Effective Design & Engineering Collaboration

Theresa Ma

@mapotato

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Theresa

Software Engineer @ Yelp

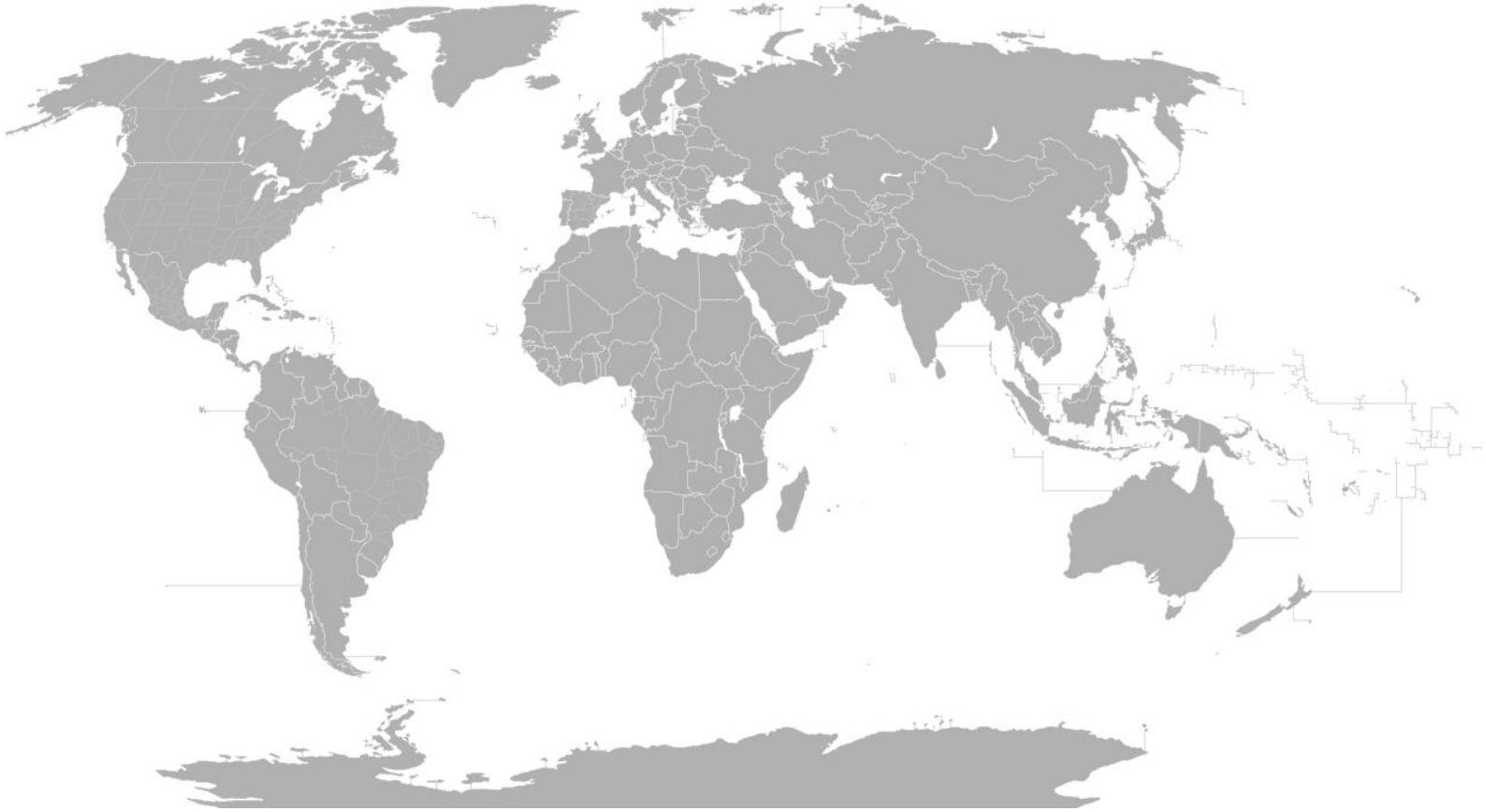
Twitter: @mapotato

The Story

Chapter 1: Creating Language
- Natural Language
- Design Language

Chapter 2: Using Language
- Shared Goals
- The Practical Stuff

Chapter 3: Creating & Using Tools
- Tools for doing things
- Tools for organizing & sharing information



The Briefest History of Humankind

Start with **language**
then **communication**
and then **collaboration**
from there, you can go on to form
community (+ culture)

yelp

Connecting people with great local businesses

29M monthly unique mobile app users
77M monthly unique desktop web users
64M monthly unique mobile web users
148M Reviews
32 Countries

Strong Product

Strong Design + Engineering Relationship

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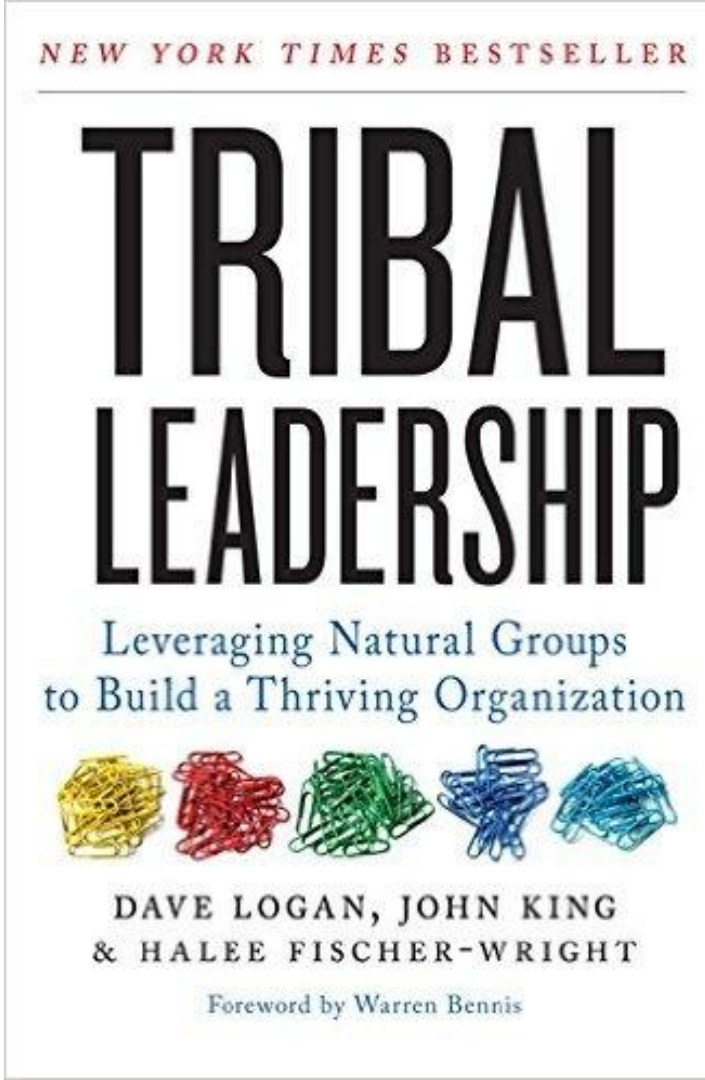
We’re not the only ones with language

DO NOT

10 year study
24,000 people
24 organizations



Rhetoric & Organizational Culture

Stage	Sampling of words that came in close proximity to other words
One	Life, sucks, break, can’t, cut, whatever
Two	Boss, life, try, can’t, give up, quit, sucks
Three	I, Me, my, job, did, do, have, went
Four	We, our, team, do, them, have, did it, commit, value

WITTGENSTEIN

“

The meaning of a word is in its use in the language

”

Designer | Engineer =/= ‘other’

ACTION ITEM

Go get a coffee with a designer or engineer you don’t yet work closely with

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S - 8pt

M - 16pt

L - 24pt

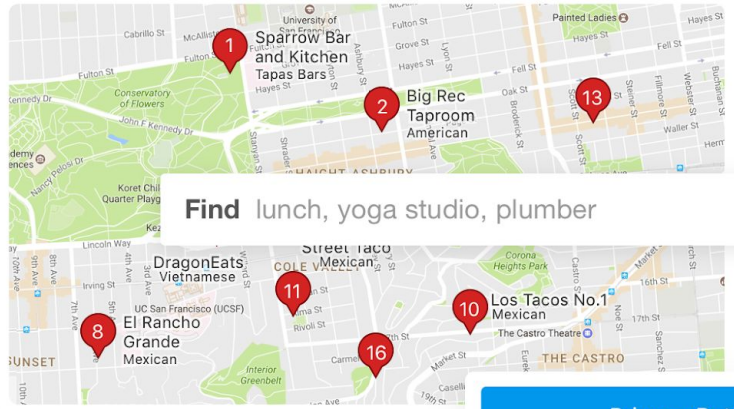
XL - 48pt

XXL - 64pt

5,125 reviews

5,125 reviews

5,125 reviews



Headline 1

Headline 2

Headline 3

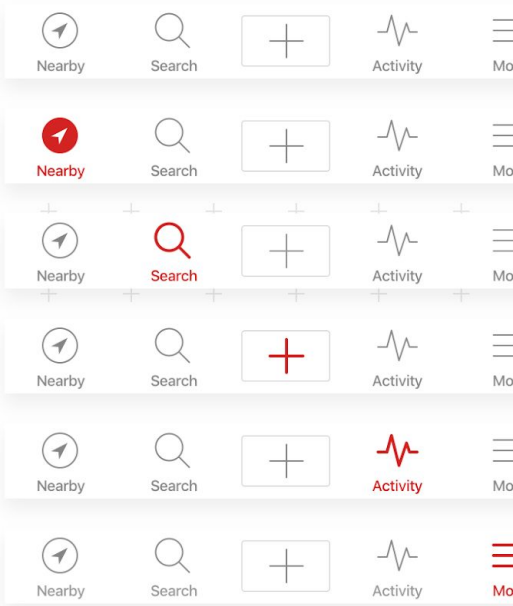
	24pt	30pt	-0.38
Headline 3	18pt	24pt	-0.29
Paragraph / **Paragraph Bold**	15pt	18pt	-0.09
Subtext / **Subtext Bold**	12pt	16pt	-0.07

Primary Button

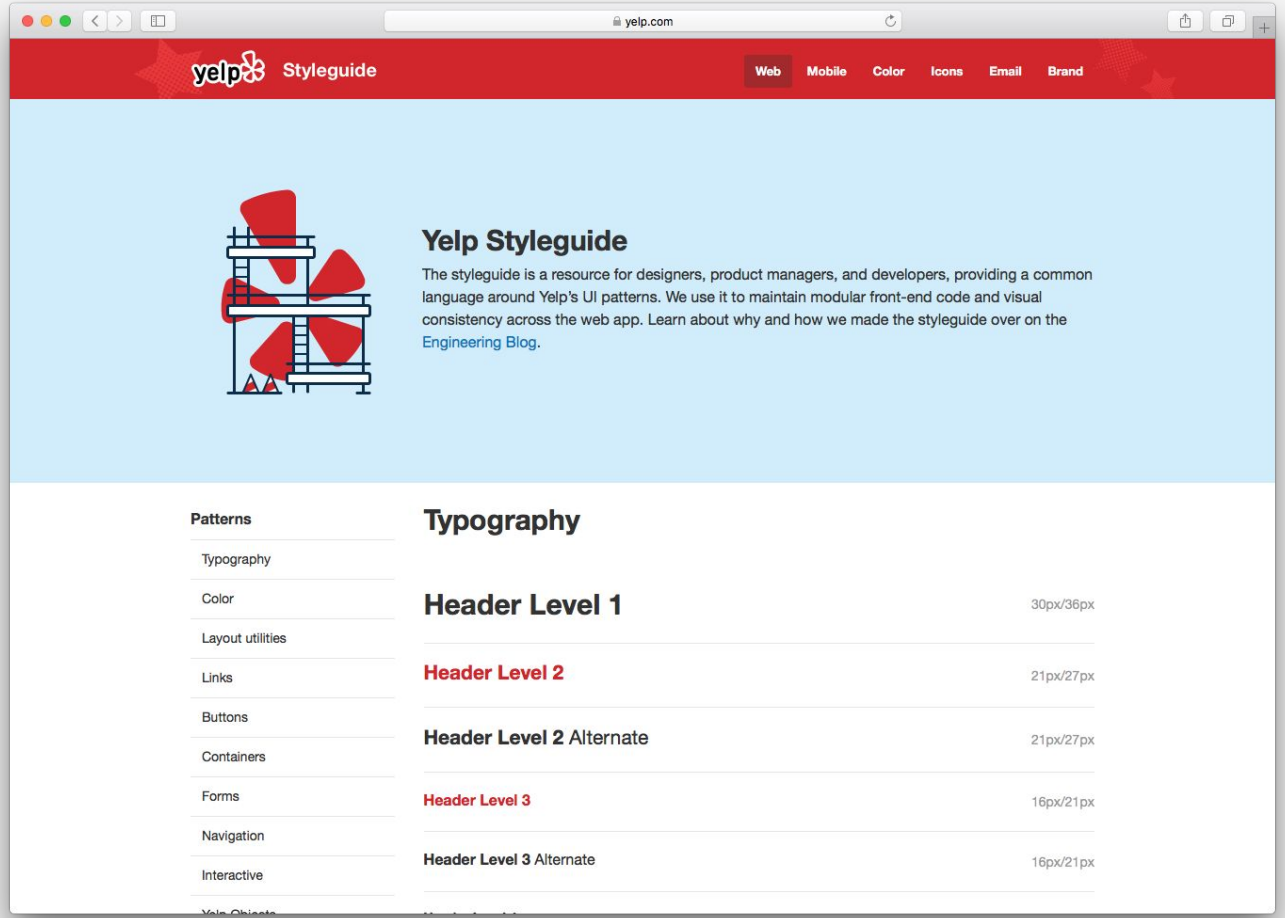
Secondary Button

Tertiery Button

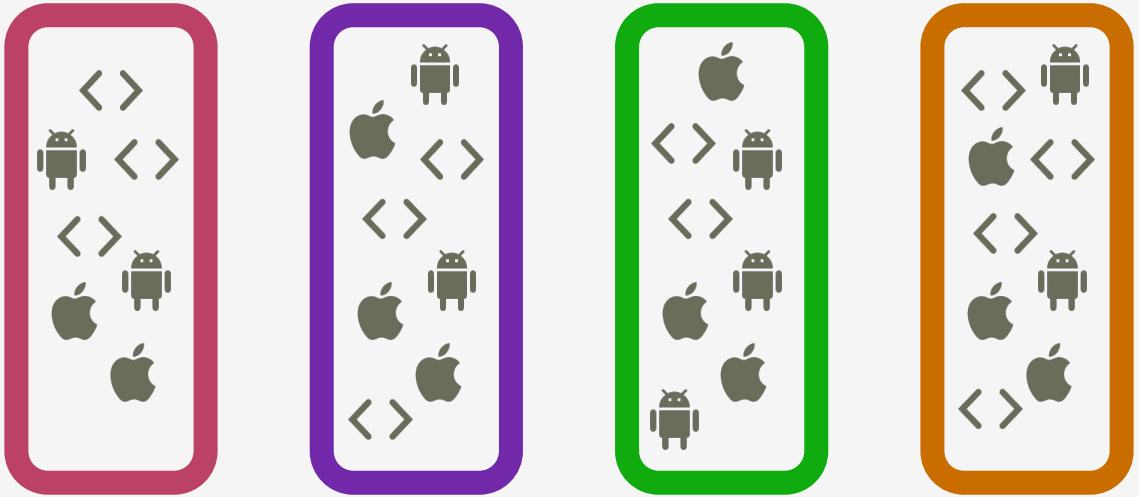
Link



Black-Dark 050505	Gray-Dark 999999	Slate-Dark 092D4B	Blue 007
Black-Regular 333333	Gray-Regular CCCCCC	Slate-Regular 336A8B	Blue 009
Black-Light 4D4D4D	Gray-Light E6E6E6	Slate-Light 9AB5C5	Blue A5D
Black-Extra-Light 666666	Gray-Extra-Light F5F5F5	Slate-Extra-Light CDDAE2	Blue D0E


yelp.com
yelp Styleguide
Web
Mobile
Color
Icons
Email
Brand
Yelp Styleguide
The styleguide is a resource for designers, product managers, and developers, providing a common language around Yelp's UI patterns. We use it to maintain modular front-end code and visual consistency across the web app. Learn about why and how we made the styleguide over on the Engineering Blog.
Patterns
Typography
Color
Layout utilities
Links
Buttons
Containers
Forms
Navigation
Interactive
Typography
Header Level 1
30px/36px
Header Level 2
21px/27px
Header Level 2 Alternate
21px/27px
Header Level 3
16px/21px
Header Level 3 Alternate
16px/21px

More cross-platform engineering teams



Alert / MessageAlertBox / BannerNotificationView / Page Alert

Your photos have been uploaded! You can write a review to go along with them.

There's an error on this page. Please fix before continuing.

There's an error on this page. We suggest fixing it or doing this thing instead.

Today is a national holiday. Call to check if this business is open.

ACTION ITEM

Audit your design system’s language if you have one

Start building one if you don’t

The Design Systems Handbook is a great resource to get you started
designbetter.co/design-systems-handbook

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What Designers Want You To Know

Their goal is to solve the **user's problems**

The **tradeoffs** they have to make

Design is far **less subjective** than you may think

They **care** about your engineering work too

YOU WILL NOTICE THIS

… before you notice this

What Designers Want You To Know

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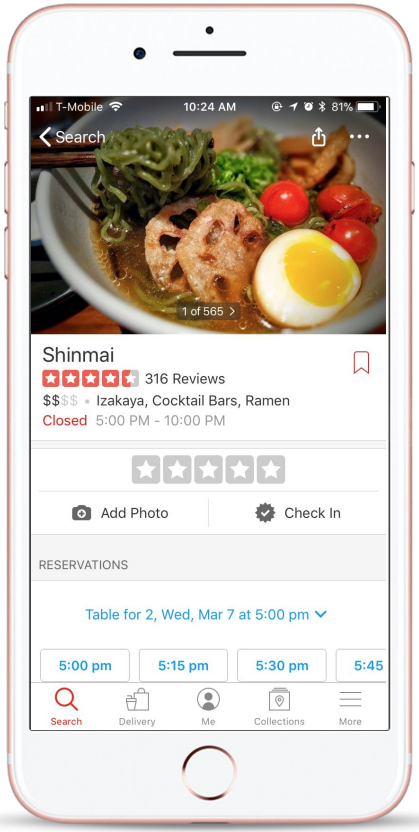
What Engineers Want You To Know

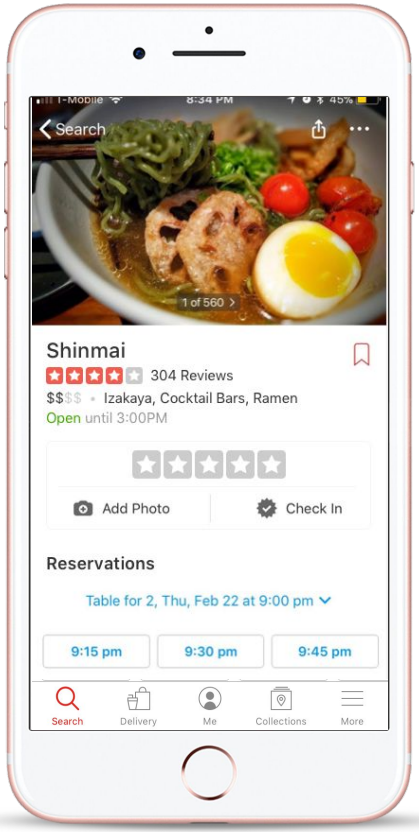
Sometimes a change that looks simple is actually far **more complicated** than you may think

Engineers love consistency too

Engineers also **care** about shipping a great product to the user

What Engineers Want You To Know





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Our Shared Beliefs

Creating the
best possible product
for the user

ACTION ITEM

What Are **Your**

shared beliefs & goals that unite your designers & engineers?

design & engineering principles?

company goals?

mission statement?

Is everyone aware of these?

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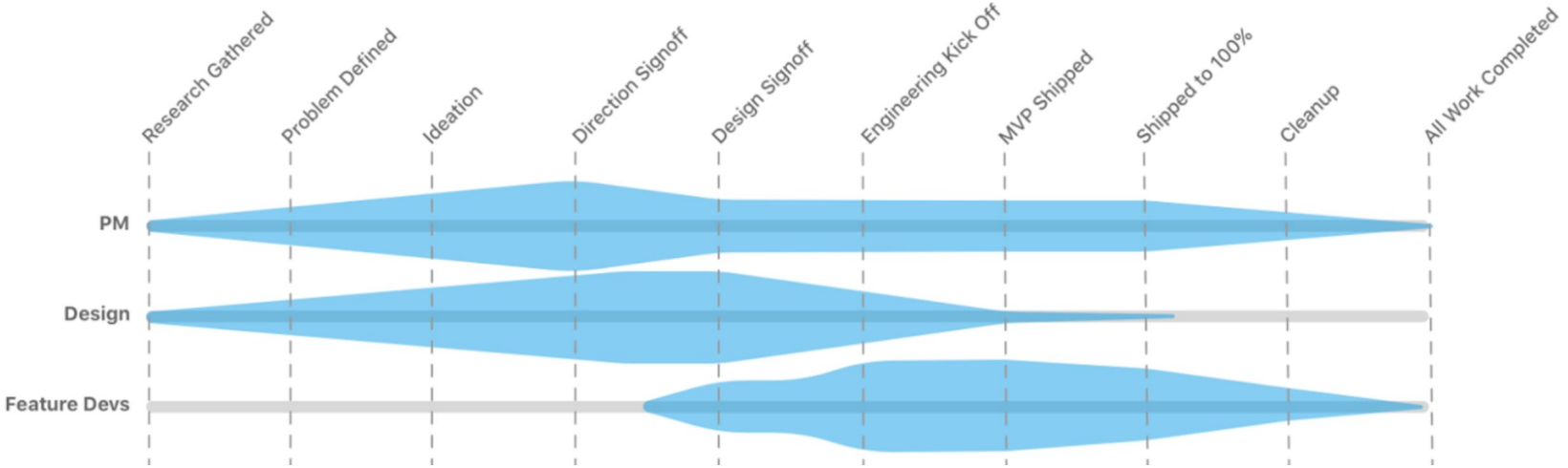
Practical Tips

Involve engineers earlier in the design process

1

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE



Practical Tips

Have designers & engineers sit together

2

Practical Tips

Go on offsites together

3

Practical Tips

Consider which design and engineering decisions need to be made earlier on

4

Practical Tips

- ❑ Use
- ❑ Checklists
- ❑ When
- ❑ Giving
- ❑ Feedback

Practical Tips

- ❑ What will it look like on different screen sizes?
- ❑ Are there any error states?
- ❑ Are the assets, such as icons and illustrations available?
- ❑ How does it look in other languages?
- ❑ Is the copy on the page finalized and does it adhere to our copywriting guide?

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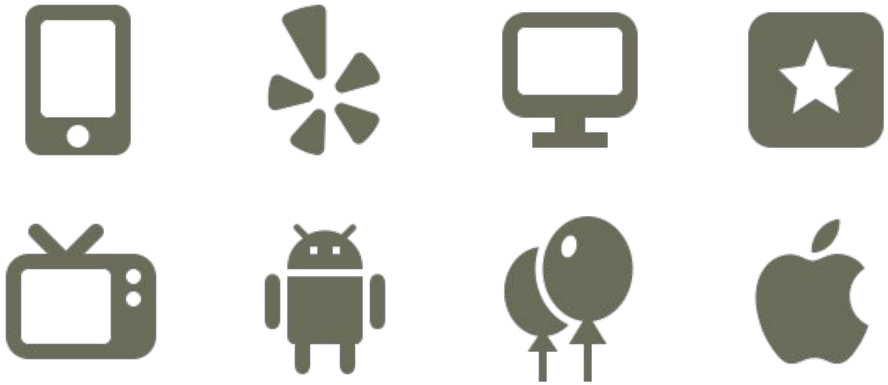
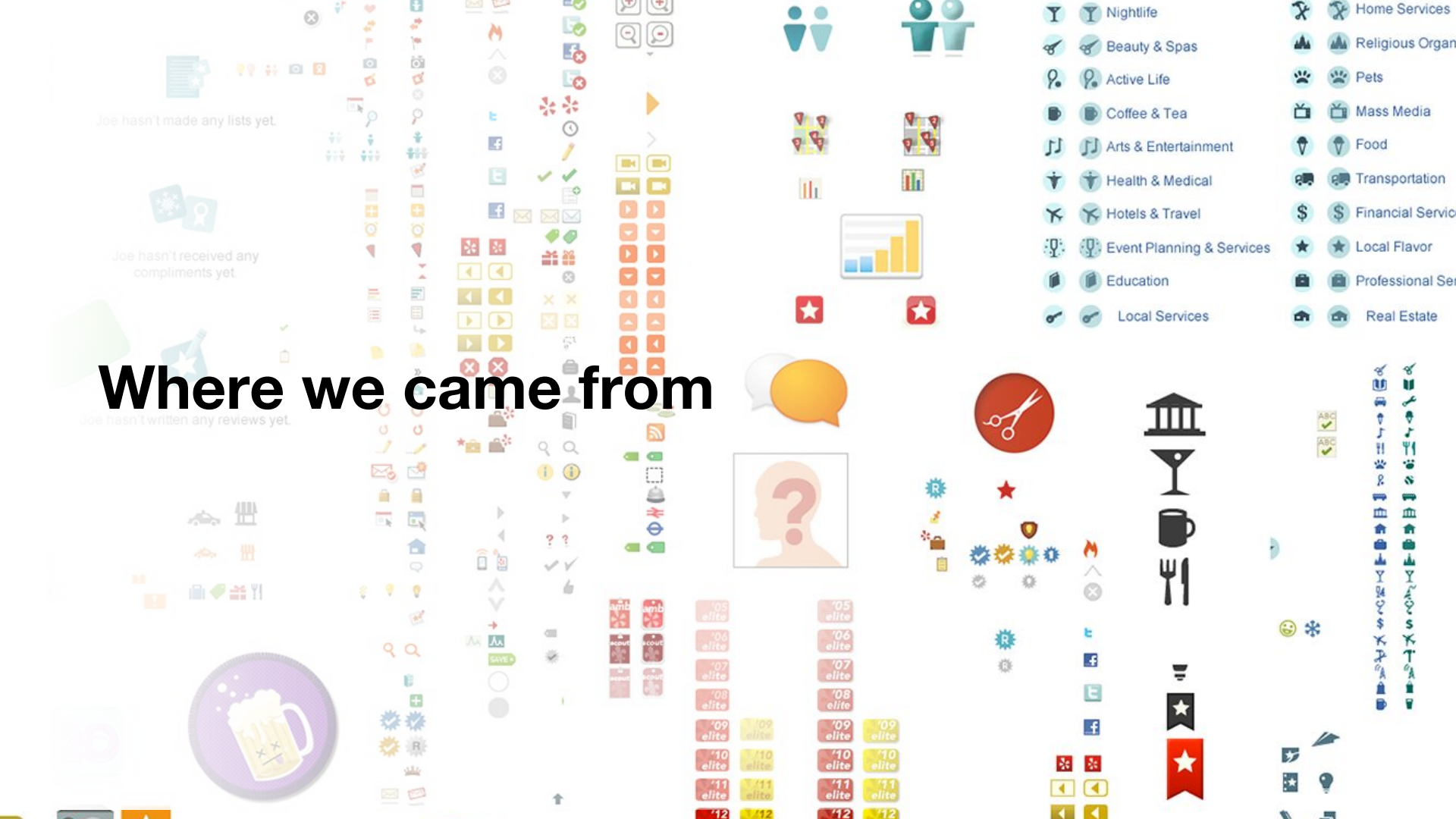
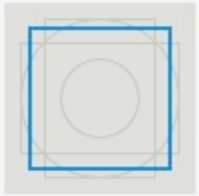
YELP ICONS

a cross platform visual icon system

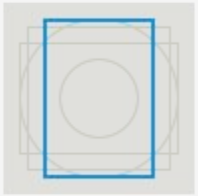




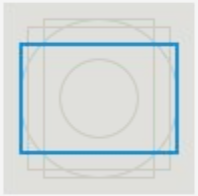
Where we came from



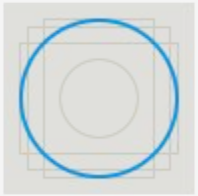
Square
(18x18dp)



Portrait
(14x20dp)

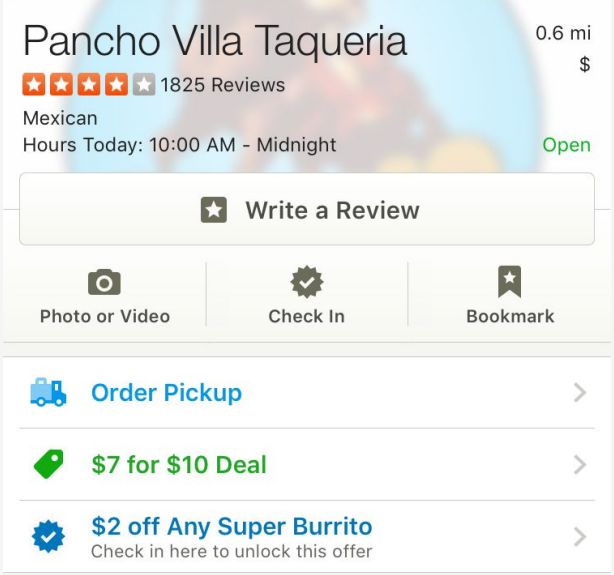


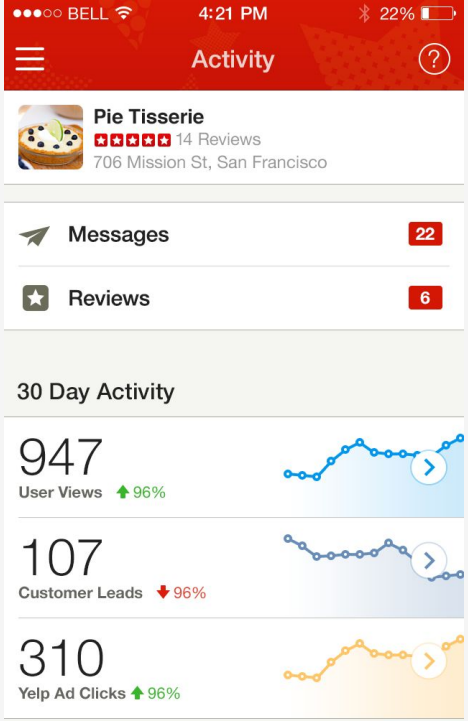
Landscape
(20x14dp)

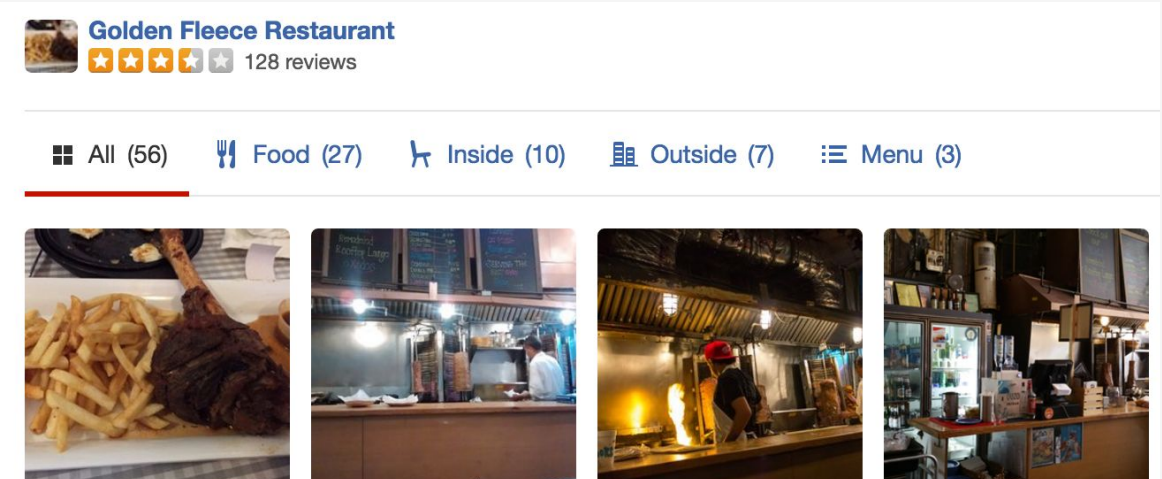


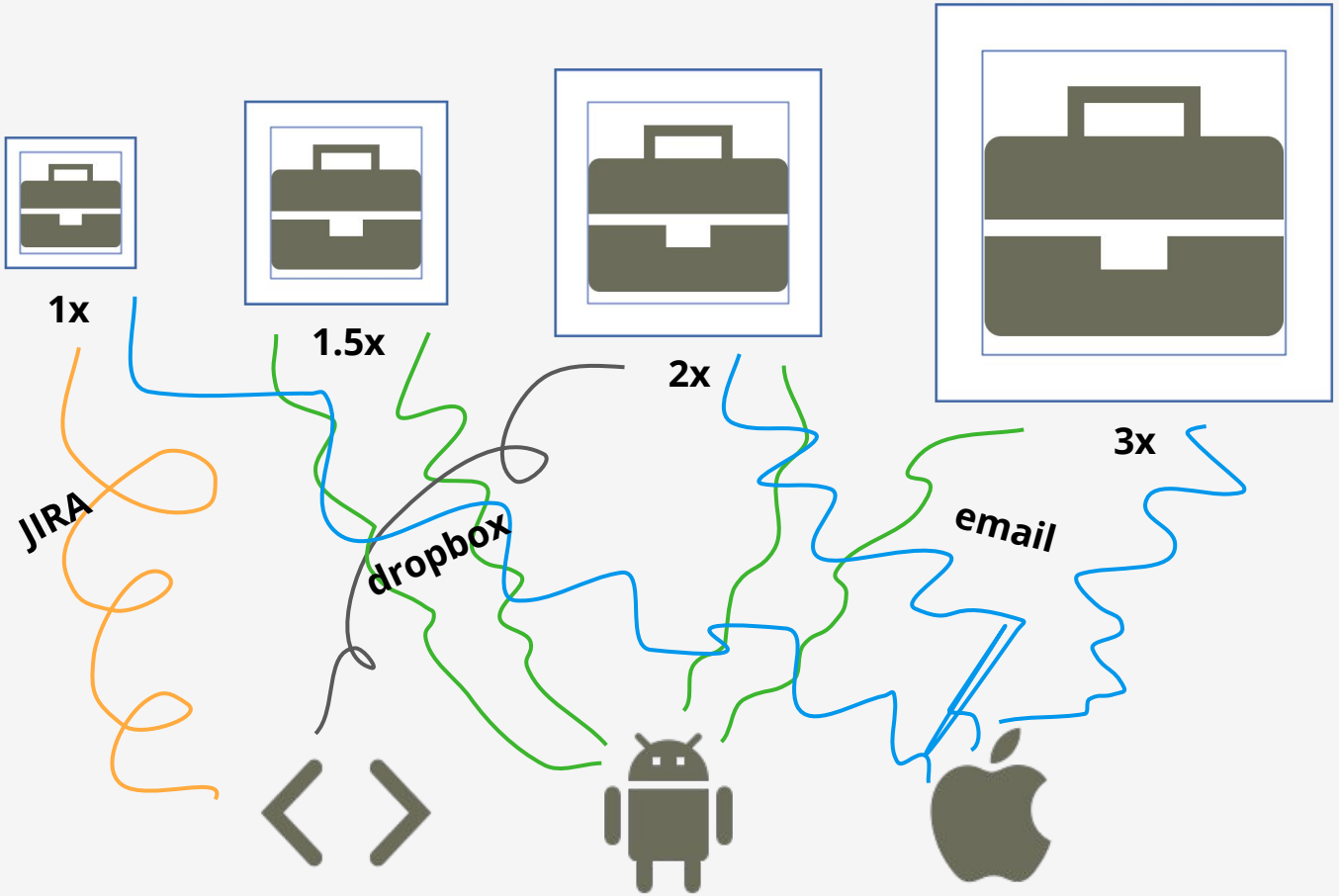
Circle
(20dp)

- Restaurants
- Bars
- Coffee & Tea
- Order Pickup or Delivery
- Make a Reservation
- More Categories

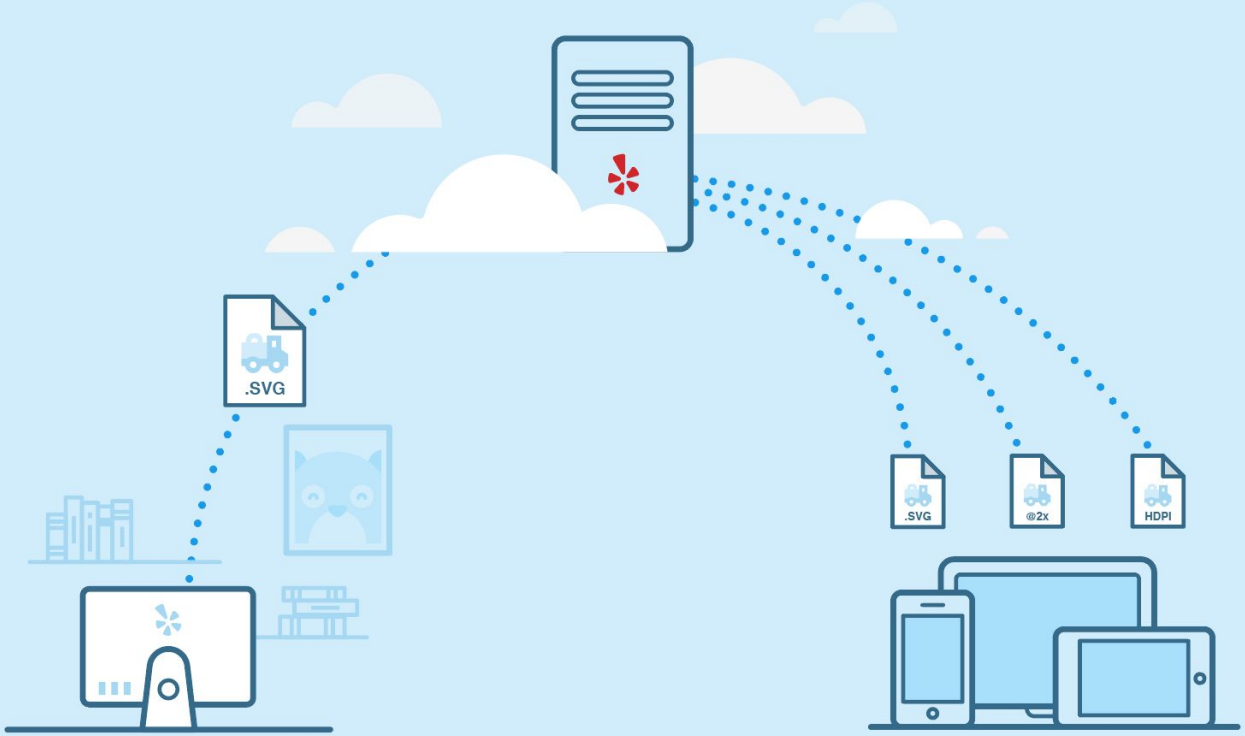







1x
1.5x
2x
3x
JIRA
dropbox
email

Icon Ally

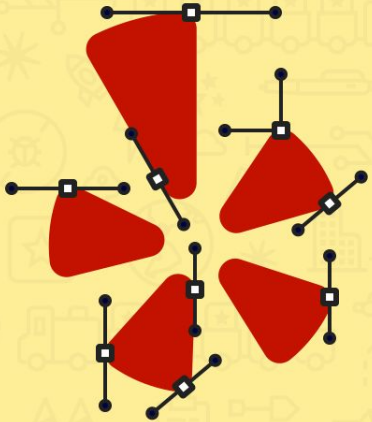


Single source of truth

yelp.com/styleguide/icons

yelp Styleguide

Web Mobile Icons Brand



Yelpicons

Yelpicons are a set of hand-crafted icons for use in web, iOS, and Android applications. The base sizes and colors are optimized for Yelp's UI patterns.

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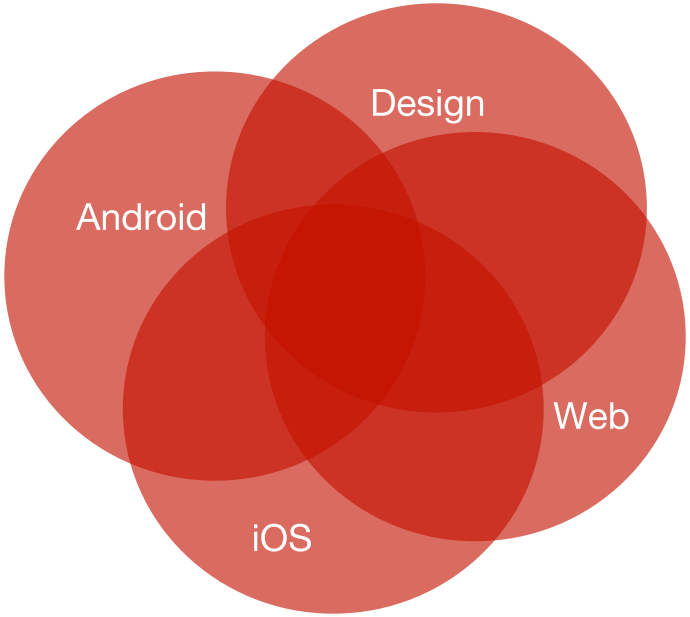
Your Existing Tools

- Make sure everyone has access
- Have 1 way of tracking these things
- Have a way of sharing in-progress work

We can create tools that bridge the gap between disciplines

Expectation

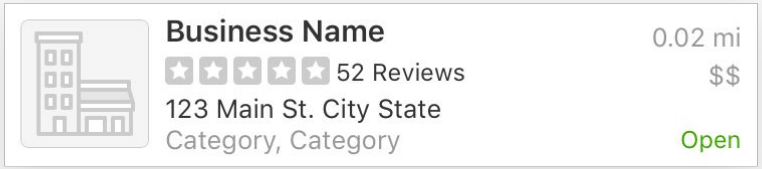
Reality



Challenges

- Any change requires coordination
- Inconsistent naming
- Designs don’t always match
- Over time Design and Engineering styleguides drift apart

Code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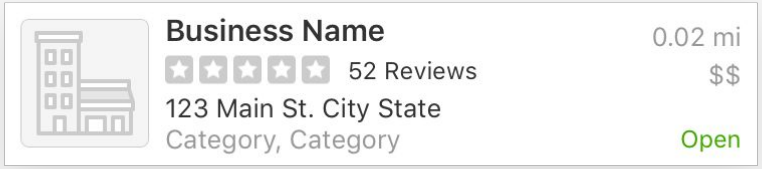
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Open

Design


Business Name
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
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123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Open

Code

Business Name
52 Reviews
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
0.02 mi
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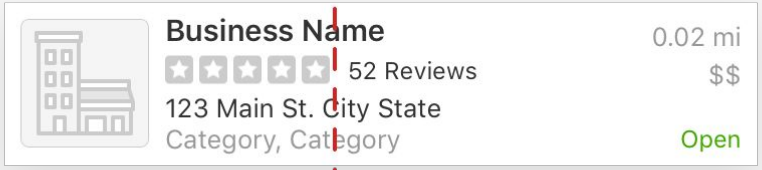
Open

Design


Business Name
52 Reviews
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
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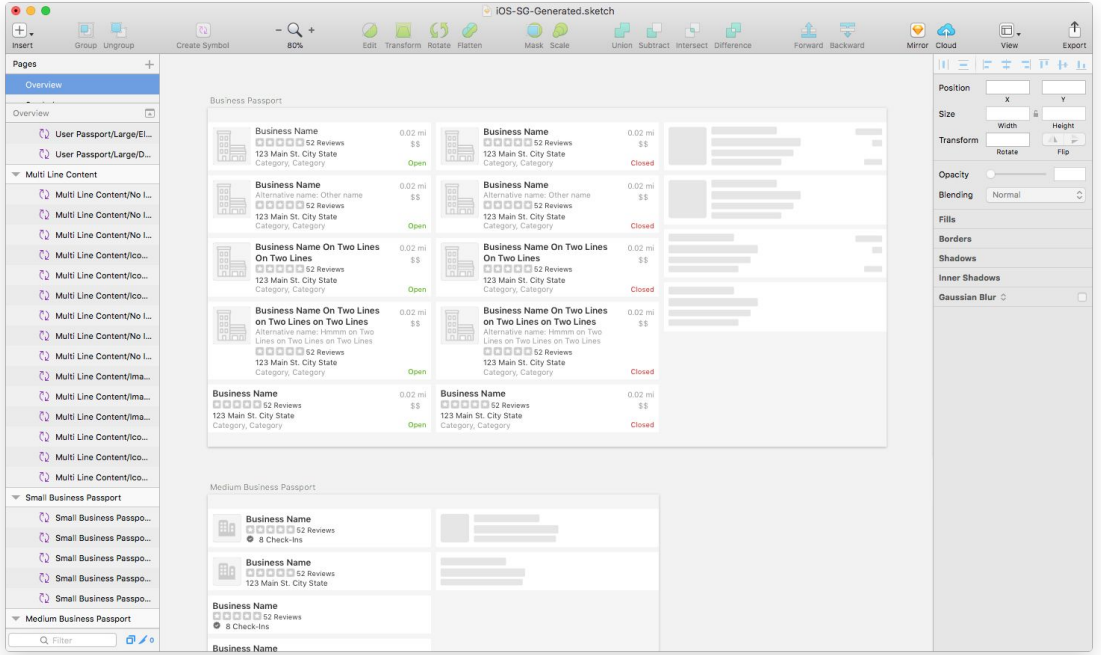
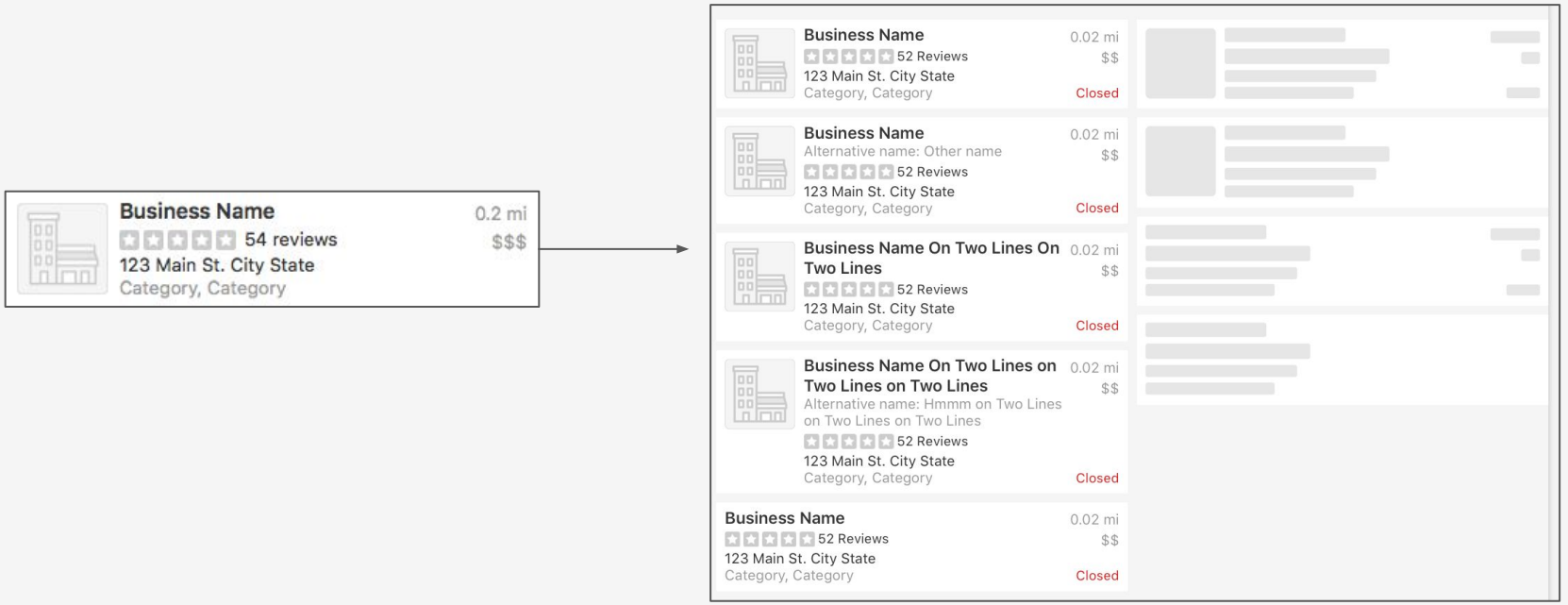
Sketch Generator




Business Name
0.2 mi
54 reviews
$$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Business Name
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Closed
Business Name
Alternative name: Other name
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Closed
Business Name On Two Lines On Two Lines
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Closed
Business Name On Two Lines on Two Lines on Two Lines
Alternative name: Hmmm on Two Lines on Two Lines on Two Lines
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
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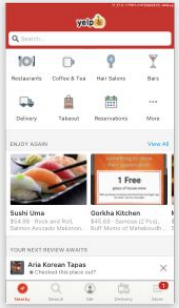
Closed
Business Name
0.02 mi
52 Reviews
$$
123 Main St. City State
Category, Category
Closed

Window



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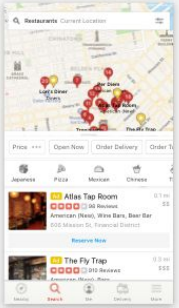

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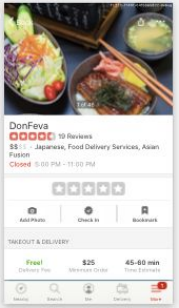

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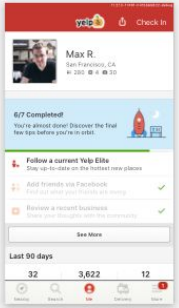

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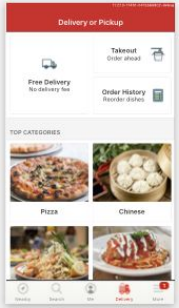

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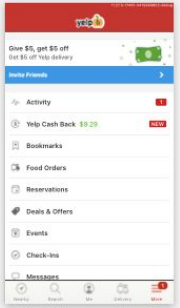

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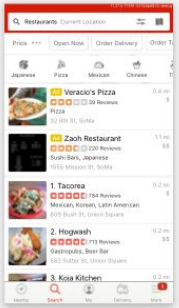
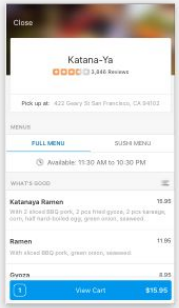


Window

Window

Window



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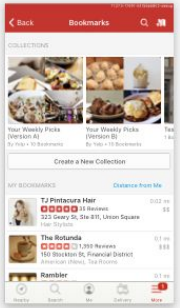

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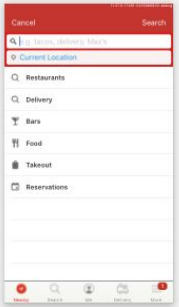

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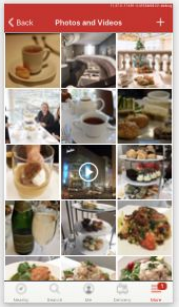
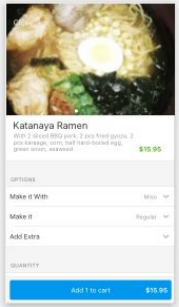


Window



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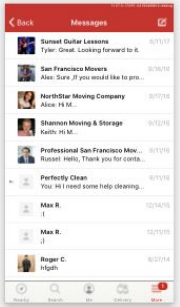
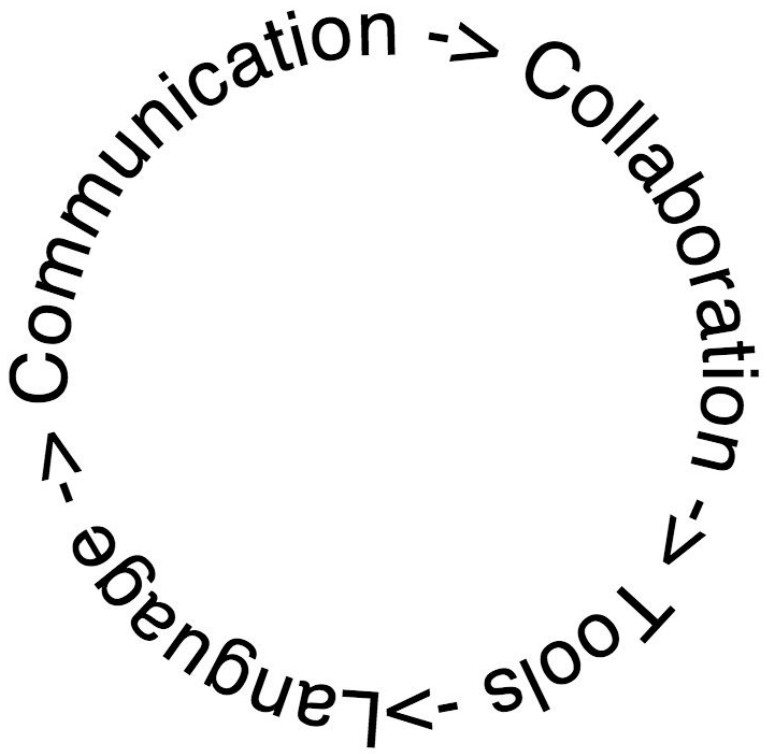


Window

Long Story Short



Long Story Short

language > **communication** > **collaboration** > **community**

(+ culture)

Thank you
yelp.com/careers

Notes

Special thanks to everyone on the design & core teams @ yelp for doing all this awesome collaborative work over the past few years

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