XIX

PLACEMENT REPORT

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Made To Engage is a multi award-winning digital transformation agency with offices in Belfast, Dublin, and London. They aim to deliver experience-driven commerce solutions that are growth-oriented, agile and innovative.

My role has been as a User Experience Designer. I have been working within the wider CX team made up of both design and UX. As part of my role I have been involved in visual design as well as working across various multi-disciplinary product teams.

MTE was started in 2011 by Steven Cassin and Stephen Leathem with the team growing ever since. The company is now made up of over 60 digital experts, who specialise in Experience Design, Technology and Digital Marketing. These three strands are integral to the business and form the basis for everything they do. This past year they have expanded into physical London and Dublin offices to help accommodate both new and existing members of the team as well as clients.

The studio is rooted in Microsoft technology and the Episerver CMS. MTE is capable of taking projects from ideation to supported creation. This is made possible through all the various teams within the organisation such as UX/Design, FED, QA, and Support to name but a few.

Made To Engage have an ever expanding client base that features both local and global organisations such as Easons, Irish Life, PowerNI, Hornby Hobbies, Scalextric, Airfix, and Corgi.

The work offered to clients ranges from simply providing content creation from the Customer Engagement team to full scale, responsive e-commerce sites that require an entire product team. These multi-disciplinary teams are made up of FED's, back-end devs, as well as designers and UX designers.

As a UX designer, I have been working within the User Experience team which is currently made up of myself alongside three others. As part of this team I have undertaken research and design activities across the product life-cycle from discovery such as persona development to usability testing with real customers. Having the foundation and theory from university was useful and essential to know, but getting stuck in and just doing some of these things has really made the difference in understanding UX principles and practices.

My role has been great at giving me a truly immersive overview and understanding of working within a true lean, agile UX environment, even within a small team. All the work I have undertaken whilst in the role has been valuable in adding to my knowledge of the field and building up my skills.

The UX team sits within the Customer Experience (CX) team which is formed by both the UX and Design team. The term 'CX' is an internal idea to put more of an emphasis on designing for customers as the business puts more focus on e-commerce sites. By working as part of the CX team, this allows all of us to up-skill across different areas from each other. The Design team has more of a focus on the visual design and brand research within projects. Both teams crossover and collaborate to output the best work possible. This is seen in design critiques, design studios, and helping out with different tasks needing done.

The CX team works alongside the Customer Engagement (CE) team under the umbrella of Digital Experience. This has allowed me to gain new understanding of different roles and work that goes into projects. The CE team consists of content creators, SEO experts, and digital marketing executives. This information and research feeds into the UX and design work that takes place and allows for a more complete and better informed design to be produced for the client. It also helps us to validate quantitative data with user research and testing that is carried out.

In my job, I have also worked alongside other departments at different times whenever required. These interactions have helped shape projects and expose me to new skills. Other projects have involved a range of different tasks such as consulting on websites to provide recommendations, designing new office space interiors and producing and organising internal SharePoint sites for better communication and file sharing.

KEY INSIGHTS

I have learnt a lot from my year working in the industry. As part of my reflection, I have condensed everything I have learnt at Made to Engage into four key themes. These themes focus on the skills I have acquired and have put to use every day here. Each one plays a unique role in developing my expertise.

DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE

In everything I design, no matter what stage in the process, users have to be considered first. I learnt not only how to facilitate various UX activities but also how to take value from them. This value then carries through the project and allows me to always consider the needs of the user first and foremost.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Dep diving into the world of UX has been exciting and insightful. Working as part of a wider product team has helped me build my experience in other areas such as marketing, analytics, SEO, quality assurance, and project management.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to every aspect of the business and the product. Having seen new methods of communicating for various situations, it has helped me to be more effective no matter who I'm speaking to whether that be internal colleagues or clients. I have also discovered a wide variety of new mediums to communicate in such as MURAL and Zeplin.

IXD KNOWLEDGE

When thinking about what I had gained from my first two years on the course, I realised that the knowledge I had obtained was cohesive in its absence. This means that it subconsciously provides a solid foundation for me. If I didn't have that knowledge, I would notice a severe lack in my understanding and ability to do my job at a high standard.

REFLECTION & EVALUATION

Throughout all the projects and tasks I have been a part of, I have learnt a lot of new skills and have built on and strengthened the foundation gained from my first two years of university.

WORKSHOPS

UX workshops allowed us to speak directly to the client and key stakeholders to help both us and them understand the goals of the project as well as the problem they are trying to solve. Workshops consisted of various activities designed to encourage discussions and conversation. One activity that I found useful was 'Rose, Thorn, Bud'. This helped to highlight what was good, what was bad and what could be improved with the current solution.

Skills Learned
- Leadership when facilitating a workshop for MCS Group
- Professionalism when dealing with clients face-to-face
- Communication skills when explaining various aspects of each activity
- How to gain valuable insights from a workshop that can be applied to the project later on

UX CONSULTATION

This activity allowed us to give quick wins to clients as well as highlight any bigger or ideal changes that would have to be taken on as a separate piece of work. This helped to optimise clients' sites for their audience. This was often done with limited prior research and was completed with best practice in mind. When providing feedback, each suggestion was presented as three points; problem, impact, recommendation. This allowed for an explanation to help back up the change that was being suggested to show the process it came from.

Skills Learned
- Best practice within UX when limited research was available on a project
- Communication when presenting feedback and recommendations for clients to read and understand
- Problem solving ability when attempting to understanding the best approach to take to each individual problem

Easons Christmas Campaign
Consultation provided for Easons during Christmas 2018 analysed the problem and provided a recommendation that would create impact.

Password:
easonsjourney

Password:
easonsjourney

Positive

Question

Negative/Frustration

Hannah's Journey Video

Figure 1 - *waterstones.com*

Figure 2 - *chapters.indigo.ca*

Figure 3 - *chapters.indigo.ca*

...ions

...r personas
...erstand target audience and allow pages to be ...cus on the user

...otjar on site
...r understand user behaviour on landing pages

...y to filter products on landing pages (see figure 1)
...v users to quickly find relevant products within the page

...highlighted or featured content at the top of pages to help user ...o give users recommendations and ideas as well as drive ...o particular products or offers

...on: Move valuable content up the hierarchy (e.g. gifts for her, gifts ...

...ney they want to grand drive users to

Action: Surface personalised content for the user (e.g. more of a focus ...

FRANK
CMO

not currently delivering a personalised brand experience to customers, need a CMS that can grow with my business

FRANK
CMO

BIO

30 years old

Commutes into Birmingham each day for work

Management with marketing BSc

Worked in both marketing and project management in digital agencies before transitioning into current position

TECH

Apple iPhone X
MacBook Pro

CURRENT PROBLEMS

- I want to deliver a personalised experience to my customers

- Can't currently deliver a great brand experience for customers

- Have limited control of CMS and this impacts business developm

- Can anyone bring more value or new information about the industry or business?

- I want a platform that grows with my business

NEED TO KNOW

- Who are these guys?

- Who have they worked with before?

- V

- V
of

Made To Engage Website
Persona created for use on the new MTE site project. Was formed by speaking to a number of different people in the role across some of our clients.

USER RESEARCH & INTERVIEWS

This is a great opportunity to speak in-depth with users about themselves, how they currently interact with the business, and in what ways they use the current solution. It helps us to understand what users find important on a specific project and in what ways they might improve it. This was challenging as I have tried to understand the sorts of questions to ask that draw out all the necessary information that will be useful later on in the process. It also proved difficult due to the number of different responses I got when speaking to various people.

Skills Learned
- Communication and flexibility through both asking questions and adapting the conversation based on their response
- Ability to take meaningful notes that can be understood and used after each session

USER PERSONAS

Personas are derived from all the insight gained from completing the user research. These are fictional characters that reflect the users that were interviewed. They are particularly useful for feeding into the design process at various stages. These were really useful for me when starting the work on the updated MTE website project. They allowed me to make sure that any decision I made was user-centred and was purposeful rather than subjective.

Skills Learned
- Ability to take key insights from user research and apply it to produce reflective personas
- Components that contribute to an effective lean persona

> "PERSONAS ARE THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL DESIGN TOOL THAT WE USE… [THEY] ARE THE BRIGHT LIGHT UNDER WHICH WE DO SURGERY."

/ Alan Cooper, Software designer, programmer and the "Father of Visual Basic"

CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Journeys allow us to visually understand how customers interact with a product to identify new opportunities to design solutions for. These journeys are informed mainly from the personas but also can be influenced using information from the user research. By creating effective user personas, it has allowed me to appreciate the true value of a user journey and its outcomes. Producing user journeys based on my personas has reinforced the concept of user-centred design (UCD) which

Skills Learned
- How to best structure a journey to discover insights and create opportunities
- How to apply a persona to inform a realistic journey
- Understanding the importance of building empathy to develop problem solving solutions
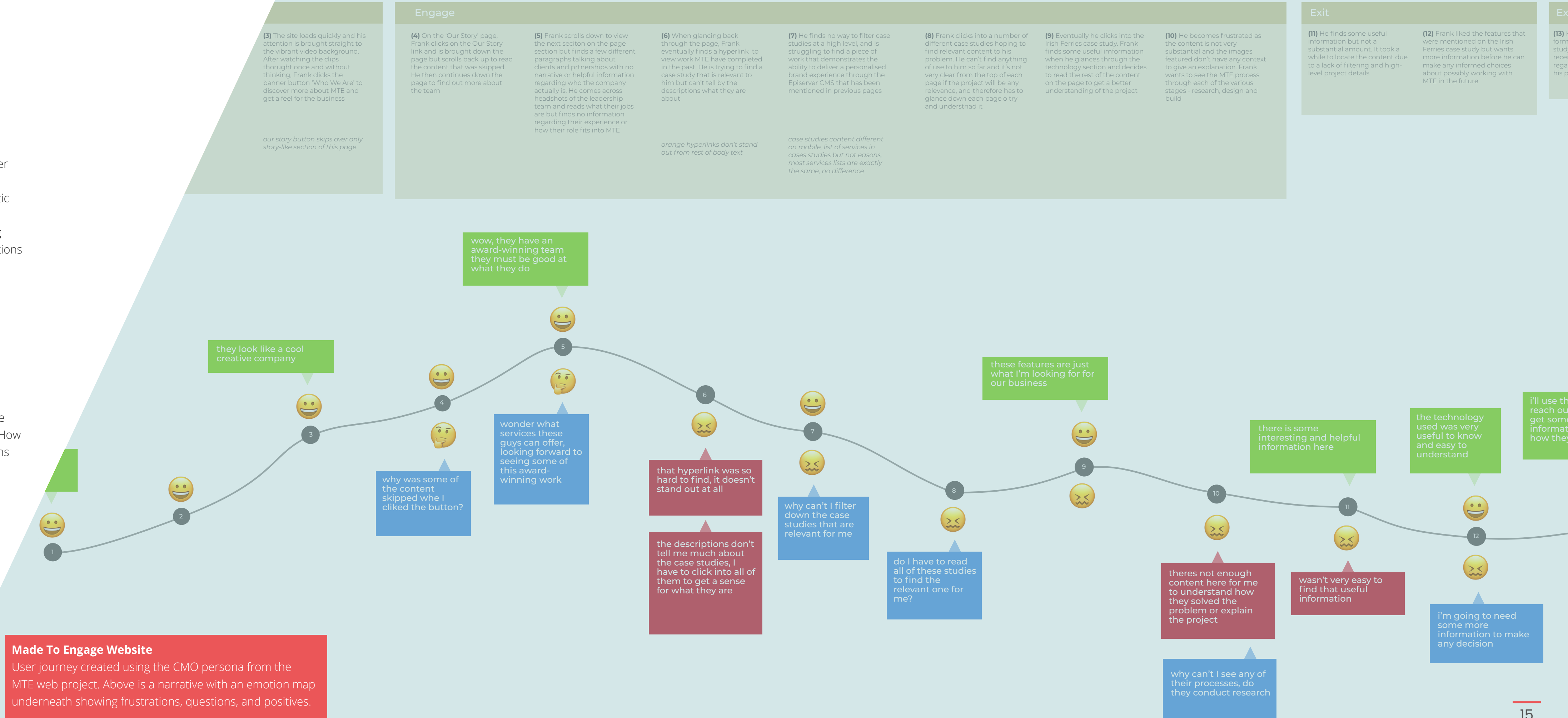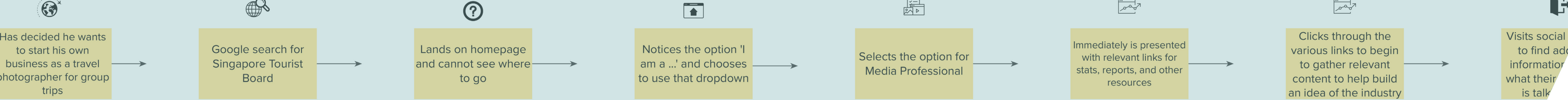
AFFINITY MAPPING

By synthesising the research completed, it allows us to build up a better understanding of the main problems faced in a current solution. This is achieved through theming the insights and notes taken and helping make visible the patterns seen from the research. Using both the themes and the journeys, this then allows us to create opportunities which in turn inspire practical solutions to each of the problems. By working through this process, it has taught me how to take research and other pieces of work and use them in collaboration to find the best solutions possible. Instead of jumping straight into practical solutions, I have started creating opportunities in a 'How Might We...' format which has helped form much better ideas.

Skills Learned
- How to effectively interpret and synthesise research through theming and mapping. How to draw out opportunities to form solutions

Engage

(3) The site loads quickly and his attention is brought straight to the vibrant video background. After watching the clips thought once and without thinking, Frank clicks the banner button 'Who We Are' to discover more about MTE and get a feel for the business

our story button skips over only story-like section of this page

(4) On the 'Our Story' page, Frank clicks on the Our Story link and is brought down the page but scrolls back up to read the content that was skipped. He then continues down the page to find out more about the team.

(5) Frank scrolls down to view the next section on the page section but finds a few different paragraphs talking about clients and ptnerships with no narrative or helpful information regarding who the company actually is. He comes across headshots of the leadership team and reads what their jobs are but finds no information regarding their experience or how their role fits into MTE

(6) When glancing back through the page. Frank eventually finds a hyperlink to view work MTE have completed in the past. He is trying to find a case study that is relevant to him but can't tell by the descriptions what they are about.

orange hyperlinks don't stand out from rest of body text

(7) He finds no way to filter case studies at a high level, and is struggling to find a piece of work that demonstrates the ability to deliver a personalised brand experience through the Episerver CMS that has been mentioned in previous pages

case studies content different on mobile, list of services in cases studies but not ezsons, most services lists are exactly the same, no difference

(8) Frank clicks into a number of different case studies hoping to find relevant content to his problem. He can't find anything of use to him so far and it's not very clear from the top of each page if the project will be any relevance, and therefore has to glance down each page o try and understnad it.

(9) Eventually he clicks into the Irish Ferries case study. Frank finds some useful information when he glances through the technology section and decides to read the rest of the content on the page to get a better understanding of the project

(10) He becomes frustrated as the content is not very substantial and the images featured don't have any context to give an explanation. Frank wants to see the MTE process through each of the various stages - research, design and build

(11) He finds some useful information but not a substantial amount. It took a while to locate the content due to a lack of filtering and high-level project details

(12) Frank liked the features that were mentioned on the Irish Ferries case study but wants miss information before he can make any informed choices about possibly working with MTE in the future

(13) ...

Journey map notes:

- wow, they have an award-winning team they must be good at what they do
- they look like a cool creative company
- why was some of the content skipped whe I cliked the button?
- wonder what services these guys can offer, looking forward to seeing some of this award-winning work
- that hyperlink was so hard to find, it doesn't stand out at all
- the descriptions don't tell me much about the case studies, I have to click into all of them to get a sense for what they are
- why can't I filter down the case studies that are relevant for me
- these features are just what I'm looking for for our business
- do I have to read all of these studies to find the relevant one for me?
- there is some interesting and helpful information here
- theres not enough content here for me to understand how they solved the problem or explain the project
- why can't I see any of their processes, do they conduct research
- the technology used was very useful to know and easy to understand
- wasn't very easy to find that useful information
- I'll use the ... reach ou... get som... informa... how the...
- i'm going to need some more information to make any decision

Made To Engage Website
User journey created using the CMO persona from the MTE web project. Above is a narrative with an emotion map underneath showing frustrations, questions, and positives.

Has decided he wants to start his own business as a travel photographer for group trips

I've been hearing about some cool experiences from friends on trips to here

Google search for Singapore Tourist Board

Lands on homepage and cannot see where to go

This is very overwhelming, there is so much going on and I don't know which navigation to use

Notices the option 'I am a ...' and chooses to use that dropdown

This was easy to find the best content for me

I hope it can help me find what I want to know

Selects the option for Media Professional

Immediately is presented with relevant links for stats, reports, and other resources

This was easy to find the best content for me

Wow, some of this is really useful information, but I'm not sure if this is quite what I was looking for

Clicks through the various links to begin to gather relevant content to help build an idea of the industry

Visits social ch to find add information what their is talk
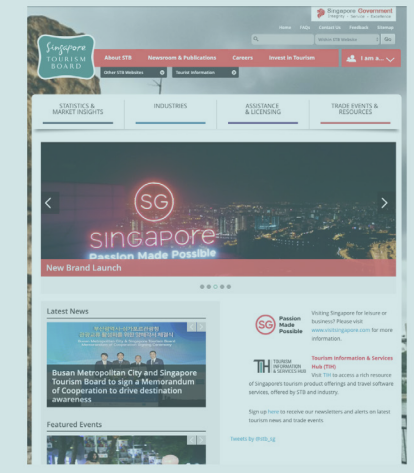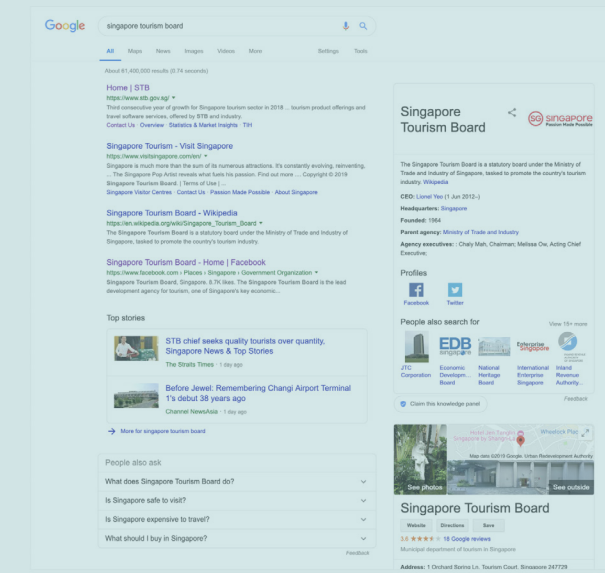
Alternative Navigation

I am a ...

I am a ...

- The site provides a more contextual navigation method by allowing the user to select their industry or specific business
- Choosing one of these returns relevant resources and content
- Broken down into very specific businesses which makes it easy and simple for the user
- Can be limiting in terms of jobs listed to the user

Media Professional

Below is a directory of tourism related information and services that can be found on the STB Corporate Website.

Statistics and Reports

Newsroom & Publications

Annual Report on Tourism Statistics

Annual Report on Tourism Statistics

Annual Tourism Statistics 2017

Annual Tourism Statistics 2016

Google search for Singapore Tourist Board

Has landed on the homepage and is confused about which navigation he should be using

This is very confusing. I don't know which navigation I should use, it's not very clear. The options on the red menu don't mean much to me

Decides to use the search to try and find out more

This should be a quicker to help me get the information I'm looking for

Uses the auto complete to search for 'cruise'

The auto-complete is very useful to give me suggestions. I don't have to type out the full word.

I wonder if these suggestions are popular searches?

Results are displayed and user looks down them

This doesn't look like I'm still on the same site! It's not very clearly laid out and I'm struggling to find helpful information

Cannot find the information he is looking for and returns to the homepage

U r

Secondary Navigation

Singapore Tourism Board

Search Functionality

- Gives and opportunity to search (us the STB site or all Singapore Gov sites
- Cannot be fixed by hitting enter, user must press 'Go'
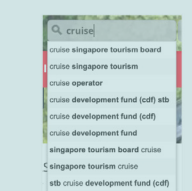
Tourism NI Hub
UX competitor analysis has a focus on UCD and clear takeaways for the client, hence the warning signs and ticks indicating good and bad points on a competitor site.

⊕ UX COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

This competitor analysis differs from regular analysis in that instead of looking at quantitative data from analytics it has a focus on content and function of a site and how effective it is such as the navigation, search, and typical journeys through the site. Before doing this, I had never carried out competitor analysis before, this was a great opportunity for me to learn more about it and the value it can add to a project. As it was UX based, it also shows me how I could analyse sites from this point of view to both improve my knowledge of best practice and to help when consulting for recommendations. I also found it helpful seeing how much this research can add to a project simply from learning from other sites.

Skills Learned
- How to carry out UX competitor analysis
- How to apply knowledge from other sites into my projects
- How to analyse other sites for both inspiration and learning

⊹ INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE & SITEMAPS

Before my placement, I struggled to understand the difference between a sitemap and information architecture (IA). Even after researching and reading it only became clear through trying to create both when working on projects. Now, by understanding the variation in each, I have been able to effectively utilise them across projects and use them to help understand and re-structure content better. By combining both sitemaps and IAs, it has allowed me to work on more effective navigations and communicate them better to clients.

Skills Learned
- Ability to communicate navigations in the best way to clients
- Creation of both sitemaps and IAs, Creation of optimised and efficient navigations

Digital Strategy ___

Etiam porta sem malesuada magna mollis euismod. Aenean eu leo quam. Pellentesque ornare sem lacinia quam venenatis vestibulum. Integer

Find out more

Transforming great companies into digital leaders

By constantly raising the bar - for both ourselves and our clients – we lead the way of true digital transformation. We expertly apply creative strategy, experience design and the world's leading digital technologies using our unrivalled team. This ensures our clients' commercial success.

From the outset, we have worked to build partnerships with ambitious organisations to pioneer innovative digital solutions. Our technology is the building-blocks of our work. We are proud to be partners with leading platform providers, including Episerver, Microsoft, Avensia, IBM Marketing Cloud, and Google. From optimising their time to market, providing insights into intelligent marketing opportunities and driving sustained business growth. These relationships enable us to transform how our clients do business.

Working closely together with our valued clients, we have made a significant contribution across a number of sectors. These advances in technology have resulted

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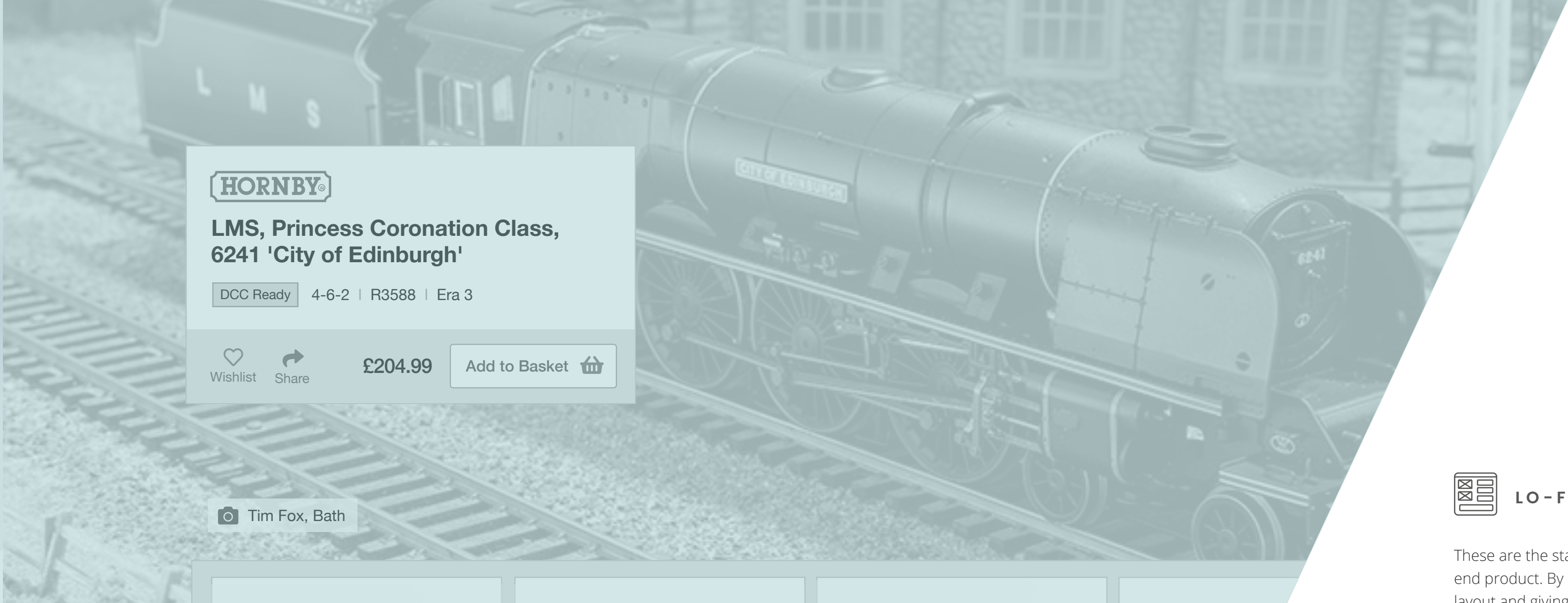
HORNBY®

LMS, Princess Coronation Class, 6241 'City of Edinburgh'

DCC Ready | 4-6-2 | R3588 | Era 3

♡ Wishlist   ⤴ Share   **£204.99**   **Add to Basket** 🛒

📷 Tim Fox, Bath

+ 24 more

The Model **The History** **Technical Specs**

The story of the Princess Coronation Class is one of split personalities and purposes and ... opinions and attitudes between design on the one hand, and ... the other.

... form of the class arose from tests by the London Midland Scottish ... ment on Stanier's development of the Princess Royal class locomotives. Stanier was said to be ambivalent about the economic value of streamlining

Reviews

Re...

MTE Website | Hornby
Both of these examples display a basic wireframe produced for each of the projects. Various fidelities are required based on the projects requirements.

🖼 **LO-FI PROTOTYPING**

These are the starting point for the layout and visuals for an end product. By beginning with basic wireframes showing the layout and giving an idea of content, I have been able to work in a much more agile environment that allows for rapid user testing and implementation of changes discovered in usability sessions that can affect the user's experience. Using the lo-fi wireframes I have transformed each section into hi-fi elements that visually represent how the finished site will look. This helps clients to understand the look and feel of their product.

Skills Learned
- Rapid prototyping and testing
- Best practice for layouts
- Taking lo-fi sketches to hi-fi designs
- The basics of UI elements

✏ HI-FI PROTOTYPING

From being on placement, I have found there are many different types of prototype that can be created depending on the need and complexity of a project. I have created prototypes that range from simple wireframes and sketches that show a basic layout all the way to working and logic-based Axure projects that help illustrate both functionality and journey through a site. This has been useful not only for presenting ideas to clients, but also internally for team demonstrations so developers can understand how a system is intended to work.

Skills Learned

- UI layout process, digital wireframing using programs such as Sketch and Adobe XD
- Working with Axure and creating functional logic in a prototype

118 Ashtowngate, Navan Road, Dublin, D15 H70K

Account Number: 1997965582

| Billing | Bill Estimator |

TO PAY

50.00

Make a payment

CTA to upgrade tariff

Speed up transactions, get discount & rewards by signing up for Energy Online.

Find out how

BILL AMOUNT: €50.00
ACCOUNT BALANCE: **€10.00 CREDIT**
BILL ISSUE DATE: 09/04/2018

Payment due: 14 days after bill issue date

Latest Bills

Select year: 2018 2017 201

14 March 2017 Tariff Change Notifica

21 March 2017 Online Registration

Latest Payments

2018 2017 2016

7 Tariff Change Notification Q3 2018

21 March 2017 Online Registration

Energia One Account | Scalextric
These are two high fidelity prototypes showing how the final products should look. This is useful for clients to get a real feel of what outcome to expect from the process.

SCALEXTRIC

Catalogue ⌄   Community ⌄   Help & Advice ⌄   More ⌄

£ Top Up   Perks   ? Help & Support

GET IN THE DRIVERS SEAT

Search the catalogue

♀ Try searching the make, model or category

Free UK Shipping
on all orders over £50.00

UK Christmas Delivery
Last order date 17th December

Extended Christmas
Get a refund on unwant

Scalextric TV
Sed posuere consectetur est at lobortisonec sed odio dui maecenas magna.

SCALEXTRIC   CHELSEA   TEST TRACK

Episode 5 of 6
Looking at the new Suns
a look back at the amaz

Episode 4 of 6

Included in each sprint, we would test our updated prototypes with users to see the challenges they face and the reactions they have. Each sprint would have a focus on a different section or elements each time, for example through the Hornby project we had a sprint focused on the search, navigation, and layout. This allowed us to get specific feedback that we could iterate on quickly after the sessions before the sprint closed. The majority of the tests we carried out were remote using a video tool called Zoom which allowed us to share users' screens and record the session. We have sourced users from both the clients' records and an online tool, Respondent, which helps us to hire relevant participants to take part in the research.

Skills Learned
- Running a usability test session
- How to take valuable and user-reflective notes
- The complications and logistics involved in organising and carrying out test sessions
- Communication skills when working with users

Hornby
The designs are placed into MURAL and post-it notes are overlaid in areas where specific comments were made allowing us to highlight key areas to focus on.

	Rose		Bud	
Task 1 Natural Exploration				
Task 2 finding trackside items				
Task 3 Product details (google)				
Task 4 Product details (direct)				
Task 5 Checking out				
Task 6 Returning to add TTS				

As well as this selection of UX activities, I have also been involved in other activities , some of which are not directly related to my role but challenged me in my skills and abilities.

Design Studios
These were visual brainstorming sessions in which a group of us would come together to collaborate and quickly produce a number of ideas for a project. This was normally achieved through an activity known as 'Crazy Eights' in which we spend eight minutes sketching eight different ideas before presenting back. We would then spend another eight minutes taking other people's ideas and incorporating them into a more focused single design. I found this really useful for quickly coming up with quality ideas that could then be implemented into the project.

Design Critiques
These times have been invaluable to my progression and improvement. They have allowed for constructive feedback of my work and helped me to understand new concepts or ideas that I previously wouldn't have used. It also gave me an appreciation for how to critique others' work and helped me to gain visibility on how others in the team work to solve a problem.

Sprint Planning and Timesheets
Time is extremely important when undertaking any work but is particularly valued when working in an agency setting. When clients are being billed depending on time spent on a project, you have to get the balance right between not wasting time whilst spending the right amount to allow the best work to come through. The timesheets aspect has been helpful for me to understand how long basic activities should take and has made me more time-conscious when completing work. Sprint planning has also been useful to me as this shows how a good plan at the start of a project can benefit you further along. It helps you to stick to timing and make sure the work you are completing is on track to be delivered. The timing aspect of a project is something I have never had a good grasp on and this has really been helpful to take away.

Team Talks
Each week someone within the business presents something from the industry or field they work in that could be of interest to others. This allows for visibility across all teams and provides new insight or understanding of a subject. It also provides a platform to learn about new technologies and events people have attended. I have taken part in presenting a couple of these team talks and it has boosted both my confidence but also my ability to speak to a larger group in a way that clearly communicates a message and inform others.

New Office
Since I have begun working at MTE the team has grown significantly and as a result of this we have expanded into a new space in the building we are currently in. One of the responsibilities passed to me was to use 3D CAD software to produce the layout and design of this new office space. This was a great opportunity for me to develop a new skill and add my mark to the business.

Intranet
Another project I took on was the create a new intranet system for MTE using SharePoint. This was a site that would allow people to share files, view company announcements and provide support for various tasks. There was some light usability testing and wireframing before making a start on the build of it. It was great to understand how this system works and to provide a useful space for people to communicate and share within the company.
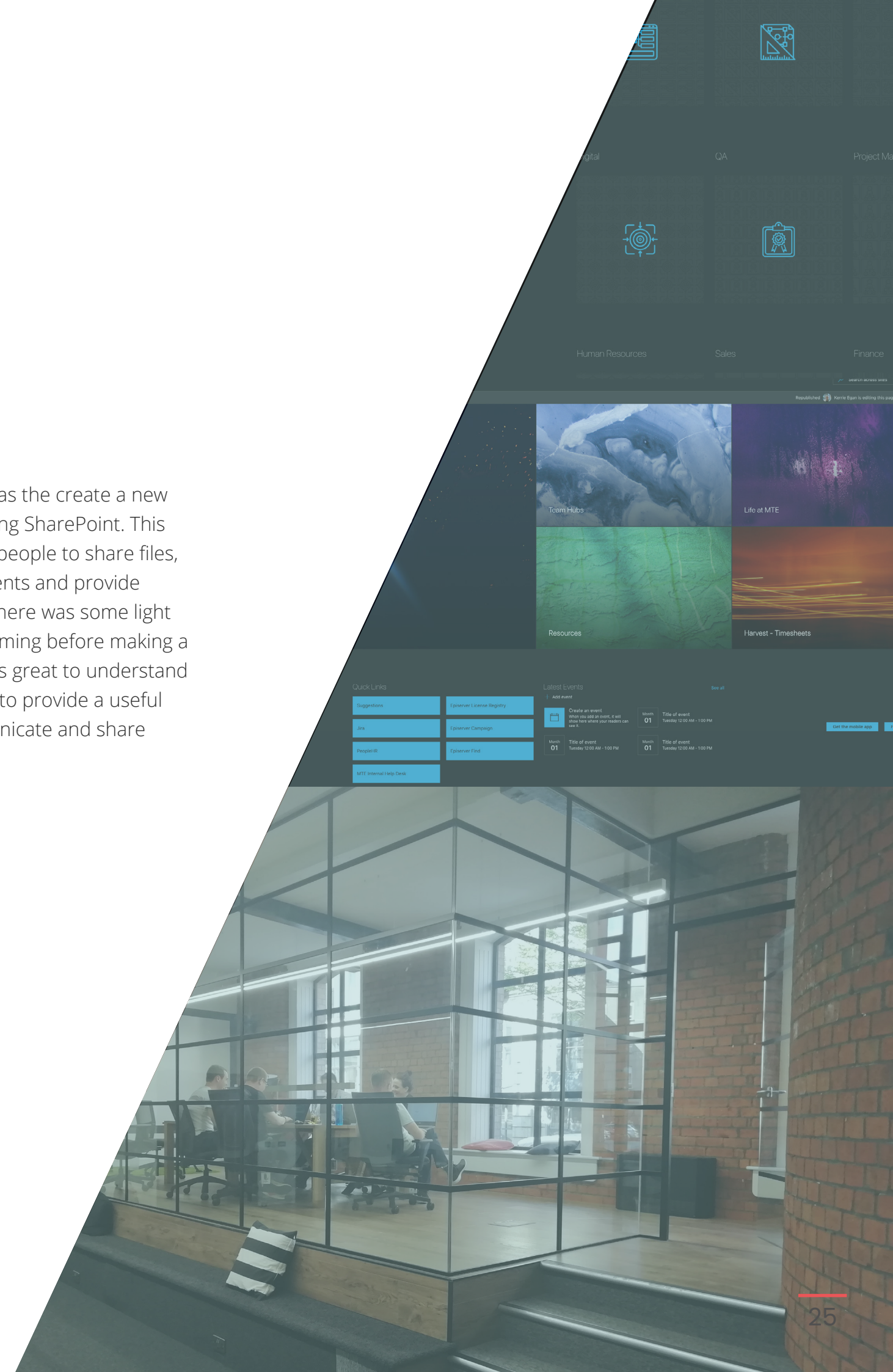
CONCLUSION

From the get-go, my experience with Made to Engage has been such an educational and enjoyable one. I have gained a lot of new insights along with new UX and soft skills that will not only serve me well in returning to university but will stand by me throughout my career path no matter where I end up.

I cannot thank the team or the people surrounding me enough for the time and effort they have put into me. I really appreciate all the knowledge they have both shared and demonstrated. I look forward to seeing the impact these things have on all of my future work.