CRS Design System

Sprint 5 Final Presentation

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Meeting Agenda

Objectives

- Present final deliverables of the CRS Design System project

Agenda

1. Background
2. Process
3. Deliverables: The CRS Design System
4. User Testing Results
5. Recommendations and Limitations
6. Questions from Public
7. Discussion with LOC

Background

Project Overview

- The Library of Congress is redesigning the Congressional Research Service website, **CRS.gov**.

- As part of that process, CRS seeks to develop a **Design System** in Figma based on the **CRS brand** and the guidelines of the U.S. Web Design System, **USWDS**.

- The design system will then be used to create high-fidelity mockups of key CRS.gov pages.

Library of Congress (LOC)

- Oldest federal cultural institution in the United States.

- Collections include millions of books, recordings, photographs, newspapers, maps and manuscripts.

- Missions include researching inquiries made by members of Congress, through the **Congressional Research Service**.

Congressional Research Service (CRS)

- **CRS** is a public policy research institute of the United States Congress.

- CRS works primarily and directly for members of Congress and their committees and staff on a confidential, nonpartisan basis.

Design Systems

A **design system** is a complete set of standards intended to manage design at scale and maintain consistency using reusable components and patterns.

U.S. Web Design System (USWDS)

USWDS is a toolkit of principles, guidelines, components, page templates, and code that makes it easier to build accessible, responsive government websites.

"We built the USWDS to help build fast, consistent, responsive, accessible websites from research-strengthened components for the American public."

\- USWDS Website

Project Goals

- Create the CRS.gov design library in Figma

- Document the CRS.gov Design System, including a style guide and component documentation

- Create high-fidelity mockup of key CRS pages

- Validate and refine design choices through benchmarking (researching other design systems) and user research
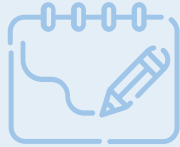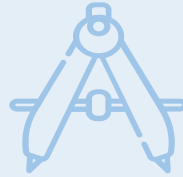
Process

Design Sprints

| Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |

Map

Sketch & Decide

Prototype

Test

Project Timeline

The project include 3 sprints in total. During the **first two sprints**, we:

- Did **background research**

- Conducted **7 expert interviews** and create 2 user journey maps:
  - Designers
  - Developers
  - LoC experts

- Created parts of the design system and conducted **user testing with 13 participants**:
  - 4 HCIM students
  - 9 professionals (designers, developers, researchers)

Background Research

Design System Research

- USWDS
- Apple Human Interface Guidelines
- Atlassian Design System
- Base Web (Uber)
- Material Design

UI Inventory

- Audited the current CRS pages to create an inventory of UI components

Competitive Analysis

- AEI
- Aspen
- Brookings
- Cato
- Heritage Foundation

Expert Interviews Findings

When creating a design system we need to:

- Create an **efficient**, **flexible**, and clearly **organized** design system

- Provide clear design **principles**, **guidelines**, and **use cases**

- Maintain **consistent** organization in Figma and Confluence

- Establish plans for design system **updates**

The CRS design system needs to:

- Reflect the **high quality service** offered by CRS experts

- Reflect a **modern** website

- Improve **readability**/**legibility** on content-dense pages

Design System Creation & User Testing

- Created design library in Figma

- Drafted documentation in Confluence

- Conducted user testing sessions to:

  - Test the ease of use of the design system
  - Get feedback on the organization of the Design System; Figma and Confluence pages

User Testing Findings: Figma

Strengths

- Variants are clearly organized.
- Information hierarchy is well organized.
- Design components are separate from documentation.

Weaknesses

- "Pattern" terminology is not widely recognized.
- Format of component designs needs to be unified and improved.
- Some naming conventions of component are too technical for designers.
- Certain components lack hover & selected state.

User Testing Findings: Confluence

Strengths

- The documentation is well organized and easy to navigate
- Figma frames linked in the documentation are helpful
- Accessibility guidelines are helpful

Weaknesses

- Lacks guidelines on when to use / not use a component
- Illustrations of do's and don'ts in the guidelines would be helpful
- Guidelines on transitions for interactive components and illustrations of these components would be useful

Deliverables:

The CRS Design System

The CRS Design System

Figma

The design system library includes:

Style guides

Components

Patterns

Confluence

The design system documentation includes:

Style guides

Usability guidelines

Accessibility guidelines

CRS.gov Page Mockups

- Used the CRS design system to create mockups of key CRS pages
  - One Topic landing page
  - Media page
  - Recent Reports page
  - Place a Request form
  - About CRS page

- Conducted user testing with 5 participants
- Analyzed data

User Testing Results

User Testing Overview

- We evaluated design system using 5 page mockups.

- In total, 5 users participated:
  - UX Strategist
  - User Experience Analyst
  - Digital Accessibility Specialist
  - User Experience Designer & Researcher
  - Accessibility/Quality assurance

- Experience level with CRS.gov varies.

User Testing Objectives

1. Feedback on components

2. Feedback on pages
   a. Readability
   b. Navigation

3. Ratings
   a. Modern feel
   b. Scannability
   c. High-quality service

Components: Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- Breadcrumb helpful for navigation
- Clear tab navigation
- Helpful step indicator
- Helpful "clear all information" button

Weaknesses

- Unclear meaning of icon on "Recent Reports" listing
- Video and description do not have the same width
  - Clarify purpose as caption/description
- Inconsistent format of hyperlinks
- Unrecognizable clickable elements

Pages: Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths

- Breathable, scannable layout

- Contrasting, visually pleasing colors

- Intuitive buttons: placement and color

Weaknesses

- Unclear purpose conveyed by the "One Topic Landing" page

- Too much white space on the "About CRS" page

Ratings

In total, 5 users participated:

- **N=5**

- This is a small sample size, so the results are *suggestive but not definitive.*

- *Average scores presented*

Modern feel:

"Because of the nice font and breathing room, it looks more modern. Not anything innovative about page layout, they are just reasonable. " (U1)

"Simplistic, standardized look and feel, streamlined." (U3)

"It doesn't do the thing that commercial websites do - giant image occupying screen but the tabs are pushed down." (U5)

"The page looks clean, modern, and serves its functions well." (U2)

"They look modern, especially for a government site where you can't include a lot of animations etc." (U2)

Scannability:

4.5 / 5

"There's a lot of breathing room and it's overall easy to read the presented information." (U4)

"Easy to scroll up and down to look for stuff. Good use of different font styles." (U1)

"The list's good, comfortable." (U5)

High-quality Service:

4.5 / 5

"The branding suggests official organization backing. The content seems sufficient to gauge trust." (U2)

"I'll give a 4... How does the design allow for intuitive navigation, i.e. how to search for certain items on the CRS Reports and Media pages?" (U4)

User Testing Recommendations

- Balance between reading efficiency and modern feel when using white space

- Add a search & filter functionality

- Give user control over how many results to see on a page

Project Limitations

- Confluence
  - Free plan - limited functionalities for page layout
  - Embedded Figma frames - inaccuracy & loading time

- Out-of-scope elements
  - Code snippets
  - Implementation guidelines

- Time constraint - future goals
  - Interactions & transitions
  - Mobile mockups

Questions From Public

Discussion with LOC

Next Steps

Handing off:

- Figma file
- Confluence XML file and PDF
- Main findings from all sprints

Thank you!