

style me

Style.me is a mobile application made specifically for use on the iPhone. It exists as a medium-fidelity prototype in its' current iteration. This document serves as a guide to explain the design decisions and process behind the concept and prototype.

THE PROBLEM

Women have difficulty finding clothing that fits them well. This is in part because women do not think about or know which clothing is flattering on their body type. This lack of knowledge is reflected by the stark reality there is no singular, reliable source of which clothing or colors will best complement each women's body type and skin color.

A simple Google search yields separate pages of incomprehensive advice. Many clothing designers do not practically consider body types when designing for the waif-like model on which nearly anything can look great. Unfortunately, an extremely small percentage of woman have this "model" body type.

To make matters worse, the styles and variety of women's clothing available, in addition to trends that do not flatter the female form, can be overwhelming to the majority of the female population. Style.me was created to solve these issues.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

There is evidence from an evolutionary standpoint as to what society inherently believes is attractive. These studies prove that youth and fertility, factors of the female appearance, are our natural cues for attractiveness.

An hourglass figure is the most relied upon cue for fertility. Therefore, to look her best, a woman should rely on clothing that enhances her natural body type to create the appearance of a more hourglass-like figure with the ideal waist-to-hip ratio of 0.7. Concurrently, skin tone and complexion serve as cues for youthfulness. This attribute can be enhanced or degraded based upon the colors surrounding the skin. For instance, certain colors will cause certain complexions to practically glow, which others will cause the woman to appear washed out or tired.

The factors upon which these attributes rely are the woman's body type, skin color, and hair color. Eye color can also be helpful (secondarily) to finding out which colors will look best on a woman. An application that takes these natural, evolutionary factors into consideration should also consider a woman's personal preferences, including personal style preferences and areas of the body that she likes to show off (or areas she would like to minimize). These preferences are no doubt also influenced by age, level of conservativeness, weight, height, culture, geography, etc.

Thus, I designed a mobile application that takes these factors into consideration and produces practical recommendations for the most flattering clothing types and colors for each individual woman.

DESIGN FUNCTIONALITY

In its' current iteration, the style.me interface provides the ability for users to input information that leads to finding flattering clothing and color recommendations. This input includes:

- ❖ Hair color
- ❖ Eye color
- ❖ Skin color
- ❖ Body type
- ❖ Personal style preferences
- ❖ Body part minimizing or “flaunting” preferences

Much of the information is inputted in the initial registration, which is mandatory. All of the steps are mandatory because the app is essentially useless for the user without this input. The above information leads to the following functionalities that the app provides. They are sorted by main access point from the application’s home page.

My Best Clothing

This area of the application provides the user with multiple methods to find information on clothing that will flatter their figure. Users are able to:

- ❖ Browse clothing by clothing type
- ❖ Browse clothing by weather
- ❖ Browse clothing by event
- ❖ Search for clothing in a text field
- ❖ Search for and view nearby stores that might sell a certain type of clothing
- ❖ View positives and negatives of clothing items based on user body type
- ❖ View suggested or related clothing items that can be worn together

My Best Colors

This area of the application focuses solely on colors that complement the female complexion, providing the user with the ability to:

- ❖ Browse colors that work well with their complexion
- ❖ Take a picture of a color to see if it will complement them

My Profile

The Profile is an easy, accessible location for storing and editing the user’s inputted information, application settings, and preferences.

Fitting Room

This section of the application was created for the need for real-time feedback about if an item fits the requirements imposed by body type and preferences. The interface allows the user to point their camera at the mirror where they are trying on the clothing to check if the

clothing fits well by combining their preferences, best colors, and body type advice in one screen with the actual outfit they are wearing.

All of the aforementioned functionality is accessible from the main page of the mobile application (See Appendix A: Home Screen). It is not currently shown in the prototype since only the major user task flows were chosen for development in the prototype. In its' current iteration, My Best Colors and My Profile are not fleshed out at all. Searching via text box, finding, and viewing clothing in the nearest stores are the interaction flows in My Best Clothing that have actually been implemented in the current prototype (See Appendix B: My Best Clothing). The Registration process is also shown in its entirety.

DESIGN WORKFLOW

The three main user task flows are Registration, My Best Clothing Search, and Fitting Room. My Best Colors section does not have much of a workflow since the information it provides is readily available to users, and there is no search or prior mechanism needed to access the desired information in this section. The My Profile workflow similarly does not need to be detailed, due to the plethora of information readily available in the section. There is only enough functionality in the prototype currently to display how a user might go through the steps – not all options on every screen have interactions.

Registration

This part of the application is shown in its entirety in the medium-fidelity prototype. The home screen is displayed to the user while the application is loading. After a few seconds, the user is presented with a screen on which they can create a username and password. After error-checking in real-time to make sure the username is not already taken, the user can then click “Create Account”, which leads them to the first official step of the registration process.

The user simply selects their natural hair color from the options provided, and then clicks Next. On the next screen is Step 2 of the registration process, which asks for the user’s skin color through input via phone camera. The user takes a picture of their screen by clicking the camera button, and is then asked to verify if the colors the application identified are indeed shades similar to their actual skin tone. If the app was correct in identifying the skin colors, the user can click “looks ok!”. If the user is not satisfied with the color gleaned from the picture, they have the option to re-take the picture. When the user is satisfied with their skin color, they are moved to Step 3, which asks them to identify their body type. Words are provided in case they are already aware of the major body categories. The sketches of the major body types are also included, to provide visual clearance of their body type. Red lines were added to enhance the natural features of each body type so that the user can clearly see, for example, that the Apple body type has wider shoulders than hips (see Appendix C: Select a Body Type).

After tapping Next, the user is taken to Step 4, which allows them to click anywhere on the body and either Flaunt or Minimize that particular body part. They can also “X” out, or Cancel if the body part was tapped accidentally. When the user desires a body part to be Flaunted, the application notifies the user with a heart next to that specific body part.

Conversely, if the user would like to minimize that body part, the minus symbol is displayed next to the body part. To edit the selections made, the user need only click on the symbol displayed, which allows them to choose the other option if they change their mind (See Appendix D: Edit Body Preferences). After tapping next, the last step in the registration process requires the user to select all or any of the representative style types, which will further tailor the recommendations provided in the app. When the user clicks on each category, a large checkmark appears over the category. Clicking again on the category should remove the checkmark, but this was not implemented in the current version of the prototype. The user clicks Finish, which allows them to complete Registration and view the application home page.

My Best Clothing Search

From the application's homepage, the Best Clothing section has the prime location due to its inherent importance to the application. The user is able to search and receive real-time results as to which clothing types are in the application, along with a preview of the clothing item. The options to Browse by Weather, Clothing Type, and Event are also provided, but are not fleshed out in the current prototype.

When the user taps on a clothing item, they are taken to a screen that displays all of the information they could possibly want about the item in relation to their body type. This includes the actual fabric materials, as well as specific attributes that determine if the article of clothing will compliment their body type. From here, the user can decide to see more items like this (or related ones they can wear with it), or search nearby stores for the item. The app will automatically use the phone's GPS capabilities to find out where the user is located, and display the surrounding stores accordingly. The user can also manually search for the store. Both methods eventually lead to the store's online mobile website, with search terms already entered for the clothing item.

Fitting Room

The Fitting Room task flow is simple. The user will simply tap the section from the homepage. It will display information about how to hold the phone. As the phone is held up to the mirror, the user can get real-time feedback as to how the clothing complements their body type and skin color (See Appendix E: Fitting Room).

TECHNIQUES & TOOLS

After initializing the concept for the application, I began with rough sketches of various features of the application, how they might look, and how each feature might be tied together. As part of the SI 582 course requirement, I completed over 40 thumbnail sketches to this effect. I utilized pencil and drawing paper, which worked well because they were fast and easy to iterate. The only thing I would change in the future is to keep something in between the pages, as the sketches smeared easily if the sketchbook was left open.

To further develop the design, I utilized Microsoft's Axure (on my Mac) with Adobe PhotoShop (CS4) to supplement the lacking image editing capabilities. I had never used Axure before, and I realize even at this project's end that I haven't even begun to touch

many of the program's capabilities. I referred to my sketches during the digital transfer process frequently, but also found myself creating more sketches and iterating on those as I designed. Axure was extremely useful, and the only drawback I found to using it was my own ineptitude as a first time user. There is somewhat of a learning curve, but I enjoyed using the software because of the essential interaction functionalities it provides in a more precise manner than many of its' cheaper or web-based competitors.

DESIGN EVOLUTION

Because I put so much thought into my initial sketches and created so many options from the beginning, the only changes that occurred in my design were a result of eliminating some of my options. While sketching and in the initial brainstorming phases, I was not thinking about how the actual icons and such would look – I was more focused on functionality. It seems like the design aesthetic evolved with the medium-fidelity prototype – especially the logo and branding for the application. I decided to take out several steps in the registration process to keep it from becoming overwhelming. I chose to include these non-crucial elements (eye color, for instance) elsewhere in the application.

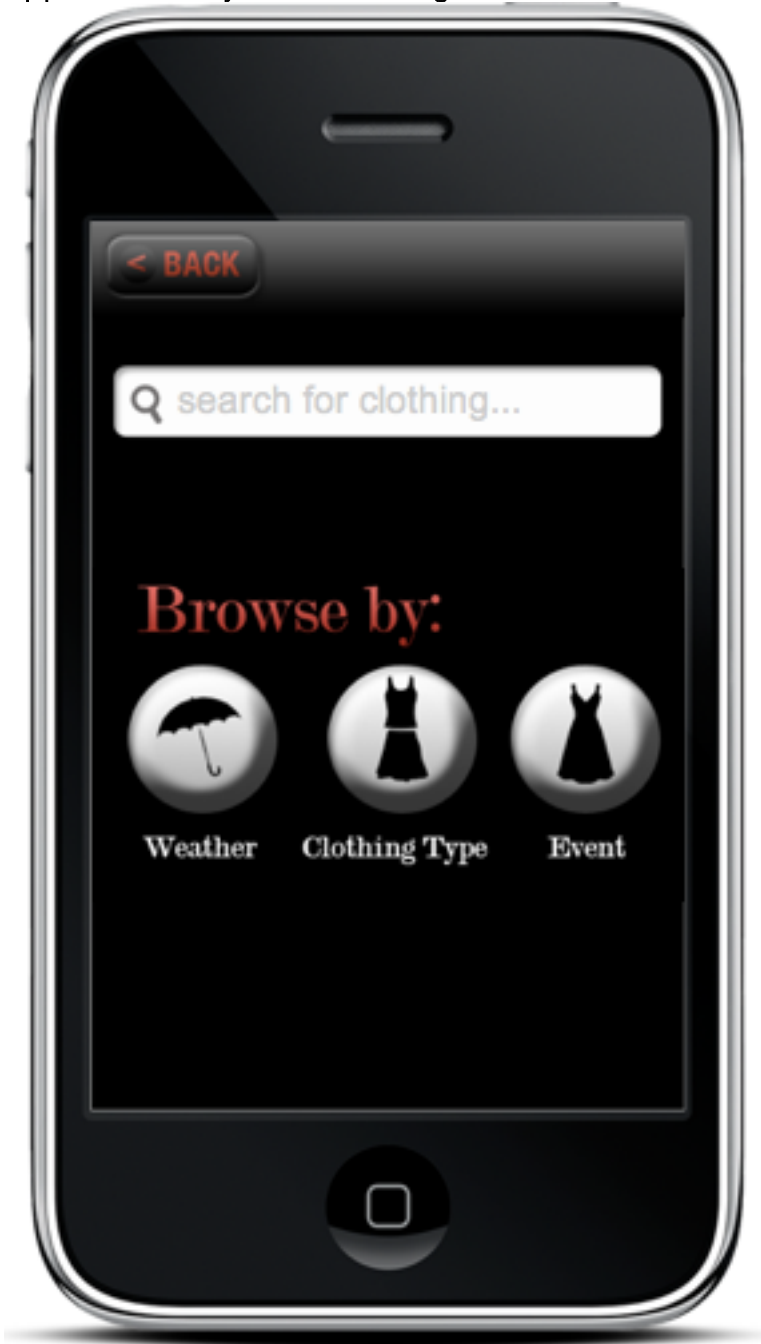
Throughout this process, I referred to readings from the course. Buxton's readings were crucial for understanding the importance of my initial sketches to the rest of the design process. I learned that my sketches, as rough as they are, are an important artifact of the design process, just as much as my final prototype! Learning about scenarios really helped me nail down the task flow, because they provided the framework to thinking about how the user would actually go through the application. While creating interactions, I would think back to Nielsen's Heuristics and correct myself as I went if they did not meet those basic standards. Many of the readings covered the distinction between low and high fidelity prototypes, which allowed me to constrain my thought process to be more effective according to what is essential and required in each level of prototype. I've saved many of the readings on my hard drive by category so that I may refer to them in the future (I know I will definitely need them again!)

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Home Screen



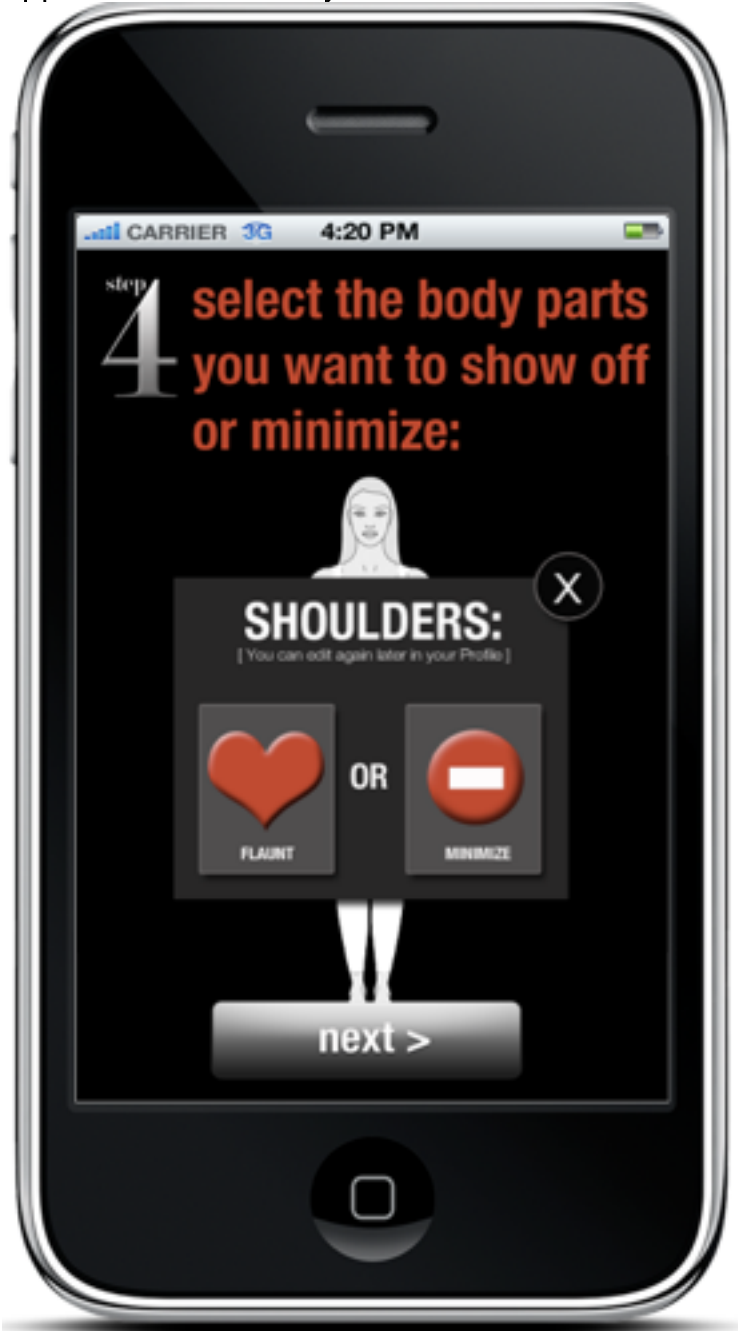
Appendix B: My Best Clothing



Appendix C: Select a Body Type



Appendix D: Edit Body Preferences



Appendix E: Fitting Room

