SNEAK PEEK

SNEAKER APP DESIGN

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I’m designing a mobile application called Sneak Peek, which allows users to learn about sneakers, leave reviews and interact with their friends about sneakers.

Many apps in this space are focused on E-commerce, whether that be profit for the platform, users who buy and sell shoes, or both. While this is useful for some users, it can be a distraction for others who simply want to browse sneakers and keep up with sneaker news.

This project aims to solve that problem by creating a purely informational platform, and also incorporates a social aspect in the form of interaction with other users.

For this project, I’m using background and user research to influence my decisions for the interface design. The final deliverables are a high-fidelity prototype of the app created in Figma, a set of low-fidelity wireframes and a case study to explain the project in depth.
I’m Adam Birder, and I’m a senior Graphic Communication student concentrating in User Experience/User Interface. I’ll be receiving my Bachelor’s of Science in Spring 2022.

I really enjoy doing UX and UI design for mobile applications, so this project was an opportunity to hone my skills. Also, I’m a big fan of sneakers and becoming more interested in sneaker culture.
The project is not systematic investigations. It will not collect data from Cal Poly students or employees as subjects. It does not attempt to answer research questions. Therefore, this project does not need to be reviewed by the California Polytechnic State University Institutional Review Board.
DOCUMENTATION
The purpose of this project is to make a platform where sneaker lovers can browse and learn more about sneakers while interacting with others with their activity in the app. Buying and selling sneakers on the internet is a huge market, but all sneaker related interfaces are dedicated to making a profit in some way from selling sneakers; Sneak Peek differs from those platforms because it is purely informational, while also allowing users a space to share their opinions with others within the app.

Users will be able to view profiles of each shoe along with descriptions, the shoe’s history, available colorways and more, while also being able to read sneaker news, make lists and share shoe profiles with friends. This is an opportunity for me to explore my passion for app design while combining with my interest in the sneaker industry.
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

User Centered Design

I want to focus this project on practicing user-centered design throughout all processes, beginning with the ideation of features as well as incorporating accessibility features. To monitor this, I will meet with my mentor and use the feedback I get from surveys to ensure that users are put first at each stage.

Management

With so many steps to complete throughout this 10-week project, I want to heavily focus on project management as well as time management for this project. To measure this, I will plan out each general step of the project for the quarter during Week 1, and follow that schedule through the quarter.

Prototyping

Being able to visualize how a set of wireframes will come to life on an actual device is extremely important, and something I don’t have much experience in. I want to focus on exploring the prototyping features within Figma as well as using Invision to create a more polished viewing of the user flow.
TIMELINE

JANUARY

Phase 1: Background Research
Senior Project Proposal
Pre-Design User Survey

Phase 2: Interface Design
Functions Specification

FEBRUARY

Site Map
Branding Decisions: Logo, Type, Color
Low-Fidelity Wireframes
High-Fidelity Wireframes

Phase 3: App Prototyping
Prototyping in Figma

Milestone: Senior Project Showcase
DEVELOPERS

1. LOW FIDELITY WIREFRAMES

2. HIGH FIDELITY PROTOTYPE

3. CASE STUDY
PROCESS
(CASE STUDY)
OVERVIEW

Sneak Peek is a fictional mobile application I created for this senior project. It is an informational and social app that allows users to browse sneakers and read sneaker news, as well as interact with other users and the content within the app. The goal of this project is to create a fully designed high-fidelity prototype showing the complete user journey throughout the platform.
The primary target user of this app is a male or female individual in the age range between 15 and 35 years old. Most users of the app have a solid understanding of sneakers and sneaker culture, and are motivated to download the app because of the ability to browse, be updated on news related to the industry and interact with friends. Most users of the app most likely own at least one pair of sneakers in the type of fashion shown in the app (Nike, Jordan, New Balance, Adidas, etc.), or are well versed in these brands and what is popular.

However, users also may be brand new to sneaker culture. Using this application is an opportunity for these users to learn more about the current state of sneakers, what is popular and coming out soon, and to gain more of an understanding of what they like and don’t like. This demographic of users may be trying to pick up a new hobby or express themselves more creatively.

To understand my primary target users more, I created a user survey prior to executing any design. I posted this survey to a sneaker-related forum on Reddit, with the goal of having users similar to my primary target user take the survey. I wanted to understand the primary brands that users like, primary apps and websites they use, and more about their motivations for using sneaker related apps.
Some of the main takeaways from the survey are:

- Nearly **two thirds** of respondents use their mobile device frequently to browse or purchase sneakers.
- **100%** of respondents purchase sneakers for casual use, while 28% purchase sneakers for athletic use or to resell for profit.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents often or somewhat often read sneaker related news.
- The top four brands that users purchase from are Nike, Adidas, Jordan, and New Balance.
- The top-three sneaker apps that respondents use most often are StockX, GOAT, and SNKRS.
- Respondents sometimes talk about sneakers with family, friends and others.

The survey results influenced my design choices in multiple ways. I was able to understand what brands that users in this space are generally purchasing from, and what apps they are using to accomplish that. I used this information in important features found throughout my app.
To further understand potential users of this app, I created multiple personas of users with different backgrounds, core needs, motivations and frustrations.

Persona 1: Jason Greenard

**Bio**
Jason currently lives in Boston and is a third-year student at Boston College. When he’s not studying, he enjoys going out with his roommates and playing basketball. His main source of income is buying and reselling sneakers.

**Core needs**
- Needs to read sneaker news, sneaker reviews and see releases to purchase shoes for casual use
- View all necessary information in one platform
- Be able to message and interact with friends about his favorite hobbies

**Frustations**
- Sneaker apps he uses are too focused on selling and end up being misleading
- Not enough people to discuss sneakers with; there’s no place to interact virtually with people with similar interests
- Hard to find reliable reviews

**Brands**
- StockX
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Nike

**Payment medium**
- Cash/Cheque
- Digital Payment

**Platform**
- Website
- Mobile App
Persona 2: Celene Pedersen

Celene Pedersen

Bio
Celene is a Physician Assistant in San Diego with a Masters in Public Health. Celene has an apartment on her own but spends a lot of time with family and her close friends. In her free time, she enjoys reading, going to the movies and the beach.

Core needs
- Wants to become more invested in sneakers and sneaker culture
- Learn about sneakers but also read sneaker news
- Make her friends and family more interested in sneaker culture

Frustrations
- Hard to find resources that are sneaker related but purely informational
- High prices on brand specific websites
- Lack of knowledge while trying to learn more causes imposter syndrome

Brands

Payment medium
Digital Payment

Platform
Mobile App

I began to be more interested in sneakers recently and I want to build up my sneaker collection.

Personality
Introvert Happy

AGE 26
EDUCATION Masters in Public Health
STATUS Single
OCCUPATION Physician Assistant
LOCATION San Diego
TECH LITERATE High
Persona 3: Christian White

Bio
Christian currently lives in Seattle and works as a Barista. In his free time, he loves running and runs half marathons multiple times per year. He’s exploring the possibility of doing a triathlon in the next year and is beginning training.

Core needs
- Needs comfortable and high-performing running shoes for long distance runs
- Reading reviews that are trustworthy and effective
- Reduce soreness after training

Frustrations
- Running shoes he currently have are uncomfortable and leave his feet being sore after training
- Not enough people in his daily life that can recommend high performing shoes
- Hard to compare prices for sneakers on different sites and apps

Brands

Personality
- Extrovert
- Dreamer

Payment medium
- Cash/Cheque
- Digital Payment

Platform
- Website

Persona 2 and 3 are also viable users of the app and their core needs and motivations came heavily into consideration. These users may find the Lists feature useful, because it can help them group sneakers together into palatable and unique collections for a deeper understanding and interaction. These users also may find Reviews to be helpful when considering buying a certain shoe.
This is a solo project I completed for my Senior Project. I completed all parts of the user research, design and testing on my own.
The scope of this project was defined by the deliverables. The original deliverables of the project were:

1. A fully designed set of wireframes produced in Figma that shows all functions and possible screens throughout the app, accompanied by a toolkit used for consistency throughout.
2. A prototype using completed wireframes in Invision that shows the user journey through the app. The format will be an offline prototype.
3. UX Case Study that articulates each step of the process including the problem statement, users and personas, scope and constraints, ideation and my process, and the outcomes.

The main purpose of this project was to learn how use Figma, which is valued as a common interface design tool in industry. I also wanted to learn how to use Invision as a prototyping tool. The overall purpose of this project was to complete an end-to-end interface design project on my own, utilizing user research results to successfully design a mobile application.

However, as I went through the project stages and began designing, I decided to alter the final deliverables. Figma is a powerful prototyping tool in itself, so I decided to prototype in Figma rather than Invision. At that point, I combined the first two deliverables into one high-fidelity prototype. The updated deliverables are now:

1. High-fidelity prototype that achieves minimum viable product status, produced in Figma.
2. Low-fidelity wireframes of all major screens in the app.
3. UX Case Study to explain my UX/UI Design process.
SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

Some other scope considerations of this project are:

• The project includes research and design stages, but I will not be developing this app as a part of the deliverables for this project.
• I originally included a Software Requirements Specification document as a part of the project, but I decided to skip this step because the app is not going to be developed.
• Because this app is heavily based on content, it is not in the project scope to create comprehensive and completed content for every link shown in the prototype. There is one sneaker profile that has been mocked up, and one news story that has been mocked up.

Some other constraints of this project:

• **Time.** Time is a limiting factor due to a short quarter and other coursework.
• **Skills.** This project is first and foremost a learning opportunity, and I am new to using Figma as of the beginning of this project. I am proficient in Sketch, which is useful for starting to use a new design tool.
• **Collaboration:** Mobile UX design is a challenging prospect that is usually performed with multiple people, but this is a solo project.

As far as the actual product, this app is a purely informational app that does not stand to generate revenue at this time. There is no opportunity for E-commerce within this app, and it mainly revolves around the sneaker related content and the app’s users, who can interact with each other and view others’ activities.
I first was motivated to start this project because I wanted to improve my UX and UI design skills specifically for mobile applications. I had worked on a mobile app for an internship the previous quarter, and getting an introduction to that kind of work made me want to expand on that experience while also incorporating more of the UX design process into the project.

After doing the user survey and personas, I began to determine what functions and features the app should have. I had a vision of an informational/social app, and I incorporated features from each of those aspects into the site map. The main features that I needed to include in the app are:

- The ability to browse sneakers and make custom searches for sneakers.
- View information related to each sneaker and custom colorway.
- View sneaker related news and make custom searches for news stories.
- Personalize the app by allowing users to like/save sneakers, and add them to lists.

From those four specific functions, I needed to make important information architecture decisions. I knew that I wanted to implement a bottom navigation, most likely with four tabs. The navigation was the main structure for where content should be placed within the app, and I tried to keep most links and content within one section of the app for discoverability purposes.

After I had the functions and site map determined, I began designing low-fidelity wireframes. These were useful in determining the layout of each major screen in the app,
from where images should be placed to cards, headings, interactive elements, navigation, and more. I created these in Figma, using minimal color and system typography to focus more on the layout and how the user will move through each screen.

A specific UX principle I focused on at this stage and throughout the project is discoverability. Discoverability refers to the degree of ease that users can find all the new features and elements in an interface when they first use it. Users become accustomed to having certain features when they use apps with similar functions, and to ensure that new users to my app would have a solid knowledge of how to interact with it, I took into account the layouts and main features of major apps in this space and incorporated those. My goal was to ensure that users wouldn’t have to spend a ton of mental thought learning how to use this interface.

Some specific examples of designing for discoverability:

- **2 Column layout:** Many apps in this space, specifically StockX and GOAT, use a two-column layout for their search tab when browsing through products. This is a common feature found throughout other E-commerce apps as well.
- **Navigation:** The placement of the navigation elements are intuitively placed for the user. Home is often found on the far left of mobile navigation, and profile is usually found on the far right, both of which I incorporated into my navigation.
- **The ability to like and save content:** Liking and saving content is a common feature across all apps. I used a heart icon to signify liking a sneaker, which is universally recognizable as an icon, and all your liked sneakers can be viewed in one place.
I completed wireframes for all major screens in the app. The low-fidelity wireframes served as a solid starting point moving into the high-fidelity screen design.

The high-fidelity design stage came next. I created 35 screens across the app to showcase multiple user flows and a complete user journey throughout the app. Throughout this stage, there were specific design decisions that I made using my user research results and knowledge of UX Design principles.

I also made decisions regarding the UI elements used throughout.

- **Typography:** I chose a simple, easy-to-read sans-serif font for the body copy in Poppins. That would also be used for some of the headers, along with Bebas Neue.
- **Icon Design:** The icons are consistent and feature a good amount of negative space within the strokes. This goes well the simple and clean UI overall.
- **Color:** I used a base color of red for the design to signify the look of stage curtains. This was inspired by the name Sneak Peek, and the motif of revealing the content within the app. The accent color of gold also is from the stage curtain idea. I also used various shades of gray as well as white in the design.

**Home**
The Home screen of the app serves as a hub to link to all the content. This is the page that users will initially open the app in, so it is important to link out to important content. The carousel on top shows the most popular sneakers by views at the time, and the Browse By section links out to browse sneakers by a certain brand. The same goes for the recent news section, linking out to most recent news stories.
Search
The Search page is the most essential screen in the app, because users can find the most information here. Users can search by sneakers, lists and accounts. Lists are public collections of sneakers that users can make which come with a title and description. When a user searches, they see a 2 column layout of sneakers related to their search. Within each cell, users can easily like the shoe and add it to a list, while seeing the title, brand and image.

News
The News tab is essential because it provides one of the major functions of the app: allowing users to read sneaker news. There’s a featured story fixed at the top, and beneath that, a section for top headlines without a thumbnail preview to allow for more stories to be linked out to on the page at once.

Profile
The profile tab allows you to view your likes, reviews and lists. From each of these daughter pages, the user can edit their content to their liking.

Sneaker Profile
A sneaker profile is the expanded page for a specific sneaker. On the sneaker profile, a user can view the average rating of the sneaker, multiple images with a carousel, the product details and a description, and reviews from other users. From here, the user can also leave a review, like or add the sneaker to a list, and view related products.
The outcome of this project was a successful high-fidelity prototype among three successful deliverables. The main achievements from this project are:

- Learning how to design and prototype in Figma.
- Practicing UX Design specific to mobile devices.
- Facilitating user research and using results to influence design choices.
- However, aside from the technical aspects, this project was a wonderful opportunity to learn project and time management. Having two months to complete a project of this depth can be challenging, not only because of the workload, but the diligence needed to continually make progress as the quarter goes on. I was very happy with the experience I gained in project management by completing this senior project.
LOW FIDELITY WIREFRAMES

Scan to see all low-fidelity wireframes!
Sneaker Profile

Sean Wotherspoon x Air Max 1/97
‘Sean Wotherspoon’

4.6

SKU: AJ4319 400
Material: Corduroy
Designer: Sean Wotherspoon
Release Date: 03.20.2019

Description:

Reportedly inspired by Sean’s love for vintage Nike Heritage, this shoe features both the upper of the Air Max 1 and the sole unit of the Air Max 97, a killer combo. The shoe shoe has a unique corduroy/cord upper with layered edges, a tidy one-of-a-kind look, with subtle hints from top to toe.

There isn’t a lot to say about this shoe. It’s awesome at first blush. It is a great addition to your collection and one that will be sure to turn heads.

Wearing Co.

Sneaker Lover

5/5

This is one of the most hyped shoes I’ve ever owned, and I’m glad I bought them. The fit is comfortable, it’s lightweight, and it’s a more accurate fit.

Don’t Hesitate

5/5

I purchased this shoe mainly for the performance, but I was a little skeptical. The comfort is 10/10, but I’m not sure it’s as comfortable as the Multisizer. Overall, I’m satisfied with the purchase, but I wish it was less expensive.

Sean Wotherspoon

5/5

I created the shoes for people who love Nike. My personal inspiration for the corduroy and cord unit was my love for the Air Max 97. I couldn’t decide between my favorite edition of 97 or the 90, so combined them.

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