DRESS
UPP

Process Book
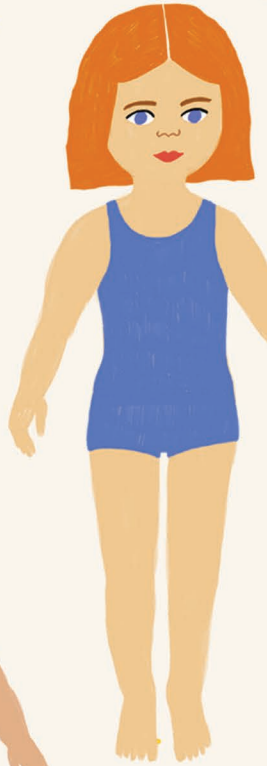
Creating a mobile application and a dream
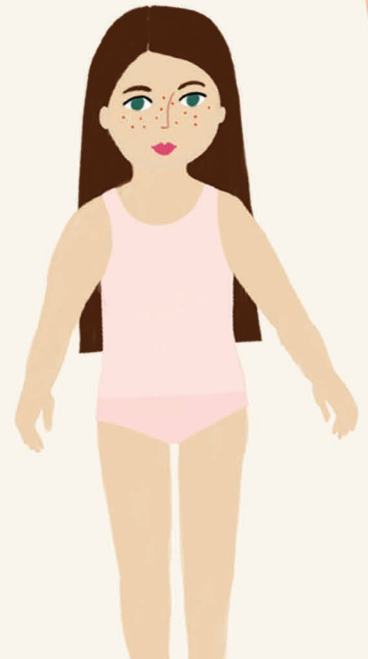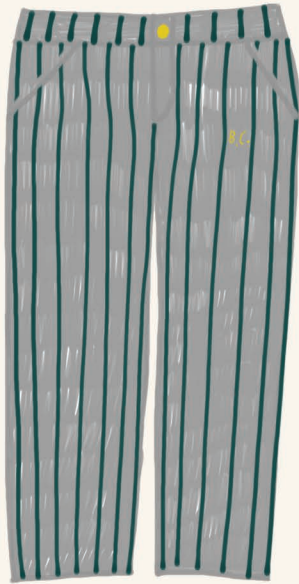
Olya Tsikhanchuk

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Lärdomsprov
Formgivning YH, grafisk design
Yrkehögskolan Novia 2020

DressUpp

an app for clothes lovers

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis describes the process of creating a mobile application, that is both entertainment for fashion interested parents and an educational tool for children, and a platform for advertising for clothing companies. I have done research on existing applications, similar and different, focusing on their apearance and approach to marketing. The design process of the app, as well as the process of creating a team is described in this thesis. A big part of the work is devoted to storytelling and explaining where the idea for this app came from.

The result of the bachelor's thesis is a mobile application, that fulfils the role of a game, advertising tool and a promotion tool on Instagram and other social media platforms.

Keywords: *mobile application, graphic design, fashion, marketing, Instagram, slow fashion, social responsibility, producer, app.*

Abstract

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Datum:	04.04.2020
Sidor:	116

Detta examensarbete beskriver processen att skapa en mobilapplikation. Applikationen erbjuder på samma gång underhållning för modeintresserade föräldrar, ett pedagogiskt verktyg för barn samt en marknadsföringsplattform för klädföretag. Jag har studerat befintliga applikationer, liknande och olika, med fokus på deras utseende och förhållningssätt till marknadsföring. I examensarbetet beskriver jag applikationens planeringsprocess och processen för att skapa ett team. En stor del av arbetet ägnas åt berättande (storytelling) och beskrivning av idén till applikationen.

Resultatet av examensarbetet är en mobilapplikation som fyller rollen av ett spel, ett reklamverktyg och marknadsföringsverktyg på Instagram och andra sociala medieplattformar.

Nyckelord: *mobilapplikation, grafisk design, mode, marknadsföring, Instagram, långsamt mode, socialt ansvar, producent, app*

Abstract

Tässä opinnäytetyössä kuvataan mobiilisovelluksen kehittämisprosessia. Mobiilisovellus (applikaatio) tarjoaa viihdettä muotialasta kiinnostuneille vanhemmille, oppimismahdollisuuksia lapsille ja mainosalustan vaatetusalan yrityksille. Olen tutkinut olemassa olevia sovelluksia, saman tyyppisiä ja erilaisia, keskittyen niiden ulkoasuun ja lähestymistapaan markkinointiin. Tässä opinnäytetyössä kuvataan sovelluksen suunnitteluprosessia sekä tiimin muodostamisen prosessia. Suuri osa työstä on omistettu tarinankerrontaan ja sovelluksen idean kuvaamiseen.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena on mobiilisovellus, joka täyttää pelin, mainostyökalun ja markkinointityökalun roolin Instagramissa ja muilla sosiaalisen median alustoilla.

Avainsanat: *mobiilisovellus, graafinen suunnittelu, muoti, markkinointi, Instagram, hidas muoti, sosiaalinen vastuu, tuottaja, sovellus.*

Content

Content

Content

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A process of creating a mobile app is described in this thesis. The motivation for creating DressUpp mobile application is very personal. It comes from my love for small sustainable kid fashion brands, my concern with the environmental issues, my dream of creating a cool product that can become my source of income and also, rather pivotal, a way of helping others. Thus, the thesis itself is written in a personal way, describing the work done by me and my developers. In the Inspiration chapter is a story from my childhood, and how my childhood whim became my interest and even a career path later in life. It is important to know this background information to really understand and appreciate the app itself. On top of that, the end product (the application DressUpp) is a real product entering a mobile application market, so I tried to keep everything very real and use the time and effort writing the thesis wisely. This means that all the information shared here in the book can be used as marketing and promotional material.

The theoretical research part of the work (chapter Foundation) had to be limited due to many reasons. I created a team of three working on this application. My two other colleagues are technical people, IT developers and UX/UI specialists, so I found it redundant to investigate and to narrate about UX and UI design here in the thesis. There are many technical blogs and even published books on this matter, so I believe my contribution to the subject will be limited only to my philosophy of breaking the existing rules and challenging oneself to create something new and unexpected, something that makes YOU love it. However, I chose to include a few technical aspects, mostly to highlight the importance of several ones that I believed are the most challenging and take a lot of time to understand. For example, applying for a developers program from Apple company. In addition, I write about creating a team and working despite the distance, that is something that our working world is experiencing at the moment and it should not be underestimated, as well as marketing aspect of creating a product. I describe my strategy on how to promote a product, and here too I choose to go with my own beliefs, that staying being myself and relying on my intuition will achieve two main goals — success of sales, and, even more importantly, the "good" feeling of being honest, open and a true self.

In the Process part of the book, that is written like a diary, I demonstrate the process, my technical intentions with the app and how it visually develops.

My hope for this thesis is that it can help others who decide to step in the path of app development. The thesis can guide any creators towards the right direction, warn them about possible obstacles and mistakes, and mainly, inspire dreaming and achieving the desirable result through hard work, collaborating and believing in oneself.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to describe all the stages of mobile application development: from exploring the theoretical and technical side to actually making own choices of colors, icon design, layout, functions, and even marketing. I wanted to challenge myself to learn how to apply my love for illustration and fashion to creating a product that is very much technical (such as an app). At the same time I did not want the existing rules, guidelines and requirements, both technical and visual, to limit me and my fantasy. While creating this app I often break the rules of UX and UI design, I experiment and challenge technical opportunities. The reason for that is my firm stance on that the evolution of app development is inevitable and all the rules that we have today become obsolete and irrelevant tomorrow. Working on the application and describing the process here in the thesis, I stick to the idea of "going with your gut feeling" and creating a very personal product, rather than trying to fit in and be as good as others.

If you have chosen to use DressUpp app that means that you want to make conscious fashion choices, support sustainable and ethical brands, have fun and at the same time make a difference in someone's life. How does it all work?

We illustrate real clothes made by slow fashion brands. You create a collage of your picks or dress up a doll. This can be a game for children to learn about ethical business and sustainability.

From a welcome screen for DressUpp app.

2.0 Questions

2.0 Questions

Why a mobile application?

I chose to create a mobile application, because it is modern and very relevant nowadays. All companies are searching for a way to digitalise and optimise their work. Fashion industry is experiencing a lot of changes, it is being criticised for being one of the greatest polluters of the environment, the sales of mass market brands go down and they rethink their production methods. At the same time more and more small, sustainable and transparent companies appear. They need visibility, to promote their values and of course, at the end of the day, make sales. DressUpp application can become a platform for eco-friendly brands to be introduced to the public, build up their fan-base, and get loyal customers who share the values of green, ethical and "giving back" production.

What is the app about?

DressUpp is an app that gives its users an opportunity to digitally dress up dolls in the clothes that exist in reality, or make collages of the favorite pieces. The pictures of the dressed up dolls or collages can be saved in gallery and shared on Instagram or via other means of sharing.

Who are the target users?

The primary users of the application are parents, who are interested in design and fashion, and also share the concerns about the future of our planet. Over the 4 years of my being active on Instagram, I have become a part of a strong community of such parents. The community is world-wide and includes all professions from artists to accountants, of ages from 20 to 60, both men and wo-men. We share the same interests for ethical clothings and beautiful design. The days when our favourite brands release their new collections are happy days, then we share our most liked pieces and shopping wish-lists.

The application can become a game for children, and under the supervision of

parents, it can be even an educational game that teaches about environment, fashion industry, product production, and consumerism. With DressUpp we can teach children to make conscious fashion choices and take care of the clothing we buy for them and they will eventually buy for themselves. With the further development of the app, we can add tips on how to repair clothes for example. There is no intention of teaching kids to be materialist fashionistars, it is just that I believe that if a kid plays with the clothes on the app and then gets them in reality, a child will then take better care of the garments.

The third target group are the ethical brands themselves. They can use the app for exposure, advertisement and getting a new fan base.

Why not a game for the whole family?

DressUpp can become a thing to do together with your kids. Besides educating children about clothes, parents can themselves become very involved in playing and this app can bring kids and parents together, improving the interaction without feeling the guilt of using a digital tool.

What is next?

At the time when this thesis is published and presented, a trial version will have been released. The access to this version is limited to a small amount of users, who perform the role of testers. Also this version is used to promote the idea to fashion brands that we are interested in collaborating with and promoting. Other plans include developing version 1 with improvements and releasing it to the Google and Apple stores by June 2020.

The application has a huge potential and can be developed in several directions, all at the same time, or if we choose to take one path. At the moment I choose not to share the plans for the future in detail.

3.0 Inspiration

3.1 Personal interest in kids fashion
Development of illustration style

Many of us witness that the things we enjoying doing as adults, we have always enjoyed doing as children.

My mothere told me stories about the troubles she went through when in the mornings she was trying to dress me in the same clothes as the day before, and I would flip out and refuse to leave the house. And considering the fact that I was born in the USSR and my happy childhood was at the time of the collapse of the great empire, I can imagine how my mom suffered from not being able to buy me new things, simply because there was not that much for sale. Creative as she was not, she still tried her best to put a new patch on a dress, or to put a new band in my hair. I am grateful for that she never game up and never punished me for my whim.

Later, while at school, the best mornings were those when I knew I had a new piece of clothing to wear. I have never been spoiled with clothes. New things were bought only out of necessity, not desire. There was a strategy of what i call "two years": every two years my brother and I got new pairs of boots, pants and sweaters. That said in 2020, I never felt I lacked something in the 90ies. Life had much more to offer than that. However, the love for clothing never left me.

Fast forward to 2015… My son Alfred was born. As a mother, I felt I needed to give him the best of everything. And until the best of everything is his education, I thought we could both benefit from my interest in clothing. I started to explore what the market had to offer. Thanks to Google search and Instagram, I discovered new brands that promoted slow fashion, sustainability, ethical design and other notions that had been unfamiliar to me before. A new world had opened to me…

B.C. TOP
LAZZARI SWIMWEAR
flow magazine
STOCK
FAVORITE
FLATS
FOR SUNNY DAYS
NOVESTA + B.C. = ♥
♥ PACKING FOR HOT VACATION ☀
B.C. TOP
B.C. BAG
ZARA
JEANS
B.C. SKIRT
SHIRT DRESS
SKINNY

DONNA WILSON SCARF
HI-PIE HAT
chihi chihi chihi chihi chihi
B.C. SOCKS
° AUTUMN WINTER CLOSET GOALS 2017-18 °
BOBO CHOSES OVERALL
REUSABLE COFFEE MUG
B.C. CREST KNITTED SWEATER
ALMA S.B. T-SHIRT
LUNCHLADY
BOBO CHOSES SWEATSHIRT
CAPTAIN
COTTON BAG
SOLOVAIR BOOTS
Dear World
The AW 17-18
Bobo Choses
Collection

THE EARTH IS OUR MOTHER WE MUST TAKE CARE OF HER
MINI RODINI + BOBO CHOSES
SPRING ISUMMER 2018 INSPO
FROM PUNAVOURENPEIKKO

LULU'S AND MINA'S CLOTHES, ACCESSORIES AND MICE
ECHO PARK
by Olga Torkhenschuk

The illustrations were drawn by hand on regular paper. If there were small details, color shades or other effects that I could not achieve with felt pens, I tooks pictures and worked in Photoshop to add what was missing.

The looks by Olya Tsikhanchuk

"A good way of choosing your clothes is to go against anything that's predictable. Un-expected combinations make the whole process more fun for both children and parents. Bright colors with faded ones, prints with patterns, stripes with cir-cles: opposites attract and com-plement each other. When he's wearing these clothes my son is not only comfortable chas-ing a dog, but I can also tell him one of the stories behind the collection. This time I'll tell Alfred about the band that sings about a creature that's half pig and half elephant. What will your story be?" @olyatikh

In summer 2017, I was going on vacation to Italy, and I could not decide what to pack with me. Making lists of things did not help, so I drew the clothes and outfits instead. I drew the clothes of my favourite brand Bobo Choses and added pieces from other brands too. I loved the idea so I shared it on my Instagram feed. To my huge surprise, the illustration was shared by B.C. and I realised that this could be my chance to attract their attention and have them ask me to do a print for their clothes. That did not happen (yet), but what happened was that they contacted me in spring 2018 and asked if I would be interested in illustrating the clothes for the magazine that they publish with every collection they release (that means two collections a year!).
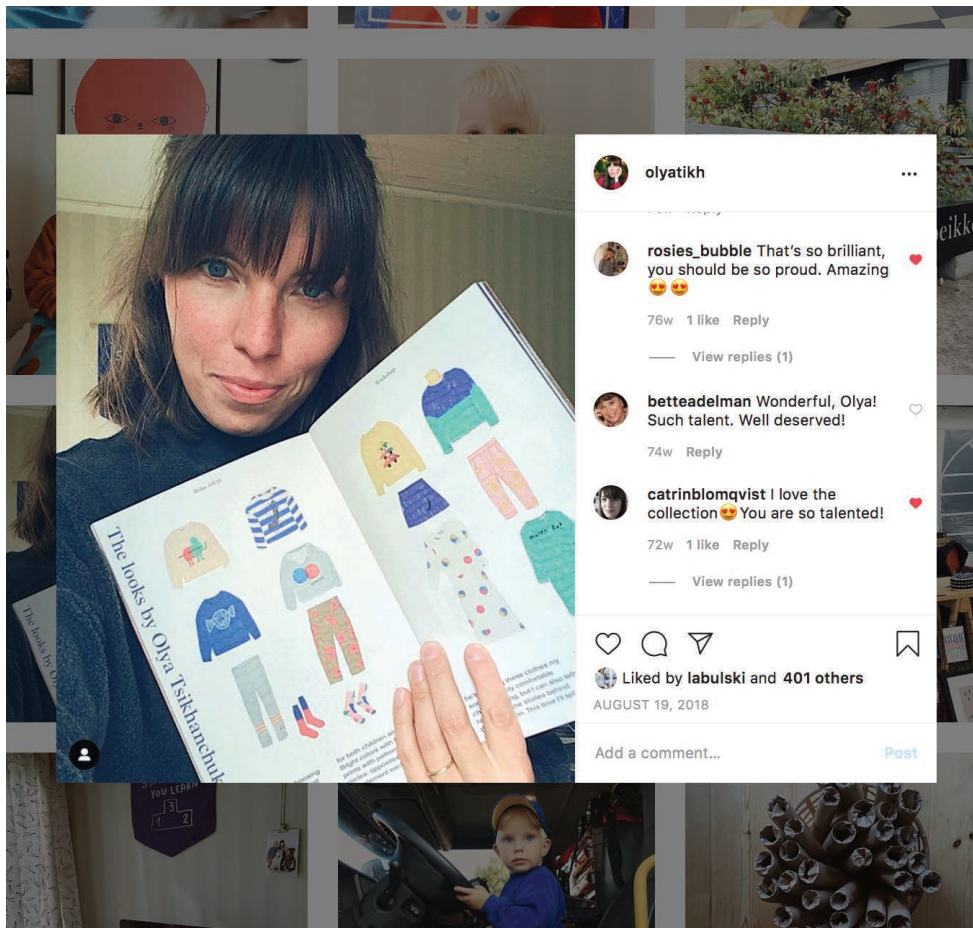
Two years later, as in today, after multiple Instagram posts, illustrations for private customers, online shops, in dependent small brands like Bobo Choses and Tiny Cottons, and a big company like Zara, I decided that I want to bring life to the illustrations and make them into an application.

The style and manner in which the illustrations are made has evolved from drawing by hand with markers to digital illustrations on Ipad Pro first, and then more work in Photoshop. The shift from analog to digital tools was made to make the work more smooth in terms of achieving the closest color to the original piece, making sure the details of prints are not lost, and last but not least, making the whole process faster.

PAPU STORIES
SS 20

BOBO CHOSES SS20
DANCE ROMANCE

BOBO
CHACHACHA
B.C
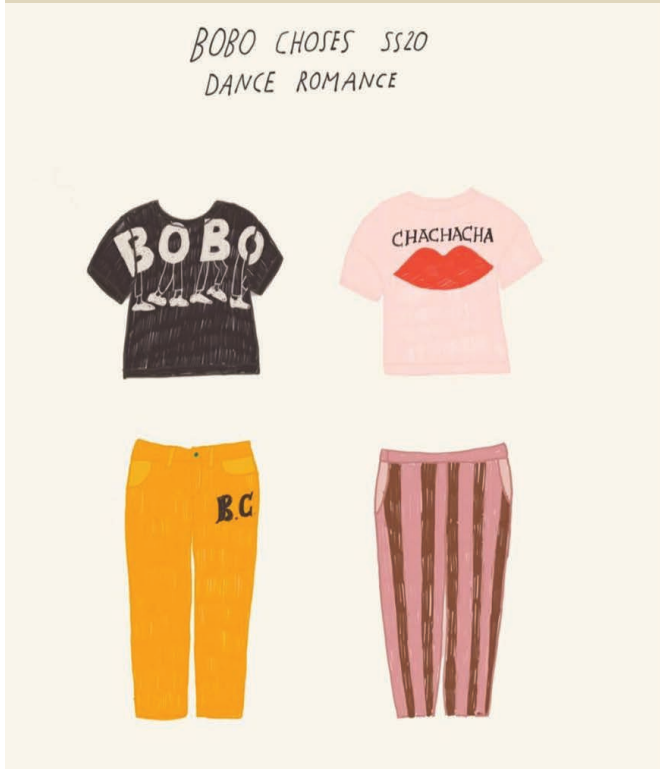
papustories • Following

papustories Oh look at this lovely illustration by @olyatikh ! Our lovely newbies over there: Boheme dresses for women and Button shirt & Casual suit for little fellows 💙 #papustories #papudesign #thecomposer #intro #fashion #inspiration #outfitinspiration #womensfashion #sustainablefashion #organicclothing #ethicalfashion

1w

lafete_nora Love!!! #teamolya

1w Reply

—— View replies (1)

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Liked by punavuorenpeikko and 356 others

JANUARY 30

Add a comment…   Post

punavuorenpeikko • Following

#punavuorenpeikko #ethicalkidsfashion

3w

viljapuuroa Omg😍 😍 hitsi nää on kyl ihania👌 👌

3w 1 like Reply

nettaelina Ihania 😍 👌

3w 1 like Reply

londeleino Kyllä kiitos 😍

3w 1 like Reply

bobochoses ✓ OMG 😍❤️

3w 1 like Reply

❤ ○ ▽   🔖

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JANUARY 14

Add a comment…   Post

ZARAKIDS

SEARCH

NEW
STRIPED T-SHIRT
7.95 EUR

+3 COL
PLAIN
5.95 E

🔒 zara.com

Dress upp plan - Google Sheets   Baby Girls' Jeans | ZARA Finland

ZARA KIDS

SEARCH _____

New size: 5 years

Available in the new baby collection

Flare

Culotte

3.2 Paper doll history

Growing up many of us played with dolls, also paper dolls. Mine were made of thicker paper, cut out in the shape of a girl or a boy. I drew clothes for them on a thinner paper, and while cutting the clothes out, I left little foldable pieces to make the clothes stay on the dolls. I also made a house out of a notebook, folding pages, drawing and making sure my doll felt good in her a pretty house. Paper dolls are more than a toy, it is an emotional game that teaches children care and beauty, and also brings lots of fun. So the fact that I was inspired by this childhood game is not surprising.

I wanted to learn more about the history of paper dolls and I discovered that they have existed even since there was paper. They had different forms and shapes, and of course reasons for usage. In Asian cultures, they were used for rituals. On Bali dolls were made out of leather and used a puppets. The paper dolls we know today, and often associate with clothes, and fashion, were first made in France in the 18th c. They were called "pantins". They were painted by hand. The first manufactured paper doll was Little Fanny and produced by S&J Fuller in London in 1810 (History of Paper Dolls and Popular Culture, 2016).

Paper dolls were used for advertising by deparments stores and fashion industry in the 19th and 20th centuries. Later paper dolls started to appear in magazines and promoted such goods as cars, fabrics, sewing machines, threads, coffee, chocolate, flour, nail polish, soap and underwear. The way paper dolls looked was often inpired by comic books characters, after comic books started to appeal to women (History of Paper Dolls and Popular Culture, 2016).

Sheet No. 11
MAPLE SISTERS'
BATH ROOM
Dolls and Furnishings

Sheet No. 1
MAPLE SISTERS'
NURSERY
DOLLS AND FURNITURE

Sheet No. 5.
MAPLE SISTERS'
LIVING ROOM
Dolls and Furniture

I LOVE MAPLE FLAKE

AMERICAN ADVERTISING PAPER DOLLHOUSE FOR
MAPLE SISTERS CEREAL

Includes two 13" x 16" uncut sheets of Living Room and Bedroom,-three cut sheets of nursery,bathroom,and dining room,six 13" x 11" uncut sheets of dolls,wall pieces,costumes and furniture for various rooms,one 13" x 7" sheet of two dolls and costumes,and other cut dolls and costumes. The reverse of each sheet includes information on the entire series,and advertising for Mapl-Flake Cereal. One sheet was given free with two packages of cereal. Good to excellent condition,some water staining on bathroom sheet. Early 20th century.

Realized Price: $1,450
Presale Estimate: 700/900

Screenshot from https://www.theriaults.com

🔒 theriaults.com   🔊 ↻

| Product icons –... | Apple Design R... | What is UI desi... | Alejandro Sa... 🔊 | history of pape... | paper dolls in a... |

AMERICAN ADVERTISING PAPER DOLLS FOR SEWING MACHINES

Including 8" single-sided easle back lady with advertising for Singer Sewing Machines along with two dresses,wedding gown and veil; and 5" x 8.5" beautiful paper doll trade card,uncut,for New Home Sewing Machine,featuring a double-sided paper doll with separate body having defined space for placement of head and hands,along with two double-sided heads (younger and older woman). Card very fine,Singer lady has neck bend,costumes excellent. Circa 1895.

Presale Estimate: 300/400

Realized Price: $200

AMERICAN PAPER DOLL BOOK BY SAALFIELD

9" x 7.5". Of sturdy linen-like paper,trademarked "Linentex",the uncut book features four pages of paper dolls and costumes along with a storyline. Published by Saalfield. Very good/excellent condition. 1927.

Presale Estimate: 50/100

Realized Price: $100

AMERICAN PAPER DOLL BOOK "ADVENTURES OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND"

12.5" x 10.5" Features punch-out stand-up figures of Alice and other characters in story settings,designed by Sidney Sage. The book is complete and intact. McLoughlin,No 964. Excellent condition. 1934.

Presale Estimate: 100/200

Realized Price: $175

AMERICAN PAPER DOLL BOOK "NEW CENTURY DOLLS" BY MCLOUGHLIN

13" x 9". Staple-bound,softbound book features four double-sided 11" paper doll child along with 24 uncut pages of costumes. McLoughlin Bros,copyright 1929. Excellent condition.

Presale Estimate: 100/200

Realized Price: $75

TWO AMERICAN PAPER DOLL BOOKS BY LOIS LENSKI

12" x 10". Each is staple-bound softbound book featuring fairy tale dolls in very stylized illustrations,including "Dolls from Fairyland" (copyright 1921 by Nourse Company,intact except one boy missing and a few costumes cut) and "Dolls from the Land of Mother Goose" (No221 by Platt & Munk. Complete and uncut). Both illustrated by Lois Lenore Lenski. Overall excellent,few bends on cover. 1921.

Presale Estimate: 200/250

The screenshot of the actual auction to demonstrate the collectable paper doll advertising that are incledible valuable nowadays.
https://www.theriaults.com

We should not underestimate the impact that fashion has on the society, or the way fashion reflects the ways things currently are in the world. In 2020 we have made quite a progress in terms of human rights and equality. In her article History of Paper Dolls and Popular Culture (2016), Elizabeth L. Maurer writes: " While fashion choices are ultimately individual, fashion trends reflect society's culture, norms, expectations, and values. Paper dolls as artefacts illustrate the social expectations for women at particular moments in time. As products of both popular culture and mass marketing, paper dolls are intentionally designed to reflect that society's idealised version of womanhood. The dolls' little paper wardrobes communicate a wealth of information about the ideal woman of the past."

And as I create the images of children to be used in the app, I am doing my best not to create a "perfect" child with certain features, I opt for a variety of looks. Same with the clothing, my hopes are that we as adults will direct the children (who use the app as a game) and explain to them the value of the work behind the clothings, the impact on the planet the fashion industry does, and of course instead of imposing social dressing standards, we should educate our children to judge less and to make their own conscious fashion choices.

DressUpp as a mobile application has all the potential to become an advertising tool for the companies to promote their products. It is paper dolls of 2020, with a clear Slow Fashion philosophy, with equality as one of its core values and an emotional personal story behind.

@dressupp_app

3.3 Slow fashion

In the recent years the concern for the environment has grown amazingly. It is no longer a topic discussed only by scientists, it has become an everyday concern of all of us. And as responsible citizens of the world, we try to take the necessary actions to preserve the planet that has been so generous to us.

One of the biggest polluters of the environment is fashion industry. As a positive consequence many brands are adopting the principles of slow fashion. What is "Slow Fashion"?

In the blog post by Madeleine Hill, published in 2018, the following definition is given: "Slow Fashion is an awareness and approach to fashion, which considers the processes and resources required to make clothing, particularly focusing on sustainability. It involves buying better-quality garments that will last for longer and values fair treatment of people, animals and the planet."

The key principles of Slow Fashion are:
1. High quality to make the garments last longer and, thus, be sustainable.
2. Local production, to save on transportation.
3. Keeping it small, producing one or two collections a year, with a small range.
4. Providing work places for the locals, with a respective high wage and a safe work place.
5. Highlighting craftsmanship of the designer, sewer and all the creatives involved in the process of producing garments.

Ever since I started buying kids clothing and got acquainted with the Slow Fashion movement, I have reduced my consumption of mass market clothing drastically. I choose what I buy carefully, paying attention to the materials, where the clothes are produced and of course by whom. As I am designing the app with a B2B opportunity in mind, I want to stay true to my Slow Fashion principles and be picky with the brands I select to include in the app. I want to promote "green" and sustainable brands that share the same philosophy with me, and create for the sake of art, not for the profit numbers.

4.0 Foundation

4.1 Creating a mobile application

At the time of extreme digitalisation, mobile applications pop up daily, and in such an abundance that will surprise any usual mobile user. There are apps for almost everything: for taking control of our financies, for helping us book trips, for paying our train tickets, for writing down our ideas, for booking time in childcare, for making doctor's appointments, for sending money overseas,.. there are even apps that promise us a mindful life if we breath the right way for one or two minutes a day. And because there are so many apps, it seems that there is no job easier than creating an app, both designing and coding one. Until you have that great idea to actually make your own mobile application...

Like with any other project, one needs to prepare oneself, by investigating the question, by doing a thorough reaserch on the matter, and coming up with own conclusions and ideas that will help along the hard road of achieving the desirable result.

4.1.1 Creating a brand out of the app

Nowadays branding is important. It is not about following visual trends and looking modern, it is about finding your image, being recognizable, consistent, and communicating the right values.

Nikki Baird in her article in Forbes (2019) suggests that the purpose of brands has changed. Brands used to be about communicating what businesses sold, but with more millennials and Gen Z's demanding more from the companies they shop with, brands need to evolve to communicate what a company values at its core.

"Small businesses don't have any desire to pretend to be something they are not, and are proud of the product they create — they want to market it with integrity, care and openness."

Creating the brand image for the app, I wanted it to be different, more hand-made, more authentic, playful, easy to understand but still playful and daring. The desire to break the existing graphic design rules and create my own, helped me to make the choices for visuals of the logo, colors and icons.

4.1.2 Creating logo, icons and choosing colors

While creating a logo for the app, I wanted to make it visually appealing, but still classy; depicting the mood of the application, but not overloaded with information. I had to take into consideration all the iOS and Android standards for application icon size and shape, but I did not limit the creativity. In the article iOS vs. Android App UI Design: The Complete Guide, it is stated that "when you first look at the tables of icons you need for either iPhone or Android, it can seem pretty daunting. But as long as you know the base size, and can check and export at various larger multiples, it's really not that hard at all." I found it very confusing and too much of a technical issue while studying this aspect of creating the application. However, I could not overlook this issue, as the logo, or the icon of the app in my case, is the first thing you see while choosing whether to download the app or not.

Creating a color palette is a long process as the decisions I take are long term. I tried to include colors that are both vivid and light, they must look good together, separately, and on each other. The colors are a brand's thread, what holds the brand together and makes it recognisable. The logo for DressUpp has all the colors incorporated, but it does not look too busy, it gives a hint to the users that the app they are downloading is colourful and happy.

@dressupp_app@dressupp_app@dressupp_a
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One of the things that differentiates between this "dress up a doll" application and others that already exist is the style of illustration. The garments are illustrated as if by a marker. So to be true to the brand and keep the same style illustrating, I chose to illustrate the icons too. The trick here was to take into consideration their size and how they all can fit in an imaginary square, that is used by the technical team while coding.

4.1.3 Creating a team. Producing an app

It is no secret that working in a good team is half of the success. Finding a team can seem like quite a challenge, but here is where networking helps. It is also about being attentive, resourceful and considerate. Has anyone told you they need a job? Did your friends tell you about their friend who is good at something? Do you keep in touch with your old school friends or colleagues? Facebook and Instagram can help you too!

I found my team of developers through digging in my memories and a pure coincidence. 9 years ago I was an English tutor to an IT team, and 5 years ago I reconnected to one of the developers through Instagram. She then had left that other team and started an own IT developing company in Belarus. Her friend who is also from Belarus, but moved to the USA, had contacted me and wanted to do an app with me as a designer. That app never worked out, but we all got connected and without a direct goal created a team. So when I came up with the idea for DressUpp I did not need to search a lot. I sent a message on Viber and after a few calls, we had a team of three. We had open discussions and established clear roles, with the agreement that honesty is the best policy and we all work for the same goal — success of the app!

The roles we were assigned at the beginning got evolved. And besides being the designer of the app, art director and promoter, I also realised that I am a producer of the app. What does being a producer mean? A producer fullfils many roles: from organisational moments to making sure all have a job to do, from finding resources (both human and financial) to applying the resources at the right stages of production, from organising marketing campaigns to checking if they actually work., from keeping the spirits of the team up to being a psychologist when the times are tough (Covid-19 outbreak in spring 2020). It is a difficult role, but it is also important for me to feel the control over the process of creating the application that I have been dreaming of.

Despite the team being separated by political borders and by a sea geographically, we work well. We communicate through emails, messages on Viber and Telegram, by having video calls. As a matter of fact, as well as we work, we decided to start a separate company with a business address in Finland, with me owning 51 % and them sharing 49 %. The juridical process could be a separate point in the thesis, but I must limit myself.


IT team in Minsk, Belarus. Igor, Olya and little Masha Polyakov.
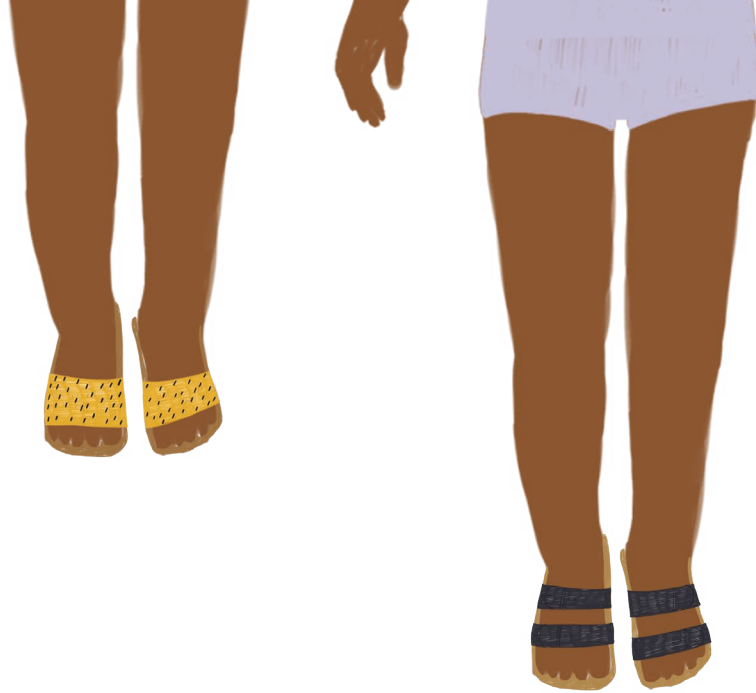
4.1.4 When design and technical possibilities collide.

There are a number of technical issues we face while creating an app. As a designer I like to be totally free in my choices, but I have to take into a consideration what is possible and what is not possible TODAY. I wanted to highlight this word, because I believe that technically our only restriction is the knowledge we still have not acquired. So it is a matter of time.

The example I choose to demonstrate is choosing sandals. I drew two options of shoes and in the wardrobe there will be both options: one for testing on the doll, the other one is for placing the shoes on a collage without a doll. That is the solution for version 1 of the app. As a future update I see it as following: you will see whole shoes in the wardrobe, but if you choose to put them on the doll, the unnecessary details will disappear. That will be achieved by "extra" layers disappearance.
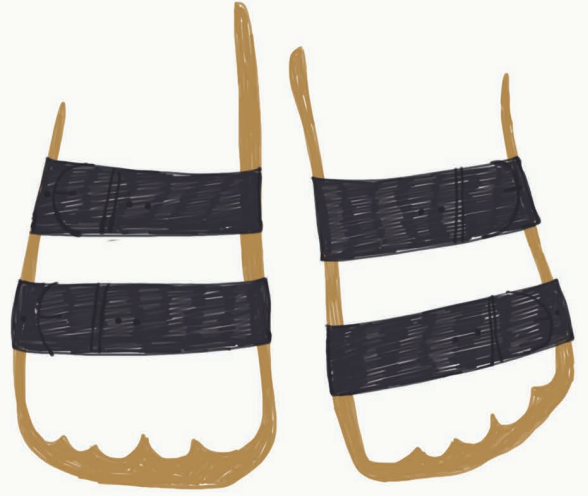
4.2 Marketing a mobile app. Instagram marketing

In the world where mobile applications exist in abundance, to make a new app to stand out can be a challenge. After doing some research on the matter, key points of marketing strategy are defined:

1. **Analysing who the target users are.** It is understandable that this app is not for everyone and it should not be marketed for everyone. We clearly see who out target audience is. That is why we also make a decision to market the app primarily on Instagram.

2. **Looking into competitors is necessary.** One needs to know how similar apps are being marketed. The thing here is that, while there are many game apps where you need to dress up a girl, there are no apps (yet) that illustrate the clothing of small ethical green brands. So we have a clear "we are different" advantage that we can market.

3. **Being present online.** Although we have established that our main marketing will be conducted via social media, having a web page is important too. It shows that this company is serious and does not take its products lightly. In addition, the website can be used a separate marketing too for B2B.

4. **Making attractive Apple and Google store pages.** Many applications don't have much information about the app, and very few screen shots. We have decided to place instruction welcome screen shots so that the potential customer sees right away what sort of app he or she decides to pay for.

5. **Creating a video about the app.** People want fast and easy these days. While visual images work fine, sometimes they require text, and reading a long text is already too much to ask from a customer. That is why videos work better. We have already booked a photographer who will make a short introduction video about the application. It will be a short video of max 30 seconds, so that we can easily post it on IG feed and also YouTube.

6. Being transparent and true. Maybe the most important point in marketing. We have chosen to start an IG account @dressupp_app even before the official launch day of the app, because there is a lot to tell to people about the process, about the philosophy behind the app. We want our potential users to actually be with us on this journey, we want to hear the feedback and make changes for the better along the way.

Instagram account before announcing the release of the application 20 March 2020.
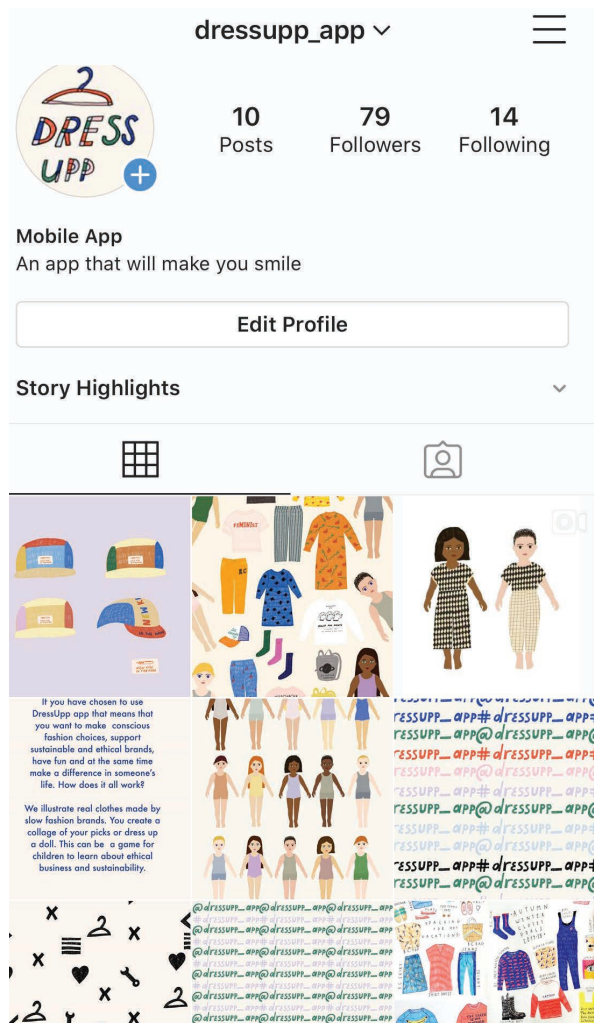
4.3 Price formation

Determining the price for a mobile application is a complex decision. It is not enough to calculate the cost of production and marketing. In the case of DressUpp, it is an app that requires constant updates (adding new illustrated clothes), more functions can be added to the app, whether we are talking about B2C or B2B. We are considering all options if putting a price on an app:

1. **Freemium**: making the app free but with the imposed limit of usage time, functions, storage and more. Customers can try using the app and if they like it, they will be willing to pay to unlock all functionality.
2. **In-app purchases**: the users get the app for free, but will be offered to buy new functions (or music, or a tool) while using the app. This option seems to be very popular among game applications.
3. **Advertising**: placing a banner or a commercial video into your app may accumulate a stable income, but the danger is to spoil all user experience.
4. **Paid and paidmium**: users pay for the app but still there can be in-app purchases options, or they get paidmium and get it all.

DressUpp is a socially responsible app: we educate people about slow fashion and the real cost of clothing, we have alsodecided to donate 5 per cent of the revenue to African Educational organisation. We have to calculate that into the price of the app, as well as the commission that Apple Store and Google Store charges for selling an app on their platforms. But so far we have decided to go with the paid app option, selling the app to the customers for a set price, but also adding more features that they can buy later. This option will give us a start sum to work with and an incentive to continue the development of the application, and with that, keep the interest of the users. The secret of pricing an app is finding a balance between functionality and user expectations. Our goal is to make customers happy and promote our app by comments, ratings and a "good new word of Instagram".

4.4   B2C and B2B

Marketing of the first version of DressUpp app, that is scheduled to be released in May 2020, is aimed primarily at individual users. In B2C (Business to Customer) marketing, simplicity in instructions, price, and focusing on emotional satisfaction is in focus. We want to show our potential customers the benefits of using the application: no more bring screen shot collages, having a beautiful IG image in the feed, finding new contacts through seeing others using the same app imagines in their feeds, and last but not least, being socially responsible and contributing to humanitarian projects.

The first version will also be used as a demonstration of possibilities for version 2 where businesses (fashion companies) are targeted. The message for B2B marketing is based on value, service and trust. The goal is to get companies interested in us as their advertising platform. For that we need to show them the legit statistics: how many people use the app, and how many share images on their IG. For that statistics we also need to create a technical function of counting how many people clicked the "shop" button and actually went to the online store of the brand, after seeing a clothing item in our app.

B2B possibilities are at the stage of brainstorming and discussing one on one with some brand founders to investigate the interest.

5.0 Process diary

5.0 Process diary

The process of creating a mobile application is more complicated than one can expect. There are many details and issues I knew I would have to deal with, but along the road I stumbled upon the obstacles I could not have predicted. I believe it is all case to case, app to app. Each mobile developer, designer and other people involved in the process should be prepared to be flexible and resourceful when developing an app.

Schedule, deadlines, workflow, and task distribution are pivotal. There should be a realistic plan of what is the desirable achievement. For DressUpp we have decided to create several versions, starting with the simplest one, that will give us a good start to build up all future functions we have in mind.

I am creating an app for the first time in my life, and my technical team has never coded a similar application. So the challenge was enormous, but exciting too. We wanted to create something and also enrich ourselves with knowledge.

I believe my sharing the experience is valuable for others who decide to take on the endeavour of producing an app.

5.1 To do list for the first version

To make sure my team and I have a good starting point, something to show as a result of the thesis work, and also to have a good promotional version for B2B plans of the app development, I decided that the following functions are necessary to be coded and perfected:

1. Register / create an account
2. Sign in
3. Choose a child
4. Go through wardrobe
5. Choose favourites
6. Drag clothes on the child
7. Save picture with the child
8. Save clothes without a child / collage
9. Save to gallery
10. Send to IG
11. How to upload new clothes

It is not easy to limit ourselves at this point, as the ideas keep coming, but staying focused and starting with small steps has been my philosophy for this project.

5.2 Work progress. Obstacles on the way

To organise good work flow, where all know theirs tasks, follow the deadlines and keep track of what is happening, we have created an online Excel file, where we are documenting everything. In addition we had weekly meetings.

The most frustrating in the whole process is working with the Apple development program. Unfortunately, I had thought that working with it would be as easy as using an iPhone, but I what is supposed to be an easy 15 minutes registration and 100 euro a year payment, ended up being an ordeal of several months.
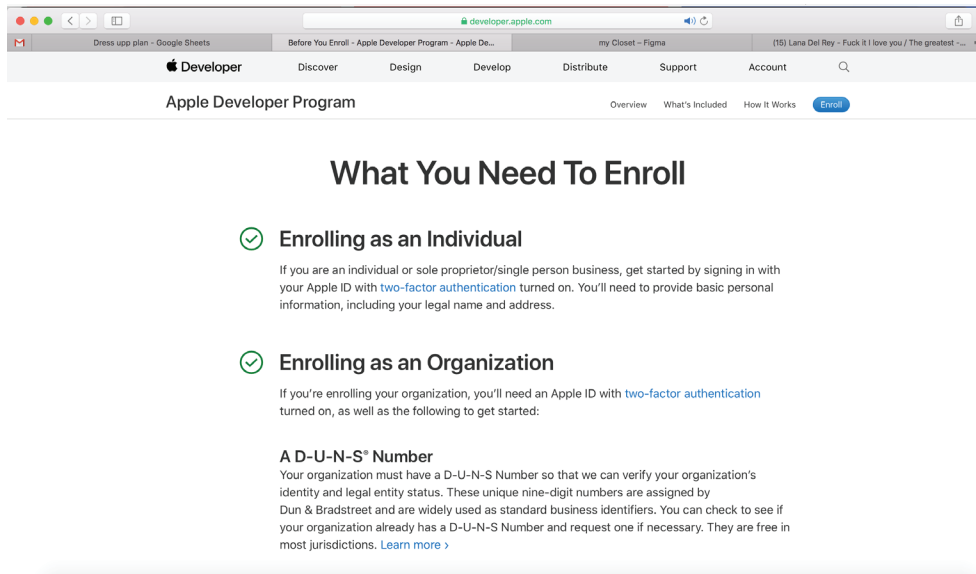
Luckily, communication with customer support works well. Analysing what kind of organisation we are also helps. So now that we have determined that we are opening a separate company for the app, the process is going smoother. However, at the time of writing this thesis, we are still in the middle of enrolling. The app is written in a language that is used both on Android phones and iPhones, but we have been testing it on Androids so far.
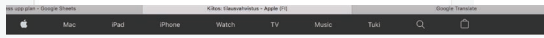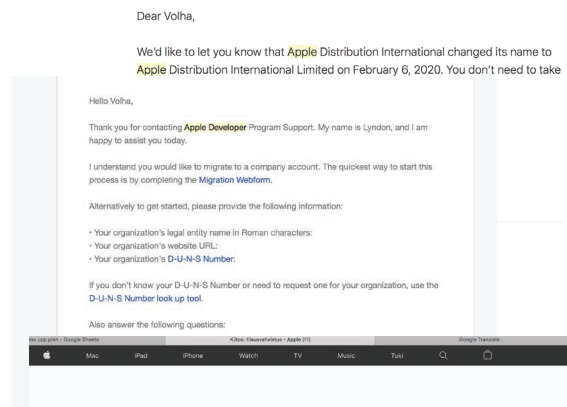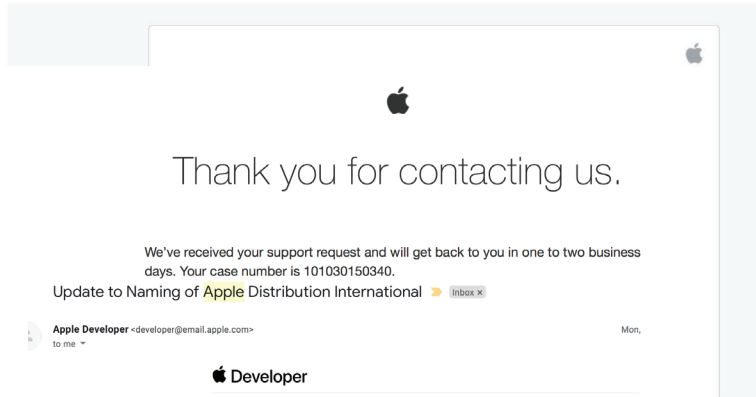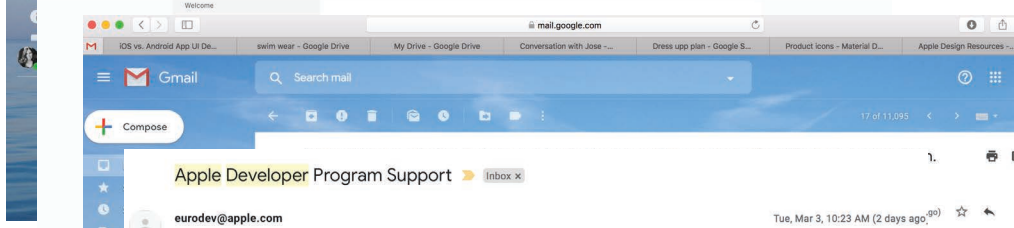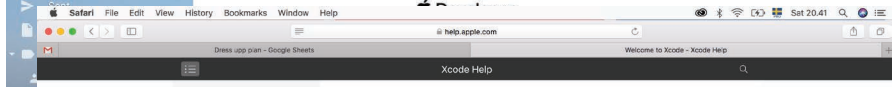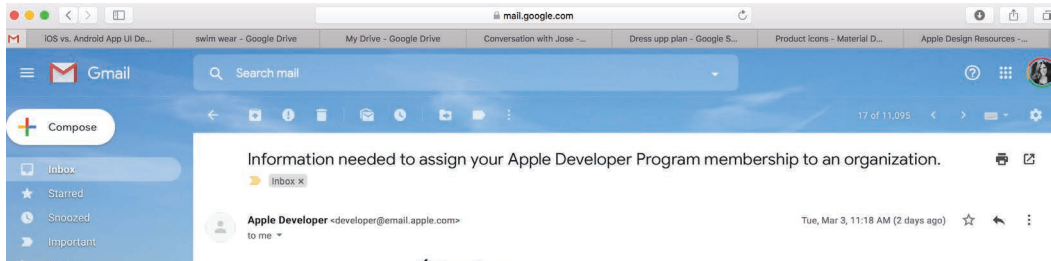
5.3 Diary

The following pages are the documentation of the process in the form of a diary. Despite almost daily work on the application, the process description is narrowed down to weeks and months.

Autumn 2019

A variety of children is drawn, I am trying to be as inclusive as possible. The children illustrated have the same shape, as it is the only way to generalize the garments, otherwise I would have to draw tens of variations of the same garment.

BOBO

CHACHACHA

B.C.

B.C.

B.C.

B.C.

B.C.

Los
Animals
'15

WE COSMOS
BY BOBO CHOSES
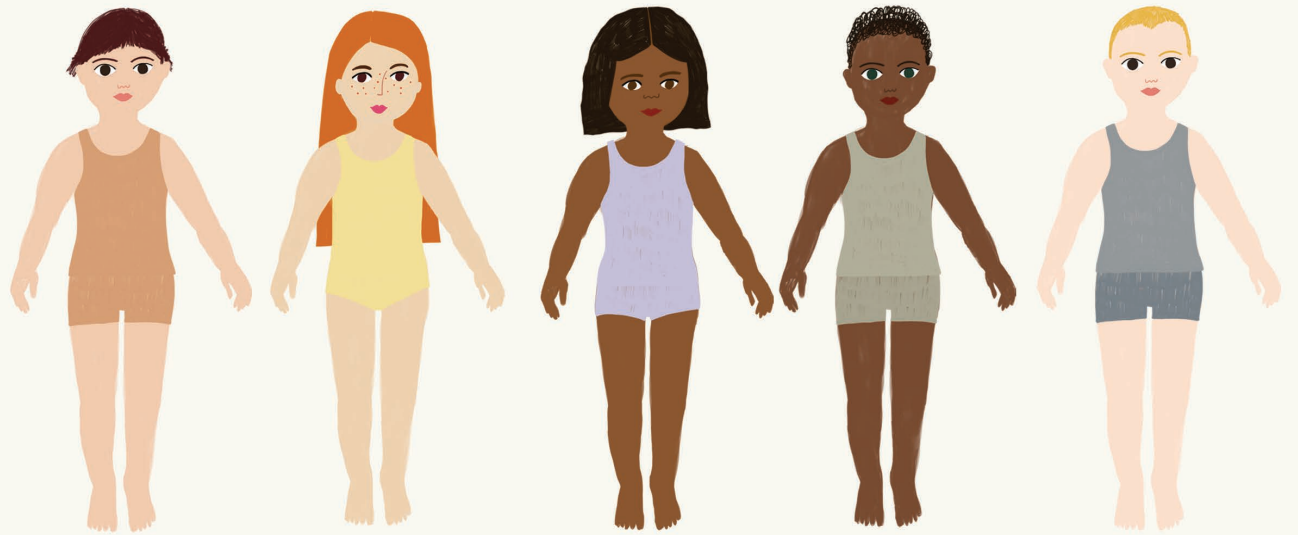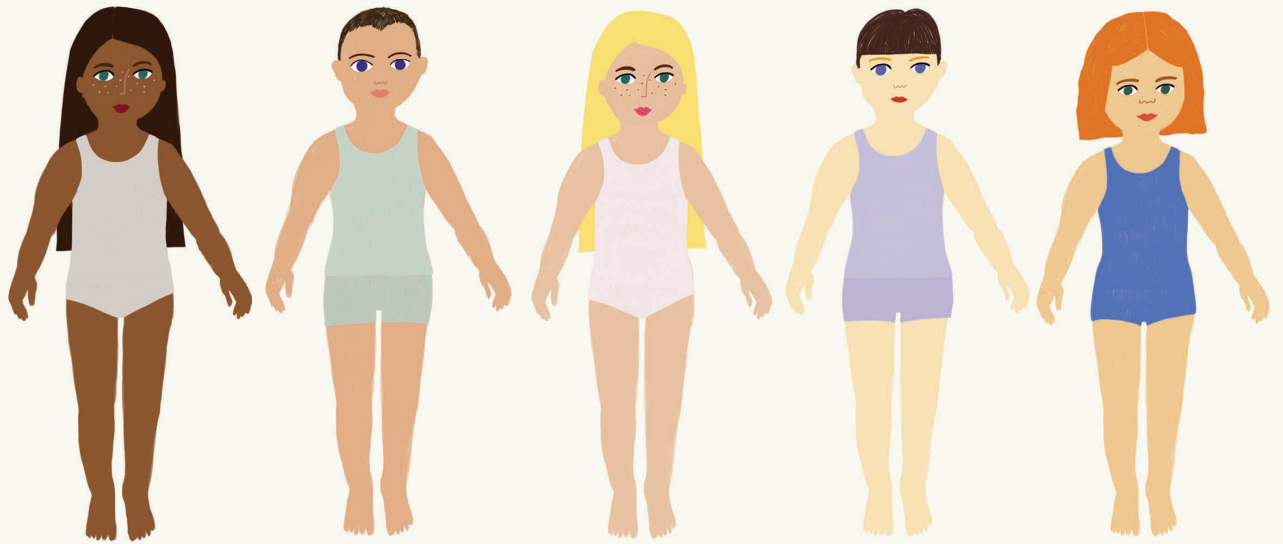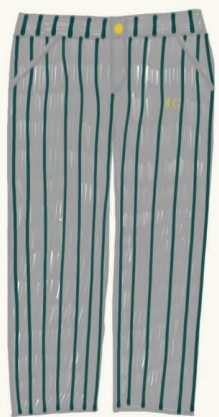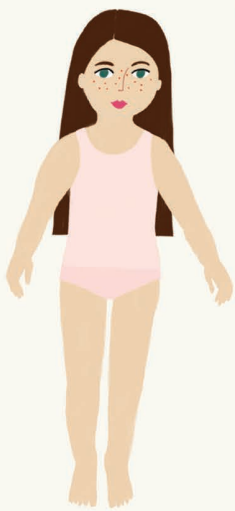
Autumn 2019 — present

Drawing clothes is an endless process. Only slow fashion brands are included in the wardrobe of DressUpp.

December 2019

First wireframes are drawn. Choosing fonts, determining the functionality.
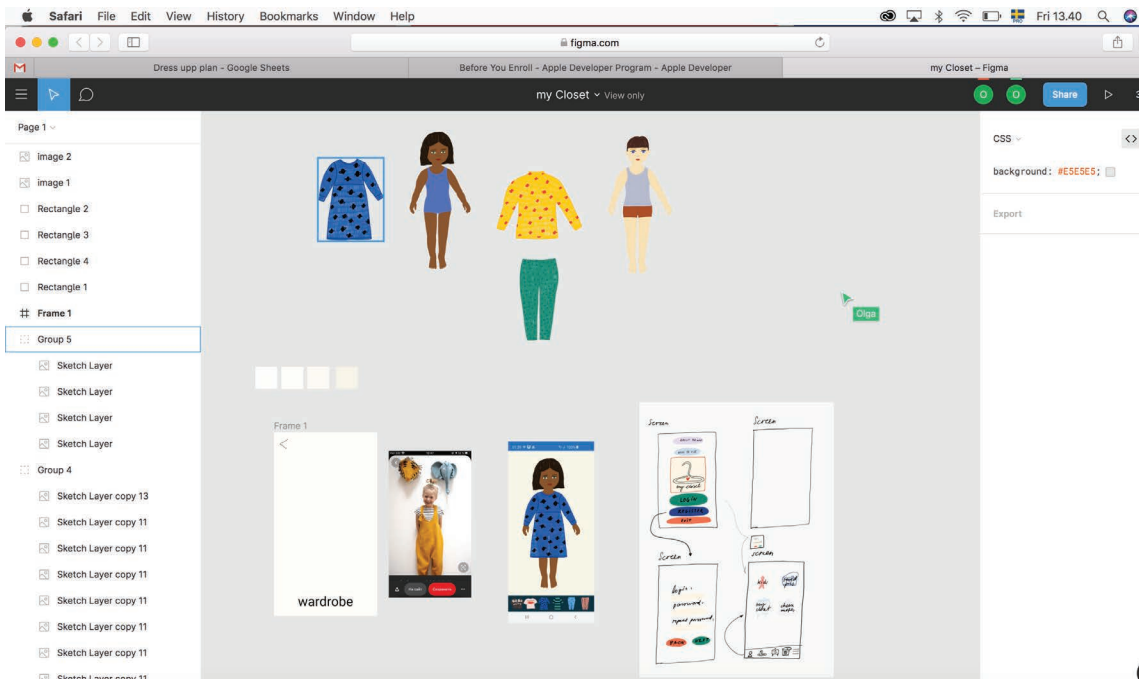
January 2019

Working with icons and menus. Testing out different looks for the buttons.
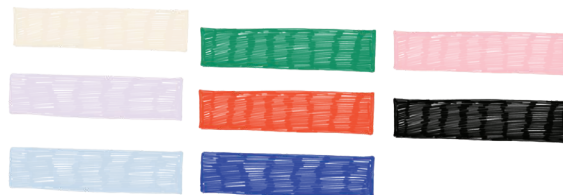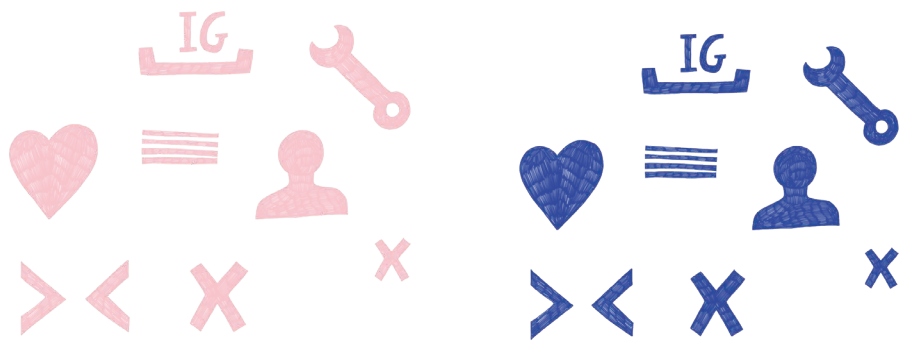
I am drawing a menu for the wardrobe. Wireframes for the main screens. I want the "work screen" to look simple, but still very playful. A lot of decissions are made from day to day, depending on the technical possibility too. The first version on Android was tested on 25 February. It still feel like there is a long way to the version 1. Many bugs need to be fixed. A lof of features still need to be developed and coded.
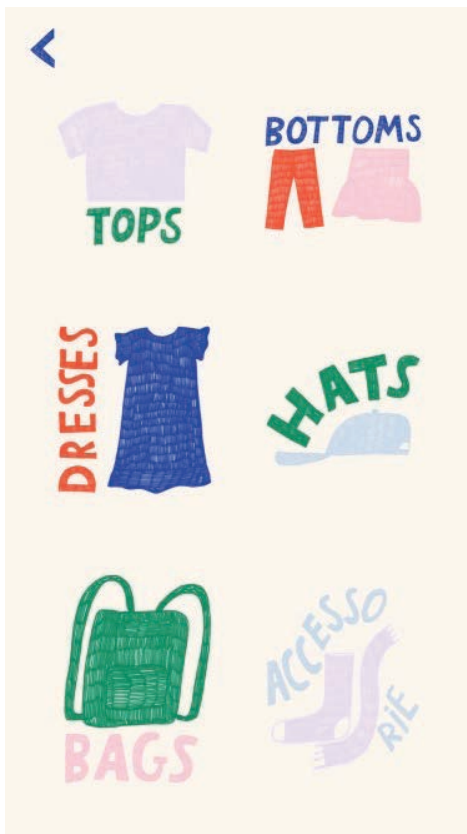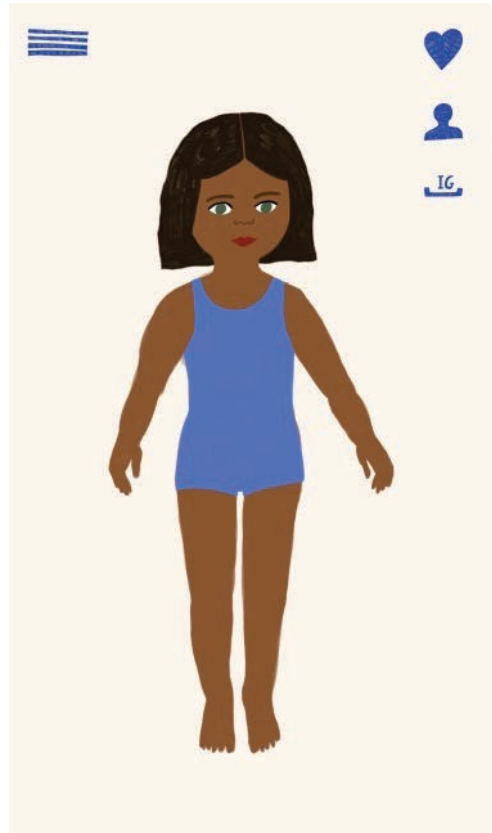
mozhno sdelat chtobi orangevij i zelenyi chelovechek perekluchalis mezhno soboj?

krestik i serdechno po yglam mislennogo kvadrotika odezhdi

My Account
Save to Instagram
Save to Gallery
Wardrobe
My Favorites
Edit

BOBO

THE ANIMALS

My Account
Save to Instagram
Save to Gallery
Wardrobe
My Favorites
Edit
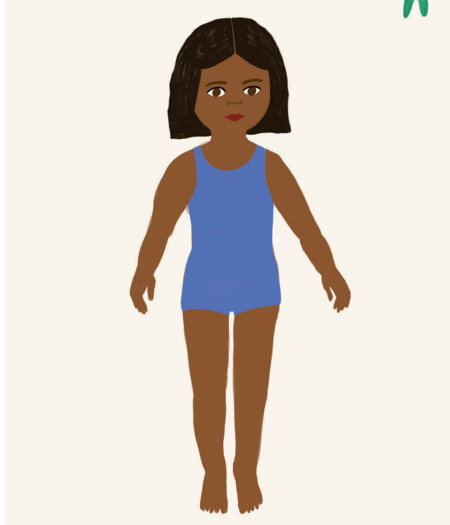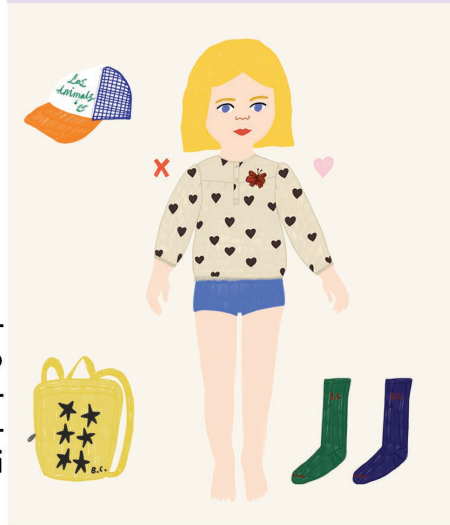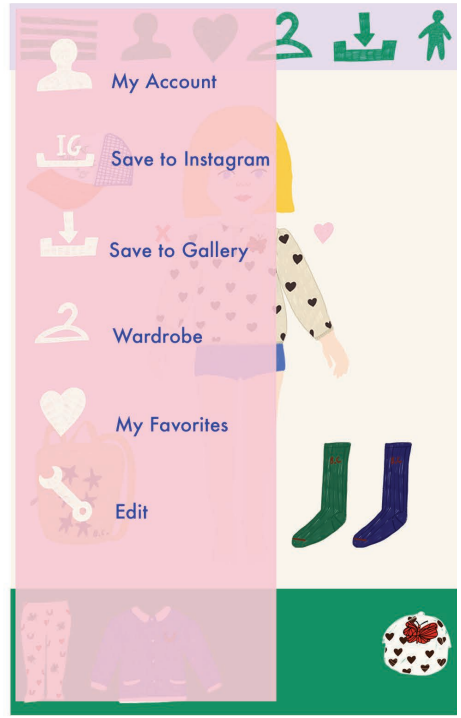
opacity 90

Hello!

If you have chosen our app that means that you want to make conscious fashion choices, support sustainable and ethical brands, have fun and at the same time make a difference in someone's life. How does it all work?

We illustrate real clothes made by slow fashion brands. You create a collage of your picks or dress up a doll. This can be a game for children to learn about ethical business and sustainability.

Choose a child

@dressupp_app

#dressupp_app

IG

Save to gallegy or send direct to IG

Pay it forward philosophy is important for us. That is why 5% of the proceeds will be donated to African Lion and Environmental Research Trust and their project of providing education to 300 Zimbabwean children. We want the money to go to school uniforms, supplies, premisses maintenance. We are so happy you are a part of this too!

Thank you
for choosing
DressUpp!

Start

Dress your child

Or make a collage
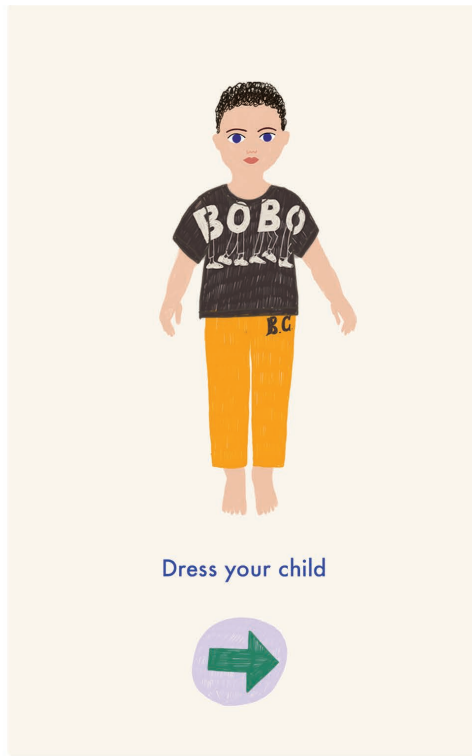
10 and 11 March 2020

Getting closer, with a deadline of 25 of march for a Beta version 1 in mind. Welcome screens are being made. It is important to engage users from the very beginning. Even after they read the description of the app and download it, there is still no guarantee that they will be happy with the choice they have made. The introduction of the application is important, meaning the instructions how to use the application and what for. I tried to keep it linguistically and visually simple, but still informative and motivating.
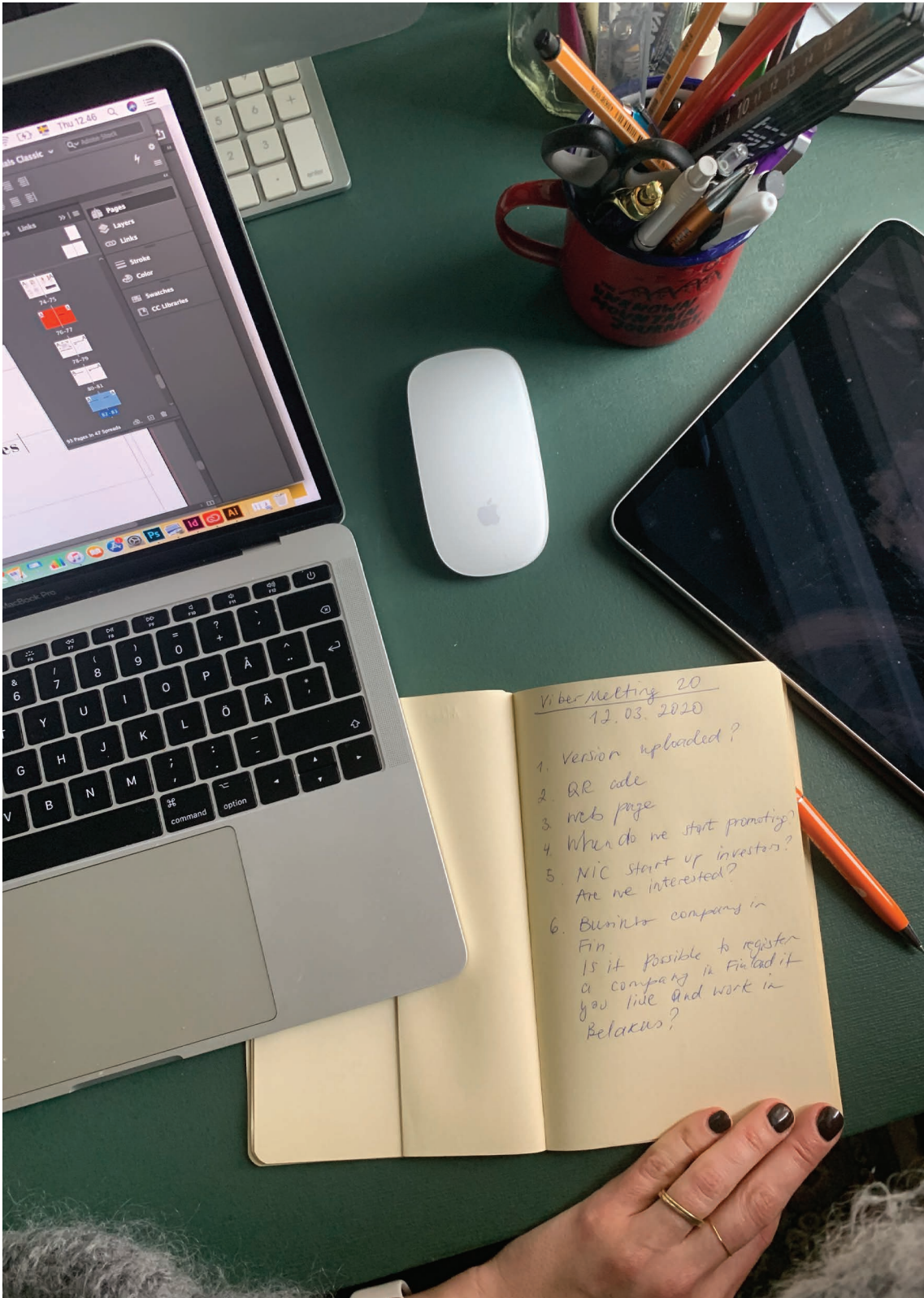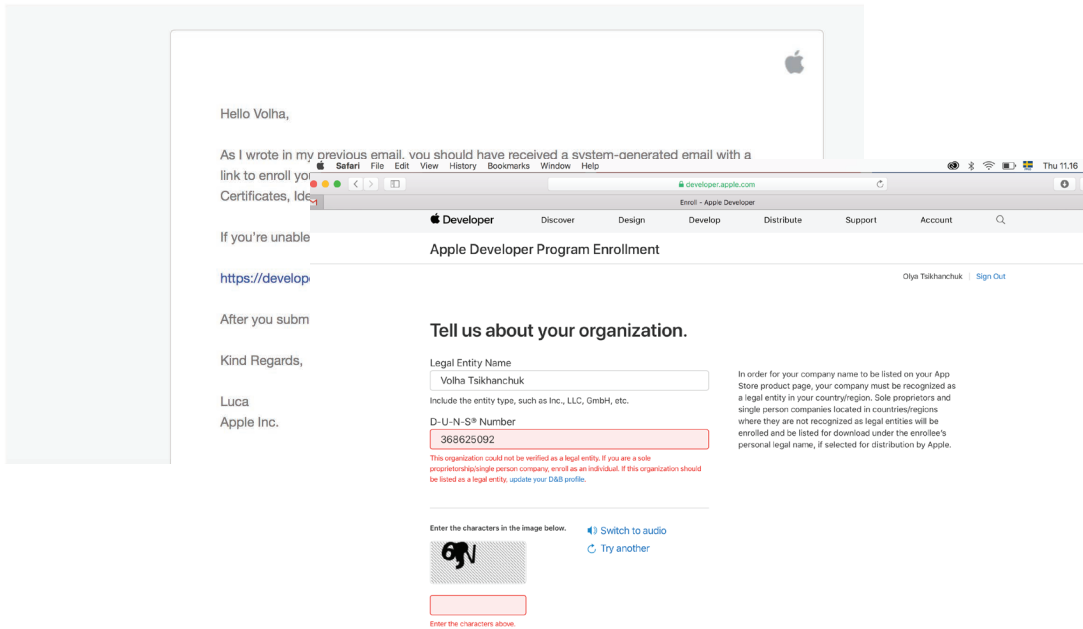
12 March 2020

Planning a meeting with the team. I find it useful to write a plan for the meeting, including all the questions we need to discuss, technical, design or business. Despite us communicating daily with small issues here and there via Viber and WhatsApp, we still need to have weekly meetings. We want to feel that we have a deadline from meeting to meeting, also we need to solve the bigger questions that just keep coming. It is important not to underestimate the value of personal contact (video call it is, but it still feels more personal than a message or an email), the support we feel from each other is so vital! We share not only a common business interest, but we also discuss daily life, life as working parents and of course life in two countries with two different business "regimes".

13 March 2020

Meanwhile the issues with Apple Developer Program are not solved. It looks like we either need to create a separate company for the app, or find another way to upload the application to Apple store.

But there is enough work to do: prepare IG strategy and posts, call Concordia — an organisation that helps with establishing a company.

15-20 March 2020

After talking to a few potential customers, the feedback is good. More tests will
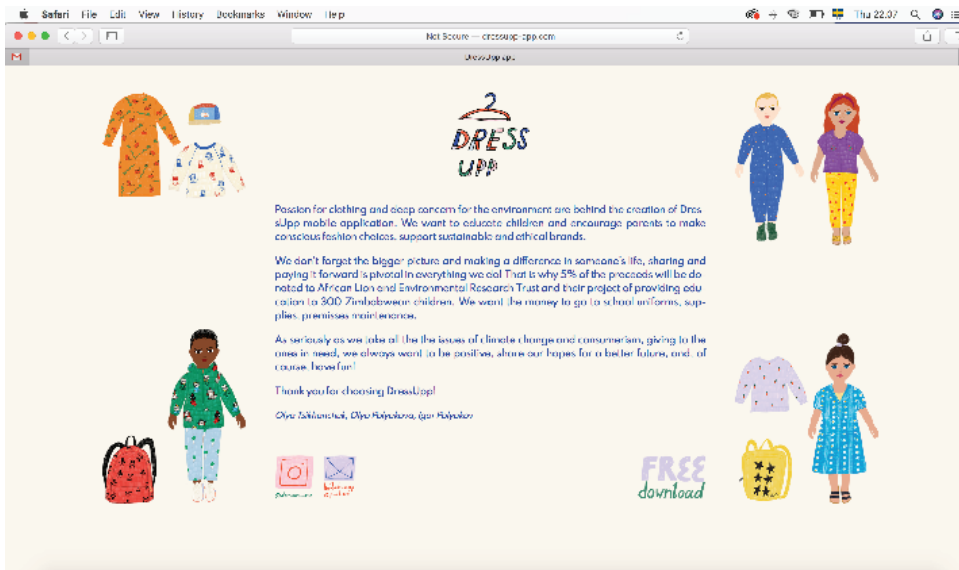be run when the app is ready to be downloaded.
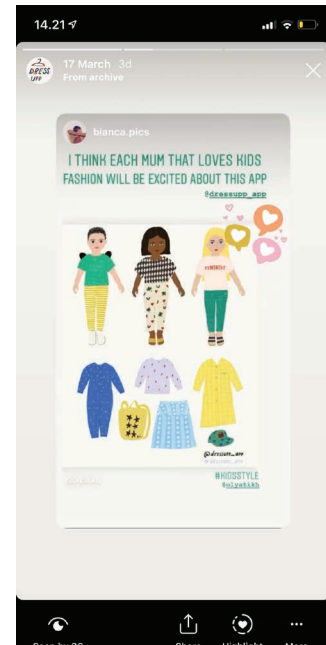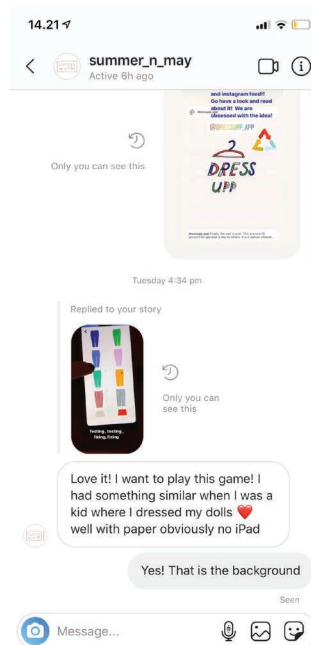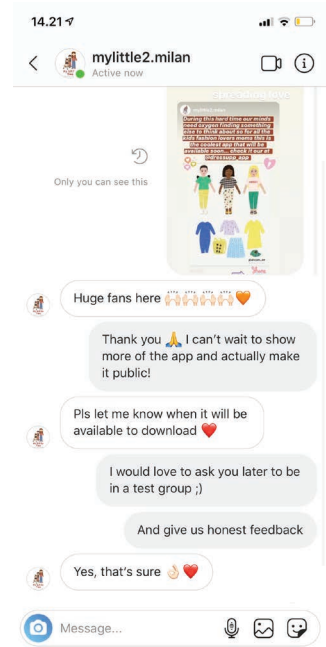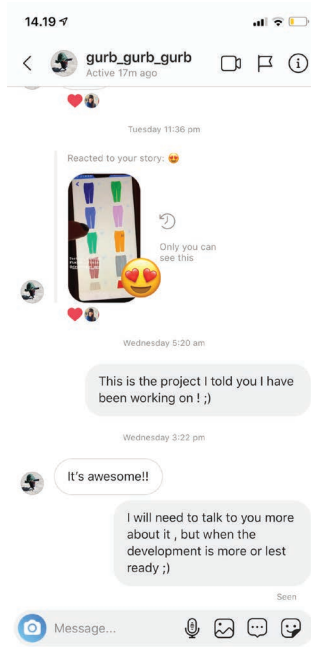
6.0 Result

6.0 Result

It is difficult to draw a line here and state that the result is achieved. The app is still at the stage of development, with a good progress, but until the app is bought by the first customer I will not consider that the goal is achieved.
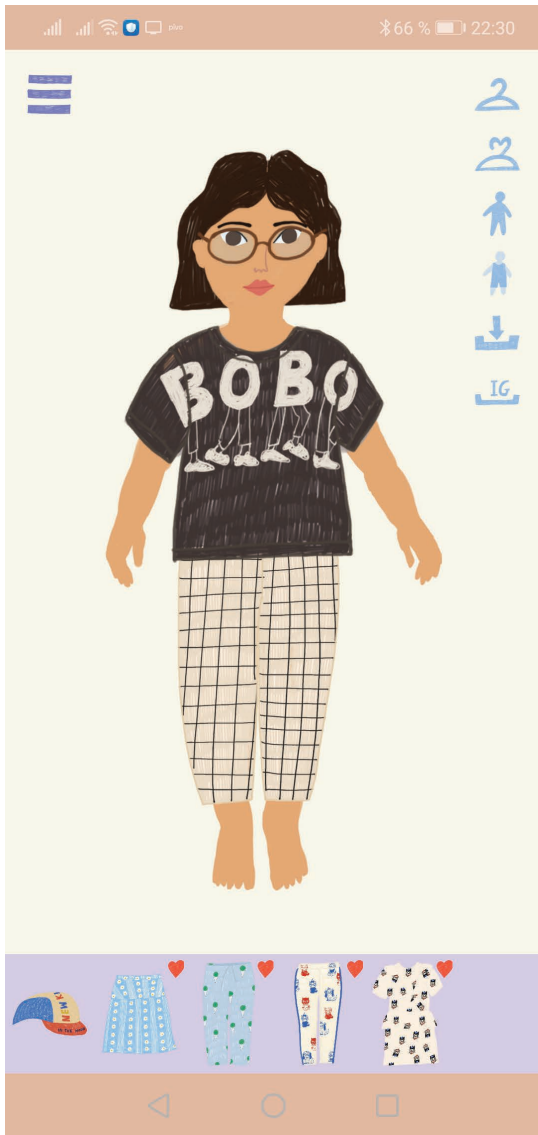
However, the following milestones deserve to be mentioned:
- a research of the mobile app market is done
- a lot of tech blogs have been read
- a new company (international) is opened
- the mobile application is close to its Beta- tests
- the website is launched
- the IG account is activated
- many pieces of clothing are drawn
- children of various ethnical backgrounds are drawn
- a dream is being realised.

www.dressupp-app.com

DRESS UPP

Passion for clothing and deep concern for the environment are behind the creation of DressUpp mobile application. We want to educate children and encourage parents to make conscious fashion choices, support sustainable and ethical brands.

We don't forget the bigger picture and making a difference in someone's life, sharing and paying it forward is pivotal in everything we do! That is why 5% of the proceeds will be donated to African Lion and Environmental Research Trust and their project of providing education to 300 Zimbabwean children. We want the money to go to school uniforms, supplies, premisses maintenance.

As seriously as we take all the the issues of climate change and consumerism, giving to the ones in need, we always want to be positive, share our hopes for a better future, and, of course, have fun!

Thank you for choosing DressUpp!

www.dressupp-app.com

© 2020

dressupp app
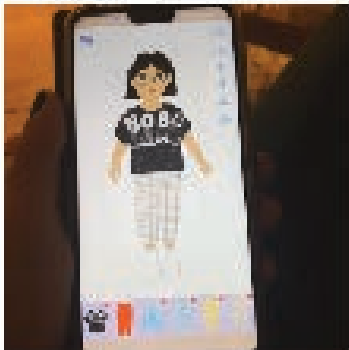
Edit Profile

20 posts   169 followers   16 following

Mobile App
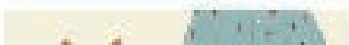An app that will make you smile
dressupp-app.com
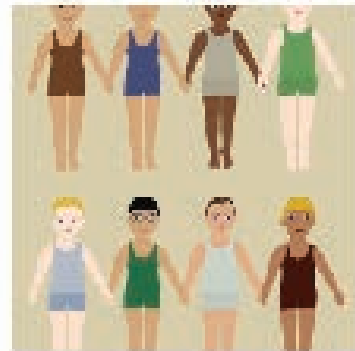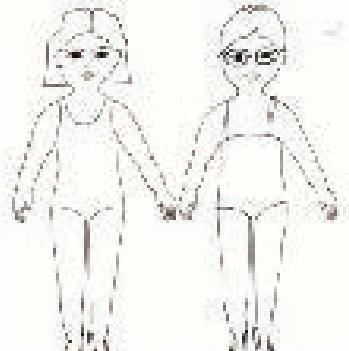
POSTS   IGTV   SAVED   TAGGED

@dressupp_app
#dressupp_app

@dressupp_app
#dressupp_app

7.0 Conclusion

7.0 Conclusion

The process of creating a mobile application is more complicated than I could ever expected, but it is also a journey I would take again. A lot of work has been done from the idea about building an app to the point at present, when we can actually test the app and start announcing it to the public. The work is not always visible, it is not the design itself or coding itself, it is a lot of communicating, emails, calls, sharing ideas, changing minds, finding better solutions, tackling problems, facing critics, opening a new business company, building up a business strategy, and I must name also the art of juggling a career, motherhood and being a wife. Can we really do it all? Scientific or not, I want to praise the superpower all women have. Men have theirs for sure, and they can write about them in their thesis!

7.1 What I learned

Ideas for a project should come from true passion.
Building a good team is vital!
Setting realistic deadlines and following them is the key to success and progress.
Writing down all the ideas and thoughts about the project is good for the development and improvement of the product.
Design cannot exist without business.
Being a designer means you are a business expert too.
Technology can develop if there is a need for something new.

7.2 What the future holds

My hope is that the app is released on the app market by the beginning of summer 2020. I would want to promote the app more to the general public, and also see the response. But most importantly, negotiations with the businesses should start as soon as possible. The big dream for DressUpp is that it becomes a functioning business that can provide jobs for me, my tech team and hopefully other people too!

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http://www.historyofdolls.com/doll-history/history-of-paper-dolls/

History of Paper Dolls
https://www.opdag.com/history.html

What Is Slow Fashion?
https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-slow-fashion/

Video
How to Build a Million Dollar App. George Berkowski. TED x City University London
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwuEwhX1M_M

Thank You

Jonas, Anna, Mikael
(my teachers who always believe in me)

Olya and Igor
(my developers)

Anders
(my husband with Android phone)

Alfred
(my son with fussy fashion choices)

My IG followers
(my supporters and a window to the world)
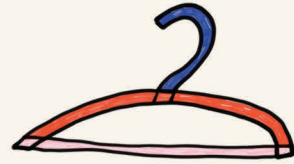
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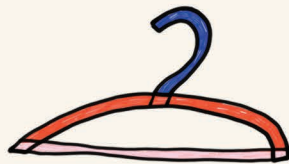
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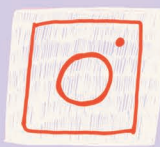@gmail.com