Report

Detailed Documentation About an Internship in Berlin

By Martijn Verschuuren

Involved Parties

Personal Details

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Foreword

This report has been written to graduate at the studies ICT & Media Design at the Fontys University of Applied Science in Eindhoven. For this report I have done a twenty week graduation internship at Betterplace.org Berlin, Germany.

During this internship I improved parts of the Betterplace website, added new content and thought out concepts to keep the visitors satisfied. Next to this report I did a research where I searched for tools to monitor and improve the User Experience for Betterplace.org.

I would like to thank the people at Betterplace for this opportunity to graduate. In particular I would like to thank Niklas Sum for guiding me during the internship and my colleagues from development, with whom I worked together on daily bases.

Martijn Verschuuren

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Summary

For this document I completed an eighteen week internship at Betterplace.org in Berlin. Betterplace.org is an online donations platform that connects people in need with people who want to help. It's concept is simple but unique: people and organizations can tell their story online and ask for donations in money, kind, know-how and time. These donations are separated in needs, which are a specific product or service.

The main product at Betterplace is the website. But the website is far from perfect. Betterplace is getting a lot of complaints from visitors that can't use parts of the website. Statistics also show a lot of visitors leaving the website at unexpected pages. That's why Betterplace offered me an internship as interaction designer, a profession I also want to do after graduating.

My main job was to search and improve parts of the website that were confusing to visitors. Next to that, I also did a research about the tools and techniques used to measure and improve usability and user experience.

For my main job, I analyzed the website and looked for parts to improve. I also got a lot of information from customer complaints, which I gathered from colleagues and the online feedback app on the Betterplace website. I then started to improve every part separately.

The research started by investigating tools and techniques and doing desk research using the internet. Many sources have been tapped and comparisons were made. The recommendations from my research resulted in a big change in the design process of new pages and improvement of existing pages.

Wordlist

API	An Application Programming Interface (API) is software that enables interaction between software programs. In general it rewrites output from program A in another format so program B can read it
Conversion Rate	Goals divided by number of visitors
EFT	Electronic funds transfer: the electronic exchange or transfer of money from one account to another
Facebox	jQuery-based lightbox which can display images, divs, or entire remote pages
Mock up	A scale or full-size model of a design or device, used for teaching, demonstration, design, evaluation, promotion, and other purposes.
Open Graph Protocol	Enables any web page to become a rich object in a social graph
Snippet	Small region of re-usable source code, machine code or text
Social Graph	The global mapping of everybody and how they're related
Social Media	A group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.
UX	User Experience
Widget	Small application that can be installed and executed within a web page by an end user

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This document is created for my graduation internship of eighteen weeks to complete my studies ICT & Media Design at the Fontys University of Applied Science in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. The internship took place at Betterplace.org in Berlin, Germany.

Betterplace.org is an online platform connecting people in need with people who want to help. On betterplace.org you find social projects from around the world or in your own neighborhood. People can present themselves, the project and the people who benefit from it on betterplace.org – whether as an individual or an organization.

At Betterplace.org, the website is the product. But the website is far from perfect. Statistics show pages don't work as expected and the marketing department gets a lot of complaints about confusing parts. That's why Betterplace.org hired me as interaction designer. My assignment was to search for flaws in the website and improve them whenever possible. The execution of these improvements can be found in chapter 4.

Next to this assignment I had to do a research for school. For my research I chose to investigate tools and techniques to improve user experience. During my research I answered the following questions:

What is User Experience?
Why is User Experience important to a company?
Why have a UX Process?
Which tools and techniques are popular?
Which tools and techniques are other companies using?
Which tools and techniques are relevant for Betterplace?

After my research I will give advice and recommendations to improve the design process for new pages and improvement of existing pages. My research can be found in a seperate document.

CHAPTER II
COMPANY DESCRIPTION

2.1 Betterplace.org

Betterplace is a global internet platform that connects individuals, organizations and companies directly with one another, founded by a group of individuals in 2007. Betterplace is a nonprofit organization trying to contribute to social responsibility worldwide. The vision of the founders is to turn a "world improvement business" into a sustainable, scalable and charitable venture.

Betterplace.org relies on donations from users all over the world. The concept is simple but unique; the site offers a list of charity projects, that are submitted by organizations. These projects are then divided into needs. A need can be a donation in money, kind, know-how or time. Other companies and individuals can donate to these needs. Betterplace ensures that 100% of donations are channeled to their intended target.

For example:
In Sorata, Bolivia, an organization is raising money to build a small bakery for students. By operating this bakery, the students will improve nutrition and gain baking and business management skills. Also, they will support the local market and are able to produce food to fill shortages.

A detailed description of the project will be placed on Betterplace and is divided into needs. Among these needs are bricks, loads of sand, cement, rebar, etcetera and are placed in order of priority. Visitors of Betterplace can donate per need. This way, the project stays transparent at all times.

Vision

Betterplace is a nonprofit organization trying to contribute to social responsibility worldwide. The vision of the founders is to turn a "world improvement business" into a sustainable, scalable and charitable venture.

betterplace

2.2 Web of Trust

Trust has always been a big issue with charities. Donators want to be sure their donations are spent well. In order to gain the trust of the visitors, Betterplace has introduced the web of trust. This web consists of different users who support the project and share their experiences with the person or organization responsible for the project and the project itself. This way the project develops a differentiated evaluation system, which prevents fraud, increases project efficiency and enables supporters to choose projects that suit their criteria.
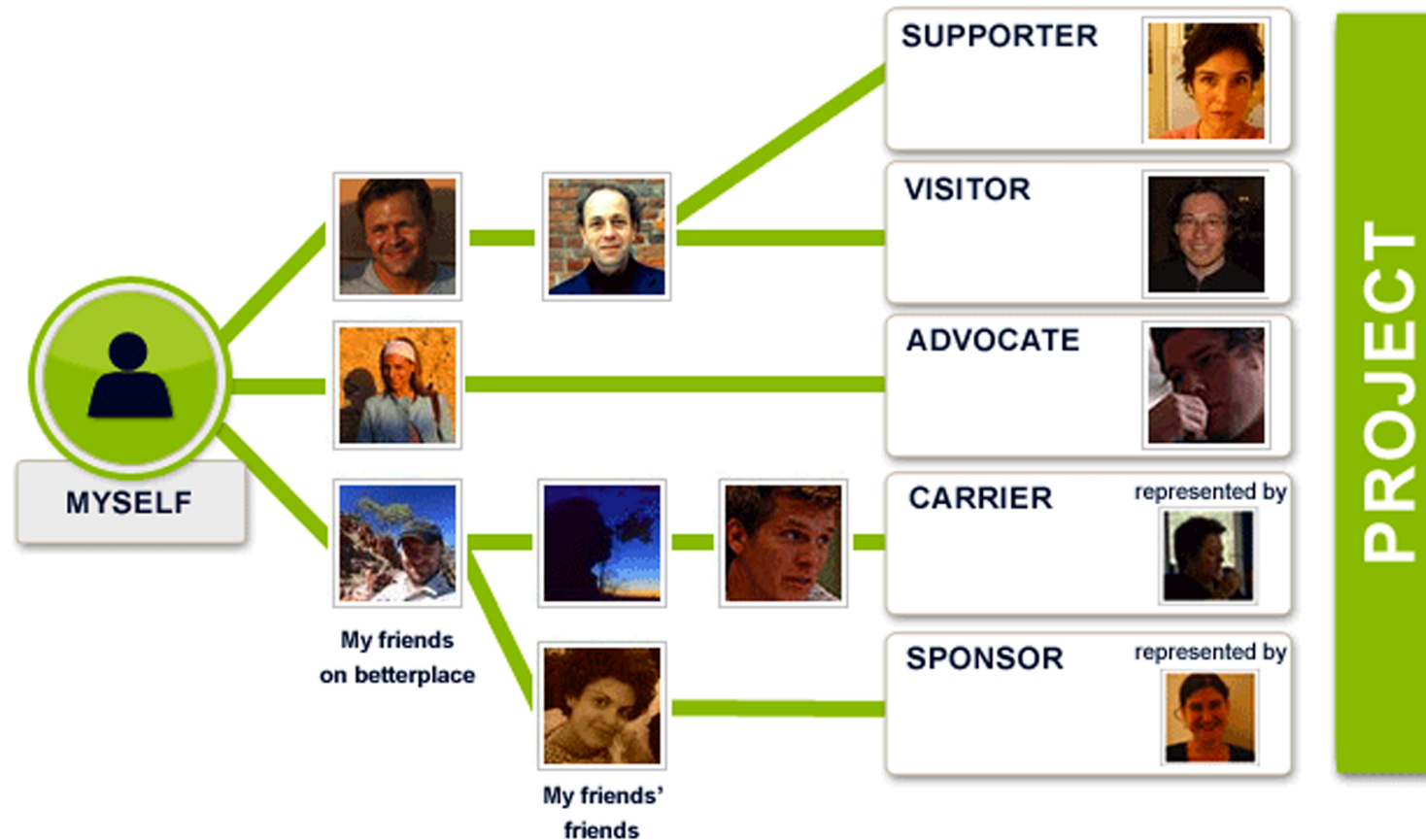
Various ways people contribute to the web of trust

By visiting a project

People who have seen a project with their own eyes and report about their experiences on the project page. These reports are supported by photos, videos, interviews, testimonials, etcetera.

By vouching for a person

People who are convinced that the person or organization is reliable. These people are called Advocates and vouch for a projects on the basis of personal experience, specific expertise or direct relations to the project. On the project page they explain why a project is trustworthy.

By supporting a project

People who have donated to a project. On the project page they can leave comments, describing their interest and commitment to the project and their reasons for donating.

By carrying a project

Local and international organizations that carry projects. These companies have gained trust over years of experience and expertise.

Donators will receive updates about the progress of the project. Every time a need is fulfilled, they will get an email. This way they know that one of the projects goals is accomplished and that their effort hasn't been for nothing.

2.3 Organization structure of Betterplace

CEO
Till Behnke

Product Management
Niklas Sum

Marketing
Moritz Eckert

CTO
Daniel Hahn

CFO
Michael Tuchen

Intern
Martijn Verschuuren
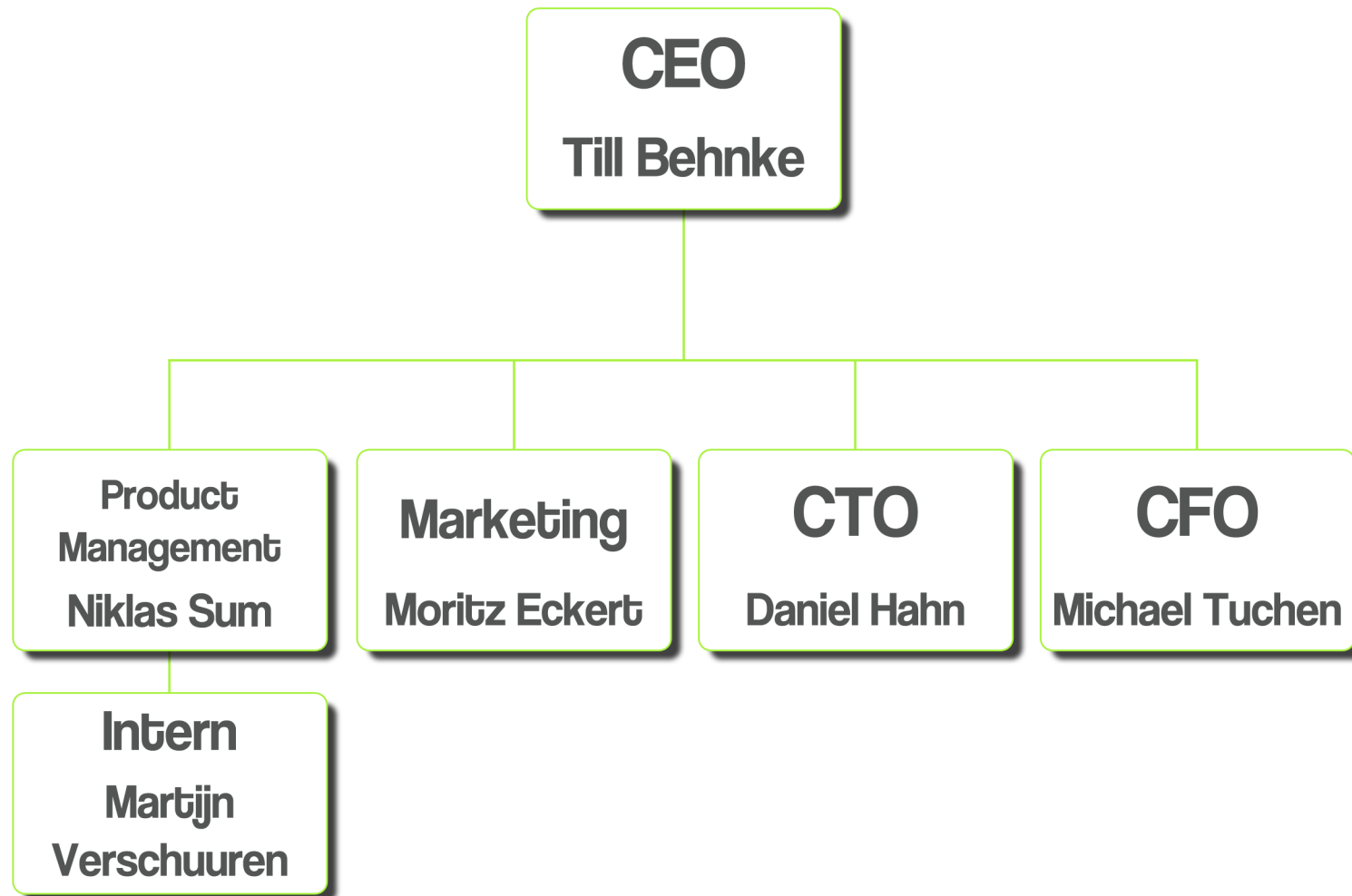
2.4 Betterplace Finance Channels

On the one side, Betterplace is supported by sponsors who donate money directly to the non-profit Foundation.

On the other side, Betterplace offers Corporate Social Responsibility solutions to corporations via a registered daughter company Betterplace Solutions GmbH. Any profit gained is redirected straight back into the non-profit Foundation.
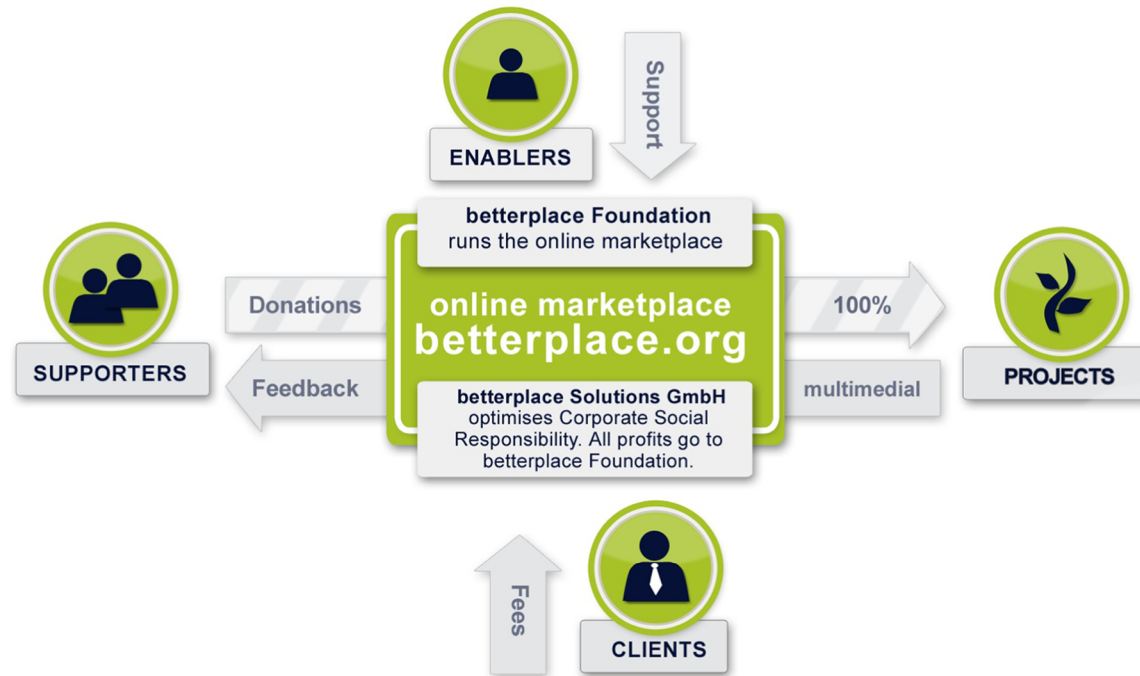
2.5 Companies that support and work with Betterplace

CHAPTER III
PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

Project Assignment

Betterplace.org is depending on online donations from its visitors. As one of the biggest donation websites in Germany, it's under continuous development and is always evolving to meet the changing demands. But the website is far from perfect. Statistics show too many people leave the site without making a donation.

The main objective of my internship is to improve the user experience for the Betterplace.org website. The website is the main product of the company, but it shows a lot of flaws. These flaws result in a low conversion rate and thus the loss of donations and co-donations.

3.1 Problem Analysis

Betterplace has two channels of income: money from investors and co-donations from independent donors. All donations are 100% forwarded to the project. A co-donation is usually a percentage on top of the donated amount. For instance, someone who donates 100 euro to a charity may make a co-donation of 15%. The co-donation amount in this case is 15 euro, which goes directly to Betterplace.

Therefore, it's of great importance that visitors make a donation at Betterplace.org. Statistics show a lot of visitors leave the site without making a donation. By improving the user experience for the website, we hope to keep visitors satisfied and encourage them to make donations and co-donations.

The other side of my internship is my research. By investigating the tools and techniques to improve user experience, I hope to improve the creation and improvement of pages for the website. The outcome of this research will result in a change within the companies process for creating and improving elements on the website.

Main Assignment

The goal for my assignment is to increase the user experience and increase donations and co-donations. Parts improved by me must be up and running during my internship. After that we are going to measure statistics to see if the edited parts show actual improvement. Because the internship period is too short to see actual change, these statistics won't be documented in this report.

Edit: while working at Betterplace.org, I realized that some parts of the website are more important than others. That's why I've created concepts for some pages, but there was no time to create them, because other pages had a priority. That's why part of my assignments will be up and running on the website, while others are concepts that will be created later in less busy periods.

Research

The goal of my research is to investigate tools and techniques to improve user experience. My goal is to select the tools relevant to Betterplace and implement them on the website. By convincing my colleagues at Betterplace about the value of my research and the recommended tools and techniques, I want to make a change in the way Betterplace creates and improves elements on the website.

3.3 Methodology

Main Assignment

For my main assignment, I will do a lot of analyzing and information gathering. This way it will become clear which elements of the Betterplace website are bad and confusing. I will then present these parts to my supervisor during a one on one meeting, where we'll discuss if it's possible to improve these parts. In these meetings we'll consider time, costs, technical aspects and importance of that particular element.

After I get approval to create or improve an element, I start sketching first designs and ask for feedback from the rest of the office. After iterating this process a couple of times I make mock ups in Adobe Photoshop. I then ask the rest of the office for more feedback on these mock ups. After iterating this process for some times, I make a final mock up, which is presented to the management and the investors. When the final mock up is approved, we can create that element and implement is on the Betterplace website.

Research

In order to answer the questions concerning, "what is User Experience?", "why is User Experience important for a company?", and "why create a UX process?" I will first and foremost use secondary data.

Qualitative research will take place in the form of meetings with my supervisor and the company's development department. During these meetings I will collect data concerning Betterplace' mission statement and vision and get an insight of the tools and techniques valuable to the company.

The quantitative research in this document will be the testing of tools and techniques. During this part of my research I will compare price, compatibility, features and usability. The outcome of this research will give me an answer to the question "Which tools and techniques are relevant for Betterplace?".

CHAPTER IV
EXECUTION

Execution

Betterplace hired me as interaction designer. During my internship I worked close with Niklas Sum, head of Product management. With this department, we worked close with a team of developers who did most of the backend stuff. This way, the two departments worked together to create new content and improve the website.

For example: for the donations page I did the research and the lay out. After I created the final mock up, I sliced it and send it to a developer, who did the coding behind the page.

There are two reasons for me not doing the back end coding for my designs:

First of all, there was one person responsible for the coding behind the entire website: Chief technology officer Daniel Hahn. He only allowed code from colleagues he trusts and even then he checked it and changed it to keep his code clean.

The second reason is the development department is working with Ruby on Rails, a open source web framework. Since I have no experience with Ruby on Rails, I wasn't able to do any coding.

Next to assignments in this report I did a lot of tasks around the office, such as designing, small research and help out colleagues, but these tasks are too small to document in this report.

4.1 Donations Page

The donations page is one of the most important pages for Betterplace.org. It's the part where donors make their transactions to the projects they want to support. It's also the page where donors are given the opportunity to support Betterplace, by donating a percentage to the company.

But the current donations page has a major problem. Research shows that the conversion rate of the donations page is 20%. In other words: for every ten people who go to our website, choose a project, click 'Donate now' and are forwarded to the page, only two people successfully finish it.

The other problem is the position of the payment methods. These are placed in tabs on top of the page, but a lot of visitors complain they cannot find them. This means the position of the payment methods isn't ideal. At this point visitors can pay my direct debit, credit card or Paypal, but it the future there might be more options.

Assignment

My assignment is to design a new donations page with the following requirements:

Payment Methods

At this point there are three payment options, with a fourth under way (PayBack). In the future there might be up to six payment methods, but some projects don't accept all payment options. Therefore, the form must look good with two as well as six payment options.

Everything must be on one page

With every click you will lose visitors. That's why it's required to put the whole form on one page, instead of for example a step by step form. If new fields show up with every submit, people will be annoyed and lose interest.

Other sites and Charities

Once I got all the details for this assignment, I started with an analysis of donations pages from competitors and payment pages from well known e-commerce sites. This gave me an idea of the way other sites handle their payments and gave me some pointers for the new page.

Conclusion Research

Many sites offer less payment methods then Betterplace.org. Most of the sites offer payment by bank transfer or by credit card, but only a few offer several options like Betterplace. Sites that do offer several methods of payment are often confusing or have to many steps. With every step, people will lose interest and the charity will lose donations.

Some charity sites offer Gift cards. People receive an amount as a gift, which they can donate to a charity of choice. This might be an option for Betterplace to look into. People who receive a gift card will have to go to the site, which creates brand aware-ness. They also might be charmed by the site, which triggers them to visit more often.

Competitors also offer their donors the option to donate once or on regular bases. This can be monthly, quarterly of every year. This isn't very lucrative for Betterplace, because they only do short projects, but it might be an option for bigger projects in the future.

Donations Page

After analyzing other sites, I did a content analysis for the old donations page. By analyzing this page, I was able to find out which of the old page was good and which was bad.

Content

0. Facebox: when people aren't logged in to their Betterplace account, a facebox pops up and asks the visitors if they want to log in or donate as guest, in which case they can register later.

1. Payment Methods: Payment methods are on top of the page, but visitors have complained they have a hard time finding them. The new page should have an option to hold up to six payment methods.

2. Choose amount: people fill out the amount they want to donate. There's also an option to fulfill the need.

3. Enter your Details: email, first and last name. They also have the opportunity to get a receipt for tax purposes.

4. Payment details

5. Support Betterplace: Betterplace is a nonprofit platform which forwards 100% of the donations to charity, but the company is also relying on personal donations for running costs, such as personnel, computers, improvements, etcetera. That's why the company asks for a small percentage on top of the donation. The support dropdown box is set to 15% and has multiple options: 5 – 25%, 'other amount' and 'not this time'.

6. Register option (checkbox): if visitors aren't logged on, they have the opportunity to register an account.

7. Secure Payment Logo

8. Donate Now Button

9. Donation summary

The first thing I've noticed is the facebox with the login option. Faceboxes can be very helpful if you only have a small part of content and don't want to spent an entire page on it. On this occasion the facebox pops up unwanted and proves to be very annoying for people trying to make a donation.

The payment methods on top of the page are pretty obvious, but I can see how people with very little to no computer experience can overlook them. Also, it doesn't have room for more than four options, which might become a problem in the future. The amount box also causes some problems. If the amount is higher than the outstanding amount of the need, they will get an error, but no explanation why they can't donate more. For example, someone wants to donate € 100,- to a charity, but the need only needs € 60,- more to be fulfilled, the donor gets an error. It's pretty weird to tell someone they can only donate less money than they intended. A solution might be to give them an option to fulfill this need and donate the rest to other needs from the same project.

Research shows us that the fulfill need option is hardly used. I suggest we leave it out of the new donation page.

The support dropdown box standard is set to 15%. I doesn't matter if you donate € 10,- or € 1000,-, it is always set to 15%. I suggest we implement a system in which the percentage is subordinate to the donation amount. For example, if you donate over € 100,- the support will automatically change to 10%. This way, the donor can still change the support percentage, but won't be put off by the high amount.

Just before finishing a donation, there's a checkbox to register an account. People will very easily mistake this for an agreement checkbox. Visitors might accidentally register an account, but without their knowledge of it, they will never use it. The next time they want to make a donation, the form will show an error, because the email they use will already be registered. With every error the form shows, visitors are more likely to abandon the donations page. Therefore I suggest to put the register option on the post donations page.

Execution

After I had collected the needed information I started drawing my first designs. I started with paper and pencil, because this is a fast and easy way to draw a lot of designs. By drawing some radical designs I got some new ideas about how the page should look like. After drawing about thirty different designs, I organized a meeting with my colleagues and got feedback from them. Some of my colleagues have a very strong opinion and vision about the website and I got a lot of good feedback from them.

I then went back to the drawing table and started drawing more designs for the page, this time more detailed. After iterating this process a couple of times, I then started to design some early mock ups with Adobe Photoshop.

When I had three mock ups, I tested them around the office. By asking colleagues for their opinions, I got a lot of information, but my colleagues might know the site too well. That's why I went outside the office to get some feedback.

I first went to the Free University of Berlin. I chose the Free university of Berlin, because I thought people there would respond positive to a short survey. Although taking surveys there proved to be harder than I thought, I did get some usable feedback. I then went back to the drawing table to redo the mock ups.

I decided to go out on the street and ask people for their opinion. I printed a page showing a charity raising money for the Japan tsunami incident. Then I asked people to pretend a friend sent them a link to that page and asked them to donate money. The attendant would agree and "clicks" the donate button. After that I showed them three mock ups and asked which one was the clearest and the most logical to them.

After this I redid the mock ups a couple of times and evaluated them with my colleagues. I then made a final mock up which can be seen on the next page.

Donations Page

First of all, I got rid of the facebox. This feature popped up unwanted and turned out to be more annoying than useful. User now have the options to register an account underneath their personal details.

To the left is the final result of the donations page. The page looks much cleaner than the old donations page. In the first box you can enter the amount of money you want to donate to the charity. It also shows the co-donation amount, which goes to Betterplace.

The standard amount for a co-donation is 15%, but we decided to connect this percentage to the donation amount. If a visitor donates more than 100 euro, the co-donation automatically skips to 10% and if donations are over 1000 euro, it skips to 5%. Users can still change this amount, but by lowering the percentage we hope they won't be startled by the high co-donation Betterplace is considering.

I moved the payment options to the left, because that way they're more obvious for users. If Betterplace decides to add more payment options in the future, they can use smaller buttons and add the extra options underneath.

In the middle of the page are the personal details and the secure payment logo, to assure users to exchange their payment details.

The page can be seen live on Betterplace.org.

4.2 Post Donation Page

After users made a donation, they were send back to the project page. By adding a post donation page, this can be used to trigger the user to do other stuff like add a comment, check out similar projects, etcetera. Therefore, my next assignment was to create a post donation page.

Assignment

Create a post donation page to trigger the users after they made a donation.

Goals

Confirm the donation: assures the user that the donation was a success.

Thanks from the project organization: a personal thanks from the project organization.

If not logged in: register: trigger the user to register. By registering, the user will receive updates about the project and can become part of the Betterplace community.

Leave a comment: by leaving a comment, the user can trigger other users to support the project.

Request receipt: for tax purposes, a tax receipt can be send to the user

Share with social media: by sharing the project with social media, the user can convince friends to also visit Betterplace

Possible Content

I started thinking about elements to put on the page. I also checked pages from competitors to get some inspiration.

I came up with the following list:

Confirm donation: show the user that his donation went well
Receipt: give the donor the option to get a receipt for tax purposes
Option to Register: if the donor is not registered yet, give him the option to create a profile
Leave a Comment: leave a comment about the project for the organization or other users
Thanks from Organization: a thank you word from the organization
Social Media: links to social media sites from Betterplace
Newsletter: option to subscribe to newsletter
Widget: option to get Betterplace widget
Invite friends: invite friends to check out the project
Bookmark Page: bookmark the project page to keep up to date

First Designs

After a meeting with my colleagues we arranged the elements from most to least valuable. We then chose the elements that definitely should be on the post donations page. These elements are donation conformation, receipt, option to register, add comment, newsletter, thanks from the organization and Betterplace social media.

I started drawing my first designs, but it lead to a lot of problems. It was impossible for me to display the amount of elements we wanted on one page. The pages would have gotten too crowded and confusing. That's why I opted to add two post donation pages.

I then created mock ups using Adobe Photoshop.

betterplace.org

Ökostrom für Japan

Vielen Dank für Ihre Unterstützung! Bald wird Sie der Projektverantwortliche über die neuesten Fortschritte dieses Projekts informieren.   Ausblenden

I want a donation receipt

☐ I want to receive a donation receipt

I want to register an account

☐ I want to register an account

Kommentiere jetzt Deine Spende

€10

☐ Hide Amount

Comment:

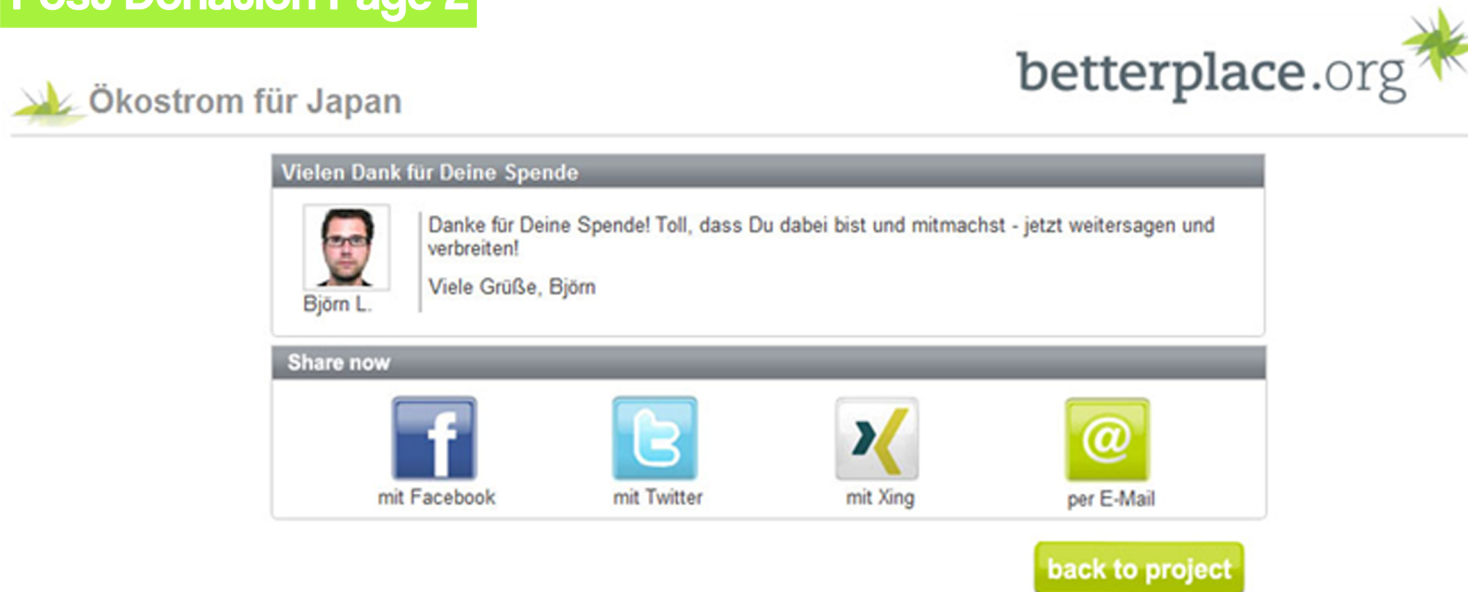**subscribe to the betterplace.org newsletter**

Sign up now to get the latest news and updates from betterplace.org and read about the incredible success that you've made possible!
I have read and agree to the Privacy Policy.

☐ Yes, I would like to subscribe to the newsletter.

next

Post Donation Page 2

The first thing the user sees on page one is a message, which assures the user the donation was a success. Beneath that the user has the option to get a receipt or register an account. This last one is only visible when the visitor is not logged in.

Beneath is the option for the user to leave a comment. If the user is logged in, their picture is shown and they have the option to show their name, picture and donation amount. There's also an option to receive the newsletter.

The second donations page contains a personal thanks from the project organization. The project organization has the option to fill them out personally or show a standard one made by Betterplace. Finally the user has the option to share the project with social media.

After the mock ups were approved we created the pages and implemented them on the website. The result can be seen on Betterplace.org after making a donation to a project.

4.3 Facebook Connect

In order to reach more people, I researched the social media options for Betterplace. Betterplace already has profiles at several social platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and XING, but we don't have any integrated options yet. My task was to research the available options and technical feasibility.

At this moment, Facebook is one of the biggest social networks worldwide, with over 600 million active users and still growing. Therefore it wasn't a big surprise that Facebook integration was our biggest priority. Other networks like Twitter, LinkedIn and XING are also growing every day, but don't offer as much options as Facebook. If the Facebook integration turns out to be a success, we might look into other popular social networks, but for now we'll focus on Facebook.

Assignment

My assignment is to research Facebook options and create a login process.

Research Facebook Connect Options

My first task was to research the Facebook connect options and find out how long it would take to implement it on the Betterplace website.

Create Login Process

If the Facebook connect was a feasible option, I had to work out a process to create a new profile or login to the Betterplace website.

In order to support Facebook options, the Facebook Platform provides a set of APIs and tools which enable 3rd party developers to integrate with the Open Graph Protocol. This protocol enables you to integrate your Web pages into the social graph. Facebook Platform has evolved from enabling development just on Facebook.com to one also supporting integration across the web and devices.
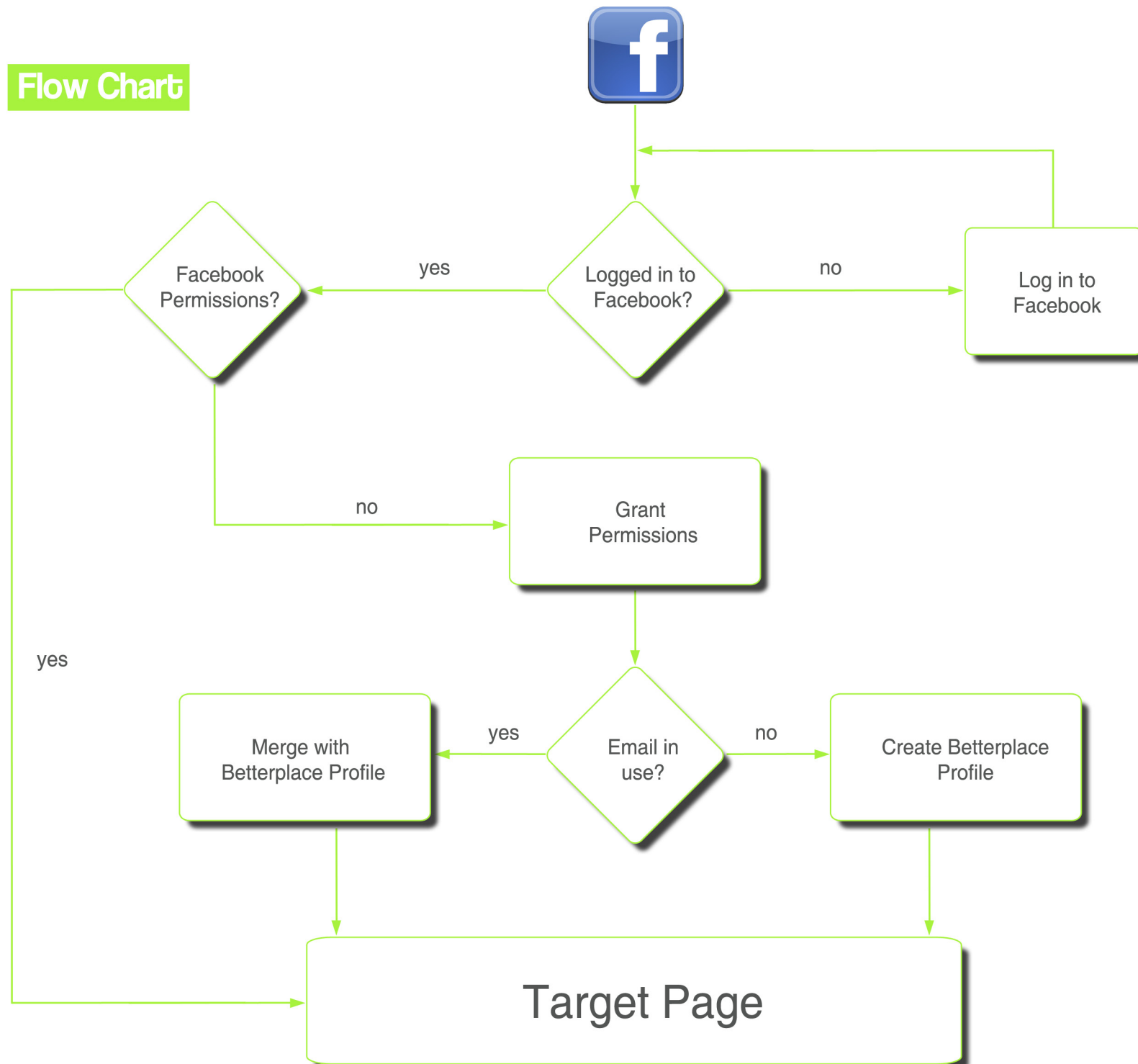
The Facebook connect option enables users to login to Betterplace with their Facebook profile instead of setting up a separate profile on the website. It also supplies extra information and pictures. When users register with their Facebook profile, they have to give Betterplace permission to access their personal data. All the information we need is on their Facebook profile and they only have to set up a password. This makes it really easy to set up an profile.

Another great advantage besides to the ease of setting up a new profile is the amount of information we can get from a Facebook profile. This enables us to create detailed Betterplace profiles with more information and pictures. This way the profiles become more three dimensional, which contributes a lot to the Betterplace community.

When visitors want to use the Facebook connect options, they have the give Betterplace permission to access their data. This can be access to their name, address etcetera, but it also provides options to access their Facebook wall. This means Betterplace can place posts on their wall, as long as it's not considered spam. This is a great way to reach a lot of people and therefore important for Betterplace.

With this in mind, I started to make sketches about how the process would work. I had to consider every possible scenario and dealt with questions like at which point can people choose a password and what if the email address is already in use under an existing profile? After working out every single possible scenario I designed a flowchart.

Flow Chart

Logged in to Facebook?

yes → Facebook Permissions?

no → Log in to Facebook

Facebook Permissions? no → Grant Permissions

Facebook Permissions? yes → Target Page

Grant Permissions → Email in use?

Email in use? yes → Merge with Betterplace Profile

Email in use? no → Create Betterplace Profile

Merge with Betterplace Profile → Target Page

Create Betterplace Profile → Target Page

About Flow Chart

When the flowchart was complete we researched the technical side again and discussed it step-by-step with the developers. After the process was approved we started thinking about the buttons that have to be implemented on the website. There were two main options to connect with Facebook: create new Betterplace profile of merge with existing Betterplace profile.

For the new users, the process was easy: the click a "connect with Facebook" button, grant Betterplace access to their profile and the rest was done automatically. When they try to login next time, they can either use their Name/password combo or use the "connect with Facebook" button again. This way the buttons also functions as a login button.

The process for the existing users was a bit harder, because when you merge two profiles (Betterplace and Facebook) you will get double data that might not be the same. For example, your Facebook profile may have your official name, but you use a nickname for your Betterplace profile. We've decided, in case of conflicting data, to use the data from Betterplace, because these users chose to display this information when they registered their Betterplace profile.

To merge a Facebook profile with a Betterplace profile, you'll also need to insert your Betterplace password. This is necessary, because otherwise visitors are able to access and edit existing Betterplace profiles, by creating a Facebook profile with the same email address.

Facebook Permissions

After the process was finished and approved by the developers, I had to look into permissions that are interesting to Better-place. Permissions are specific to the website or application asking for them, not for all of Facebook or other Facebook users. There are dozens of permissions which can be included into the process, but I chose to only include the permissions that are interesting to Betterplace, because the permissions themselves can sometimes be alarming. If visitors are scared off by a long list of permissions, they will leave the site and you will lose possible donors.

Access my basic information

Includes name, profile, picture, gender, networks, user ID, list of friends and any other information I've shared with everyone. This information is needed to set up the profile.

Send me email

Option for website to email the user directly. This is an interesting option for Betterplace. By sending mail, Betterplace can keep users updated about projects they supported or trigger them to donate to a project. Don't send to many emails. If it's considered spamming, you're users can become annoyed and Facebook can disconnect your site from Facebook Connect.

Post to my wall

A post on your Facebook wall can be seen by everyone connected to your profile. This way Betterplace can reach a lot of new users. Again, watch out for spamming.
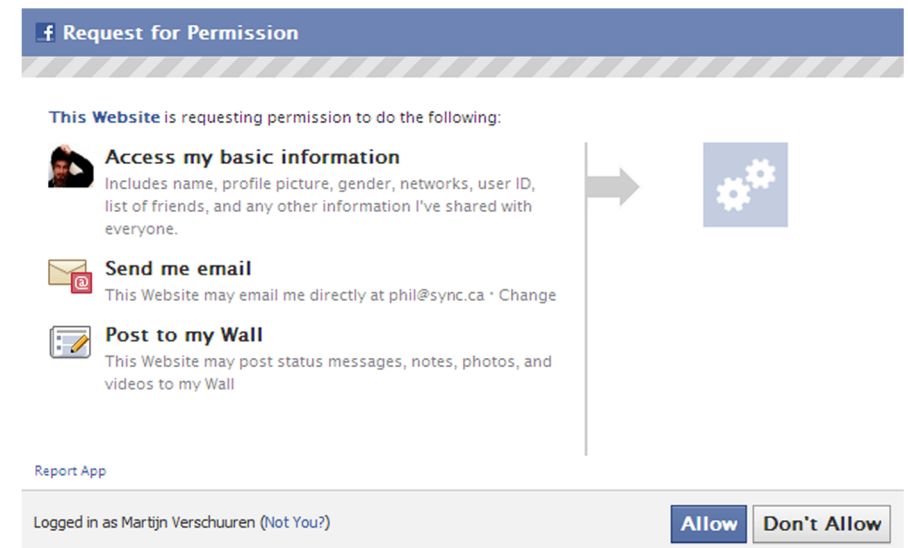
Facebook Connect Buttons

After I worked out all the details for the Facebook connect process, it was up to me to implement the buttons into the website. I chose to implement the buttons on three locations

Registration Page

Whenever a new user registers an account they have to option to fill out the standard form or use the Facebook Connect option.

Login Page

If a user wants to login to his profile, he can also use the Facebook Connect option. If a user already has a Betterplace profile, the two will merge into one.

Donations Page

A lot of users forget to login to their profile. That's why we added the Facebook connect option to the donations page. The donation is added to your profile and other users can see which projects you have supported in the past.

API

Because I have never worked with an API before, I wasn't able to edit this for the Betterplace website. That's why one of the developers edited the API and implemented it on the website. The result can be seen on Betterplace.org.

4.4 CashOut Concept

For this assignment I was asked to think of a new process for charities to access the donations. At this point, a charity will only get the donated money when a need is fulfilled. This can take months and if the need isn't fulfilled after six months, the money will return to the donor in form of a coupon. This is bad for the organization as well as the donor.

Betterplace transfers 100% of the donations to the designated charity. The problem with this policy is that Betterplace has to pay for the bank transfer, otherwise the 100% guaranty would be jeopardized. While these extra costs aren't very significant for transfers within Europe, a transfer to African countries can cost up to 25 dollars. That's why the process must only be used in times of need.

Assignment

Create a process for charities to transfer money in times of need.

Minimal amount

There should be a minimum amount which can be transferred through the process. An international transfer is very expensive, so the amount should be practical.

Minimal waiting period

When someone donated money to a charity by EFT, he or she has the ability to cancel the transfer within a period of time. Betterplace uses a period of two weeks, so the money transferred through the process must have been with Betterplace for two weeks.

Only in times of need

As said before, an international transfer can be very expensive. Therefore the process can only be used if a charity really needs the money and cannot be a way for charities to get some quick cash.

Execution

With this information in mind I started thinking for ways to make the process work. I gathered a lot of information from colleagues about the transfer process as it is and some ideas for the process.

Cash Out Page

After some meetings with colleagues and a lot of drawing, I came up with the Cash Out Page. This was an extra option in the charity's home page which enables the administrator to request money from their donations.
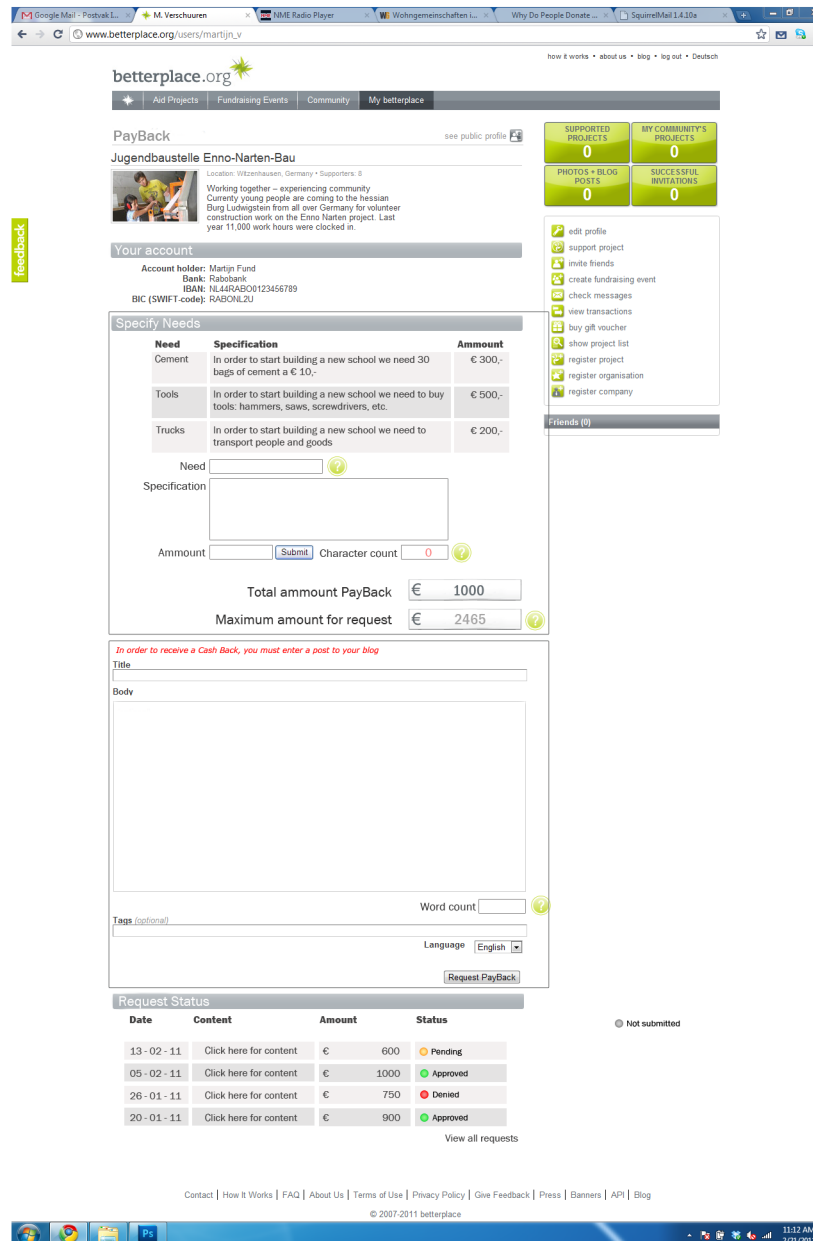
Scenario

1. Organization logs on to Betterplace.org and uses CashOut Button on the project page.
2. User fills out CashOut page. He specifies needs and adds a blog post in which he explains why he needs the money now. If the request meets the requirements (minimal amount, blog post added) status is set to Pending.
3. A colleague at Betterplace receives an automatic email with the request and the filled out form. He also checks the blog post. He can then approve or deny the request.
4. If request is approved, the request status is changed to Approved. Within two weeks the requested amount will be transfered to the charity.
5. If request is denied, the request status is changed to Denied. Bjorn sends the charity an email explaining why the request is denied and gives them the opportunity to fix it.

By specifying the needs in step 2, users have to explain why they need the money now. If this is specification is insufficient, the request will be denied. This way charities can only use the CashOut option in times of need. Users also have to add a blog post about their recent activity, which makes the project page more interesting for donors.

With this scenario in mind I started to draw the design for the page. From these drawings I created a couple of mock ups in Adobe Photoshop.

Mock Ups

Browser mockup — betterplace.org

Google Mail - Postvak I... | M. Verschuuren | NME Radio Player | Wohngemeinschaften i... | Why Do People Donate ... | SquirrelMail 1.4.10s

www.betterplace.org/users/martijn_v

how it works · about us · blog · log out · Deutsch

betterplace.org

Aid Projects | Fundraising Events | Community | My betterplace

PayBack
see public profile

Jugendbaustelle Enno-Narten-Bau

Location: Witzenhausen, Germany • Supporters: 8

Working together – experiencing community
Currently young people are coming to the hessian
Burg Ludwigstein from all over Germany for volunteer
construction work on the Enno Narten project. Last
year 11,000 work hours were clocked in.

| SUPPORTED PROJECTS 0 | MY COMMUNITY'S PROJECTS 0 |
| PHOTOS + BLOG POSTS 0 | SUCCESSFUL INVITATIONS 0 |

Your account

Account holder: Martijn Fund
Bank: Rabobank
IBAN: NL44RABO0123456789
BIC (SWIFT-code): RABONL2U

edit profile
support project
invite friends
create fundraising event
check messages
view transactions
buy gift voucher
show project list
register project
register organisation
register company

Friends (0)

Specify Needs

Need	Specification	Ammount
Cement	In order to start building a new school we need 30 bags of cement a € 10,-	€ 300,-
Tools	In order to start building a new school we need to buy tools: hammers, saws, screwdrivers, etc.	€ 500,-
Trucks	In order to start building a new school we need to transport people and goods	€ 200,-

Need
Specification
Amount [ ] Submit Character count 0

Total ammount PayBack € 1000
Maximum amount for request € 2465

In order to receive a Cash Back, you must enter a post to your blog

Title
Body

Word count
Tags (optional)
Language English
Request PayBack

Request Status

Date	Content	Amount	Status
13 - 02 - 11	Click here for content	€ 600	Pending
05 - 02 - 11	Click here for content	€ 1000	Approved
26 - 01 - 11	Click here for content	€ 750	Denied
20 - 01 - 11	Click here for content	€ 900	Approved

Not submitted

View all requests

Contact | How It Works | FAQ | About Us | Terms of Use | Privacy Policy | Give Feedback | Press | Banners | API | Blog

© 2007-2011 betterplace

11:12 AM 2/21/2011

feedback

Specify Needs

Need	Specification	Ammount
Cement	In order to start building a new school we need 30 bags of cement a € 10,-	€ 300,-
Tools	In order to start building a new school we need to buy tools: hammers, saws, screwdrivers, etc.	€ 500,-
Trucks	In order to start building a new school we need to transport people and goods	€ 200,-

Need [ ]
Specification [ ]
Ammount [ ] Submit Character count 0

Total ammount PayBack € 1000
Maximum amount for request € 2465

In order to receive a Cash Back, you must enter a post to your blog

Title

Body

Word count

Tags (optional)

Language English

Request PayBack

Reasons to deny request

1. Blog post isn't satisfactory
2. Request is below minimum amount
3. Requested amount is higher than donated amount
4. Needs specification isn't in order
5. Donations haven't been with Betterplace for two weeks (EFT can be canceled within two weeks)

CashOut Page

After we presented this concept to the rest of the company, we were waiting for approval from the investors. Unfortunately the investors had been discussing the use of needs on the website. When Betterplace started, the needs system made the website unique compared to others. It provided maximum transparency, but lately the system was causing a lot of confusion.

Another problem with the needs system was the administration. The financial department had to make a lot of extra hours to maintain the needs system. For these reasons the investors were thinking of a new system, which didn't include needs.

This all happened without our knowledge. When we were going to present the CashOut concept to the investors, they told us the future of the needs was uncertain, so we decided that building the page was to great of a risk. If the investors decide the needs will stay, Betterplace will implement the CashOut concept later.

4.5 Partner Widget

In order to spread the Betterplace name and featured projects, every project page offers a widget showing information about the project. Partners can copy this widget by simply copying a snippet of HTML code, which can be implemented on their website. This way, visitors from their website can click the widget, which forwards them to the project page.

There aren't many projects that actually use the widget, because it's old and outdated. The design doesn't look good and the widget often doesn't work well. That's why I'm designing a new widget.

Assignment

Design a new widget to replace the old one.

There are no other requirements for this assignment.

Execution

This assignment had no requirements attached, which made it kind of hard in the beginning. The old widget was too small, but I had no idea how big then new widget had to be. Therefore I got some inspiration from widgets from other sites and investigated some sites that where going to use the widget in the future.

I chose 260*160, because this looked best on most partner sites. I then made a list of possible content:

> Betterplace Logo
> Project Picture
> Project Name
> Total amount Donated
> Total donations
> Latest Donations
> Progress Bar
> Donate now Button

Because the widget wasn't big enough for all these items we had to scrap some. I started making sketches and tried a lot of combinations. In the end I chose for Project Picture, Project Name, Total Donations, Progress Bar, Call-to-action Button and Betterplace Logo. The result can be seen on the left.

The implementation of the widget was rather easy, because most of the code was already on the site. We updated the code for the widget and cleaned up the code for the website.

Project organizers and supporters can easily spread the widget. All they need is to copy an iframe and paste it into their website HTML.

The widget can be seen live under the 'Spread the Project' button in the project pages.

4.6 How it works Page

A lot of people don't seem to get the concept behind Betterplace.org. Most people don't get the needs system and there's other confusing stuff as well. That's why I made a new concept to improve the how it works page.

The How it works page is a mess at this moment. There's way to much text and there doesn't seem to be a systematic approach. The Frequently Asked Questions page (FAQ) doesn't offer much help either. It's very hard to get the concept behind Betterplace from the How it works pages.

If users don't get the concept behind the website, they are more likely to leave. This will costs you visitors and donations.

Assignment

Design mock ups for a new How it works section.

Systematic Approach

The format behind Betterplace must be clear

Concept only

For now I only have to make mock ups for the concept. Betterplace is planning to develop these pages in the future, but some of the pictures and videos haven't been created yet.

Execution

To gather information I interviewed some colleagues. Dennis from marketing worked on a new How It Works section some time ago, so I could get a lot of information from him. I then started to divide the information from my colleagues into groups.

I came up with this concept:

Page 1: Concept - How does it work?

We start with explaining the concept behind Betterplace. By explaining the 'how' behind Betterplace, we get the attention of the visitors.

Page 2: Vision - Why support Betterplace?

After the visitor learned the concept behind Betterplace, it's time for the 'why' part. This page contains a video, texts and pictures about the local and global effects of supported projects.

Page 3: The result - The effects from previous projects

On the third page, we show news articles and quotes from the media. There are a lot of stories about Betterplace, all positive. This will have a positive effect on the visitor.

Page 4: Donors - Who?

The last page contains the 'who' part of Betterplace. This page contains top donors, user quotes, organizations etcetera.

With this concept approved by my supervisor, I started creating some mock ups. These mock ups are very basic, because a lot of pictures and videos are missing. This is because they haven't been created yet. The person responsible for this hadn't had the time to create them.

betterplace.org

Hilfsprojekte | Spendenaktionen | Community

Home | Wie's funktioniert | Über uns | Teamblog

How does it work? → Why support Betterplace? → The Effects → Who?

(Concept Short) Betterplace connects people in need with people who want to help.

(video about betterplace)

2:01 / 2:03   360p

About Transparency

betterplace.org ist also eine transparente Spendenplattform für soziales Engagement: Menschen und Unternehmen, die Gutes tun wollen, treffen auf Menschen und Hilfsorganisationen, die Unterstützung brauchen. Weltweit und auf Augenhöhe.

Grafik a la Förderer-Broschüre 2. Seite bzw. a la Startseite. Jedoch im Dreieck, Aktionen müssen rein!

Zusammen mit Dir wollen wir die Welt besser machen. Klingt pathetisch, ist aber ganz einfach. Du kannst auf betterplace das soziale Projekt Deiner Wahl finden oder einfach selbst einstellen. Du kannst nicht nur mit Geld helfen, sondern auch mit Sachspenden. Du kannst Projektverantwortliche und andere betterplace-Unterstützer direkt kontaktieren und sie mit Deinem Wissen unterstützen. Auch Freiwilligenarbeit kann über betterplace koordiniert werden. Dabei sind die Projekte und ihre Beteiligten sowie Bewertungen durch andere stets für jeden einsehbar. Wenn Du Fragen zu einem Projekt hast, kannst Du sie dem Projektverantlichen direkt stellen, falls Du ihn kennst oder sein Projekt aus anderen Gründen empfehlen kannst, werde ein Fürsprecher und schreib es öffentlich auf die Projektseite. Vielleicht warst Du bei dem Projekt sogar einmal vor Ort? Als Besucher kannst Du noch direkter beschreiben, warum es sich lohnt, für das Projekt zu spenden – oder auch nicht. Da betterplace eine offene Plattform ist, kann jeder ein Projekt einstellen. Eine der wichtigsten Fragen ist deshalb: Taugt das jeweilige Projekt überhaupt etwas? Die Antwort gibt das Netzwerk der betterplace-Nutzer in Verbindung mit der neu geschaffenen Transparenz. Projekte, die schlecht bewertet wurden oder keine Fürsprecher haben, bekommen kaum Spenden. Jene aber, um die sich viele Nutzer in Form von Fürsprechern oder Besuchern tummeln, schaffen Vertrauen – ein Vertrauensnetzwerk. Wir nennen es Web of Trust, und es ist ein Grundpfeiler der betterplace'schen Qualitätskontrolle.

About Web of Trust

People who offer help should be able to trust. That's why we have the "web of trust". The "web of trust" surrounds each presented project and consists of different users who give an account of their experiences with the person responsible for the project and the project itself. Thus, over time, there develops a differentiated evaluation system for projects, which prevents fraud, increases project efficiency and enables supporters to choose projects according to their own criteria.

There are various ways for you to contribute to the "web of trust" of a specific project:

Visit a project:
Visit a project on the ground! Observe what is happening and talk to the person responsible for the

Vouch for a person or project:
You are convinced that the person responsible for a project is reliable? That makes you the perfect

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betterplace.org

Hilfsprojekte | Spendenaktionen | Community

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How does it work? → Why support Betterplace? → The Effects → Who?

(Vision short) Beterplaces' Vision is to turn a "world improvement business" into a sustainable, scalable and charitable venture.

(video Till Betterplace vision)

2:01 / 2:03   360p

Spendenvolumen

Du vergrößerst das Spendenvolumen im sozialen Sektor! Denn viele Unterstützer, die über betterplace die Welt verbessern, würden über Umwege wie Weihnachtsgrüße mit Überweisungsträger oder Plakatwerbung für große Organisationen eher nicht spenden. Bei betterplace findest Du aber gleichberechtigt neben Projekten großer Organisationen auch Projekte von kleinen, so genannten Grassroot-Organisationen. Auch Du findest bei betterplace Dein Lieblingsprojekt. Und statt in allgemeine Budgets einzuzahlen, spendest Du bei betterplace nur auf konkrete Bedarfe, etwa für "ein Schulbuch", "Rohre für einen neuen Brunnen" oder "eine Gitarre für die Musikschule".

Effizienz

betterplace.org ist effizienter, weil weniger Fundraising-Kosten entstehen. Weihnachtsgrüße mit Überweisungsträgern und Plakat-Werbung ist für Projekte auf betterplace nicht nötig – unsere Plattform ist kostenlos. Und wir leiten 100 Prozent Deiner Spende (an das entsprechende Projekt) weiter. Nicht zu vergessen: Auch Sachspenden und Zeit für freiwillige Arbeit kannst Du über betterplace.org leisten.

Effektivität

Viele kleine Organisationen und Projekte von Privatpersonen können dank betterplace aus ihrer Anonymität heraustreten. Denn über betterplace und soziale Medien wie Facebook oder Twitter können sie auch ohne Werbebudget für ihre gute Sache werben. Um das Vertrauen der betterplace-Nutzer zu gewinnen, muss ein Projekt bei uns vor allem eins sein: transparent. Wer durch Blogeinträge, Fotos und Videos seine Arbeit transparent macht, gewinnt bei betterplace das Vertrauen der Community. Und da du bei betterplace siehst, was mit Deinem Geld passiert, kannst Du entscheiden, an welche Projekte Du spendest – an das effektivste.

In den USA werden bereits rund zehn Prozent der Spenden online gesammelt. In Deutschland sind es noch weniger als fünf Prozent, aber wie auch bei der Zahl der Internetnutzer ist die Tendenz steigend. Betterplace wächst aber auch, weil es seine Nutzer überzeugt hat. Du willst die Welt auch besser verbessern? Hier kannst Du Dich anmelden.

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How does it work? → Why support Betterplace? → The Effects → Who?

See what others wrote about Betterplace

WIRED
"Find your Charity Soulmate" - Joana Breidenbach in WIRED
WIRED, Nov 2010   Aus: Printmedia
An article about the co-founder of betterplace.org, Dr. Joana Breidenbach, in the WIRED Magazine.

ALJAZEERA.NET
Website bridges charity-needy gap
Al Jazeera, 23.11.2009   Aus: TV & Radio
A new website is helping people donate to some of the neediest people around the world.

DW
Global Online Giving Marketplaces
Deutsche Welle, 06.11.2009   Aus: TV & Radio
Many of the challenges that online platforms of this kind face are common to all of the organisations represented here...

BUSINESS DAILY
Donors building a web of trust
Business Daily Africa, 26.10.2009   Aus: Onlinemedia
Givers often lose interest as complex messages start to filter through. How do you better involve the donor...

THINKSOCIAL
ThinkSocial Awards: Betterplace.org "Connecting people who need support with those who want to help, worldwide"
Think Social, 26.10.2009   Aus: Onlinemedia
For individuals, organizations and corporations, better place connects those in need with donations in kind, of money, know-how and volunteering...

THE HUFFINGTON POST
Social Purpose Becomes the New Social Status in Business
by Mitchell Markson , The Huffington Post, 22.10.2009   Aus: Onlinemedia
As fun and prevalent as cats flushing toilets on YouTube may be, something meaningful and substantive is happening in social media as well...

STANDARD
Donor aid: Websites boost accountability
by Peter Orengo, The Standard, 13.10.2009   Aus: Onlinemedia
"If these sites represent a growing trend in fundraising, the lesson we all must learn is there is a new generation of givers who want more evidence that their contributions are making a real difference"...

.de
Partners for Africa
by Katharina Nickoleit, Deutschlandmagazin, 03.01.2009   Aus: Printmedia
German foundations and organizations involved in the continent...

DEUTSCHE WELLE
betterplace.org
von Harry Graupner, Deutsche Welle, 08.12.2008   Aus: TV & Radio
Interview with the CEO of betterplace.org, Till Behnke ...

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How does it work? → Why support Betterplace? → The Effects → Who?

At this moment we have 39.348 donors, which makes Betterplace the biggest Charity platform in Germany.

(Google Maps Germany with photos of projects)

Click the image for detailed information about the team (link to team page)

SUPPORTERS WHO HELP US FINANCIALLY

Doing good has to be made better. That is not only our conviction, but also that of the following people:

These supporters have donated 10,000 Euro and more …

G. Eckert   S. Morschh- euser   H. Pentzlin   F. Feller   Mathias E.   H. Cramer

M. Sassera- th

These supporters have donated 1,000 Euro and more …

Till B.   D. Woywod   T. Stracke   H. Thorborg   O. Grün   S. Morschh- euser

D. Droigk   A. Gagern   D. Kamrad   B. Kundrun   M. Follert   M. Kraus

R. Mauch   A. Feige   R. Koczwara

These supporters have donated 1 Euro and more …

C. Mohr   W. Röhr   M. Spiegel   H. Funk   S. Teichner   A. Kleemann

Content

Concept: How does it work?

- Movie explaining the concept behind Betterplace.org.
- Text about transparency
- Text about Web of Trust
- Text about 100% Guarantee + how BP is financed
- Info about Fundraisers

Vision: Why support Betterplace?

- Movie Till Behnke about vision BP (not filmed yet)
- Texts Dennis about donating, efficiency and effects

The result: The effects from previous projects

- Media articles
- Quotes from Media
- Quotes from Organizations

Donors: Who?

- Google maps image with photos of projects
- The team (clickable image)
- Supporters who have donated 10.000+, 1.000+, 1+
- Supporters who donated in kind
- User Quotes

4.7 Projects Search Page

Betterplace was receiving a lot of complaints about the projects search page. This page contains a search bar which doesn't work very well. The bar needs very specific search terms, which means if you don't type a word exactly, you search will be incomplete.

The page also contains filters, but these can very easily be overlooked. Another problem with the filters is they can't be deleted. If you for instance filter projects by country and than by category, there's no option to delete the country filter. This can be very confusing.

The developers have also been working on a world map containing all the projects. This world map must also be integrated into the design of the page.

Assignment

Design a new Projects Search Page

Filters

The filters must have a more prominent place on the website and must be easier to use.

Search Bar

The search engine must be updated to get more complete results.

World Map

The design must have an integrated world map.

Research

Before I started to design a new projects search page, I did some research into other sites and search behavior from the Betterplace visitors.

I started by analyzing pages from competitors and well known sites. This gave me a lot of inspiration, but it was very hard to integrate the filters and the world map into the design. There aren't many sites that have a search bar, filters and a world map integrated in one. It's very hard to integrate these three into one page and make it clear for the users.

I decided to do a research into the search behavior of the Betterplace visitors. This way I was hoping to gain insight about how visitors try to search for and filter projects. For this research I got the statistics from Betterplace.org.

Research results

A lot of visitors search for projects near them. They enter city or state names into the search bar. This shows people are willing to search on a local level. The old search bar only provided results for a local search if the search term was in the projects title bar.

Filters like responsibility and tax deductable are rarely used. They can be left out or implemented another way.

The category filters are the most used filters, but visitors are still searching for themes. This indicates some people can't find or understand the filters.

A lot of people search for objects to donate, for example donate car. This can't be realized with the search bar. There is a navigation on top of the page the switch the needs from money to needs in kind, but people don't seem to notice that.

how it works • about us • blog • login • sign up • Deutsch

betterplace.org

| | Aid Projects | Fundraising Events | Community | |

1 Browse Projects │ Browse Needs │ Browse Blog Posts

2 Which project are you looking for? [_____] [Search]

5 register project

3 FEATURED PROJECTS

6 How do I find a project?

In the menu bar below you can sort projects or filter them, for example, according to category and region.

Read more...

4 Unterstützung für Kindergärten und Grundschulen

Location: Donaueschingen, Germany • Supporters: 4   ★★★★★ 3 Ratings

Musik für den Umweltschutz unterstützt Kindergärten und Schulen im Bereich Umweltschutz und Erneuerbaren Energien. 1.000 Kinderlieder-DVDs, über Erneuerbare Energien, werden kostenfrei an Kindergärten und Schulen verteilt.

[LEARN MORE]

1% funded

Outstanding items:
€ 2,360.-

7 ARRANGE BY

- Top Rated
- Almost Funded
- Already Completed
- Recently Added
- Recently Updated

FILTER BY LANGUAGE

- English (860)
- German (2015)

Bärenherz Children's hospice   [-TAX]

Location: Leipzig (Markkleeberg), Germany • Supporters: 714   ★★★★☆ 97 Ratings

Please support us, so we can support families in need. Bestow families who care and nurse their ill child day in day out with time to recover and relax a little while. Your donation can finance a few days in our children's hospice.

[LEARN MORE]

93% funded

Outstanding items:
€ 5,534.-   ✋ 10

FILTER BY CATEGORIES

- Education (1001)
- Health (489)
- Food Security (140)
- Environment (245)
- Infrastructure (119)
- Human Rights (166)
- Culture & Sports (239)
- Emergency Aid (168)

...Ferien mit Behinderten im Libanon: Summercamps

Location: Faraya, Lebanon • Supporters: 5   ★★★★☆ 17 Ratings

150 Jugendliche aus Europa schenken Ihre Zeit 180 libanesischen Behinderten in gemeinsamen Ferien in den Bergen

[LEARN MORE]

60% funded

Outstanding items:
€ 700.-

FILTER BY RESPONSIBILITY

- User (439)
- Organisation (2128)

SOSOSO-PRO – SOLAR-SORYA-SUN Project   [-TAX]

Location: Tropang Tree, Cambodia • Supporters: 27   ★★★★☆ 91 Ratings

Sorya means „sun" in Khmer (the language of Cambodia) - pictured in the logo of our organisation. Since many years Sorya is using solar power at our school in Tropang Sdock ...

[LEARN MORE]

80% funded

Outstanding items:
€ 1,305.-

FILTER BY FISCAL TYPE

- Non tax-deductible (1370)
- Tax-deductible for German donors (1197)

FILTER BY LOCATION

- Africa (806)
- Asia (401)
- Europe (1136)
- North America (106)

Ein Haus für Kinder in Kambodscha

feedback

51

Content

1. Needs Navigation
2. Search Bar
3. List of Features Projects
4. Project Summary
5. Register Project Button
6. How to find a project
7. Filters

Notes

The first thing I noticed were the outdated project displays. These are designed a couple of years ago, but nowadays they look old fashioned. Therefore, I want to design some new project displays.

The option to browse for needs is not very visible on the top of the page. At first I didn't notice them at all, plus lot of people are complaining about this. I want to give this feature a more prominent place.

The filters on the right aren't very obvious. I want to delete some and display the more usable ones on top of the page.

The Register Now buttons has no place on this page. I'd rather take it out and put it on another page.

The how do I find a project box should disappear. We have to design the new search in such a way it's obvious to people how it works.

First Sketches

After I worked out the good and the bad I started to work out some sketches, but it proved harder than I thought. I knew the search terms and filters people used, but I didn't know how people search for projects. Do visitors of Betterplace know what they are looking for or do they browse around and then start filtering? For these questions and more I did some more research and worked out possible scenarios, which can be found on the next page.

Additional Research

This additional research is done by interviewing colleagues and analyze more search data. After this research I came up with the following conclusion:

There are three types of people who visit Betterplace.org

Visitors who want to support projects on a location

Part of the Betterplace visitors want to support a location, like a continent, country, region or city. There are two main reasons for this:

The first group wants to support something near them. We realized this when we found out a lot of people from Berlin search for projects near Berlin.

The second group visited a location or seen it on television and want to support that exact location.

For these visitors the world map would be an outcome. Supported by Google maps, they can open the world map and search for their location. The new search bar will also include tags, so if a project is tagged under Africa, it's possible to find it by typing Africa in the search bar. This wasn't possible with the old search bar.

Visitors who want to support a category

The second group contains visitors who want to support a category. For example: visitors who want to fight hunger in the world.

Visitors who don't know what they want

The third group doesn't have any idea what they want to support. They heard about Betterplace and are just browsing around till they see something they like. For this group, all the search options (search bar, world map, categories) are interesting.

My next step was to design a new page which included a search bar, world map and categories.

After a lot of sketching I came up with a new concept, which included a top bar with search bar, world map and categories in one. Also, the categories should have icons, so they are more recognizable.

The bar should look like this
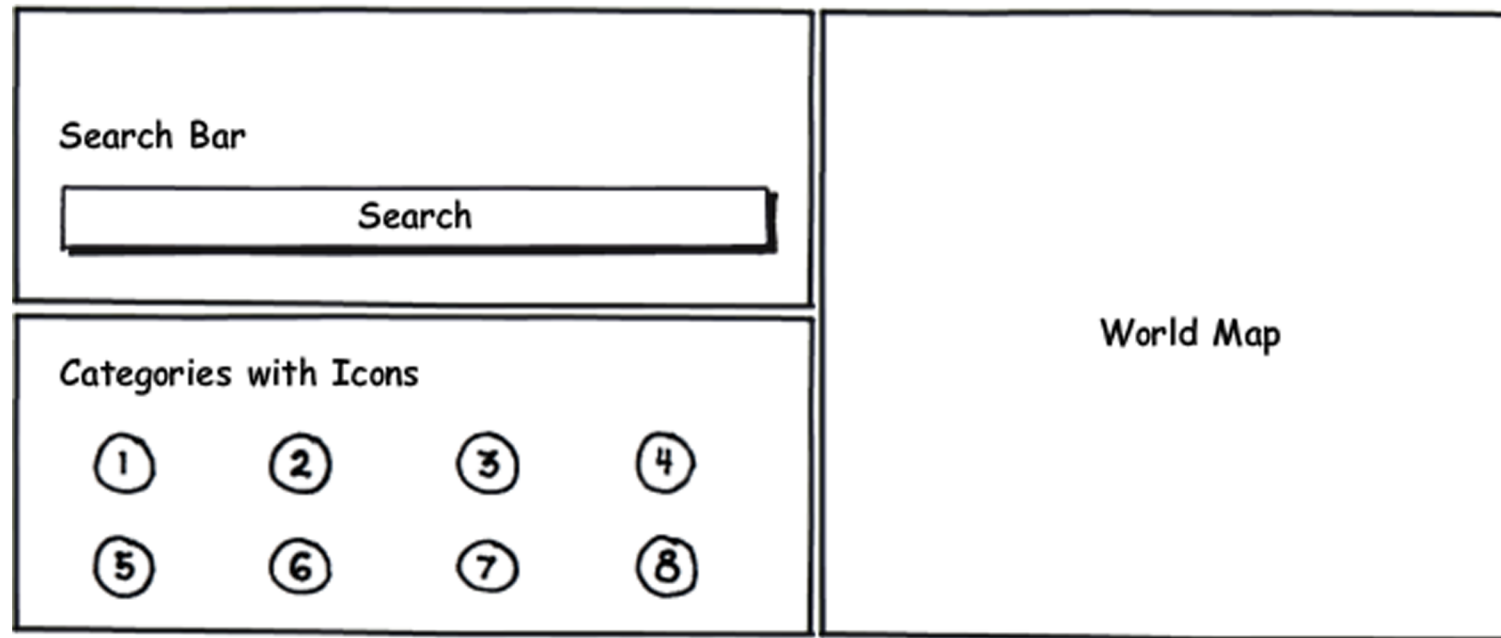
I also created icons for the categories:

Categories

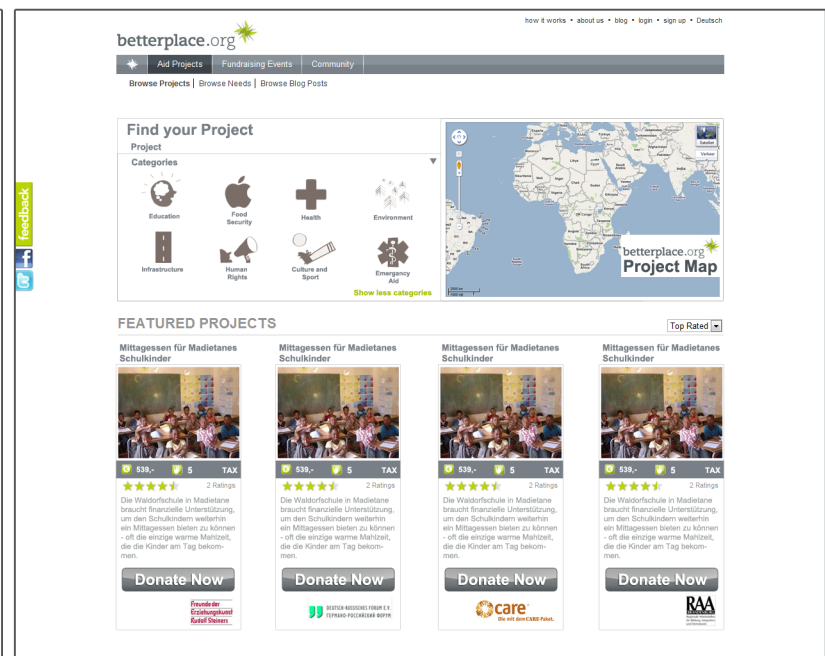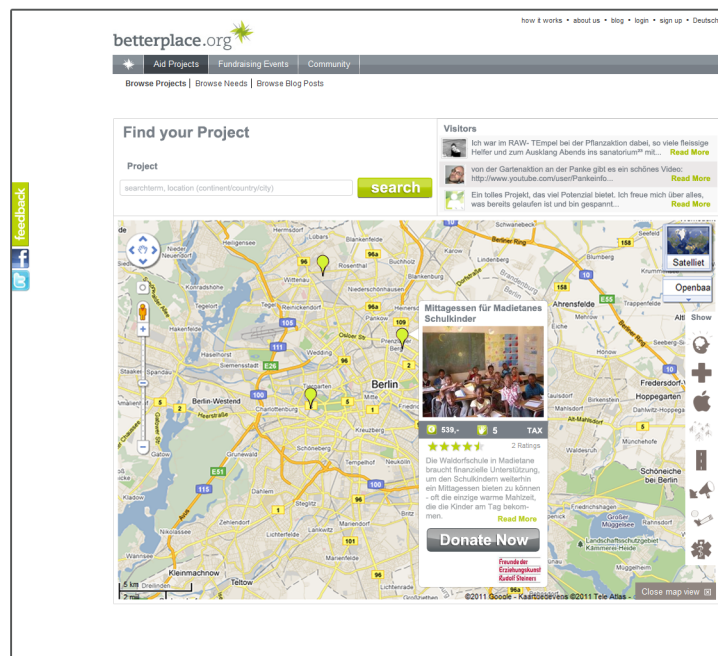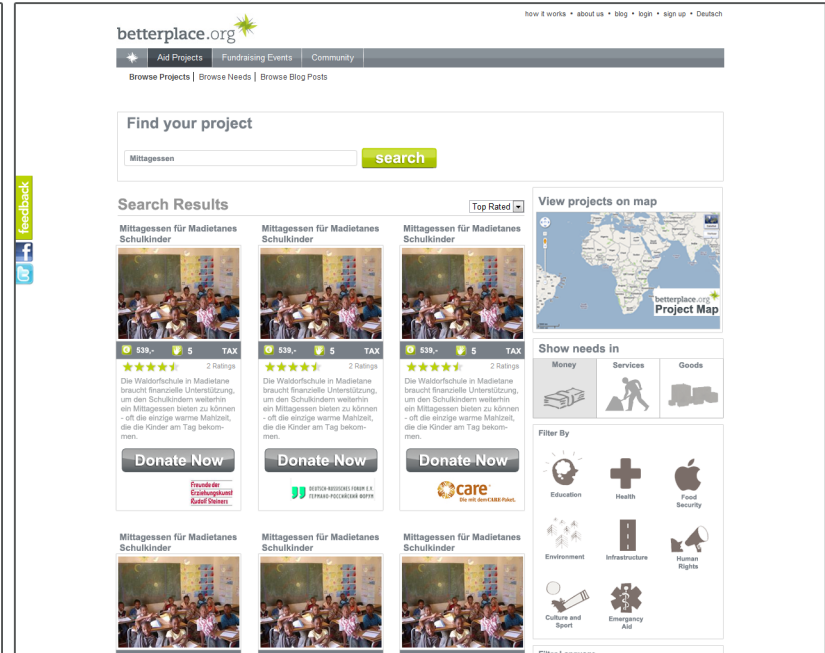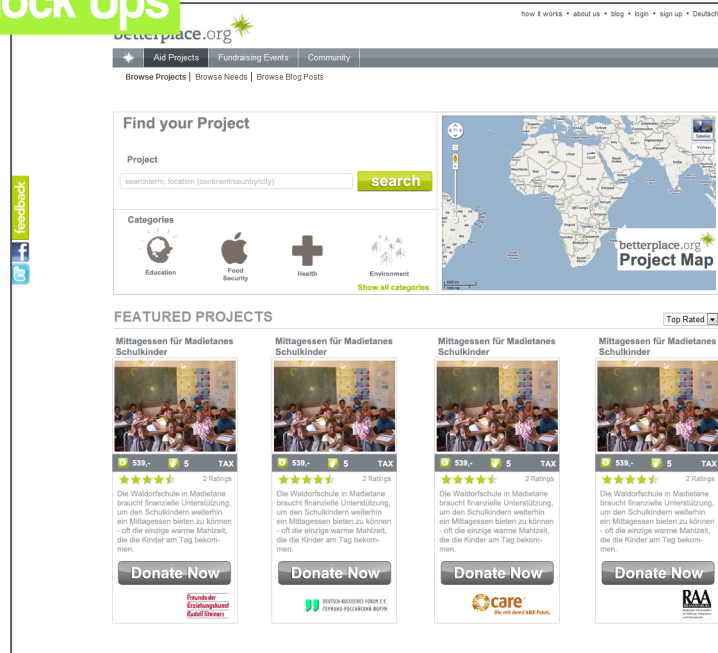| Education | Food Security | Health | Environment | Infrastructure | Human Rights | Culture and Sport | Emergancy Aid |

Mock Ups

Notes

The mock up in the upper left corner is how visitors will see the page without having searched for something. Above the projects you can see the box with three search options.

The visitors who want to search now have the following options:

Use the Search Bar (upper right)

By entering a search term in the bar they can specify the project they want. After the search is done, the top box disappears and filters appear on the right. This way they can filter their results.

Use the World Map (lower left)

After visitors click the world map, they are forwarded to a full screen map with a location search bar on the top and filters on the left.

Use Categories Filter (lower right)

After using the filter, the page stays the same. There are eight categories in total, but the search box only shows the four most popular. This is because the box didn't fit eight icons. Underneath the categories there's a Show all Categories button. If clicked, the search box above will disappear en the other categories will appear.

Deployment

During the development of the projects search page the world map wasn't working accordingly. That's why we postponed the deployment of the projects search page. This page will soon be live on Betterplace.org/en/projects.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Conclusion

During my internship I made some radical changes to the Betterplace website, but only time will tell us the impact of these improvements. Most of these changes I made with feedback from my supervisor and colleagues. Between them there is a lot of knowledge and experience in the world of charities and donations, so I'm convinced the changes are for the better.

We also made some changes that weren't within my field of expertise, like the Facebook Connect function. Seeing the popularity of Facebook today I'm sure that this will also generate new users and improve the Betterplace community. I learned a lot from this assignment and I'm glad I could be part of it.

My research also had a big impact on the company. After documenting about A/B testing and Multivariate testing, several colleagues couldn't wait to start the first tests. Even my boss used the term A/B testing on weekly bases, so my research definitely hasn't been a waste. I hope my colleagues from product management and development will continue using my advice and improve the Betterplace website.

The only downside are the assignments that are in concept form, but haven't been created or implemented. Some concepts are fully worked out, but when we wanted to create them, management told us to work on another assignment and the concept was put on a sidetrack. I'm convinced these concepts will be created and implemented later, but I'd rather created them at that moment.

REFLECTIONS

Reflection

Now my internship has come to an end, I can only conclude the time just flew by. Four months sounds like a long time, but when you're working, it's over before you know it. Looking back at my internship, there are some things I would have done different, but then again, I now know things I didn't know at the start, and I learned a lot from it.

International Business

Cultural Differences

Although Berlin is not that far from the Netherlands, there are some mayor cultural differences in the business environment. My colleagues from Berlin saw each other rather as co-workers instead of friends. Personal live was never really an subject, which makes it really hard to get to know people. The first few weeks I had a very hard time blending in with my colleagues.

At Betterplace I've got the opportunity to work with a lot of different nationalities. I had colleagues from Germany, England, France, Hungry, Spain and Korea. It was interesting to talk about national differences, but they also had their own work ethics, which could be confusing. It did give me the opportunity to understand other cultures and helped me to overcome stereotypes.

Language Barrier

Although everyone at Betterplace spoke perfect English, the main language used was German. When I started my internship, my German skills weren't very good. I had my last German courses over ten years ago and back then I only had two years of German. This meant I had to improve my German, because most of the meetings also were in German.

The first couple of weeks I improved my German skills by watching a lot of German television and I taking an online German course. After that I understood most of the German during meetings and if I didn't fully get something, I wrote it down and asked Niklas later. This way I got along while bettering myself in German.

My meetings with Niklas were all in English. At the end of my internship, my German skills were pretty good, but it's hard to use technical terms in German. It's also difficult to make a point in a language you don't fully master. That's why we chose to do all one on one meetings in English. Even though my English was good before I started my internship, I was able to perfect it in Berlin.

Lack of communication

One thing that really bothered me at Betterplace was the lack of communication in the office. Especially the information gained in higher meetings, which I couldn't attend, wasn't always shared with the rest of the office.

Take for example the case with the CashOut concept. While we were creating a new process to transfer money to project organizations, others were discussing to get rid of the current format. This caused us to put a lot of work into an assignment, which couldn't be used. Although the needs are still part of the Betterplace format and there's a big chance the CashOut concept will be implemented after all, it's annoying to hear your work might have been for nothing.

Lots of colleagues with lots of opinions

Something I realized is you can't satisfy everyone. Some of my colleagues have a very strong opinion about the website. These opinions can be very different and you have to disappoint some people.

For example, I set up a office wall test with three mock ups for the donations page. One contained a picture of the supported project. One colleague was convinced you had to create an emotional connection until the transaction is over. Another colleague contradicted this by saying the emotional connection is already made before they were forwarded to the donations page. This resulted in a one hour discussion, with no result. Eventually I decided not to include the picture, also due to technical reasons. Looking back, we should have A/B tested it and waited for the result, but at that point I hadn't finished my research.

As I said before, you can't satisfy everyone. As an interaction designer I was hoping to gain information from the experience and knowledge from my co-workers, but instead I lost a lot of time. Next time, I will make decisions like this one myself.

Internship Abroad

I'm really glad I chose an international internship at Betterplace.org. Berlin is a great city, with a great history and I learned a lot at my internship, but also in my spare time. There are some thing you just can't learn from an internship close to home. Things as being independent, meeting people in a city abroad and finding your place in a bizarre capitol. I would recommend everyone to do an internship abroad.

Personal Development

Interaction Design

Since my first internship in Curaçao, I wanted to be an interaction designer. Back then I created an interface for a touch screen monitor and I was looking for something similar for my final internship. When Betterplace offered me this internship, I was a bit skeptic, because the product was a website, which I'm not that interested in.

Looking back, I'm glad I took this internship. Assignments like the donations page, projects search page and widget were actually like designing an interface. When you're designing an interface for a touch screen, you have a lot of freedom, which you don't have with a web browser. This way I learned to improvise and adjust to the assignment.

My research also added a lot to my experience as interaction designer. At first, I didn't think the research was going to be such a big part of my internship, but as time went by and I learned more about the subject, it really was an asset to the company and my personal knowledge of User Experience and usability testing.

Planning

One thing that still bothers me is my planning. It's very hard for me to estimate how much time I am going to spent on an assignment. For my assignments for Betterplace, this wasn't a big problem, because there were no real deadlines. As long as a product could be improved I was working on it.

My lack of planning was truly visible during my research. I spend a lot of time searching and testing tools and techniques suited for Betterplace. At the end, I knew what I was going to write down in my research, but I really underestimated the time I needed for this. When I was done, I wasn't 100% satisfied with the result, so I redid some parts. With better planning, this could have been avoided.

With the experience I gained from this internship, I hope to improve my planning in the future and not be overwhelmed by bad estimations.

CHAPTER VII
LITERATURE

Literature

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