

Fleek Low-Fi Prototype Report - Cody S (Writer/Developer), Elizabeth D (Designer/Developer), Alona K (Designer/Interviewer/Developer)

Introduction

Fleek is a platform for black men and women to discover and share local, high-quality hair care content.

The problem we are addressing is the current level of difficulty for black men and women to find high quality barbers. Our platform solves this by providing users the ability to discover new barbers, enabling barbers to connect with new clients, and allowing all users to share content with their local network.

Sketches

In our UI brainstorming phase we developed a total of sixteen different sketches representing different angles we could take to tackle our problem space. We focused our efforts primarily on iPhone applications but were also excited about exploring the possibility of creating a platform for wearable devices such as the Apple Watch or Google Glass.

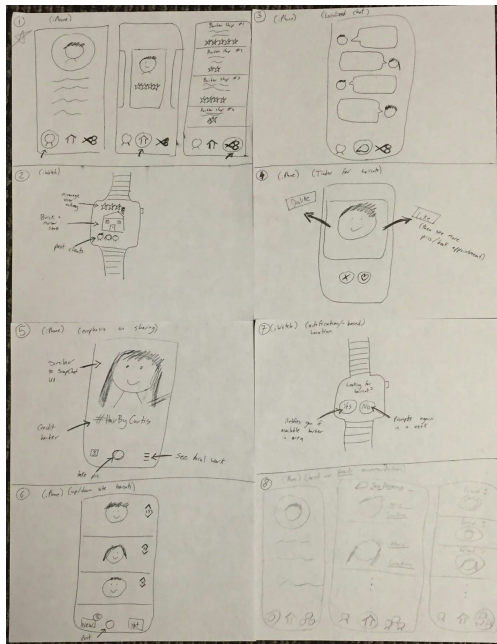


Figure 1. UI Ideas 1-8

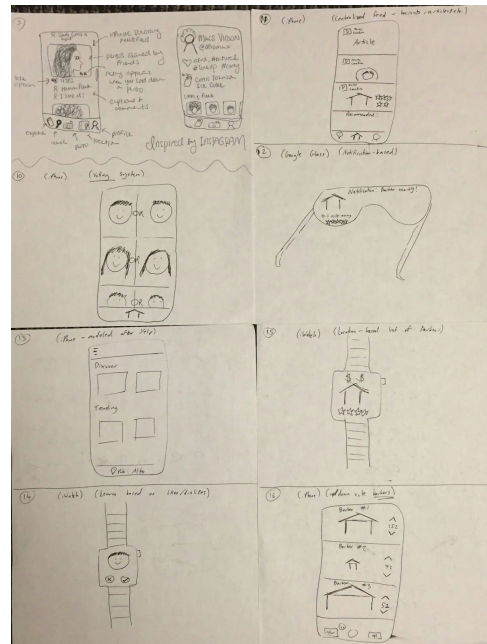


Figure 2. UI Ideas 9-16

After our brainstorming we chose two sketches we felt tackled the issues in our problem space in diverse ways and star. The first was an Apple Watch application that was entirely notification based. For this platform, the user would toggle a kind of “haircut discovery” mode on or off and when the application was active it would alert the user

when they were within a mile of a barber that fit their preferences. They would also be able to view a “portfolio” of the barber’s past work alongside information like pricing and previous customer reviews.

The second platform we selected was an iPhone application constructed more like a social media platform. This platform would consist of a central, location-based “hair feed” that users could scroll through to find everything from articles to photos to recent barber reviews. It also gave every user a profile from which they could “like” and “share” content and a tab in which users could view local barbers and barbers could attract extra business.

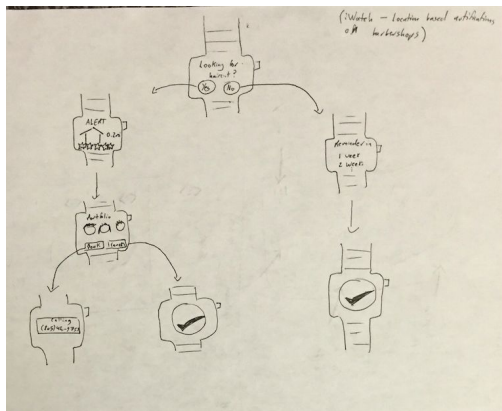


Figure 3. Apple Watch UI Idea

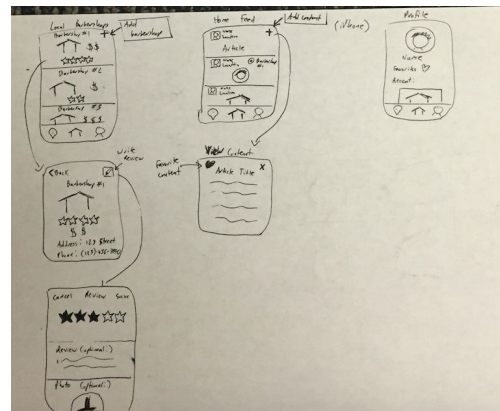


Figure 4. iPhone application UI Idea

Selected Interface Design

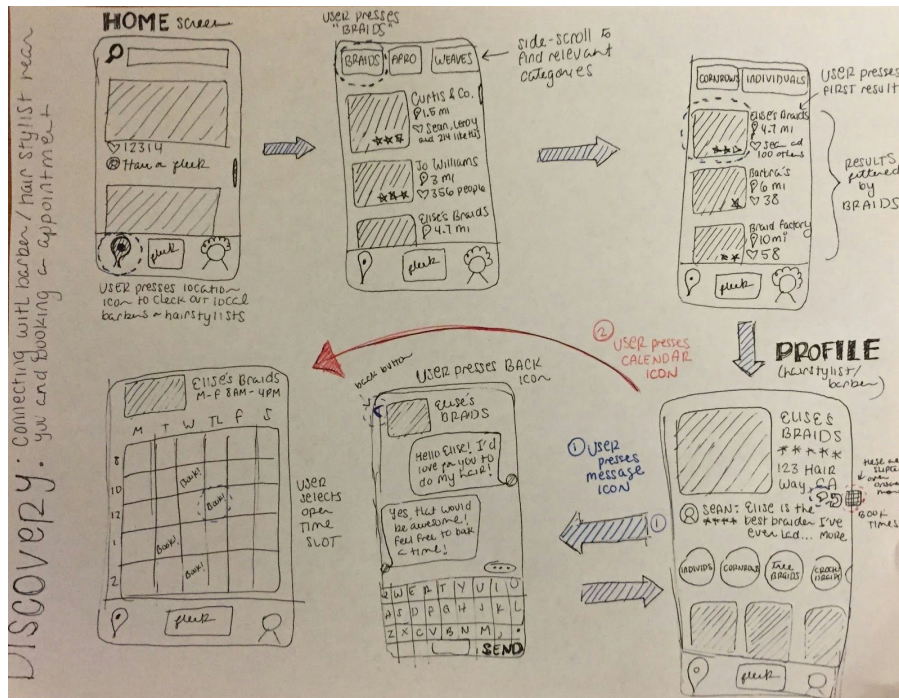


Figure 5. Discover New Barbers UI Storyboard (Complex Task)

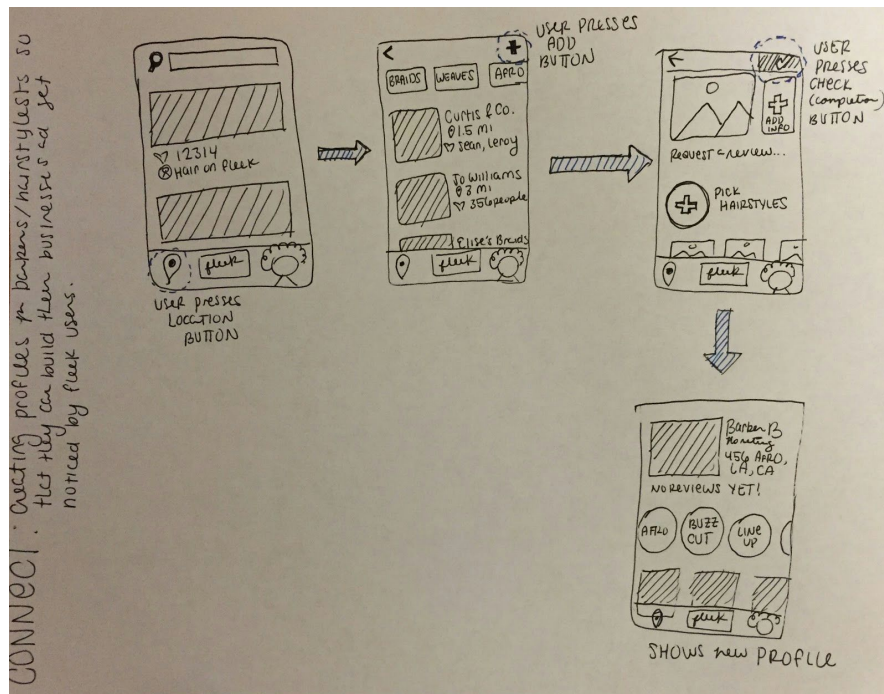


Figure 6. Connect with Clients UI Storyboard (Simple Task)

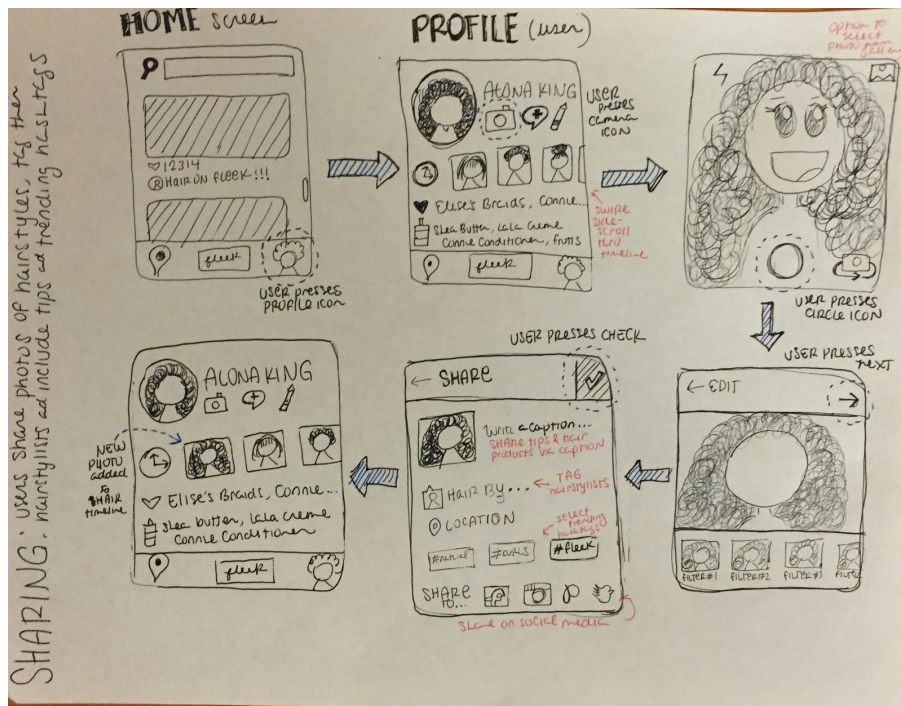


Figure 7. **Share** Local Content UI Storyboard (*Medium Task*)

We decided on the iPhone as our interface design because we believed it was a platform with which people already perform a number of discovery tasks and because it presents us with a much larger market opportunity (iPhone owners instead of Apple Watch owners). Our team also has a far deeper understanding (as both users and designers/developers) of how people interact with iPhones and believe we can effectively leverage this to create an incredibly easy to use application.

Prototype description

Our prototype was presented to our participants as pen-on-paper sketches with an iPhone background to enforce familiarity. Users were instructed to interact with the sketches exactly as if they were a real iPhone - items that were perceived as buttons were tapped the interviewer would replace the screen accordingly.

We decided to design our **discover** screens (Figure 5.) this way because, through our needfinding process, we became acutely aware of the fact that different barbers have different skillsets and that just because a barber is talented at one hairstyle that does not necessarily mean that barber is talented (or even capable) of another. In the process of adding all of the functionality we believed invaluable to our users this became our complex task.

We decided to design our **connect** screens (Figure 6.) this way because we wanted to make it as simple as possible for barbers to create an online presence for themselves to drive additional traffic to their stores. We also wanted to encourage barber shop creation from not only the barbers, but also from the clients so that barbers that are less technologically savvy could also benefit from the platform.

We decided to design our **share** screens (Figure 7.) this way because we wanted to use UI elements that would be familiar to our users when adding content. This storyboard was inspired by a combination of Instagram and SnapChat as these are two apps our team agreed are intuitive to a diverse range of users.



Figure 8. The Low-Fi Prototype

Method

We recruited a total of three participants who were all prospective users of the platform. We publicized that we wanted to do some research and demoing into the usability of an app about Black Hair and our 3 participants volunteered themselves as users. The app being about Black Hair caused participants to self-select themselves in a manner that aligns with the demographics of our potential customer base. All participants were kind enough to give their time to the project without further compensation.

User testing was all conducted in natural environments for the prospective users such as dorm rooms and cafes on campus. The thought behind this was that these were the kind of places in which our users would be actually using the product and hosting the procedure in these environments would make testing more realistic.

Each user was asked to perform three tasks throughout the user testing process. The three tasks in order of least to most difficulty were to 1) create a unique hair shop page on the app, 2) post a picture of themselves onto the app and give the barber/beautician cred, and 3) find a barber/beautician and make an appointment on their calendar. Difficulty was determined by how many screens they had to navigate through to complete the task starting from the app's home screen.

User testing was all conducted in natural environments for the prospective users such as dorm rooms and cafes on campus. The thought behind this was that these were the kind of places in which our users would be actually using the product and hosting the procedure in these environments would make testing more realistic. After laying the system out and demoing some small tasks, we asked the participants to complete the tasks outlined above. We video recorded their interaction with the system. To keep the confidentiality of the participants we only recorded their arms and hands.

After completing the tasks, the users rated the app on 3 characteristics from a 1 to 5 scale, 5 being the best overall rating and 1 being the lowest.

Participant Number 1:

- Intuition of Navigation | 3
- Understanding of Lower Bar Icons | 3
- Satisfaction of the Experience | 4

Participant Number 2:

- Intuition of Navigation | 4
- Understanding of Lower Bar Icons | 5
- Satisfaction of the Experience | 3

Participant Number 3:

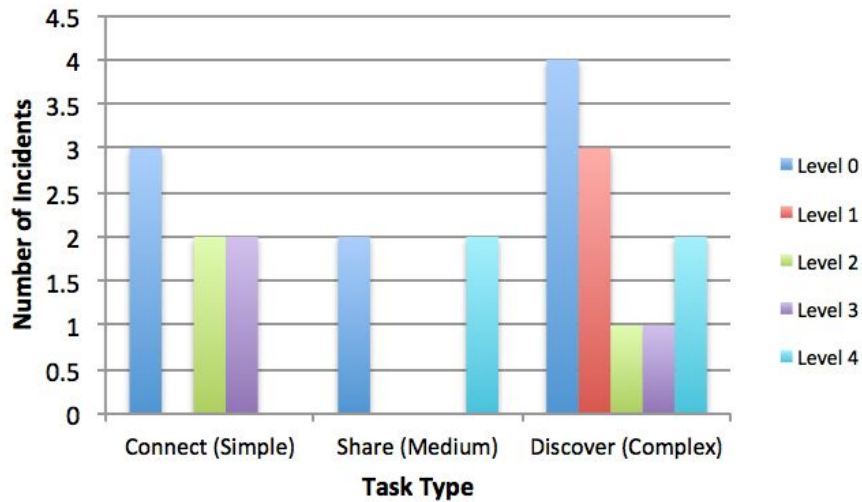
- Intuition of Navigation | 5
- Understanding of Lower Bar Icons | 5
- Satisfaction of the Experience | 4

Results and Discussion

While many of our assumptions proved true and participants were largely able to intuitively navigate the application, we gained a number of insights from our user testing that we will incorporate into our next iteration.

Throughout our user-testing process, we kept a log of the number of different “critical incidents” users had when interacting with the product. We grouped these by tasks and classified the incidents on a scale of 0-4 where 0 indicates a user suggestion and 4 indicates a major UI flaw (such as a missing button).

Figure 9. Critical Incidents Broken Down by Task



Task 1 Summary: Participants thought the navigation flow for this task was simple and straight-forward. Users expressed a desire for additional functionality related to creating and publicizing their shop. In addition, we received mixed feelings concerning how easy it was to actually create a shop on the app and if that affects the credibility of the potential barbers and beauticians.

Specifically, since we did not have an icon or field for hair style prices for that, participant three’s work around was to put hairstyles and their prices into the about section of her page. Also, another participant wanted to see an edit/update icon button whenever she looked at her own shop page to quickly change the details of her shop at any time. None exists currently. Lastly, participant three looked for a fast and easy way to publicize her newly created shop to social more outlets than just our app.

Task 2 Summary: Participants enjoyed the scrolling features and swiping filtering features of the app. Many said it felt fun and intuitive when choosing and filtering what hairstyles and pictures they wanted to see. Unfortunately, the participants discovered there was no reasonable way to “go back” or undo a choice on certain screens. One participant especially had a hard time figuring out how to undo or un-filter the local beautician choices once she commit to selecting a more specific hairstyle

choice on the screen of the app. We will work on designing a clear way of doing this in our next iteration.

Task 3 Summary: Task 3 was the most intensive task when it came to icon and screen navigation. One participant found it hard to navigate to a screen where they could see the reviews of the barber. Currently, if you look at the barbershop page and click on one of the pictures in the portfolio, you can see the review that corresponds to that picture. This was not satisfactory to the participant. He would rather click a button and quickly see what the general comments about the barber are without going through every picture. Also, another participant wanted an indicator for the general pricing range of the beautician she was interested in. Currently none exists but it wouldn't be hard to add an icon indicator to show this. One participant didn't immediately locate the "google map" icon as an indicator of the screen to find local barbers, but the other participants were able to make that correct assumption.

Word Count: 1478