

AAU Career Support Center Case Study

Project Summary

AAU(Academy of Art University) Career Support Center website provides AAU students spaces and template to create and display their portfolios, up-to-date design related openings posted by companies, and tools to check/write reviews of those companies.

Background

The team was given the challenge of designing a website for new students to AAU. After interviewing several new students of AAU, we realized that career development is a big concern for even new students. The tuition fee for AAU is expensive, for most times the students need to find part time job to support their school expense, they also want to finish school and begin to work as design professional as soon as possible.

Goals

The team was trying to create a career website for AAU students. It will be a place for them to create their own portfolio, check and comment on other students' artworks, find part-time, full-time and internship opportunities, and also check and write comment on company profiles. Recruiters of design related companies also could check students' portfolios and post job openings.

Challenges

There are a lot of big, professional career website out there, why bother to create another one? To create a career site specifically for AAU students requires a lot of user research. The team needs to find out the difficulties the students are having when using the existing public career sites, the special needs they have as design major students.

Process

The team began the user research with observing and interviewing current AAU students. After the research with interviews, brainstorming and affinity diagram, the team identified three core needs for the success of the student career site: a place for students to upload and create their own portfolio easily, an updated list of design related company information and reviews, and a job board focusing on design major position. Also since the user research shows that male and female user might have different preference and expectation for the site, the team created four personas for the research, two international students and two domestic ones. Storyboard were also created to help team members to get a deeper understand of the user scenarios and needs.

The first version of the site was created through sketch and paper prototype. It is also an easy and convenient way to help define the rough user task flow. After two rounds of user testing using the paper prototype, the team got a lot of useful feedback and further refined the design. For instance, the fancy but confusing animated pagination bar was replaced with regular dots so that the user can quickly realize the function of that element. Also, some of the buttons and categories' names were modified to keep consistency, so that user can recognized them instantly.

Solution

The AAU Career Support Center website provides the AAU students a place to easily find the most recently posted design related positions, they can also check the profile and reviews of the companies. For design students, portfolio is more important than resume, so the site also provides students spaces and template to create and display their own artworks, and view other students' portfolios.