Process for Taking Over and Modifying a Low-Fidelity Prototype

Introduction

Purpose of Document:

This document aims to provide a comprehensive guide for taking over and modifying a low-fidelity prototype. The intended audience includes UX designers, product managers, and developers who need to update, enhance, or repurpose an existing prototype to meet new requirements or improve its functionality. The guide outlines the necessary steps to understand the existing prototype, identify areas for improvement, and implement modifications efficiently.

Overview of the project

This project is started by one of my peers for his semester project, this product is a recipe website although it is not quit the same as a traditional cooking website. StuChef is a website to share recipes that are easy to make, not time consuming and budget friendly specifically created to help students with their daily cooking's where the people on this platform as a community help each other into finding and possibly creating these recipes for others to enjoy as well.

Process of Taking Over and Modifying

1. Initial Assessment

1.1 Understand the Current State

Review Documentation: Examine any available documentation related to the prototype, including design specs, user stories, and project notes.

Since this is an existing project, there was not much documentation provided yet. I started off by asking the original creator about the details of the design such as the goal of this product, who are the stakeholders, user requirements from the research that he has done

beforehand. After receiving this information, I did a little more research on he design of different competitors of a similar type of product.

Explore the Prototype: Interact with the prototype to understand its current functionality, user flow, and design elements.

By exploring the original prototype, I get to have a better understanding in how the client would want it to look like, the prototype itself wasn't quite finished for a low fidelity prototype. There were only a few pages that were semi finalized before taking over which made it a little challenging to exactly see where things were going but this was not a problem at all.

1.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Since I am not really part of the project some stakeholders that I am consider are the original designer/creator, future UX designers, developers, community members, the target audience which in this case are students.

Original Creator (Peer)

- Role: Initial developer and designer of the prototype.
- Interest: Wants to ensure the prototype aligns with the original vision, goals, and user needs. Also interested in seeing the project continue and improve successfully.

UX Designers

- Role: Focus on understanding user needs, creating design solutions, and improving user experience.
- Interest: Aim to enhance the usability, functionality, and visual appeal of the prototype. They want to make sure the design meets user needs and stakeholder goals.

Developers

- Role: Implement design changes, add new features, and ensure the technical functionality of the prototype.
- Interest: Focused on efficiently turning design and requirements into a working product. They want to make sure the prototype is scalable, maintainable, and free of bugs.

Students (Primary Users)

- Role: The main users of the recipe website.
- Interest: Looking for easy-to-make, time-efficient, and budget-friendly recipes. They also want to contribute to and benefit from the community's shared recipes and cooking tips.

Community Members (Contributors)

- Role: Users who actively share recipes and cooking tips.

- Interest: Interested in sharing their knowledge, gaining recognition, and helping others with their cooking. They want to engage with the platform to improve their cooking skills and enjoy a sense of community.

  Stakeholders from Competitor Analysis
- Role: Indirect stakeholders considered during competitor analysis.
- Interest: Want to understand how similar products are designed and which features users value. They use these insights to enhance the prototype.

2.2 Stakeholder Needs and Expectations

Original Creator (Peer)

- **Needs:**
  - **Keep the project true to its initial vision and goals.**
  - **Provide detailed guidance on design and functionality to the new team.**
- **Expectations:**
  - **The prototype should maintain its core concept and original objectives.**
  - **A smooth transition and effective collaboration with the new team to ensure continuity.**
- **Priority: Medium**
  - **Ensure the project aligns with the initial vision and goals.**
  - **Offer guidance and clarification as needed.**

UX Designers

- **Needs:**
  - **A solid understanding of user needs and the project's design goals.**
  - **Access to user research and feedback to inform their design choices.**
- **Expectations:**
  - **Design improvements should significantly enhance usability and user experience.**
  - **Freedom to suggest and implement changes that improve functionality and aesthetics.**

- **Priority: High**
    - **Gain a comprehensive understanding of user requirements.**
    - **Implement design changes that enhance functionality and user experience.**

Developers

- **Needs:**
    - Detailed specifications and design guidelines.
    - Access to the original codebase and documentation.
- **Expectations:**
    - Clear, actionable tasks and priorities.
    - Efficient collaboration with UX designers and product managers.
- **Priority: High**
    - Provide detailed specifications and design guidelines.
    - Ensure clear, actionable tasks and priorities for efficient development.

Students (Primary Users)

- **Needs:**
    - Recipes that are easy to make, quick, and budget-friendly.
    - A website that's intuitive and easy to navigate.
- **Expectations:**
    - High-quality, reliable recipes that meet their daily cooking needs.
    - A supportive community platform for sharing and finding useful cooking tips.
- **Priority: High**
    - Offer easy-to-make, time-efficient, and budget-friendly recipes.
    - Ensure the website is intuitive and user-friendly.

Community Members (Contributors)

- **Needs:**
    - User-friendly tools for sharing recipes and tips.

    - Recognition and feedback for their contributions.

- **Expectations:**
    - A strong sense of community and engagement with other users.
    - Their contributions are valued and appreciated.
- **Priority: Medium**
    - Provide easy-to-use tools for sharing recipes and tips.
    - Ensure contributors receive recognition and feedback for their contributions.

Stakeholders from Competitor Analysis

- **Needs:**
    - Insights into competitive features and user preferences.
    - Knowledge of industry best practices.
- **Expectations:**
    - The prototype incorporates effective features from competitors.
    - The project uses industry standards to improve functionality and user satisfaction.
- **Priority: Low**
    - Understand competitive features and user preferences.
    - Gain insights into industry best practices for functionality improvements.

Client (Implicit Stakeholder)

- **Needs:**
    - The final product should meet the specified requirements and goals.
    - Regular and clear communication about the project's status.
- **Expectations:**
    - A high-quality, functional final product that fulfills initial goals.
    - Positive user acceptance and feedback.
- **Priority: Medium**
    - Ensure the product meets specified requirements and goals.

- Maintain regular communication and updates on project status.

IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES:

The goals for this project to modify the prototype is to attract more students to use this platform not only for easy fixes to cook but it allows students to create their own meals and share their recipes as well as giving reviews on each recipe that they have tried and giving their feedback from their personal opinions in a fast and efficient way.

2.4 Stakeholder Involvement

Planning: Before starting this project, we planned on how I would approach this project and discussed on how I would approach this. We agreed to continue communicating during the process through WhatsApp.

Feedback: After completing a few pages, I would always take the initiative in asking for feedback along the way on how the product looks at the time, from the feedback I have received I will then continue to modify the product accordingly.

Decision points and approval stages: The original designer decided to hand over the project and entrusted me with the responsibility of deciding how the website would look and function for most parts.

2. Planning Modifications

2.1 Planning Modifications

The first step in the planning process for modifying the StuChef prototype was determining its current status by consulting with the original creator and looking over any available data. This helped in making the original vision and goals clearer. The prototype was then thoroughly examined to find areas that needed modification.

Next, the changes' scope was established, with an emphasis on important pages including the users page, feed page, recipes page, favorites page, and navigation bar. Every alteration was ranked according to its influence on the user experience, practicality, and feedback from stakeholders, guaranteeing that the most important modifications were taken care of first.

To ensure that the modifications met user requirements and business goals while remaining faithful to the original concept, regular communication with the original creator was essential throughout the process to gain insights and feedback. This method offered a precise and efficient methodology for modernizing the StuChef prototype.

2.2 Define Scope

List Changes:

- Navigation Bar: Keeping it simple with the logo placement using the traditional method where the placement is on the top left corner with the other essential buttons? On the right side
- Home Page: For the home page I decided to go with a hero using a picture that features one of the dishes that you can find on the website, on the ride side of the hero page I added a search bar in order to make it easier for users to find their desired recipes with an added filter on the top to change to the desired category of any filter accordingly. Scrolling further you will find a few recipes that are currently popular, under this there is a small teaser of the post feed that has a separate page on itself for users to experience the feeling of a community brough together of food and creativity that everyone can enjoy. Next to it you can find the allergen section in case anyone has any allergies that they have to look out for.
- Recipes: for the recipes page I decided to add a picture of the recipe itself of the finished product with a title or name of the recipe.
- Feed: For this page the original creator wanted a social media like feed with a recipe of the day ranking system to make it more interesting for people, the post feed would display three of the top recipes of the day where you can scroll down to see more of the other posts. On the top left corner right under the logo I decided to add a filters option to help people navigate through the posts easily. For the top right corner of each recipe there is a heat shaped icon to add the recipe itself to their favorites.
- Favorites: For this page you can find all the recipes that the user itself added to themselves. Scrolling through the recipes sideways to find the preferred saved one, and on the top left corner under the logo there is a filter to adjust it accordingly and find the recipe that the user added to their favorites.
- Users Page: this page is plain and simple like any add the traditional users page where you can find the users profile picture, their name, their ranking on the platform and a few other essentials.

2.3 Prioritized Changes

Based on Impact, Feasibility, and Stakeholder Input

High Priority:

1. Home Page Enhancements:

Impact: High - This is the first page users see and it sets the tone for the entire user experience. Engaging and functional design elements will greatly enhance user engagement.

Feasibility: Medium - Requires a combination of design and development efforts but is manageable within the project's scope.

Stakeholder Input: Strong alignment with user needs and the original creator’s vision.

Key Changes:

- Hero section with dish image and search bar
- Filter option for categories
- Popular recipes section
- Community post feed teaser
- Allergen section

2. Feed Page:

Impact: High - Promotes user interaction and engagement, essential for building a community around the site.

Feasibility: Medium - Development of a dynamic feed with ranking and filtering requires moderate technical effort.

Stakeholder Input: High priority for the original creator and end-users looking for engaging content.

Key Changes:

- Social media-like feed
- Recipe of the Day ranking system
- Display top recipes with a scroll feature
- Filters option
- Favorite icon functionality

3. Navigation Bar:

Impact: High - Essential for site navigation, affects all users.

Feasibility: High - Relatively straightforward to implement.

Stakeholder Input: Basic requirement for usability and aligns with standard web design practices.

Key Changes:

- Simple design with logo and essential buttons

Medium Priority:

4. Recipes Page:

Impact: Medium - Important for content organization and user satisfaction.

Feasibility: High - Simple to implement with clear design and development guidelines.

Stakeholder Input: Useful for users to browse and select recipes, aligns with the primary purpose of the site.

Key Changes:

- Recipe display with image and title

5. Favorites Page:

Impact: Medium - Enhances user convenience and personalization.

Feasibility: Medium - Requires some development effort for the filtering and scrolling features.

Stakeholder Input: Valuable for users who want to save and organize their favorite recipes.

Key Changes:

- Display saved recipes
- Sideways scroll feature
- Filter option

Low Priority:

6. Users Page:

Impact: Low - Basic user information display, not critical to core functionality.

Feasibility: High - Simple design and development effort required.

Stakeholder Input: Necessary for a complete user profile but not a top priority for most stakeholders.

Key Changes:

- User profile details (profile picture, name, ranking, etc.)

2.4 Risk Assessment

1. Technical Challenges:

Risk: Adding new features like the social media-style feed and dynamic filtering might run into technical problems.

Mitigation Strategy: Do a thorough technical check before starting. Plan for extra time in the schedule to deal with any issues and make sure experienced developers are on the team.

2. Scope Creep:

Risk: The project might expand beyond the original plan due to new feature requests or changing requirements.

Mitigation Strategy: Define a clear project scope with set deliverables. Use a process to review and approve any changes to the scope.

3. User Acceptance:

Risk: Users might not like or use the new features as much as expected.

Mitigation Strategy: Get user input early by doing surveys, usability testing, and gathering feedback. Make changes based on what users say to ensure the features meet their needs.

4. Resource Constraints:

Risk: Limited availability of team members, budget restrictions, or lack of necessary tools could slow down the project.

Mitigation Strategy: Plan resource use carefully and check it regularly. Focus on the most important tasks first and make sure key resources are available. Consider hiring temporary staff or outsourcing if needed.

5. Timeline Delays:

Risk: Unexpected problems might cause delays, affecting the project timeline.

Mitigation Strategy: Include extra time in the schedule for unforeseen delays. Regularly review the timeline and adjust tasks as needed to stay on track.

6. Quality Assurance:

Risk: New features might introduce bugs or issues that affect the website's performance and user experience.

Mitigation Strategy: Implement thorough testing procedures, including unit tests, integration tests, and user acceptance testing. Ensure there is a strong process for reporting and fixing bugs quickly.

7. Communication Breakdowns:

Risk: Miscommunication among team members and stakeholders can lead to misunderstandings and errors.

Mitigation Strategy: Set up clear communication channels and regular check-ins. Use project management tools to keep everyone informed and aligned on the project's progress.

8. Dependency Risks:

Risk: Dependencies on third-party tools or services might cause delays or integration issues.

Mitigation Strategy: Identify all dependencies early and assess their reliability. Have backup plans in place for critical dependencies.

3. Handoff

3.1 Final Delivery

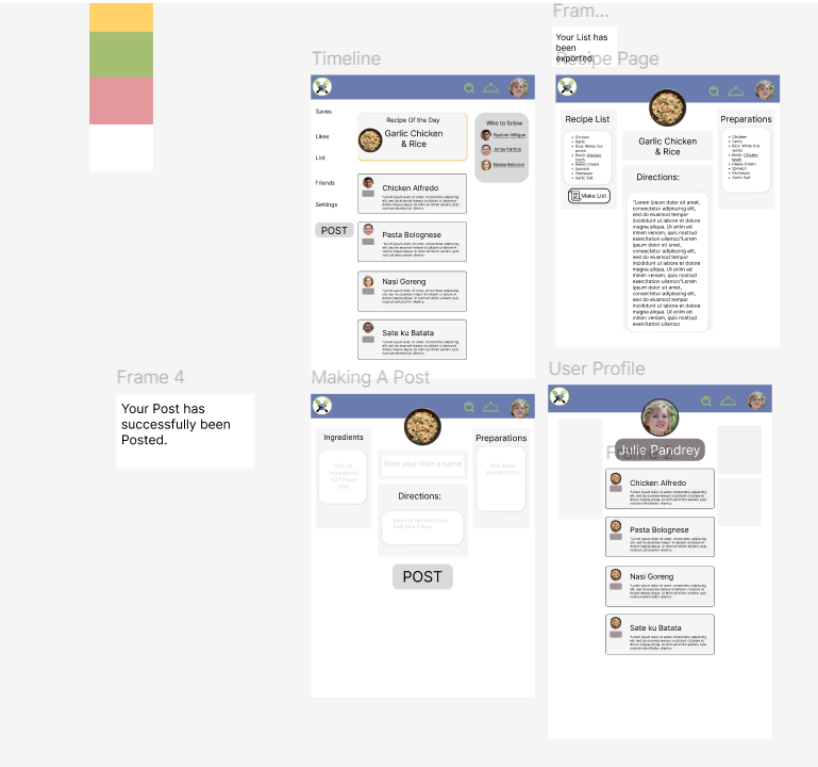
For the final version of the modified prototype, I made sure to communicate all the changes made to the original creator in detail. This involved providing a comprehensive overview of the modifications, explaining the enhancements implemented in each section. Additionally, I shared the inspirations behind the design decisions, showing how elements from successful platforms were incorporated to improve the user experience. This approach aimed to keep the original creator informed and engaged in the evolution of the project. By involving them in the process and drawing inspiration from industry leaders, we ensured that the final version reflected the project's core objectives while incorporating the latest advancements in user-centric design.

Conclusion

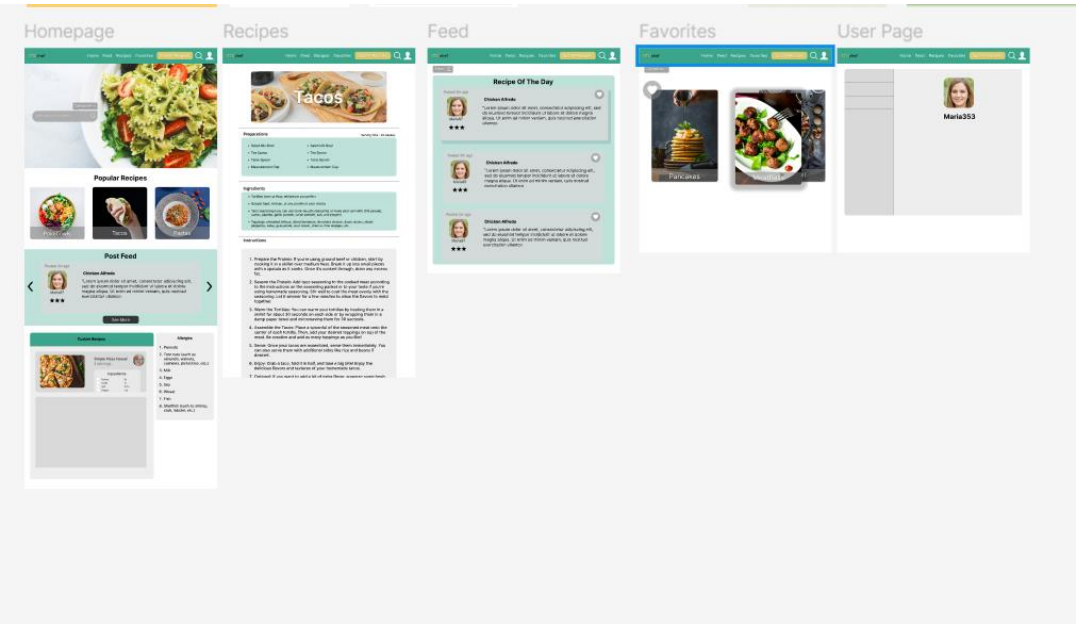
In conclusion, the modification process of the StuChef prototype has been a collaborative journey aimed at enhancing user experience and aligning the platform with its original vision. Through thorough assessment, strategic planning, and effective communication, the prototype has been successfully updated to meet the evolving needs of its stakeholders. Lessons learned and best practices have been identified, providing valuable insights for future projects and improvements.

Appendices

Original prototype screenshots



Modified prototype screenshot



Creators feedback