letr stay in touch

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Thank you for taking the time to look at my case study. I appreciate it and value your time so would like to point out a few highlights for you, to get a quick grasp of the scope of the project - the Coles Notes version!

PG 3: OVERVIEW
PG 4: Problem Space
PG 6: Primary Research
PG 7: How Might We?
PG 17: Hi-Fi Prototype
PG 18: Design Impact

TABLE OF CONTENTS

letr – UI | UX case study
by Julie Matson
an iOS app designed to keep you connected

Overview: letr is a project that was created during the height of the Pandemic, and is a response to the social isolation and disconnection from all that we love during the long stretches of isolation.
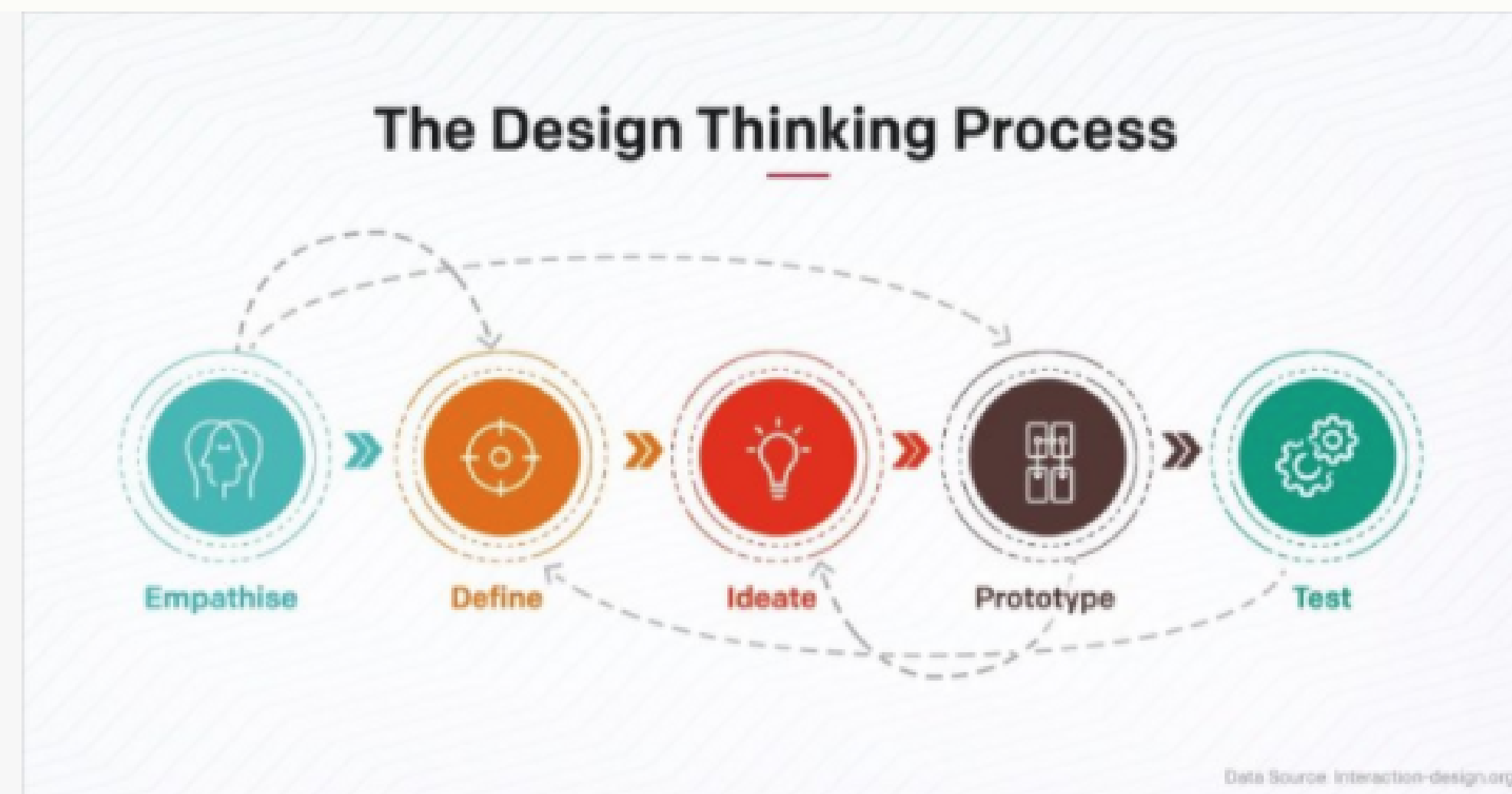
My Roles: UX | UI Researcher & Product Designer

Timeline: 10 weeks

Methodology: IDEO's 5 stages of Design Thinking

Tools: Pen & Paper, Marvel POP, Adobe XD, Adobe Illustrator, Canva, InVision, Figma

Project Type: Academic

The Design Thinking Process

Empathise → Define → Ideate → Prototype → Test

Data Source: interaction-design.org

1 – EMPATHY

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM SPACE

Initially, I was examining a few potential problem areas, all of which focused on isolation brought on by the pandemic. The main concerns focused on the following points:

Since the pandemic hit more and more people are feeling more isolated and feel connected to others.

Social media offers a very superficial connection to most people, often decontextualized by the "scroll." This period in time has really highlighted the importance of real human connection, and it is something that is not being met currently without causing individuals a feeling of anxiety.

This **issue** affects most people that are digital-natives, especially people that live in cities without other family or roommates, or with people that they want to have regular contact with.

The **ultimate impact** I am trying to achieve is to offer a solution for people that want to keep track of their friends and family in a more meaningful way that isn't just the superficial scroll of social media.

Ways to alleviate **pain-points** the problem-space causes is by offering them ways to connect with people in a way that feels more meaningful than just a social media contact.

IN THIS INCEPTION PHASE I WONDERED:

HOW MIGHT WE help people have actionable interactions with others in an intentional way?

SECONDARY RESEARCH

The Atlantic Magazine recently published an article outlining the recognition of many different levels of friendships, and how the pandemic has essentially "erased" entire categories of more casual friendships – those that you might see in a public setting like a bar or coffee shop.

Stanford sociologist Mark Granovetter coined the concept of these levels of friendships as one of "weak ties." He also decreed that this level of friendship, one's "outer circle," to be vital to our social health.

Human beings are social creatures – it takes the combined levels of both close and weak connections to satiate our natural drive for connection. The pandemic has heightened this need, and has also left most of us not knowing exactly what we are missing – the casual but regular connections – but knowing that something is missing.

This missing layer of communication can have adverse effects on folks that are already introverted or easily get social anxiety with the idea of meeting new people. Digital fatigue is a phenomenon felt by many people as it is, so the idea of using more emotional bandwidth to maintain more casual connections are often left by the wayside, ultimately creating a deeper state of alienation.

unsplash.com/@priscilladupreez

PRIMARY RESEARCH

I began my research process with user interviews around how people are staying in touch with their loved ones during the pandemic.

Objective: Conduct 5 user interviews to collect insights on users' communication methods and experiences to inform proto-personas, journey maps and app functionality ideas.

Methods & Tools: Qualitative data was collected through 20-30 long minute scripted user interviews which allowed time for open-ended questions and follow-up responses as per natural conversational flow. THese interviews were conducted via video calls and transcribed.

KEY FINDINGS

Motivations, Pain Points and Behaviours from user interviews

In summary, the interviewees all tried some methods to keep in touch with friends and family and were open to the methods their friends preferred. They all ranked Text Messaging as their primary Go-To, followed by Messenger. The majority of them didn't want to be the first person to contact someone, for fear of interrupting them, and appreciated when someone made a point to send an unprompted message to them.

2 – DEFINE

Project Hypothesis

I believe that by giving people easy-to-use tools and methods to keep in regular contact with friends and family that they will feel a stronger sense of community and will make efforts to stay connected.

HOW MIGHT WE improve the quality of interactions between people in order to strengthen relationship and community?

Sabrina, 28
Location: Vancouver BC
Occupation: Customer Success Agent
Archetype: Urban dwelling professional

"*I want to make plans with friends without adding more work or stress to do it.*"

My Proto-Persona Archetype is based on my user interviews. I created a **Persona Experience Map** and **Task Selection** is derived from my user interviews and keeping the problem space and hypothesis in mind. They reflect one feature that would augment the user experience.

ATTITUDES BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS

· Finds it difficult to meet new people and is missing her long-term friends
· Doesn't feel her current social media is showing her the posts by friends that it used to
· Loves to know what is happening in the lives of her close friends
· Feels she sometimes has to choose work over social opportunities

NEEDS AND PAIN POINTS

· Is currently very career-motivated, leaving less time for socializing
· Lives in a different city than the one she grew up in and feels a bit lonely as a result
· Is fed up with most social media platforms as a way to keep in touch with friends

POSSIBLE WAYS TO ALLEVIATE PAIN POINTS

· Establish a more personalized way to communicate with her friends
· Set up planned time to socialize with her friends
· Sort out more suitable ways to maintain a regular communication with her friends

Sabrina's Experience Map

Trying to make plans to catch up with friends.

Task Selection

Sabrina wants to find her friend's contact to send them a gift from their Amazon Wish List

8

3 – IDEATE

Based on the problem space and my user findings I wanted to design an app that gives users options to contact with their close friends and family – the people they want to keep in touch with. I wanted to create a digital solution that provides many opportunities to connect – texting, email, social media, sending gifts or phone calls.

In summation
**A cloud-based address book to stay in touch with those you actually want to.**

ITERATIONS & USER TESTING

I did some paper sketchings of a potential user flow. Next, I conducted 2 rounds of User Tests, on Lo-Fi Wireframes, modifying the iterations based on usability findings.

The **User Testing Scenario**: the user wants to send their BFF a gift for a special occasion to let them know they are thinking of them.
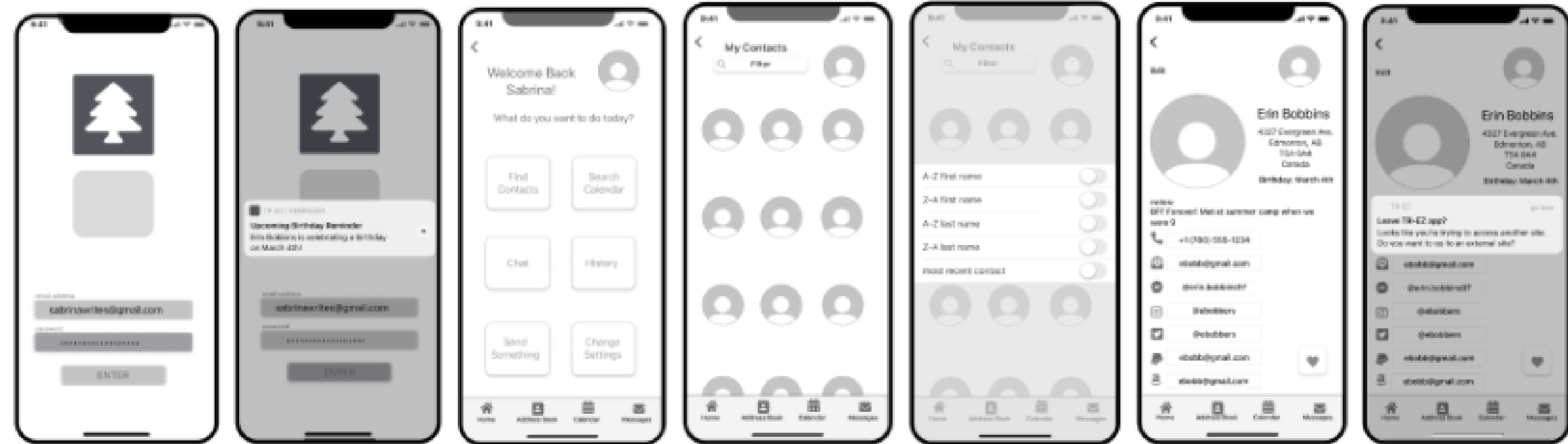
PEN & PAPER SKETCHES | LO-FI WIREFRAMES

USER TASK FLOW - LOG IN - FIND FRIEND - SEND A GIFT TO FRIEND - BE DIRECTED TO GIFT SITE
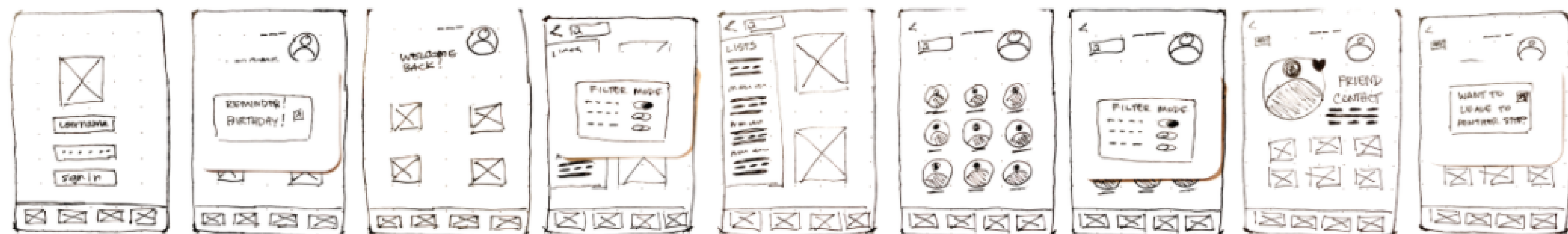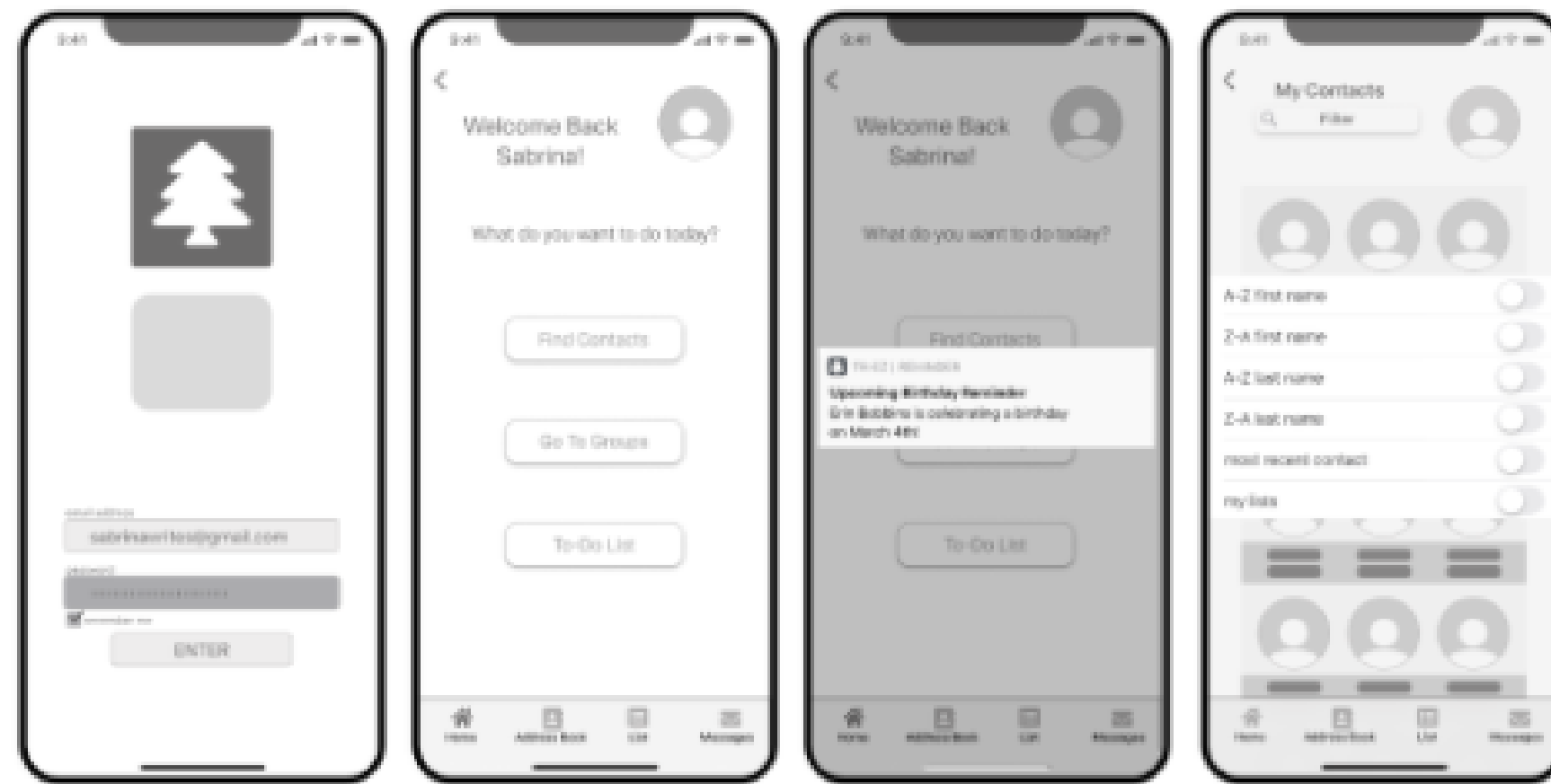
1st Iteration

These are most of the initial Lo-Fidelity Wireframes showing the userflow.

2nd Iteration
Showing some of the bigger changes, based on user feedback.

3rd Iteration
Showing further design clarifications.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS AFTER USER TESTINGS

Round 1:

- The general consensus was that the user flow was easy to follow, although the greyscale profile pictures were too busy.
- The filter options weren't intuitive and need rethinking.
- Each user wanted to filter by different options, which showed a disconnect in both the user task flow as well as my introduction background story to the app before testing began.
- My introductory user task description didn't set some users up for success and definitely needed refining.

Round 2:

- In general, the task flow was more fluid, but there were opportunities for further clarity.
- Adjustments to the logged-in user's profile picture need to happen on some screens for more information clarity.
- Further refinements of the filter options will be beneficial.

BIGGEST CONSIDERATIONS AFTER 2 ROUNDS OF USER TESTING:

- Changed Filters Options for more clarity.
- Changed the User Icon and added a Settings symbol for improved distinctions.
- Changed the layout on the Individual Contact Page for more clarity. There was a second Confirmation modal added at the end of the flow to strongly signify the user was about to leave the site.
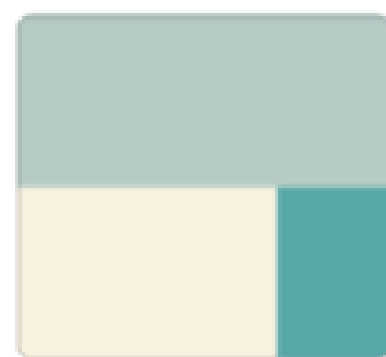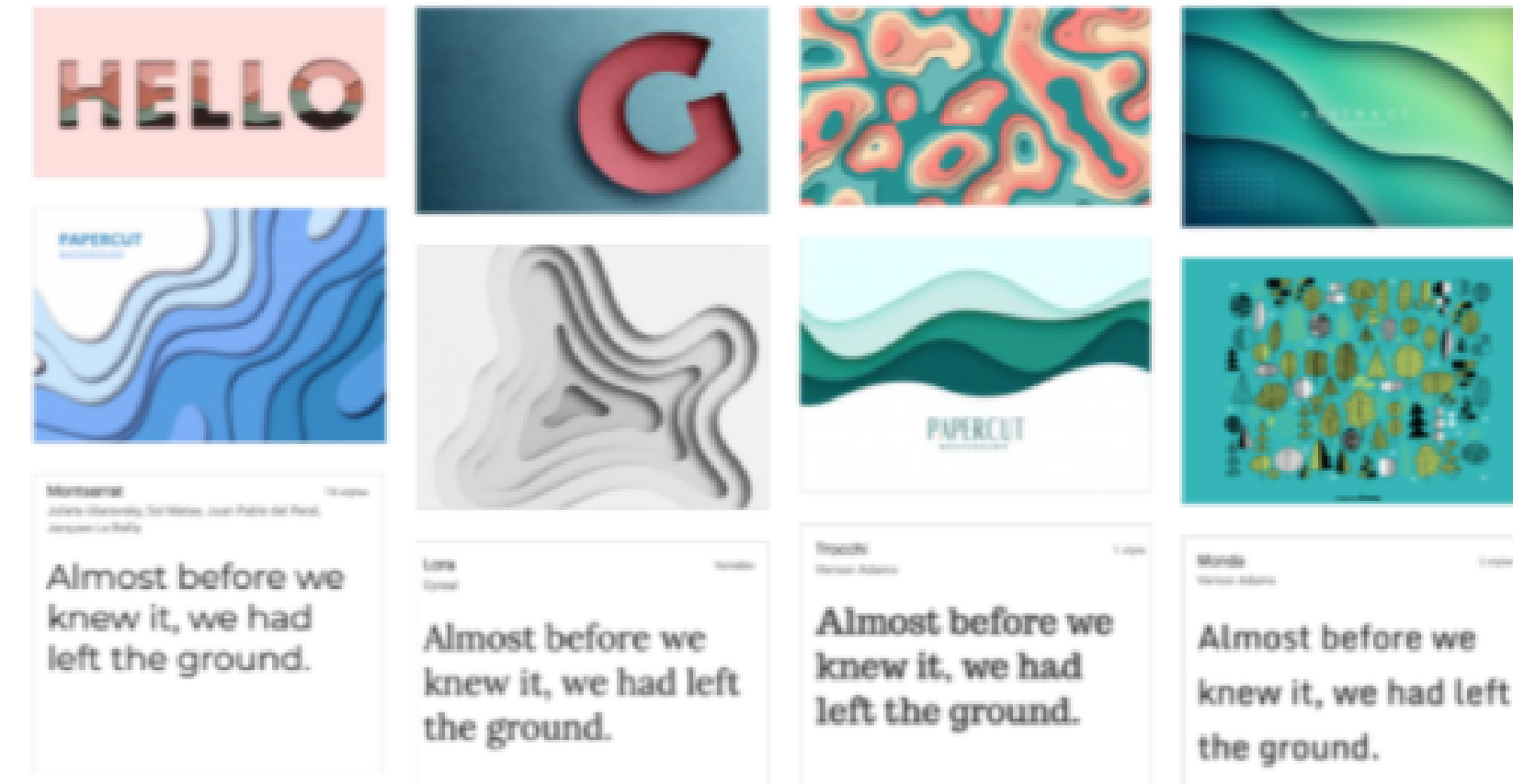
4 – PROTOTYPE

VISUAL IDENTITY

Before designing the UI, I brainstormed a cohesive visual identity that reflected the **CORE VALUES** of the brand. Here is a quick look!

Key words for the mood of visual identity

|	
Clean	Friends
Connection	Ripple Effect
Connected	Select
Curated	Sharing
Friendly	Soft

The colour palette was developed from reoccuring tonal ranges that appeared throughout the letr inspiration boards.

As a complementary palette, they evoke a sense of softness and connection.

The addition of gradients in the logo typeface and wordmark, and on select portions of screens also conjures a softness and friendly openness.

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Wordmark Ideation & Sketches

Final wordmark

Application Icon
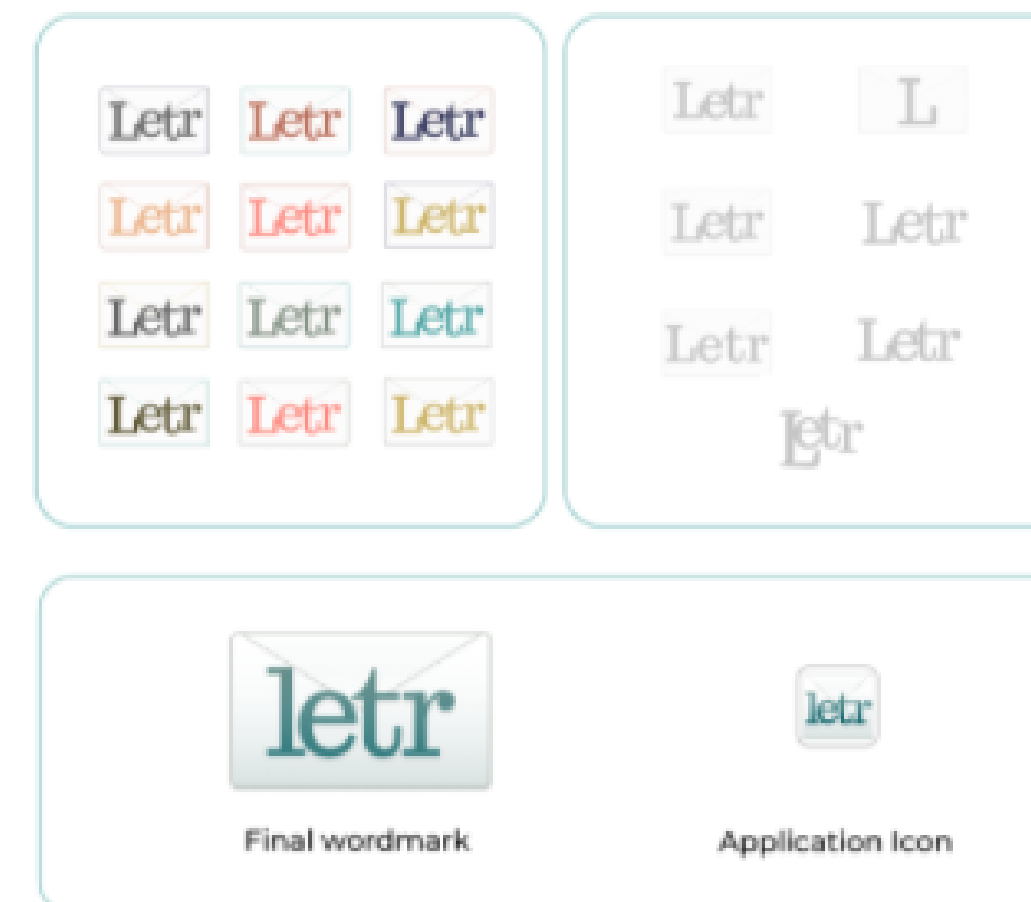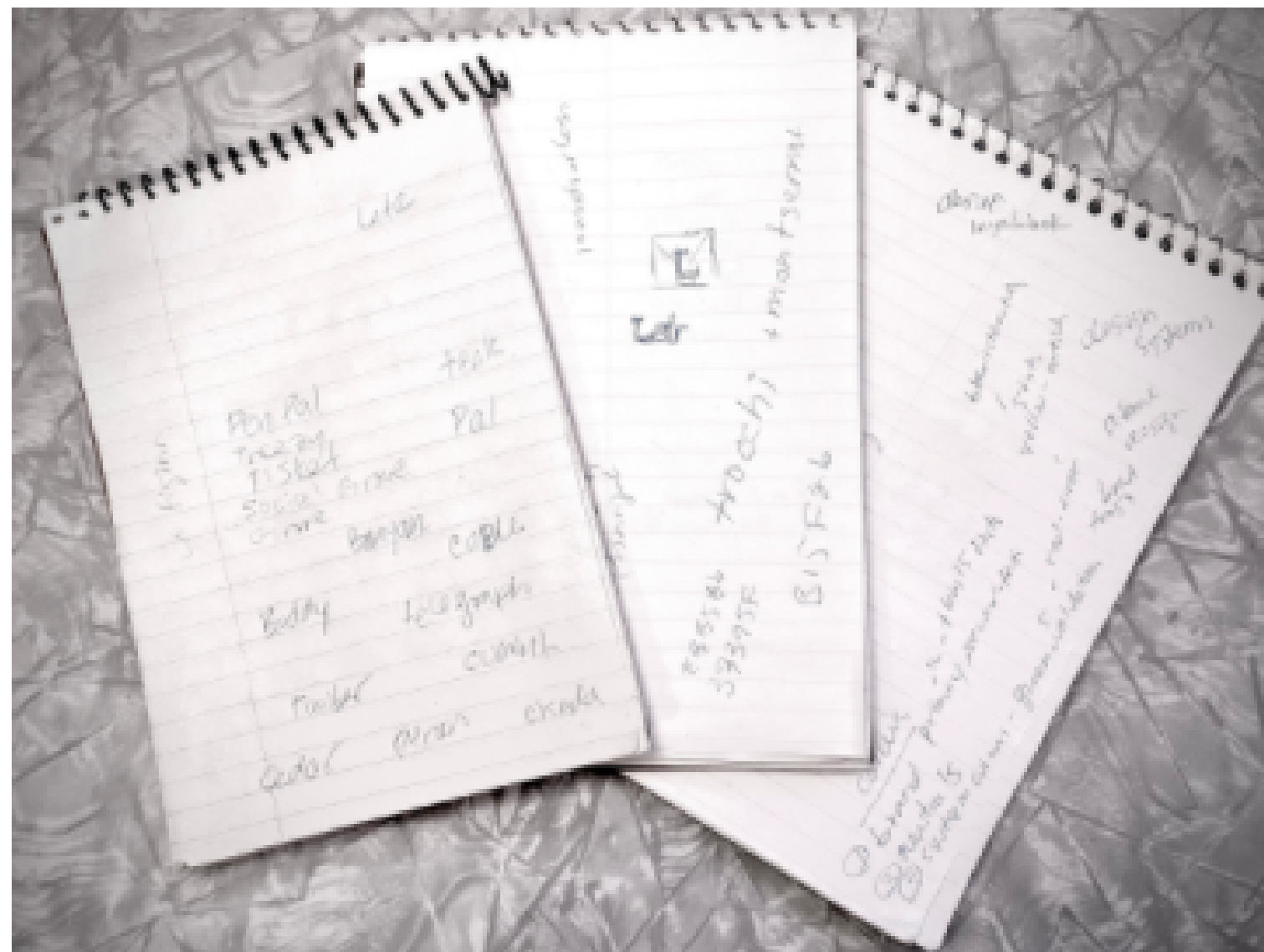
Inspired by the *Atomic Design System* for the UI Library foundation, I grouped my design elements in the following way:

Fundamentals: Colours, Typography & Iconography
Components: Buttons, Boxes, Forms, Navigation & Segmented Controls
Patterns: Grids, Modals & Cards

COLOUR PALETTE

Using the 60/30/10 Rule, I selected the 3 Main
Brand Colours.

* Denotes the main branding colours

* 54A8A8	BBDCDC	D1E4E5	F6FBFB
Active State	These colours appear in the gradients		This is for Card backgrounds

* B5CCC5	849285
Tab Bar	This is the selected state for the login screen

* F8F3DE	E6DAB1	CDB663	84712D
Background	These are accent shadows		Favourite Icon in card

Greyscale accents and typeface colours

FFFFFF	C4C4C4
Background	Inactive Typeface

000000	686767
Typeface	Button and Card Accent

605B35
Icon colour

TYPOGRAPHY & ICONOGRAPHY

Iconography is sourced from the iOS Human Interface with the exception of the "List" Icon. I created it to pair with the "Image Card" Icon for different view options.

Montserrat

Aa Montserrat

Montserrat is the primary typeface used in letr. 3 weights are used, Regular, **Medium** and **Semi-Bold**. The soft clean roundness of this typeface is the appeal, evoking the themes of friendly connection.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Aa Trocchi

Trocchi is the typeface in the logo for letr.

Montserrat

Display 3	Regular 64/78
Display 2	Regular 48/59
Display 1	Regular 36/44
Headline	Regular 24/29
Subheading	Regular 18/22
Title	Semi Bold 20/23
Body 3	Semi Bold 17/21
Body 2	Medium 17/21
Body 1	Regular 17/21
Caption	Medium 14/11
Button	SEMI BOLD (ALL CAPS) 14/17

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPED OVER THE LAZY DOG.

BUTTONS, BOXES, FORMS, NAVIGATION & SEGMENTED CONTROLS

Input Form/ Inactive

Input Form/ Filled

Tab Bar/Inactive

Segmented Control Toggle - Z-A Active State
Segmented Control Toggle - A-Z and Recent Inactive State

Tab Bar/Active

Primary Button/ Disabled

Primary Button/ Active

Primary Button/ Pressed

Card Box Filled/ Disabled

Card Box Filled/ Active

Card Box Filled/ Pressed

Selection Button/ Disabled

Selection Button/ Pressed
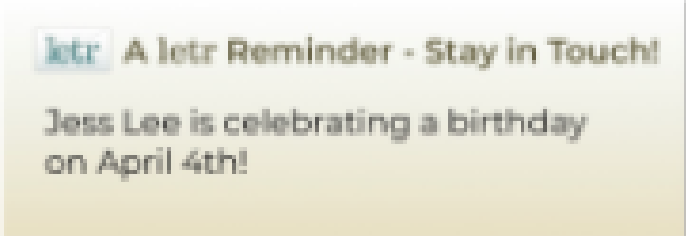
Search Box/ Disabled

Search Box/ Active
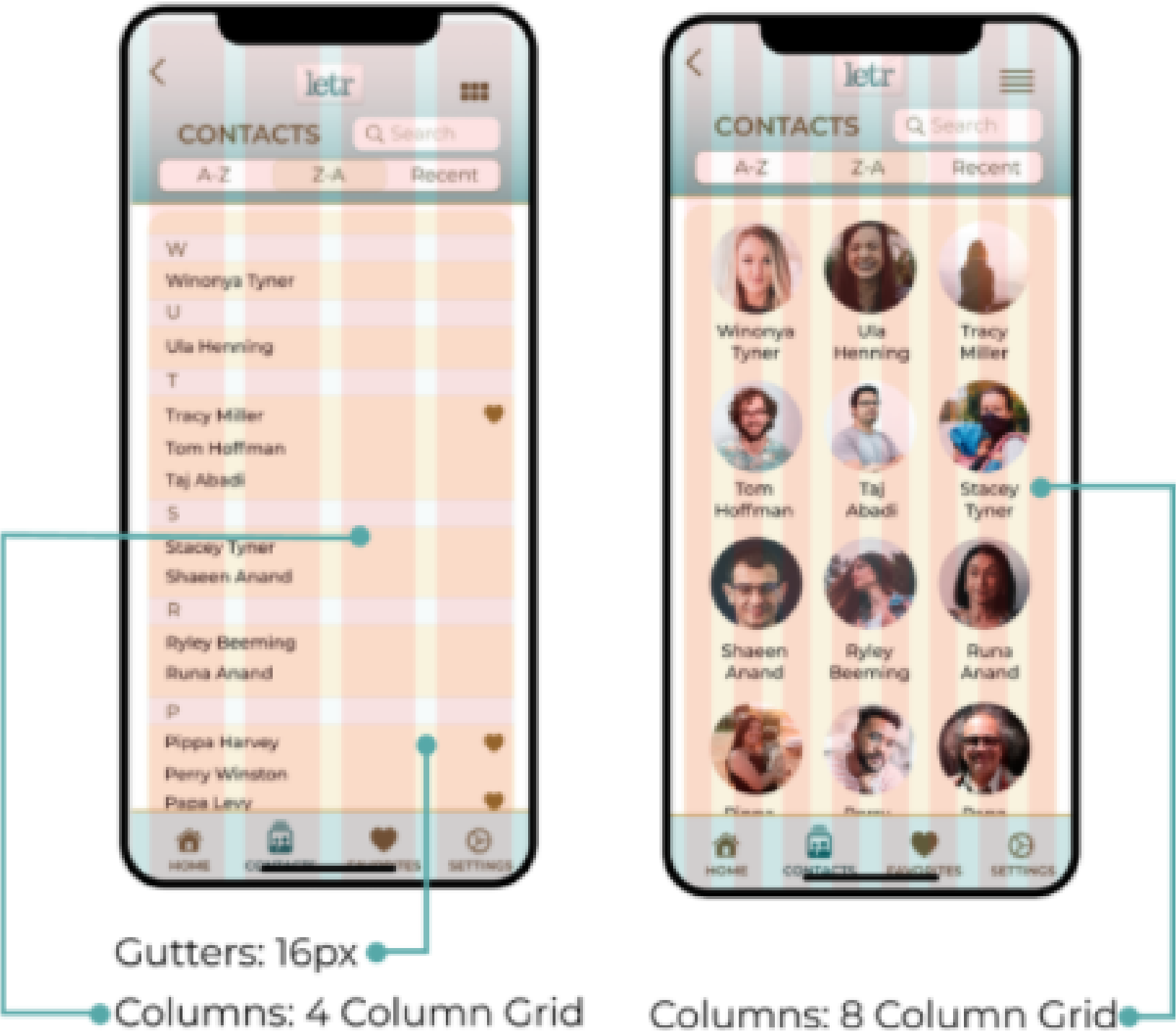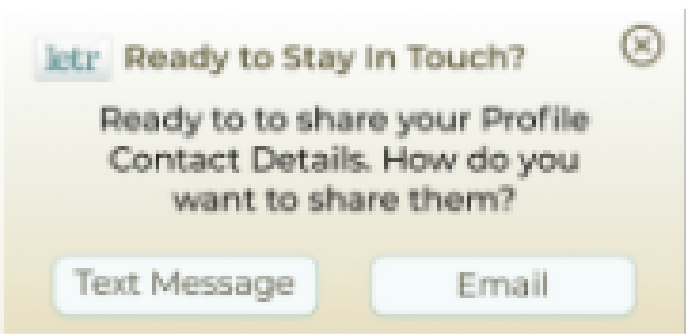
Selection Button/ Disabled

Selection Button/ Pressed

GRIDS, MODALS & CARDS

The prototypes were designed with the 8pt system, with either a 4 Column or 8 Column Grid, depending on screen infomation. 16px Gutters and 16px Margins were also in place.

Reminder Modal

letr A letr Reminder - Stay in Touch!

Jess Lee is celebrating a birthday on April 4th!

Contact Share Modal

letr Ready to Stay In Touch? ⊗

Ready to to share your Profile Contact Details. How do you want to share them?

Text Message | Email

COLLEGE

Group Cards/Inactive

Gutters: 16px

Columns: 4 Column Grid

Columns: 8 Column Grid

THE FINAL PROTOTYPE

The High-Fidelity Prototype can be found [HERE](#)

MARKETING

Marketing Site Ideas

I put together a mockup for both website marketing and mobile marketing. I took into account the Brand Identity, feeling and Flat Design aesthetic to come up with an integrative concept.

I have also created device mockups for advertising opportunities. Here are some examples of the Landing Page and Web App across platforms – iOS, Android and Web. Although the app was originally designed for iOS, ideally it would be platform-agnostic.

[LINK](#) TO DESKTOP MARKETING SITE PROTOTYPE   [LINK](#) TO WEB APP MARKETING SITE PROTOTYPE

DESIGN IMPACT & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Based on my research as well as my observation of the social landscape, I feel an app like **letr** would provide an opportunity to connect in ways that aren't currently happening.

We are in an unprecedented moment in our modern history, and it will take us, as social humans, to adjust to the world again. It is forever changed, and so are we.

We need to seek out ways to remain connected, and **letr** provides a way to do that.

VALUE PROPOSITION:

letr's main competitive advantage is that it allows the user to control what information they want, or don't want, to share. It also allows for quick sharing updates, something to consider in this time of relocation and exploration in the lives of many young people.

There are several Contacts Management Apps on the market, but they are geared for more of a business use, to keep track of work associates, scheduling meetings etc. **letr** appeals to the everyday user in the way that social media does. It lets the user keep track of their close connections, and interact with them in more meaningful ways.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

During all the phases of my research, I witnessed and learned that people have many different preferences when it comes to utilizing more digital tools. One of the main marketing objectives would be to showcase the ease of **letr**. It is cloud-based for easy cross-platform syncing. The ability to quickly send a friend a gift via their public wishlist or quick cash via PayPal or Venmo are high selling features, so an emphasis on these capabilities in marketing campaigns would be an asset.

A/B testing would be implemented to gain further insights into usability and interaction details, helping to define the design even further.

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