

User Experience research and design portfolio

Rob Gillham

This is me ↷



I've worked in user experience research and design for twenty years. I consider myself an all-rounder, having performed both research and design roles for global companies, government depts and start-ups, across consumer and B2B domains on mobile, desktop and more.



I've led large scale international research projects and performed the full range of activities, from qualitative discovery research such as interviews, onsite observations and diary studies to rapid user testing and iteration of designs as part of Agile-based product development.



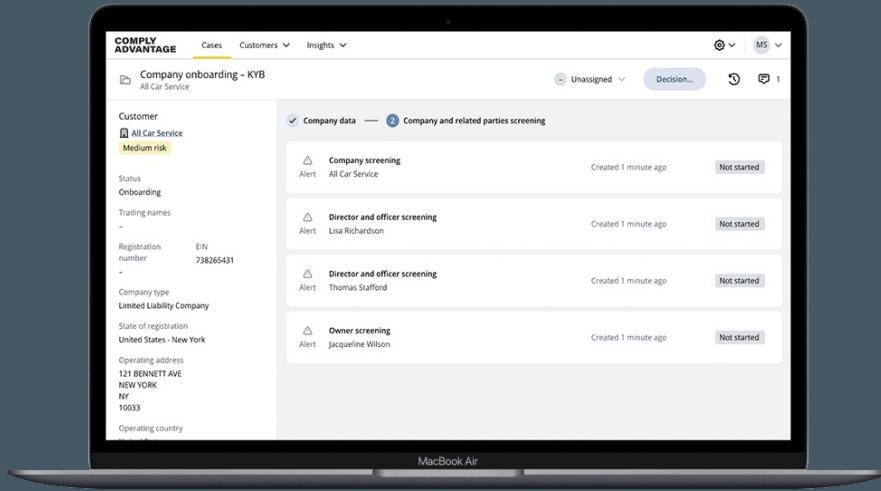
As a designer, I've performed early product concept development, collaborating as part of a Product team and ideating with senior stakeholders. I've created detailed designs for build and created and curated design systems. My tech skills extent to interactive prototyping using HTML/CSS and frameworks like React. I'm knowledgeable about Accessibility standards for UI.



I'm a passionate advocate for user insight and an effective communicator of compelling stories about design to align teams and stakeholders around ideas.



COMPLY ADVANTAGE



Allianz 

 OakNorth
Bank

Ebury

 Santander

Munich RE 

TransferMate
GLOBAL PAYMENTS

From early-2019 to late-2023, I was UX Research & Design Lead at ComplyAdvantage, a fintech scale-up creating SaaS apps that help banks, fintechs and other financial service providers (FSPs) detect evidence of money-laundering.

- It is a regulatory requirement of FSPs in most countries to determine the risk their customers represent when they open an account — and then continue to monitor their transactions for suspicious activity.
- Anti-money laundering (AML) checks are time-consuming, but necessary as the penalties for non-compliance are large fines and potentially, criminal charges.
- AML activity generates no profit and costs money. Therefore, Chief Compliance Officers of FSPs want their analysts to achieve the optimal balance between risk management and efficiency.
- ComplyAdvantage apps automate aspects of the AML workflow helping clients to achieve these goals.

In 2020, users of ComplyAdvantage's Transaction Monitoring (TM) app were unhappy with the solution and several clients were threatening to churn.

- Transaction monitoring is a regulatory requirement of financial service providers.
- Every transaction by a bank customer must be tested against a set of risk criteria or rules *e.g.* where transaction value => (1.5 * average transaction value)
- Client organisations upload transactions nightly to the TM platform for processing.
- Any transaction that triggers one or more rules becomes the basis of an alert which must then be investigated by a human analyst.
- The analyst decides whether the alert can be safely dismissed or escalated for further investigation.
- Analysts are measured on efficiency, but they must do a comprehensive job, leaving a full justification of each decision on every alert.

The screenshot displays the ComplyAdvantage Transaction Monitoring interface. At the top, an alert is shown for 'Vladimir Putin' with a 'Soft Stop' action. Below this, a table of transactions is visible, with one transaction highlighted: Tx ID 'Tx-6436350576', Tx Datetime '2023-05-02T10:25:10...', Tx Direction 'Inbound', Tx Type 'payment', Tx Base Amount '5,205.00 USD', Customer ID 'BM000001', Customer Name 'Mette Garza', and Counterparty ID 'BM18820'. The interface also shows a 'Rule Info' section with various rule codes like 'P-TLI', 'NCOU', 'NBCOU', 'CTPYPEP', 'P-SUMCIB', 'SUMCCI', and 'HASUMI'. A 'Potential Matches' section lists 'Vladimir Putin' as a match with 'Aka exact' and '1952-07-10 (Age: 71 years old)'. The bottom part of the screenshot shows a 'Transactions' list with search filters and pagination, displaying details for transactions like 'Tx-1977110309' and 'Tx-1470853406'.

I initially created a problem statement, by collating client feedback from customer support and sales teams with previous user research findings:

1. The UI was a system-view of transaction monitoring: it reflected what the system *did* — not what the user wanted to *achieve*.
2. The UI was open-ended, allowing users to work in almost any way and not enforcing any type of workflow.
3. There was no clear task focus to screens or sense of what actions were required of the user.
4. Many users were exporting alerts to other apps rather than using the TM platform to complete tasks as a workaround.
5. TM looked dated and had poor usability. Hard-coded HTML updates added over time had left the UI riddled with inconsistencies and accessibility issues.

This consolidated view persuaded leadership a more in-depth investigation of the TM app and user needs was required.

The screenshot shows a transaction monitoring interface. At the top, a table lists alerts with columns: Alert ID, Rule Code, Subject(s), Action, Priority, and Number of TXs. The first row shows Alert ID 7855, Rule Code CTPYPEP, Subject Vladimir Putin, Action Soft Stop, Priority -, and Number of TXs 1. Below this, there are two tabs: Transactions and Rule Info. The Transactions tab is active, showing a table with columns: Alerts, Tx ID, Tx Datetime, Tx Direction, Tx Type, Tx Base Amount, and Custom. A transaction record is shown with Tx ID Tx-6436350576, Tx Datetime 2023-05-02T10:25:10..., Tx Direction Inbound, Tx Type payment, Tx Base Amount 5,205.00 USD, and Custom E BN. To the left of the transaction table, there is a list of triggered rules: P-TLI, NCOU, NBCOU, CTPYPEP, P-SUMCI3, SUMCCI, and HASUMI. Below the transaction table, there is a section for Vladimir Putin (Counterparty) with a 'View entity in new tab' link. This section lists various fields for the counterparty, such as Date(s) of birth, Location(s), Counterparty Account Number, Counterparty BIC, Counterparty Bank Country, Counterparty Reference, Counterparty Sort Code, and Counterparty Type. To the right of this section, there is a 'Potential Matches (2)' section with a dropdown for 'Actions' and a checkbox for 'View whitelisted results (1)'. It lists two potential matches: 'Matching name' and 'Vladimir Putin' (Aka exact, 1952-07-10 (Age: 71 years old), Russian Federation). Red annotations highlight the 'Rule Code' field, the triggered rules list, the transaction record, and the 'Vladimir Putin' entry in the potential matches section.

Selected alert rule code

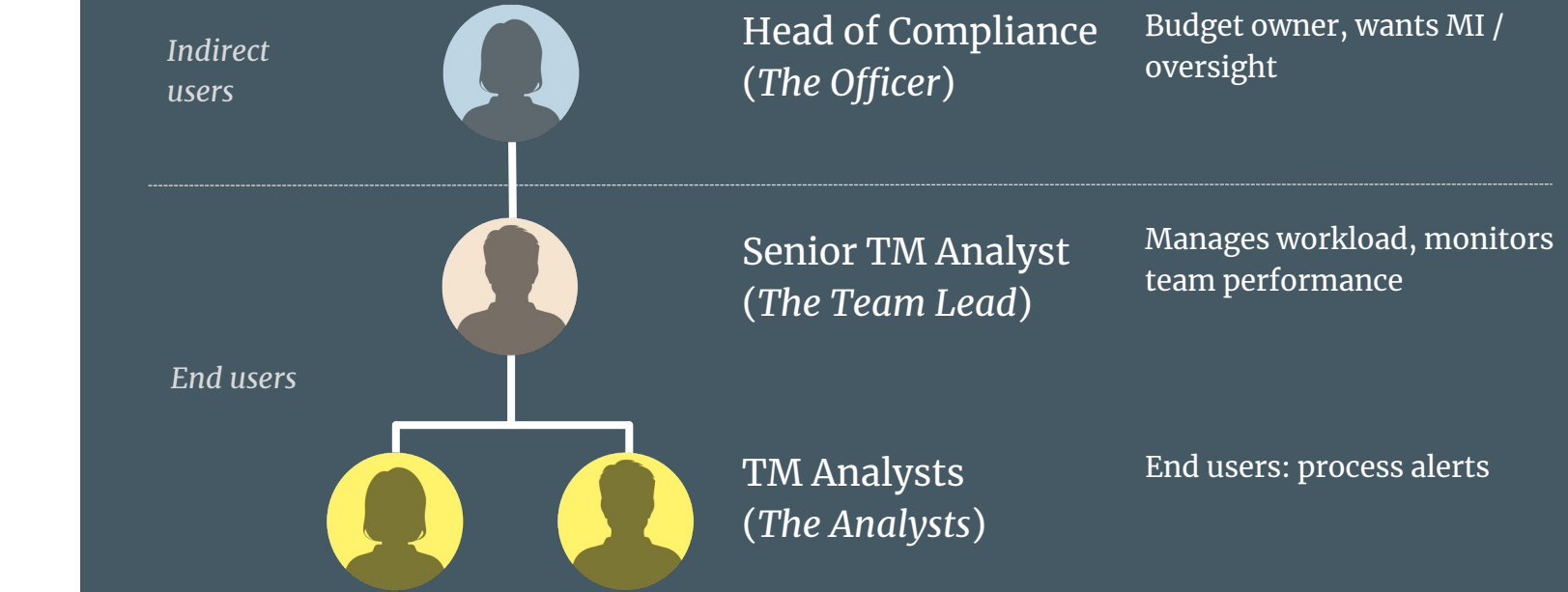
Tx data fields

All rules triggered by this tx record

Published sanctions list entry that contains a potential match with one or more tx fields

Discovery research

- Working with the product team, I scheduled and performed 1-1 remote interviews with clients from the at-risk group.
- For balance I also conducted interviews with a range of other TM clients of different size and sectors. I also recruited a handful of users of competitor products.
- Interviews were open-ended, with the broad objectives of learning how transaction screening was done in each organisation, shortcomings and strengths of the current tool, and any learnings from competitor or analogous products.
- One shortcoming of CA's existing customer insight was feedback mostly came from people who weren't end-users: account managers spoke to senior staff in the client org and their views would then be passed on internally as "users say ..."
- In a workshop with internal subject matter experts, we identified three broad types of role within client orgs and interviewed as many people from each persona category as possible to gain a holistic view of our clients' needs.



Discovery research

Our findings challenged a number of preconceptions and threw new light on what users wanted from the TM platform:

- *Officers* wanted an end-to-end case work tool, not a point solution for triaging alerts
- *Team Leads* preferred that one analyst be assigned all alerts relating to one customer rather than assign them in a taxi-rank manner as they were generated.
- *Analysts* spent far longer looking at the context of alerts and the customer's historical behaviour than we'd previously thought. Speed was secondary to doing the job properly.
- *Analysts* spent a lot of time filtering and exporting transaction data to spreadsheets in order to create useful heuristics like the customer's average transaction value or number of transactions per month

Above all, participants stressed that **the purpose of transaction monitoring was to understand the risk posed by individuals** — not to process alerts on a transaction-by-transaction basis as our app did.



Compliance
Officer

I want my department to identify the risk that individual customers pose to the business through a case working approach — with the focus on people, not transactions



Team Lead

I want to spend less time assigning individual alerts to analysts so I can concentrate on monitoring and improving team performance

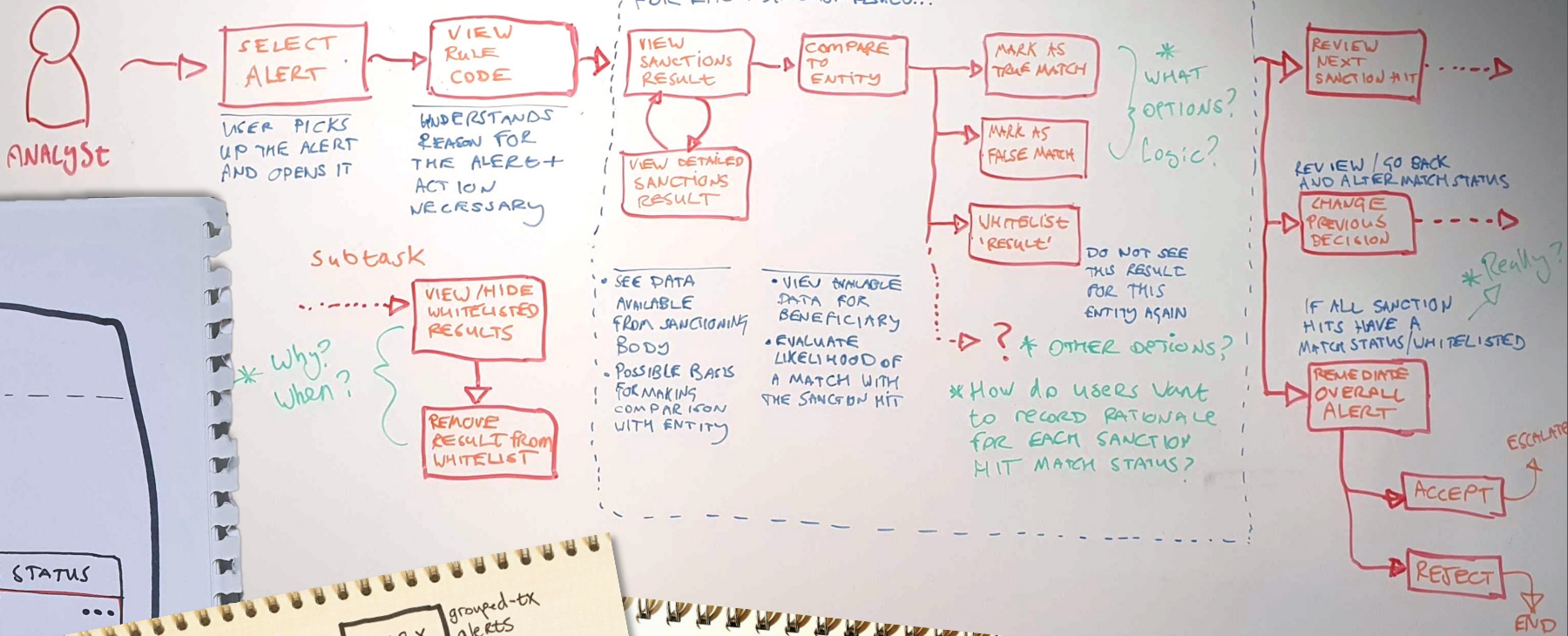


Analyst

- I want to see all current and past alerts associated with a customer and who's working on them
- Case notes for previous alerts should aggregate in the customer history so we have that audit trail in a single place
- I shouldn't need to do all the work of exporting data to Excel just to see customer transaction data and calculate benchmarks like 'average 30 day spend'

Concept design & testing

I set about modelling an improved flow with the bank's customer as the central task focus, rather than the transaction record.



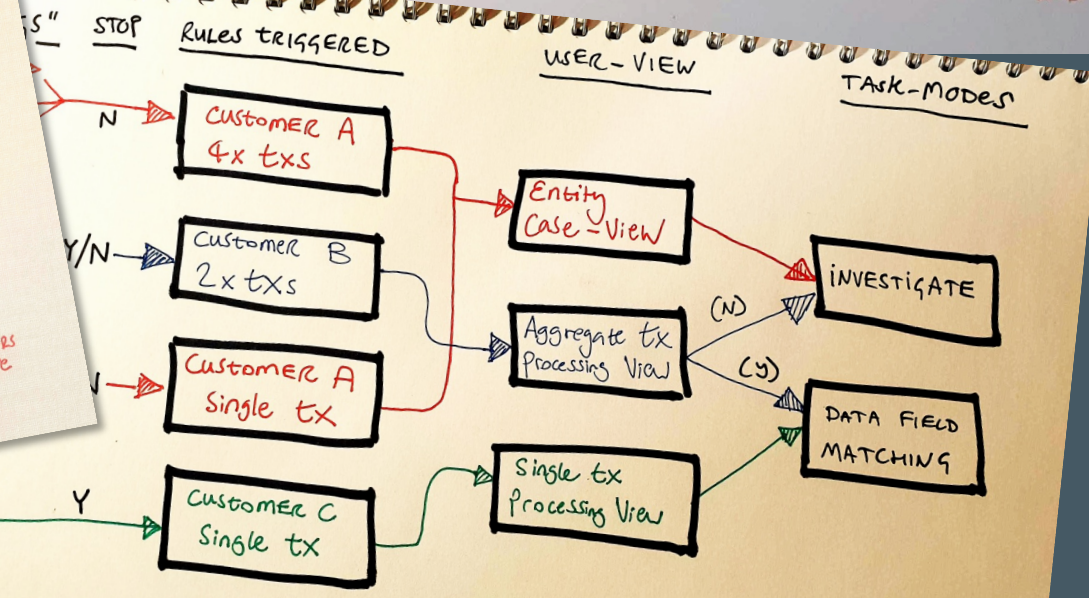
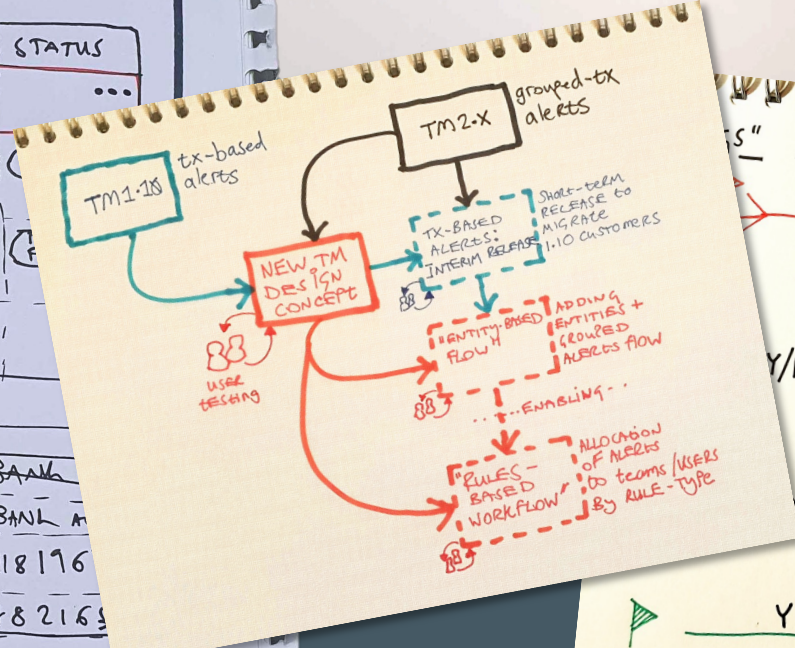
JIM JONES
 Address, phone no...
 Date of birth...
 Social security # ▼ MORE

ALERTS

Date	Rules	Txs	TOTAL	OWNER	STATUS
06/06/20	HVC REF	5	10538.27	You	...
12/05/19	SANC BSANC	2	2001.20	J SMITH	
01/04/16	HVC	4	15080	S WOOD	

ALERT DETAIL

Alert	RULE	Tx	NAME	STATUS
1051	HVC	1000.12	S MILTON	BANK
		2,102.00	S MILTON	BANK
		500.12	J PHILIPS	118196
		10006.79	J PHILIPS	482163
		512.13	RT GREG	78612



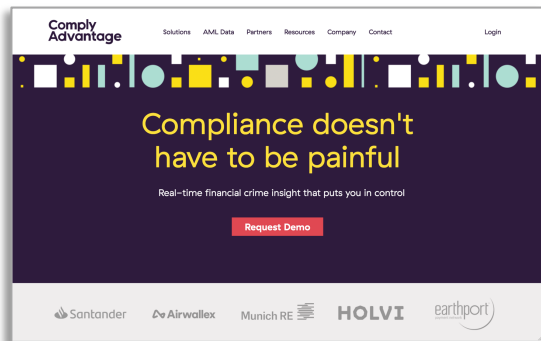
Concept design & testing

I went through several lightweight early designs, exploring different methods of presentation, gradually moving from low to high fidelity.

I created prototypes and shared these with users in 1-1 testing and made rapid iterations between sessions.

The key principle remained reframing the task flow around the customer as the main object.

Early on, I explored a palette aligning the new UI to CA's then-website style (below), which proved problematic. With the agreement of stakeholders, requirements of brand were loosened in favour of a calmer, accessible aesthetic more appropriate for workplace software.



Alerts by entity

Alert ID	Alert type	Customer
QB-022332	HVT	Victims
QB-022332	Sanctions	Scotist
QB-022332	CNO	Sanctions
QB-022332	HVT	Tina D
QB-022332	HVT	Search
QB-022332	Sanctions	Victims
QB-022332	Sanctions	Howtop
QB-022332	CNO	Victims
QB-022332	HVT	Shere
QB-022332	Sanctions	Dorcy
QB-022332	HVT	Search
QB-022332	HVT	Shere
QB-022332	HVT	Dorcy

Alerts

Assigned to me: 11 | Unassigned: 13 | All open alerts: 24

ID	Date	Entity	Alert Type	Value	Status	Assignee
1108812	18/06/2020	HVP	x3	12,344.00 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
1108811	17/06/2020	HVP	x1	6,172.00 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
1108810	17/06/2020	HVP	x1	4,963.74 GBP	Unassigned	
1108809	16/06/2020	HVP	x1	2,493.56 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
1108808	16/06/2020	HVP	x1	1,182.92 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
1108807	16/06/2020	HVP	x2	3,241.11 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
1108806	16/06/2020	HVP	x2	4,553.70 GBP	In progress	mikesmith

Alert history

Date	Alert Type	Value	Status	Assignee
18/06/2020	HVP	12,344.00 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
17/06/2020	CPBANC	6,172.00 GBP	In progress	mikesmith
17/06/2020	TVL	4,963.74 GBP	Active	Unassigned
31/05/2019	CPBANC	344.09 GBP	Rejected	spora

Alert #85745711 (In progress)

Rule triggered	Date started	Total value	Age of alert	Priority
HVP	20/04/2020 15:38:15 (+00:00)	12,344.00 GBP	5 days	Soft stop

Transactions

Date	ID	Amount	Sender	Beneficiary	Priority
20/06/2020	5783453	12,344.00 GBP	Graham Hughes	Kristofer Pacheco	Hard stop
19/06/2020	3454423	6,172.00 GBP	Graham Hughes	Kristofer Pacheco	Soft stop
18/06/2020	3455435	4,963.74 GBP	BOXS Ltd	Graham Hughes	Soft stop

Alert queue: entities

Subject name	Date/time of most recent alert	'In review'	Age of oldest 'In review' alert	Rule code(s)
Claire Ringrose	31 October 2020 17:36	7	12 days	MCO, BSANC, PLMT
Ezra Banks	31 December 2021 12:15	2	2 days	STRC, PLMT
JW Hart	31 October 2020 17:36	2	2 days	STRC, PLMT
Alison Hunt	31 October 2020 12:15	1	2 days	STRC
Marrion Butler Jones	31 October 2020 12:15	1	2 days	STRC
Jennifer Lotterham	31 October 2020 17:36	1	4 days	STRC
Magnus Maximus Joe	31 October 2020 12:15	1	7 days	STRC
Nicolina Lindholm	31 October 2020 17:36	1	4 days	STRC
Ren Delan	31 October 2020 12:15	1	6 days	STRC
Nahia Colunga	31 October 2020	1	6 days	STRC

Claire Ringrose / Entity details

Metric	Value
Average total transactions per month	64
Parties transacted with per month on average	26
Average tx value	68.31 GBP
Total amount of transactions in the previous 365 days	190

Entity details

Field	Value
Full name	Claire Alma Ringrose
Country of residence	UK
Date(s) of birth	13/01/1978
Type	Residence
Address	Flat 4a, 2 Gladstone Way, London, N10 8PU, UK
Address	7 Rue de Lyons, 59100 Roubaix France
Date(s) of birth	13/01/1978
Date(s) of birth	13/01/1979
Date(s) of birth	13/02/1978
Customer ID	Claise090746
Account number	
Account balance	
Country of residence	

Detailed design & build

- Alongside a junior designer, I created the high-fidelity designs which were the blueprint for build.
- We continued to squeeze in usability testing sessions with clients as we worked, or even performing guerrilla sessions with our own customer support and sales teams.
- I began to work closely with the frontend and UI developers to develop CA's first React-based component library to support build.
- As we were creating a new design system from scratch, it was desirable to rely on out-of-the-box components as much as possible. I rationalised the use of components across screens to standardise interactions and keep the effort to a manageable level for developers.
- I audited all the new components for their match with designs and created a backlog to deal with the discrepancies, along with failure to meet WCAG accessibility criteria.

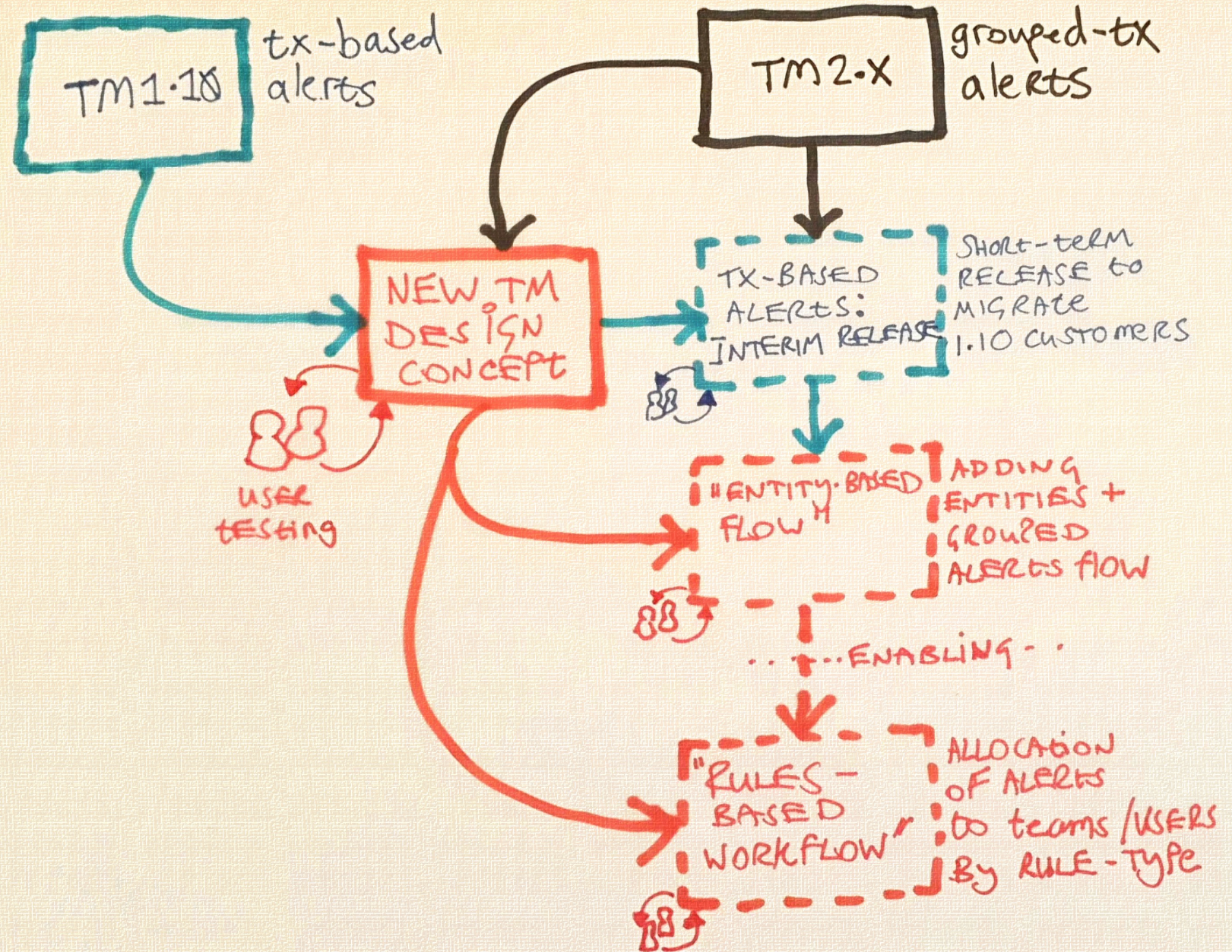
Subject name	Date/time of most recent alert	Open Alerts	In Review	Age of oldest 'In Review' alert	Rule code(s)	Super Action	Alert Priorities	Owner(s)	Status(es)	No. of Transactions	Country Code
Everton Brown	03 March 2023 13:10	1	1	4 days	BENS-SP	0	MEDIUM	unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	03 March 2023 12:54	1	1	4 days	BENS-SP	0		unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:06	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	0		Jake McMullan	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:04	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	0		unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:57	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	0		unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:53	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	0		unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:51	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	0		unassigned	In Review	1	United Kingdom

Subject name	Date/time of most recent alert	Open Alerts	In Review	Age of oldest 'In Review' alert	Rule code(s)	No. of Transactions	Country Code
Everton Brown	03 March 2023 13:10	1	1	4 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	03 March 2023 12:54	1	1	4 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:06	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:04	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:57	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:53	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:06	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 15:04	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom
Everton Brown	09 February 2023 14:57	1	1	26 days	BENS-SP	1	United Kingdom

Outcomes

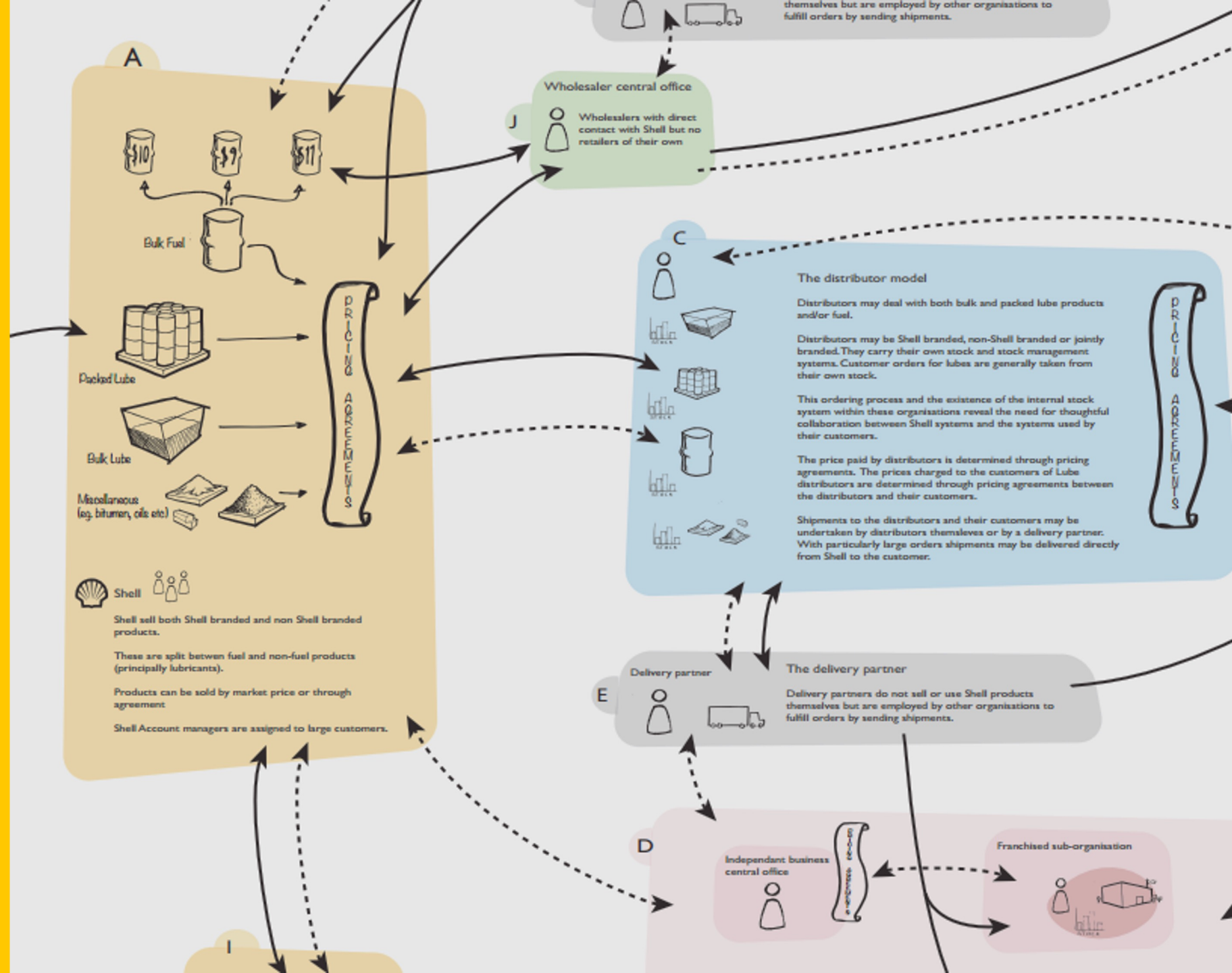
The new 'customer-based flow' was released initially only to TM clients threatening to churn.

- As a result, no at-risk clients churned – all eventually moved the new workflow and were satisfied with it. One unintended consequence was a surge of new feature requests to extend it once clients got to grips with the new flow and began to explore the possibilities.
- CA's sales team noticed the new workflow received good feedback. They began using it in sales demos. Several new deals were made on the basis of the new functionality. New clients using the workflow soon numbered among CA's largest accounts.
- Client satisfaction with the new workflow and increased sales convinced CA leadership to replace all our platforms with a single, case-working solution based on the same principles as the customer-based flow. This move became central to the product strategy.
- The success of the customer-based flow made it simple to get leadership buy-in when I requested the time and resources to carry out a comprehensive discovery research and concept design programme to support the single platform project.



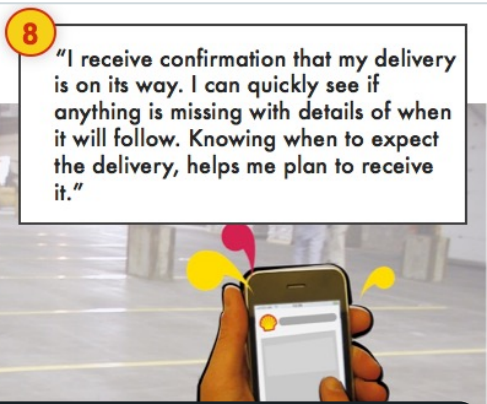


Case study
 UX Lead
 Shell Markethub
 2011-2015



Design principles — one output of workshops with stakeholders

Consistent experience Learn it once , use it anywhere	Satisfying The easiest part of my working day
Relevant and personal Gets better the more you use it	Adaptable Growing and changing with the business
Contextual Understands where you are and what you are doing	Growing business Never miss a business opportunity

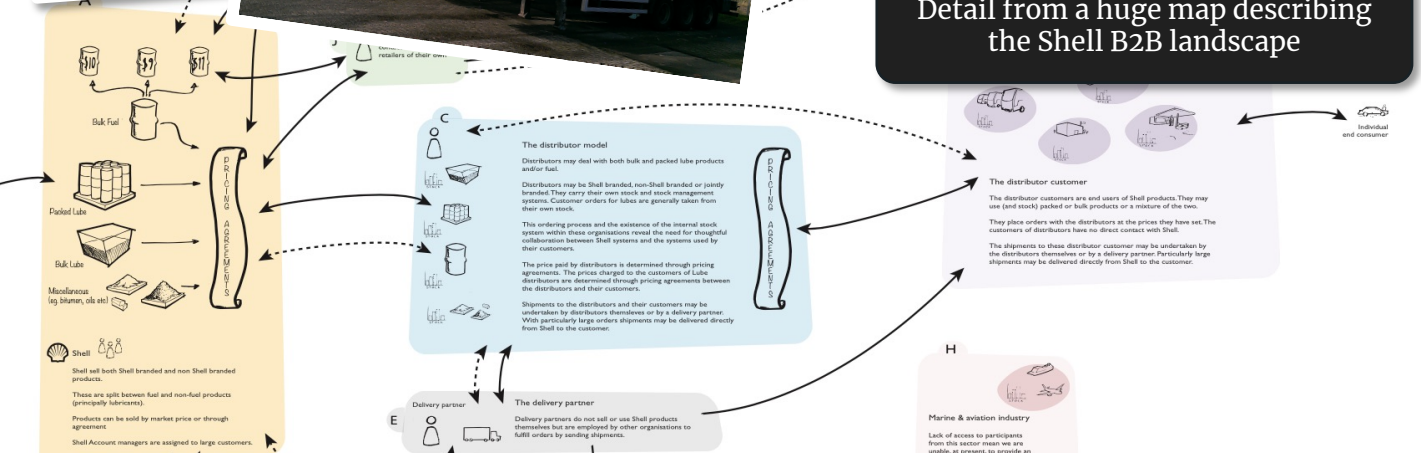


Storyboards of 'success stories' helping bring the vision for the customer experience to life

Onsite research with Shell Fleet customers in the Netherlands



Detail from a huge map describing the Shell B2B landscape



Strategy & planning

- As Principal Consultant at Foolproof, I was responsible for the planning and delivery of all projects for Shell, the agency's largest client.
- I led the work to forge a user experience vision and strategy for a \$15m ecommerce, logistics and resources platform for Shell's B2B channel customers and partners globally
- Shell sought to unify a number of disparate B2B sites which were expensive, outdated and offered a poor and fragmented customer experience
- Challenges in the early stages included achieving a common vision and buy-in from a number of distinct and often very independent business areas within Shell
- In collaboration with senior stakeholders at global VP level within Shell, we identified a set of key customer experience principles for the new platform which we storyboarded to bring the vision to life
- Exploratory customer research with target audiences led to detailed user journey mapping, persona creation and the design of key concepts

The Moneymakers

"We need a partner that helps us grow our business"

Who we are

The people responsible for expanding the business. We are always looking for new opportunities to maximise profits and sales.

Typical job roles:
 COO, General Manager, Regional Manager, Territory Manager, Marketing Manager, After-sales Manager, Sales Team Leader, Sales Representative

Steve, Regional Sales Manager for a large wholesale petroleum distributor

My business goals

- Maximise profits from existing customers' sites
- Acquire new customers and develop the network

My day to day activities

I am responsible for sales in the region, and report directly to the General Manager. While my Territory Managers each manage a portfolio of sites, my responsibility is to look for new customers and develop the network across the region. I spend my day coordinating the sales team and keeping track of pricing and the sales pipeline. On request, I need to provide clear articulation to my customers about the Shell CVP, products and marketing campaigns.

My relationship with Shell

Our organisation sells over 512 gallons per year of Shell fuels. We have a good working relationship with the team at Shell who support us actively through phone calls and regular meetings.

My use of online tools

Since I don't use Shell online tools very much, I often struggle to find what I am looking for. I usually end up calling my CRM or the CSC to get guidance. Some times I go online to download transaction statements and retrieve brand and promotional materials for my customers.

My frustrations

I have to account for the regional performance in regular reports to the GM. I find getting the necessary summary of our key brand metrics time consuming. I would prefer to receive important notifications and updates by email to my mobile as I am often on the move. We rely on regular substantiated pricing add Shell. Whenever their server goes down, it paralyzes the sales team.

What I want from online tools

- Have summary results of reports I create sent to my mobile
- Quick, easy access to collateral which helps me articulate value
- Online support to help plan and run market research, campaigns and run promotions
- Product training and basic onboarding for my team
- Tools to help forecast demand, visibility of inventory

What we need

- Timely and reliable pricing information and updates, product availability and lead times
- Help articulating CVP and product benefits
- Tools to support the growth of our business
- Tools to help forecasting demand visibility of inventory, lead times

Designing for us

Knowledge and analytics
 Access to manager-level reports, forecasts and statistics. These allow us to analyse past performance, benchmark against competitors, and develop our strategy and develop our markets.

Support
 Templates and guidance in creating business plans, promotions and online initiatives that underpin a clear sales strategy. We need to be proactively informed about product and service updates, such as products being discontinued or replaced.

Timely information
 To best support active management of the sales pipeline we need access to information and collateral in a timely and efficient manner. We are busy mobile people. Don't make us come and get it ourselves!

What other customers say



- I currently use online tools to**
- Get info on products, safety procedures, etc.
 - Place and manage orders
 - Manage logistics and delivery of products
 - Increase my business performance
 - Access financial documentation
 - Share information with Shell



Jan, Owner at a small wholesaler
 I personally oversee all aspects of the business with the help of an office manager. Keeping track of the daily operations demands a lot of my time. I'm not a specialist and I don't have much time or resource to invest in developing our sales and marketing strategy. Therefore, I want to be informed only about the materials relevant specifically to me, and need them in a format that is easy to go.



Roberto, Sales Manager for a lubricants macro distributor
 My sales force tends to work small networks in their local areas. They find it difficult to make full use of the online tools as few of them have reliable internet access. Most do not speak English and much of the training material is unavailable in Spanish. However, Shell provides for promotions and other initiatives often do not work in our market.



Liu, Marketing Manager for a lubricants macro distributor
 We are looking to develop in our markets, but our plans often go beyond what Shell can currently provide to support us. We localise materials from Brand Central, but we'd like to be more proactive in creating our own initiatives and getting a rapid response from Shell in approving our materials. Shell online tools seem clumsy and difficult when placed alongside the other systems we use.

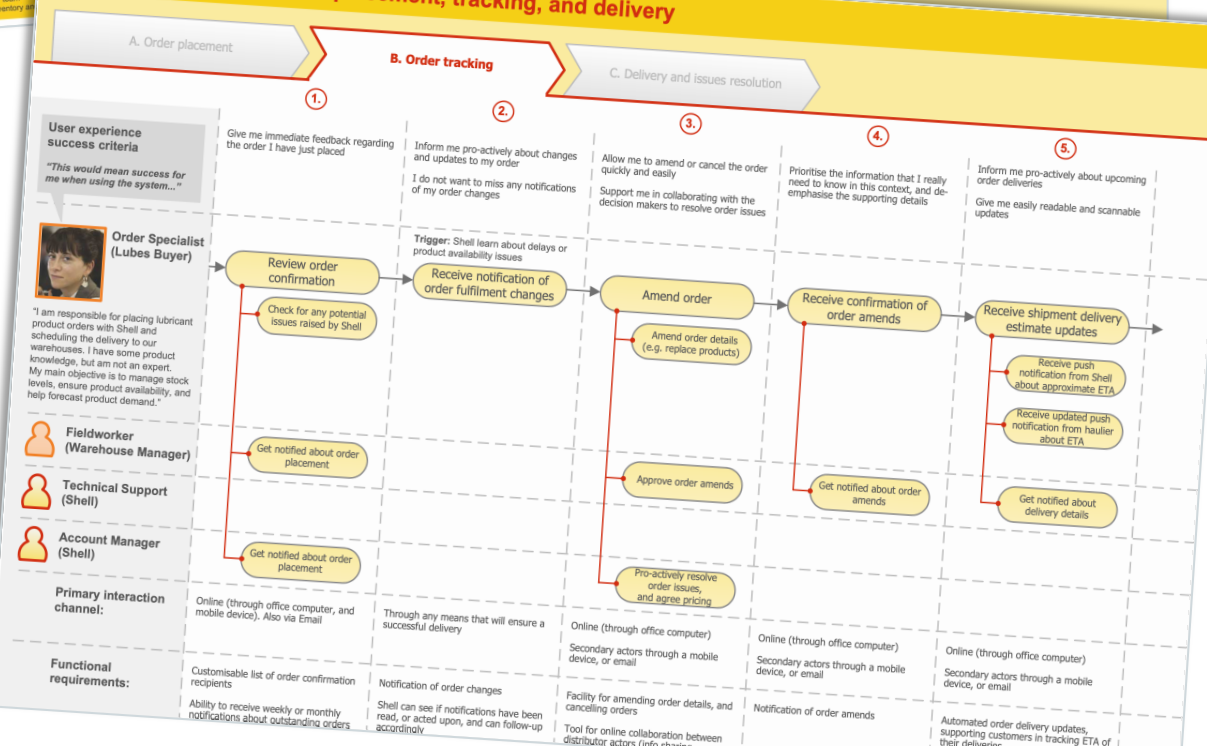


Rose, Sales Representative for a lubricants distributor
 I use the Distributor Portal for downloading product information and training materials. However, with over 600 lubes products available, it is often very difficult to locate relevant information. I also need to know product availability and delivery lead times, but this information is often difficult to get from Shell systems. As I spend most of my time on the road, I need to access this content on the move. If there is new information that can help me hit my sales targets, I would prefer to be notified instead of having to go and find it myself.

Journey: Wholesaler – Pickup and delivery management

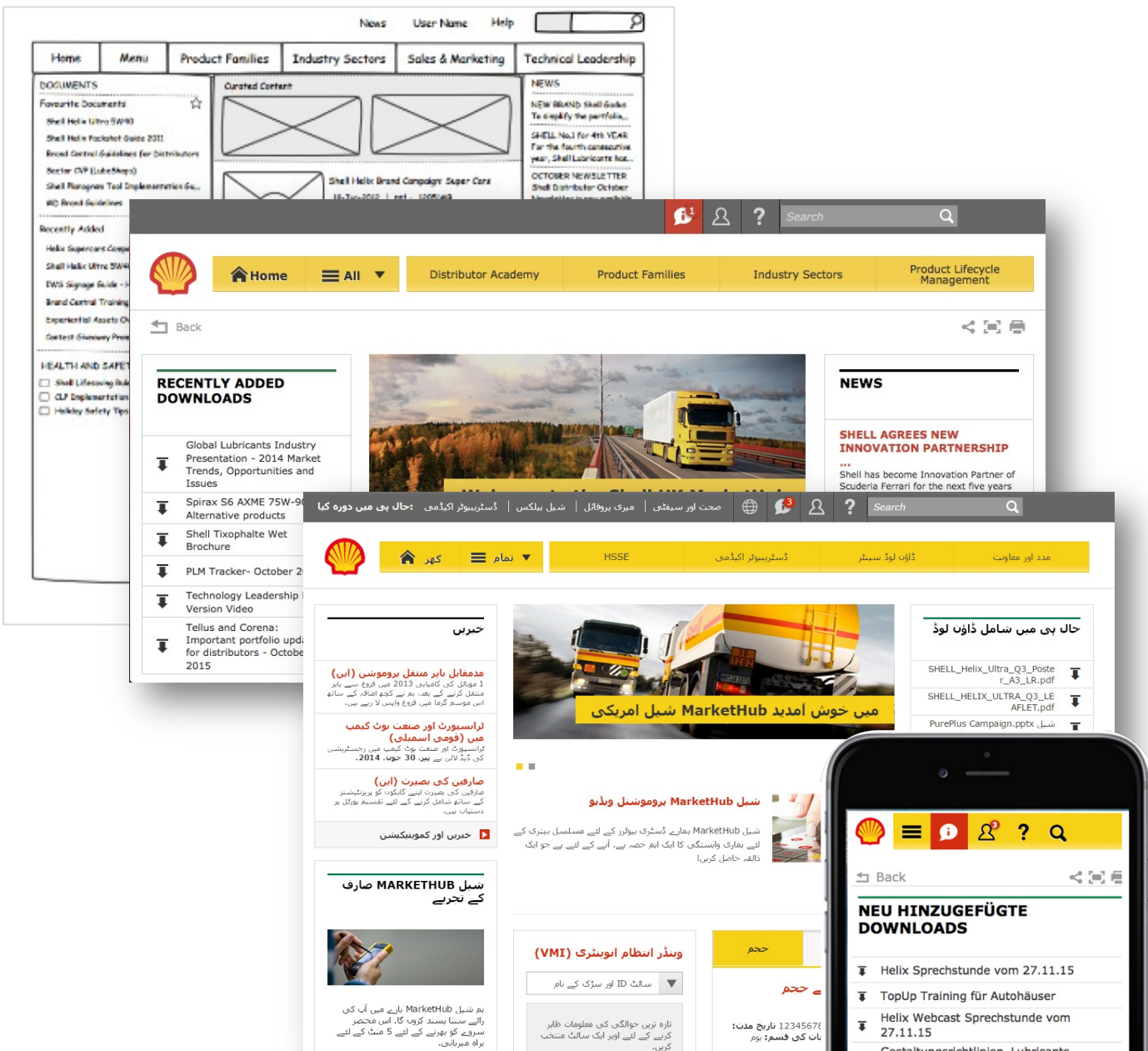
Journey: Accounts reconciliation

Journey: Distributor – Order placement, tracking, and delivery



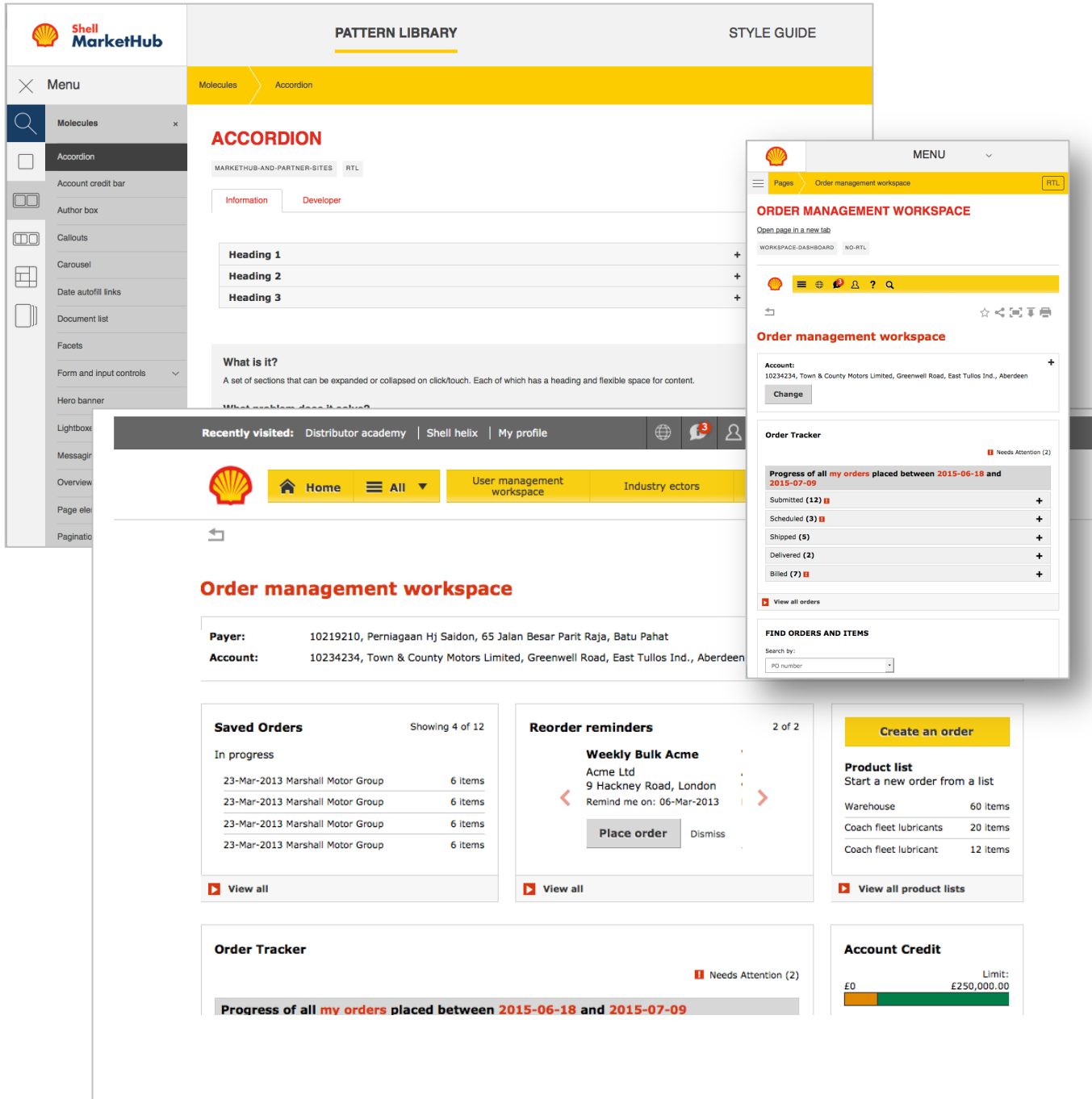
Business requirements

- The new platform needed to deliver a best-in-class user experience to a varied set of customers around the world
- With a team of researchers, I created a set of persona 'classes' to capture the diverse user requirements.
- We documented detailed customer journeys showing customer organisations' workflows: including interactions between different users during tasks, user's information and support needs at each step - including touch points with Shell through various channels
- We highlighted user, business and system success criteria at each stage
- I created scorecards for task success criteria. Technology platform vendors were scored on how well their product met these UX challenges as part of Shell's procurement process



User-centred design

- I led a team of designers and researchers following a sprint-based user-centred design process
- Each sprint included iterative testing with users and refinement of the design
- To meet the demand for rapid access to users, I worked with Shell's business marketing team to create a global panel of 170 Shell B2B customers across multiple markets and business areas who could be contacted for testing
- Design evolved swiftly from early wireframes and the majority done in rapid, hi-fidelity prototyping
- I ensured the test plan achieved comprehensive coverage of desktop, mobile and tablet experiences as MarketHub was a fully responsive site
- We also tested local variants of the site with users in different countries to assess the design with longer average word-length than English (e.g. German), left-to-right (e.g. Arabic) and character sets (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, Russian)



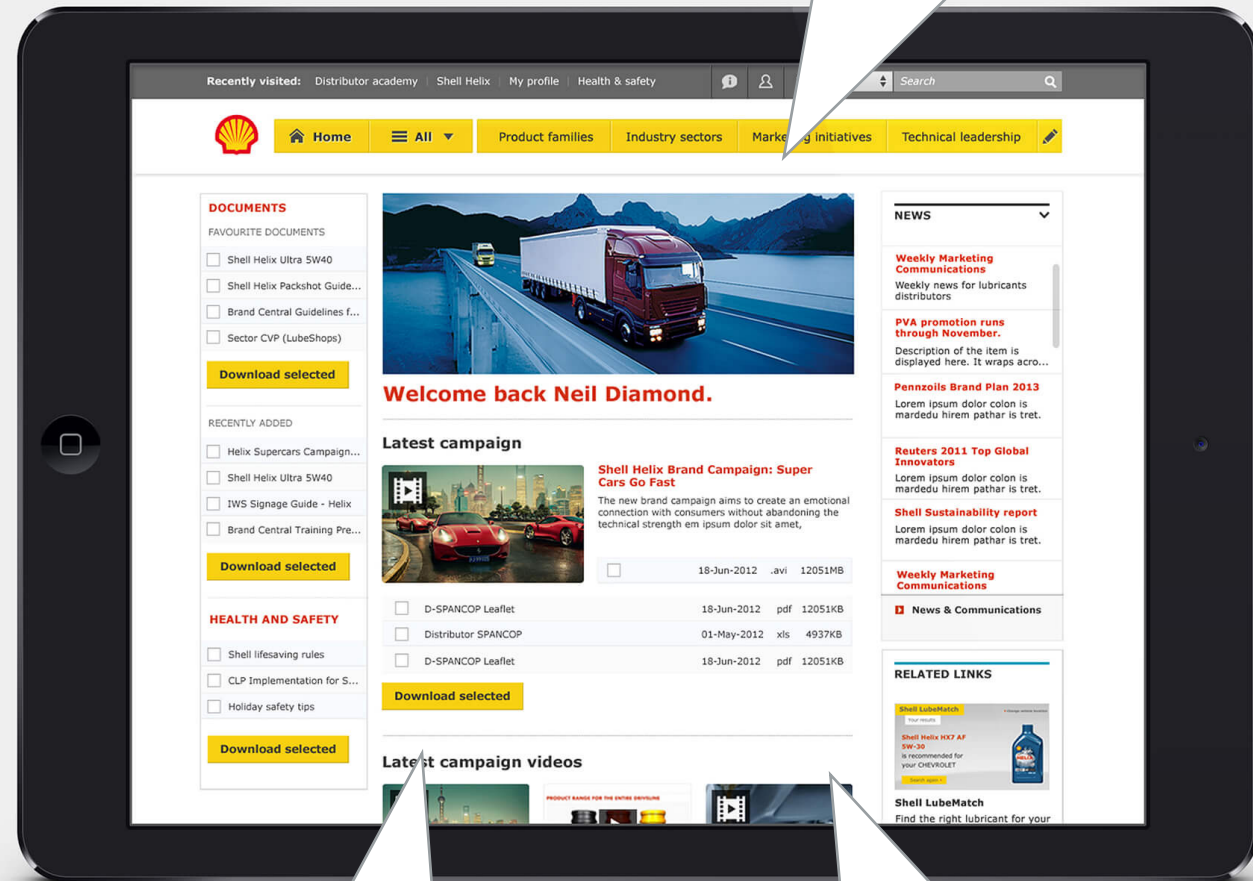
Detailed design

- I led the delivery of all UX design specifications and assets for build as a fully-functioning design system.
- Shell and their technology partners were not used to creating fully responsive sites, so we took it upon ourselves to deliver fully working HTML and CSS assets.
- Design patterns, visual style and UI components were delivered as a responsive HTML/CSS design system app using the atomic design framework.
- I acted as the custodian of design standards on the programme – defining updates for future releases and evaluating all frontend build against the screen designs and design system.

Project outcomes

- MarketHub release 1 went live in November 2015 to 6,232 Shell distributors globally
- The distributor customer satisfaction score increased to 7.5 (out of 10) in the first quarter after launch from an average of 6.3 for the previous 12 months – and remained consistently high in subsequent quarters
- Q1 performance alone represented **\$4m in operational savings** due to improved online marketing and communications and reduction in customer calls
- Post go-live user research supported the internal view of MarketHub with overwhelmingly positive feedback from users

“My fear in using the latest technology disappeared seeing how easy it is to use MarketHub.”



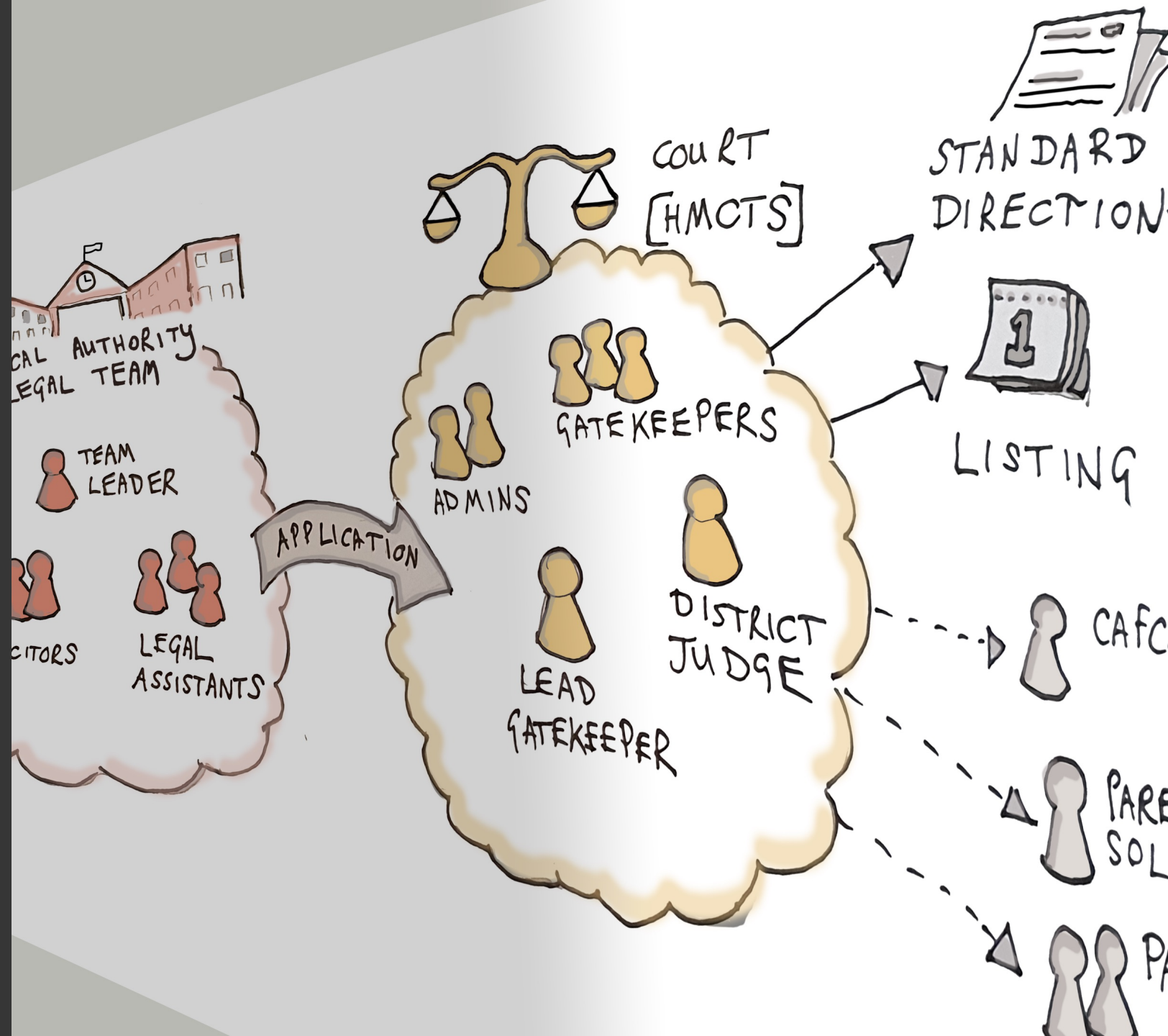
“It’s a game changer with its ease of use.”

“It’s so easy to navigate and find things; I was able to register in no time.”



HM Courts & Tribunals Service

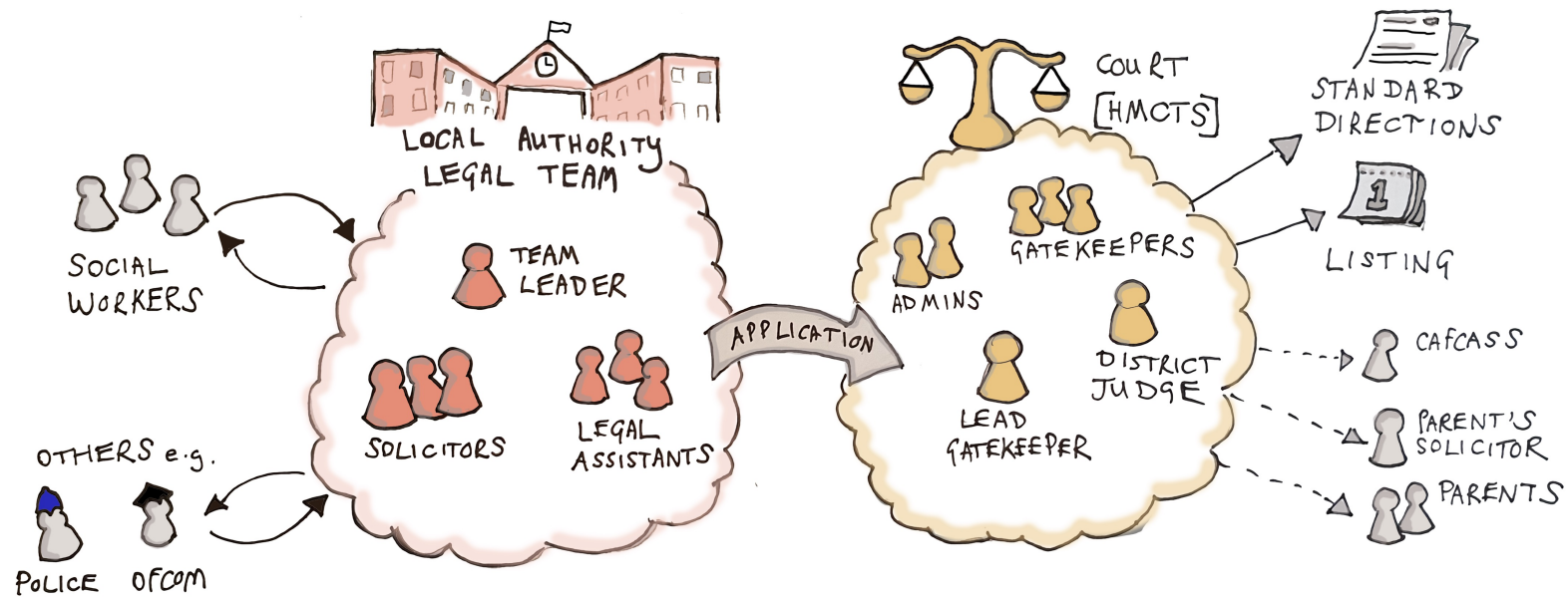
User research 2018
Public Law case
management service



HM Courts & Tribunals Service wanted a digital solution to improve the preparation and sharing of case documents when local authorities applied to family courts to take children into care.

Working as a member of a multi-disciplinary product team, I worked with subject matter experts in HMCTS and my team to understand the application process and who the main actors were:

- When social workers believe a child needs to be taken into custody, the local authority has to make an application to the courts and a hearing date scheduled. The need for a hearing may be urgent if the child is considered to be at immediate risk.
- Following the initial application, follow-up case documents must be completed by both local authority solicitors and court staff prior to the court dates. Both must have a complete and up-to-date copy of all documents as must the parents' solicitors.
- The application form was a complex PDF form. All case files were paper-based. Every amendment required the entire updated case file be faxed or scanned/emailed to the other parties.



UX leadership at HMCTS were concerned that previous user insight gathered by the product team lacked sufficient numbers or depth to meet the quality criteria set by the Government Design Standard.

I was set the task of reviewing existing insight and conducting further research as needed to address the deficit.

Getting access to local authority solicitors to interview was a slow, high effort task that had hampered prior research.

I collated all available local authority and family court contacts into a database and sent a mail out to all contacts inviting them to participate in the design of the new solution.

Interested respondents could click on a link and indicate their interest and whether they preferred a remote or onsite interview.

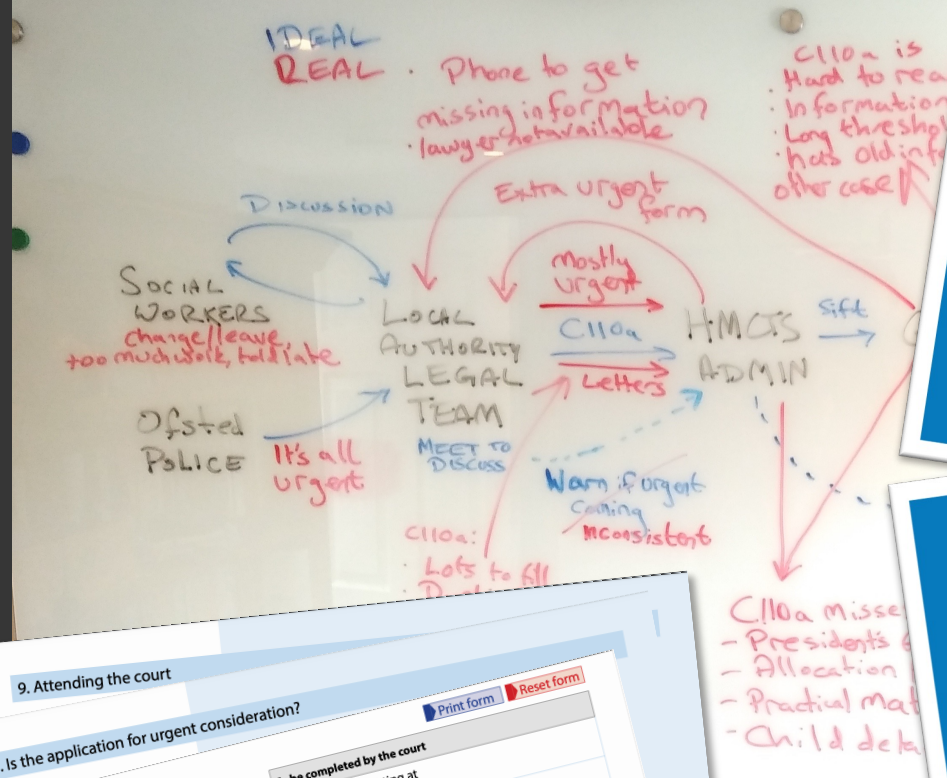
From the responses, I was able to swiftly schedule visits to local authorities and courts in Swansea, Newcastle, Gateshead and London as well as conduct a further 11 remote interviews.



Analysing the findings from interviews, I mapped the pain-points participants raised to the existing application process.

This corroborated the picture provided by previous research but added further insight to user needs of a digital service:

- Court and local authority staff welcomed the prospect of a digital alternative for sharing case documents as the current process was time-consuming, inefficient and prone to document versioning errors.
- The form's 20 pages of questions were linear with plenty of redundancy with no logical grouping into sections that would only apply depending on answers to earlier questions. There was obvious opportunity here to not simply render the form in digital format but to redesign it in an optimised form.
- Given the urgent, short-notice nature of applications for child care orders, court staff had difficulty scheduling hearings within 24 hours as required. There was obvious scope to give them some visibility as soon as local authority solicitors began filling in the form, instead of only when it was submitted.



Hypotheses

- "By making the C110a form an online service we can make the application and allocation more efficient"
- "By reducing the burden of questions answered by local authorities we can get better information to gatekeepers"

Main findings

- Local authorities and Gatekeepers generally happy with making C110a an online service
- We have scope to reduce some of the questions asked as not all are needed (caveat: Policy team to be consulted)
- JUI interface for Gatekeepers less than ideal, information still seen as confusing
- HMCTS has problems knowing what applications may come their way and planning for urgent hearings
- GDS principle of one thing per screen not appropriate for local authority professional users

The screenshot shows the C110A form. The title is "Application for a care or supervision order and other orders under Part 4 of the Children Act 1989 or an Emergency Protection Order under section 44 of the Children Act 1989". The form includes a section "To be completed by the court" with fields for "The family court sitting at", "Case number", "Date issued", "Child(ren)'s name(s)", and "Fee charged". Below this is a section "Nature of application" with the question "What order(s) are you applying for? (tick all which apply)". There are two main options: "Care and supervision or other Part 4" and "Emergency Protection Order". The "Care and supervision" option has sub-options: "Care", "Supervision", "Interim care order", "Interim supervision order", and "Other (please specify)". The "Emergency Protection Order" option has sub-options: "information on the whereabouts of the child(ren) (Section 48(1) Children Act 1989)", "authorisation for entry of premises (Section 48(3) Children Act 1989)", "authorisation to search for another child on the premises (Section 48(4) Children Act 1989)", and "Other (please specify)".



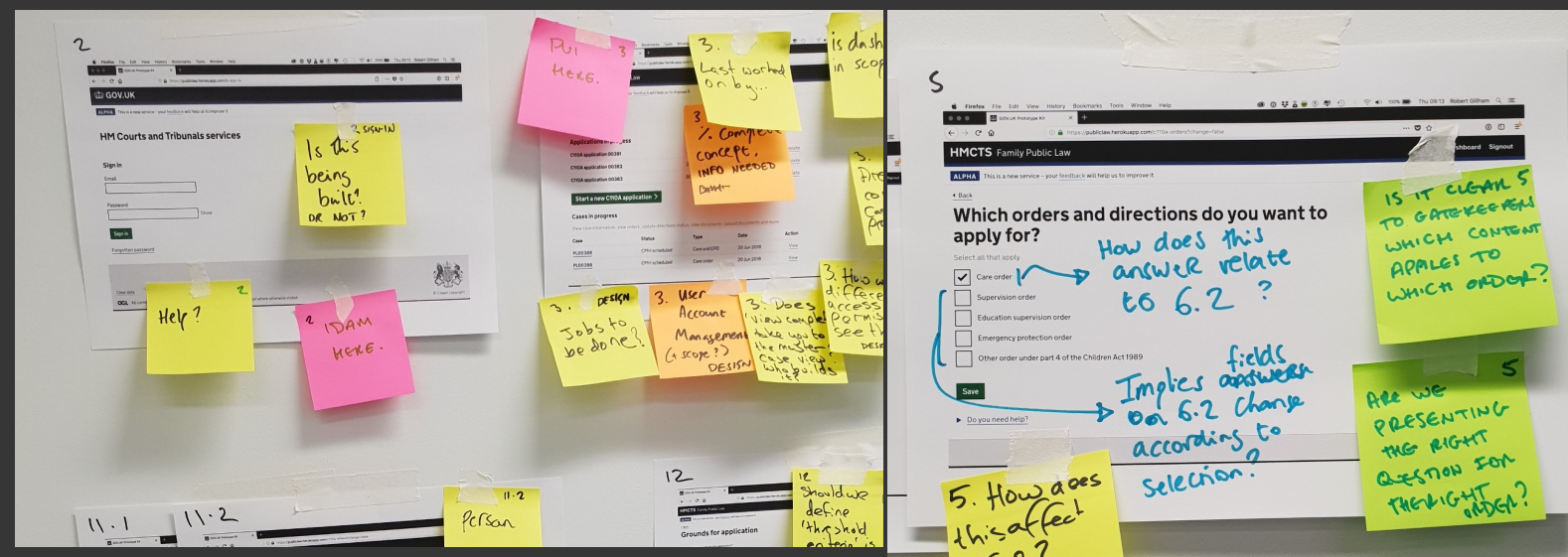
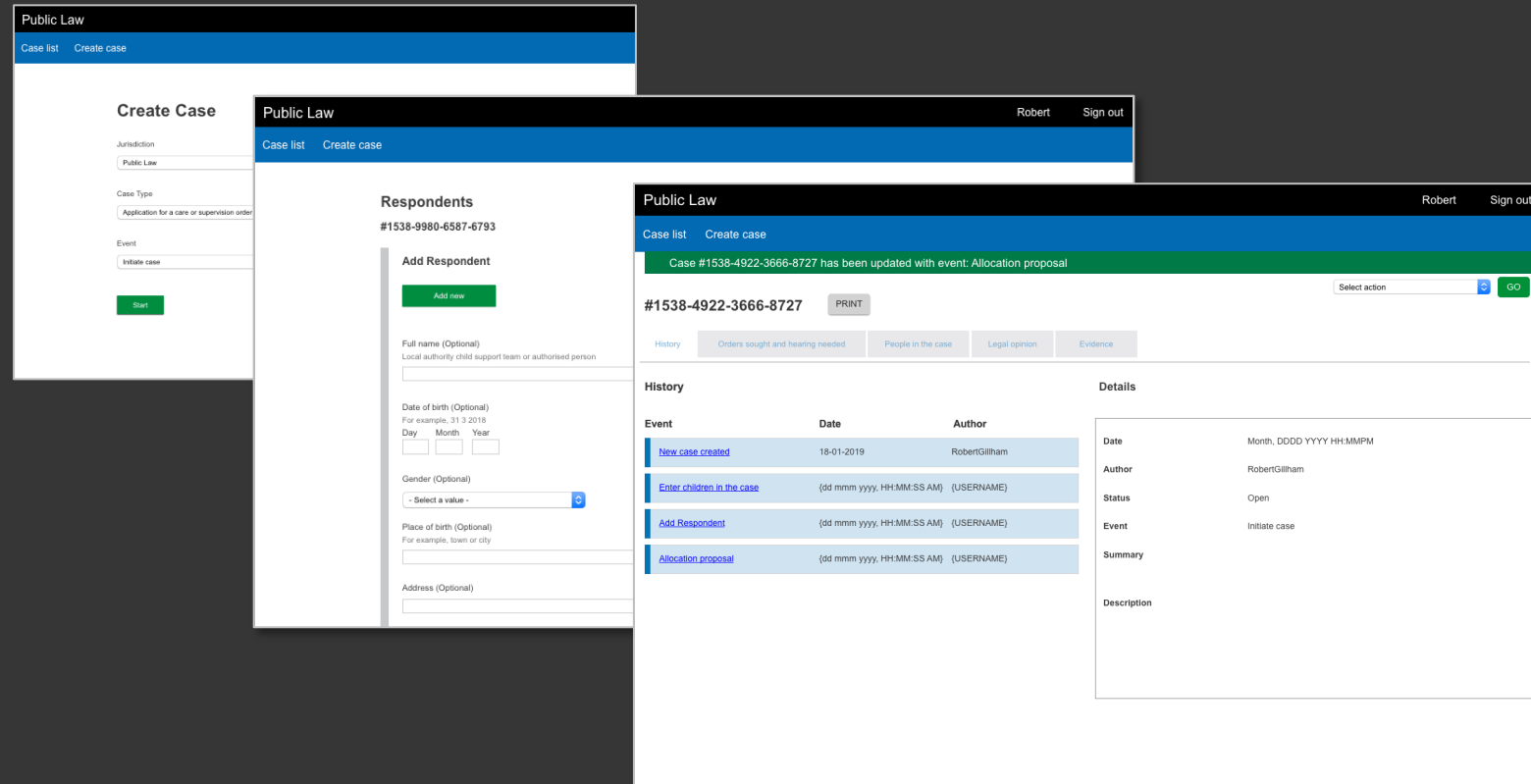
Following the research, I worked with the Interaction, Content and Service Designer on the team to reassess existing prototypes and to refine the design based on the findings of the research.

We moved the design away from a largely faithful reproduction of the PDF form with its order, wording and logic

We broke the form up into its component questions and mapped the dependencies between them to create a flow that revealed or hid fields and sections depending on answers to previous questions. This massively simplified large parts of the form.

We also introduced the 'hub and spoke' pattern from the GDS pattern library (often used in forms for complex tasks like mortgage applications) which allowed the user to navigate between sections via a 'hub page'.

This hub page provided an overview of the overall completion status of the form and allowed the form to be completed in a piecemeal fashion, which mirrored how information tended to become available to users in real cases.



Following the research and subsequent iteration of the design, our proposed solution went to a Government Service Standard assessment.

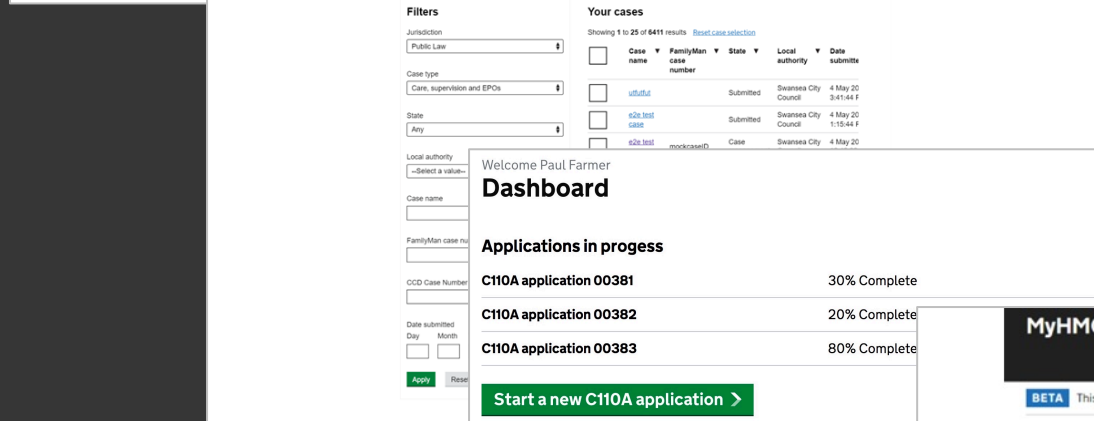
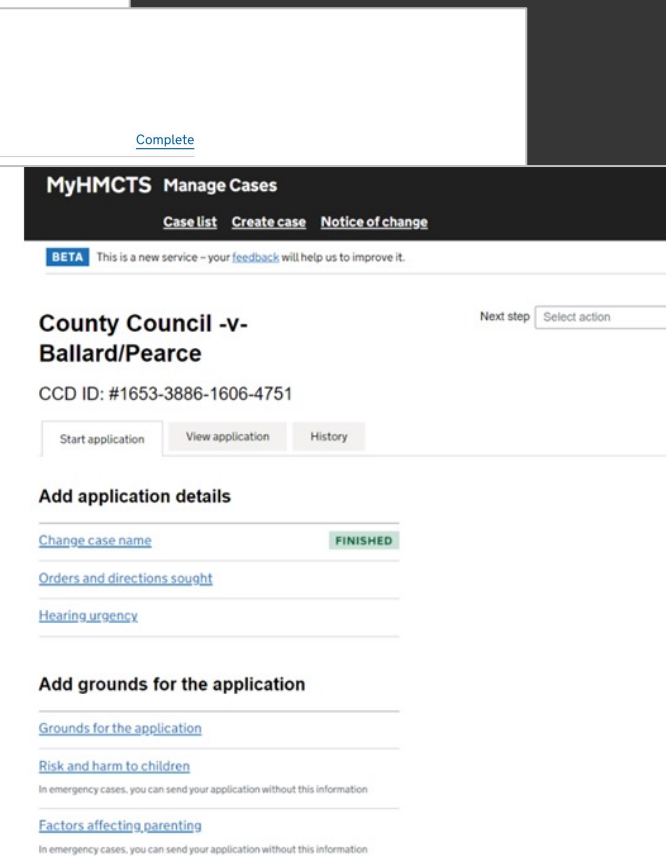
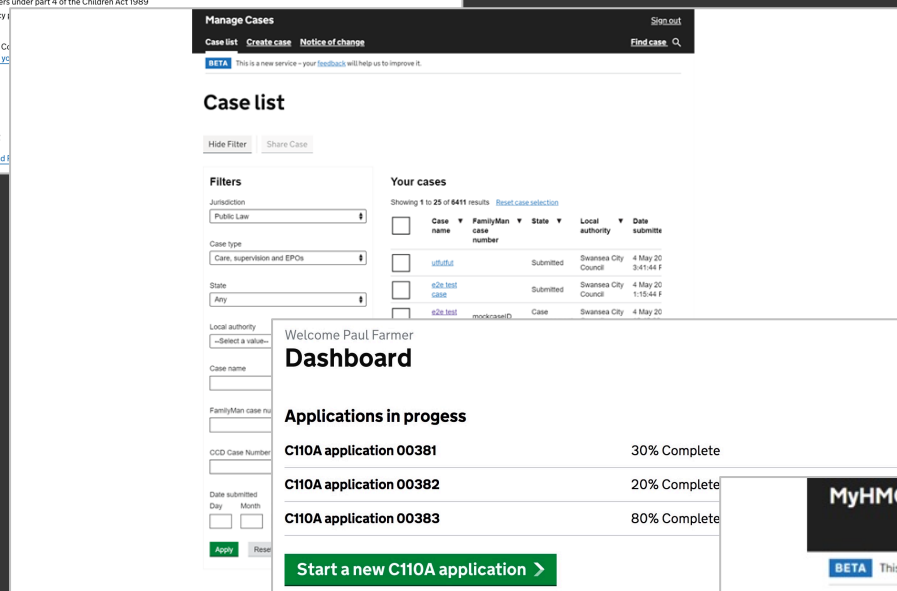
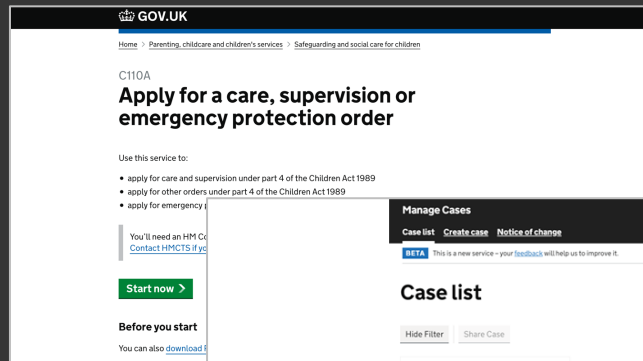
They confirmed the rigour of the research and validity of our findings. The proposed design was approved to become a live beta under the gov.uk domain.

Since 2021, the service has been in used by all 44 family judge court sites across England and Wales. 141 local authorities now use the service and report time savings.

Court staff and legal professionals are viewing files and collaborating on draft orders that are being approved faster, providing more time for parties to comply with directions.

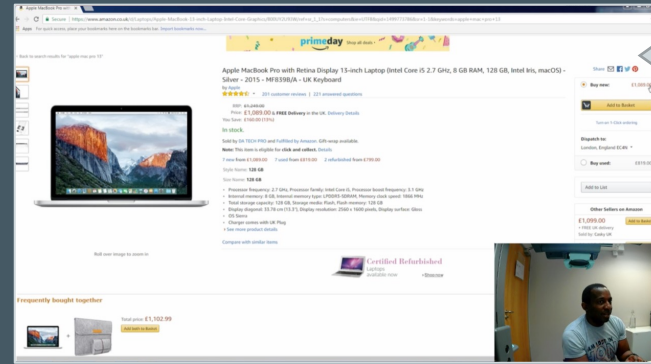
“Court orders are [now] approved very quickly, which is very useful in terms of service on others. Using the portal has saved both time and money and allows files to be updated easily.”

— Lisa Thomas, Senior Lawyer, Swansea City Council



More user research...

- I've been doing user research in support of design for twenty years in both agency and in-house roles, across B2C and B2B applications.
- I've planned, directed and personally performed studies all over the world, including France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, US, Russia, Japan, China and India.
- This has included discovery-style research involving observation, diary studies and open-ended interviews...
- And more design-specific research methods such as usability testing, card sorting, remote unmoderated testing and surveys to name just a few.
- I've performed research into everything from enterprise software to console games, touchscreen ticket machines, apps for mobile and tablet devices and even IVR systems.



User research into Amazon Prime Day experience

Comparative study of SMB business use of mobile across in China, India Germany & US

Session Material – Handsets				
	USA	Germany	India	China
High End Phone	Motorola Droid	HTC Hero	HTC Hero	iPhone 3Gs
Mid End Phone	Palm Pixie	Nokia 3600	Nokia E63	Nokia 3600
Low End Phone	Samsung T239	Nokia 6300	Nokia 6300	Nokia 6300

Findings – Context of Use

Participants struggled to identify the card that was most appropriate to them

- In most cases, participants believed the Post Office Platinum Card to be the most 'desirable'
- It was perceived as the highest 'status' card e.g. hardest to get, with the most advantageous APR
- Balance Transfer cards were seen as for a specific requirement – not as regular cards

User testing & prototype development for Bank of Ireland's credit card application process

Detailed findings | Proposition – First time users

User testing Oystercard touchscreen interface for Transport for London

Thank you

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 [linkedin.com/in/robgillham](https://www.linkedin.com/in/robgillham)