Exhibition online community platform

An exploration of what features an online exhibition community platform should have to enhance engagement and user experience based on user needs

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Abstract

The aim of this project was to explore how best to provide an online community platform with features that meet the needs of those who enjoy visiting exhibitions and enhance their engagement and experience. Following secondary research and qualitative research, the analysis revealed that the functionality should focus on both 'access to information' and 'sharing and exchanging information'. Based on the findings, a preliminary high-fidelity prototype was developed to demonstrate the functionality of the platform.

Introduction & Background

Some museums or exhibitions have provided a point of connection between visitors and them through social media accounts in the hope of increasing engagement in this way (Kidd, 2011). Online community features have been credited with providing some knowledge sharing, creating and changing the way some visitors interact with each other or with the museum (Grabill, Pigg and Wittenauer, 2009). However, the current level of engagement with official social media spaces for exhibitions does not appear to be high. By analysing the functionality of some existing exhibition-related websites and interviewing potential users, this project proposes solutions based on the findings of the study that offer the possibility of increasing visitor engagement.

Study Methodology

- Secondary research: Support the hypothesis by analysing credible extant studies with sufficient sample size

- Qualitative research: Semi-structured interviews provide insight into the common needs and individual differences of potential target groups.
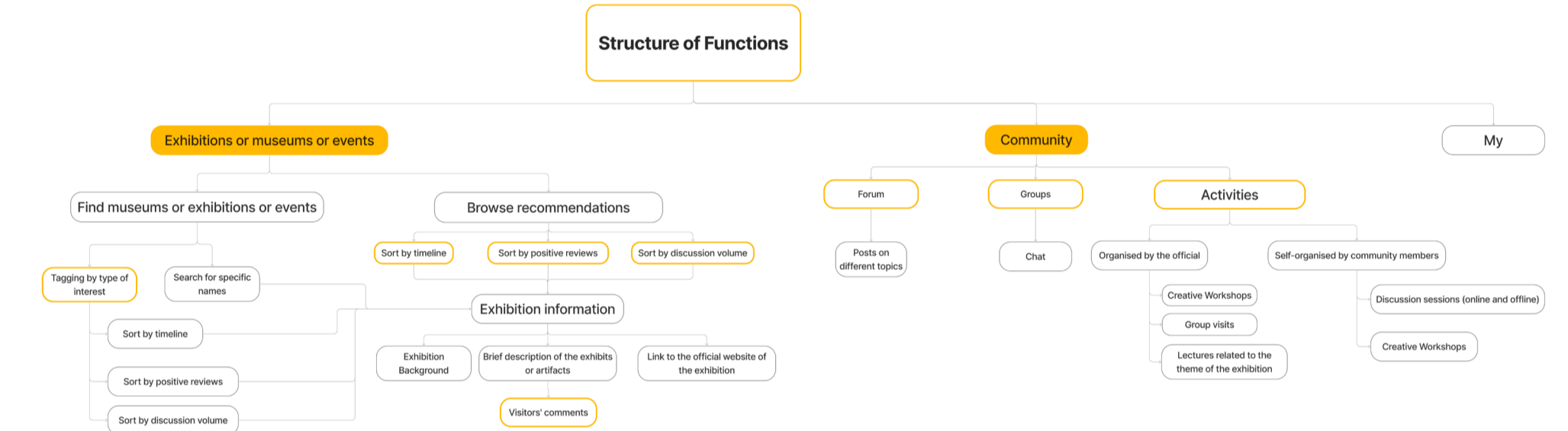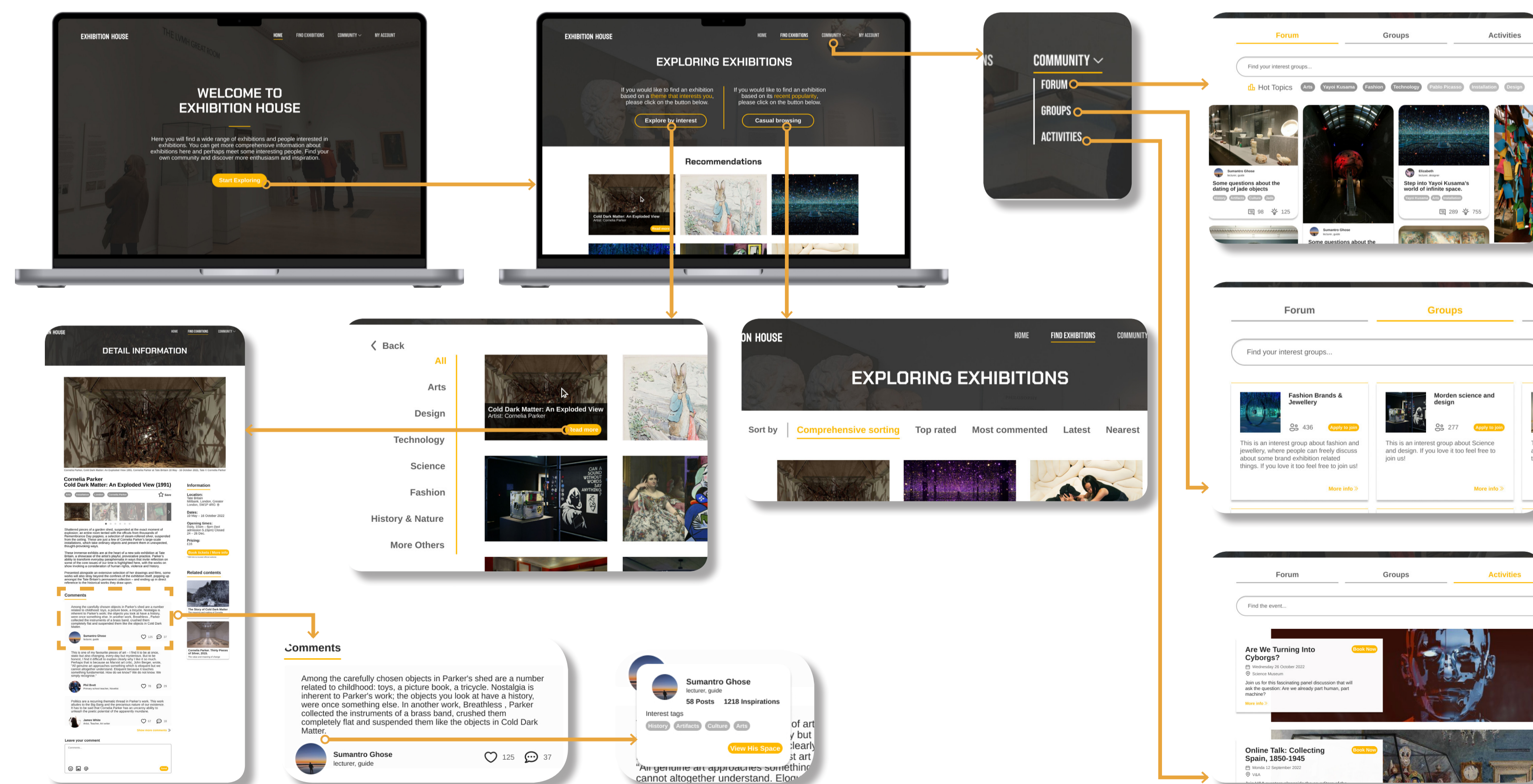
Research Results

Diagram / Design

Testing & Evaluation

8 participants living in different parts of the world were invited to a subjective usability test, where they were interviewed through observations and questions to find out how satisfied they were with the prototype and what they would suggest for the functionality.

- Willingness to use the platform:

- Willingness to use comment and community features:

- Preference for category exploration features:

  By interests:

  casual browsing:

  depends on purpose:

Conclusions & Future Work

- The majority of people rated features such as comment sections, forums and interest groups positively, saying that they were helpful and enhanced engagement to some extent.
- The small sample size and the short duration of the study make it impossible to judge whether the online community will work in the long term.
- Considering the convenience, a mobile application should be added in the future and the QR code function should be used to link the exhibits to the online community.