



Bright Minds

Book publisher app

Anna Aksenovich

Project overview



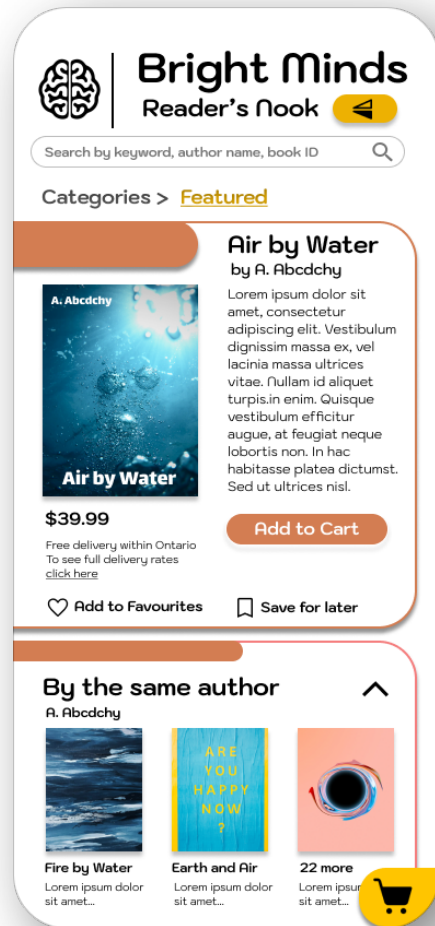
The product:

An app for a book publishing company



Project duration:

3 months



Project overview



The problem:

Create an app for the new book publisher company that wants to differentiate itself from others and grow its revenue from B2C sales



The goal:

Create compelling and interactive designs that communicate brand personality and support e-commerce functionality

Project overview



My role:

UX Designer and Researcher

(All designs and concepts end-to-end are created by me – from the brand name, logo and strategy conception to final iterations on mock ups)



Responsibilities:

Brand conception and strategy, Content design, User research, Wireframing, Prototyping, User testing

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary



I have started with conducting secondary research in the form of competitor analysis. My initial assumption and hope for this app was that you cannot order books directly from the publisher and by offering the e-commerce service Bright Minds can differentiate itself in the market.

While that assumption didn't hold, the e-commerce service that publishers do provide is often lacking. Through further in-depth interviews, I found that people generally didn't mind where to buy their books from as long as it ensured fast delivery and easy way of placing an order.

User research: pain points

1

Findability of delivery information

Users mentioned being blindsided by delivery fees up to the last step in the checkout process. Overall it is hard to estimate the delivery cost ahead of time as often the site estimate list them based not only on location but on the weight of items, which creates a confusing experience for the users.

2

Searching and exploring niche titles is a frustrating experience

One of the main motivations for the users ordering books directly from the publisher is access to niche titles which they might not be able to find anywhere else.

When the app and web experiences limit their ability to do so, they get frustrated and often abandon the process altogether.

3

Not straight forward process

Users mentioned that often they have to create an account and go through a number of steps to make a purchase.

Persona: Stephanie

Problem statement:

Stephanie is avid reader and amateur writer, who needs fast delivery for books, exclusively from her favourite publisher, because her local bookstore often doesn't carry all the titles of niche authors.



Stephanie

Age: 27

Education: Master's Degree

Residence: Windsor, ON

Family: Single

Occupation: Freelance writer

Stephanie has identified a major obstacle to ordering books directly from publishers: fluctuating and unclear delivery fees, coupled with a difficult-to-navigate website. This has prevented her from accessing new titles and has made the process of finding out-of-stock titles a cumbersome journey.

"Sometimes I just give up. It takes so much time and then finally I am at the checkout page to only find out that this book weighs 3 pounds which puts it into a different delivery fee category. I wish I had some kind of visibility to this beforehand."

Goals

- Publish her own novel in the new few years
- Read more books by niche authors

Frustrations

- Inaccessibility of titles by niches authors
- Unable to understand the ins and outs of publishing industry

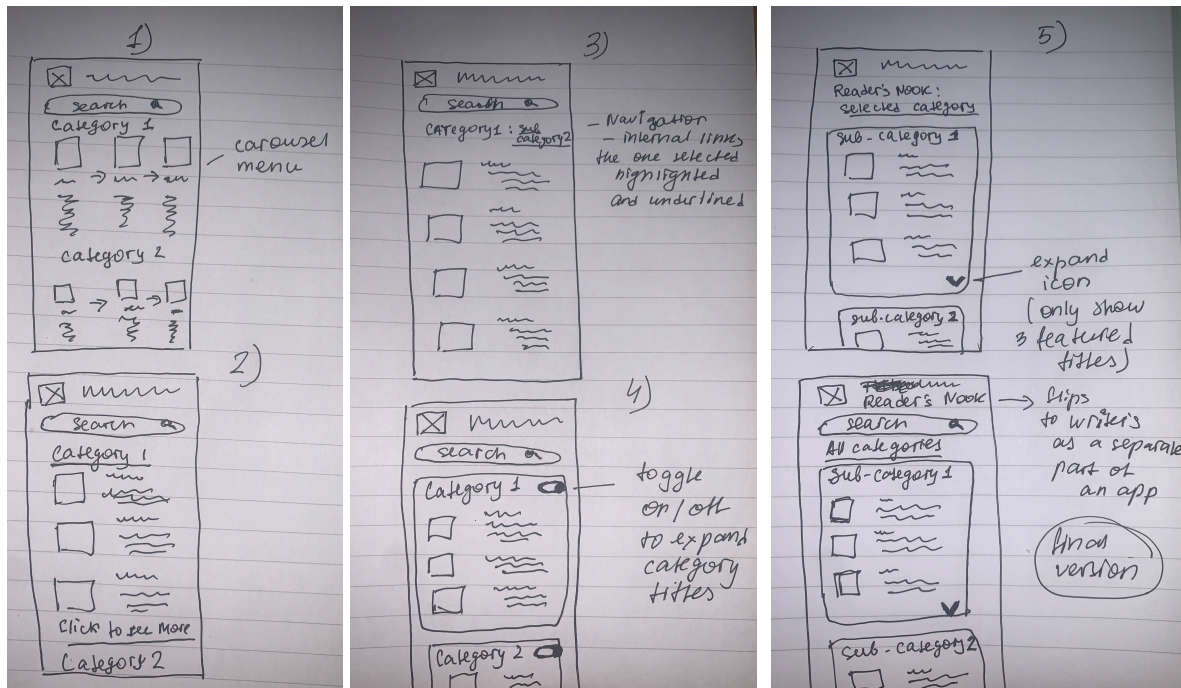
User journey map

The user map visually highlights the persona's journey from discovery to purchase stages, when looking to buy niche books from the publisher. It helped me to identify pain points and orientate my app towards an enhanced user experience.

Journey Steps Which step of the experience are you describing?	RESEARCH	DECISION	SAVE FOR LATER	PURCHASE
Actions What does the customer do? What information do they look for? What is their context?	<div>I open the publisher's website to look for new books</div> <div>Finds an interesting book</div> <div>Adds to cart</div>	<div>Enters shipping information</div> <div>Discovers high delivery price and long timeline</div> <div>searches for the book on google to see if it is available from other retailers</div> <div>Continues to retailer site to buy the book from them if available</div>	<div>Unable to find a book anywhere else</div> <div>Goes back to the publisher website to add to Favourite list or Save for later</div> <div>Completes a lengthy sign up process</div> <div>Has to login again</div>	<div>Save a book to their list</div> <div>Come back at a later time</div> <div>Buy multiple books at once to avoid high delivery cost</div>
Needs and Pains What does the customer want to achieve or avoid? <i>Tip: Reduce ambiguity, e.g. by using the first person narrator.</i>	<div>Wants to find new niche titles easily</div>	<div>Avoid having to complete extensive process to get delivery information</div> <div>Avoid having to search for books at other places</div> <div>Wants to buy their books at one place</div>	<div>Avoid having to look elsewhere and feel disappointed when title is unavailable</div> <div>Needs a way to save and come back to the book at later date</div> <div>Avoid having to complete a lot of steps to save a book</div>	<div>Needs to easily retrieve saved books</div> <div>Needs to ensure books they are looking for are available</div>
Touchpoint What part of the service do they interact with?	<div>Search and book catalog</div>	<div>Shipping calculator</div> <div>Checkout page</div>	<div>Favourite List</div> <div>Sign up process</div> <div>Login</div>	<div>Favourite list</div> <div>Checkout process</div>
Customer Feeling What is the customer feeling? <i>Tip: Use the emoji app to express more emotions</i>	<div>🤔</div> <div>😍</div>	<div>🤢</div> <div>🤔</div>	<div>😞</div> <div>😞</div>	<div>😞</div> <div>🥳</div>
Backstage				
Opportunities What could we improve or introduce?	<div>Provide delivery information ahead of time under each title</div>	<div>Increase retention by providing other delivery options</div>	<div>Simplify the sign up process</div> <div>Create an easy way for users to save books and create lists</div>	<div>Create alerts that will notify the user when the new book becomes available (or when the book in their list is about to sell out)</div>

Paper wireframes

I drew some wireframes on paper first. It helped me to narrow down some ideas I had around how the navigation might work given the app is to feature a large number of categories and subcategories.



Digital wireframes

This screen took a lot of iterations and fixes. The aim was not to overwhelm user with a huge list of categories.

Search bar was one of the first things I thought to include with the ability to search by various criteria. I also felt it was important to include breadcrumb navigation so the user could easily find their way back and around.

Cards for emphasis and unity.

I wanted to create clear section separations that supported the navigation toggles.

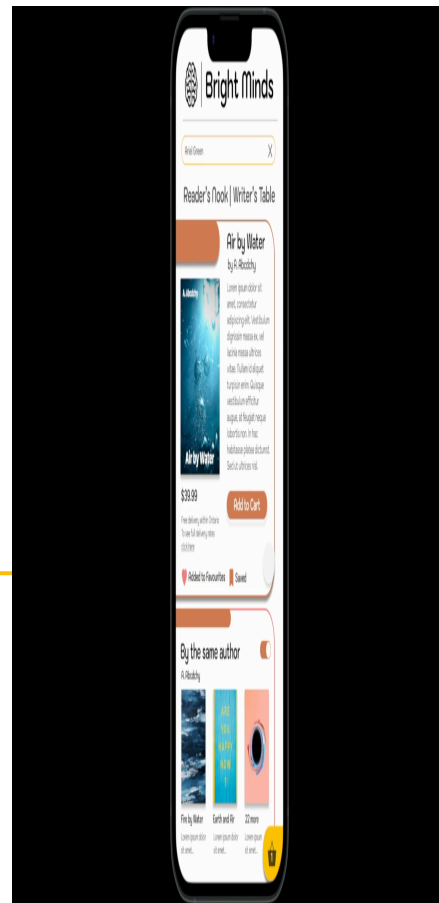


Toggle On/Off. I implemented this element while trying to iterate and find something that allows users to filter through and navigate multiple categories.

Digital wireframes

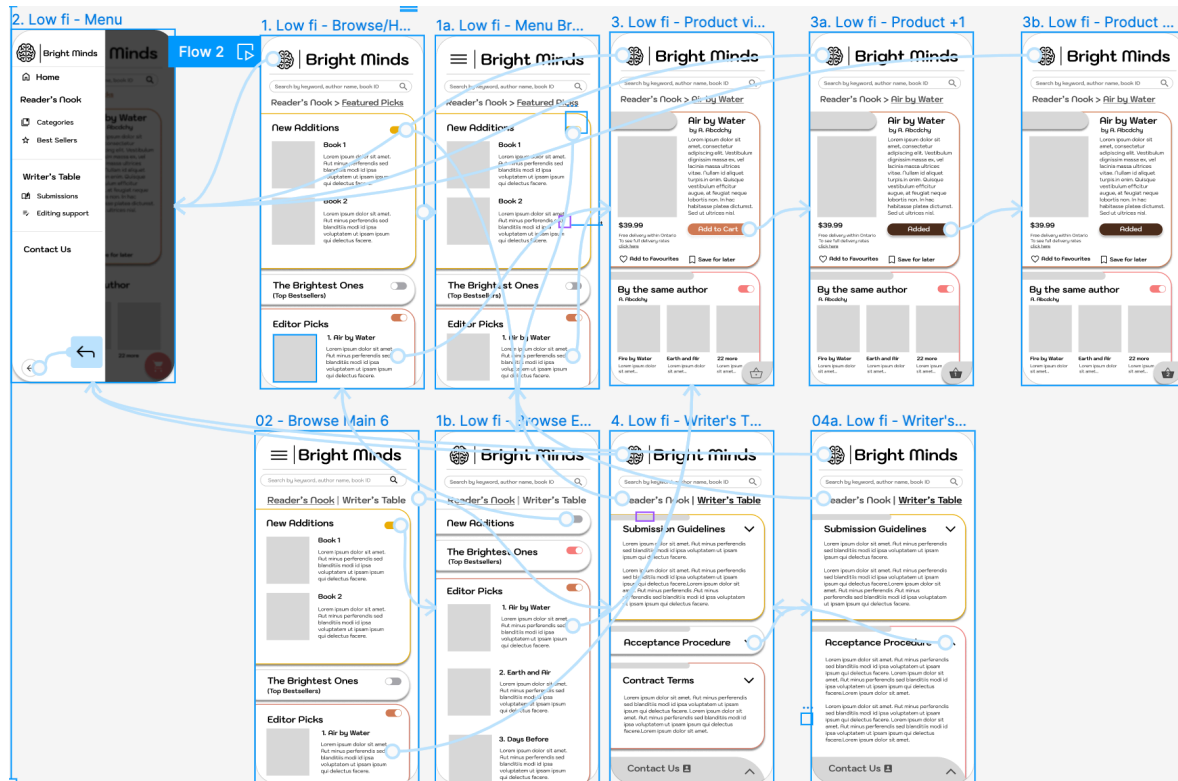
I also focused on implementing some of the feedback received in the research discovery phase to make sure I am meeting users' needs. I wanted to ensure users have all the information they need on one page to make a purchase decision as well as other features that would assist them in their consideration and purchase process.

Having "Favourites" and "Save for later" lists allows the user to come back to books they reviewed or liked. Especially useful for titles that are niche and low in stock



Since a lot of readers on this site are also aspiring writers, they often are interested to see the author's journey through publishing. This is why I included "By the same author" card instead of "Similar to this"

Low-fidelity prototype



My focus was mainly on figuring out navigation between different parts of the app (versus creating a flow of the checkout process). Since most of the discovered pain points were specifically around information layout and ability to find things easily, it was more important to showcase the navigation between different pages.

Low fidelity prototype in Figma

Usability study: findings

Write a short introduction to the usability studies you conducted and your findings.

Round 1 findings

- 1 The separation of writers and readers as two audiences with separate app section weren't clear.
- 2 Users expected to have a back button on all the screens and found it difficult to navigate without one
- 3 Toggle off/on was a point of confusion as it was perceived as a filter rather than category preview

Round 2 findings

- 1 The current design of the 'back' button on the Menu screen is not intuitive.
- 2 Users expected to have a place from where they can easily navigate back to the Home Page.

Refining the design

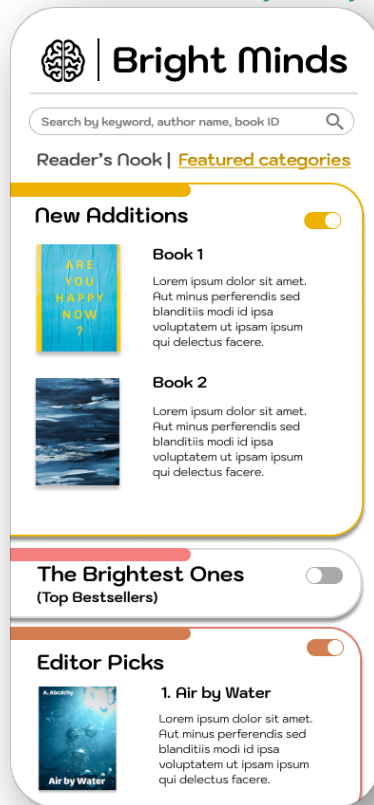
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups

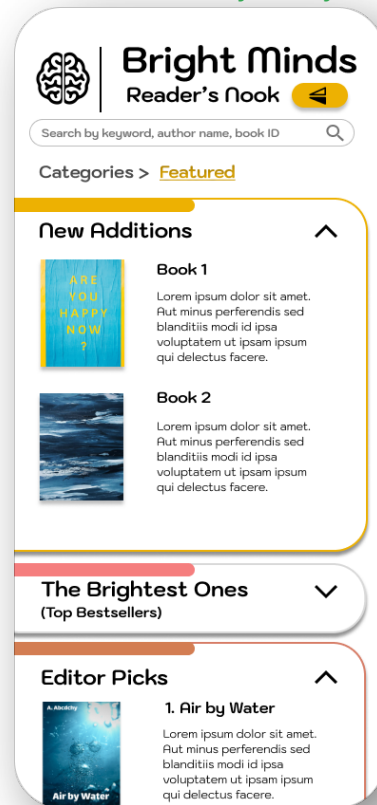
I decided to swap the toggles for expand/minimize buttons as they are more intuitive for users in this context. I also decided to include a more clear 'breadcrumb' navigation so users can easily identify their location within an app and various categories.

As a result I moved the Reader's Nook to the top - making it a distinct sub section of the app.

Before usability study



After usability study



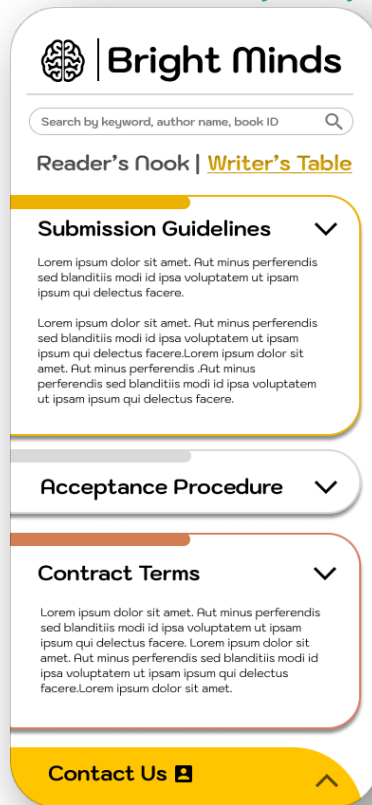
Mockups

Similarly, here you can see “Writer’s Table” as a subsection appear at the top with the brand name. I have used Uber as an inspiration where their mobile app in a similar manner sections off different audiences and therefore functions (Drivers from Riders).

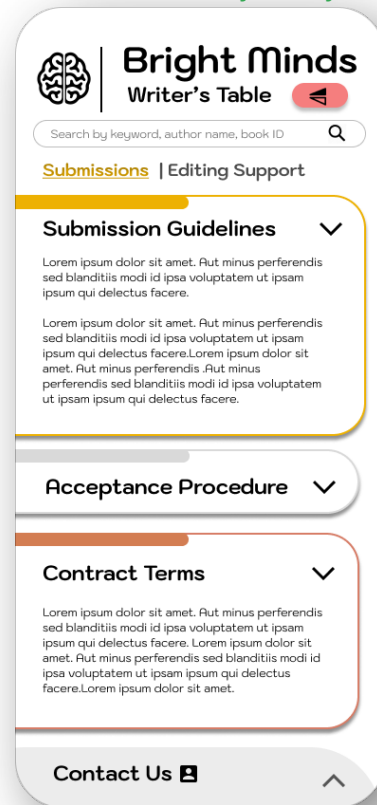
The ‘breadcrumb’ navigation mirrors the original format as there are only 2 categories (in this subsection) that the user can flip through.

I also changed the colour of the bottom tab to create consistency – with grey signifying minimized sections. At the same time, I wanted to de-emphasize “Contact Us”. It appeared to users as the main call to action. However, I would like the user first to browse through the page to find what they are looking for and “Contact Us” thereby comes as a secondary action (if at all) – which in long term might reduce operational costs for customer support.

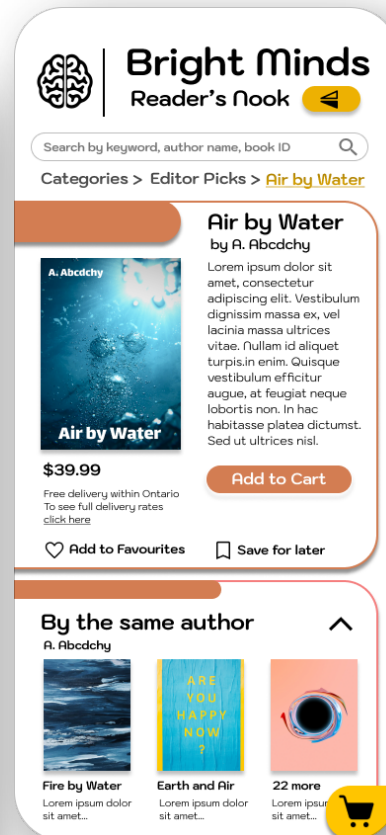
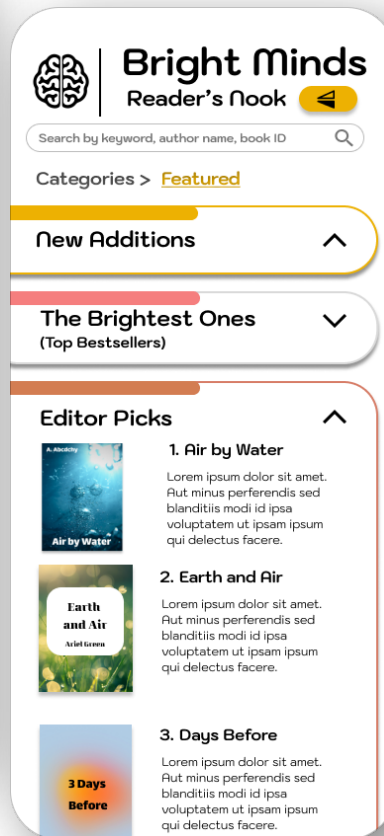
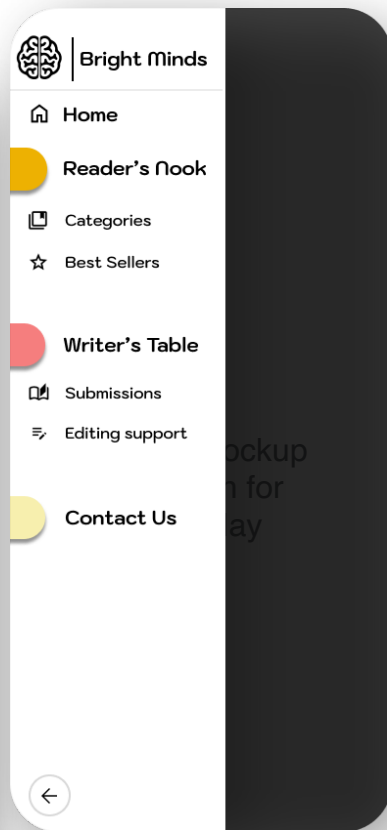
Before usability study



After usability study

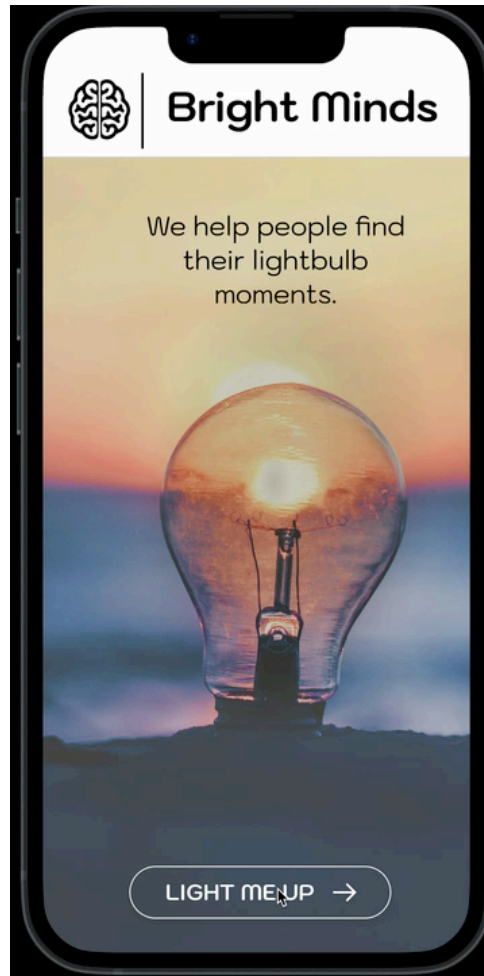


Mockups



High-fidelity prototype

[Figma link](#)



Accessibility considerations

1

Colour contrast

I have used quite a bright colour palette for my designs. One thing that I always kept in mind is keeping the contrast in line with accessibility standards. I used WebAim to reference check every colour decision that I made.

2

Use of whitespace and proximity

In order to make relationship between content easier to see and identify, I made very clear sections by grouping similar elements together as well as using ample whitespace to differentiate between related content.

3

Interactive elements

I have used different styles to differentiate different states of the elements (such as clicked, hover etc). For the purpose of illustration and this project, I did include hover states as well, although they won't apply to a mobile device design.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

“I love how bright it is and the whole concept of Bright Minds with the bright elements in the design – without making it too overwhelming! It makes for a very nice experience just browsing through the app.”



What I learned:

I have had some experience designing with Figma but this course and project really allowed me to go deeper and also understand the value of multiple iterations.

My designs have changed and evolved tremendously since the first iteration I created 3 months ago. I also learned a great amount of nuance, such as Gestalt principles and accessibility considerations, and more importantly how much this knowledge can improve my work.

Let's connect!



I am currently working as an Experience Designer (heavy on Design Thinking and User Research) but would love to make a permanent transition into UI/UX design, or specifically a field of Interaction Design.

[Website with portfolio](#)

[Email](#)

[LinkedIn](#)