The Challenge:

How can we improve the research process for designers and creative thinkers?

I wanted to explore how I could help designers to collect & collate research material simply and intuitively while also allowing them collaborate and share their ideas easily. This is the story of how I designed & developed a Saas web application for creative thinkers called DesignBox

My Role: **UX Design, UI Design, Strategy Development, Front-end Development**
Research, Concept Development, Visual Design, Brand Development, Usability testing, Wire-framing Prototyping, Html/CSS/JavaScript
Duration: 3 months

Tools: Paper Prototyping, Interviews, Google Forms, Sketch, Invision, Balsamiq, Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign, Sublime, GitHub
Link: www.Designbox.Github
Link: www.InVision

Design Box: CaseStudy

DESIGN**BOX;**

DesignBox is a Saas web application which allows designers and creatives to collect information, collate it in a single place and create simple presentations that can be shared quickly with clients ad colleagues. A user can create and save simple documents, images, links & video, then collaborate with others. DESIGN-BOX allows you collect research, collate into presentations & collaborate with clients & colleagues throughout the design process.

The goal is to create a product that is easy to use, intuitive, and accessible anywhere with any devices. Say goodbye to typical browsers' book-marking tool, and experience the power of Pinterest, Delicious, and Evernote, combine with the visual fluidity of Paper and the collaboration of Murial.

Key features:
Collect links, images videos & notes,
Collate into boxes for easy reference
View research as list mode or presentation
Collaborate with clients and colleagues.

Competitive Analysis

List of features:

	Mural	Evernote	Google Keep	Paper App
Intuitive/ Ease of use	3	0	2	3
Discussion board/blog	3	3	0	0
Easy to collaborate	3	3	0	0
Note-taking	2	3	1	2
Make, edit and clear lists	2	3		
Social network sign in	3	3	3	3
Strong search engine	3	3	0	0
Free trial	2	3	3	3
Create folders/board/tag	3	3		
Save video, audio	0		0	0
Easy to navigate	3	0	2	2
Rich in features	1	3	0	0
Strong UI	3	1	2	3
Clear instructions/ easy to learn	3	0	2	3
Comment, write over documents. picture etc	3	2	0	3
Link to calender	0	2	0	0
Link to contacts	3	3	0	0
Send reminders	2	3	3	0
Easy to bookmark urls		3		

01

Competitive Analysis

Mural: https://mural.co/
Strong collaboration tool, visual, intuitive, design & idea generation focused

Strength	Weakness
• Collaborate in real-time, easy to share	• Only online app
• Clean UI	• Very design process driven, niche audience
• Easy to navigate, Intuitive navigation structure	• No Calender link for planning
• Very visual and flexible interface	• Works best for teams
• Agile friendly & design precess friendly	• No option to make personal notes
• Sticky notes to jot down ideas fast	• Monthly subscription
• Youtube,Vimeo,Slideshare, Evernote & Google Drive friendly.	• Poor type capabilities

Opportunities	Threats
• Improve list/calender option	• Niché market
• More media options	• Only really useful if working in a team
• Save boards as presentations	• People still like to collaborate/brainstorm in person
• More individual functionality	• Still needs other apps to manage a project/
• Integrate with Print?	• Companies need to invest/not individuals

Evernote: Feature rich, easy collaboration, resource collection easy

Strength	Weakness
• Feature rich	• Interface is functional but difficult to warm to
• Strong collaboration options	• Free option only has basic functionality
• Resource collection easy (url,files images etc)	• Confusing navigation
• Powerful search option	
• Free for basic version	
• Save out presentations	
• Online and offline option	

Opportunities	Threats
• Potential untapped design market	• Saturated market with new competitors
• Very general service,Customisation might work	

01 Competitive Analysis

Paper App: https://www.fiftythree.com/
Makes notes+save images+sketch . Strong UI but limited functionality.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Notes, lists, draw, import images options	• Limited features
• Boards can be used as final presentations	• Limited media(no Video, audio etc
• Easy to navigate and learn	• Limited collaboration option
• Simple, uncluttered interface	• App only for phone and tablet
• Ex attention to design detail, colour, type etc	• No calender link or reminders
• Flexibility of pen+Paper but on Screen	

Opportunities	Threats
• Become desktop compatible?	• Limited target market
• Increase functions and become a full design management tool	• Design will always want pen and paper!

Google Keep: https://www.google.com/keep/
Save url links , add notes, lists, photos and audio.

Srenghts	Weakiness
• Add notes, lists, photos, and audio to Keep.	• No files download
• Clean UI	• No Video
• Share via email	• Limited functionality
• Strong search option	• No offline option
• Works on your phone, tablet and computer.	• Email share is the only collaboration option
• Free	

Opportunities	Threats
	• Allot more powerful tools our there
• More media options needed	• Cannot be used offline
• Increase functions & become full project tool /	• Allot more function rich tools our there
• Presentation option?	

01

User Research
Interviews & Survey

The Interviews:

Location:**Kalp, Dublin**:
Interviewee **Brenda (Graphic Designer) Carla (Interior designer) & Paul (architect).**
Age 22-50. Working in Dublin.
The small research budget for this project meant using local designers who were willing to meet and be interviewed in exchange for coffee and cake! I also collected more quantitative research through Google surveys.
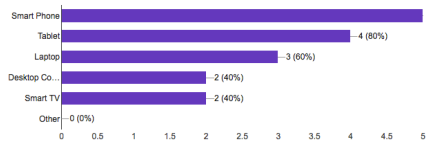
The feedback:

" *I love paper! The satisfaction of having a paper list completely ticked off!*
" *Using a pen/pencil, drawing notes helps me think*" "*I always return to my paper notes & the satisfaction of crossing out lists is great*" "*Keeps eaze and speed of bookmarking in the browser is great Also like the tag option for creating "folders: and export and keep forever. Pinterest is also great for sharing boards with clients and looking back on projects. The public versus secret is also a great idea*" " *I use it cos its easy to use, can easy to add pictures, links, webpages. Able to add reminders. Able to add check boxes for lists.....*"
"*Evernote is really powerful but I only use it in work cos I have to, find it really annoying*" "*Hard to sketch in Paper app, keep meaning to but the Paper Pen but never get around to it!*" "*The interface in Evernote notes / reminders is annoying and not easy to use. Siri is better as it is voice activated and less work*" *I enjoy researching phase of a project but sometimes get stuck going around in circles . I also find it hard to communicate with non designer about my research and ideas. If I show them all the stuff I looking at, it really means nothing to them*"
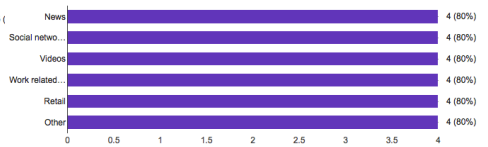
01

User research
Interviews & Survey

The Survey: **Google Forms:** 5 Survey responses : Interior designers, Web designer, Graphic designers and engineers. Age 22-50. Working in Dublin, London & Germany.
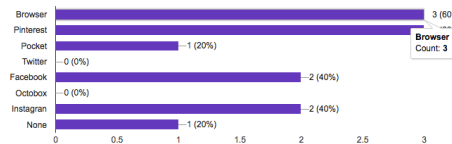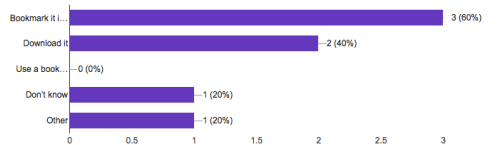
01. What devices do you own? (5 responses)

Smart Phone	5 (
Tablet	4 (80%)
Laptop	3 (60%)
Desktop Co…	2 (40%)
Smart TV	2 (40%)
Other	0 (0%)

03. What content do you look at while browsing online (5 responses)

News	4 (80%)
Social netwo…	4 (80%)
Videos	4 (80%)
Work related…	4 (80%)
Retail	4 (80%)
Other	4 (80%)

06. What specific tools or sites do you use to bookmark? (5 responses)

Browser	3 (60%)
Pinterest	
Pocket	1 (20%)
Twitter	0 (0%)
Facebook	2 (40%)
Octobox	0 (0%)
Instagram	2 (40%)
None	1 (20%)

Browser
Count: 3

05. If so, how do you save that content? (5 responses)

Bookmark it i…	3 (60%)
Download it	2 (40%)
Use a book…	0 (0%)
Don't know	1 (20%)
Other	1 (20%)

04. When you find a link or an image that interests you online, do you save it? (5 responses)
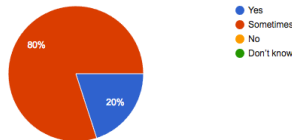
- Yes
- Sometimes
- No
- Don't know

80% / 20%

14 Do you prefer to write notes/lists on paper (4 responses)

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

50% / 25% / 25%
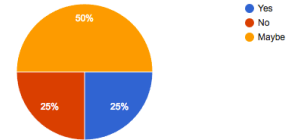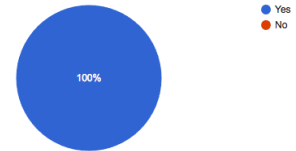
19. How often do you share resources (like files, images, links, etc.) and collaborate with your coworkers? (5 responses)
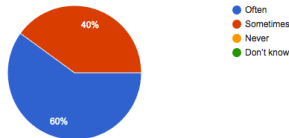
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never
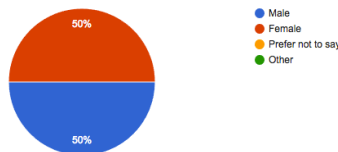- Don't know

40% / 60%

20. Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account? (5 responses)

- Yes
- No

100%

25. What is your gender (4 responses)

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

50% / 50%

02

Defining the Problem & Feature Prioritization

Pain Points:

Ease of use. Bad experience with clunky functionality and text/list heavy content.

Searching through list - Text heavy interface: Content for this audience is usually visual and they are also visual thinkers and learners. They get frustrated searching for content in text list and wish for a more visual approach.

Sharing Research often & easily. Face-to-face meeting are useful but not always necessary or productive. Would rather less meeting but more online discussions about research and ideas.

Access on all devices: Need to collect and access anywhere/anytime. Too heavy function and app becomes slow on mobile devices.

Saving all types on content: Hard to remember where content was found and in what format eg, web link, document, video etc

Fluidity of paper: Miss the use of notebooks and written lists. Flexibility of thinking diminishing on screen.

Inconvenience of having to document or present research in another application when including the client and pitching ideas.

Goals:

Focus on **a more visual representation of research.**
Improve the **transition between research, sharing and presenting**.
Improve the drawing, **sketching options**.
Ease the process of **finding and categorising**
Balance functionality with speed and ease of use.

Persona 01

Katy : Designer
Organise, Hunt + Gather

"Right now, my computer can't take all of the images I'm trying to save. I need a simple way to capture and refer back to this stuff."

Katy is a Graphic designer and is a research fanatic, gathering everything possible to help her. Typically, she downloads an image or takes a screen-shot, and then she stores these on her computer. She had used Pinterest before, but not for work. She likes being able to pull up the site anywhere, but organising the content isn't the easiest. Also she would love to just print or turn research into mood-board or presentations. For notes, she defers to pen and paper. It helps her remember things, but she often forgets to take a note pad with her when she leaves the house. For to-do lists she loves The Scrum Board. It is pen & paper but so effective!!

Frustrations:	Needs:
1. Older computer = less hard drive space	1. Centralized way of organizing inspiration
2. Doesn't know what tools to use	2. Simplicity of pen & paper into device experience
3. Organizing is time consuming	3. Synced online, not computer
	4. Easy way to turn research into presentation.

About Katy

Female, 32 years old, Living in London, UK. Tier: Professional

Amy is a freelance designer but interviewing with several companies for a full-time position. She uses her phone to check Facebook and Twitter, and likes to jot down notes to remind her of things she needs to do. Amy loves to hit the beach with her two dogs, just an hour south of her. Swimming, running, and eating are her passions.

Persona 02

Amy : Design Entrepreneur Start-up
Organise, Observe v Forget

"I can never remember what I bookmarked, so having an easy way to view the stuff I like would be fantastic. Also I'm edging back to work after maternity leave and I realise with 2 kids, I'll have to be SUPER organised, even more than before!

Amy typically bookmarks content she finds interesting in the browser. However, she often forgets what she's bookmarked, and keeping track of it can be slightly overwhelming. She primarily uses her laptop at work to gather this type of content, but without it being synced online, she's unable to access it at home. She likes Pinterest cos its also great for sharing boards with clients and looking back on projects. Amy likes to keep notes for herself and for work but hasn't found a tool she enjoys. While she works closely with peers, she rarely shares resources with them. She still likes making lists with pen and paper and loves the satisfaction of having a list completely ticked off!

Frustrations:	Needs:
1. Keeping track of bookmarked content	1. Only accessible on work laptop
2. Ability to view at work and home	2. Hard to remember what's bookmarked
3. Wants easy note-taking software	3. Other software is difficult to use
4.Organize bookmarked content into subjects	4. Easy way to organise herself

About Amy

Female, 36 years old, Living in Dublin Ireland. Tier: Professional
Married with two kids. She is running her own small design company. When she leaves work, Susan doesn't take her laptop home with her, trying to distinguish the boundary between home and work. However, she often finds herself working at night to finish projects. Susan's an outdoors person and she loves camping and reading good books.

Persona 03

Daragh : Software Engineer
Organizer, share, make notes

"If I had a way to share inspiration with my team, we could save time from meeting constantly"

Daragh loves to save images he finds online for inspiration. He's bookmarked hundreds over the course of 3 years. However, the browser can just be slightly frustrating. Creating folders, managing them, etc. It's sometimes overwhelming and should be easier. He wants to collaborate with others on his team to share what he finds with ease. Subscribes to several software applications and can never remember passwords. Would love something that combines a few of those. Big fan of Evernote and uses it for everything. He adds pictures, links, webpages, reminders and also adds check boxes for lists. Used to write paper lists but constantly losing them

| Frustrations:	Needs:
1. Difficulty managing bookmarks	1. Share inspiration with his team
2. Too many different softwares	2. Organize content into groups
3. Not accessible on all devices	3. Ability to write and share notes

About Daragh

Male, Age: 26. Living and working in Dublin, Tier: Expert
Daragh is married, working professional in a US tech industry. He's worked at a number of startups in the UK, and is now leading a team of designers and developers. He's an early adopter, grabbing up the latest technology devices. Constantly on his phone his phone during the day and often communicates with team remotely. He's interested in photography. He loves trying a new restaurant every night if possible.

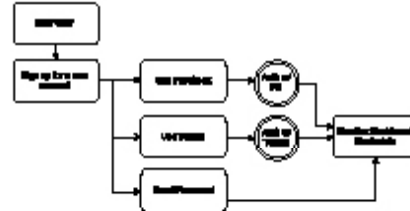# 03
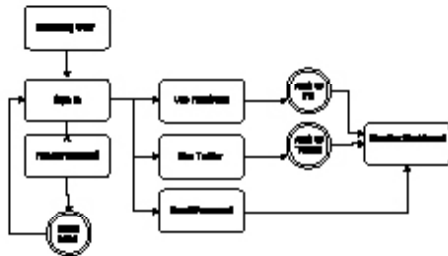
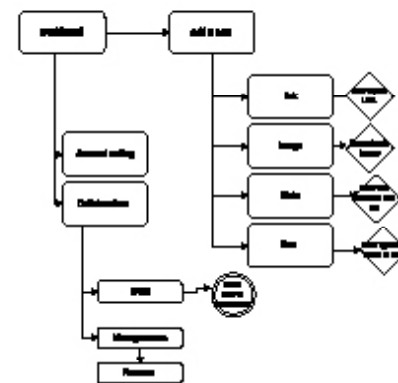**Wire-framing, User-flows**
Placement & Layout design
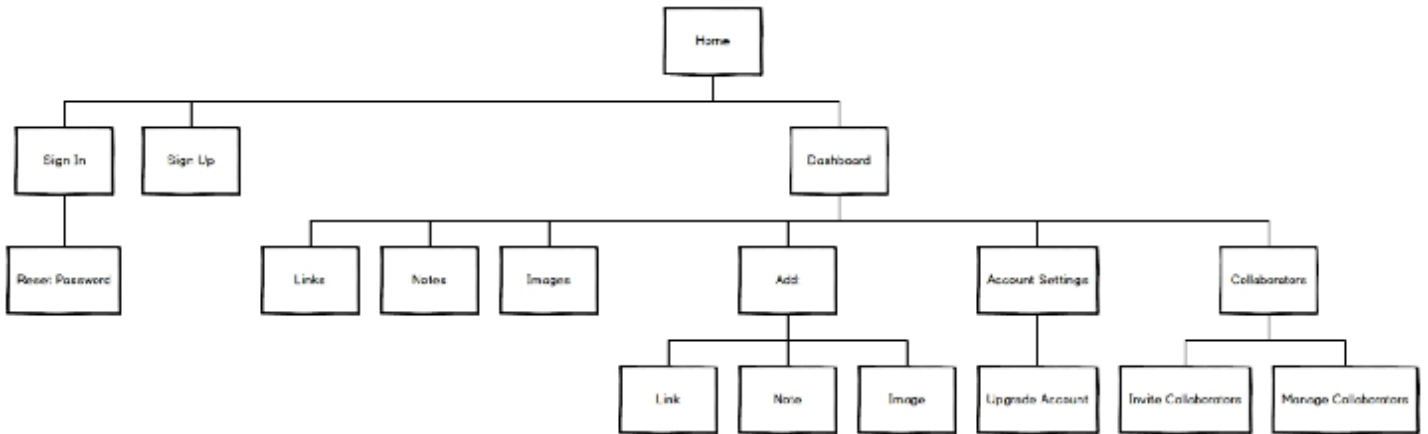
03

Placement & Layout design
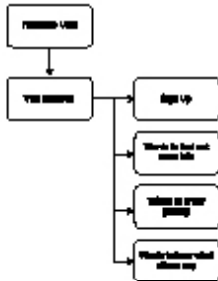
View Usability test questions
View In-vision prototype

Low fidelity testing Balsamiq mid fidelity wire-framing in Adobe Illustrator and usability testing in InVision. User flows that I tested 1.Sign in 2.Sign Up 3. Move to paid subscription. Add new image to dashboard

The feedback:

• Sign in and sign up seems clear to all.

• It took a while for 2 testers to find the setting options

• Tag line too long

• Users want to see what the interface looks like from the hero

• Liked that they could start for free without giving credit card details

• 3 testers commented that they are not seeing what value this has over

its competitors yet, all the same features?

Action:

Reposition settings and user setting

Reconsider what features may need to be added to i

Improve its USP

Add Item btn needs to be reconsidered throughout

Add picture of app dashboard to the hero page

04   Execution : Visual Language

Brand Vision: Strong and simple

Creative Audience

Minimal

Visually structured but flexible usage

Creative

Flexible templates

Media rich

Collaborative

Open and accessible.

A strong, simple, instantly recognizable mark inspired
by the block type from traditional print and overlapped with
contemprary layout, serif faces, and contemporary colour.

04 Execution : Visual Identity

HEADER

h1 Hauristica Bold
h2 Hauristica Bold
h3 Hauristica Bold

PARAGRAPH : LATO

For the complete experience, please enable Java Script in your browser. See plans for: businesses photographers students.Adobe is changing the world through digital design .
I am wire framing a new site and think that it would be so convenient to have 'lorem ipsum' in the type menu.

COLOUR :COMP

#0C152A	#4B5361	#6AA8B3	#8BA752	#333333	#E2E2E2	#F59E03

04 Execution : Typography

DesignBox uses bold typography to create stronger hierarchies and drama across the site. We're using Heuristisa serif font as a nod to traditional print note-taking and Lato for clean legibility body text.

Heuristical Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&*()_+

Heuristical Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&*()_+

Heuristical italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&()_+*

Lato light
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&*()_+

Latol Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&*()_+

Lato Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890!@£$%^&*()_+

04

Execution : Typography

Large bold type should be used to establish a clear information hierarchy. These are the recommended type sizes.

Hauristica Bold 48px
48px Leading / -20 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -2px Letter spacing

Hauristica Bold 36px
36px Leading / -30 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Hauristica Bold 32px
32px Leading / -30 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Hauristica Bold 28px
28px Leading / -36 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Hauristica Bold 24px
24px Leading / -43 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Hauristica Bold 20px
20px Leading / -47 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: -1px Letter spacing

Lato Regular 16px
18px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

Lato Regular 14px
18px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

LATO BOLD 13PX
16px Leading / 0 Tracking Dev Pixel Spec: 0px Letter spacing

LATO BOLD 12PX

04

Execution : Imagery

Photography rather then illustration will be used and the feel of the photography is important in order to connect with the target audience. It should conger up a feeling of creativity, iteration, a visual richness environment and community
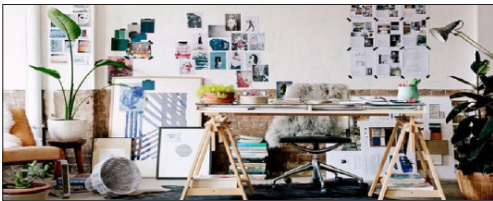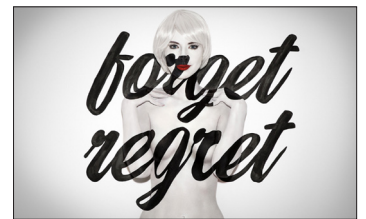
04

Sketch and InVision
Execution : Visuals