prototype is designed regarding the prototype's portfolio of tools. Since a few of the current categories, such as Trends and Graphic Design, do barely come back in those twenty tools, these categories add no value during tests.

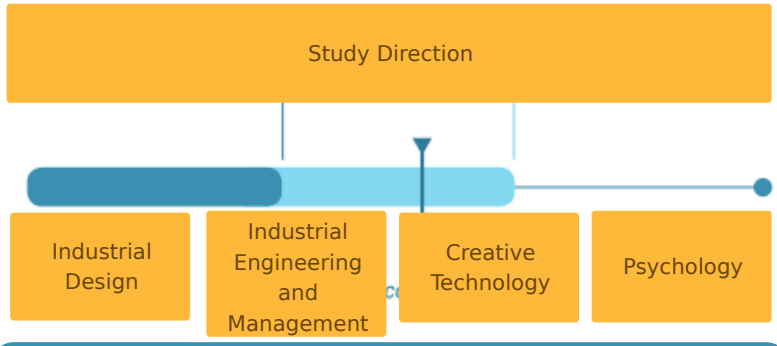
Basically, there is nothing unclear or negative about the current nine categories Creatlr uses. Nevertheless, the current categories can be redesigned since a large share of the tools is out of the picture in the prototype. Product Design includes the three current categories; Product Development, Software Development and Service Design. When excluding the UI and Application tools, these three categories have an almost fully matching profile. Business Models covers the Business niche. Customers mainly include User-Centered Design. Brand Identity covers Marketing and Communication. Project Management stays exactly the same.

The radar plot itself is also chosen based on an iterative process. These iterations are established through reflections of several target groups. Since users' can have multiple directions they want to focus on, weighing and ranking of categories can improve users' experience of the Explore page. In order to rank and balance categories, a specific method is required. A question about the five categories seemed to be a logical choice to include in the Intake. The Industrial Design Engineering project groups and former mentor advised me to look for solutions and algorithms in Microsoft Excel. Of all visual graphic options, a radar plot fitted the the best in my opinion. Instead of picking one category out with a regular question, this radar plot had significantly more potential.

1

Topics

Identify and value your topics. What are you good or bad at? What do you want to learn, know already or dislike



Empathy Map

Roadmap Canvas

Customer Journey Canvas

Agile Kanbas Canvas

User Knowledge Canvas

The Agile Journey Map

Blue Ocean 4 Actions Framework Canvas

Team Canvas

SWOT Canvas

Co-creation Canvas

Marketing Analysis Canvas

Knowledge Map

Service Blueprint Canvas

Golden Circle Pitch Canvas

Business Model Canvas

Scenario Canvas

Lean Canvas

Stakeholder Canvas

Value Proposition Canvas

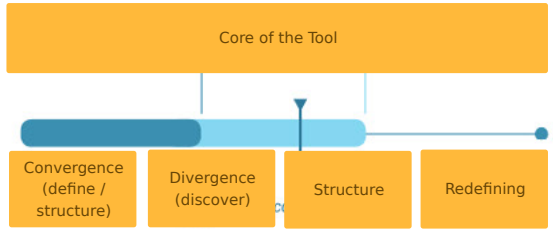
Study Direction

The Empathy Map ‘Study Direction’ is the visualization of my first impression of a newly designed guide. At first, I thought of a set of tools divided into categories suitable for certain curricula. The four chosen curricula are based on the Dreamteam’s assumption of present curricula working in the DesignLab. Since every curriculum has their own focus and emphasis, all the tools can be classified differently. Interviews over time indicated that the portfolio of tools can be classified as shown on the map. On the basis of provided usage information about all the tools, students argued if the tools would be useful at some point in their study.

Later on, I generated the feedback that it is not about the background of users, but rather about their intention and goals. Medical students could have a course about business plans and then the entire guide would be worthless. Therefore, the added value of a guide is not generated by knowing users’ background, although being a step forward. By knowing the users’ goal, specific tools can be selected without completely missing the point. The next canvas expands on this design step.

1 Topics

Identify and value your topics. What are you good or bad at? What do you want to learn, know already or dislike



Roadmap Canvas

Agile Kanbas Canvas

The Agile Journey Map

Team Canvas (?)

Co-creation Canvas

Knowledge Map

Golden Circle Pitch Canvas

Scenario Canvas

Stakeholder Canvas

Persona Canvas

Product / Market Fit Canvas

Empathy Map

Customer Journey Canvas

User Knowledge Canvas

Blue Ocean 4 Actions Framework Canvas

SWOT Canvas

Marketing Analysis Canvas

Service Blueprint Canvas

Business Model Canvas

Lean Canvas

Value Proposition Canvas

Business Model Deck

Trends

creatlr

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Knowledge map template by Creatlr.com

Visualize your knowledge and competences

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Project
Afstuderen
https://www.creatlr.com/project/weMQaZIwC2VlpGC4HKHL8d/

Workshop
Core of the Tool
https://www.creatlr.com/workshop/6atyilhFqtDe8c9XzwRzzh/

Creatlr.com - The platform for design thinkers

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Core of the Tool

Looking from users' perspective, they want in general more targeted guidance during their exploration and search for tools. In order to design a guidance that fit the needs of the users, it is useful to know how the portfolio of tools can be classified. With the knowledge about tools' characteristics, users can be assisted effectively during their journey on Creatlr's platform. The Empathy Map 'Core of the Tool' visualizes each tool's character. The four character options are convergence, divergence, structure and redefining. Since every tool is characterized by at least one of the four categories, it seemed to be a well-considered categorization to gain insights about the tools' variety. When all the tools could be ranked in one specific category, this would indicate a non-varied set of tools. Fortunately, this is not the case. Otherwise, the portfolio of tools should be definitely be reconsidered to prevent an unrepresentative prototype.

Convergence:

tools that convert options, ideas, and actions to selective

Divergence:

tools that open users' mind and promote the generation of many ideas.

Structure:

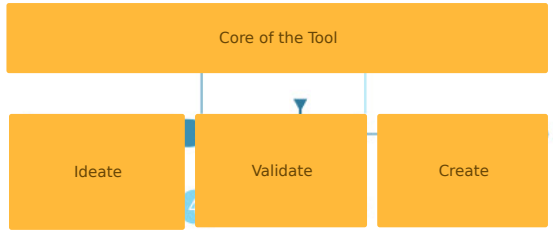
tools that create a structure to stages, choices and decisions.

Redefining:

tools that have a reflective element that enables users to reconsider their actions.

1 Topics

Identify and value your topics. What are you good or bad at? What do you want to learn, know already or dislike



Roadmap Canvas

Agile Kanbas Canvas

The Agile Journey Map

Team Canvas

Co-creation Canvas

Knowledge Map

Golden Circle Pitch Canvas

Scenario Canvas

Stakeholder Canvas

Persona Canvas

Product / Market Fit Canvas

Empathy Map

Customer Journey Canvas

User Knowledge Canvas

Blue Ocean 4 Actions Framework Canvas

SWOT Canvas

Marketing Analysis Canvas

Service Blueprint Canvas

Business Model Canvas

Lean Canvas

Value Proposition Canvas

Business Model Deck

Trends

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Visualize your knowledge and competences

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Afstuderen
https://www.creatlr.com/project/weMQaZIwC2VlpGC4HKHL8d/

Workshop
Core of the Tool clone
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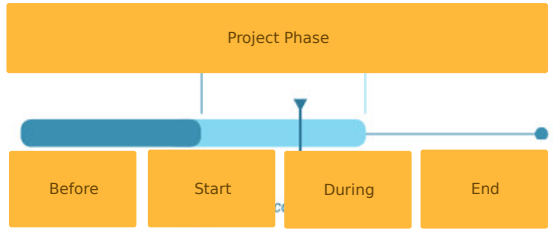
Ideate, Validate & Create

After generating feedback about this categorization, I was being advised to consider the Ideate, Validate and Create method. This approach is designed by DOON and strives for innovation by doing. (DOON, 2015) An element that is also featured in the reflective transformative design process. In order to gain more knowledge about the tools and their user experience, iterations with consequent improvements are part of that process. Therefore, the entire portfolio of twenty tools is classified in either Ideate, Validate or Create. Since the ideation, validation and creation is an eternal loop, these three categories also indicate in which stage of the loop users are. This particular stage of the loop gives extra information about the users' situation and their needs in the form of useful tools. Specific loop periods can be associated with certain tools. When users are ideating, another ideation tool can be superfluous. An effective guide will be a step forward and already suggest tools with a high validation factor.

1 Topics

Identify and value your topics. What are you good or bad at? What do you want to learn, know already or dislike



Roadmap Canvas

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Workshop
Project Phase
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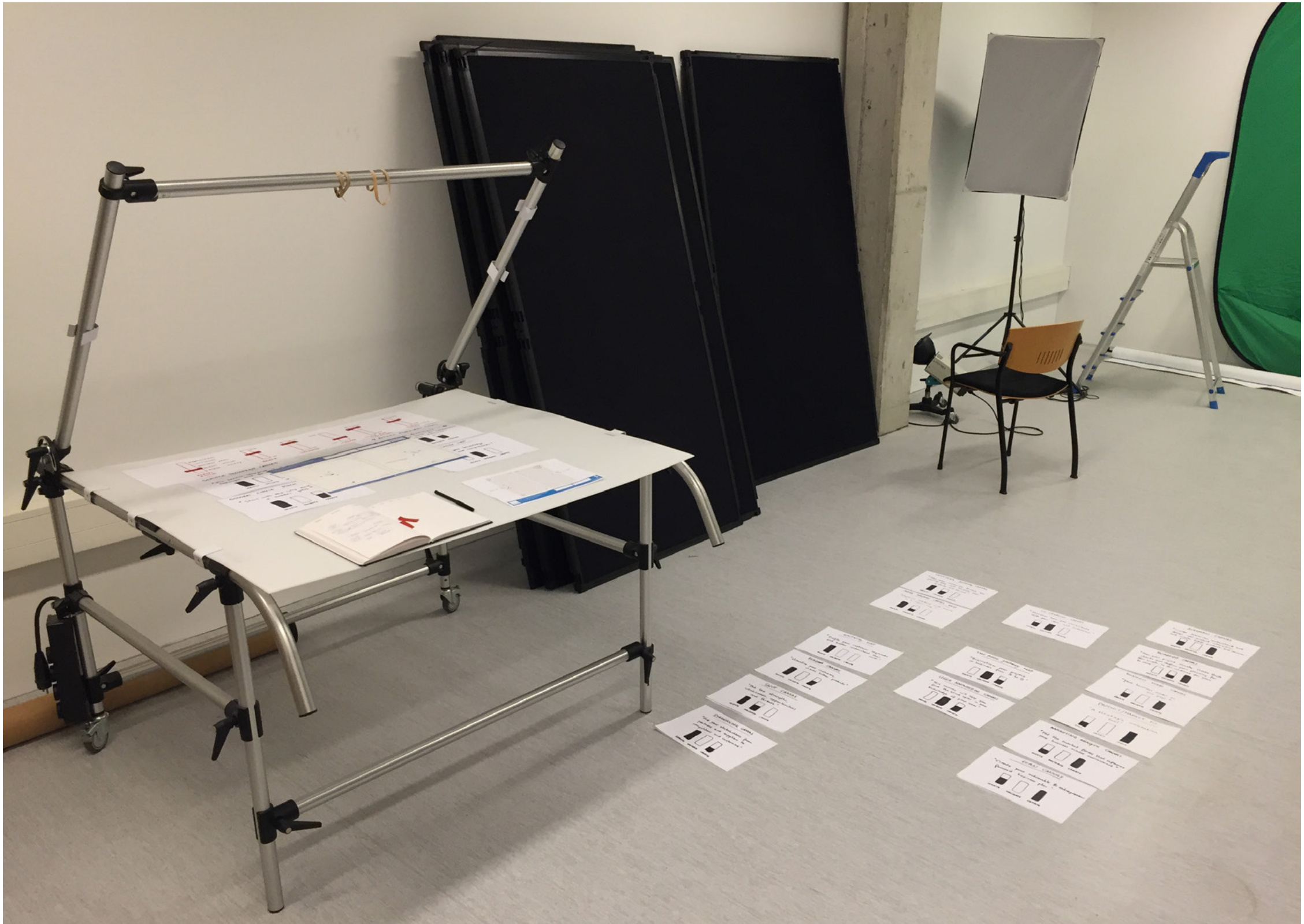
Project Phase

To expand on the last named factor, another Empathy Map, called ‘Project Phase’, visualizes the different stages where tools can be of great value. By categorizing the twenty tools via four general stages; before the project, at the beginning of the project, during the process and at the end of the project. The loop of DOON in combination with users’ process stages already generate much information that can result in a very targeted portfolio. With this approach, users’ process stage is clarified. This user information does only need a specific direction; the focus of the user. Users’ focus is measured on the basis of the bullet points in the radar plot. Together, this bundled information is the fundament for the redesigned Explore page.

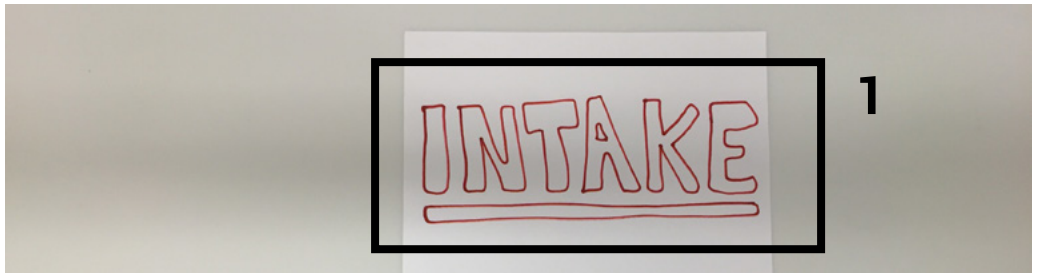


Paper Prototyping

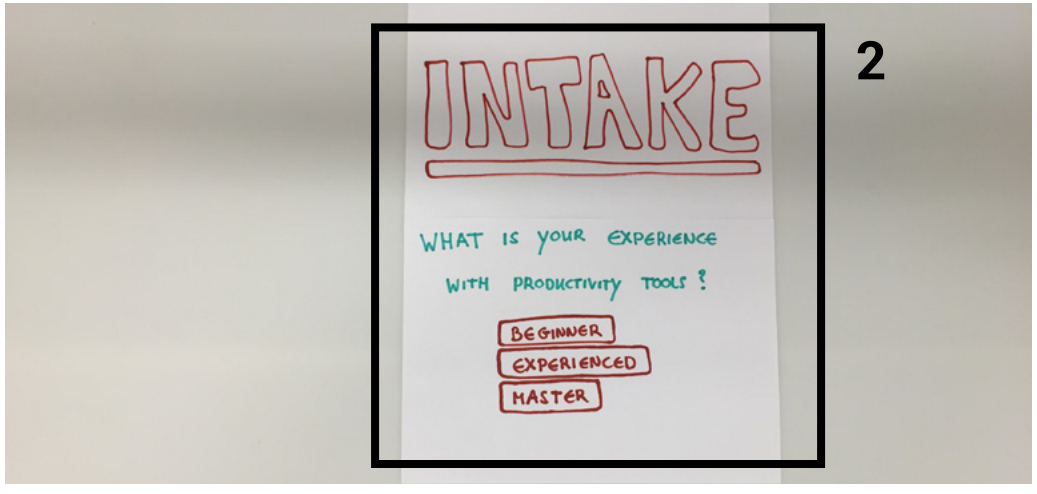
The result of target groups' job stories the Empathy Maps was that I started prototyping. In other words, learning by doing. By making prototypes and sketching a situation or a case, it was very accessible to design alongside the users. Paper prototypes assisted me in co-designing with target groups in order to iterate and realize an improved service product. Via scenario based photos of paper prototypes I have gained feedback, insights, and tips. These meetings enabled me to focus on the parts that benefited the most from redesigning, such as improving interaction, create weighs to questions, reformulating questions and order of questions.

The meetings were organized with the Industrial Design Engineering teams and my former mentor as the target groups. At first, students and staff have been presented a photo of the first screen of the Intake after introducing them the scenario. On the basis of their choices, I provided them the next step or screen of the Intake. At all times, they could ask me questions or give direct feedback. After the Intake was done, the target group and I started conversations about the effect of the Intake, points of discussion, advantages and possible disadvantages and pitfalls.

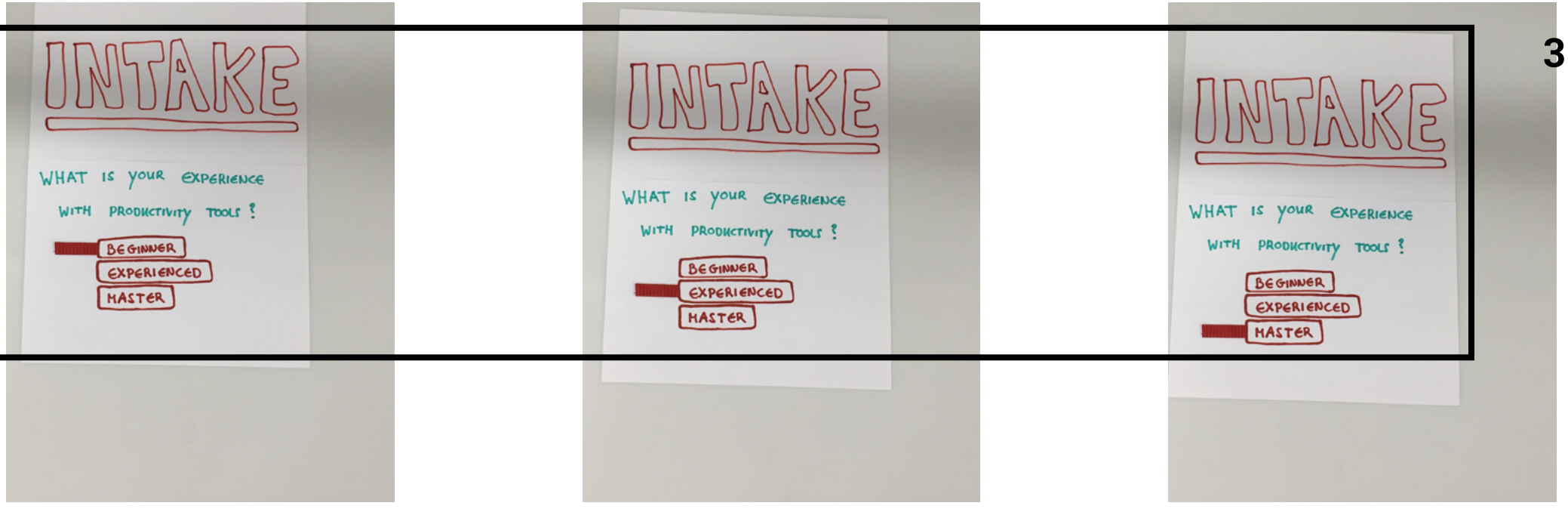
The following spreads visualize the results of the paper prototype session in DesignLab's Capture room. The prototype includes 4 questions, their corresponding answer options and a possible result of the portfolio. All visualized in 11 successive steps.


INTAKE

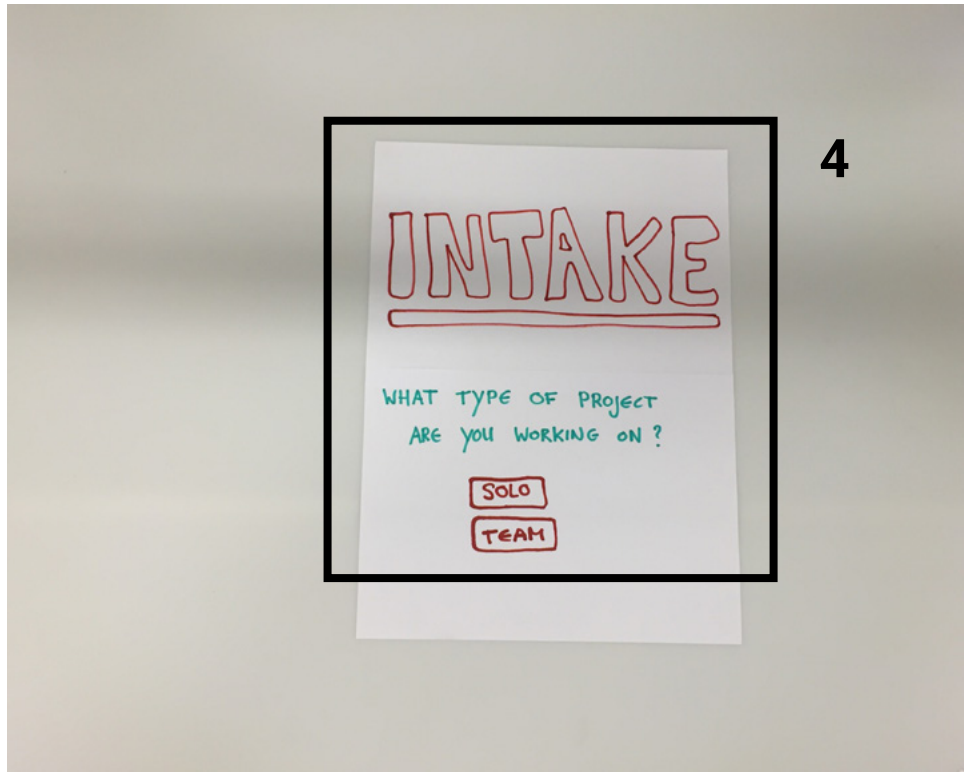
1


INTAKE
WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS ?
BEGINNER
EXPERIENCED
MASTER

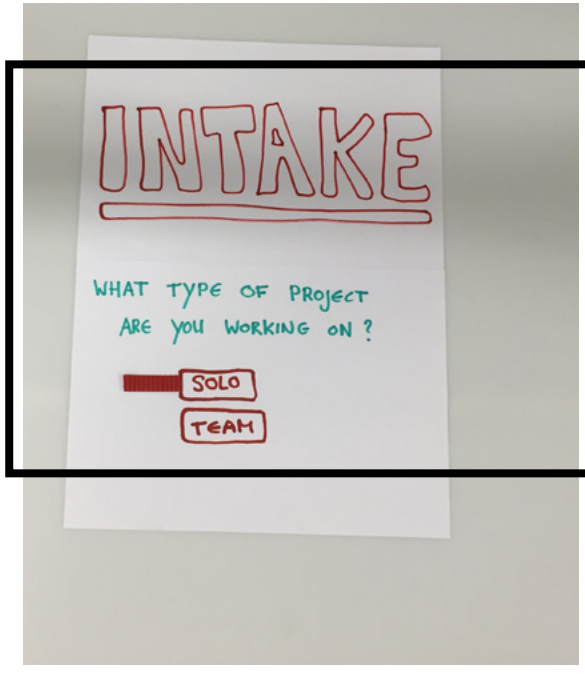
2

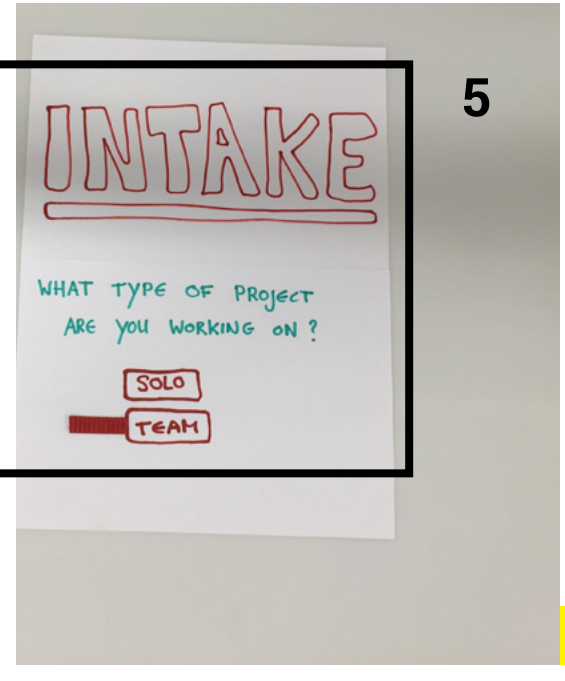

INTAKE
WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS ?
BEGINNER
EXPERIENCED
MASTER
INTAKE
WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS ?
BEGINNER
EXPERIENCED
MASTER
INTAKE
WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS ?
BEGINNER
EXPERIENCED
MASTER

3

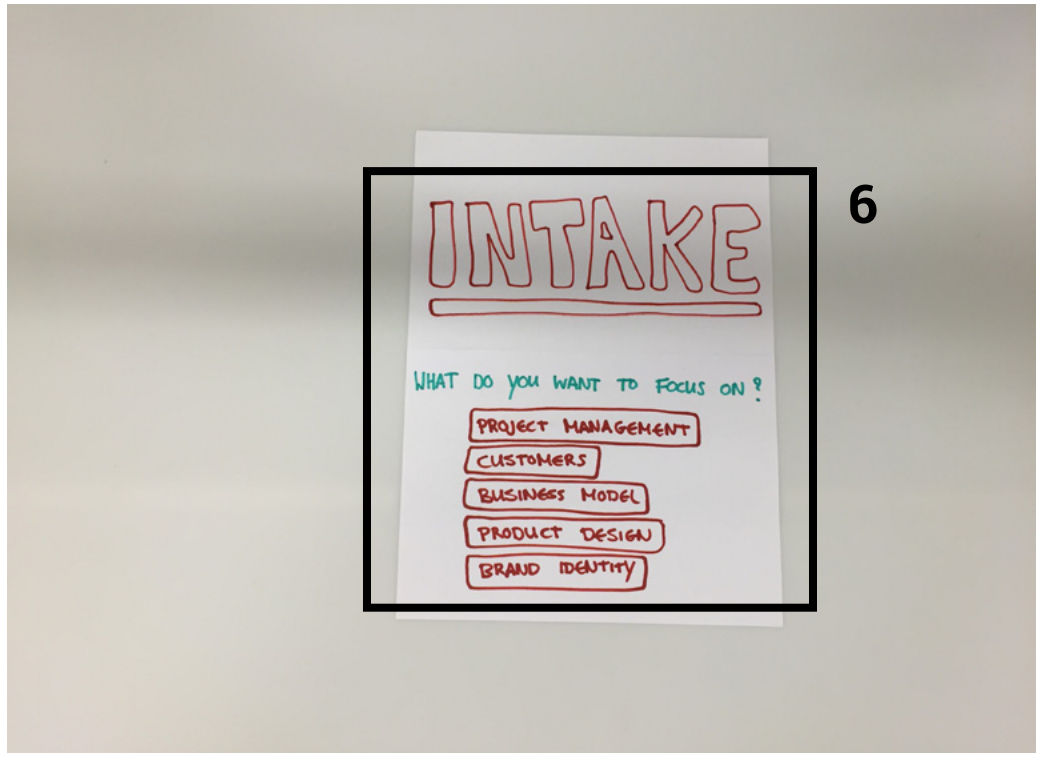

INTAKE
WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT ARE YOU WORKING ON ?
SOLO
TEAM

4

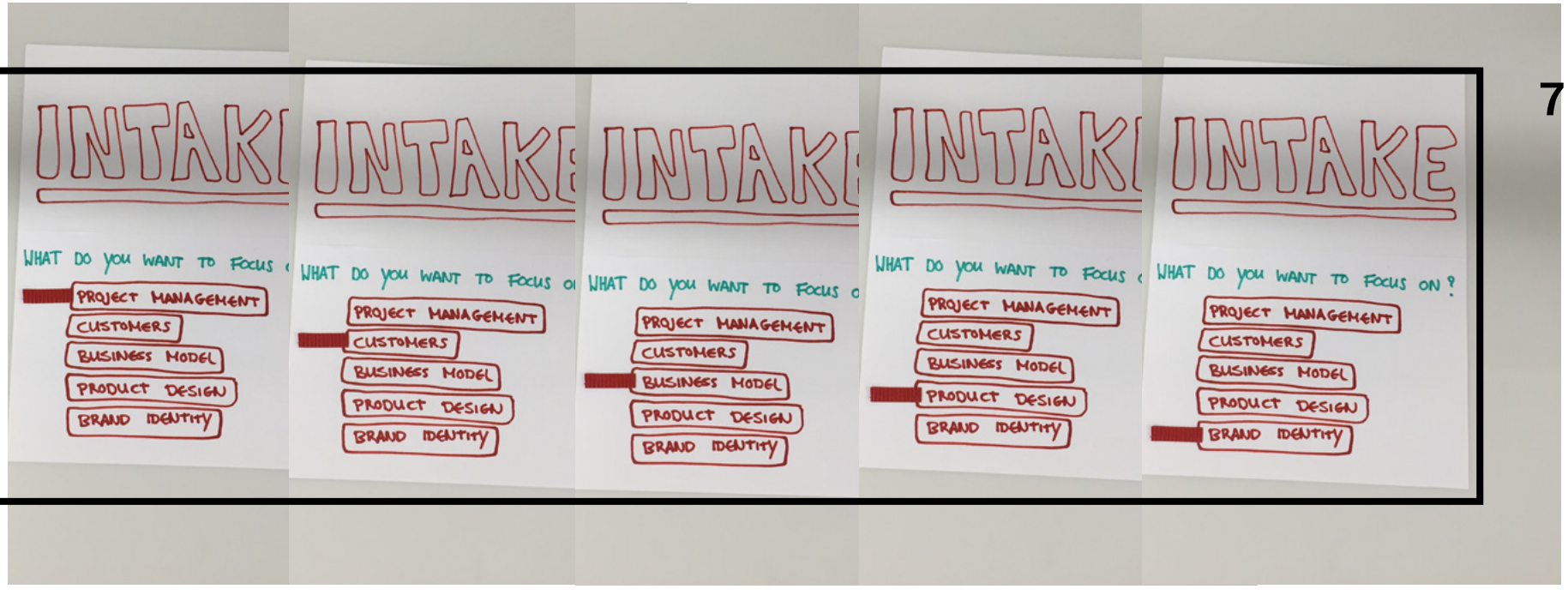

INTAKE
WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT ARE YOU WORKING ON ?
SOLO
TEAM


INTAKE
WHAT TYPE OF PROJECT ARE YOU WORKING ON ?
SOLO
TEAM

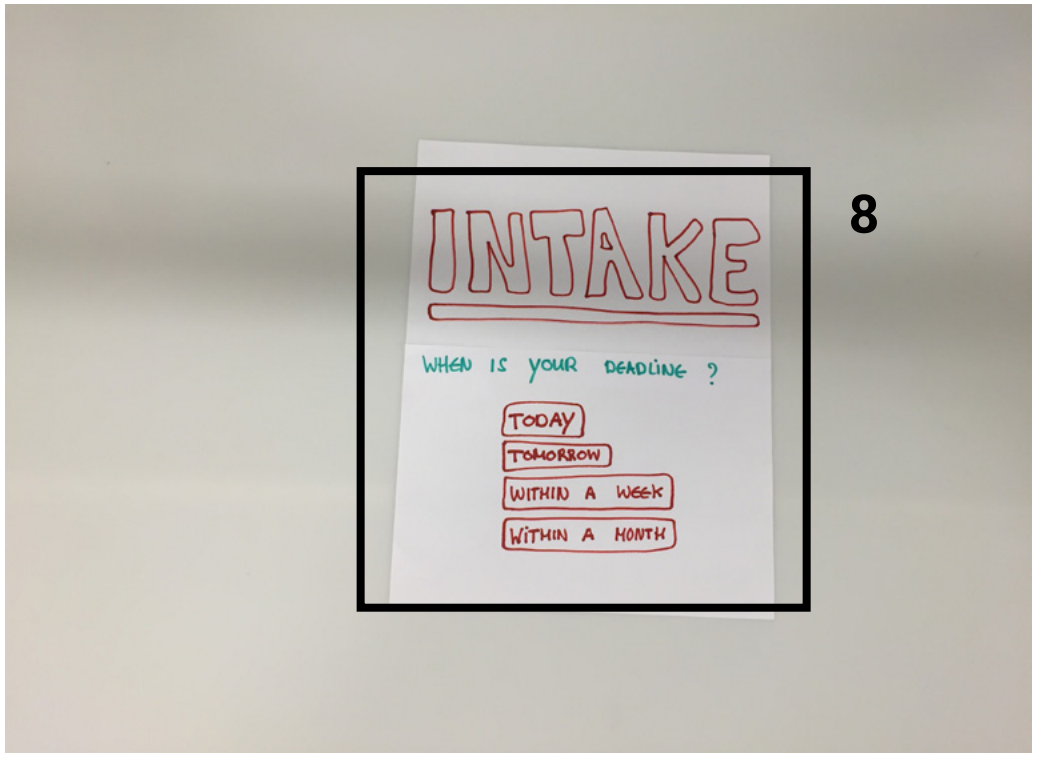
5


INTAKE
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON?
PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CUSTOMERS
BUSINESS MODEL
PRODUCT DESIGN
BRAND IDENTITY

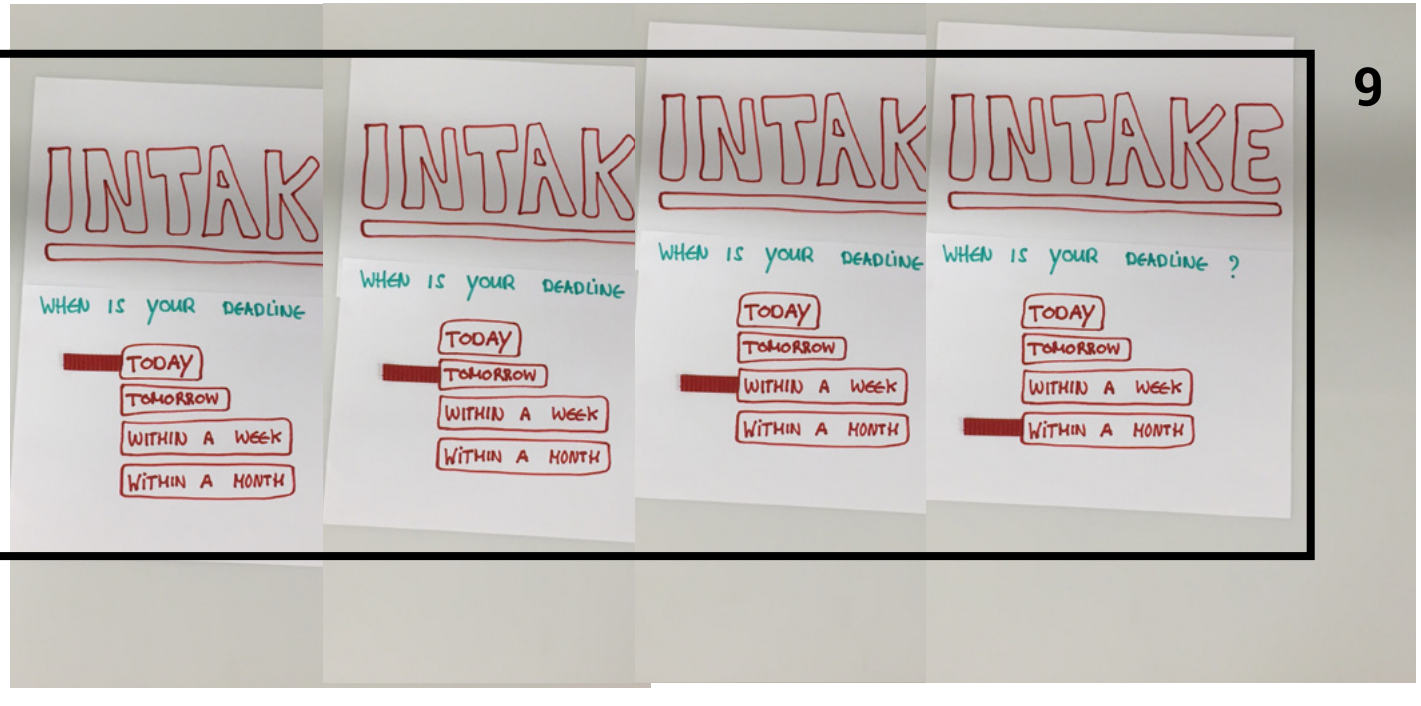
6


INTAKE
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON?
PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CUSTOMERS
BUSINESS MODEL
PRODUCT DESIGN
BRAND IDENTITY

7


INTAKE
WHEN IS YOUR DEADLINE ?
TODAY
TOMORROW
WITHIN A WEEK
WITHIN A MONTH

8


INTAKE
WHEN IS YOUR DEADLINE
TODAY
TOMORROW
WITHIN A WEEK
WITHIN A MONTH
INTAKE
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TODAY
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INTAKE
WHEN IS YOUR DEADLINE ?
TODAY
TOMORROW
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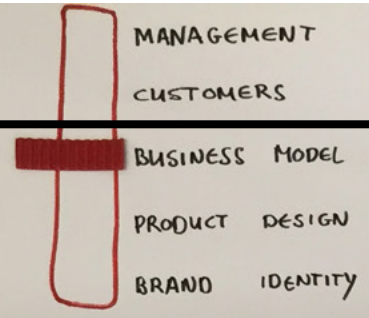
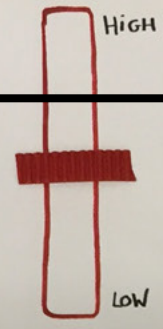
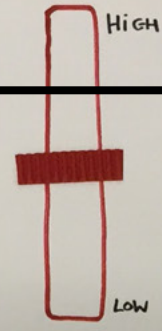
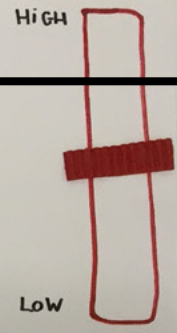
WITHIN A MONTH

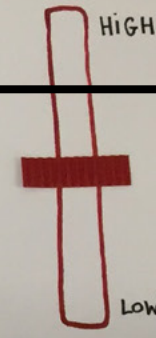
9









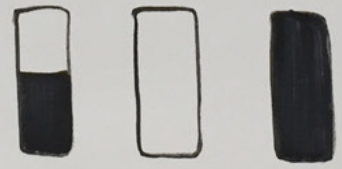


SWOT CANVAS

"Plot the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats"

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

"Your business model on one page"

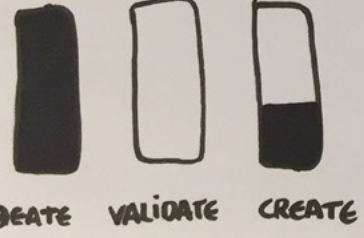


KNOWLEDGE MAP

"Visualize your knowledge and competences"

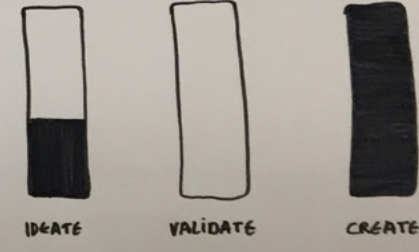
STAKEHOLDER CANVAS

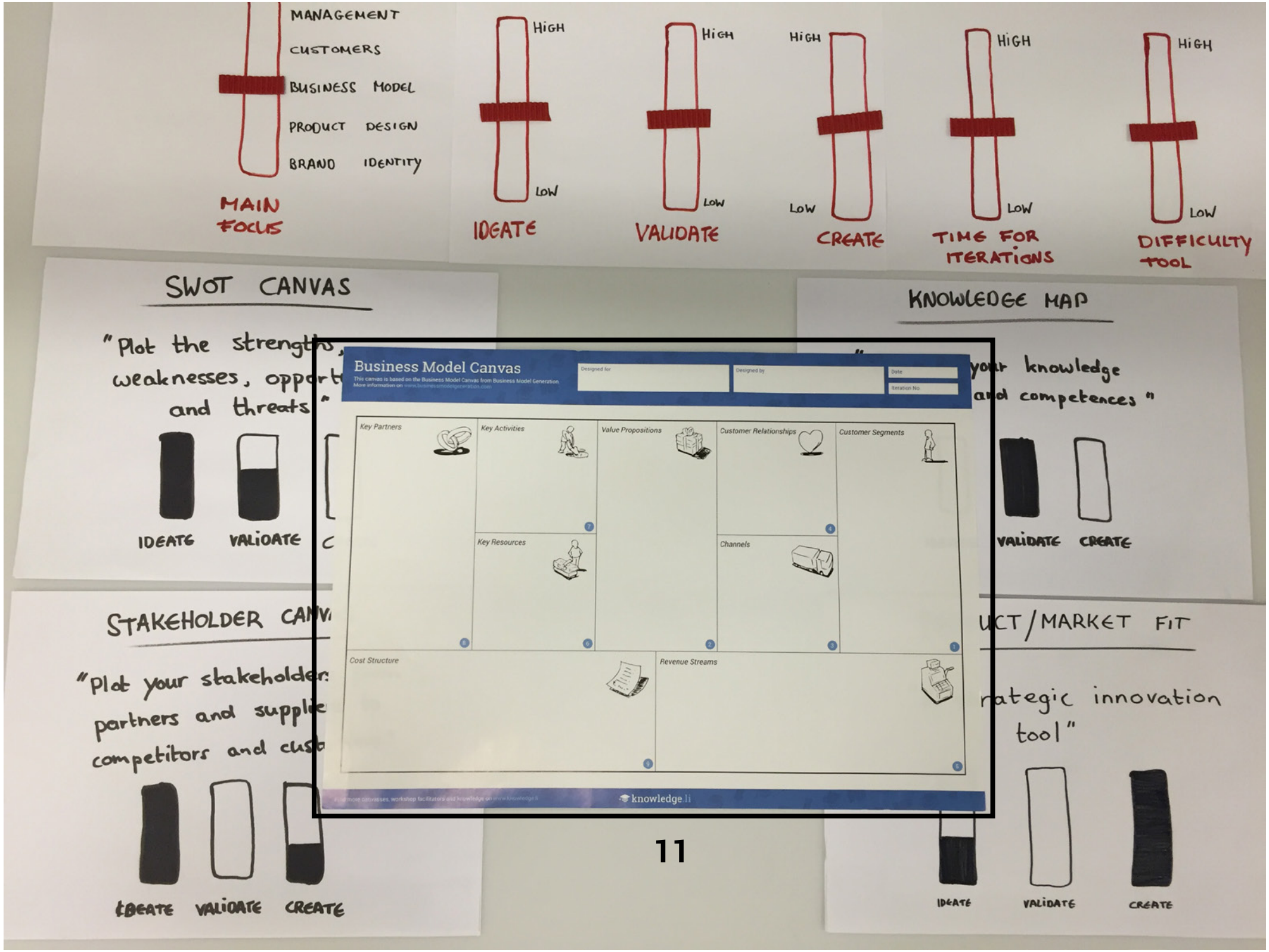
"Plot your stakeholders from partners and suppliers to competitors and customers"

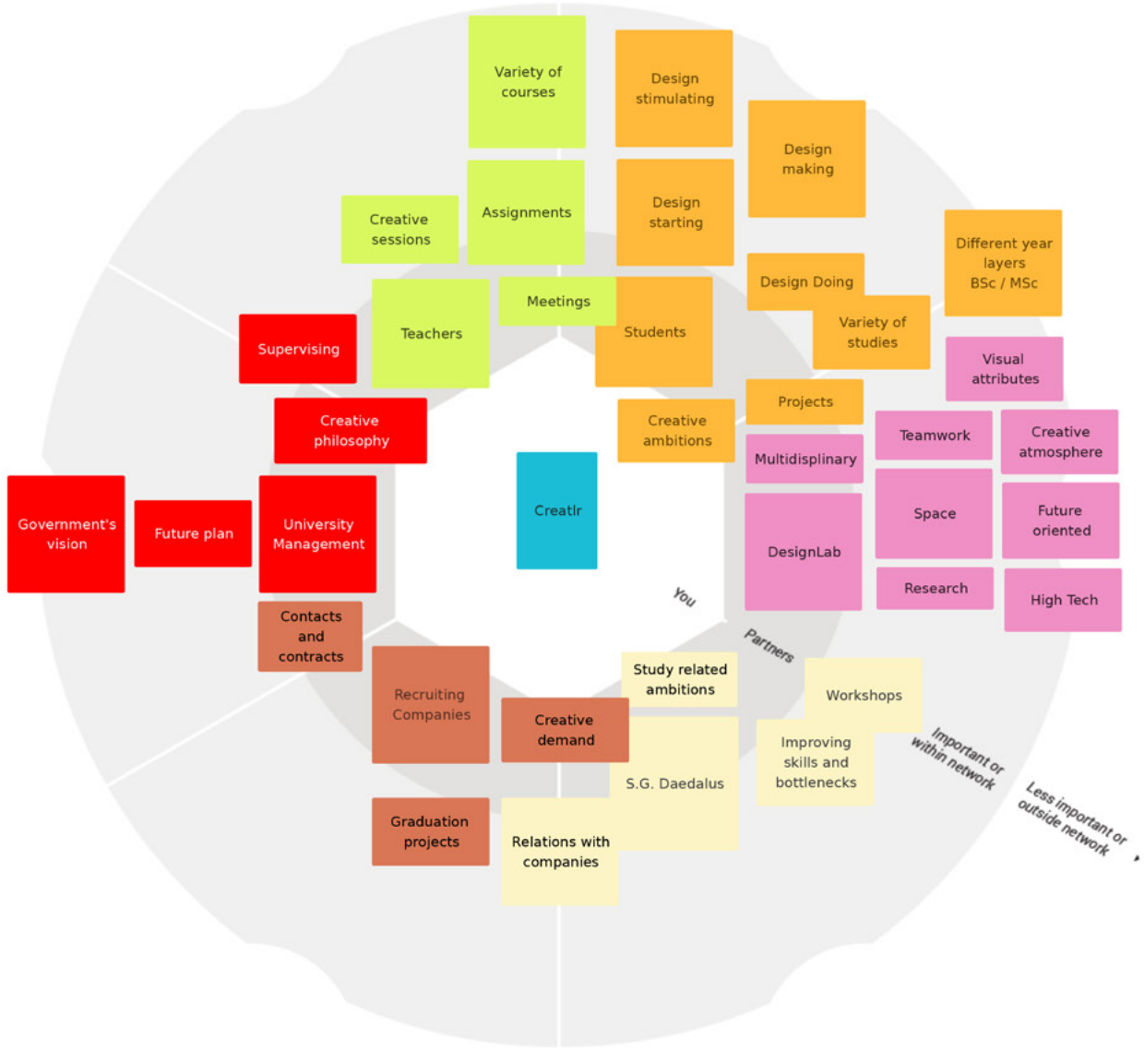


PRODUCT/MARKET FIT

"A strategic innovation tool"




MANAGEMENT
CUSTOMERS
BUSINESS MODEL
PRODUCT DESIGN
BRAND IDENTITY
MAIN FOCUS
HIGH
LOW
IDEATE
VALIDATE
CREATE
TIME FOR ITERATIONS
DIFFICULTY TOOL
SWOT CANVAS
"Plot the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats"
KNOWLEDGE MAP
your knowledge and competences"
Business Model Canvas
This canvas is based on the Business Model Canvas from Business Model Generation
Designed for
Designed by
Date
Iteration No.
Key Partners
Key Activities
Value Propositions
Customer Relationships
Customer Segments
Key Resources
Channels
Cost Structure
Revenue Streams
knowledge.li
STAKEHOLDER CANVAS
"Plot your stakeholders: partners and suppliers, competitors and customers"
PRODUCT/MARKET FIT
"Strategic innovation tool"



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Stakeholder Canvas template by Creatlr.com

Plot your stakeholders from partners and suppliers to competitors and customers.

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Project
Afstuderen
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Workshop
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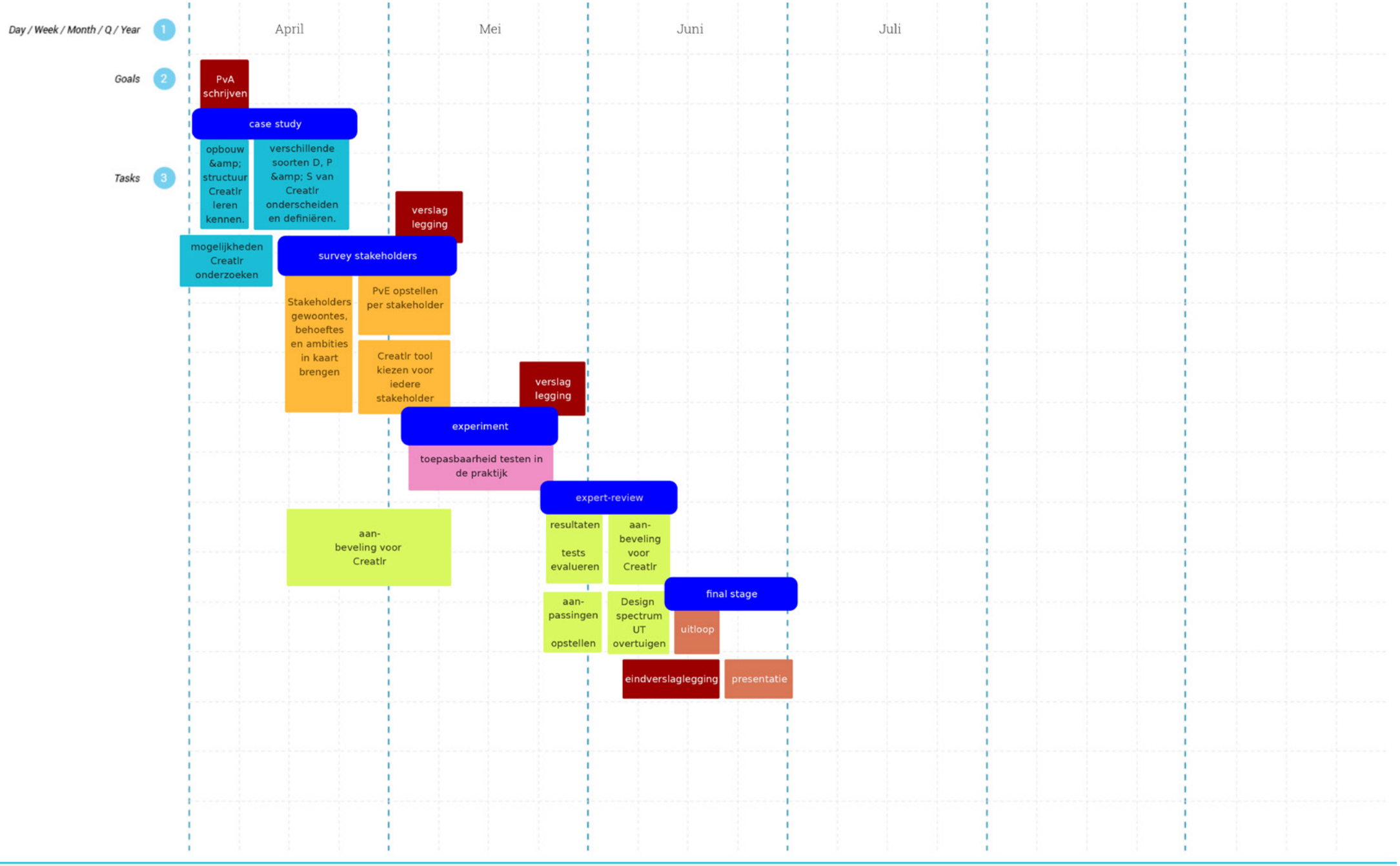
Pre-Analysis

Before the start of my research in the first week, I had planned the first meeting with my former mentor. During this meeting it turned out there were a few critical points in my plan of action that would favor a revision. At that moment, the target group was only the people involved with the curriculum Industrial Design Engineering. The reason for this was that these stakeholders would fit Creatlr's creative, visual and innovative thinking the best compared to other curricula. Creativity, visualization, and iterative design come back in projects, courses and workshops. The similarities in approaches between Industrial Design Engineering and Creatlr make it an ideal target group for research purposes. Despite the clear advantages, my mentor pointed me on the DesignLab. The curricula at the University of Twente are in general more conservative and less open-minded regards innovation compared to the DesignLab. Together with the study association, S.G. Daedalus, they are the promoters of learning creative skills. They organize lectures of professional companies, workshops in Adobe programs, welding and 3D printing. (DesignLab Dream Team, 2016) Due to their progressive mindset, these two parties do think more in ambition instead of needs. With needs as the starting position, Creatlr's productivity tools would probably not get full appreciation. This is because not all parties involved at the university are convinced of the advantages and beneficial aspects of Creatlr. Despite this assumption, this project eventually focusses on the parties that are open to innovative multidisciplinary approaches. The DesignLab has launched a brand new design program that integrates social problems with creativity, the visualization of ideas and tangible prototypes. (Evers, 2016) These prototypes are the foundation from which the design process can develop. The approach of visualizing processes, problems, and ideas from an early stage are in line with Creatlr's approach of creative processes. Furthermore, Creatlr's platform and tools are particularly suitable for multidisciplinary use. A multidisciplinary environment is in comparison to the DesignLab less common in the curriculum Industrial Design Engineering. For this reason, the DesignLab is significantly more interesting than rather one single curriculum as my main target group. Besides earlier described arguments, the DesignLab is strengthened by ambition while the curriculum Industrial Design Engineering is undeniably full of structure and less driven by open-mindedness. All the different stakeholders involved at the University of Twente are mapped via post-it's on the Stakeholder Canvas. This canvas divides groups and their priority. The canvas shows the versatility of the DesignLab. Students, staff, and companies are all involved and working together at this location. The connection and cooperation between people with different functions and backgrounds is a progressive feature.



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Roadmap Canvas template by Creatlr.com

Plan your project visually. Create gantt charts and define your planning for ...

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Workshop
Afstudeerplanning
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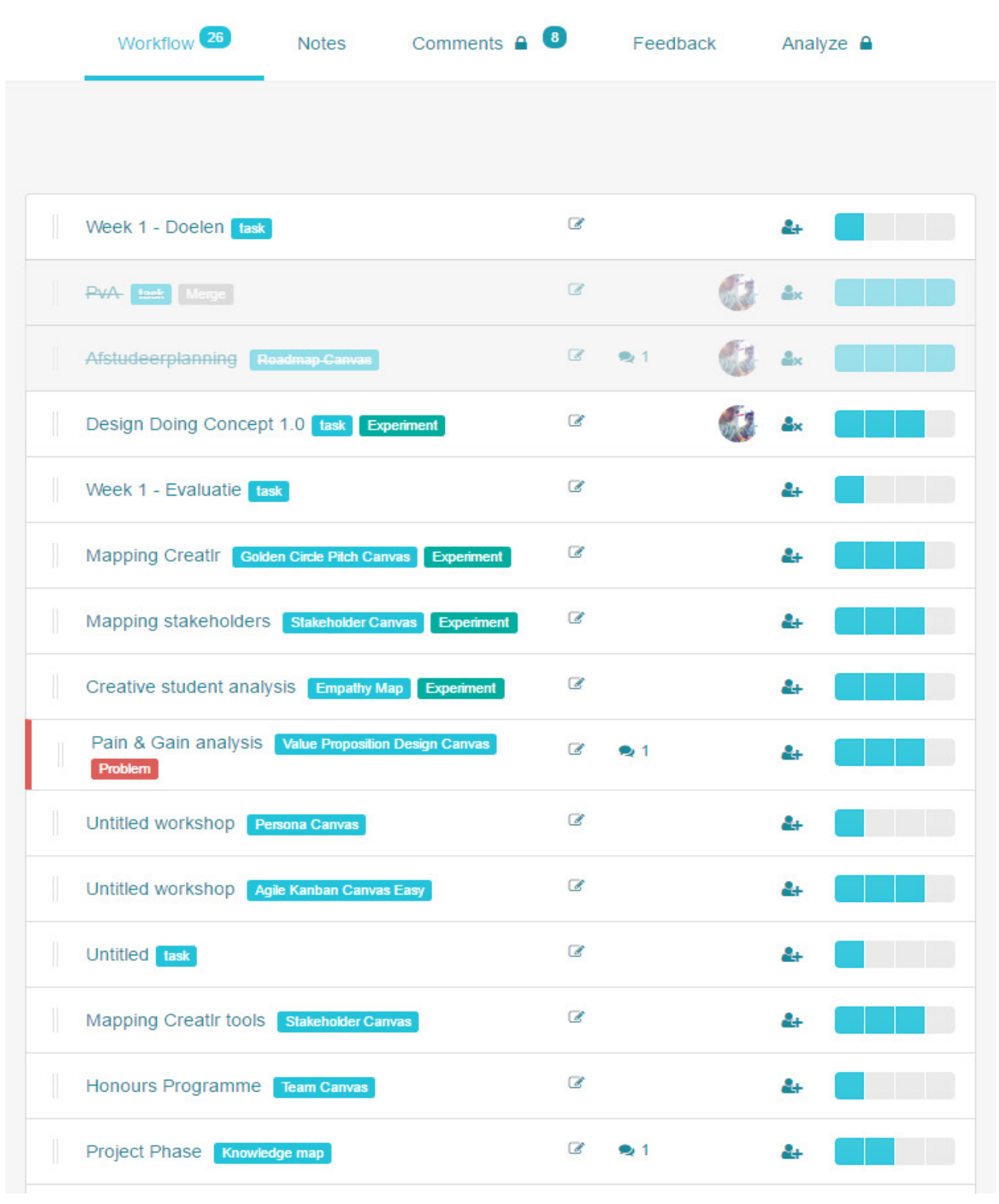
Pre-Analysis

Nowhere else at the university, the hierarchy seems to be as transparent as in the DesignLab. (Evers, 2016) This assumption is definitely worth further investigation. For that reason, the people at the DesignLab require a closer look.

During the same meeting, my provisional planning for the upcoming three months was examined. In order to do my research more efficiently, my mentor suggested doing the entire research cycle immediately in the first week. Thereafter, evaluate the findings and convert the output into the new input. In the second week, the exact same cycle can be done again. This time more specific with the knowledge and experience about pitfalls and importances. In contrast to my own planning, this approach points out problems and key points in an early stage. With this knowledge, you can take these pitfalls into account during thorough research. Furthermore, the suggested approach is more in line with the reflective transformative design framework. By reason of these arguments, I have decided to start my research with short samples and subsequently, focus on advanced parts.

Another critical point; the main research question had to be more concrete and framed according to my mentor. At first, the question was specified on the study Industrial Design Engineering. Now the target group can be seen as more multidisciplinary, the research question cannot remain exact the same. To make the question more effective and challenging, yes or no answers have to be avoided. Besides that, how and what items are a good shot. Instead of former question: 'Is the current Creatlr platform usable at universities?', the complete research question for this project is changed into: 'How and why does Creatlr fit within DesignLab's design ambitions?'

It was also pointed out that researchers and teachers have a busy schedule. Appointments have to be made on time otherwise, they could delay the investigation. In other words, it is important to already make appointments with key targets in the first few weeks.



this screenshot was taken on the 18th of May 2016

Analysis

The upcoming parts reflect on the first research stage. This phase reflects on the effect that design doing had in the first weeks of research. The former planning was used as a reference. This planning consists of four big stages. The first stage is the exploration and mapping of Creatlr's platform structure, opportunities, and tools. In order to get the hang of Creatlr, extensive use of the platform and tools are required. After this phase, the different stakeholders with their habits, needs, and wants have to be mapped. The knowledge of the first two stages can be used for target group experiments. These experiments are used to acquire more understanding of specific use and interaction. In the final stage, it is about converting all the knowledge and results into adjustments and optimization of the platform. In the first week, this final stage is used as an evaluation for creating new research insights.

During the first stage, the structure of Creatlr was examined. At the same time, I started a graduation workspace. In this workspace, workshops are added for promoting creativity and visualizing relations. Due to this, the know-how of Creatlr is combined with quick research. Besides the roadmap that is created via a Creatlr workshop, a few other workshops have helped me in mapping different aspects.

Gains

Pains

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Empathy Map template by Creatlr.com

Profile your customer segments and better understand their world

Featured in the book Business Model Generation. Adapted from XPLANE

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Analysis

In order to get to know the values of the DesignLab, prepared interviews are used in combination with the Empathy map to gain information and visualize that data. Interviews are used for getting in touch with the people involved at the location. Before elaborating on the content of the interviews, the design choices and effects are discussed.

Interview Design

I have decided to use an interview method instead of a survey. The main reason for this choice is that interviews make it possible to interact with target groups. Furthermore, interview approaches are more versatile, there is space for open-minded comments. In addition, the opportunity to deepen the conversation into specific subjects appeals me. There is the opportunity to guide every single interview and to take up any topic. Since every stakeholder differs, it is of great importance that the interviews can be personalized. The approach of the well-prepared interviews is that they can be experienced as a conversation and still obtain the information I was looking for. In other words, during the interviews, there is beside a Q&A also space and time for stories and experiences. With this interview method, there is the possibility to deepen into certain aspects when the opportunity presents itself. This methods' advantage is that besides the fact I get answers to the prepared questions, there is the possibility to highlight any aspect and face unexpected situations.

Since there are a few important stakeholders working in the DesignLab, there is a special questionnaire for every stakeholder. The target groups are divided into three groups, students who are working on their study or project, the responsible staff at the DesignLab and researchers. These three groups can be divided separately because of their different backgrounds and goals. Before making the questionnaire, first, the information I want to obtain has to be clear. With a goal in mind, questions can be designed specifically in order to obtain the intended information. The open questions are noted in a notebook and the answers are written down in notes. With this procedure, every page contains a new interview. The prepared questionnaire serves as a tool to obtain answers to the necessary questions. The extra value of the interviews is derived from the conversations in between the questions. Mostly this contains interesting, surprising and unexpected revelations which result in more stakeholder and situation knowledge.

Stakeholder Interviews

Sketching the situation, actions, and happenings in the DesignLab is impossible without input from the ones who make the DesignLab lively. Interviewing multiple students with different backgrounds, purposes and interests have helped me to create a better vision of the DesignLab. The first surveyed people were students studying in the DesignLab. The result and key statements of the interviews have been summarized. Asking Industrial Design Engineering students about the bottlenecks they face during projects, the following came to light. The bottleneck is in most of the times the moment when decisions have to be made. This part is indicated as a difficult part when working in a team; choices have to be compared and weighed against each other. Furthermore, both team meetings as well as handing out tasks are time-consuming and can be done more efficiently.

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Stakeholder Interviews

Engineering & Management students came up with the following interesting information. To the question, whether they have already faced and used productivity tools, the answer was undeniable yes. A second year Industrial Engineering & Management student indicated that the project coordinators often provided canvas websites. In most of the times, these canvasses were used for rather startup purposes, such as the Business Model Canvas and Lean Canvas. This resulted in the use of multiple websites with corresponding accounts. Quite unnecessary according to the surveyed student. This student noted that most of the bachelor students generally do what they are asked for. Barely any outside the box thinking. In other words, Creatlr will need teachers' promotion, otherwise, students will not see Creatlr's utility. After looking around for a short period on Creatlr's website, students suggested short introductory movies with an explanation. Furthermore, the wayfinding was very confusing and messy. They were not able to find options for categorization or filter for different goals.

With the information obtained, a few important statements can be used for more advanced research. The fact that students will probably not use Creatlr intuitively needs more attention. Apparently students are not immediately convinced of the platform's added value. That is why the approval of a project coordinator could be missing the link. With their approval, many more different students can be reached. However, as mentioned earlier, teachers are not so keen on new study materials. Certainly not when their module is already fully scheduled. This matter of fact was experienced during meetings with project coordinators of Industrial Design Engineering, Technical Engineering & Management, Creative Technology and Mechanical Engineering. No single coordinator nor teacher wanted to consider the use of Creatlr in their module or course. Despite the disappointment, a great lesson was learned after these conversations. Sometimes it is more important to know the arguments behind a rejection than a positive response. Additionally, it is of great importance how you communicate your research goal. Instead of asking people how they can help you with your graduation project, it is probably more effective to do it the other way around. An approach where you ask people about their situation and try to find out in which way Creatlr can add value to their project.

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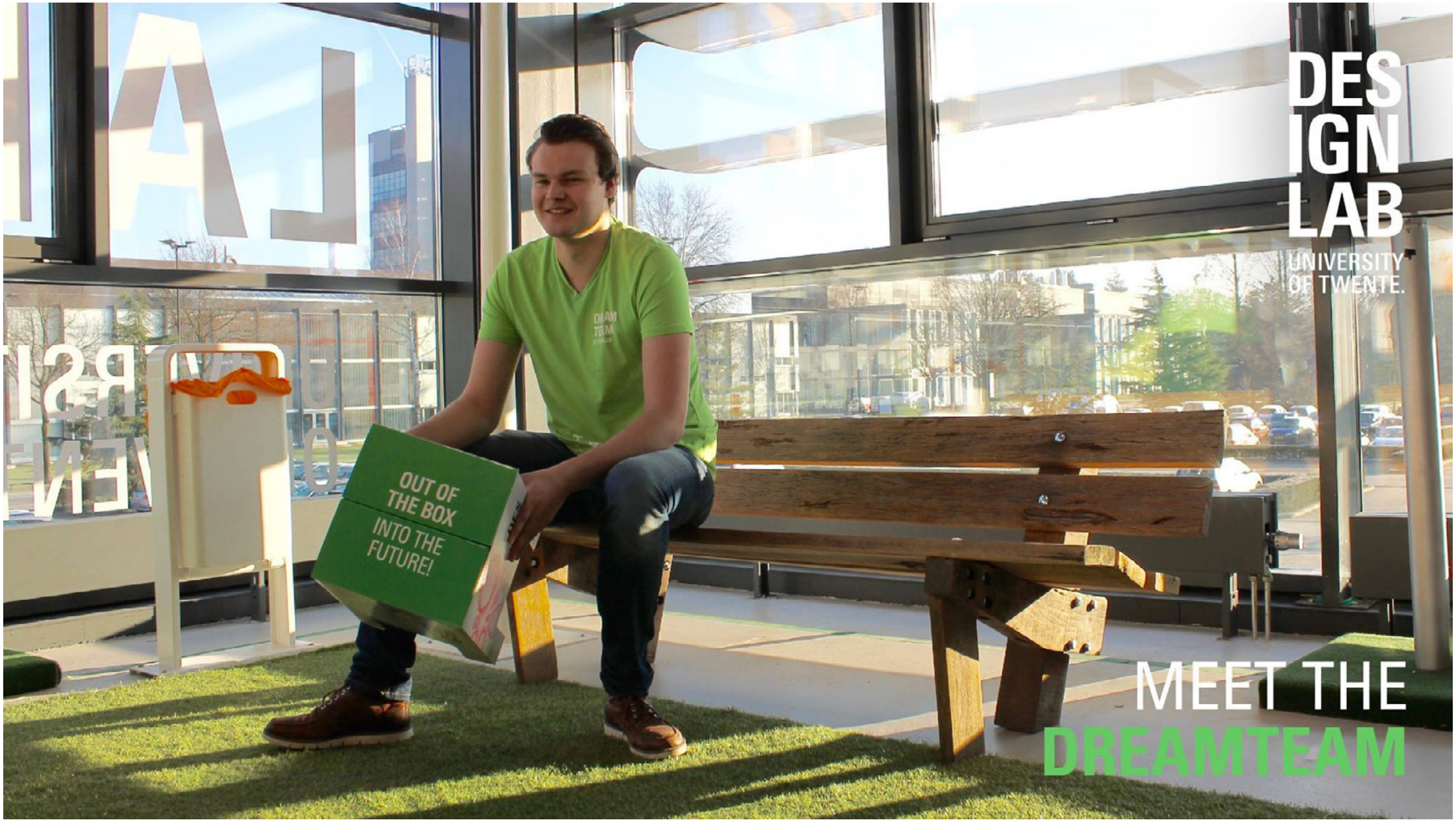
Dreamteam

Besides interviewing students and coordinators, interviews have also proven their worth in other situations, such as conversations with one of the DesignLab responsible persons and Dreamteam members. With one of the Dreamteam members, DesignLab's development for the last two years was discussed. Since the opening in September 2014, the DesignLab went through a major evolution. One year ago, merely students with Industrial Design Engineering background visited the DesignLab for study and project purposes. The outlying location of the building could be the main cause of this. Due to projects in the DesignLab, Creative Technology, and Electrical Engineering came in touch with DesignLab's facilities. It was noticed that students' DesignLab experience was very positive. This resulted in a larger variety of curricula visiting the DesignLab. DesignLab's most common pros are the amount natural light, the big area, pleasant atmosphere and the facilities. Compared to the Horst building, these are a few unique advantages. Another advantage following the Dreamteam member is the by / for student relation in the DesignLab. Students feel more freely to ask around to another student; the threshold of asking questions seems to be gone. In other words, the Dreamteam as contact persons of the DesignLab worked out perfectly. In order to create a multidisciplinary space, first, a large variety of curricula is required.

DesignLab's objective is to create an environment where everyone, student, and staff, can integrate with each other. When multiple disciplines are present in the same area, it is possible to exchange knowledge with other disciplines easily. This multidisciplinary environment is reflected within teams in companies and organizations. In other words, the DesignLab wants to make the gap more accessible between students and the business environment. (DesignLab, 2016) Therefore, to make this possible, the DesignLab maintains connections with many startups in the same building. To promote the connection between different disciplines, Tosti Tuesday has been introduced. By this way, students can integrate into an informal fashion. The cooperation between disciplines is also combining different working methods and habituation. This integration is made easier through the freedom in the use of attributes, such as kinetic sand, Lego, whiteboards and several materials that promote creativity. Another ambition of the DesignLab is that every curriculum is educated in how to go through an entire design process. This ambition reflects and strengthens their motto Science2Design4Society. Another objective is to promote design from scrap and stimulate discussions in the team on the basis of tangible prototypes.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INTO THE
FUTURE!
MEET THE
DREAMTEAM

Dreamteam

After my meeting with this Dreamteam member I realized everybody in the DesignLab is there for the same reason; designing for / with society. Multidisciplinary projects are properly encouraged. Therefore, from that moment I knew people who are part of the DesignLab community are open to any case and are willing to help.

The tip to attend the Alumnidag workshop was a useful one. In order to understand how DesignLab's motto is reflected in practical terms, the presentation and workshop were very helpful. During this active workshop it was made clear there are different areas to stimulate special design stages. The core values DesignLab wants to spread are multidisciplinarity, iterative and reflective design. Reframing and making ideas tangible are also part of these core values. These are bullet points that correspond well to the chosen design doing approach. DesignLab is a drop-in place for creative, flexible, open-minded and inspiring people where solutions to societal problems are being designed. With all the facilities, the Science2Design4Society approach and the mediation between disciplines, the DesignLab has got everything to start creating. The mediation is reflected in the relation between university/business, students/staff, and education/research.

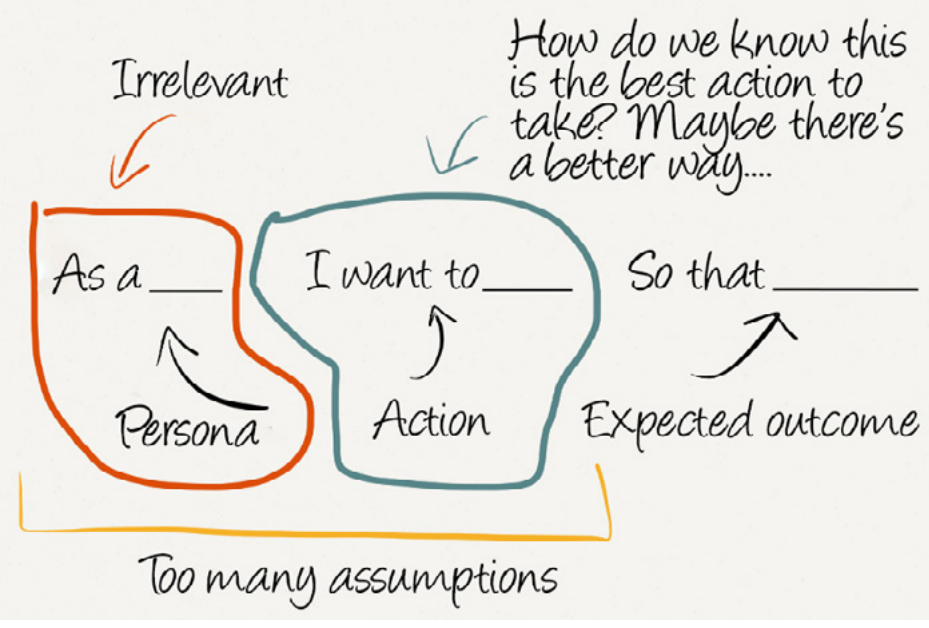
Design Doing

Besides doing interviews and getting in touch with several target groups, the entire research cycle also had to include experimental knowledge generated by the design doing to complete the research process. (Hummels and Frens, 4-9 April, 2009) However, this was more difficult than expected; the change into a design doing mindset needed some time. Due to the fact I would rather not bother people with my case, I did approach fewer people. This was partly due to the realization that such a cooperation can be more time consuming than promised. One way to prevent this problem is to have a powerful pitch. A pitch that emphasizes and clarifies the added value of someone's collaboration. Personal experience has shown this requires an approach where the concerned person has to be convinced of their advantage when participating. In addition, the DesignLab wants to promote interaction between disciplines and remove barriers.

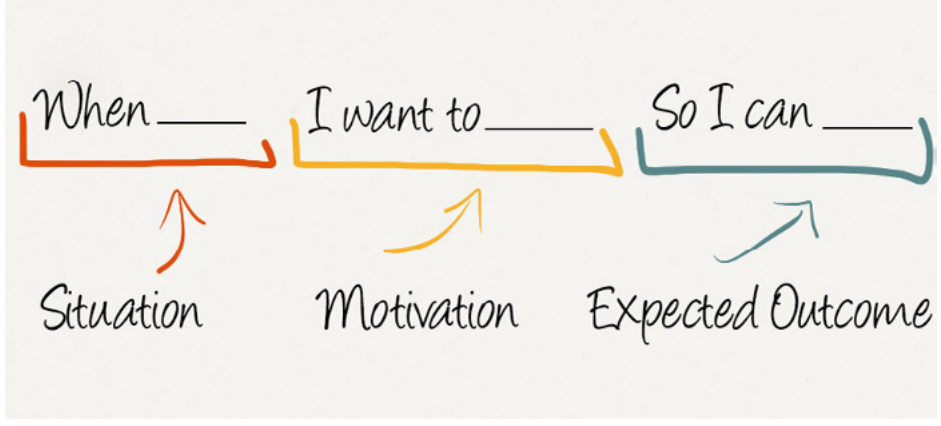
Job Stories

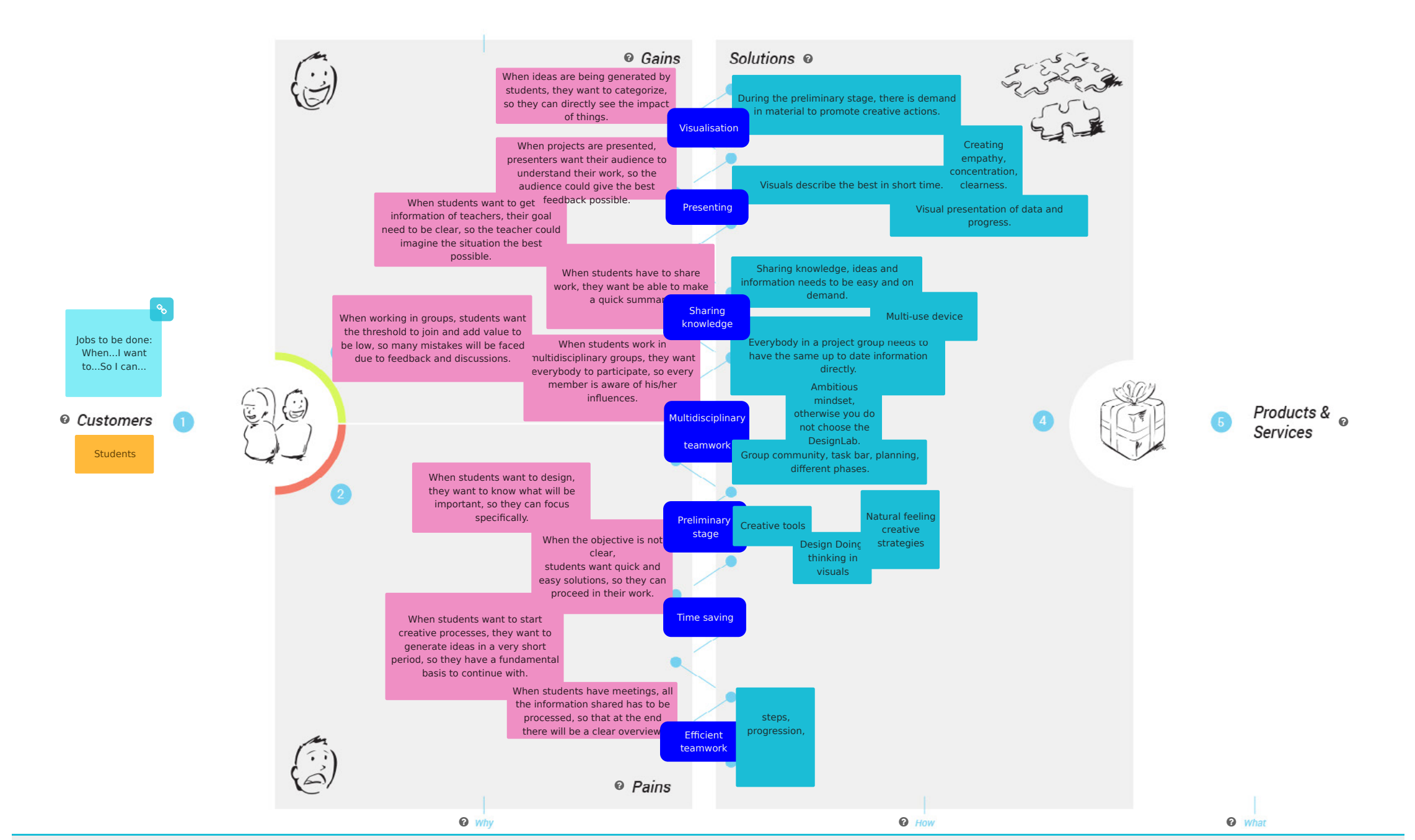
The interviews attended presentations and meetings, all the information and data need to be filtered. However, this is easier said than done. In order to present progress and results to Creatlr, it is not sufficient to conclude something went good or bad. Creatlr wants to know why and in which situation interactions occur. That is why my supervisor at Creatlr pointed me on the Job Stories method. Job Stories is a framework that focusses on the triggering event or situation, the motivation, objective and the intended outcome. (Klement, 2013) With this framework, every causality can be described without a persona, which is irrelevant and does not add anything. Job Stories is an easy and effective method that can be used right away. Job Stories takes away the main problem of User Stories; the many assumptions and no acknowledgment of the causality. The disconnection between the action and persona in User Stories has been taken away by the new Job Stories. The corresponding framework consists of three parts: When …, I want to …, so I can … With this tip in mind, solutions can be achieved more efficiently. From now on, upcoming interviews and other research methods can be evaluated via this framework.

User Stories



Job Stories





creatlr

Value Proposition Design Canvas

template | by Creatlr.com | smart tutorial

Create great value propositions from a customers perspective.

This canvas is a supplement to the Business Model Canvas from Business Model Generation , the Empathy Map by Dave Gray and XPLANE and Golden Circles by Simon Sinek.

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Project
Afstuderen
https://www.creatlr.com/project/weMQaZIwC2VlpGC4HKHL8d/

Workshop
Pain & Gain analysis
https://www.creatlr.com/workshop/0dUjJAF9WWPIlo5dGlxY3b/

Creatlr.com - The platform for design thinkers

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Module's First Week

There are a few key dates to keep in mind for the rest of the research period. One of them is the fact that in my third week of research, the fourth module begins at the university. This is a very important feature with target group strategies in mind. The first week of a module is the period when project groups are formed. From my own experience, the efficiency in the beginning of a project is not that high. Fortunately, after a few weeks, when everybody gets to know each other's expertise's the workflow increases. By then the goals are clear and established and all the group members know what is expected of himself/herself. My research strategy is to introduce Creatlr from the beginning stage of a project. By this way, Creatlr is used from the start and the entire design process can be valued. The threshold to actually use a new platform is significantly lower than introducing something new in the middle of a project. In addition, if this strategy fails, there is still plenty of time left for alternatives.

Target Group Division

Since the DesignLab has a growing number of people involved, many projects are running. With the result that many different projects can be approached. It is important to have a varied portfolio of projects since the DesignLab has a great diversity of creative people. Eventually, it was possible to collaborate with five different parties. These five different target groups and their projects are used for extensive experiments. In order to analyze the difference in target groups use of Creatlr's platform and tools, custom programs have been started.

The Five Target Groups 1/5

Honors Program

Introduction

Peter-Paul Verbeek heard of my research content and saw possibilities for me in joining the honors program. This honors program is for ambitious students who want an extra-curricular challenge besides their regular curricula. The honors program in question is specifically focused on the design process of products and services. The program consists of several lectures given by experienced professors, prepared workshops by students themselves and scheduled time to work on a project.

Approach

My research goal for this target group was to find out how the variety of students would use Creatlr during their workshop. After the workshop, a quick analysis could be used as a basis to interview one of the students. My assumption in this case was that this target group had little experience in productivity tools and probably never heard of Creatlr before. The workshops' project brief enabled me to choose the best suitable tool. The project brief was: "How can elderly live longer at home with the use of sensors?" In order to get to know and visualize the elderly's needs and wants I introduced the Empathy Map. This map stimulates the user to see the situation from elderly's perspective. I observed the students via participation and interacted with them during the workshop.

Feedback

Despite the benefits of the tool to write down thoughts and divide ideas into separate parts, the students were obviously out of their comfort zone. The Empathy maps were barely used in the way as they were designed; more as scrap paper. Notwithstanding the explanation of the tool's goal and method before the beginning of the workshop, this was not reflected in the students' ideas and concepts. The subdued conclusion of this experiment is that students are very reluctant to new methods. The tool's beneficial aspects during their creative process did not outweigh the ignorance. After analyzing the used sheets, I interviewed one of the participators. Following this student, the tool can be more effective when they know the context why and how the tool should be used. In other words, the preparation before starting the workshop had to be improved. The students admit the possible advantages, yet they do not see the necessity. Therefore, these students would not repeat usage or create an official account.

The Five Target Groups 1/5

Honors Program

Job Stories

“When my team is doing quick iterative processes, we want to get started immediately, so we do not loose time”
“When I am in a new project group, I want to use familiar methods, so I do not have to teach team members”
“When someone else is forcing me to use a method, I want to see the added value to my project immediately, so I can decide if it could be useful or not”

Customer Journey

When students are cooperating in newly formed groups, there are a few steps that they do experience every time. First, the project brief and corresponding goals were being observed. These documents are the guideline for the entire project. Thereafter, students introduced themselves to the group. Personal curricula, interests, expectations and goals were shared during this session. This session was followed by an introduction of the Science2Design4Society design strategy. Afterwards the students started to implement the design strategy during a case. This was the first moment the students came into contact with Creatlr. The students were mainly busy with discussing the issue instead of using the tool for their case. Only one of the six groups used the tool as intended. After the workshop the paper was left behind.

Bottlenecks

Users do not experience the added value of single tools immediately.
The high threshold when nobody in a team has experience with Creatlr.
The insight to use the tools following own interpretation.
The presumption Creatlr costs time instead of saves time.

Solutions

Showing inexperienced users examples of fully completed tools before use.
Showing inexperienced users examples of tools used with multiple interpretations.
Showing inexperienced users the tools’ versatility via printed versions and online use.
Showing inexperienced users which specific tools can create value for certain common goals.

Recommendations

In order to convince students and make them feel comfortable with the use of Creatlr’s tools, this target group would benefit from examples, tutorials and a shortlist why Creatlr can add value to their project and can improve the project’s quality.

The Five Target Groups 2/5

Project Groups Industrial Design Engineering

Introduction

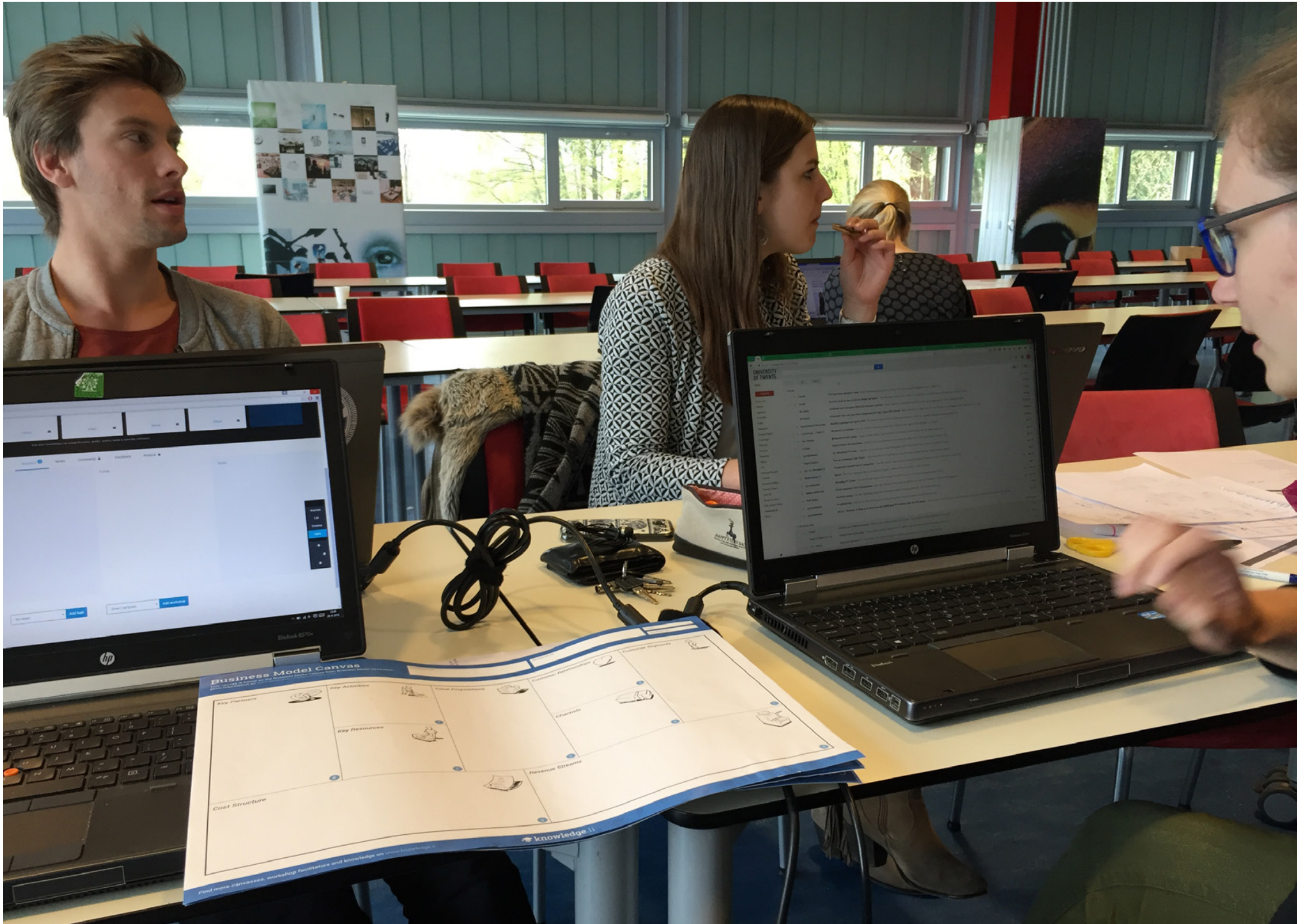
As there are many project groups working in the DesignLab, it is useful to know which curricula stand out in large numbers. Hereby, I will have more knowledge about the structure and classification of the people visiting the DesignLab. The running projects of common curricula can serve as valuable cases for Creatlr. Teams working on these projects can generate feedback, find bottlenecks and help improve Creatlr. Throughout the week, together bachelor and master students of Industrial Design Engineering occupy the majority in the DesignLab. Industrial Design Engineering students' enthusiasm and positive attitude towards Creatlr's concept resulted in a cooperation between me and a few second-year bachelor project groups.

Approach

My goal to achieve in cooperation with this target group is to find out what drives these students to use Creatlr's tools and platform or what prevents them from using. This cooperation is a long-term project throughout their entire design process. This cooperation includes the use of a workspace, multiple reflection meetings, iterative improvements, and co-designing. With this long term approach, it is possible to obtain more deepened feedback via co-design sessions.

Feedback

This target group has used Creator's tools and platform the most intensively and generated the most feedback throughout the design process. The iterative and reflective approach was very effective in cooperation with the students. The feedback varied from small items to big issues in both platform and tools. One of the first barriers that the students faced after making a workspace was that they could not find where to filter on persons and parts of the project. When someone has multiple workspaces, it must be able to filter on specific persons in order to see a full task list. Furthermore, the label options should be customizable. Only then the labels can create clarity and promote overview. These labels should also be implemented as a search term. In addition, the notification to delete a sticky note is really frustrating. There has to be a button that solves this problem. When the workspace is filled with over twenty workshops, the workspace gets confusing. Therefore, it can be convenient to have the option to archive workshops and tasks that are already done. By this way, the active workspace with workshops and tasks remains a backlog and thereby separated from finished work. While using several workshops, the students note that the information used in multiple workshops correspond to each other. However, there is no data transfer between workshops. Actually, when using Creatlr's tools there is certain overlap that is not exploited.


Business Model Canvas
Key Partners
Key Activities
Key Resources
Value Propositions
Customer Relationships
Channels
Customer Segments
Cost Structure
Revenue Streams
knowledge 11
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The Five Target Groups 2/5

Project Groups Industrial Design Engineering

Job Stories

“When I am new to Creatlr, I want to know where to start, so I can make use of Creatlr efficiently”

“When I am using multiple workshops, I want that information can be transferred to another workshop, so I can work more efficiently”

“When I am searching for tools, I want Creatlr to filter the options to my demand, so I have less choice”

“When I am exploring, I want to filter, so I can find the tools faster”

“When I’m not familiar with the workshop, I want tutorials, examples or step-by-step assistance, so I can use the tool properly”

“When I have multiple workspaces, I want to see what tasks and workshops I need to do, so I can have an overview”

“When I want to delete a sticky note, I want to click on a notification, so I do not have to see the pop up all the time”

"....." = job stories Creatlr is working on at the moment.

Customer Journey

The Industrial Design Engineering students were collaborating within a team of six students. The project brief was to design a product service combination without any design restrictions. However, it was very important to implement all twelve sub courses in the final product service design. At the beginning of the course a workspace was created together. In this workspace tasks were added with final goals and objectives. In cooperation with me, we had consultations how Creatlr could fit within the project and create value to the team. Since I had already gained much knowledge about Creatlr’s range of tools and their strengths, I suggested multiple canvasses that would help them in achieving their goals in a creative and visual way.

Bottlenecks

Current labels do not fit the curricula projects.

Poor in providing the right tool.

Available filter options are insufficient for inexperienced users.

Irritating and needless pop-up when deleting a sticky note.

Solutions

Introduce the possibility to archive workshops.

Option for custom labels.

Connection and information transfer between canvasses.

Option in workspace to filter on individuals and labels.

Overview of to-dos in all projects.

Option to not ask the user again when deleting a sticky note.

A filter which guides the user to the right tools on the basis of user's wants and needs.

Recommendations

In order to let this target group use Creatlr the best possible without assistance or tips, Creatlr should implement a more advanced filtersystem that is consistent with students' inexperience. More concrete and imaginable filter options to guide users to the best workshops and follow-up tools. The development of information transfer between workshops can improve the efficiency of Creatlr's platform. Furthermore, by making labels customizable the workspace area will fit better to the expectations and wants of this target group.

The Five Target Groups 3/5

EU Funding

Introduction

After several meetings with Peter-Paul Verbeek, he introduced me to the subject EU funding requests. In and around the DesignLab many researchers are part of international teams that write EU funding requests to finance their projects, researches, and initiatives. EU funding requests are written in a team of mostly unknown international researchers under high pressure. A request's entire work plan is divided in work packages for every participator. Instead of physical meetings, almost all consultations are kept via online video calll services.

Approach

Via my former mentor and Peter-Paul Verbeek it was possible to come in touch with several researchers that are experienced in international projects. Interview meetings with this target group provide more knowledge about this subject and where Creatlr can add value to project management and visualization during consultation.

Feedback

Because of the high pressure everybody is busy with completing their part of the work plan. Since all the members of the team have a lot of experience and trust in their own approach, they were not open-minded towards a complete new productivity platforn such as Creatlr. Even when they knew what value Creatlr could add, they were reluctant towards it. However, even after thirty minutes of research on the website, it was not clear for the target group what and how Creatlr could add value to their activities. Creatlr was only an option when every team member was familiar with Creatlr and convinced the productivity would get a boost. The meetings are all very strict and therefore the researchers think Creatlr will be too time consuming and risky to introduce to his project members. Similarly to the project management tools of Creatlr also the possibilities to visualize data cannot be useful to the request. Following the researchers, the research parts are that specific that productivity tools would not work.

Job Stories

"When I am writing a EU funding request, I want to trust on my own approach, so I can deal with the high pressure"

"When I am on a website, I want to see immediately what service or product can add value to my project, so I rather put effort in useful activities"

"When I am in a team with unknown researchers, I want nobody to adjust their working method, so I do not have to adjust to different methods"

"When I am doing specific tasks, I want to use familiar tools I can trust on, so I can the most productive"

Customer Journey

The researchers at the University of Twente writing a EU funding request were very sure Creatlr had nothing to offer during their EU funding project. A hypothetical nor open-minded approach was too much to ask from them. The researchers rather thought in possible problems instead of potential advantages. Therefore, the opportunity to experiment within this niche became a hard case. Unfortunately, the research process within this target group had to be ended in an early stage due to no mutual interest.

Bottlenecks

Confusing and unclear homepage.

Solutions

General presentations / workshops of Creatlr's possibilities in multidisciplinary environments.

Clear homepage with final workshop / workspace results.

Recommendations

This target group is firmly convinced Creatlr is not the right platform to invest time in. Therefore, it would probably make more sense to shift focus to other target groups that provide Creatlr more experimental data.

The Five Target Groups 4/5

Master Course Human Interaction Design

Introduction

My former mentor proposed to co-design a few parts of his master course Human Interaction Design. He was very curious what I would bring on to create value for him as a teacher and for the students in their projects.

Approach

With this course, Human Interaction Design, I want to investigate what can be the value of CreatIr for both teacher and students. Via discussions with my former mentor / teacher, the objectives of the course can be set. Within this course, there is the possibility to design lectures and workshops together with the teacher. Furthermore, this target group consist of master students instead of bachelor students. This target group are more experienced in multidisciplinary projects. Their feedback and vision is different from other groups and therefore very unique and useful to take into account during the reflective transformative design process.

Feedback

A few master students were picked to discuss their experiences with the tools. In this case the students rather used tools, no platform. The students indicated that the entry level of the used tools, the Empathy Map and Team Canvas were very high without examples. Following a team of master students it was difficult to understand what was the order of use regarding the different boxes of one canvas. For this reason, the efficiency of the tools decreased significantly for the students. They were also wondering if there is a guide which helps in picking the next useful tool. Filled in examples before starting with the toolkit, which can be defined as multiple tools for one purpose, would help significantly in their opinion. With examples there is more structure; it takes less effort to understand and use the tool. The first use took too long in order to be called productive. Nevertheless, the tools caused a great deal of conversation. One of the students wanted to see the entire offer of tools. Instead of tools filtered by the nine bullet points, he would like to see other filters, such as how much time a tool costs, with how many people a tool can be used properly, and if a tool can focus on reflection.

The Five Target Groups 4/5

Master Course Human Interaction Design

Job Stories

“When I am using a tool, I want Creatlr to guide me to the next tool, so I have the best successive tool that fits my goal”

“When I am using a tool for the first time, I want a filled in example, so I can easier understand the order of use”

“When I am not trained in using productivity tools, I want a low entry tool to begin with, so I can use a tool more efficiently and intuitively”

“When I want to use one of the tools, I first want to see all the tools before filtering, so I can see I have not skipped any tool”

"When I am filtering, I want an estimation of how much effort and time tools will cost, so I can decide which tool fits the best that moment"

"When I am filtering, I want an indication with how many people the tool can be used properly, so I can decide which tools have potential for my team"

Customer Journey

The students were introduced with Creatlr's tools after the teacher divided every students into groups of 2 à 3. The teacher had arranged that every group would have a unique design case for a professional company. In order to get to know the qualities and interests within a project group, the students first filled in their own persona.

Afterwards the students within a group compared their personas side by side to see what would be the best division of responsibilities during the design process. Hereby, the students used a Team Canvas in order to establish their cooperation structure.

Bottlenecks

The tools are difficult to use without experience.

The current filters do not match with users' intentions.

Order of use within one canvas.

The shortage in personal input.

Solutions

A guide that generates suggested tools.

Indication for entry level tools.

Adjusted filters to make Creatlr more personal for projects.

Recommendations

The master students of Industrial Design Engineering were moderately positive about the tools and their function. In order to improve Creatlr and highlight their advantages, Creatlr has to respond to the users' inexperience. This can be achieved via a more personal oriented guide to find the best tools for each team, goal and project.

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The Five Target Groups 5/5

DesignLab

Introduction

Besides the people who make the DesignLab ambitious, inspiring and lively as it is now, the facilities also have a large share in this. Therefore, the function of the DesignLab in my research and experiments can be illustrated.

Approach

The DesignLab was a perfect place to arrange meetings, doing interviews, experiments and prototyping. Because of DesignLab's versatility in areas, the options and opportunities were very broad. I have tried to use DesignLab's hospitality and make the most out of their helpfulness. The 'how can I help you' and 'feel free to ask' atmosphere floated throughout the entire building. Both Dreamteam's as well as the employees' empathy assisted me by sharing detailed information about the state of affairs within the DesignLab. Furthermore, I had limited access to the Capture room which enabled me to make photos of the paper protoyping via a professional preparation.

Feedback

The vathriety in possibilities within the DesignLab involved several key factors throughout the reflective and iterative process. The variety in prototyping materials helped me to improve the prototype. The creative and multi-purpose spaces in the DesignLab promoted informal meetings and deepened and detailed feedback via co-design sessions with students. In the DesignLab there was better communication with target groups compared to the Horst building. There are specific areas in the DesignLab that do not mind when there is a lot of background noises. In other words, perfect for group discussions. Compared to the DesignLab, the students at the Horst would interpret these noises as disruptive.

Customer Journey

When students arrived at the DesignLab, most of the students attended a group meeting, worked on a project or started studying for own purposes. A few students made use of the facilities, such as the photography room and workroom. Most of the students stayed at one desk for the rest of the day. A small part was testing their products and gathering test persons. In students' pauses, the playground area with ping-pong table was used frequently. In general the atmosphere was easy-going with a drive for ambitious challenges.

The Five Target Groups 5/5

DesignLab

Bottlenecks

The space limitations of the DesignLab during events.
The gap between a student who would benefit from Creatlr tools and the the place where such tools can be found.

Solutions

Claim a specific place, Ideate, where Creatlr canvasses are availabe and free to pick.
As an introduction to gain Creatlr canvasses on every desk.
Cooperation between projects running in the DesignLab and Creatlr's workshops and platform.

Recommendations

For implementing Creatlr's canvasses and use of the platform in and around the DesignLab further research is required. At this stage the possibilities could be discussed with those responsible for the DesignLab. I would suggest more communication between Creatlr and project coordinators in order to find out what both parties want . By this way, a concrete proposal could be the start of a long-term cooperation.

Future Research

This research has shown that many users, not only the people of the university, would benefit from the created concept. In order to work out a complete functioning Intake, this requires further research and development. Many iterations will have to take place before implementing the Intake into the current Creatlr platform. First of all, before scaling the concept, a branded mock-up would give more insights about the actual interaction and feasibility of the Intake. At this stage, it is unclear if the Intake will be received positively by regular users. Therefore, testing the usability of the mock-up under a variety of audiences is of great value. The related feedback and recommendations can be valued, identified and if necessary is implemented. Throughout the iterative process, the changes are getting smaller and more detailed. Since design doing requires a critical look, it remains valuable to test and verify the changes all the time. The development of the Intake would also include the design of a database that is supporting the values of the filters and the changes over time.

Personal Experiences

Development as a Designer

During three months of running an individual research, my true character as a designer was exposed. This project made me think about my capacities, strengths, and weaknesses. I have gained experience and developed myself in different ways. Before starting this elevating process, I was convinced small research steps just settled down after a while. Gradually during the first weeks, I realized the design approach I had chosen demanded a more strict approach. The maintenance of five target groups, keeping track of the report, and making the most out of the planning was a real challenge. At first, I was doing these aspects rather separately. After a while, I realized the research and experiments were far ahead of the concept report. As a result of the remarkable progression made with co-design sessions and experiments, the report had been put on the back burner. Hereby, I had to change my focus and rebalance the entire design process. Due to keeping overview at times and being self-critical, I managed to balance the project myself. Self-criticism turned out to be of great importance. At the very time the research progression was doing well, it was difficult to keep the big picture in mind. Therefore, the meetings and sessions with both the company supervisor as well as with my former mentor were essential. During these meetings, I attached great importance to consulting my forward planning of the upcoming week.

I will not know how it worked out without those meetings. However, what I do know is that setting more targets and deadlines, even at an early stage, will lead to a more structured process and a higher peak. Executing an individual project this large following an entirely new design approach logically involves several pitfalls. The most important are how to use that specific knowledge as an advantage for the next time.

Personal Experiences

Project

Regarding the large number of people I have spoken to during my project, one specific target group stood out in a primarily negative way. I had expected more from the researchers in the DesignLab. They were one by one very reluctant, pretentious and even uninterested sometimes towards the Creatlr's platform and tools. One of the major outcomes of the interviews was that researchers do barely use productivity tools or visual strategies. Basically, that does not cause the inconsistency I would like to mention. However, there is one aspect I cannot wrap my head around. How is it possible that researchers, who are not open-minded towards creative and visual strategies, do teach students in courses that demand a creative, innovative, and visual approach? There is a chance my approach towards this target group was completely wrong that caused this misperception. Nevertheless, this analysis has not to be concealed in this report. Unfortunately due to time limits, I could not investigate this case extensively. However, this small word of criticism is worth mentioning since the DesignLab is pro multidisciplinary creativity.

Epilogue

Investigating a new target group is not only about getting to know their characteristics and environment. In order to translate information and feedback to something useful is the hardest part. Everyone can analyze what is good and what can be improved. However, not everybody is convinced that hitting the nail on the head can create new opportunities and force improvement. Moreover, being open to serious criticism and generating negative feedback eventually leads to the bottlenecks that stand in the way.

Forcing myself to use a new design approach was an ambitious effort that worked out in my favor. Creatlr is a company driven by improvements from feedback and experiments. With a traditional approach, the same amount of feedback was not generated in the same amount of time. Doing many iterations and showing users the result time after time, make both parties feel acknowledged in their collaboration.

Yet, I do think that the stakeholders involved at the University of Twente are divided on Creatlr as a whole. A large part of the concerned students was enthusiastic about the variety of Creatlr's tools. Nevertheless, the struggles while using the platform and the integration between team members were remarkable. The overall experience was not as sophisticated and natural feeling that users faced the added value and indispensability.

Therefore, with the implementation of the Intake, a new dimension is created to bridge the gap between (inexperienced) users and the platform experience. I am aware that the Intake is a strict turn and probably give rise to some conflict with respect to the current design of the Explore page. Nevertheless, after iterating and reflecting, I do think this revolution contributes to the development of Creatlr.

By designing an Intake, the threshold is slightly higher because of the extra effort. However, the result and effect that the Intake causes after optimizing outweigh the effort. With pointing out the platform's bottleneck, I have designed a solution close to the major problem. Not every iteration was a step forward, yet it was little steps closer to the solution. The research question 'how and why does Creatlr fit within DesignLab's design ambitious?' were set in a wider context. Eventually, the comprehensive goal was to give more effective guidance to the exploring user.

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Colofon

Text
Marlin Bloemberg
Even though this book was thoroughly corrected by ir. Alberto Martinetti, I am solely responsible for any textual as well content related flaws.

Photographs and illustrations
All photos presented in this report with exception of the photos on page 80 and 83 are made by Marlin Bloemberg.

The background photo on page 3, 40, 42 and 44 is used in agreement with Creatlr.com.

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