

Freelancr

My team and I recently had a session at our university where the main topic was 'Freelancing.' We learned about how difficult it used to be to find freelance work and how there was barely any communication or connection between fellow freelancers.

Simultaneously, We had been brainstorming for a while, looking for an idea that we could turn into an app. And that is when it dawned on us. We had an idea that we believed would be appssolutely cool! (pun intended)

Introduction / An App for Freelancers

Freelancr is an app made for freelancers and those looking for freelancers. Tinder and Instagram inspire it, and many of its features are based on those found in these highly successful social media apps.

We envisioned our app to have a profile swiping system similar to Tinder, where one could swipe through different people who freelance. There would be other features such as the 'Direct Message,' 'Call,' 'Follow,' and 'Profile' feature borrowed from Instagram. Furthermore, Dubizzle was also a source of inspiration when making the 'Listings,' which were Ads displayed by people who needed work to be done urgently.

The first step to designing our app aesthetically was to decide on the color scheme and font. Which we finalized in a Figma document that we titled 'Assets.'



Mainly multiple shades of gray and bright contrasting pink, the colors we picked were complimentary to each other but were also picked for specific reasons.

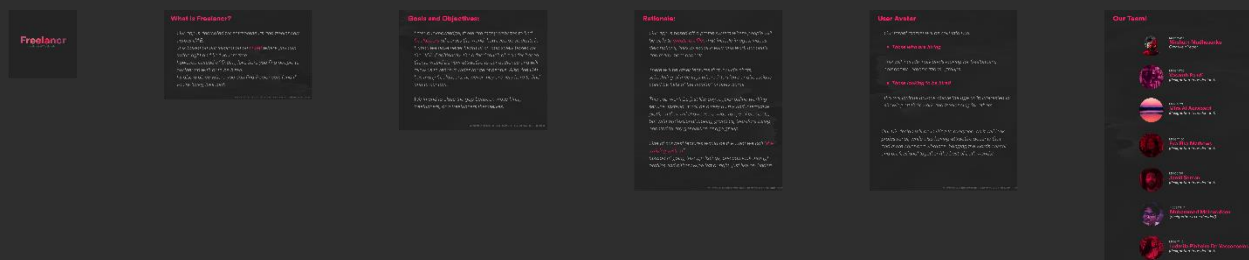
We believed our app would look highly professional with a permanent 'Dark theme,' as many people are too used to light modes. Having a dark theme would give our app a more premium feel. However, we cannot only have grays. After careful discussion, we decided to have one 'Accent' color, which would stand out from the gray tones and bring some life and color into our app. This was done to show that although our app is serious and is for professional users, it could still have a quirky side.

The font we selected for our entire app, after researching, ended up being;

Circular STD

Circular STD is a simple sans serif font notably used in Spotify's interface. It was decided only to use that single font while adding variety using the typeface's many weights. However, since our app prototype was planned to be made to support an iPhone XR, we have also made use of SF Pro Display, which is highly similar to the font used on apple devices.

After our assets were ready, my team and I made our Project Backgrounder, which had details about our app, such as our rationale, goals and vision, user profiles, and why our app was made in the first place.



Our project backgrounder.

Survey

User research can be an essential tool when creating an app or a service. It provides information about consumers and assists designers and developers in making decisions and presenting content or services catered to their needs. This often results in customer satisfaction.

I assigned my team members a task to gather information related to freelancing. We selected Google Forms to do a simple survey, which we then posted on our Instagram stories. We surveyed people by asking questions about what they knew about freelancing and whether they would freelance if given the opportunity.

Our responses suggested that many people knew what freelancing was, but a good portion was unaware. We also learned that the survey participants were more interested in freelancing than looking for freelancers. This made sense as most of our demographic consisted of people between the ages of 18-25

The form can be viewed using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/cFrcVjcsxm5RGyHS8>.

after presenting our App Backgrounder and having our idea approved, we began making our app prototype.

Construction / My role, and the building of an app prototype

I was assigned the role of a Creative Director, which meant I had to lead a team of 6 people, assign them tasks, and collectively bring our idea closer to reality.

I also took responsibility for deciding the app's aesthetics, and I also became our app's 'Prototyper.'

It can be tricky to figure out where to start when designing an app. We came across the same issue, but after hours and hours of pacing around, I devised a plan.

My team members were given the task to create as many Lo-Fi pages as they could come up with. This gave us an idea of the type of pages we would need.

Preliminary App Demo

We began with a simple flowchart, which we would build on as we progressed.



Once completed, it would serve as the preliminary demo that we presented to receive feedback and constructive criticism.

The work was done together, as I wanted my team to understand our app's aesthetics. This way, they could consistently incorporate the same design language into other pages.

Our App demo would have four essential features that were presented during our first presentation;

- The Logo page
- The opening sequence (which consisted of Splash pages)
- The Login or Register pages and finally,
- The first iteration of the Swipe feature.

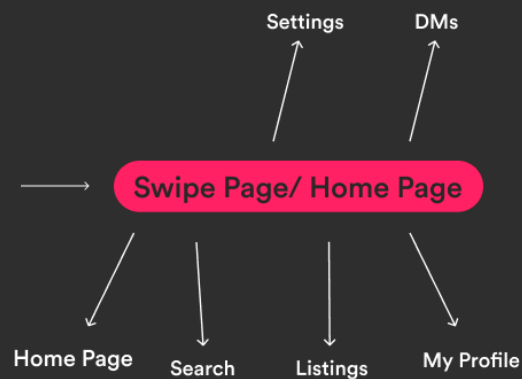
The design of our splash pages had to be extremely attractive and pleasing to look at, as they were the first pages that one would see when opening the app for the first time. Therefore, we spent much time working on the pages.

Our app's most essential and central feature was the Swipe Page, which also served as the home page. Tinder, an online dating app, heavily inspired this system. As the team's prototyper, I made sure our swipe page was completely functional, which meant swiping cards left or right. After numerous trial and error attempts, the first iteration of the swiping system was complete, which meant that it was time to present our preliminary work.

Final App Demo

The presentation of our preliminary work ended with our team receiving some much-needed feedback and critique. Taking notes of said feedback and implementing changes where they were due was the first step we took before building our final app prototype.

The **next step** to completing our design was naturally to expand on the flowchart that we had made.



I planned to begin where we last finished, which was at the Home Page, and move outward and make the pages required for other features of our app. After meeting my team members, the team was divided into groups of two and allocated different features and pages. The main features that we had to make were:

- The **Settings** Page, similar to the one on Instagram.
- The '**Likes**' Page displays people who liked your Profile and shows the profiles you liked.
- The **Direct Message** page, which users would use to communicate with each other. this also includes Video and Voice calls as added features.

- The **Search** page, which would be used to search for specific people.
- The **Profile** page.
- The **Listings** page is the latest addition to our features. Inspired by Dubizzle and people per hour, this page would have advertisements and listings that people would post.

I focused on the Profile and the listings page while my team members handled the other pages.

The design process was similar for every page; make the Lo-Fi, then the Mid-Fi, and the Hi-Fi versions. Once each page was designed, I would go through the work, review and give feedback, and then make necessary changes, after which I would prototype it and make connections.

The plan was more or less successful; however, some of my teammates could not meet deadlines and had work that was not up to the standards that we had agreed upon. These issues were solved by myself and other teammates who spent extra time perfecting our app.

The swipe mechanism was revisited, and I worked on making a second iteration. The latest version is a lot cleaner, looks much better, and is easier for users to understand.

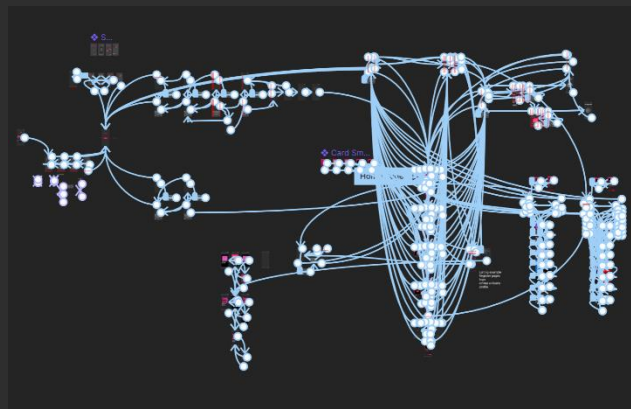
Once the main pages were completed, it was a matter of nitpicking tiny details and looking for minute imperfections, which we polished, testing the flow of our prototype, and ensuring its smoothness and interactivity. Another detail that I added was animation, by sprinkling in small elements around the app, especially the splash pages. This improved the overall 'attractiveness' of our app.

After many days and nights of hard work, The prototype we designed was finally completed.

Conclusion / A reflection.

I have learned a lot that I thought was impossible to learn during the past few months. Working in Figma and learning how to use it was an absolute blast. It felt amazing to see something that I made displayed as a flow. Making actual working buttons, components, and animations motivated me to create more things.

Taking a step back after making what seems like millions of connections and looking at the beautiful mess I made makes me feel so proud of myself.



A beautiful mess.

I feel immensely grateful to learn a new skill and for the fact that I was given a chance to display the skills that I had already worked hard to acquire. Working with my team was also very fun. It was fascinating to listen to others' thoughts and opinions and view things from their perspectives.

I was given a chance to be a creative director and this allowed me to enhance my leadership skills by planning and executing ideas, relaying work, and communicating effectively with my team members. I have also developed a newfound respect for designers in media and all app designers and developers. The amount of thought and detail that goes into making the smallest of elements is awe-inspiring.

Learning design has made me look at the world through a different lens. I appreciate design much more than I ever did before.