

Hello, I'm Casey

I'm a ***user experience designer*** (that's a fancy term for someone who makes technology fun, simple, and easy to understand). I help make and design ***cool stuff***.

Take a look at my portfolio or **read my resume** to see for yourself.

My personal design beliefs

When it comes to design, I firmly believe that:

- ① Understanding people is the first and most important step in creating a good experience
- ② Amazing experiences can be unlocked by making them accessible to everyone
- ③ Technology can do anything for people – nothing is impossible

Want to get in touch with me?

Reach out to me by email or **connect with me on LinkedIn** [↗](#).

Resume

Casey is a highly knowledgable, collaborative, and energetic user experience designer who uses the power of research and empathy to design and develop great software experiences. By combining her knowledge of design, development, and accessibility, she strives to show that anything is possible to make other lives better.

Design career

Design specialties

Universal design (accessibility) • Design and content strategy • Health and wellness • Financial/insurance • Web and mobile app design • Software development assistance and prototyping

Experience

Senior User Experience Designer, 2017-present

At ActiveHealth Management, I:

- 1 Provide design and product research and direction for five product teams
- 2 Provide input and feedback into web and mobile style guides
- 3 Provide hands-on assistance to improve software development and accessibility design practices
- 4 Work across the organization to build relationships with different internal product teams
- 5 Champion accessibility across the organization, helping teams design and build in an accessible way

UX Specialist, 2015-2017

At Sandia National Laboratories (contracted with AIS), I:

- 1 Provided user research for five product teams
- 2 Provided input and feedback into corporate intranet style guide and user experience standards
- 3 Designed and developed prototypes used for usability testing and design guidance
- 4 Conducted usability testing and provide recommendations for improving products
- 5 Championed accessibility and mobile-first design

Interface Design Specialist, 2012-2015

At State Farm (contracted with Blackwell Global Consulting), I:

- 1 Provided design direction from project inception to deployment for seven product teams
- 2 Provided input and feedback into corporate style guide
- 3 Mentored and assisted fellow designers on how to use the design system to create pixel-perfect, accessible designs

Experience Designer, 2010-2012

At Lexmark International (contracted with AeroTek), I:

- 1 Provided design direction, code snippets, and quality assistance for five agile development teams across the world
- 2 Unified experience of printer applications with the out-of-the-box experience
- 3 Worked across the organization to build relationships with different internal design organizations

Lead Web Designer, 2009-2010

At GameZombie.tv, I:

- 1 Led design strategy and execution of GameZombie.tv
- 2 Winner of two 2010 Student Webby Awards

Additional relevant experience

- 1 Research Assistant, Shareable Interfaces Research Group, 2009-2010
- 2 Design Consultant, Hanapin Marketing, 2009
- 3 Associate Instructor, Indiana University, 2008-2010
- 4 Writing consultant, RPI Center for Communication Practices, 2007-2008

My skills and tools

Skills

Design: Content and design strategy • Mobile apps • Paper prototyping • Responsive web design • Sketching • Storyboarding • Whiteboarding • Wireframing

User research: Affinity diagramming • Card sorting • Competitive analysis • Contextual design • Heuristic evaluation • Interviews • Journey mapping • Paper prototyping • Participatory design • Usability testing

Tools

Rapid prototyping: Axure • Adobe design suite • Balsamiq Mockups • Microsoft Office • Sketch app

Software development: Aria • Bootstrap • HTML/CSS/JavaScript • PHP • React • WCAG 2.0, 2.1 • WordPress

Additional information

Education

MS, Human-Computer Interaction/design: Indiana University, 2010

BS, Electronic Media, Arts, and Communication: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 2008

BS, Computer Science: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 2008

Contact me

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Tales of Badges

Connecting people at conventions through the love of cosplay



Background and problem space

What is cosplay?

Cosplay is the art of becoming of one's favorite character from anime, television, and comic books, and other pop culture icons. Cosplayers gather (5.5 million in the United States alone) at conventions across the world to share their passion with the world and find other people who share their love.



Cosplay in action – Britain and USA from Axis Powers Hetalia (from Genericon 2010).

And what problem does this design solve?

"While I love to cosplay, I want people to engage with me and the love of my character, but I am often uncomfortable in front of other people while in character."

This quote from one of my interviews gave me the insight to create something that would allow him (and others) to be comfortable in character (and have more fun, too).

User research

What drives this human interaction?

I started by attempting to understand what makes people interact with cosplayers by performing the following research:

Observing and learning from observers of cosplayers



Watching people interact with a life-size cardboard cutout of a cosplayer



Watching how people talk about cosplayers



Leading a focus group on observers and cosplay

I staged two "encounters" for observers to interact with cosplayers to see how they react to them. I supplemented this experiment by conducting a focus group of individuals who go to specific events (called conventions) where they have interacted with cosplayers firsthand.

I learned the following from this research:

- 1 Observers would only interact with cosplays that were familiar or piqued their interest
- 2 Observers who thought the quality of the costume was exceptional would also create an opportunity to interact with the cosplayer

Conducting interviews with cosplayers

During this time, I also conducted interviews of five cosplayers to understand their motivations for cosplay, why they enjoy this activity, and what causes them to interact with others while in character.

"Everyone has a reason to cosplay – whether it's to fit in or it's to break out of their introversion. When I wear a costume, I am much more social and people just come to me. It's a confidence booster that makes me stay physically fit."

This quote from one of my interviews gave me an insight I had not seen yet. I then decided to try cosplaying myself to learn more and become inspired about creating potential solutions.

Trying out cosplay for myself



I learned how to sew from my friends and put together my own costume.

It was much more difficult than I had anticipated, but I was able to assemble all of the pieces of my character and travel to a convention to try out cosplay and see what I could learn from the experience firsthand.



I spent one day at a convention to play the role of "observer"



I spent one day at a convention to play the role of "cosplayer"



I was also fortunate to speak to other cosplayers at a panel

By attending a convention, what I had learned from my interviews, experiments, and focus group was confirmed. I also saw an opportunity for a design solution, as observers would take pictures of well-done costumes (whether familiar to them or not) and **interact with each other as if they were close friends**.

Using design thinking to solve the problem

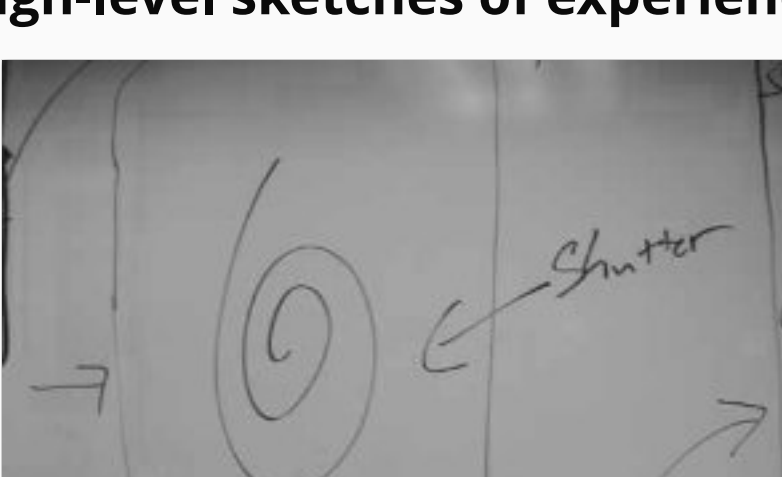
Sketching ways to solve the problem

With this information I had learned from my user research and firsthand exposure to the problem space, I began sketching ways to solve the problem.

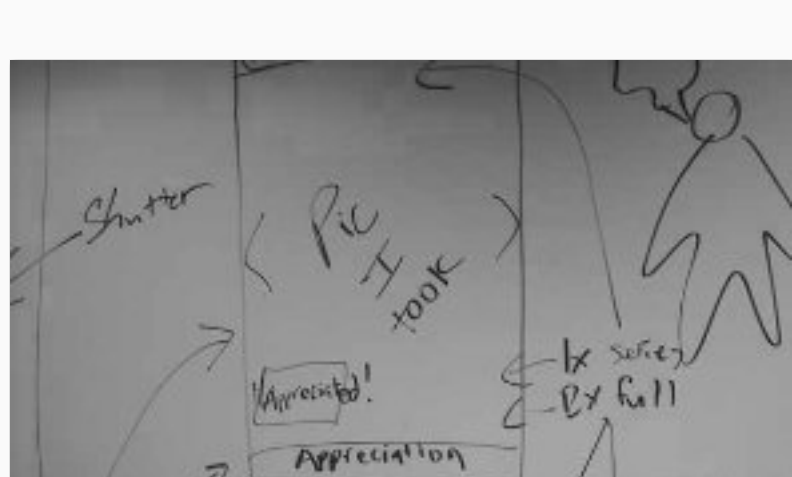
High-level sketches of experience



A smartphone app could recognize a costume



And when the observer takes a picture



The observer would be given an opportunity to learn about the character

While this wasn't the only concept I had made, it seemed like the most logical and natural solution because it **provided an opportunity for people to interact with the unknown** in a new, almost magical way, that didn't take away from the experience of going to a convention.

How the experience would work

This design may seem rather simple, but the design would actually be doing the following on behalf of the observer:

- 1 The design would use image recognition on the costume to find the character and cosplayer
- 2 The design would also look up information about the character and the cosplayer in real-time to support and continue the interaction between observer and cosplayer

Validating the design approach

Prototyping the experience on paper

To validate my assumptions about the design approach, I made a paper prototype of the experience to see if the solution would match the needs of observers.



I had participants select a cosplayer



Participants would pull up their phone and take a picture



And I would play the computer to show the participant a snapshot of the experience

After multiple rounds of testing, I learned the following:

- 1 The core experience worked well and was fun for the observer
- 2 Each observer had different needs to learn about the character (some wanted a full description, some wanted to know about the cosplayer, and others wanted the universe they were from and the character)
- 3 Observers wanted to leave feedback and appreciation for a job well done

Testing a more refined experience

In addition to testing the experience on paper, I invited four additional participants to test the experience. I asked them to take a photo and leave a comment of each cosplayer. You can try the experience, too.



Cosplayer 1

Cosplayer 2

Cosplay group

And what did participants think?

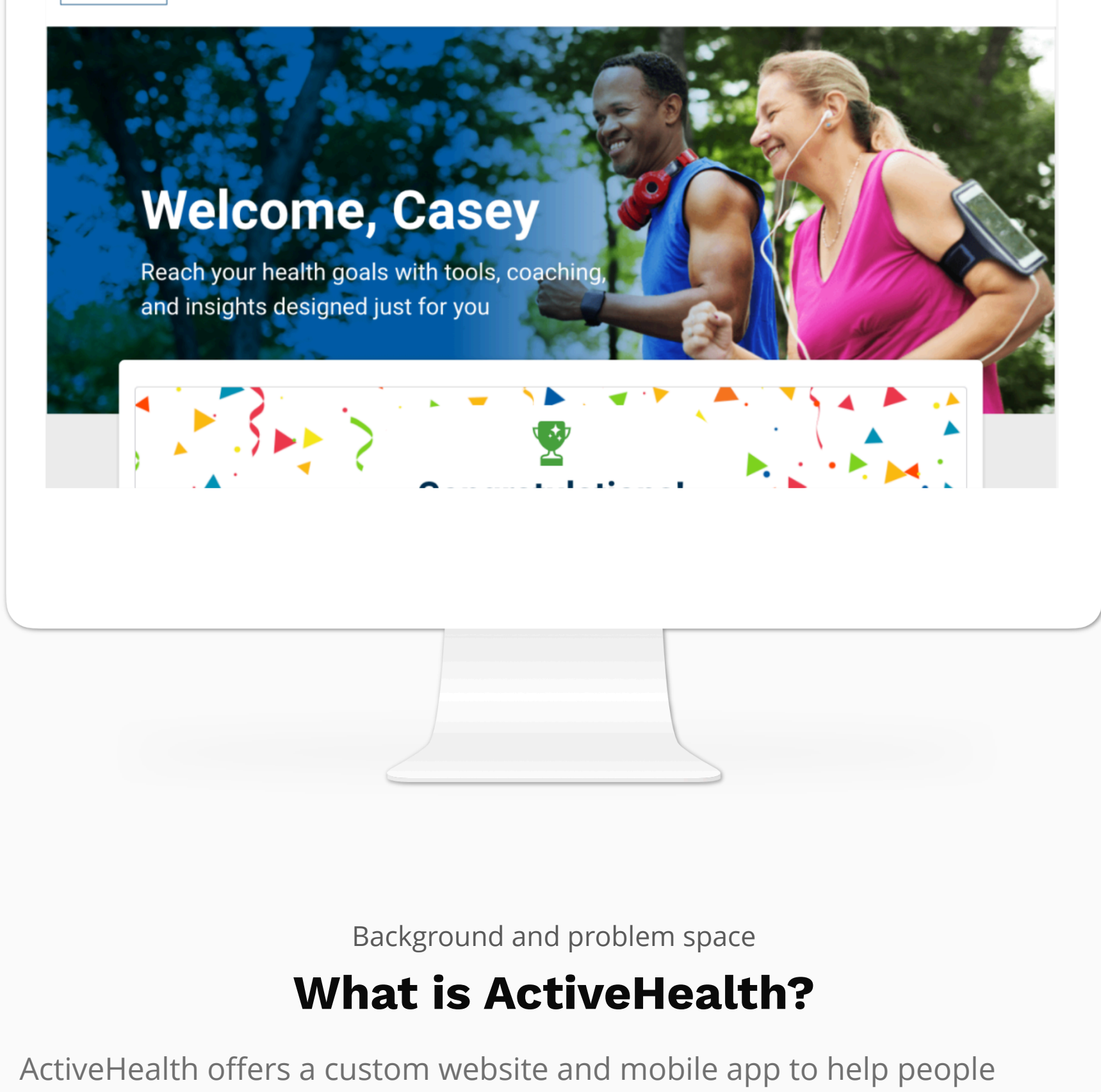
- 1 "The design **made me more confident** and adds more emphasis to the cosplayer. **It's more exciting for the person who is cosplaying** – that's the big thing."
- 2 "It would be handy to have this at a con because I don't know them all. If you can use an iPhone, you can use this."

Participants were also excited to have a means to learn about the people around them at the convention, learn about new characters, and make new friends.

ActiveHealth Refresh

Making a simpler, more engaging experience to learn about health

To protect client confidentiality, I've changed some details of this project.



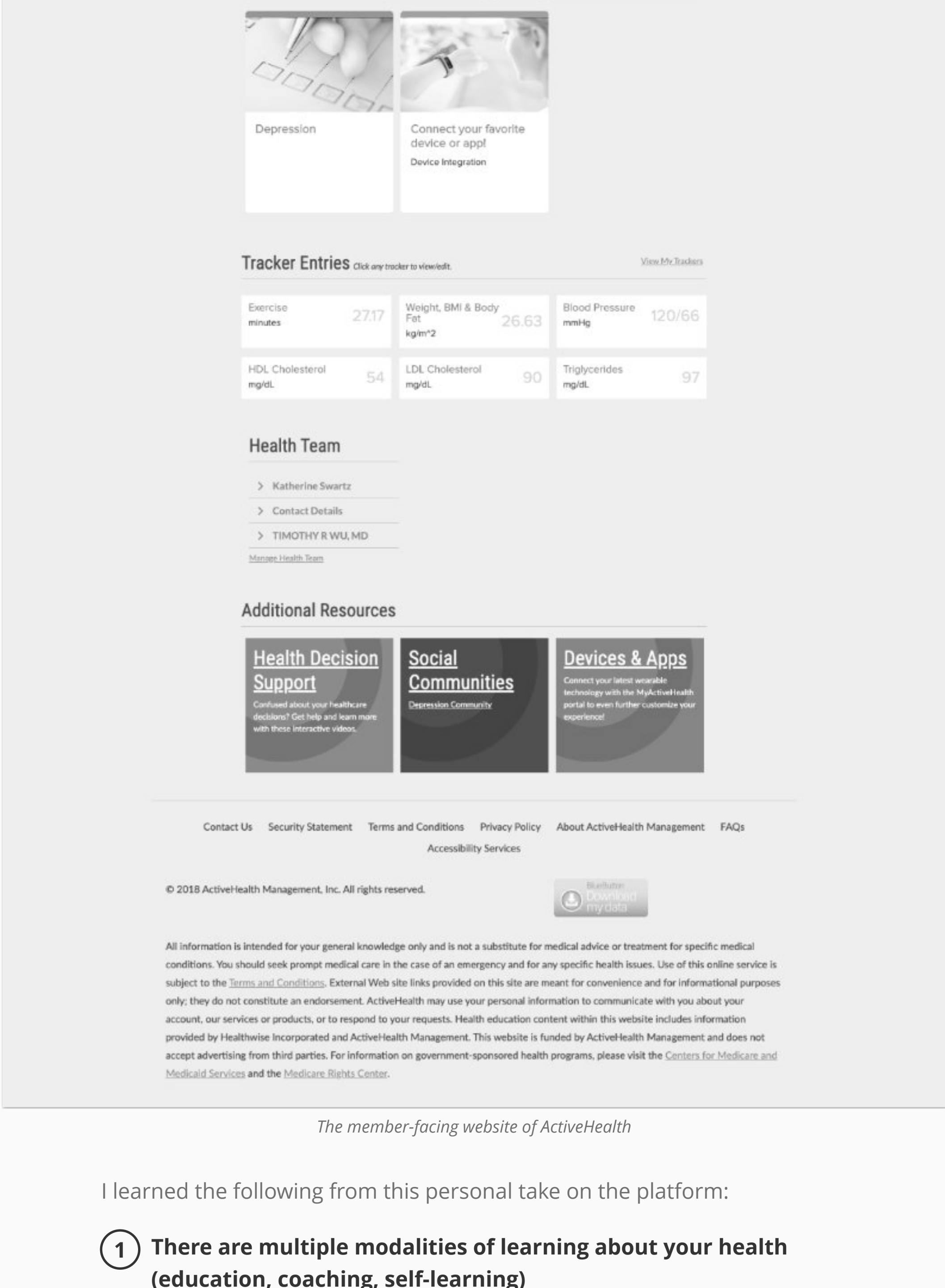
Background and problem space

What is ActiveHealth?

ActiveHealth offers a custom website and mobile app to help people become more engaged with their health. ActiveHealth was looking to not only offer more types of ways for people to engage with their health, but they also wanted to find ways to make the experience more polished and more useful to their members. It was my job to help the team figure out ways to make the most of the website and the mobile app.

Understanding the platform itself

One of the first activities I performed was to understand the ins and outs of the platform. I spent each day for a year using the platform to understand what value members actually get.



The member-facing website of ActiveHealth

I learned the following from this personal take on the platform:

- 1 There are multiple modalities of learning about your health (education, coaching, self-learning)
- 2 It was not an easy way forward after logging in to see what was available or what I needed to do
- 3 There was not a coherent voice of what the product was offering to me
- 4 There were many areas of the experience that were difficult to use and not friendly to those who use assistive technologies

Looking through prior user research, some of these points were also echoed, but were worded as *"I can figure it out, eventually"*.

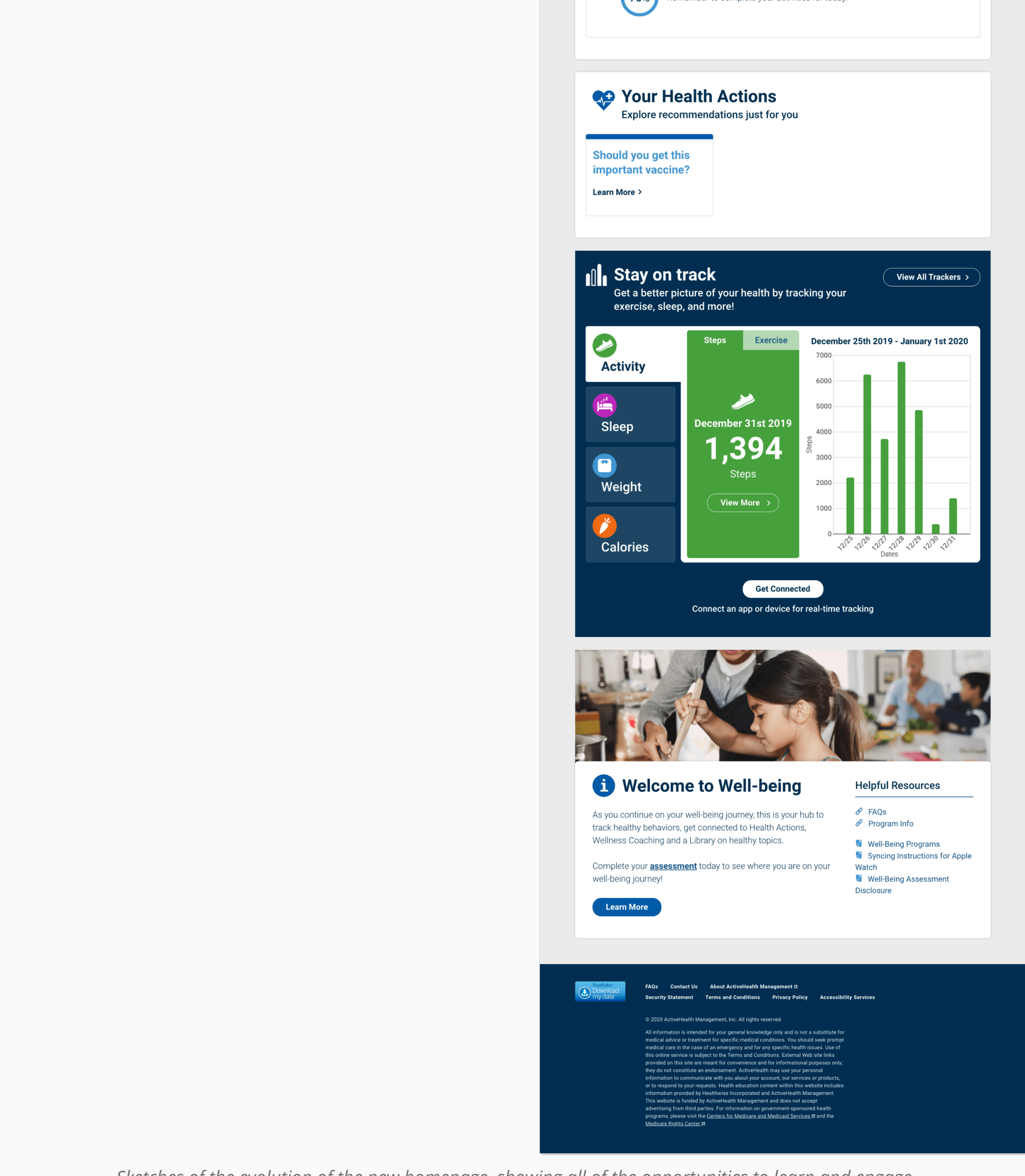
I then worked with the organization to better understand what each product in the platform was doing and what the intended experience was meant to be. To help the organization, I delved deep into each of the main sections of the website to understand what was there and what opportunities to improve the experience could be made by also improving the experience for all members.

Creating a new opportunity

Putting a new experience together

From all of this research, it was time to help reframe the experience to make it easier for members to understand and get started working on their health. Now, when members log in, they can see what was available: a health assessment, rewards, coaching, health actions, information from their corporate HR team, and addition health-related goodies.

After getting buy-in from the team, I worked on created some initial concepts of what the experience could be:



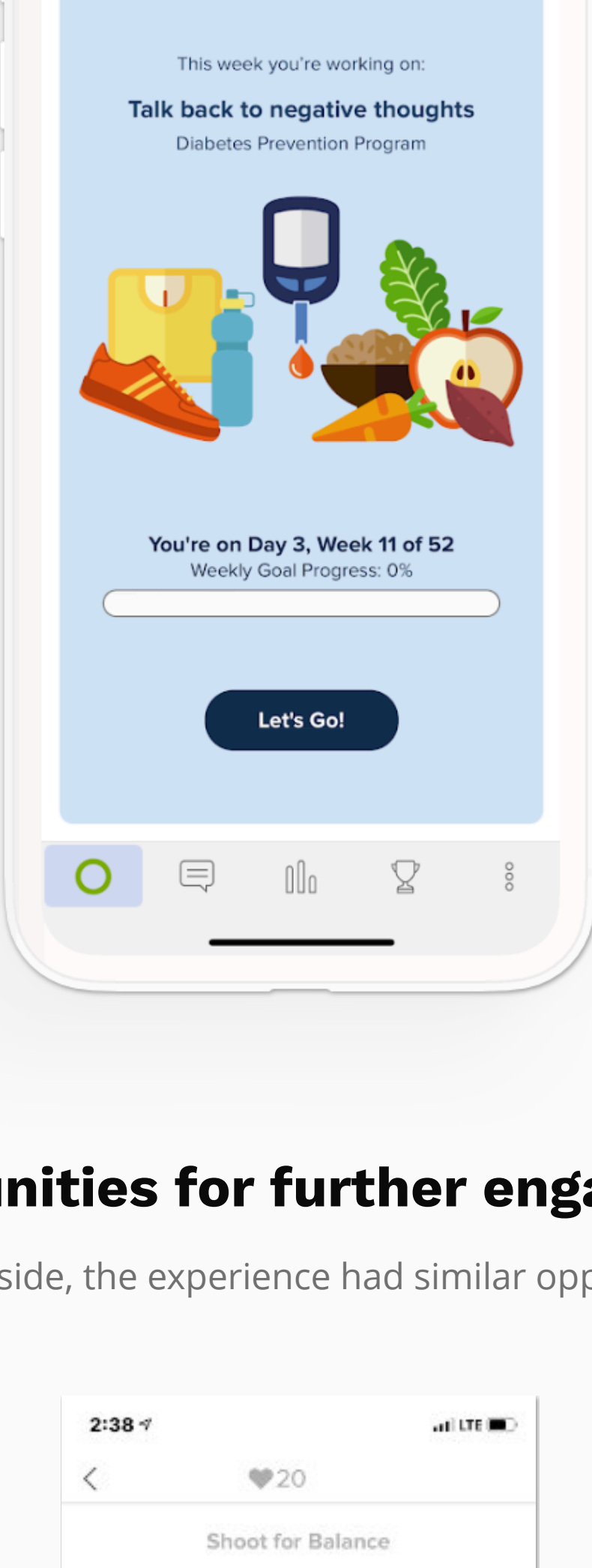
Sketches of the evolution of the new homepage, showing all of the opportunities to learn and engage with one's health

Once the actual design work started, each iteration of the design not included feedback from project stakeholders, but also included feedback from prospective and actual users of the site. After about 6 iterations and feedback from 2,000 people, the new version of the site launched with over 1 million users, reporting how much better the site's visuals and content were than what they had seen.

But work wasn't done yet.

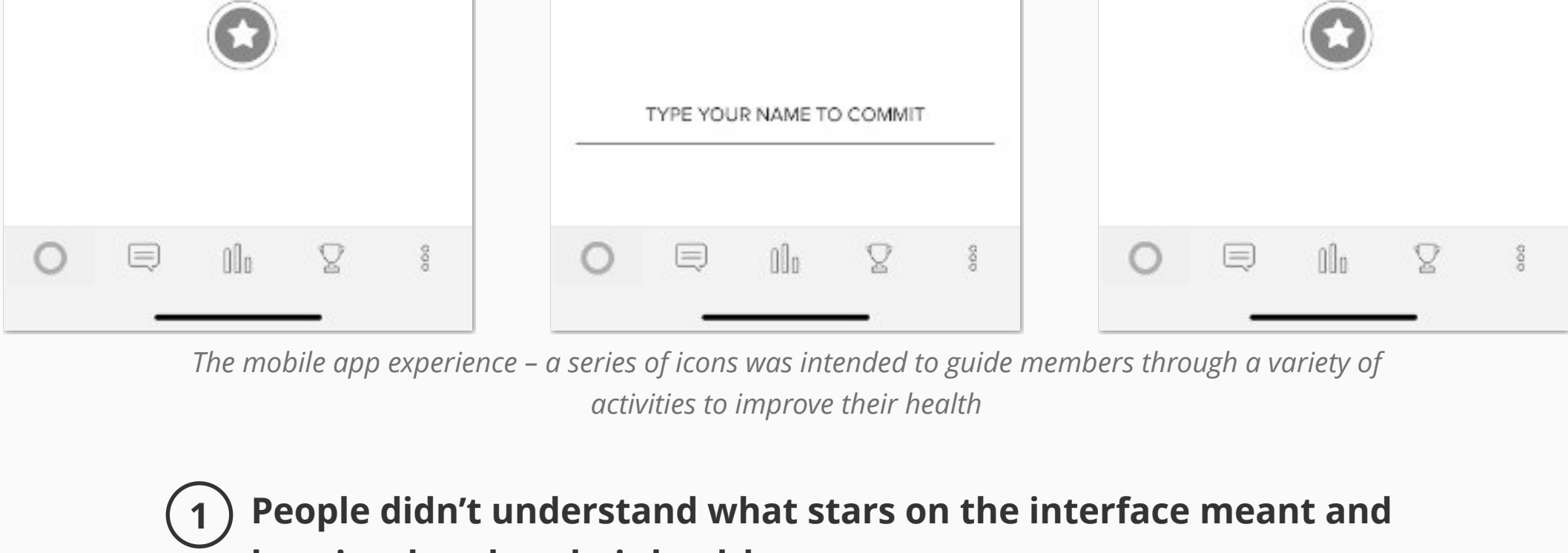
Improving opportunities outside of the website

A better app experience, too



Opportunities for further engagement

On the mobile app side, the experience had similar opportunities for improvement:



The mobile app experience – a series of icons was intended to guide members through a variety of activities to improve their health

- 1 People didn't understand what stars on the interface meant and how it related to their health
- 2 People didn't understand what their "progress" was towards meeting their health goals
- 3 The overall experience suffered from purely relying upon seeing in order to enjoy and take value from the experience

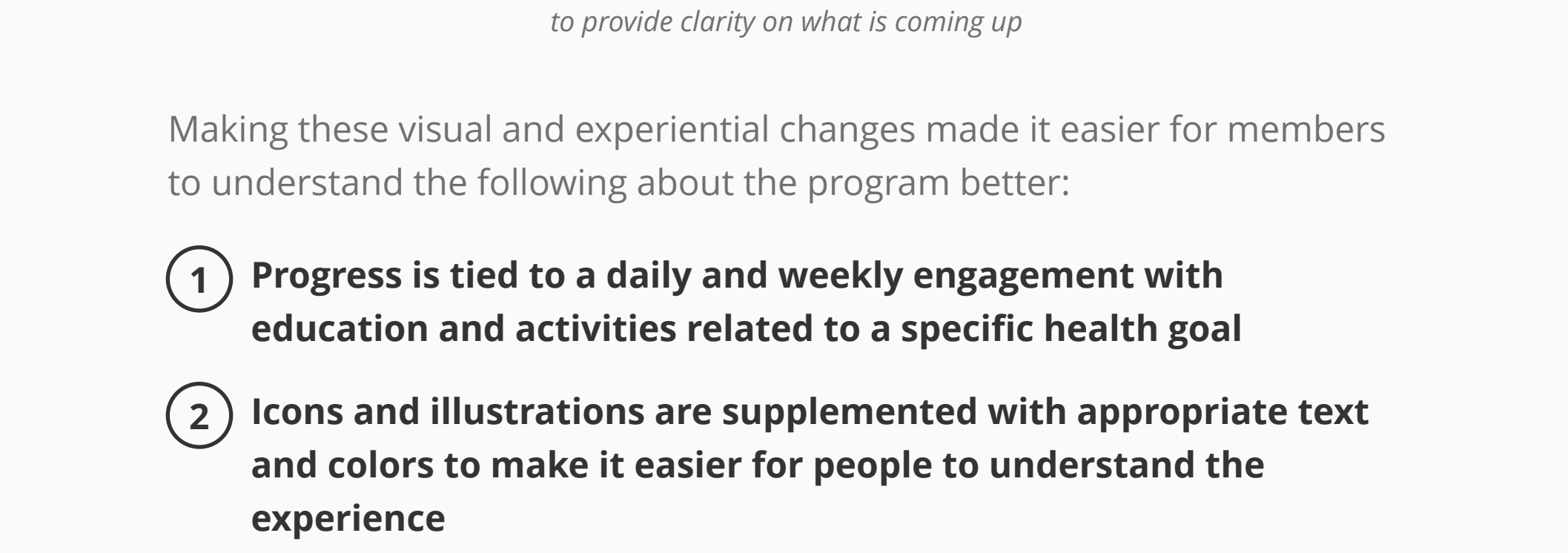
With these observations in mind, I followed a similar process as with the website: I used the overall experience, noting major takeaways about the experience, but also noting where a combination of fun and accessibility together can be brought together.

After creating multiple different concepts and iterations, I helped the team re-frame the experience in a more goal-oriented type of way: tying together a visual of a health goal and a list of activities members can do.



Sketches to explore how the experience can tie together progress and clarity of what needs to be done next

What did people think of the new design?



The new experience leads members through each day's activities with a balance of text and imagery to provide clarity on what is coming up

Making these visual and experiential changes made it easier for members to understand the following about the program better:

- 1 Progress is tied to a daily and weekly engagement with education and activities related to a specific health goal
- 2 Icons and illustrations are supplemented with appropriate text and colors to make it easier for people to understand the experience
- 3 By better showing daily and weekly progress, there were new opportunities to celebrate success

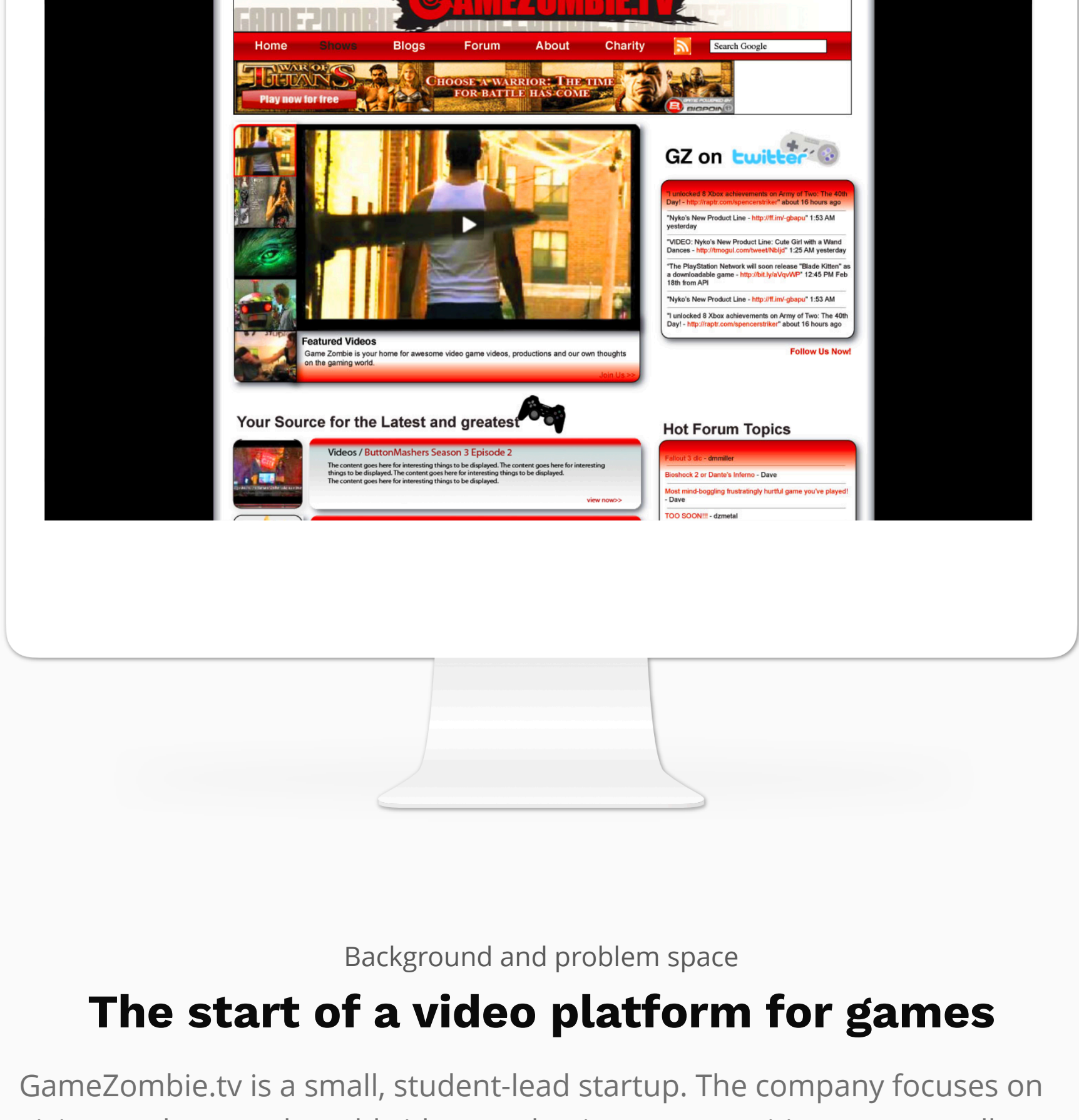
When the new design was put in front of current users and prospective users, the new design, even though it had more "clicks", had a way to draw people to using the app more (and even enjoying the new experience).

As some of our participants mentioned:

- 1 "The graphics are cute!"
- 2 "So that's what the stars meant!"

GameZombie.tv

Launching the award-winning platform for video game shows, podcasts, and blogs



Background and problem space

The start of a video platform for games

GameZombie.tv is a small, student-lead startup. The company focuses on giving students real-world video production opportunities to eventually get a job in the gaming or entertainment industry.

When I joined GameZombie.tv, they had a small website up and running. It contained the company's videos, but they wanted to grow into a bigger platform that would also be a center for blogging, behind-the-scenes, and podcasts related to video games. My role was to help the company have a larger presence, while also generating more avenue from ads.

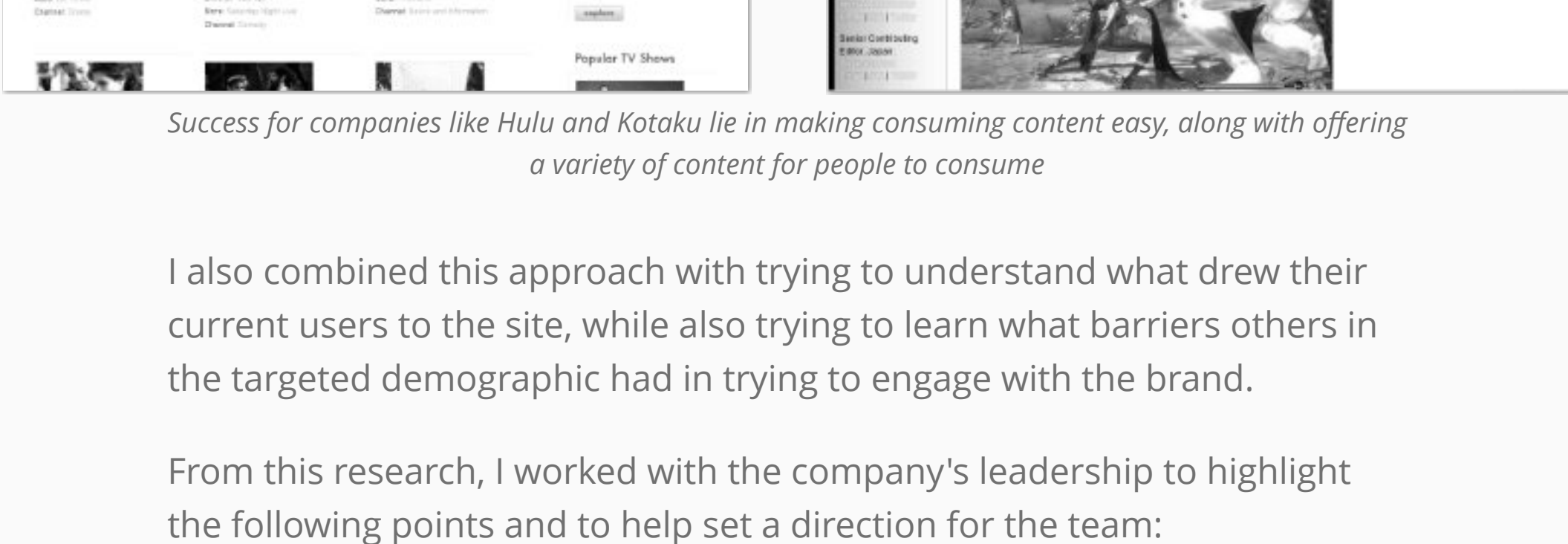


The origins of GameZombie.tv – a video player that was an initial entry point to the company's other content

Creating a product strategy

How does GameZombie.tv grow?

With such a high goal in mind, I started to research and provide ways to add in the new types of content into the mix, while also growing their video space. I began looking at video websites and gaming blogs for inspiration (and to also learn how they are successful with their content).



Success for companies like Hulu and Kotaku lie in making consuming content easy, along with offering a variety of content for people to consume

I also combined this approach with trying to understand what drew their current users to the site, while also trying to learn what barriers others in the targeted demographic had in trying to engage with the brand.

From this research, I worked with the company's leadership to highlight the following points and to help set a direction for the team:

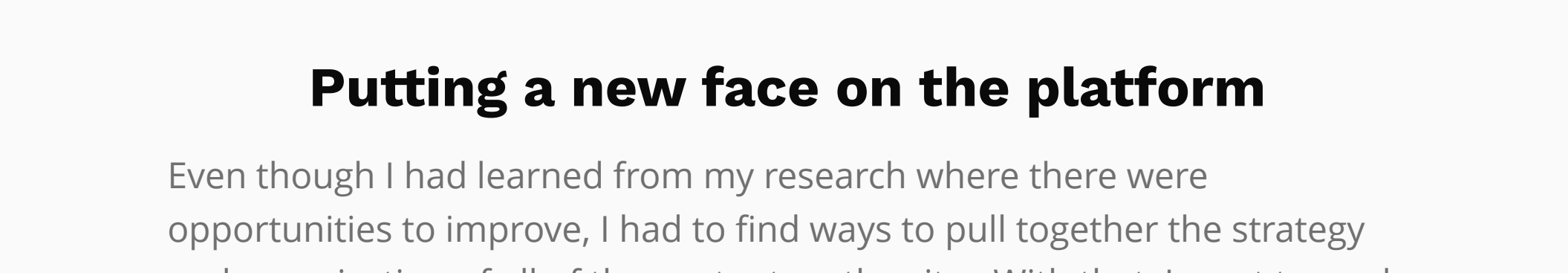
- 1 The best blogs and platforms had a synergy between their videos and blog content, which created a loyal fan base
- 2 As a small brand, those outside the company needed context to help under what a "Game Zombie" is and what it does
- 3 To show the volume of content that is available on the platform, a small video player on the homepage wasn't enough to engage people

Executing the new platform

Bringing all of the content together

To bring all of the content together on the platform, I first performed a content inventory of all of the content. From reviewing the content myself, I quickly learned that I needed some assistance in organizing all of the content (because even though I know a lot about gaming, it would be better to bring in actual users of the site to help me organize content).

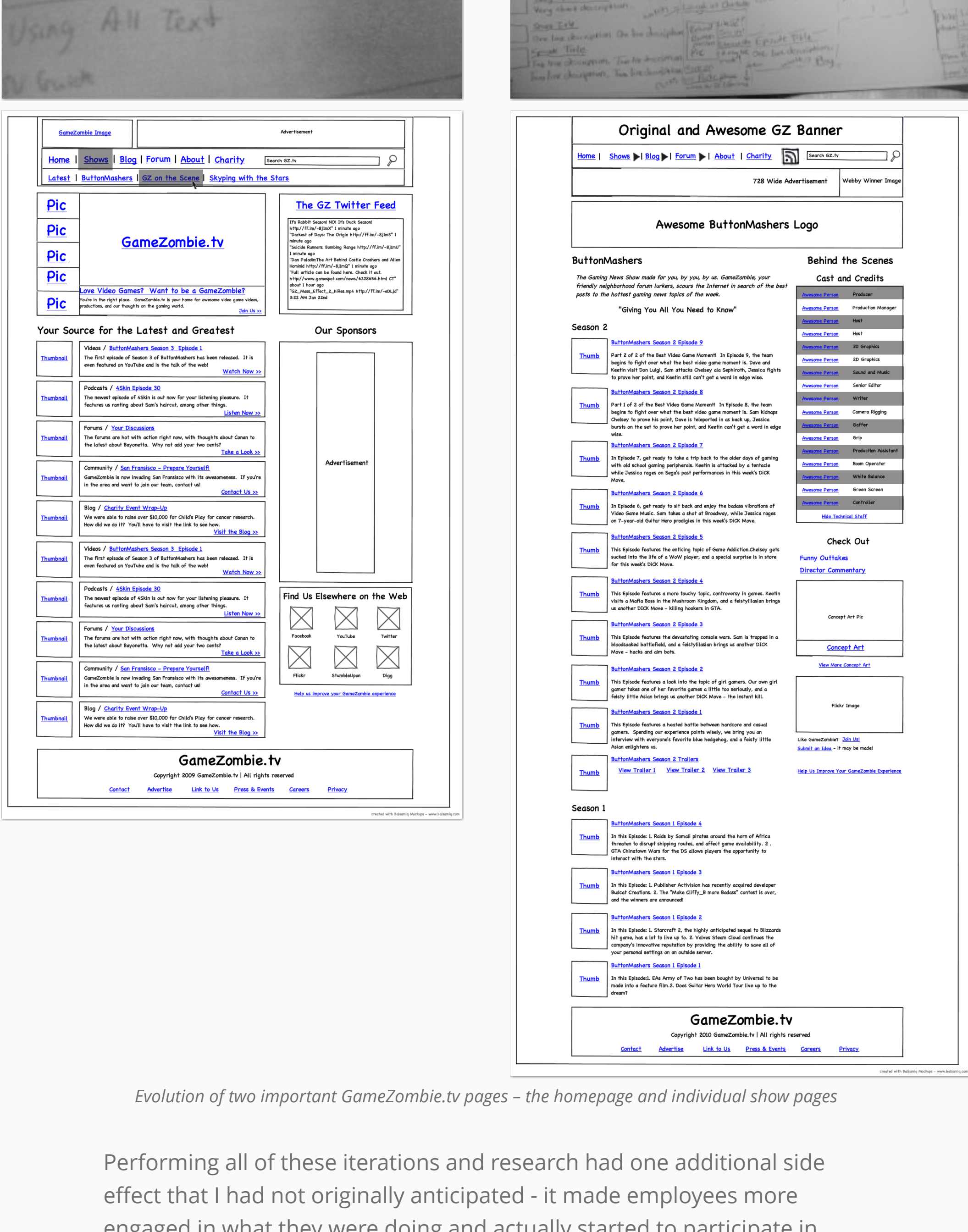
I wrote all of the content users could consume on the site on small index cards, and I had participants sort the cards in meaningful ways.



To help users understand all of the content available, I had participants perform a card sort of all content on GameZombie.tv

Putting a new face on the platform

Even though I had learned from my research where there were opportunities to improve, I had to find ways to pull together the strategy and organization of all of the content on the site. With that, I went to work on creating multiple iterations of how the company can bring the new experience.



Evolution of two important GameZombie.tv pages – the homepage and individual show pages

Performing all of these iterations and research had one additional side effect that I had not originally anticipated - it made employees more engaged in what they were doing and actually started to participate in giving feedback during design reviews.

And after all of the hard work...



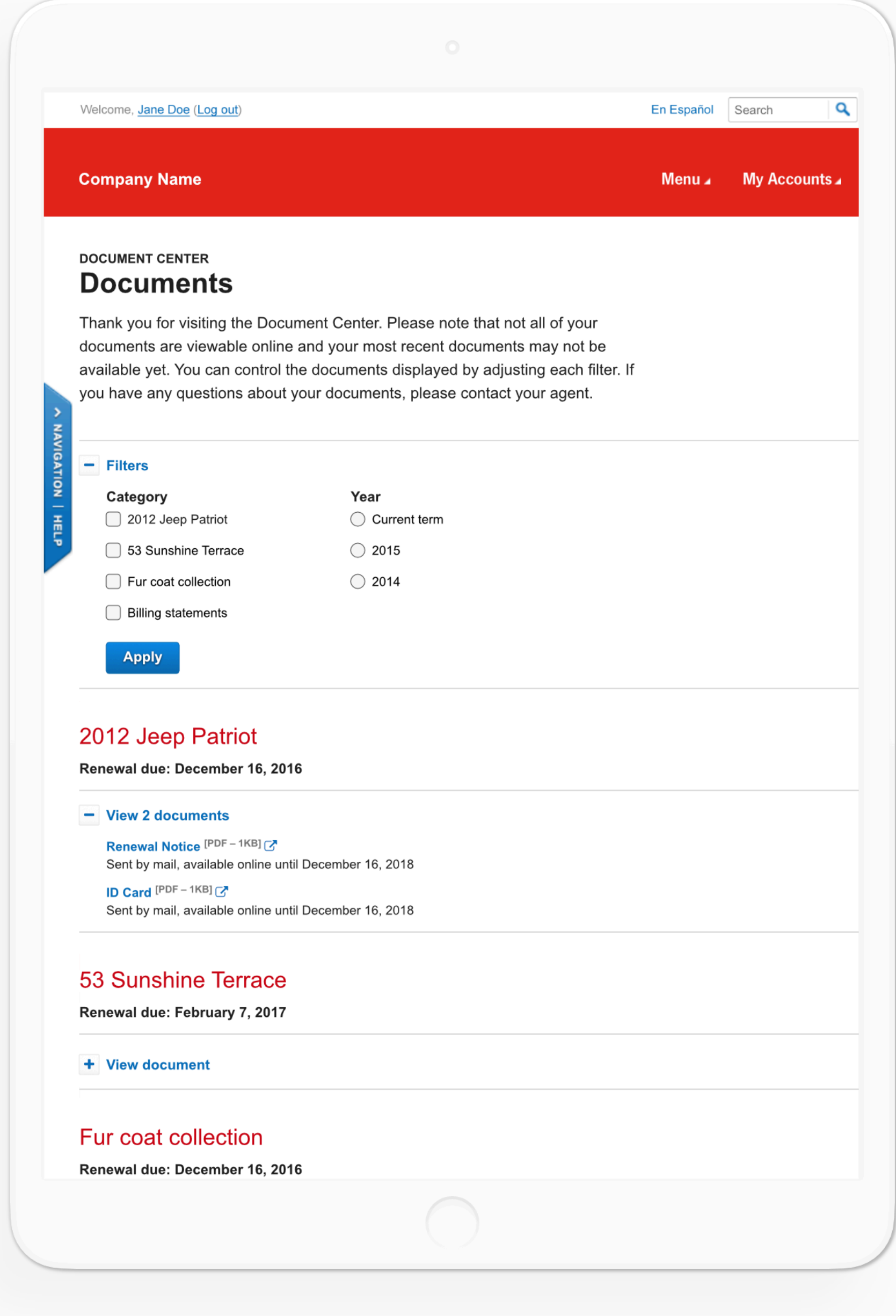
The next iteration of GameZombie.tv – a portal to videos, reviews, and original content

The new GameZombie.tv platform launched. There were still more opportunities to execute on, but the design was very received by its users. It was so well received that the design earned a Webby award for our efforts.

Document Center

An easier way to access all insurance paperwork

To protect client confidentiality, I've changed some details of this project.



Creating an opportunity for design

Working with a design in-progress

When I first started working on the Document Center, I picked up a design that was well underway. My task was to assist the team through the rest of the design process: visual design, usability testing, and deployment.

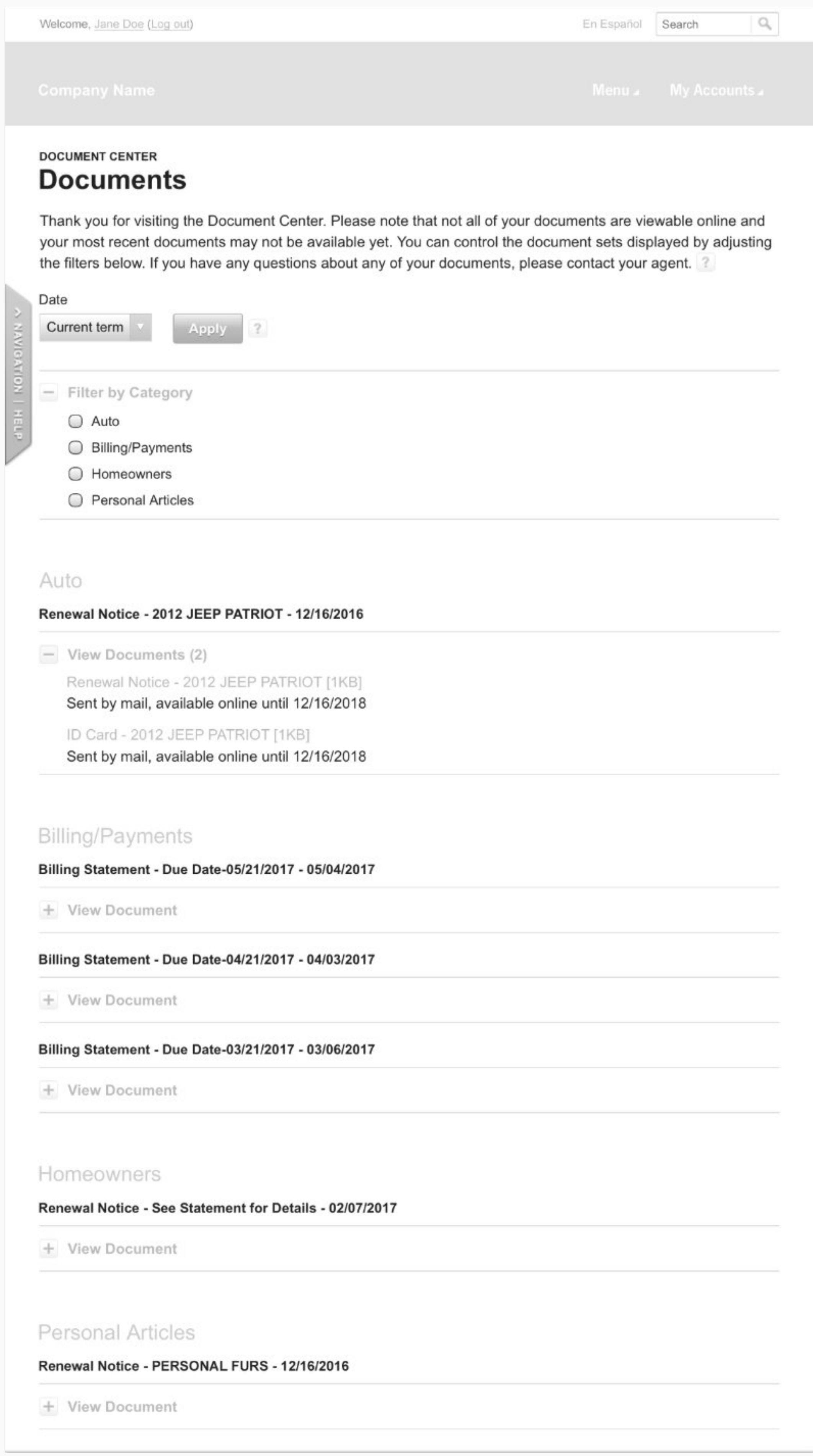
I faced the following design challenges in the design I was continuing:

- 1 Each document has different legal rules on how long it is visible on the website
- 2 Backend systems only contained logic that related documents by how they were mailed to customers
- 3 The project team was resistant to using patterns from the rest of the website for their project

Testing out the design as could be built

I had a hypothesis during these conversations that there might be a few potential issues with the design – the organization of documents and if customers would have trouble accessing documents from their mobile device. I let the team know of my concerns, and I brought these potential issues up to the company's usability team.

During usability test creation, the usability team worked with the business area to create scenarios for testing, but they also added in questions and scenarios that were aimed to also draw out information that would address my concerns. During each hour session (a total of 7 sessions), participants found it easy to find the page of documents on the website, but when asked to find documents related to their policy, they had a little bit more difficulty.



Example design used for usability testing at the company.

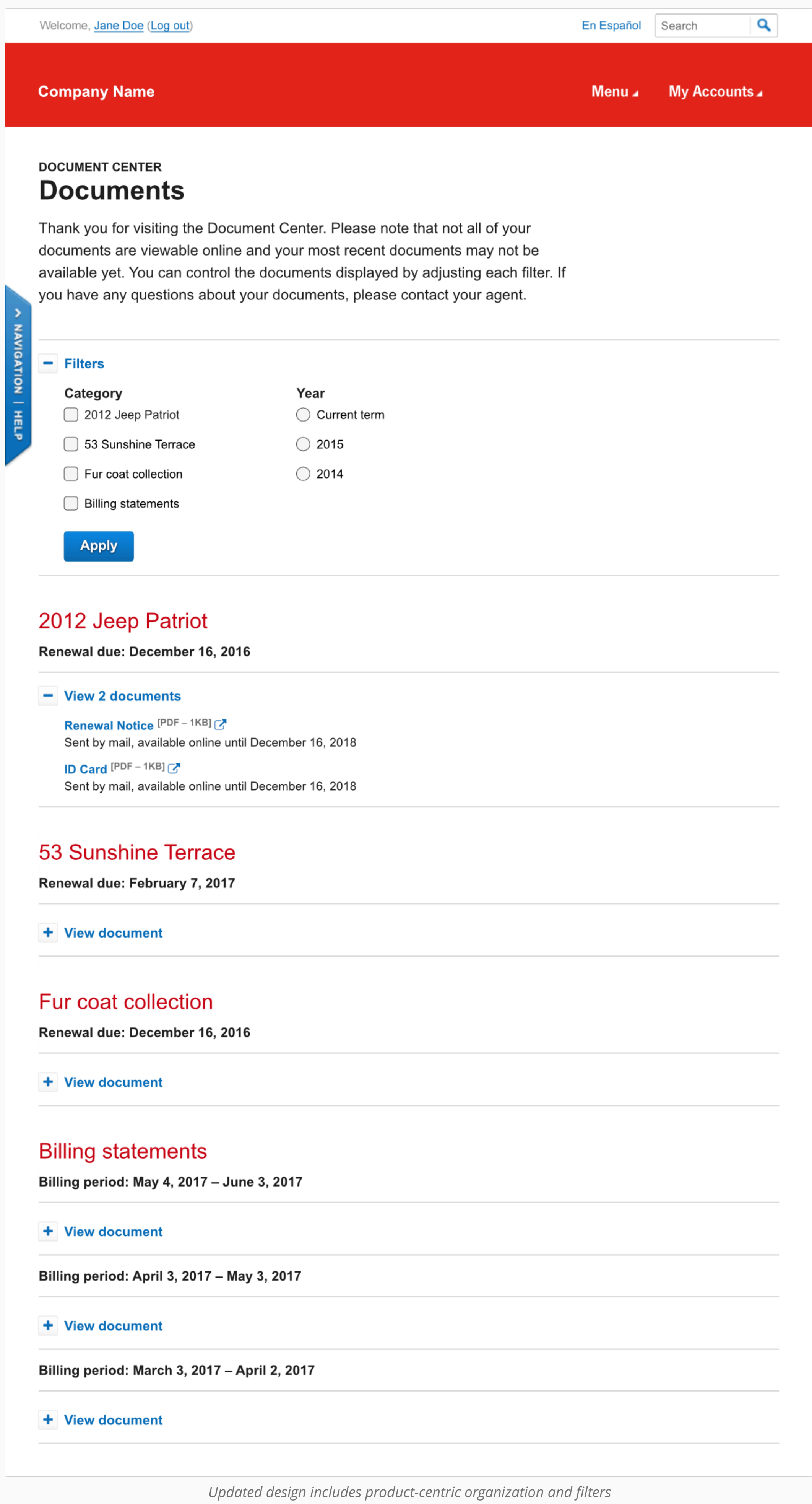
As participants said during each session:

- 1 I think of *documents for my truck* or *documents for my house*, not *all auto documents*
- 2 It's also pretty tough to get to my documents on a phone - it's not bringing up something when I tap on it

Bringing the team forward

Making the results of testing actionable

The team was let down by the results of testing – after all, they had spent over a year designing and building the experience, and it wasn't received well for their customers.



Updated design includes product-centric organization and filters

I updated the design to help the team move forward with the results of testing:

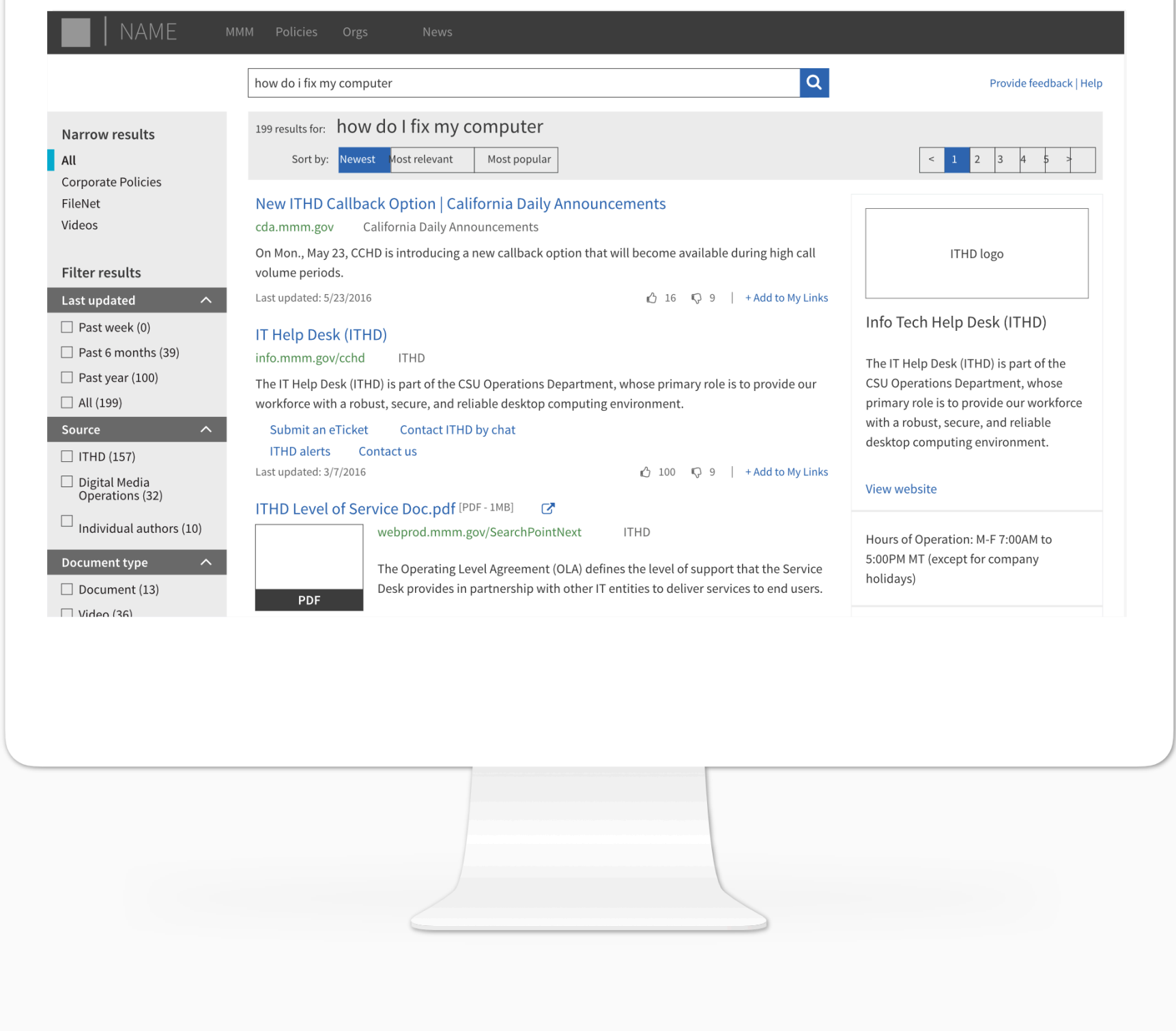
- 1 The team can start to work on the logic of associating product documents together and powering filters
- 2 The design systems team can work on making touch targets larger for common design components
- 3 The new design can be tested again and shared with other areas of the company for awareness and testing again to show that this direction is valid

Even though the team had to deliver the experience was tested at the time, this design helped me to get more accustomed to some hard decisions that are in the real world: even if a design isn't perfectly usable, having the functionality out there that can be quickly improved upon is also a valuable path forward for the team.

Corporate Search

Efficient and simple search for tools, processes, and more

To protect client confidentiality, I've changed some details of this project.



Background and problem space

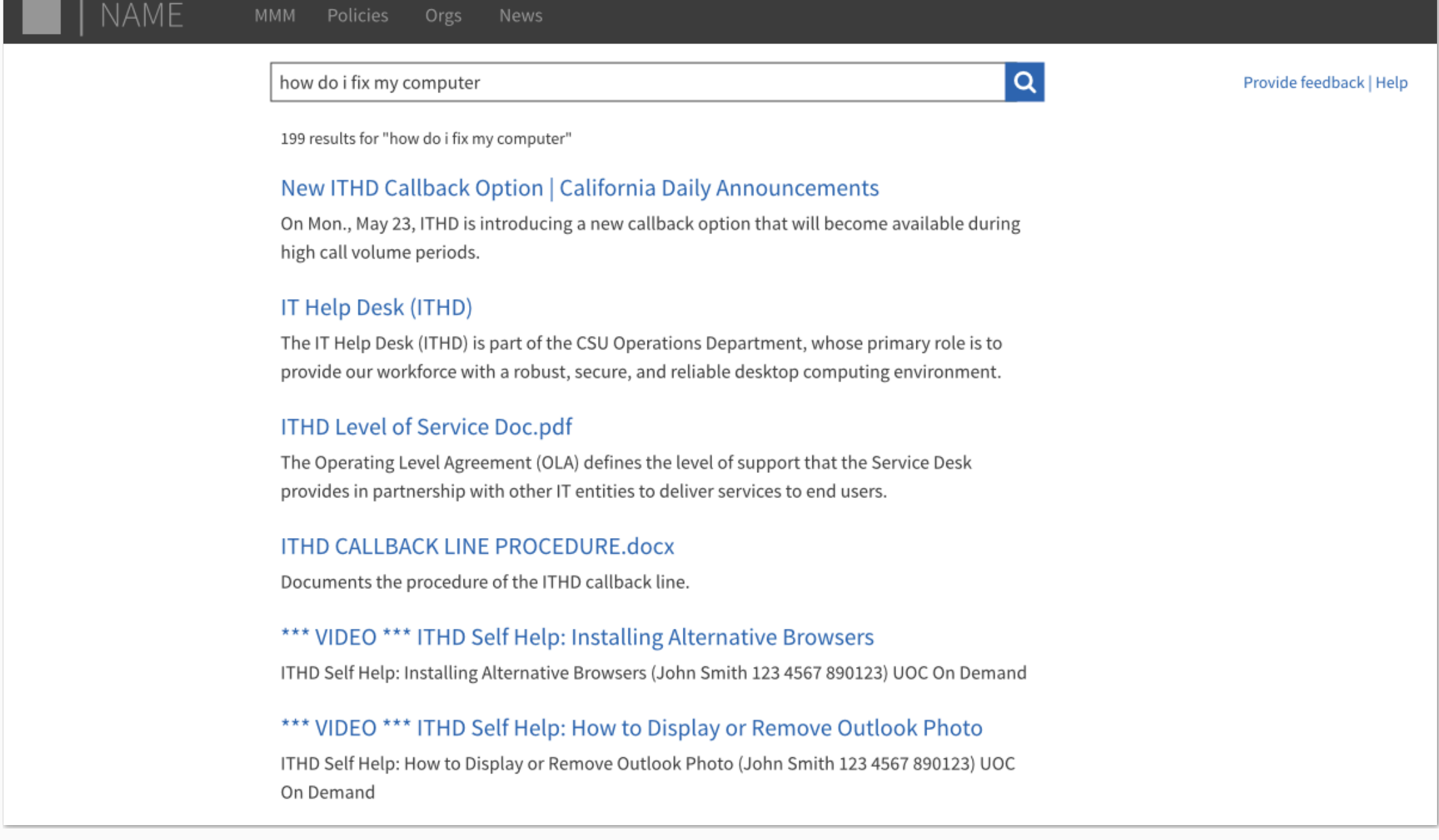
The need for Corporate Search

Corporate Search is an important utility for many workers in the government. It connects them to company information, tools, processes, and procedures needed to perform their job correctly.

Unfortunately, this utility had a notoriously negative experience among workers. I had to figure out exactly why workers hated search and provide ways to help the company improve search.

User research

Determining Corporate Search's problems



Example search results for a sample search at the company.

In order to determine where the negative feelings came from, I met with workers across the company to watch how they used search and where the utility did not match expectations.

To account for different types of workers' needs, I ran a large and comprehensive study to bring out this information. I led **16 one-hour moderated virtual interviews** over multiple work locations at the company. In each session **I conducted interviews** about their experience with search and had each participant **complete 10 tasks with a new search prototype**.

From watching workers use search and talking to them about their experiences, I learned the following:

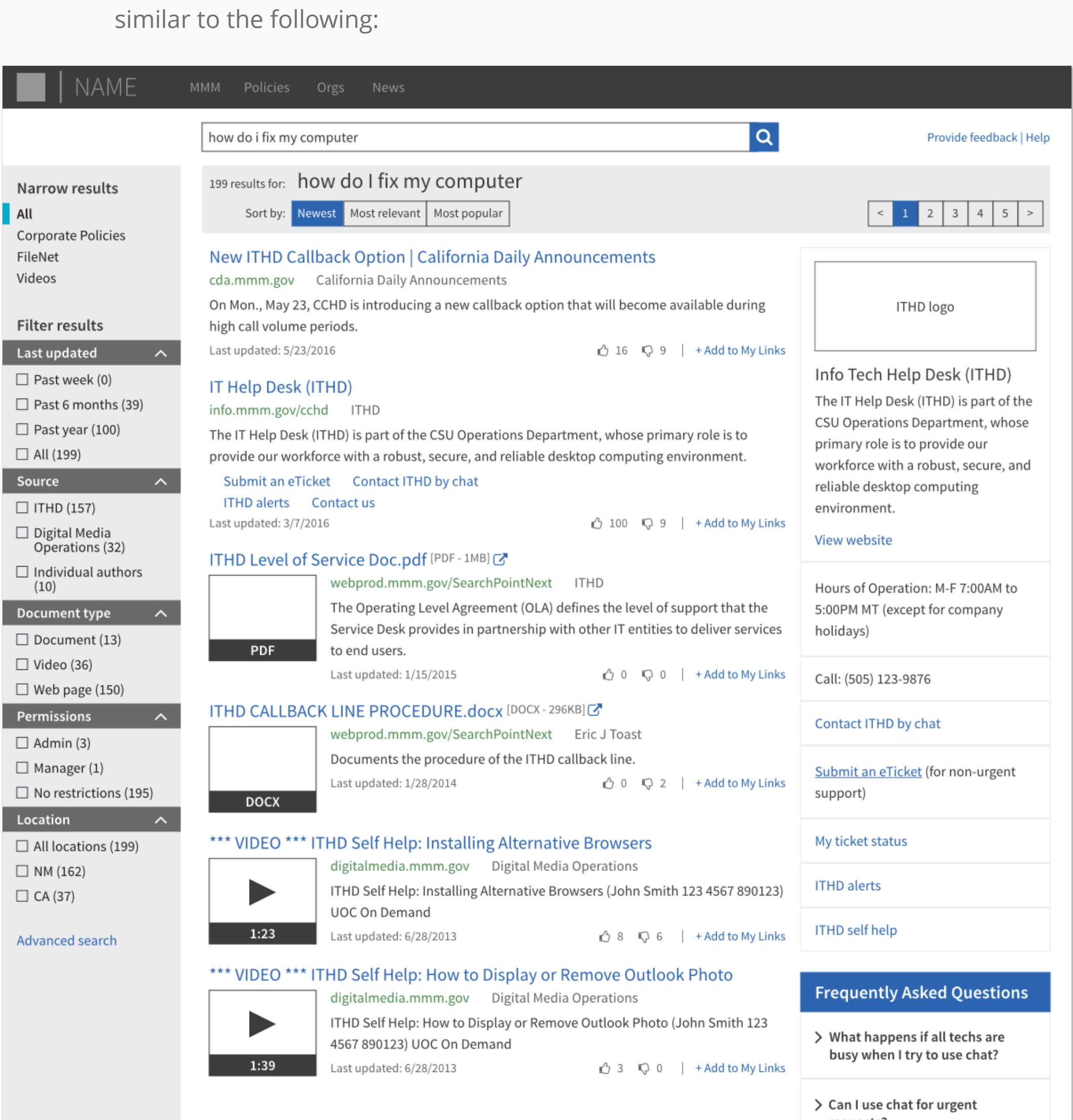
- 1 Things that workers already knew (or could easily ask someone nearby) were easily findable
- 2 The language workers used to find something became a guessing game as to whether or not they used the right terms to find something
- 3 Search pulls up resources and documents that are out of date (often giving incorrect information)
- 4 General information is brought up, causing workers to have to do research on each result or call someone to find the right answer
- 5 Results would be shown that the worker does not have proper access to

Designing an improved experience

Making results actionable from testing

I used these findings to create a list of **58 prioritized recommendations** for how the organization to continuously improve the search experience.

In addition, I helped the team understand how they can turn these recommendations into a new experience. I provided a series of mockups similar to the following:



Updated search results proposal with improvements based on the results of testing.

This experience would be powered by the following updates to make the experience better for workers:

- 1 Content managers can use metadata that the search engine can use to display current content
- 2 Content managers can provide timely, targeted information to allow workers to access answers to frequently asked questions
- 3 Search results can be sorted, grouped, and filtered to allow workers to narrow down search results more efficiently
- 4 Search results can show thumbnails of documents, pictures, and videos to help workers know if the search result is useful or not
- 5 Workers can rate search results to help others and the technology know if a resource is useful or not
- 6 Useful resources can be immediately saved and brought up as workers need it

When these recommendations and designs were delivered to the Corporate Search stakeholders, **they were delighted** to understand why their utility was hated and to get an action plan as to how to make the application more liked. **Workers enjoyed the new experience**, as it showed them that the organization was listening to them; they also liked the fact that their feedback was being used to create something more useful at the company.