

PROJECT DOCUMENT

DESN2150

Contemporary Digital Media

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RESEARCH

VISUAL RESEARCH

Smart phone app trends

General smartphone trends were observed from platforms such as 'It's Nice That' and Behance. Figure 7 is an example of a news platform – 'Bundle News'. The colour palette is minimalistic, yet powerful and stylish; it creates a particular mood and communicates a strong message, the idea that 'knowledge is power'. The content layout is bold and consistent through the use of blocked squares for images, buttons and text. Figure 8 showcases 'BiBi' an app for student flight attendants to find teachers. Unlike 'Bundle News', it contains lively illustrations when introducing the app, creating an amicable atmosphere. A noticeable observation is that all these interfaces use a lot of white space. This creates a breathable atmosphere to avoid overcrowding information. There is an obvious trend of clean and simple design which communicates easiness and innovation to the user. These apps in particular use a sans serif typeface which suggests the type of app, the function and who it may benefit. Figure 9 is an example of an app interface which uses a serif typeface and communicates an entirely different concept and target audience. The use of illustration and colour are quite feminine in comparison to 'BiBi' as well.

Blocking apps & functions

'Flipd' to some extent is a blocking app which helps users to stay focused and not get distracted. Generally, the app was quite misleading as it did not allow users to block apps and a few of the features were for premium users. However, useful observations were made in relation to the project. Firstly, the navigation panel is located at the bottom and is not available on all the screens (Figure 12). When deciding the type of navigation, space and efficiency needs to be considered too. Secondly, the app also features a visual timer, however only a selection of times was available for the user to choose from, depending on their concentration levels. This does not give the user much freedom but at least they have the ability to observe and pause the time.

Social media apps such as Facebook and Instagram were investigated (Figures 10 & 11) to see the process of blocking a person, as well as the language used. Both processes were quite short and only Instagram provided the user with a written confirmation. On the other hand, Facebook presented the user with a blank profile as confirmation instead. Both apps remind the user who they are blocking as well; this is something that will be considered for the blocking app to constantly remind the user that they are blocking the right person.

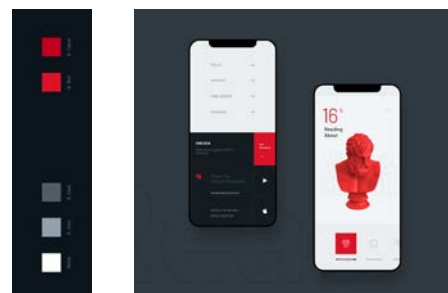


Figure 7: 'Bundle News' app

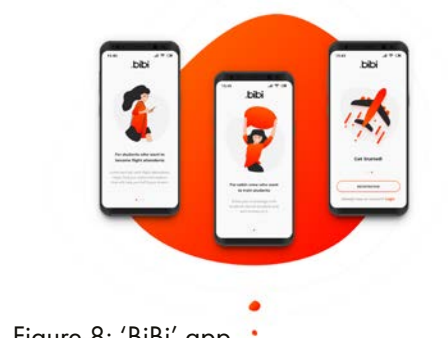


Figure 8: 'BiBi' app

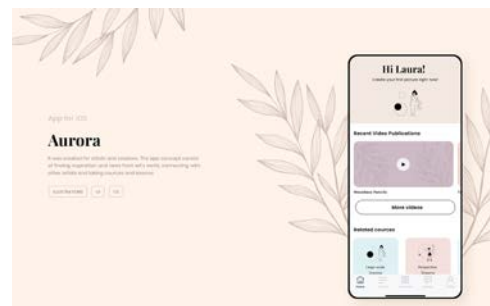


Figure 9: 'Aurora' app

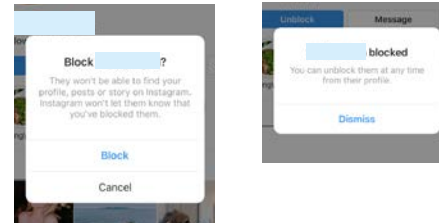


Figure 10: Screenshots from Instagram before and after blocking someone

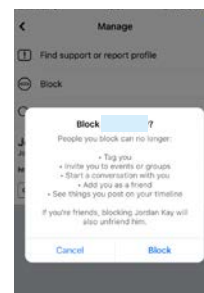


Figure 11: Screenshots from Facebook before blocking a person

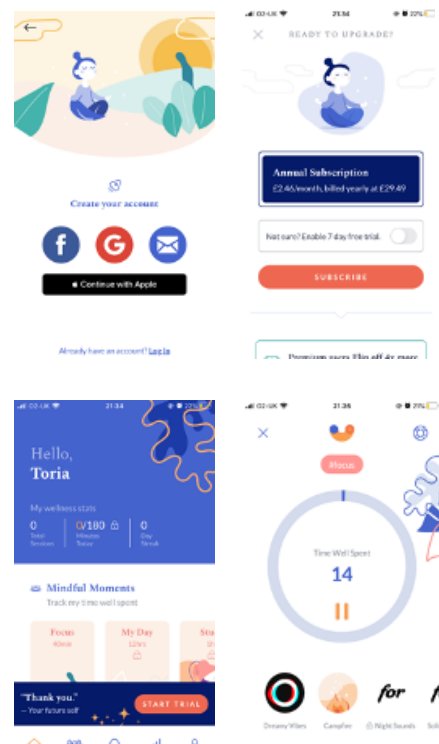


Figure 12: 'Flipd' screenshots

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Survey insights

From the survey, everyone who took part wanted to block strangers/ stalkers in real life, closely followed by annoying people, fake friends and break ups. Participants did not like the idea of a block being rebounded, which was a feature that was initially thought about and will not be included. They were also asked what would happen if someone did rebound a block and the responses varied from crying to smiling to blocking them again. Moreover, when asked about the tone of voice, the majority said playful/ light-hearted, which was closely followed by serious. The answer that was particularly useful suggested a balance of both which is possible with the right design elements. In terms of age suitability, the majority of respondents picked 18-24, followed by 25-34 and Under 18's, which falls within the Gen Z and Millennials range which confirms the assumption made at the beginning.

A few personas were made which were then narrowed down to form a more specific target group -

TG: 18+ year olds; to improve mood and mental wellbeing, making a bad situation or experience seem less serious/ hurtful or unpleasant.

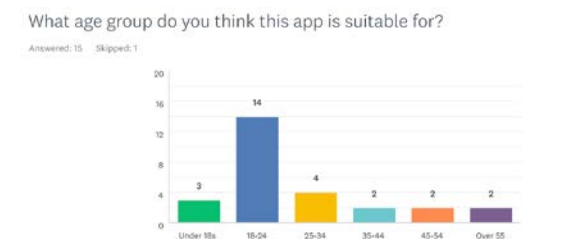
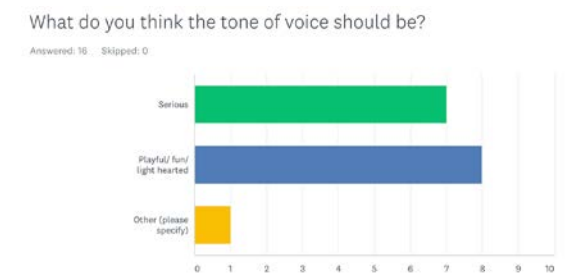
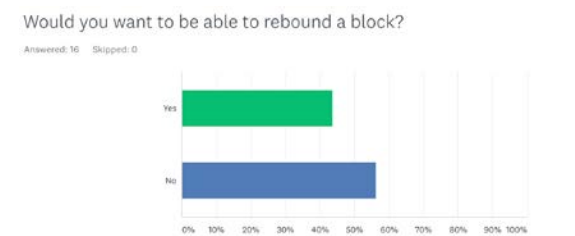
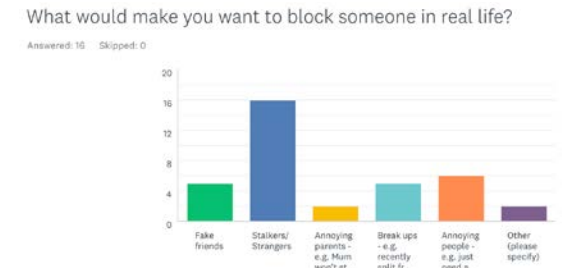


Figure 13: Results from the survey

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

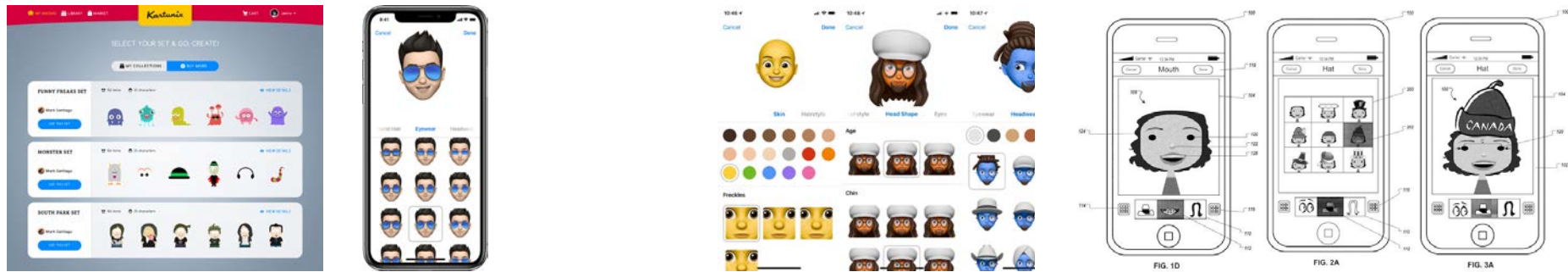
LOW FIDELITY WIRE FRAMES

Low fidelity wireframes were done throughout the whole process as a new idea would appear at any time. Figures 20, 22-23 are initial sketches of potential ideas for the different screens the user will come across when setting up the block.

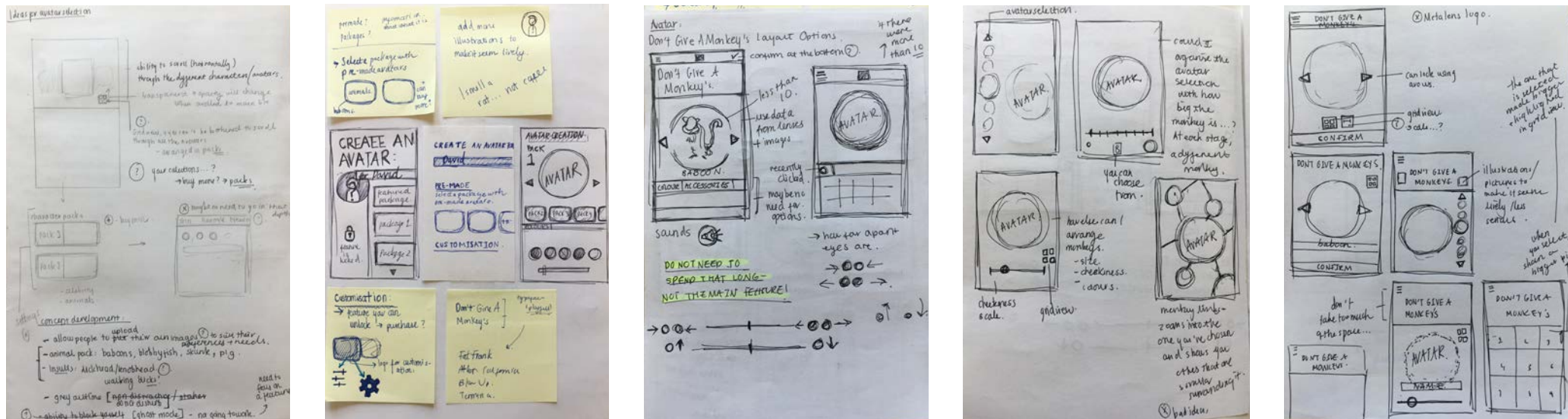
The main concern was the avatar selection because there was no clue as to how it was going to function. Specific research was done in order to gain an insight of how other designers would present the feature, as shown by Figure 19. Apple in particular had a variety of options that the user could choose from; this was the initial concept but was a bit unrealistic and complicated. By this stage, it was forgotten that the main focus was actually the process of blocking and therefore meant that the avatar selection should be very simple with much fewer options than the examples looked at. A new idea that allowed a limited variety was including different packages (inspired by Figure 19 - first image from left). This allowed a variation of different avatar packages depending on the user's motivation but keeping the avatars within the package quite limited. Figure 20 present the process of finding a simpler way to present the content by looking at a variety of layout options which were then developed further digitally.

Furthermore, other screen layouts were also thought about to begin with, such as the homepage, profiles and the timer feature. Figure 21 were used as inspiration for layout as well as the visual research done previously. Layouts that involved blocks of colour/ images/ text were specifically picked out because it made sense to have the design link with the function of the app.

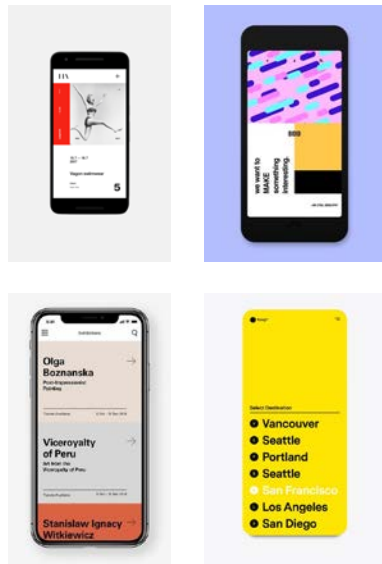
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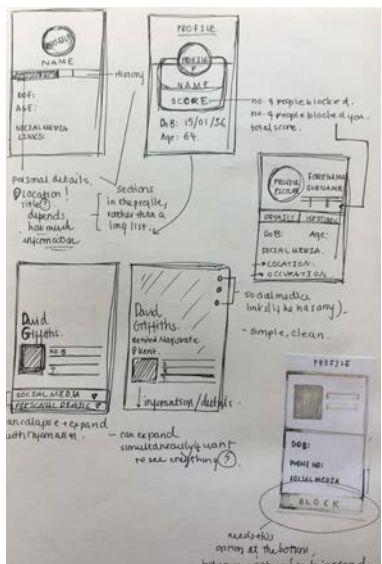
^ Figure 19: Visual research on avatar selection/ customisation - Apple being quite an influencer due to their success of 'Animoji'



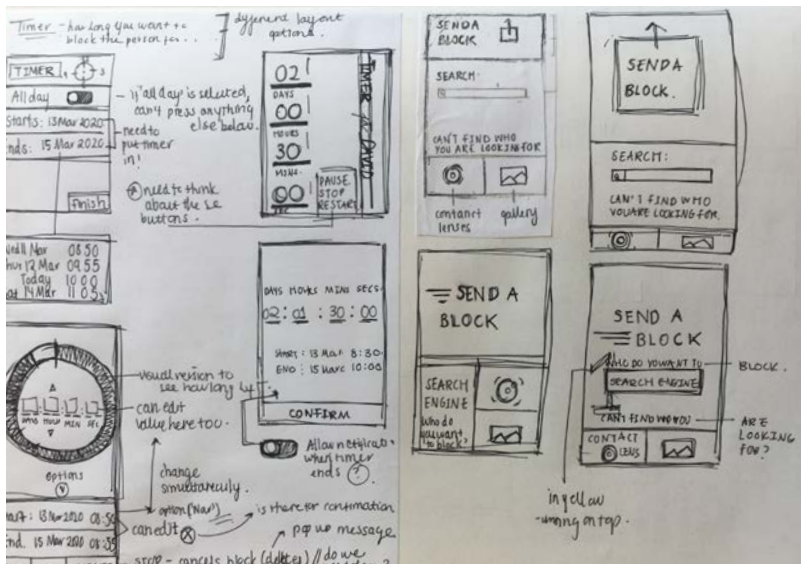
^ Figure 20: Sketches of how the avatar selection is going to work in response to the visual material



< Figure 21: Visual research on blocked layouts



^ Figure 22: A variety of sketches on profile layouts



^ Figure 23: Sketches focusing on the timer feature and 'send a block' home screen

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MEDIUM FIDELITY WIRE FRAMES

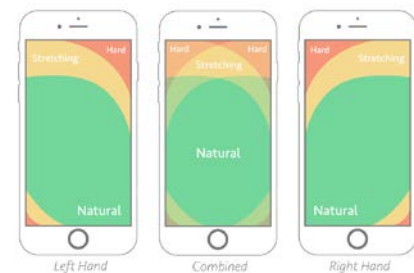
Whilst the low fidelity purposely focused on layout, at this stage it was also about the specific features present on each screen, such as the logo, menu and the back button.

When transforming the sketches into digital versions, these features were focused a lot more. Initially the logo was positioned at the top left-hand side, which was then replaced with the slide out menu and the logo moved to the centre. However, a realisation was that when a back button was needed, there was nowhere to place it other than the top right-hand side, which is counter intuitive. There was no plan to move the menu to the right as a lot of apps such as Uber (Figure 25) have placed their menu to the left, so it would make sense for this app to do the same for user efficiency. There was some thought into having a bottom navigation bar, but this was not favourable as more space would be used up. The solution was that perhaps there was not a need for a back button but instead to treat the interface like magic - so a swipe action might be more suitable instead (Figure 27).

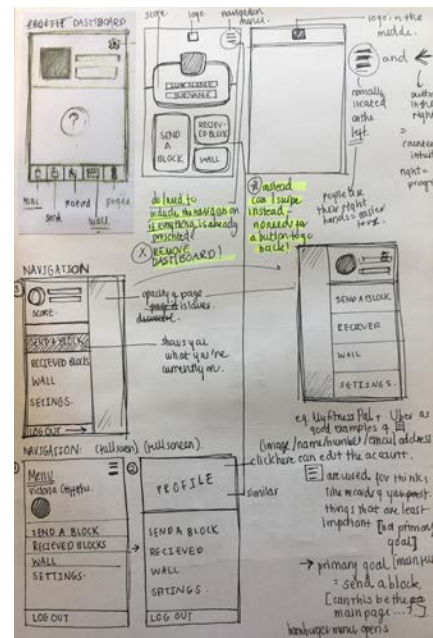
This led onto other features that did not need to be included visually because they do not aid/relate to the function. Design trends from research suggest that simplicity is key. For instance, the logo does not need to appear on every screen – just the significant ones. Moreover, the slide out menu is not needed for the dashboard as the content is literally repeated. The decision was to not include the dashboard (as shown in the sitemap and prototype) in order to reduce the user flow and have 'send a block' as the homepage instead. Like Uber, the function is the homepage, there is nothing else which directs the user to the function beforehand.

From observing Facebook and their design features, this aided the desired interaction and design of the search bar. Visual research was also done on different call to action layouts and language. This is important to help give a sense of what is going to happen when users interact.

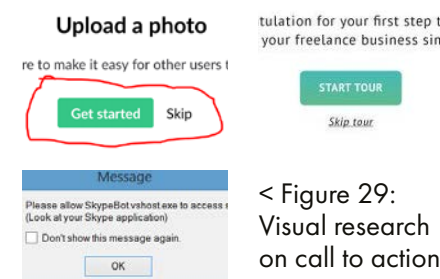
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^ Figure 24: This illustration was used as a guide to help position the features for user efficiency

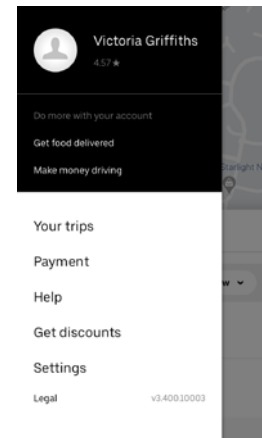


^ Figure 28: Development showing the replacement of the dashboard with a slide out menu featuring the same content



< Figure 29: Visual research on call to action

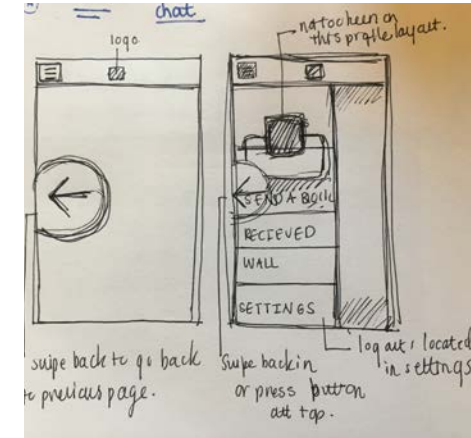
> Figure 30: Medium fidelity wire frame showing more ideas and developments of each screen



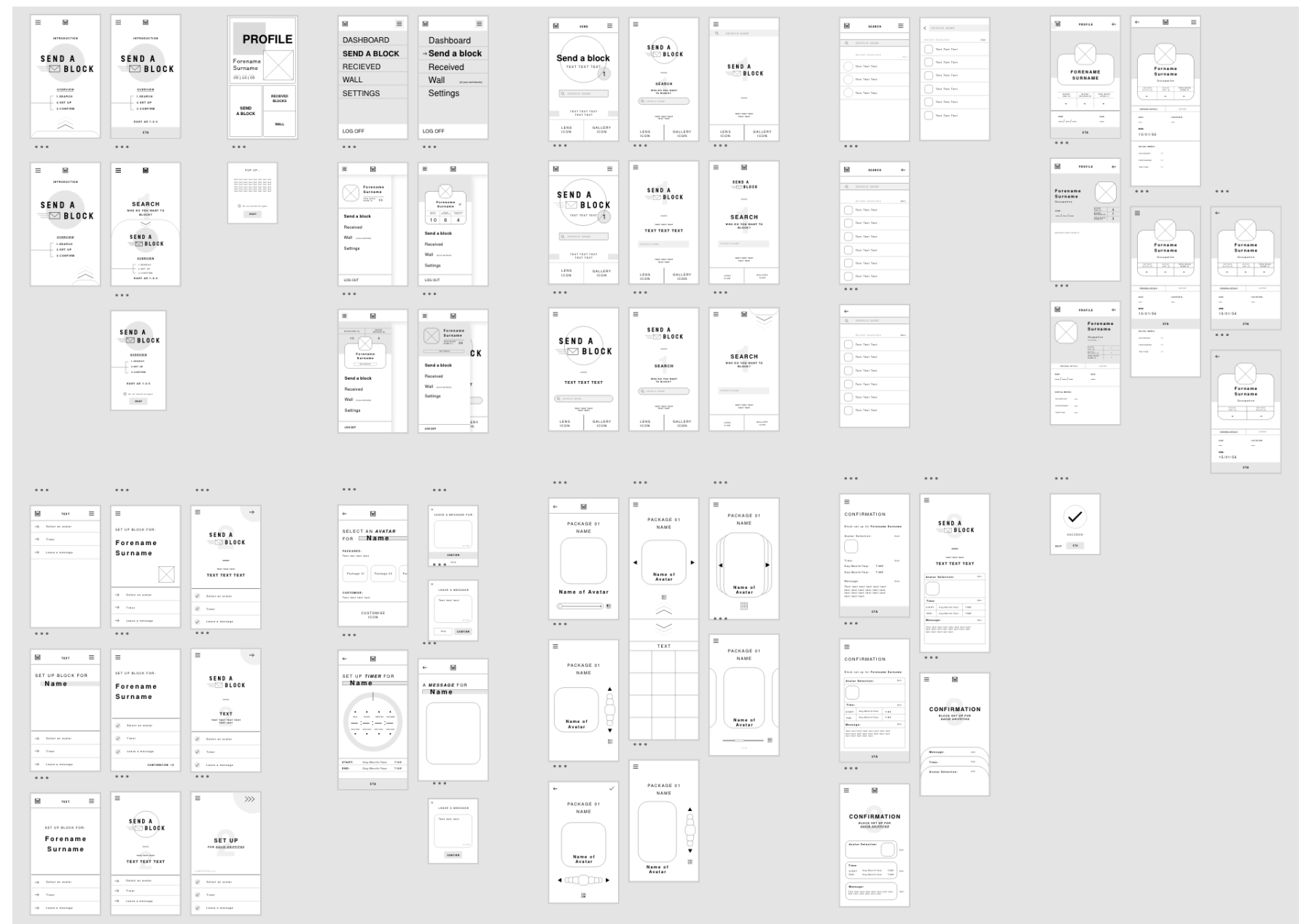
< Figure 25: Screenshot of Uber's slide out menu and behind is the opening screen



< Figure 26: Screenshot of Facebook's search bar



< Figure 27: A sketch showing that there is no need for a back button



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

HIGH FIDELITY WIRE FRAMES

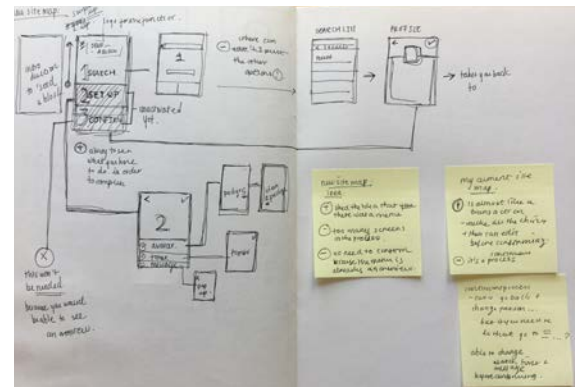
Figure 34 contains high-fi wireframes that were refinements from the previous page. Images, colours and shadows brought the wireframe to life and were experimented on in this section. As previously mentioned, the yellow colour palette was more successful in communicating the app in a serious but lively way.

During this stage, a realisation was that there was no way for the user to see how long the process was or their progress. Figure 31 presents a new user flow to amend this problem – however, after careful consideration it was actually not the best option because it added unnecessary screens to the process. It was basically a larger version of the stage 2 (set up) where users were able to return back to a menu, but it ended up being too repetitive and confusing. It was better to maintain the user flow that was already considered as it was a continuous process, like a transaction, which could be edited at the end before activating.

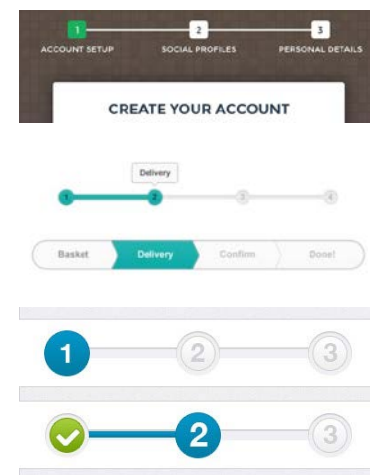
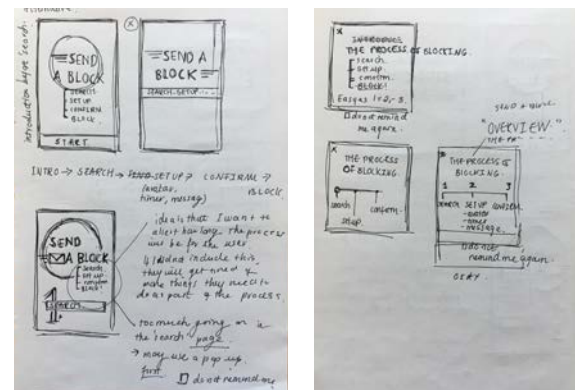
Instead, Figure 32 are developments of how to notify the user of the progress. The solution was to create an introductory pop up of the progress that the user could choose not to be reminded about. Although this did communicate the process to the user at the beginning, it does not follow the user throughout the process.

More research on progress trackers helped and a few images in particular (Figure 33) aided the development of progress trackers which are situated at every significant screen (search, set up, confirmation). This meant that users would be able to see how far into the process they were. Quite a few that were seen in research also allowed them to go back to previous stages which could be incorporated into this app too. Figure 35 are screens of various progress trackers which were finally tested on each significant screen to make sure they were consistent. Moreover, simple illustrations were also developed and adjusted so that the screens were not overcrowded. Illustrations were used to make the pages more significant and less empty, whilst creating an amicable atmosphere.

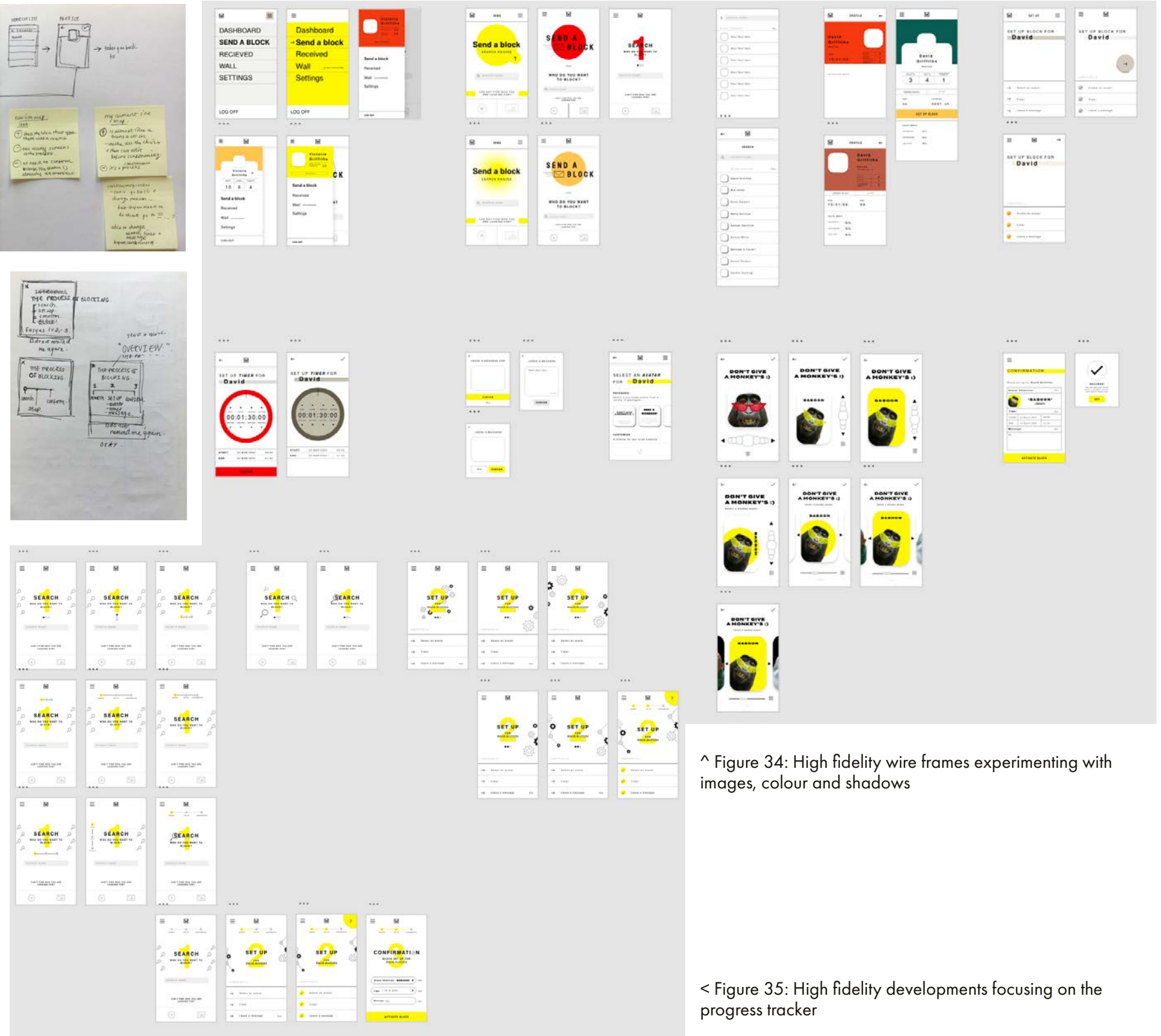
> Figure 31: Sketches of potential new user flow



> Figure 32: Pop up sketches about the process



^ Figure 33: Progress tracker visual research



^ Figure 34: High fidelity wire frames experimenting with images, colour and shadows

< Figure 35: High fidelity developments focusing on the progress tracker

PROJECT

'METALENS' BRANDING

The logo for 'Metalens' was inspired by 'Asia Networks' metaphor of symbol' (Figure 6) where symbolic elements were joined to create a new logo. Similarly, this was done for 'Metalens' in relation to its function of sending and receiving blocks. Figure 37 breaks down the different elements.

The colours emphasise that there is a function with both seriousness and light heartedness. The bright yellow symbolises positivity – idea of making a bad situation or experience less hurtful or unpleasant. The darker colours add professionalism and sophistication to the app. The colour palette is gender neutral and contemporary which adheres to the target audience as well.

The typefaces used are sans serif because it communicates simplicity and honesty of the brand. As mentioned previously, a serif font does not fit the app function – there is nothing pretty or decorative about it. It is purely to do a specific function.

SMARTPHONE APP

The fundamental aspect of this app is to set up a block. Research on existing apps and analysing their features greatly aided the design process as shown through development, which is similar to a transaction in some way. The design of each screen is consistent, minimal and simple because it serves a purpose with a clear hierarchy. Illustrations are used as an indication that the screen is significant, but also creates a carefree atmosphere. The packages also tries to be witty reflected through the choice of unique typefaces, text and images.

For future developments, ideas such as allowing users to block themselves from other people's vision; including limits so the user does not lose control and notifications the user may receive from the app have been considered.

The following page is the final wireframe with annotations (Figure 40).

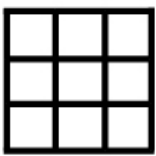
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Figure 36: Metalens logo



letter 'M'
'M' is for 'Metalens'



grid of blocks
literal illustration of blocks



envelope
related to the function of sending and receiving

Figure 37: Breakdown of Metalens logo

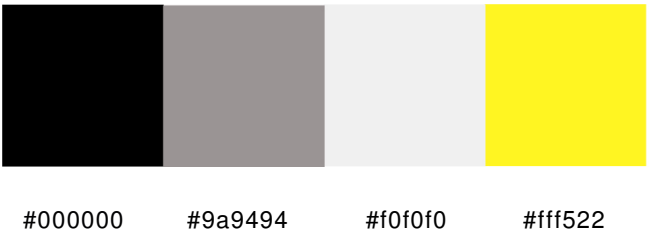


Figure 38: Colour palette

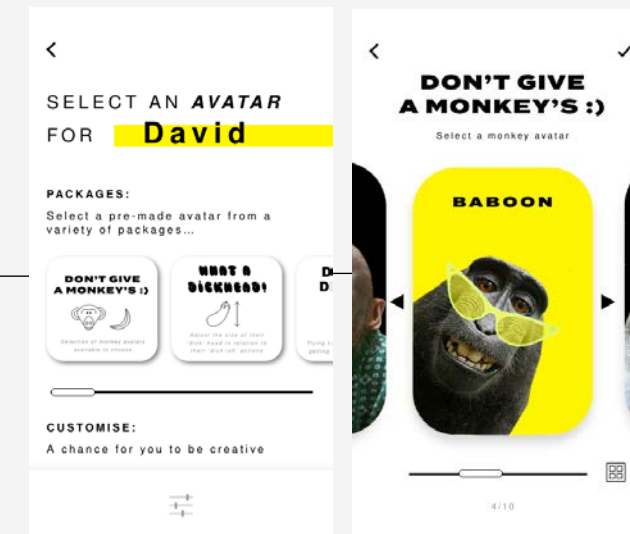
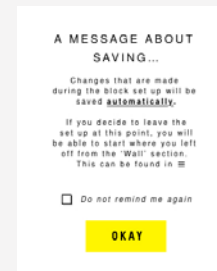
Reglo
Nimbus Sans L Bold
Nimbus Sans L Regular

Figure 39: Main typefaces used



< When entering the app, a pop up will appear showing the main features of the function. The user has the ability to tick and not be reminded each time they enter.

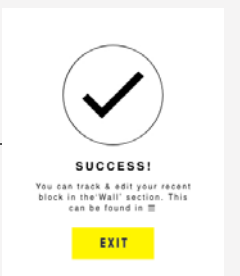
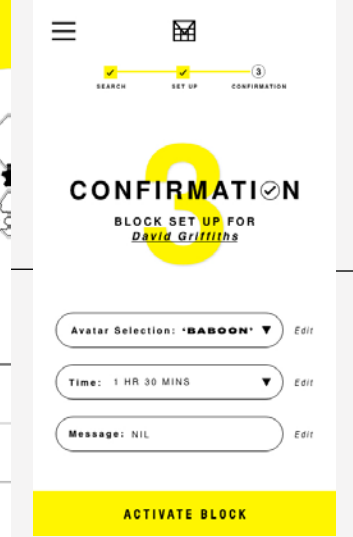
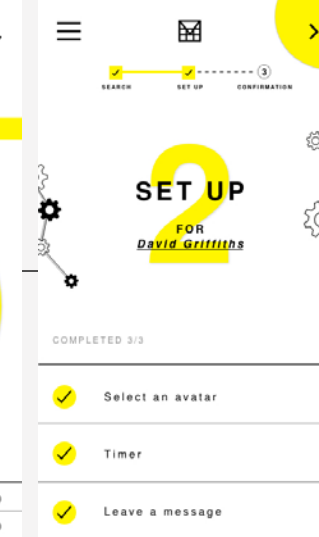
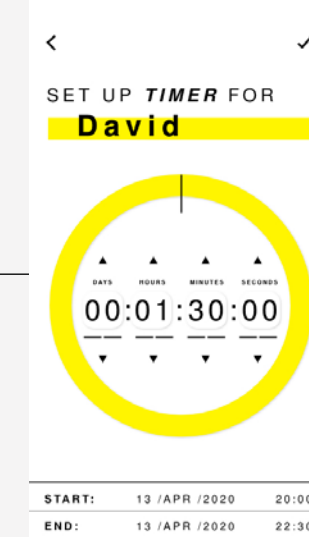
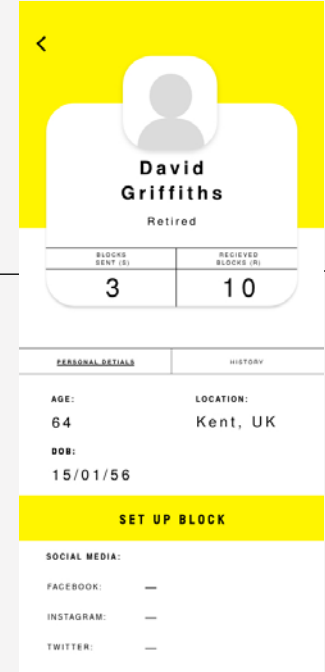
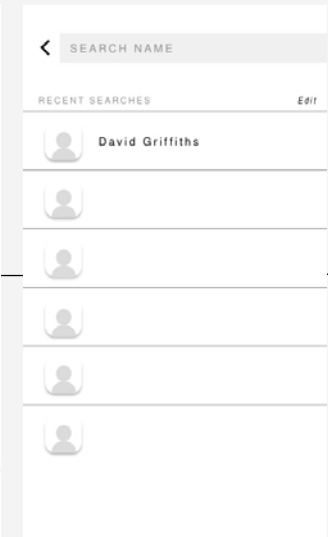
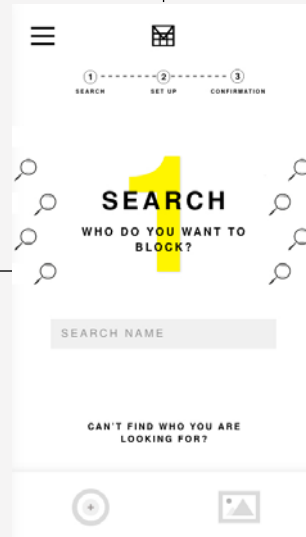
> A pop up message about saving. The user again has the ability to stop being reminded before 'SET UP' begins.



< When the user selects an avatar, the background will turn yellow as an indication.

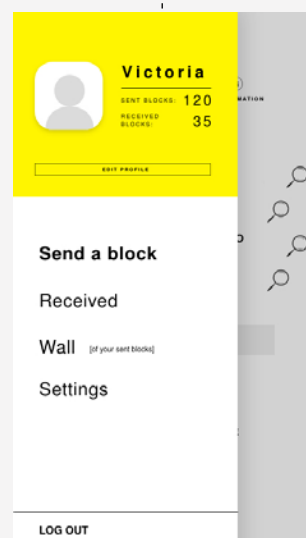
< The user can also change the layout of the avatars by selecting the grid at the bottom right.

When the tick button is pressed, it will bring the user back to the 'SET UP' with a yellow tick by it to show it has been completed.



^ At the start, there is potential in developing a animated logo in relation to the loading %.

> Affordances - when the user taps on the recognisable hamburger icon, a slide out menu will appear. The user is able to edit their profile or go to other features of the app. To continue with the block, the user can swipe the menu back in.



^ When the user interacts with the bar from the 'SEARCH' screen, it transitions to a new screen where the bar shifts to the top. The user can type in or select a name from the recent searches (inspired by Facebook).

If the user can not find who they are looking for using the search bar, other options (the smart lenses/ gallery) are also available if returned to the previous screen.

^ After selecting a person from the previous screen, their profile will appear. The details are there to ensure that the right person is about to be blocked. The user can scroll to see social media links as well.

^ Instead of treating the interface as magic by swiping to go back to the previous screen (previously mentioned), the progress tracker can be used instead.

Throughout this whole process, the name of who the user is blocking is clearly stated. This is useful for users in general that are easily distracted or in need of some assurance during this process.



^ After each section is completed (in any order), a tick will appear to let the user know that this is the last and final stage before going live.

Once there are 3 ticks, an arrow will appear at the top right hand corner indicating to go to the next stage of the process: confirmation.

^ Predictable language like 'activate block' is used to let the user know that this is the last and final stage before going live.

^ Feedback response which gives the user a clear indication that the block was successful (inspired by Facebook and Instagram).

Once the user has clicked 'exit', they will be returned to the 'SEARCH' screen, where they can process another block or use the hamburger menu to access more features.

REFERENCES

BRANDING

Typefaces:

Nimbus Sans L - <https://open-foundry.com/fonts>
Reglo - <https://open-foundry.com/fonts>

WIREFRAME

Images:

Monkey (centre) - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macaca_nigra_self-portrait_\(rotated_and_cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macaca_nigra_self-portrait_(rotated_and_cropped).jpg)
Moneky (left) - <https://www.askideas.com/22-funniest-monkey-face-pictures-that-will-make-you-laugh/>
Monkey (right) - same link as above
Glasses on (centre) monkey - https://www.matchesfashion.com/products/1274433?country=GBR&rffrid=sem.Google.n=g.cid=1755541412.aid=71570253547.k=.mty=.d=c.adp=.cr=341568394312.iid=pla-841965075251.pid=1274433000001.ppid=841965075251.lpm=9045133.adty=pla.prl=en&utm_content=1274433000001&utm_term=841965075251.%5bvalue%5d.&gclid=Cj0KCQjwybD0BRDyARIsACyS8mv3Jm_YnB8_3xd69ZdzvNwWPde8vFBao8kEnOAA_lyw1Nx8Ql58UaAmwPEAlw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds

Reference Images (images that inspired and aided illustrations)

Settings icon - https://www.flaticon.com/free-icon/settings_126472
Setting icon #2 - https://www.iconfinder.com/icons/1037075/cog_cogs_gear_gears_mechanism_preferences_settings_icon
Moneky icon - https://www.iconfinder.com/icons/1999734/ape_chimp_chimpanzee_macaco_monkey_primate_icon
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Magnifying glass - <https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/magnifying-glass-icon-magnifier-isolated-vector-9713929>
Egg plant - <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/eggplant>
Egg plant #2 - <https://www.dictionary.com/e/emoji/eggplant-emoji/>