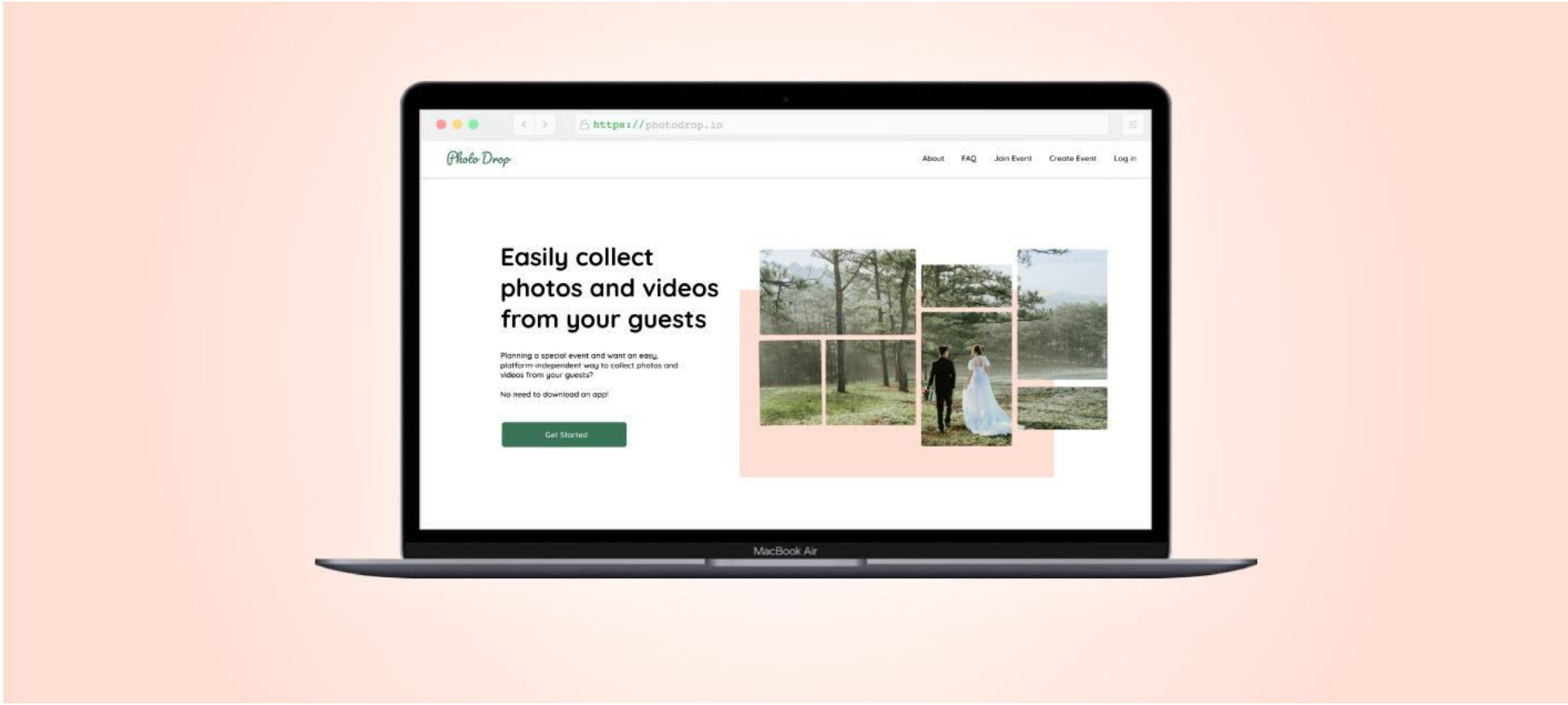


Photodrop: Web App

Concept Project for Google UX Design Certificate Program

Role: UX/UI Designer
Date: January 2023 (4-week design sprint)
Team: Lauren Aliman
Tools: Adobe XD, Procreate

Roles & Responsibilities

As this project was a requirement for the Google UX Certificate Program, I worked on it individually, as both the UX Researcher and UX/UI Designer. I worked on the following deliverables:

📝 Deliverables

UX

- Surveys
- User Research
- User Personas
- User Stories
- User Flows
- Wireframes
- Low-fidelity Mockups

UI

- High-fidelity mockups
- Color palette
- Typography
- Interactive prototype
- Usability Testing

⚒️ Tools

- Adobe XD
- Procreate
- Google Forms
- Jamboard
- WebAIM - Contrast Checker
- Material Design Tools

Project Overview

Photodrop is a web app concept I worked on for the Google UX Design Certificate Program. Its goal is to make collecting event photos and videos from guests, family and friends as easy and hassle-free as possible. I spent four weeks researching and designing the prototype to be user-friendly and accessible for everyone to enjoy.

Problem Statement

Weddings and birthdays are special moments that we want to remember forever, but collecting photos and videos from guests can be a disorganized and time-consuming experience. Asking guests to add their photos to a Google Photos or Dropbox album isn't always easy and some people might not want to participate, due to technical difficulties, unclear instructions and privacy concerns.

⛳ The Challenge

Design a simple solution for collecting event photos and videos from guests that's user-friendly and accessible for everyone.

Scope & Constraints

I worked on this project for a month, following the timeline specified in the Certificate Program. The course required me to use Adobe XD and follow the Design Thinking process. Prior to starting the project, I had no experience using Adobe XD, so I had to spend extra time learning it.

Having to work within a short timeframe, while simultaneously learning how to use a new design tool, proved challenging. Given these constraints, I was only able to focus on two user flows - one for web and one for mobile. The final prototypes are limited, but they demonstrate the fundamental features of the product concept.

Design Process

I followed the 5-step Design Thinking process that I learned from the course.

👥 Empathize	🔦 Define	💭 Ideate	💻 Prototype	🔁 Iterate
Interviews User personas	User story User journey Pain-points	Sitemap Paper wireframes Digital wireframes	Low-fidelity prototype Usability study	Changes to prototype Key mockups Accessibility

👥 Empathize - Understanding the User

Conducting interviews
User groups
User personas

Conducting interviews

I started the project by interviewing 2 people who had been planning to get married and are potential users of the app. I also interviewed 3 people from diverse backgrounds who face challenges with technology. Some notable quotes are summarized below.

User Group 1: Event hosts

"I would love to save all the photos that the people send me, but it's hard to track down all the photos sent on whatsapp, instagram and social media"

"I just want the easiest option possible for my wedding"

User Group 2: Guests

"I don't want to have to download a separate app"

"I don't have a Google Photos or Dropbox account"

"I don't want strangers to see my photos"

Creating user personas

Based on the interviews I conducted, I created two user personas.

Sarika

Age: 30
Education: College graduate
Hometown: Toronto
Family: Fiancé
Occupation: Manager

"I want my wedding day to be memorable, not just for me and my partner, but also for all of my family and friends."

Sarika, a 30-year-old Project Manager planning her wedding, wants all guests to contribute to a shared Google Photos album. However, some guests don't have a Google account and prefer sending photos via WhatsApp or social media. With over 100 guests, Sarika is concerned about managing the ceremony photos later.

Goals:

- To keep all her wedding ceremony photos in one place
- To collect photos from her guests and compile them all in a shared album

Frustrations:

- *"How can I get all my guests to add their photos of the ceremony to one shared album?"*
- *"I wish there was an easier way to share photos across platforms"*

Susan

Age: 57
Education: College graduate
Hometown: Bend, Oregon
Family: Married, grown kids
Occupation: History teacher

"I don't use cloud-sharing apps...Can I send you the photos by e-mail?"

Susan, a 57-year-old teacher, attended her nephew's wedding in Portland and wants to share photos with her nephew and relatives. Not using social media, Susan sent the photos via email, but exceeded the space limit and had to send five separate emails with photo attachments.

Goals:

- To see photos of her nephew's wedding
- To share some of the photos that she took during the event

Frustrations:

- *"I don't use social media and don't have an easy way of sharing photos with my family"*
- *Not particularly tech-savvy, and struggles to use some of the more popular cloud-sharing platforms*

🔦 Define - Defining the target user and identifying pain points

User story
User journey
Pain points

For this project, I identified a particular user need that would be addressed in the problem statement. The focus of this project is Sarika, a soon-to-be bride, who wants to collect photos from her guests and organize them in a shared album. For Sarika, it's important to have a solution that's simple for her to configure and accessible so that many of her family and friends can participate.

Sarika's user story

"As someone who's planning a big wedding, I need a simple and accessible way of collecting photos from my guests, because I want to remember every moment of my special day.

Mapping Sarika's user journey

Persona: Sarika

Goal: Sarika wants to collect photos from her guests and compile them in a shared album

Action	Create shared album on Google Photos	Add title and photos to shared album	Invite collaborators by email	Share link with wedding guests	Receive photos
Tasks	A. Sign in to Google Photos Account B. Navigate to Sharing menu C. Tap "Create shared album"	A. Add a title B. Tap "Select photos" C. Select all wedding photos in gallery	A. Tap "Share" B. Add known guest emails manually C. Send invite	A. Open photo album B. Tap "Share" C. Send link to group chats, messages, etc	A. Wait for guests to join album and add their photos B. Follow up with guests
Feeling	Excited "I can't wait to see everyone else's photos!"	Happy, nostalgic "I love looking back at these memories"	Overwhelmed "I have to type in at least 50 emails"	Annoyed, worried "I hope everyone sees the link on all the group chats"	Annoyed, overwhelmed "Some people didn't follow my instructions!"
Could Improve:	Create shared album ahead of time	Add ability to customize album colors, fonts	Automatically add all guests as collaborators when they RSVP	Automatically add all guests as collaborators when they RSVP	Organize photos chronologically in an aesthetically pleasing layout

Identifying pain points: What's keeping Sarika's guests from participating?

Because Sarika wants to ensure guest participation, it's important to address some of the pain points that might be experienced by her guests while attempting to collaborate on a shared photo album. Some of the key pain points identified from the interviews are below.

1

Guests might not want to download new apps or have to sign-up

Convincing all guests in an event to use a specific application can be challenging, especially if they have to download a separate app or have to sign-up and create an account.

2

Some guests might struggle with technology

Attendees of big events can vary greatly in their ability to engage with technology.

3

Some guests might have privacy concerns

Some guests might be concerned about their photos being accessed by unauthorized people.

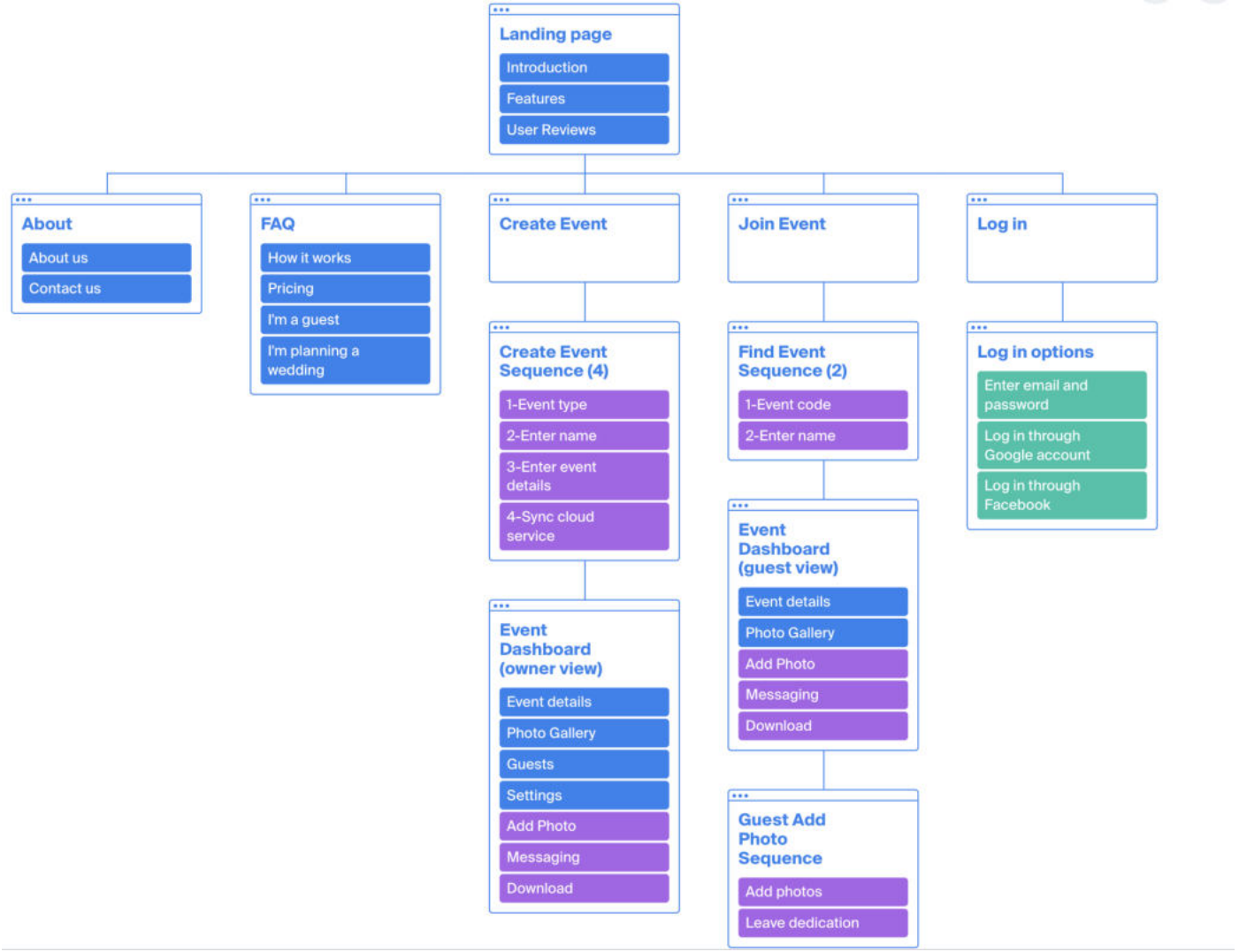
💭 Ideate - Starting the design

Sitemap
Paper wireframes
Digital wireframes
Screen size variations

I sketched multiple ideas on paper, created a sitemap and digital wireframes. During this phase, I was able to visually represent the layout of the site and outline the user flows that I prioritized for this project.

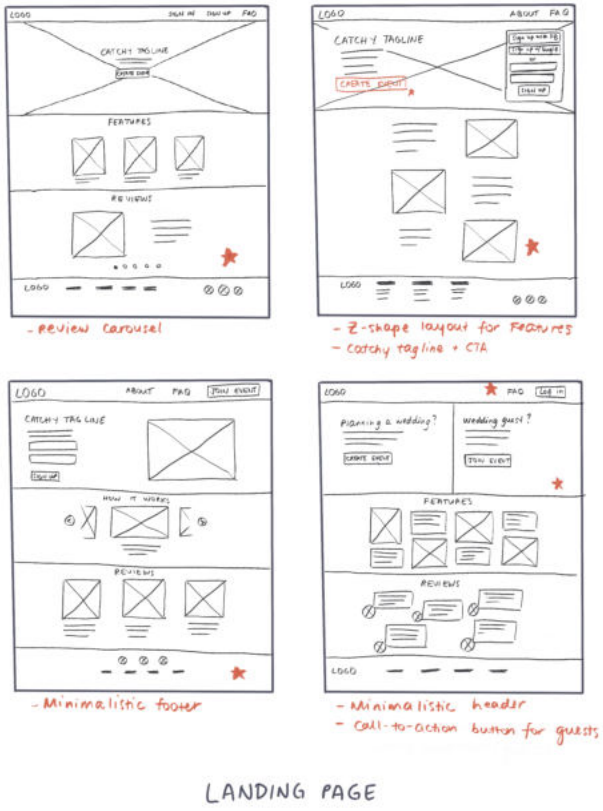
Sitemap

I designed the sign-up sequence to be simple and with as little steps as possible by reducing features and buttons to the bare minimum.

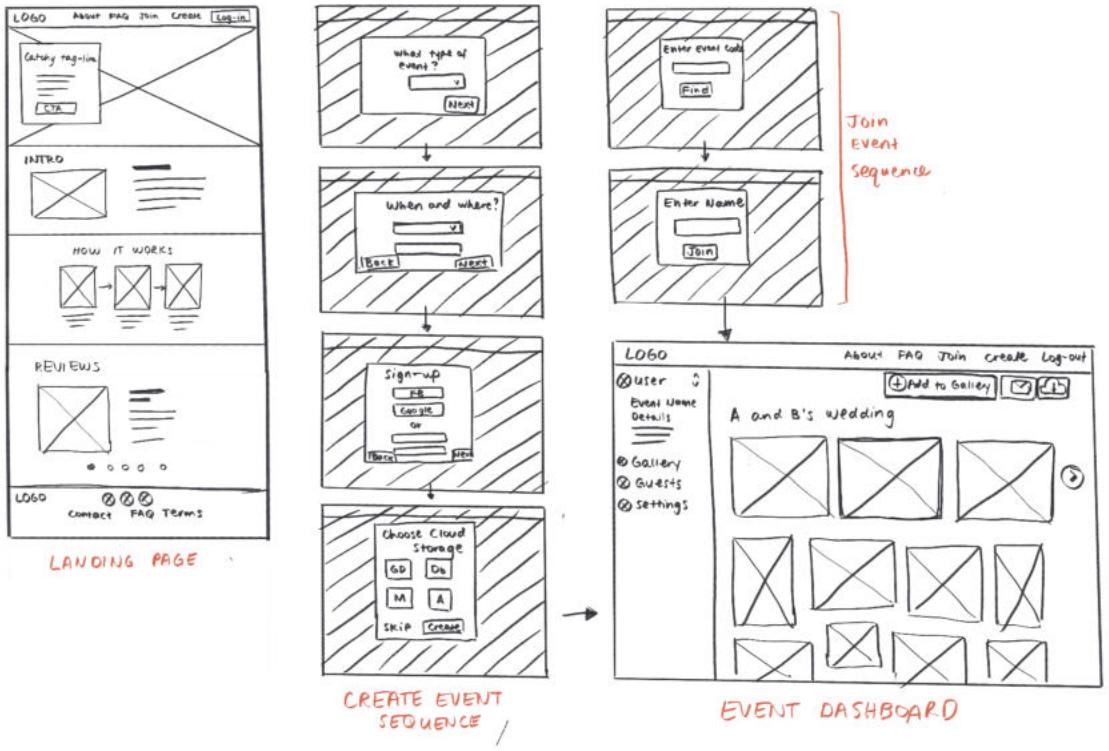


Sketches and paper wireframes

Next, I sketched out paper wireframes for the landing page, the “Create Event” and “Join Event” sequences and the Event Dashboard.



Landing page sketches

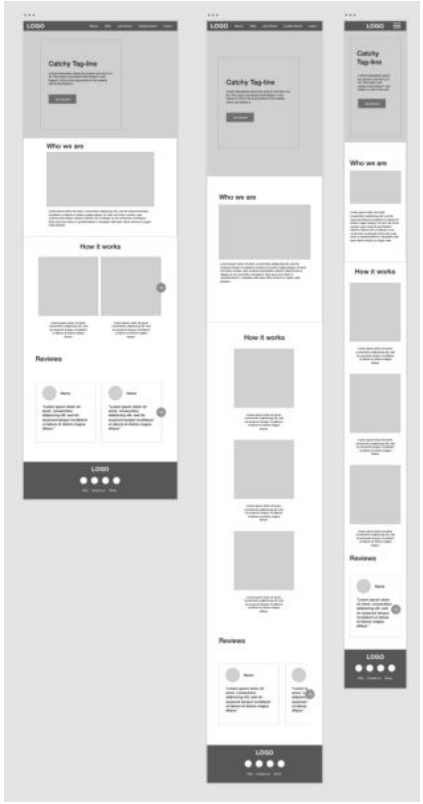


Create event / Join event sequences

Digital wireframes and screen size variations

Using my sketches as reference, I created digital wireframes on Adobe XD, adding placeholder text, buttons and other basic design elements. I also added several screen size variations for iPad (horizontal), iPad (vertical) and mobile, so that all the relevant text and images are still viewable on different devices.

Create event sequence



Screen size variations

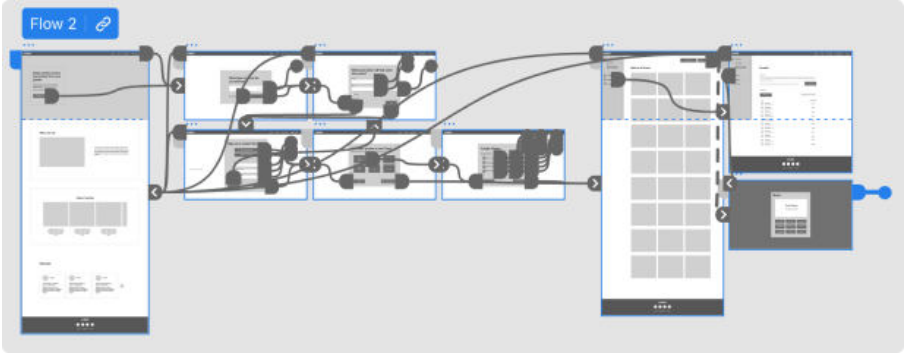
💻 Prototype - Testing early concepts

Low-fidelity prototype
Usability study: research method
Usability study: findings

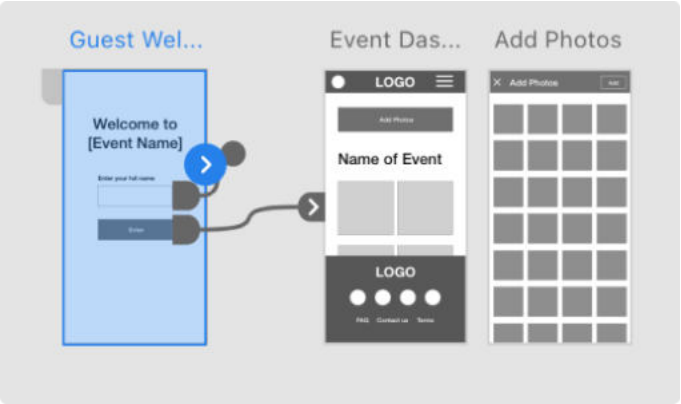
In this stage, I conducted usability testing on the preliminary concepts starting from the low-fidelity prototype. This helped to detect issues that caused confusion or dissatisfaction in my testers, as well as pinpointed areas that required enhancement or further clarification.

Low-fidelity prototype

I connected all the screens involved from the landing page, the sign-up sequence and generating an invite link for the event gallery.



I also made a simple low-fidelity prototype for the mobile version demonstrating functionality from the perspective of an event guest.



Usability study: research methods and findings

I conducted two rounds of usability studies. Findings from the first study were used to inform design changes from wireframes to mockups. The second study used a high-fidelity prototype and revealed which aspects of the design the users liked and which aspects needed further refining.

Research Questions	Participants	Methodology
Can users navigate to different parts of the website from the landing page? Is it clear to users what actions can be taken on each page? Do users understand how to add photos to the gallery?	5 participants 2 male and 3 females between the ages of 29-70.	10-15 minutes per participant Remote Unmoderated usability study Participants were asked to complete tasks in a low-fidelity prototype

By grouping together some of the feedback I received from users, I was able to come up with common themes and insights.

1	2	3
Users didn't feel inclined to provide information unless it was absolutely necessary.	Most users needed more context and guidance in setting up the cloud-storage feature	Most users needed guidance and clear instructions on what to do upon entering a new page

🔁 Iterate - Refining the design

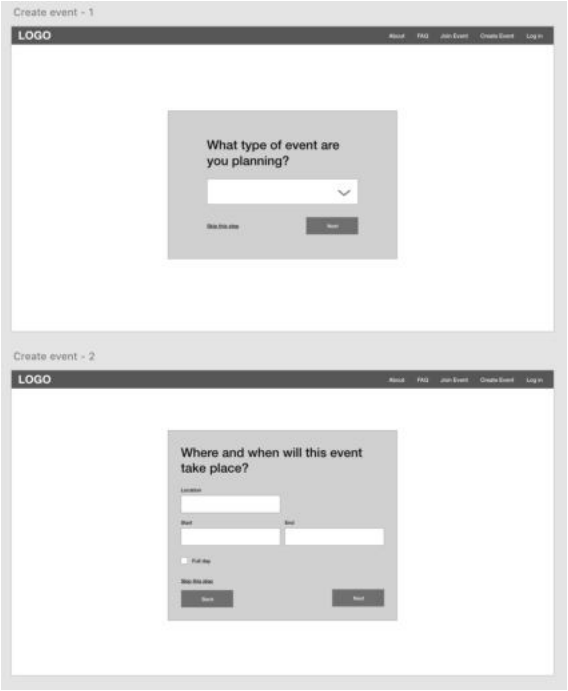
Changes to prototype
High-fidelity mockups
Accessibility

Based on the insights gained from the usability study, I developed a more polished high-fidelity prototype for a second round of testing. This testing revealed additional areas of concern, particularly with regards to accessibility, which I addressed by making further modifications to the prototype. These final changes were incorporated into the completed version of the high-fidelity prototype.

Changes to prototype based on usability test results

Simplified the sign-up sequence

Users prefer to provide only necessary information during onboarding, as I found in the first usability study. In the next iteration, I replaced the previous prompts asking for event type, location, and date with a single prompt for event name, making the sign-up sequence shorter and less intrusive.

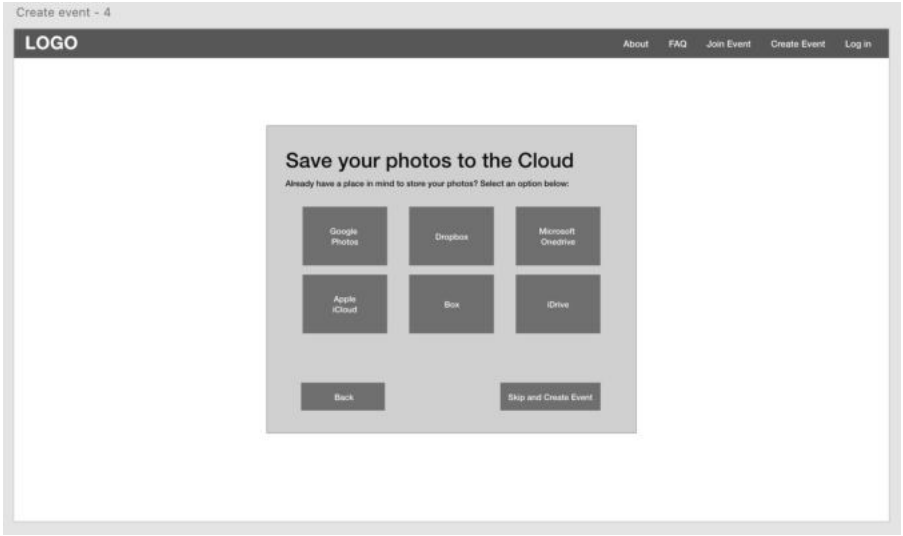


Before usability study

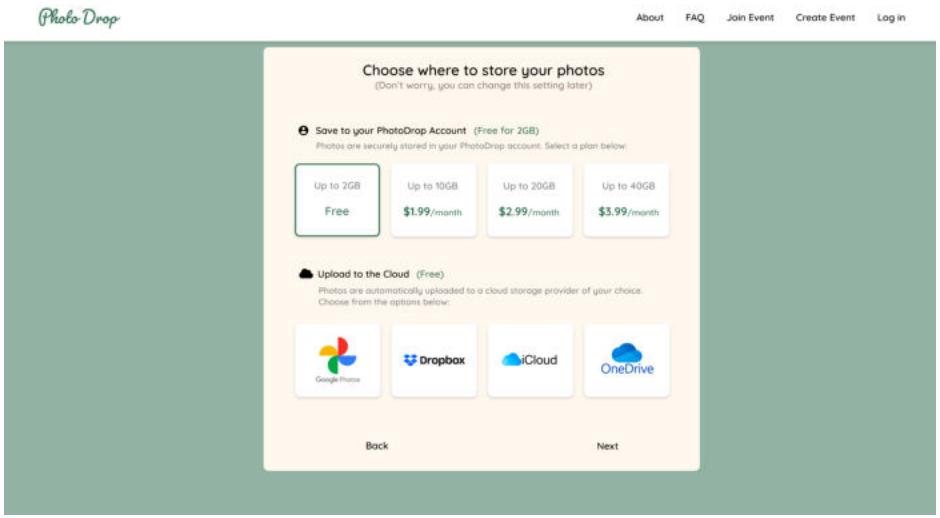
After usability study

Added clearer instructions

This product offers flexibility by allowing users to choose their preferred cloud storage option. Initially, users found the cloud-storage selection step confusing due to unclear instructions. To address this, I improved the instructions, added a pre-selected default option (Free storage up to 2GB), and reassured users that they can change their selection later.



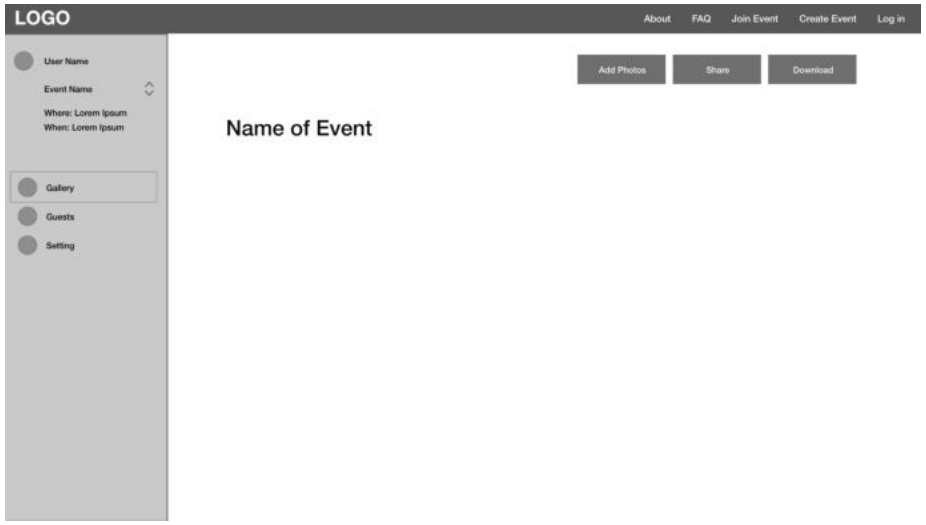
Before usability study



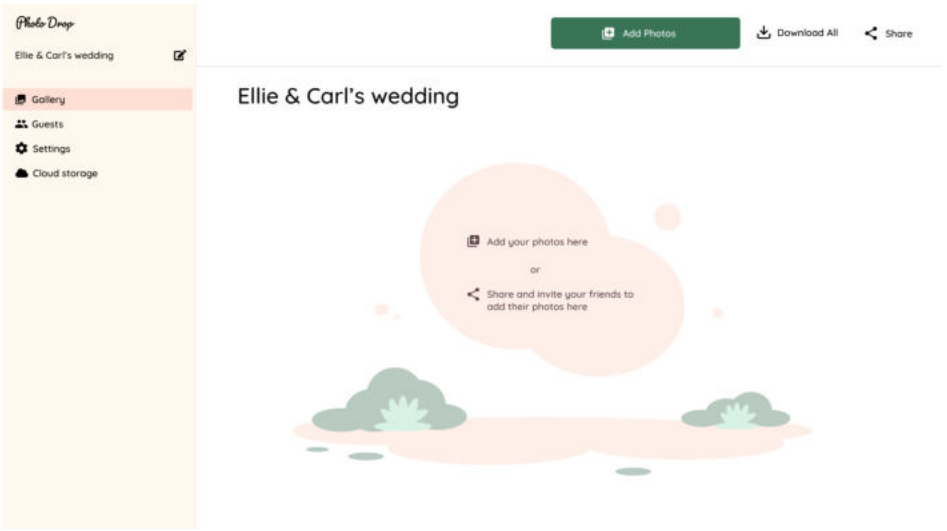
After usability study

Added a “zero state” page

After sign-up, users are brought into the Event page. During the usability study, users found the “zero state” Event page empty and confusing - it was clear that more guidance was needed for the first user to choose an action. In the second iteration, I added suggestions at the center to either “Add Photos” or “Share” the event with friends.

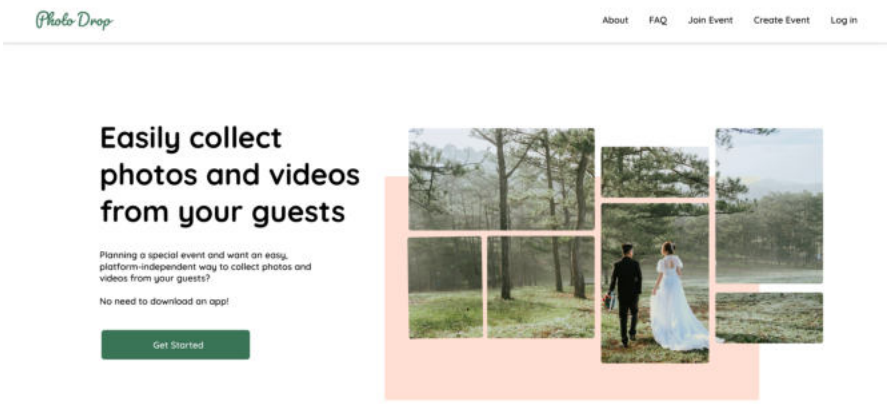


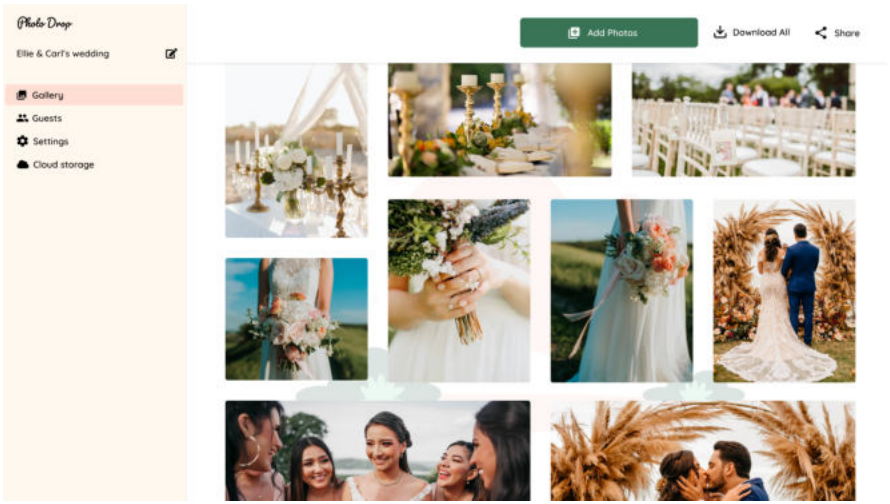
Before usability study

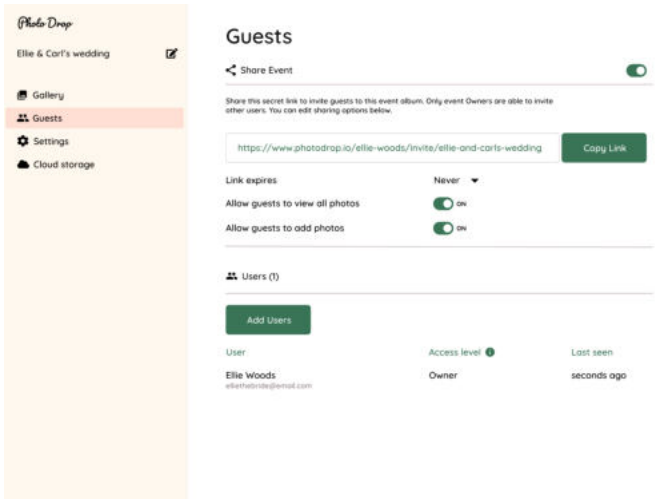


After usability study

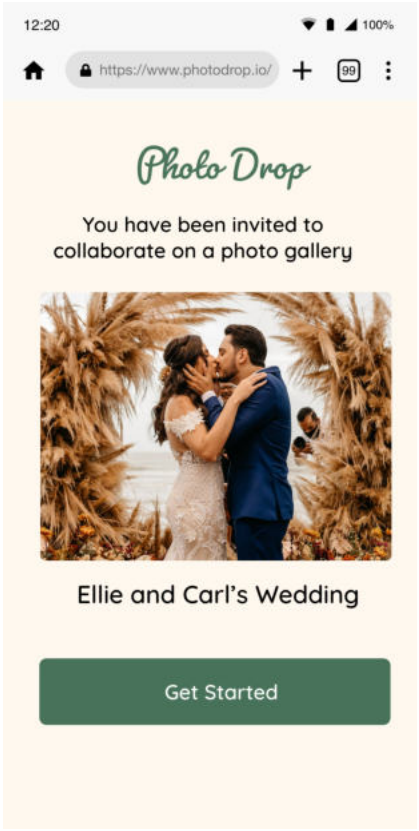
Key mockups: web

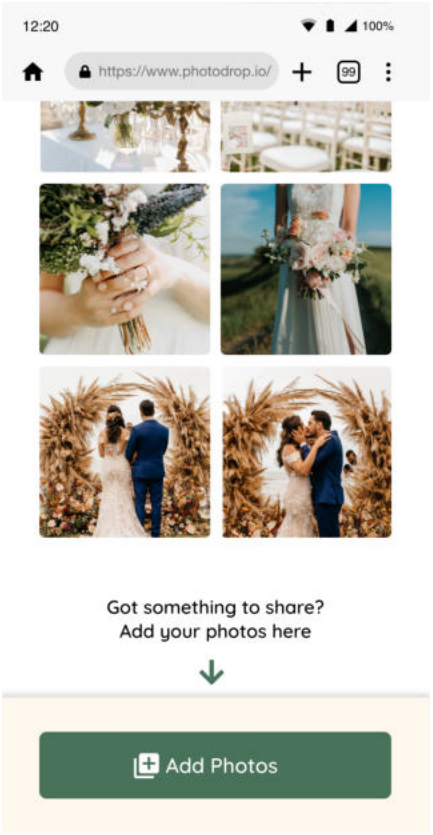


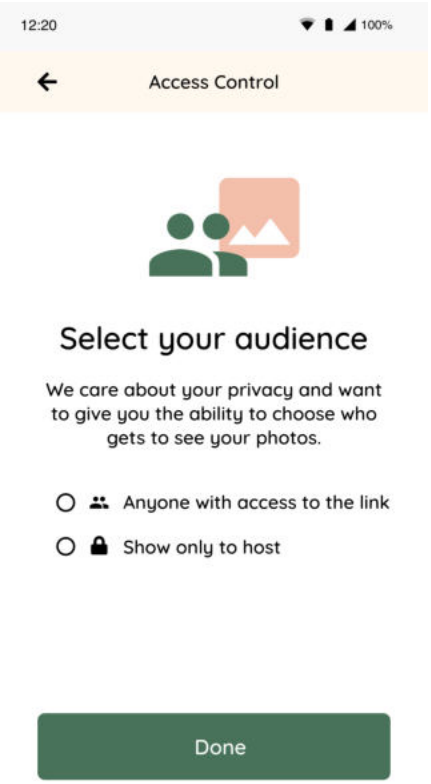




Key mockups: mobile







Accessibility considerations

Prioritized text clarity

In designing for people with poor vision, I prioritized text clarity by using large font sizes and selecting an easily readable typeface. Quicksand is a simple display font with rounded edges and clear spacing, making it readable even in mobile devices.

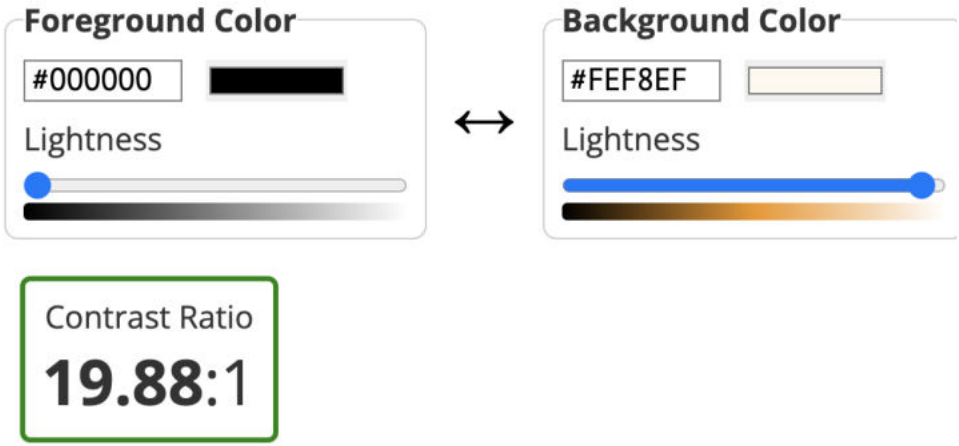
Header 1: Quicksand

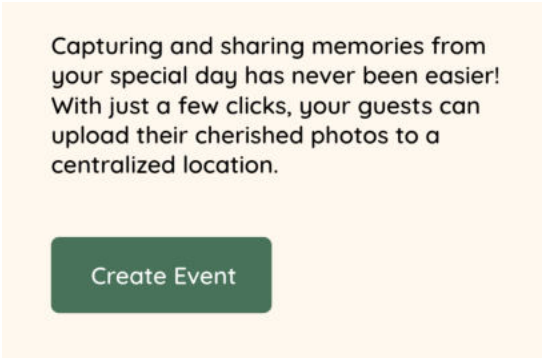
Header 2: Quicksand

Paragraph: Quicksand

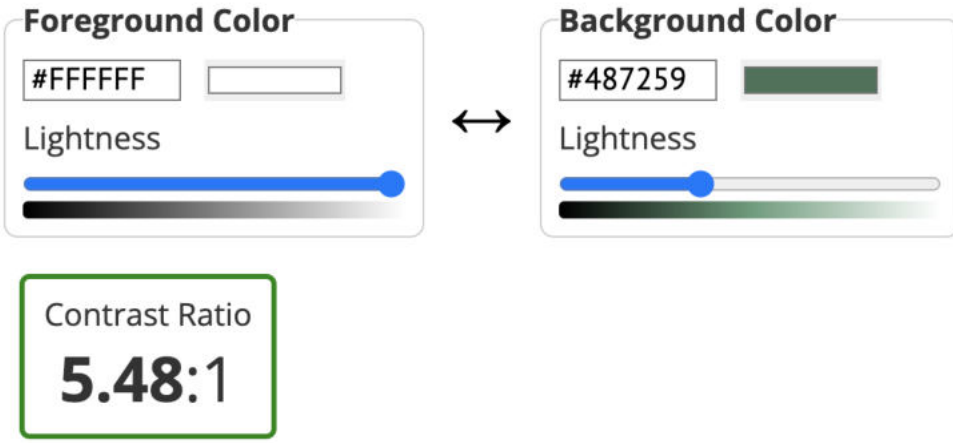
Ensured high contrast for text

For design elements and typography, I made sure to select color combinations that were compliant with WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)



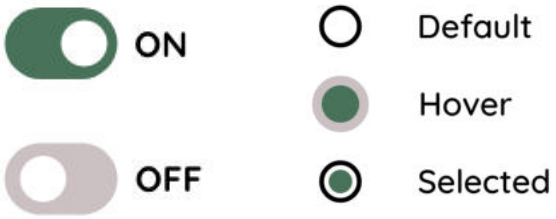


Sample text and button from mockup



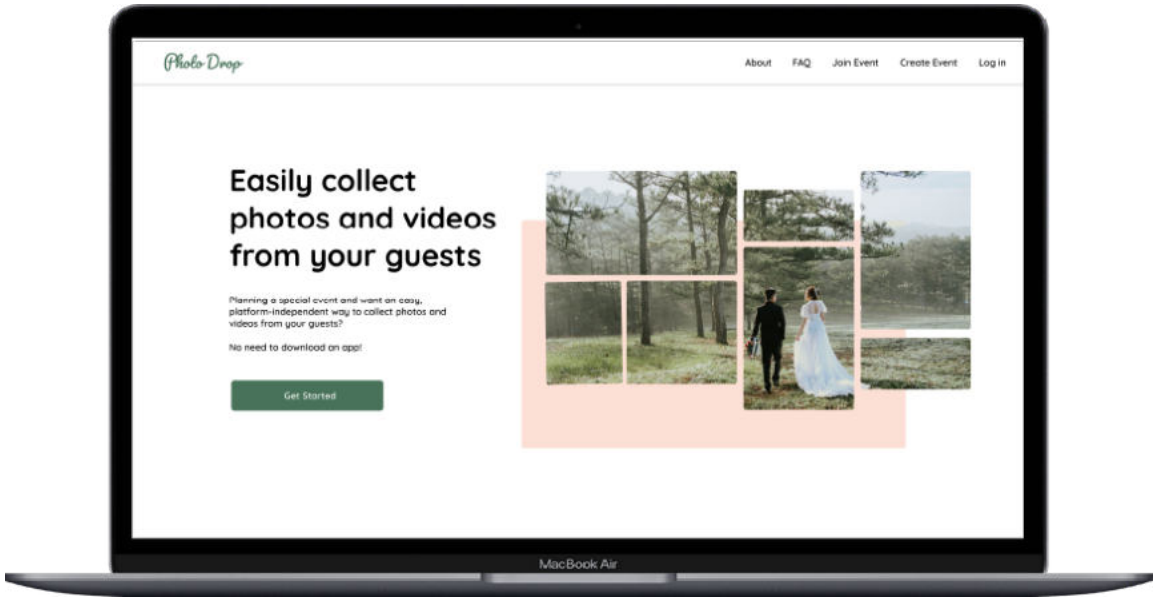
Not relying on colors for state changes

To be accessible to people who are color-blind, I made sure to add labels and other signals to indicate state changes for toggles and radio buttons.



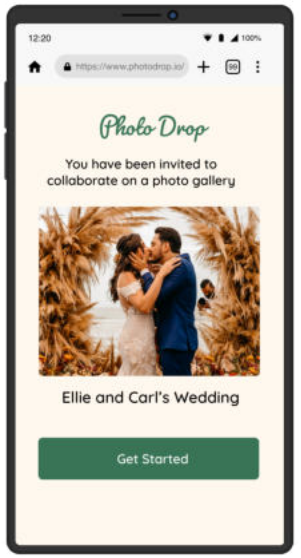
High-fidelity Prototypes

Finally, putting everything together, I created high-fidelity prototypes demonstrating two primary user flows for this web app.



User flow 1: Create an event, add photos and share the event with friends

Launch web prototype



User flow 2: Add photos to event

Launch mobile prototype

Outcomes & Lessons Learned

As part of the UX Design Certificate Program, I worked on a photo-sharing web app concept, which I called Photodrop. I worked on this project with the intent of learning how to design for accessibility, responsive web design and learning how to use a new tool, Adobe XD. In the end, I was able to use Adobe XD to create interactive prototypes demonstrating a user-friendly and accessible way of collecting events photos and videos from guests.

Because of time constraints, I wasn't able to focus on several critical features that I had initially wanted to include in the prototype. For example, I would have liked to demonstrate how the user might configure it with different cloud storage services such as Google Photos or Dropbox.

My most important takeaway from this project is learning how to design for the elderly. By testing my mobile prototype with two people between the ages of 64-70, I was able to learn some strategies to make my design more accessible to the elderly, such as:

- Focus on one action per page
- Provide clear instructions and cues for desired actions
- Don't add text on images (very hard to read)
- Use large and readable typefaces