DZone: An interactive platform for designers seeking and sharing ideas.

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DZone
An interactive platform for designers seeking and sharing ideas.

By Yidie Xue

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

School of Design
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1.0 Abstract

DZone: An interactive platform for designers seeking and sharing ideas.

Using interaction design, graphic design and social media to create an application that will provide a place for designers to find inspiration and gather feedback about their projects.

The principle of design is to create something both beautiful and effective. However, not all designs are created equal. There are plenty of inefficient designs in existence. The reason is not because of bad designers, but because of the lacking platforms for designers to communicate and test their designs.

There are many tools available, both application and website, for designers to express their ideas. However, the majority of these resources are focused on sharing project on the social media and treat it like an element of personal portfolio. Platforms for designers to actually test their project, gathering critical product-developing feedback is limited.

A common need designers have is a place to seek feedback and share inspiration for their projects. This thesis project is an app that will fulfill that need. At the beginning of a new project, users could use the application to seek inspiration through others designs, local events or locations. During the process, users could post their ideas to gather feedback to improve the project. Upon finishing the design, users could share their project where other users can also share their opinions and ideas.

DZone creates a simple and efficient way for designers to share and find ideas. It combines graphic, interaction and user experience design. The user interface and interactivity will be prototyped for an iOS device. The thesis will focus on the usability test of several groups of people in different ages and genders.
2.0 Introduction
2.1 Problem Statement

Design could be considered an art form by some. However there are some rather large differences to note. Design is more complex. Besides merely looking the part, something well-designed must make intuitive sense to the user. For this reason, it is very important for designers to test their designs with users. Visuals in design are important, but not all-encompassing. Getting inspired and becoming creative is a necessity for any designer. While there are lots of interactive tools for designers to share the ideas, there are none that allow designers to seek inspiration locally and gather specific feedback for their projects. There is a common need for a platform for designers to gather that inspiration, but also communicate and improve their designs. DZone is a solution to that need, a one-stop shop for designers' resources.

After researching about the design process, there are several problems that occur when designers are creating their projects. Firstly, before starting a design, designers need inspiration. The way someone gets inspired varies from person to person. Some like to view similar projects while others prefer somewhere beautiful and quiet or a meaningful event. Secondly, it is hard for designers to gather feedback for some specifics they might have questions about. Asking friends or family for feedback may gain some insight, but problems arise as they are not the target users, nor professionals. This type of feedback can not only be frustrating, but can turn out to be a waste of time and energy altogether. Last but not least, a lot of designers enjoy talking with people who has similar background but different experience which could cause them to improve in unexpected ways, or achieve a higher motivation than they begin a project with. Overall, designers really need a platform that will cover all three points for them to improve their projects.
2.1 Problem Statement

Through a comprehensive design, the goal of this thesis is to create a platform for designers to become inspired and improve their work. DZone focuses on graphic, user interaction and user experience design. When a new project is started, users can find their inspirations in different ways depending on their preferences. During the process, they could set up custom questions to gather feedback in the specific areas needed for the project. Moreover, they could communicate their ideas and opinions with other users in the design field.
2.2 Situation Analysis

Inspiration plays a significant role in the whole design process. Designers usually get inspiration from different places, events or some specific item but it is hard for designers to gather all of this creative information by themselves. Usually, designers will use an application or website to find what they want, however there is limited information online. Secondly, feedback plays a crucial role in any design. The purpose of any design project is to fit both user’s lifestyle and personal preferences. So it is very important the designer gathers enough feedback from the target audience. However, finding people to gather the specific feedback is not easy. You can either ask friends and family or a stranger you meet on the street. Therefore, an application for designers seeking inspiration and feedback is needed to ease the whole design process.

There are some existing websites and applications already available to designers for finding and sharing ideas. After reviewing many of the websites and application for designers to share their ideas, it became clear they all fell into two categories:

1. Personal Portfolio (Behance, Pinterest, etc...)

These sites allow designers to gather all kinds of different designs and art work that can serve as inspiration and also get feedback from others. However, it is too limited for them to obtain feedback only on a specific project. The current feedback system for these sites is only the comments section in which designers would not be able to ask a specific question during the process.

2. Feedbacks Gathering (Google Survey, FluidSurveys, etc...)

These sites and apps are more focused on gathering feedback from the target audience which is perfect for a finished project but when it comes to gathering professional feedback during the design process, it might not be the best tool. It also can’t help designers to get inspired.
2.2 Situation Analysis

Overall, there are very limited resources out there to help designers with the whole design process. DZone will create a simple and efficient way for designers to seek and share ideas, inspiration and feedback. It will be the perfect platform for designers to talk, become creative and improve their projects.

This thesis project will contribute to the field of design. It will help designers create more user friendly designs which can improve quality of live for users. DZone will be an application that will combine various elements of design. Through user interface, user experience, graphic design, designers can create any project more efficiently.
2.3 Thesis Statement

The tools available to designers to improve their projects during the design process is very limited. They would need to use various websites or applications to gather comprehensive help for their project. DZone will provide a perfect platform for designers to enhance and communicate their work. It will also show people who are interested in the design industry how design works, letting them witness the process in action.
3.0 Research
3.1 Survey of Literature

Books

**Graphic Design - Now in Production**


This book is a very good resource to learn about the contemporary graphic design. Graphic design is changed by the time, it is very important to reset designer's mind when the technology has been improved.


This Book is about the history of graphic design which has a lot of historical graphic design works. It organizes lots of varies resources, branding identity, magazines, posters and other design works. A helpful book for all designers. It will definitely inspire and remind people of the beginning and the main purpose of graphic design. It will definitely help to improve the your own design work.
3.1 Survey of Literature

Books


A book that combines a lot of elements such as persona, and experience map, user flows and usability test. A lot of UX technique have been taught in the book. It also gives a clear design process steps which lead the interaction designer to design more user friendly interface.

Mobile Design Pattern Gallery: UI Patterns for Mobile Applications


When comes to UI design, good patterns are very important. A successful pattern system will improve the whole visual feeling in a user interface. This useful UI book provides over 90 design patterns, which illustrated by 1,000 screen shots from current Android, iOS, and Windows Phone apps.
3.1 Survey of Literature

Books

**Essential Mobile Interaction Design: Perfecting Interface Design in Mobile Apps**


Mobile applications should be easy to navigate and use. Effective user experience and interface design is vital to achieve this goal. This book brings together a lot of interaction design principles and techniques you can use in your next applications for any platform, target device, or user. It is a good book for designer to read and improve their user interface to become more and more user friendly.

**UI Is Communication: How to Design Intuitive, User Centered Interfaces by Focusing on Effective Communication.**


User interface design has always been a challenge. Design a perfect user interface requires understanding a wide range of design principles and techniques. User center design is very important to all the interaction designers. This book provides very detailed information about the user centered interface design.
3.1 Survey of Literature

Online Articles

*Design Process: A look at our life-cycle flow to help you develop better products.*

https://zurb.com/word/design-process
Accessed November 19, 2017

This article describe the lifestyle of designers and what will help a designer to create better project. It has a lot of detail about the process of the design.

*Top artists reveal how to find creative inspiration*

https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2012/jan/02/top-artists-creative-inspiration
Accessed November 19, 2017

There are 4 artists shared their way to get inspired during their design or creative projects. The different inspiration ideas lead to the understanding of how to find inspiration.

*The Rise of the Designer as Life Coach: Creativities who focus on meaning and motivation are finding broad audiences*

https://magenta.as/the-rise-of-the-designer-as-life-coach-cce50c6aa73e
Accessed November 19, 2017

The article have a wide range of method to help designers to find inspiration. It also explained how inspiration will affect the creativity of the designs.
3.1 Survey of Literature

Websites

**www.behance.net**

*Accessed November 19, 2017*

This is a famous website for designers to sharing their projects and even make it as a personal portfolio. It also can be a place for designers to get inspiration from the other projects.

**www.yelp.com**

*Accessed November 19, 2017*

The purpose of yelp is to searching for nice restaurant and cafe. It also can be a tool for designers to seek inspiration locations to create their project.

**www.meetup.com**

*Accessed November 19, 2017*

Meet up is mainly for people who is new to town to find some events and meet someone new. It has some creativity events for designers and artists to get inspiration.
3.1 Survey of Literature

Applications

Survey Monkey

Accessed November 19, 2017

An app that helps designers to create survey forms to gather feedback for their project.

Havenly: Interior Design Ideas

Accessed November 19, 2017

An app for interior designers to get inspiration and feedback. A platform for them to get more job opportunity.

LBB - Discover Your City

Accessed November 19, 2017

An app which allows you to find nearby places to eat, shop & more.
3.2 Competitive Analysis

Behance

https://www.behance.net/

Behance is a network of sites and services specializing in self-promotion, including consulting and online portfolio sites. A lot of designers and artists choose to use Behance to share their projects because of the diversified and well designed pages. They also like to use it as an inspiration tool to seek similar projects to their work. Generally speaking, it is a successful social network for designers and artists.

**Strengths**

- Easy Navigation
- Nice Visual Design
- The ability to share ideas and projects
- Ability to find Inspiration
- Can connect with other social media sites

**Weaknesses**

- Not able to gather feedback
- Limited ways to get inspired
- Limited support mechanisms during the design process
- Hard to have good conversations with people in similar backgrounds
3.2 Competitive Analysis

Yelp
https://www.yelp.com/

Yelp is a social network that help people to find different places (restaurants, cafes, bars, etc...) It is a place for people to seek new and hot locations in the city. It provides various places and events for people to choose to go. However, it is not specifically for designers and artists, it is for people who are new to town and want explore new places.

Strengths
• Easy to use
• Visually nice looking
• Has provided a lot of locations and events for people
• Has a useful and easy feedback system

Weaknesses
• Not specifically for designers
• There are not a lot of creative locations and events provided
• Not able to gather feedback for project
• Not helpful during design process
3.2 Competitive Analysis

Meet up
https://www.meetup.com/

Meetup is an online social network service for people to organize or join off-line group meetings in various cities around the world. Meetup members can find and join groups with a common interest. It is a perfect place to organize a group and meet people who are creative but it is not convenient that you have to be somewhere to talk to people and share the projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could create your own events</td>
<td>Not specifically for designers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to meet people with the</td>
<td>Can’t find inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same interests</td>
<td>Hard to get feedback if not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to use and navigate</td>
<td>going to the Meetups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and simple look</td>
<td>Not helpful during design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have creative Meetups</td>
<td>process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Competitive Analysis

Google Forms Surveys
https://www.google.com/forms/

Google Surveys provides both a web interface with which to design the survey as well as the audience that takes the survey. It mainly helps marketing groups to gather what the real people are thinking. It is also used for designers to get feedback from their target audience to improve their work. It is a very useful tool for gathering ideas.

**Strengths**
- Survey results can be guaranteed
- Selectable target audience
- Clean and simple look
- Connected to all the social networks

**Weaknesses**
- Not specifically for designers
- Can be confusing for beginners
- No help with Inspiration
- Not helpful during design process
3.3 Factors to Consider

After researching competitive designs, it was found there is not a lot out there to help designers during the whole design process. Most designers usually design their projects without getting any help. It is very important to have a platform for them to communicate and get the professional help they need. To accomplish this goal, an application will be created. There are few factors that need to be considered.

- **Accessibility and Ease of Use**

  The most important part of designing an application should be how to make it functionally accessible for users during various scenarios. DZone has many different functions, a simple and clear direction is needed to show users how to use the application and have less confusion.

- **Visual Composition**

  It is imperative to create a clear and nice looking application. A reasonable color choice, clear font and the typographic hierarchy are the three main parts of designing a good looking application.

- **Social Media**

  Nowadays, social media plays a big role in people’s life. Using social media to help designers during the design process is necessary for DZone. It will bring more people who has similar background to use the application and be connected.
3.4 Target Audience

The target audience for the DZone application is mainly mature designers, age 20 and up. While this application can be used by artists and people who are creative too. They will be interested in creating anything such as paintings, websites, graphic, etc... DZone will help them during the design process and provide a platform for them to communicate and share their ideas.

While some designers might not be familiar with new technology, DZone application is easy to navigate and understand, even for those with a rudimentary knowledge of tablets or smart phones.
3.4.1 Interviews

Since DZone is an application that designed primarily for designers, understanding what designers really need is very important to the whole design process. A survey was presented to 4 industrial designers, 4 interior designers and 4 visual communication designers. They were asked a few basic questions:

**Starting a project**

1. What will you do when you start a new project?
2. How do you get yourself inspired?
3. Will you go talk to people before start the project?

**During a project**

1. Where are you usually working on your project?
2. What will you do when you facing a problem or issue?
3. What’s usually the hardest part for you?

**Finishing a project**

1. Where or how are you gathering the feedback for your projects?
2. Can you find anyone who’s in your field to ask for feedback?
3. How do you improve your design after the feedback?
3.4.1 Interviews

Results

Starting a project

1. 8 out of 12 designers said they will surf the Internet for similar projects to find some ideas, 4 out of 12 people said they will go to museums, galleries and other places to find inspiration.

2. Designers' answers vary from person to person. Some designers said they get inspired from a painting or photo, while others said they just relaxed and suddenly know what to do, Some even said this can be done simply by having a conversation with Co-workers or friends.

3. 12 out of 12 designers said they will talk to their classmate or co-workers about their project and ask for some feedback before they start their work.
3.4.1 Interviews

Results

During a project

1. 12 out of 12 designers said they usually just work in the lab or office. However if they need to bring the work home, 10 out of 12 designers said they usually will go to a cafe, library or park during summer time. 2 out of 12 designers choose to work at home.

2. 8 out of 12 said they usually figure things out by themselves using online resources. 4 out of 12 said they would ask their professor, co-workers and / or classmates.

3. The answer is varies of this questions.
   • When putting design ideas into practice
   • Brainstorming the design ideas
   • Software not working correctly
   • Being asked to keep revising the designs
   • Not have enough time to think
3.4.1 Interviews

Results

Finishing a project

1. 12 out of 12 said they usually will ask their co-workers, classmates and / or clients for feedback.

2. 6 out of 12 said they have friends in same field who can give them feedback to help them improve their work, the others said it is hard for them to find people who can help them

3. 12 out of 12 designers said they not totally follow the feedback they got, they usually just improve some part which they think is necessary and ignore the others.
3.4.2 User Personas

Mike Wang

Mike is an interior designer who is pursuing his Master’s degree in Rochester Institute of Technology. When there is a new project assigned, he usually surfs Internet and goes to nice cafe for ideas. He also enjoys talking to his classmates and professors and he would like to know more people with the same background. He think it will be helpful to have a platform to share the ideas and get help during the design process.

Goals/Needed

- Meet more people with similar background
- Have a place to talk to people to get inspired
- A map that will show creativity locations for inspiration
- Getting help when facing a problem that suddenly occurred
- Join or host a creative event to help others or personal project.
- Surfing for project inspiration and helping others at same time.
- Easy to use and navigate

Personality

- Extrovert
- Intuitive
- Socially Active
- Creativity

Technology

- Software
- Mobile Apps
- Social Network

Background

Age: 26
Gender: Male
Status: Single
Occupation: Interior Designer
Nationality: Chinese
Location: Rochester, NY
Device: IPhone 7

Figure 1. User Persona
Image Source: Shutterstock.com
3.4.2 User Personas

Samantha Baily

Samantha is a UI/UX designer in a design studio for 6 years. She enjoys doing her job and using a lot of social media to post her projects and life. She has a lot of designer friends and they are always inspiring her. When she starts a project, she loves going to a national park to bring herself back to nature. She said it is a little hard to get specific feedback for her project. The other tools out there are not very efficient.

**Goals/Needed**

- Share more projects with friends and co-workers
- Connect with popular social media
- A specific and detailed feedback form to gather feedback
- Sharing opinion and ideas to help other’s work
- An easy way to find nice parks to get inspiration
- Visually nice and clean look
- Could get feedback as soon as possible
- Join events to share ideas

**Personality**

- Extrovert
- Intuitive
- Socially Active
- Creativity

**Technology**

- Software
- Mobile Apps
- Social Network

**Background**

- Age: 35
- Gender: Female
- Status: Single
- Occupation: UI/UX Designer
- Nationality: American
- Location: Rochester, NY
- Device: IPhone 6 plus

*Figure 2. User Persona*

*Image Source: Shutterstock.com*
3.4.2 User Scenarios

Seeking Idea Map

Figure 3. User Experience Flow
3.4.2 User Scenarios

Sharing Idea Map

Figure 4. User Experience Flow
3.5 Goals & Objectives

According to research and interviews conducted, the ultimate goals and objectives of this project is to provide an platform to help designers during the design process. Here are some of main functions that DZone has:

• Providing creative locations and events for inspiration
• Sharing ideas and inspiration with others
• Organizing creative events to help projects
• Quick Feedback for the project
• Professional help during the process
• Easy to seek and share ideas
• Communicating with people in the same background
• Gathering specific feedback for the project
4.0 Design Process
4.1 Design Methodology

**Approach**

**Research**
Researching existing websites and applications meant for designers to communicate their ideas. Asking designers what feedback they want to gather and at which step will they want to talk to people during the design process.

**Collect & Reflect**
Organize all the research, information and take some time to think about both how to help users to use the application easily and efficiently and what do users really need during the process.

**Brainstorm**
Thinking about the contents and functions of the application. Finding references and decide the design information, interface, user experience and visuals.

**Implement**
Design Flowchart, Information Architecture, Wire frames of the application Create application logo, visual style, icons, graphic elements and user interface Prototype the application.

**Usability testing**
Collecting feedbacks from four groups of the target audience. Evaluate and push further.

**Final Product**
Prototyped IOS Application

**Presentation and further dissemination**
Presentation and thesis show
4.2 Design Ideation

Sketches have been made during the entire design process to improve the usability. They helped create ideas into specific concepts. Visual style, icons, user flows, contents, and all user interfaces in the DZone were developed through these sketches.

Figure 3. Sample of Idea Sketches
4.2 Design Ideation

Figure 4. Sample of Idea Sketches
4.2 Design Ideation

Figure 5. Sample of Idea Sketches
4.3 Flowchart

Figure 6. DZone Flowchart
4.4 Paper Prototypes

Before creating wireframes, paper prototypes were created to reduce mistakes and to test the contents, layout, and functionality of DZone.

Figure 7. Paper Prototype
4.4 Paper Prototypes

Figure 8. Paper Prototype
4.4 Paper Prototypes

Figure 9. Paper Prototype
4.4 Paper Prototypes

Figure 10. Paper Prototype
4.5 Wireframes

Wireframes were made by using Adobe XD. They are designed for the purpose of laying out the user interface elements and experimenting the functionality and usability.

Figure 9. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 10. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 11. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 12. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 13. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 14. Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

**Figure 15.** Wireframes
4.5 Wireframes

Figure 16. Wireframes
4.6 Logo Design
4.6.1 Logo Sketches

The original idea of the Logo is to combine the letter "D" & "Z" together to create a symbol that is clean simple and creative.

Figure 16. Logo Sketches
4.6.2 Final Design

Color Palettes

Using the color of blue and green create a clean and nice look and the decent gradient color brings a realistic and relaxed sensation to the logo.

Figure 17. Grid System for Logo
4.6.1 Logo Sketches

**Concept**

A simple logo design that combines D & Z which represent 'Design' and 'Zone'.

*Figure 18. Logo Concept*

*Figure 19. Logo Design*
4.7 Visual Design
SF Pro Display Fonts are chosen because it is easy to read due to the simplicity of each letter and it is very recognizable even in smaller sizes. This font is also the system font for IOS, so when the user uses DZone, it can be matched with the IOS system.

SF Pro Display Light

SF Pro Display Regular

SF Pro Display Medium

*SF Pro Display Medium Italic*

SF Pro Display Semi bold

*SF Pro Display Semi bold Italic*

SF Pro Display Bold

*SF Pro Display Bold Italic*

SF Pro Display Heavy

*SF Pro Display Heavy Italic*
The color palette for the DZone were selected based on the logo color choice. Expanding from the simple blue and green to a color scheme of gradient from light to dark. It creates a delightful and clean feeling for the app.
4.8 Final Prototype

Introduction

Figure 20. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Login / Sign up

![Login/Sign up interface](image)

Choose the area you interested in
- Graphic design
- Interaction design
- Industrial design
- 3D & Motion design
- Illustrations

![Profile picture upload](image)

Upload Profile Picture

![Sign up with social media](image)

Sign up with Facebook
Sign up with Google

![Sign up form](image)

E-mail/ User Name
Password
Login

New here? Click to Sign up

Already have an account? Click here to login

Figure 20. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Menu

Figure 21. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Seeking Inspiration

Figure 22. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Seeking Inspiration

Figure 23. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Seeking event & Payment

Figure 24. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Seeking Project

Figure 25. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Sharing Project

Figure 26. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Sharing Location

Figure 27. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Sharing Events

Figure 28. Final Prototype


4.8 Final Prototype

Live Chat & Profile

Figure 29. Final Prototype
4.8 Final Prototype

Prototype Link  https://xd.adobe.com/view/79580292-5e76-4e33-bea7-11fe307a0db0
5.0 Summary
5.1 Usability Test

Usability testing was conducted to evaluate the DZone application and collect feedback from the target audience. The participants were divided to 4 groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Designers</td>
<td>3 participates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction Designers</td>
<td>3 participates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Designers</td>
<td>3 participates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Designers and Artists</td>
<td>3 participates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants will be interviewed about their ideas and problems they face during the design process and they will be asked to fill a feedback form and present their opinions after they used the app.
5.1.1 Questions

Feedback Form

DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

Name: ____________________________________________ Major/Occupation: ____________________________

1. Overall User Experience
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Easy Navigation
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Visual Style
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Content
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Clarity of Information
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Usability
   Terrible  
   Excellent
   1 2 3 4 5

Other Comments

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
5.1.2 Results

Overall, results were extremely positive and encouraging. However, few problems were discovered during usability testing. Here are some results in four main categories of the final test.

• **Overall User Experience**

  Most participants liked the ideas and visual style. They thought that this app was easy to navigate, reasonable to use and visually appealing. Users said that the app’s User interface and experience are very user friendly and they would definitely use it for their future projects.

• **Easy Navigation**

  Most participants completed their tasks without asking questions. There was an issue where some participants were confused in trying to find the project list to share feedback. They were unsure whether they should click on the seeking or sharing part.

• **Visual Style**

  All the participants thought the app visually look really good. Clear and readable fonts, with reasonable and clean color choice. However, some of the designers have a little problem with the icon on the app. They liked it for its clean and simple look but the meaning of the icon was said to be unclear.
5.1.2 Results

• Content

Users wanted all links to work on Adobe XD for the interactive prototype. Some of the participants were confused by uploading customized feedback. They thought it should provide easy choices for basic questions - not needing to type everything in. The other participants thought the text of the app is a bit confusing.

• Clarity of Information

The participants thought the app was easy to read and the paragraph was mostly reasonable and understandable. There were some parts of the app that were confusing to read, but overall it was easy to follow and understand.

• Usability

All the participants think the usability of the app is great. They would use an app like that during their design process. It's easy to use and follow. Overall, they thought it was a great tool for the design industry.

After gathering all the feedback from the target audience, a few modifications have been made for DZone.
5.1.3 Modification

Light up all the text to improve the readability

Figure 29. Design Modification
5.1.3 Modification

More filter choices were added as well as a search bar for quick and easy inspiration location finding.

![Figure 30. Design Modification](image-url)
5.1.3 Modification

A link for feedback was added and basic answers were applied to a drop down menu.

![Figure 31. Design Modification](image-url)
5.3 Dissemination

To promote my thesis project, I will upload it to the major social media websites like Behance, Pinterest, Tumblr and my own personal website.

On campus dissemination

Imagine RIT May 2018
Thesis Show December 2017

Off-campus dissemination

Communication Arts 2017 Design Competition
Applied Arts 2017 Student Awards
RGD So Good Awards
HOW Interactive Design Awards
5.4 Conclusion

DZone started as an idea to assist designers in the design process, but has evolved into an application that could help designers seek inspiration, solve problems and gather specific feedback during the entire process. Through comprehensive research, it was found that there are very limited resources to help designers during the design process. There are several apps designers could use for different purposes, however those are not specific to designers and are not convenient to use. Something that functionally supports the whole design process is needed to simplify designer’s life.

After comprehensive research, design ideation and development process, a final usability survey was taken to improve the project. Feedback from target users was very positive. They were excited to have a simple and easy app to use during their design process. These reactions are implemented into the future DZone, which will effectively improve the design process and help struggling designers and artists.

DZone app is an important tool for designers to seeking and sharing ideas. It is a good platform to communicate with other designers and use your opinion to help them solve issues during the design process. It is a comprehensive designer’s tool kit.
Appendix
A1 Thesis Proposal
D Zone

The quintessential app for designers seeking and sharing ideas

Yidie Xue
Thesis Proposal for the Master of Fine Arts Degree

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Imaging Arts and Science
School of Design
MFA Visual Communication Design
February, 2017
Thesis Committee Approval

**Cheif Thesis Adviser:** Daniel Deluna

Signature of Chief Thesis Adviser  Date

**Associate Thesis Adviser:** Nancy Ciolek

Signature of Associate Thesis Adviser  Date

**Associate Thesis Adviser:** Chris Jackson

Signature of Associate Thesis Adviser  Date

**MFA Thesis Candidate:** Yidie Xue

Signature of MFA Thesis Candidate  Date
Abstract

The principle of design is to create something both beautiful and effective. However, not all designs are created equal. There are plenty of inefficient designs are out there. The reason is not because of bad designers, but because there are not enough platforms for designers to communicate and test their designs. A common need designers have is a place to seek feedback and share ideas for their projects.

This thesis project is an application that will fulfill that need designers have to seek feedback for their work. At the beginning of a new project, users could use the app to seek inspiration through others designs, local events or locations. During the process, users could post their ideas to gather feedback to improve the project. Upon finishing the design, users could share their project on the app where other users can also share their opinions and ideas.

D Zone creates a simple and efficient way for designers to find ideas. It combines graphic, user interaction and user experience design. The user interface and interactivity will be prototyped for an iOS smart phone. The thesis will focus on the usability test of several groups of people in different ages and genders.

There are several things especially important when starting a design project. First of all, inspiration plays a significant role in the whole design process. Designers usually get inspiration from different places, events or some specific item but it is hard for designers to gather all of this creative information by themselves. Usually, designers will use an application or website to find what they want, however there are limited information online. Secondly, feedback plays a crucial role in any design. The purpose of any design project is to fit both user’s lifestyle and personal preferences. So it is very important the designer gathers enough feedback from the target audience. However, finding people to gather the specific feedback is not easy. You can either ask friends and family or a stranger you meet on the street. Therefore, an application for designers seeking inspiration and feedback is needed to ease the whole design process.

There are some existing websites and applications already available to designers for finding and sharing ideas. Two of the most popular are Behance and Pinterest. These sites allow people to gather all kinds of different designs and art work that can serve as inspiration and also get feedback from others. However, it is too limited for designers to obtain feedback on a specific project. The current feedback system for these sites is only the comments section in which designers would not be able to ask a specific question during the process.
Problem Statement

There are several problems that occur when designers design their projects. Firstly, before starting a design, designers need inspiration. The way someone gets inspired varies from person to person. Some people like to view similar projects while others like to go somewhere beautiful and quiet or attend events. Secondly, it is hard for designers to get feedback for some specifics they might have questions about. They could ask their friends but they are not the target users or professionals. It is very inefficient and can be a waste of time and energy.

This thesis aims to answer the following questions:

• Is there a solution for designers to easily and efficiently gather feedback during the design process?
• What kind of feedback will be helpful for designers to improve their projects?
• Is there a way to make an application that efficiently caters to users in different design fields?
• How can the visual part of an application be fit to various user preferences?

D Zone focuses on graphic, user interaction and user experience design. When starting a new project, users could find their inspirations in different ways depending on their preferences. During the process, they could set up custom questions to gather feedback in the specific areas needed for the project. Moreover, they could communicate their ideas and opinions with other users in the design field.
Survey of Literature

**Graphic Design Books**

*Graphic Design - Now in Production*


The rise of user-generated content, new methods of publishing and systems of distribution, and the wide dissemination of creative software have opened up new opportunities for design. Graphic Design: Now in Production is conceived as a visual compendium in the spirit of the Whole Earth Catalogue. This book is a good resource to learn about the contemporary graphic design.


This book is a big contributor to the history of graphic design which has numerous historical graphic design works. It organizes lots of resources, identity, letter-forms, magazines, sources of on-line knowledge. A helpful book for everyone. It will definitely inspire and remind people of the beginning and the main purpose of graphic design. It shows how to create a beautiful graphic design work and helps improve the your own design work.
Survey of Literature

Essential Mobile Interaction Design: Perfecting Interface Design in Mobile Apps

Mobile applications should feel natural and intuitive; users should understand them quickly and easily. Effective interaction and interface design is crucial in achieving this feat. This book brings together proven principles and techniques you can use in your next applications for any platform, target device, or user. It is a good book for designer to read and improve their interface to become more and more user friendly.

UI Is Communication: How to Design Intuitive, User Centered Interfaces by Focusing on Effective Communication.

User interface design is a challenging, multi-disciplinary activity that requires understanding a wide range of concepts and techniques that are often subjective and even conflicting. User center design is very important to all the interaction designer. This book provides very detailed information about the user centered interface design.
Survey of Literature

### Interaction Design Books

**The UX Book: Process and Guidelines for Ensuring a Quality User Experience.**

A very broad approach to user experience through its components-usability, usefulness, and emotional impact with special attention to lightweight methods such as rapid UX evaluation techniques and an agile UX development process. The book gives a clear process steps which lead the interaction designer to think more and design more user friendly interface.

**Mobile Design Pattern Gallery: UI Patterns for Mobile Applications**

When comes to UI design, good patterns is very important. A successful pattern system will improve the whole visual feeling in a user interface. This handy reference book provides more than 90 mobile app design patterns, illustrated by 1,000 screen shots from current Android, iOS, and Windows Phone apps.
Design Ideation

Mood Boards
Design Ideation

Mood Boards
Design Ideation

Flowchart
Design Ideation

Experience Map

Seeking Inspirations
- feel stuck in a project
- start a new project
  - Finding Inspirations
    - Creative Locations
    - Events
    - Other Projects
    - Rating & Review
      - Decide where to go
        - Invite Friends

Seeking Feedbacks
- Upload Project
  - Set Customize Questions
    - Gathering Feedbacks
      - Back to Design

Sharing Inspirations
- Found a place
- Found an event
  - Upload Information
    - Share with friends
Design Ideation

Wire frames
Design Ideation

Wire frames
Design Ideation

Logo Sketch
Methodology Design

Objective
This thesis project focuses on graphic, user interaction and user experience design. The thesis aims to test several groups of people of different ages and genders to use the same application. D Zone creates an easy and effective way to find inspiration depending on people’s preferences and feedback from customizable questions users could post. Also, it is a good place to share ideas.

Target Audience
• Graphic Designers
• Interaction Designers
• Industrial Designers
• Other Designers and Artists

Software
Adobe Creative Suite
• Experience Design
• Photoshop
• Illustrator
• Photoshop
Methodology Design

### Approach

**Research**
Researching existing websites and applications meant for designers to communicate their ideas. Asking designers what feedback they want to gather and at which step will they want to talk to people during the design process.

**Collect & Reflect**
Organize all the research, information and take some time to think about both how to help users to use the application easily and efficiently and what do users really need during the process.

**Brainstorm**
Thinking about the contents and functions of the application. Finding references and decide the design information, interface, user experience and visuals.

**Implement**
Design Flowchart, Information Architecture, Wire frames of the application. Create application logo, visual style, icons, graphic elements and user interface. Prototype the application.

**Usability testing**
Collecting feedbacks from four groups of the target audience. Evaluate and push further.

**Final Product**
Prototyped IOS Application

**Presentation and further dissemination**
Presentation and thesis show
Implementation Strategies

The scope of my thesis project will be graphic, user interface and user experience design. I will use Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop and Experience Design to achieve the project. After prototyped the project, a usability report from people of all ages will be written.

The final project will be delivered as a prototyped IOS application using Adobe Experience Design. However, a fully developed Application will be considered after the thesis dissemination.
Dissemination

To promote my thesis project, I will upload it to the major social media websites like Behance, Pinterest, Tumblr and my own personal website. I will also submit my finished project to the following design competitions:

- **Communication Arts 2017 Design Competition**
  May, 2017

- **Applied Arts 2017 Student Awards**
  May, 2017

- **RGD So Good Awards**
  July, 2017

- **HOW Interactive Design Awards**
  June, 2017
Evaluation Plan

Main Research Questions
- What is the visual impression of the user interface?
- Can you figure out how to use the application?
- Does the application feel consistent to you?
- Which part of the application confused you?
- How is your user experience?
- Any other suggestions?

Participate Profile
The specific target audience will be four groups.

GROUPS:          PARTICIPANTS:
Graphic Designers  5
Interaction Designers  5 participates
Industrial Designers  5 participates
Other Designers and Artists  5 participates

Procedure
The participants will be interviewed about their ideas and problems they face during the design process and they will be asked to complete several questions and present their opinions after they used the application.
## Pragmatic Considerations

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Bibliography


http://designspiration.net/
https://www.awwwards.com/
http://ui-patterns.com/
https://www.behance.net/
A2 Usability Questionnaires
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

Name: 
Major/Occupation: 

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. Overall User Experience</th>
<th>Terrible</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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Other Comments


DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

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Other Comments

I love the design. Great job!
# DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

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Other Comments

Love the project looks really nice and easy to use. Great job!!!
# DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>6. Usability</td>
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Other Comments

Law the design look good ad nice, when at the sign up page, want ya dis font. It's will her much clean to high the whe text them for an icon. Great Job!
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

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<td>Nice Design, love the app</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Job.</td>
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# DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

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**Other Comments**

*Easy to use, visually look perfect. Good Job. Some paragraph is a little hard to read, but it's a really nice project.*
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

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Other Comments

Awesome Design, easy navigate, clean look, will definitely use it. Only problem will be the text is a little small.
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

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Other Comments

1 bin more clone it is no go clue had much one that not it for the present how then to explain. After, found. Job !!!
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

Please circle the numbers that most appropriately reflect your impressions about using the app.

Name: ___________________________  Major/Occupation: ___________________________

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<th>Question</th>
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Other Comments

[Handwritten comments]
**DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire**

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**Other Comments**

1. I like the project a lot. It looks nice and clean.
**DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire**

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**Other Comments**

Great job. Looks super nice. All pages are amazing. Can't wait to use it.
DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

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Other Comments

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DZone | 114
A3 Thesis Defense Presentation
DZone

A platform for designers seeking and sharing ideas

Yidie Xue
Master Of Fine Arts Degree
Visual Communication Design
School Of Design
College of Imaging Arts And Sciences
Rochester Institute Of Technology

Contents

01 Research
Introduction
Situation Analysis
Problem Statement
Target Audience
Objective

02 Design Process
Design Ideation
User Flows
User Scenarios
Wireframes

03 Visual Design
Colors
Fonts
Prototype

04 Summary
Usability Test
Modification
Conclusion
## Introduction

Dzone is an application with the purpose of assisting the creative design process

- Brainstorm ideas by browsing events, locations and more
- Seek feedback for projects from design experts and other designers
- Share ideas with other designers among the community

## Situation Analysis

- It is hard for designers to get inspired only by surfing the Internet
- Designers need a platform to communicate their ideas and thoughts
- There are limited places for designers to gather specific feedback for their project
### Problem Statement

- Designers do not have a way to access real world sources of creativity
- There is not a sufficient ways to gather feedback during the design process.
- Places to share thoughts and ideas with other designers are limited.

### Target Audience

- Designers (20+)
- Creative People
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Design Process</th>
<th>Visual Design</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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### Objective

- Provided creative information for designers to seek ideas and inspiration
- Use effective UX/UI design to help designer gathering specific feedbacks during design process.
- Create a social network for designers to communicate their creative thoughts and feelings.

### Design Ideation

**Main Function**

- Seeking & Sharing Inspiration
- Seeking & Sharing Events
- Seeking & Sharing Feedback for projects
- Live Chat (communicating ideas)
- Following System
**User Scenarios**

**Sharing Ideas**

- Start
  - Login
  - Signup
  - Main Menu
    - Inspiration
    - Feedback
    - Problem
      - Problem List
      - Give Ideas
    - Locations
    - Events
      - Link to Project
      - Project List
      - Live Feedback
      - Share Feedback

**Wireframes**

**Login / Sign Up**

**Menu**
<table>
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### Wireframes

#### Seeking

#### Inspiration

#### Sharing Ideas

#### Live Chat & Profile
Colors

SF Pro Display Light
SF Pro Display Regular
SF Pro Display Medium
SF Pro Display Medium Italic
SF Pro Display Semi bold
SF Pro Display Semi bold Italic
SF Pro Display Bold
SF Pro Display Bold Italic
## Prototype

**Prototype Link:**

https://xd.adobe.com/view/79580292-5e76-4e33-bea7-11fe307a0db0

## Usability Test

### DZone Satisfaction Questionnaire

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Modification

- Light up all the text to improve the readability

Modification

- Add a link for feedback and provide basic question choice to cut down of typing questions as much as possible.
## Conclusion

- DZone is an important tool for designers seeking and sharing ideas.

- It is a good platform to communicate with other designers and use your opinion in helping them solve issues during the design process.

- It is also a new designer’s social network.

---

**Thank You**

Any Questions?
A4 Sources for Imagery

While designing the prototype for DZone, images were purchased from shutterstock.com

Figure 32. Receipt of shutterstock


Li, Aihong. UI/UX design: inspiring user interface and user experience design chief editor Li Aihong. Hong Kong: Artpower, 2017.
