

# Design report

# Digital Host

Municipality The Hague, Atrium



# The Hague

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## Introduction

In the beginning of our design thinking process the first step was to get familiar with the client, their services, their design brief and their general style guide. After everyone from the team got properly acquainted with all of the relevant information needed, work started towards completing the objective of making “The Hague Municipality” atrium into a more customer centered space, where customers find their way easily and feel warmly welcomed at the same time. This report will showcase the creative decisions, processes made and the factors behind their implementation.



# Theoretical Framework

As a culmination of the clients debriefing, the team found that there were certain chunks of data missing, which could help make a strong base for the design ideation process. In the end these three interconnected bases were covered:

- Ease of service
- The layout of the Atrium
- And the touchpoints that the Municipality uses to interact with the users

# Research Design

Data for this study were collected using a combination of three methods: desk research, fly on the wall observation, interviews, and participant observation.

## **Fly on the wall observation**

This method helped us observe visitors of the Atrium without disturbing their visit. We chose this method to get an overview of natural behavior of Atrium visitors and to answer our research questions about the Atrium layout.

We found three high spots on different floors of the Atrium and set up a camera on each spot, each pointed at a different part of the space. We had one general overview (11th floor), one shot of the main entrance (7th floor) and one shot of the Atrium which included the counters (3rd floor). We filmed on a wednesday between 11:00 and 12:00 in the morning. This resulted in three time lapse videos that we used to make a journey map.

## **Interviews**

We interviewed visitors of the Atrium in order to gather opinions and experiences of the users of the space. We wanted their feedback to answer our research questions about the Ease of Service.

We went to the Atrium on a wednesday and interviewed visitors between 10.00 and 12.00 in the morning. We tried to pick mostly people who were already done and on their way out. We chose to do so because they can tell us about the experience they just had at the Atrium and so that we wouldn't bother them during their interaction.

## **Desk research**

Before we started with the research, we did some desk research on the Municipality and their services. We went to their website to see what services they offer and which services can be carried out online and which ones require a visit to the Atrium. We did this desk research to help us answer the research questions about the User Touchpoints.

## **Participant observation**

This method helped us get first hand experience with interacting with the Municipality and the Atrium. This helped us answer questions about all three of our topics: ease of use, layout, and user touchpoints.

Coincidentally, one of our groupmates moved during our period of research and therefore had to change his address for the Municipality. We followed and documented his whole journey, from the start at the website to his appointment in the Atrium.

# Research Results

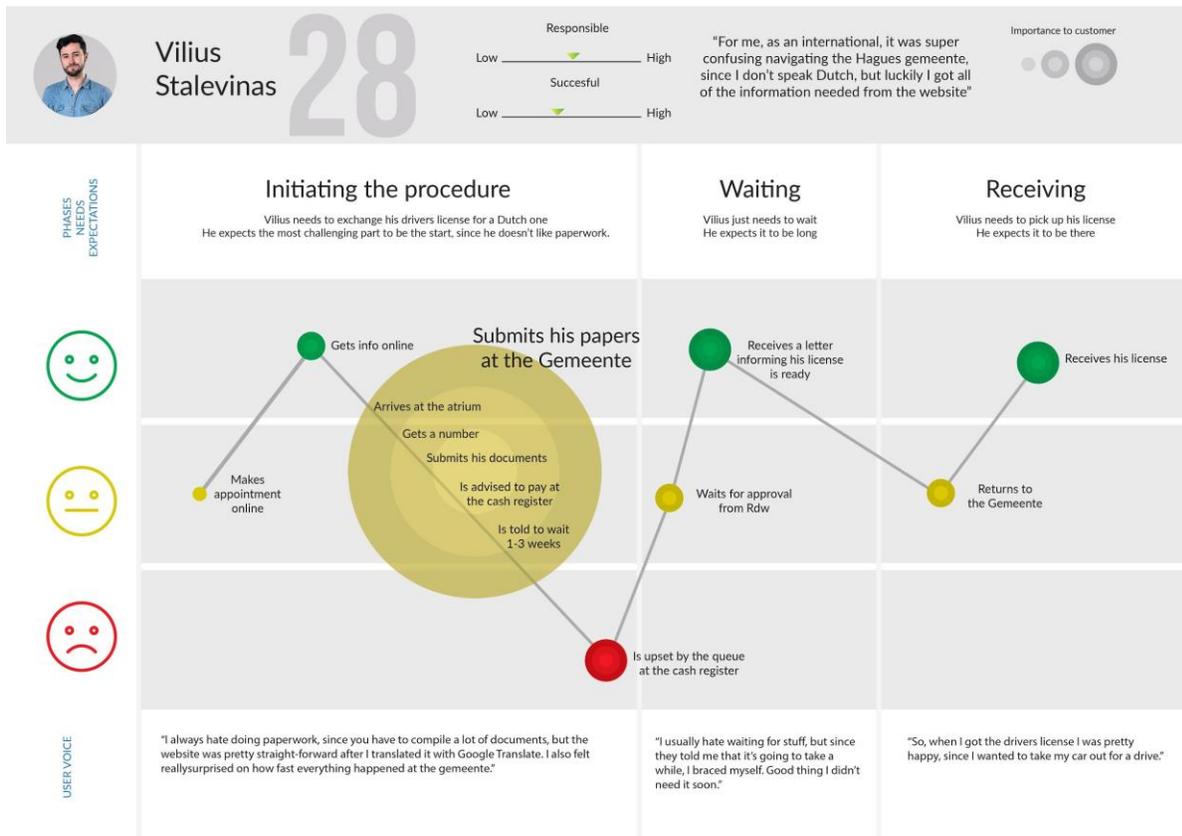
## Desk research

In our desk research, we

## Customer Journey Map

To get a clearer picture on the usual Atrium visit experience, our team shadowed a participant and asked him to talk about his experience afterwards. This culminated in a very insightful visit that allowed us to analyse the touchpoints and the user's reaction. The illustrated map showcases the different steps the user went through and evaluates them with a scale that goes from 'sad', to 'happy'. This research helped in realising the shortcomings of the current service, so that we could strive to deliver a more empathetic and user friendly iteration of the service.

From our research, we derived several products. Beneath is a user journey of an average Atrium visitor



## How did this help us

This research showcased that there are a lot of areas where the user feels mellow. At the core of the issue is the fact that the hardest part for the user is to initiate the procedure and get the paperwork done, so our aim in the end became to simplify the experience. Another stressor of the user experience is also waiting times, so we thought we'd look into how to reduce it. another useful insight what we found during the observation(s) was the lack of English translations.

From this research, we conducted several insights in the form of user stories.

As a...	I want...	So...
1. User	to be able to pay by cash not only at one place	I don't have to stay longer as necessary.
2. User	The space to be more green	The space feels more welcoming.
3. User	To be able to read what's on the screens	I can be aware of the status of my process.
4. User	To receive consistent information all the time	I don't have to walk around asking different people for the same information.
5. User	To be compensated if the system makes a mistake	My time is rewarded with something.
6. User	To have my appointment be on time it was scheduled	There is no time wasted on waiting.
7. User	The entry point not to be crowded with exhibitions or billboards	I can have an overview of the place I'm entering.
8. User	The orientation system to be less confusing	I can find my way faster towards what I'm looking for.
9. User	To have an appointment scheduled as fast as possible	I can get the document/ license etc. that I need, and not have to be on stand-by.
10. User	The system to be fully translated to English	That as an expat/ international I can understand the whole process and not just a part of it.

Below, we answer the research questions we posed based on our client brief and meeting.

## 1. Ease of service

### **What are the different tasks that users might try to accomplish in the Atrium?**

Services provided by the Municipality can be found in the research report. Other than that, we have found that some of the visitors only use the Atrium space to pass through it, in order to get to the other side.

### **How can the experience for users at the Municipality atrium be enhanced, considering the multiple types of services offered there?**

This is a difficult question to answer, because we didn't get sufficient amount of critical feedback to be certain about a major issue in the system. However, visitors have stated that they find the atmosphere of the atrium quite cold and 'niet gezellig'; and that the nickname of the building is "Ice Palace". This part of the experience could be enhanced by adding aesthetic features to the Atrium. Visitors have reported that they would like to see more color. For this, we might look at the Atrium of the municipality of Groningen, who have implemented lots of greenery in their design.

## 2. Layout

### **Why are users feeling like they don't know where to go once they arrive at the space?**

It turns out that many users don't really have difficulties understanding where to go once they arrive, since they are locals. Internationals and newcomers, on the other hand, have way more trouble finding their way, during their first visit to the atrium.

### **How is the signage currently helping to steer the users through the space?**

People who visit the atrium to get something done usually go to the information screen on a pole first. Next to the pole are hosts in orange ties, who will assist them and point them in to the right direction.

### **How do users experience a "warm-welcome" feeling from public spaces?**

During the making of the interviews, we noticed that people find the Atrium to be quite 'cold'. The citizens of The Hague have nicknamed the City Hall "The Ice Palace" because of the clean and white design of the space.

### **Why is the current layout of the space not ideal for the service?**

The current Atrium is lacking a real warm welcome. Most of the time there is an art exhibition present in the middle of the atrium space basically, but visitors tend to ignore it totally or they see it as an obstacle that they have to avoid. Another thing that bothers most of the users, especially expats, is the fact that there is only one desk at which visitors can pay by cash. This usually results in long waiting lines and irritation mostly in rush hours.

### **How does the Atrium accommodate for “walking-through” traffic of users? (exhibitions, tourists, etc.)**

As stated above, the art exhibitions are sometimes viewed as an obstacle for passers-by or they are totally neglected by the trespassing people. Otherwise, the walkthrough of the building seems fluent, there haven't been any major re-marks to prove otherwise.

## **3. Touchpoints**

### **Are users aware of the different channels of service the Municipality offers and do they work towards helping the user find what they need?**

The website of the municipality is for most of the users confusing. While conducting desk research we found that making an online appointment via the website can be confusing and inadequate.

A major issue that we came across was that not all the pages of the website are available in English. This puts expats and internationals at a huge disadvantage and can make their experience with the municipality even more confusing.

We also found, that many users find the info screens too small and have difficulty reading them, especially from a distance.

During the interviews, we found out that the visitors of the Atrium are quite pleased with the work of the staff, especially the hosts with the orange ties and the with the people sitting behind the counters. They have been found not only sufficient, but also to be very helpful and kind to the visitors. However, some visitors still feel like, that there are smaller and bigger issues with the communication between them and the people working behind the counters.

### **What technologies or methods are being used in similar spaces for the enhancement of their service design?**

Through desk research we have been unable to find concrete answers to this question so far. However, we looked into other solutions and different ways of how others manage large spaces and systems, and what are they have in common. We found that the municipality of Groningen, have large amounts of greenery and daylight come in to their atrium, which creates a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere for their visitors.

## Ideation

### Three concepts

After the team decided upon the three areas of interest for the research in the municipality and gathered a sufficient amount of information using different methods, a meeting was organized in order to create and choose the three best concepts. The most relevant insights were organised into groups, this process can be found in the research report. The first step while coming up with the concepts was tasking every team member to come up with two concepts, that answer the most relevant research insights. Afterwards on the meeting everybody brought two concept proposals of their own, and the three best concepts were chosen and where it was necessary also iterated. Three main concepts/ directions were chosen by the group. The first concept was mainly focused on how to make the welcoming better, the second concept is more focused on changing the interior of the Municipality in order to make the visitors feel relaxed in the atrium and the third concept was mainly focused on the online/ interactive experience with the atriums space using only one app instead of many different ones.

# Concept 1 - Virtual Host

Our first concept is aimed towards creating a warm welcome feeling for the user. Our intention was to create a personalized journey through the Atrium with the help of a virtual host. Visitors of the Atrium have reported that they enjoy the help they receive from the employees, especially the hosts. We wanted to take this feeling of trust and put it into every touchpoint and interaction in the Atrium. The virtual host can also help users find their way in the Atrium more fluently.

## Virtual Host



The Hague

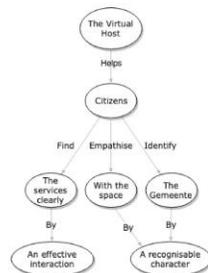


“I don’t feel welcomed in this space”  
 “It’s confusing to find where to go”



## The Concept

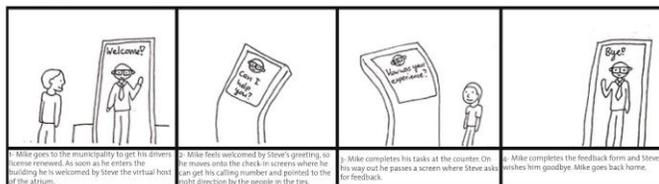
Our research showed that users have a hard time finding where to go or what to do in the moment they arrive at the Atrium. This, accompanied by a general feeling of “coldness” from the space, has generated an impression in users that the Gemeente is somewhat confusing and un-personal. With a virtual host, we will empower the current hosts stationed at the entrance, their recognizable figure and attire will be used to create a character that will be present through most of the Gemeente touch-points and channels. The finality of this character is to help users move more efficiently through the services offered by the Gemeente, as well as to generate empathy with the space.



## The touch-points

Once a visitor comes to the Atrium, they will be greeted with the main Touch point (Steve), then the visitor continues to the check-in system where they interact with (Steve) and it'll help them check-in for their appointment or find the service they want. After the visitor gets appointed with a number, they will sit by the benches and wait for their turn which will be displayed on the monitors. Other important information will be also displayed on these monitors, such as news and ads relating to The Hague.

After the visitors are finished with their appointment they might have to pay for some services, they can pay with cards on the same counter or they can pay with cash at the cash register. After completing the appointment, before leaving, Steve says bye to our visitor and prompts them with the last question how they would rate the services.



# Concept 2 - Duinenmeubels

The second concept aimed to re-establish the use of space in the atrium by replacing the furnitures with “sand dunes” inspired by the seaside landscape of the city. Modular pieces of furniture will be used to offer versatility to the space, no matter the occasion. On daily basis they will serve as seating areas for people waiting for an appointment, and in the same time it can quickly be modified to serve as an exhibition space if the occasion rises. The space experience will be improved upon by implementing a play on blue and green soft hues of light and a distinctive olfactive identity akin to the iconic seaside visuals often associated with The Hague.

## Duinenmeubels

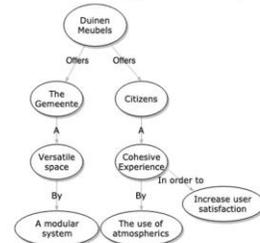


“I don’t think it’s very comfortable”  
 “it’s all white and boring”



## The Concept

The Atrium is a space regarded as cold and minimal. Which is not necessarily a bad thing, but when accompanied by a confusing arrangement of service channels it has been regarded as an unwelcoming space. Through the application of **atmosphercs** and **public space design**, we will use the concept of the **Hague sand dunes** to create furniture inspired by the seaside landscape of the city. These will be **modular pieces of furniture** that will offer versatility to the space. They will serve as seating areas for people waiting for an appointment, but can be put together to create an **exhibition space**. Together with a play on blue and green soft hues of light and a distinctive olfactive identity (again, seaside inspired) we will offer a better experience while using the space.



## The touch-points

Upon entering the Atrium, the visitor will be welcomed with an **ocean breeze** scent that comes from the new smell system and will see the atrium equip with new furniture. Visitors pick their number at the check-in system, after that they sit at the **Duinen shape** furniture but they will notice that they have been moved since the last time. This is because the **furniture and plants** are modular and can be moved when the spaces desire a change. Visitors will also hear different **sounds of birds** that are local to The Hague. As the visitor’s number comes up, they will continue with their appointment. Once the visitor is finished, their **mood will be lifted** because of all the interactions with the smell and different type of furniture.

1. Amanda goes to the atrium to register her change in address, and as soon as she goes through the entrance she smells the fresh and briny aroma of the air, which reminds her of the sea.	2. She notices that since her last visit some things have changed inside the atrium. Dune shaped furniture has been added to the space.	3. Amanda takes a seat in one of the modules and finds herself hearing distant bird noises and catching a whiff of an aroma reminiscent of the sea. She is comfortable during her wait.	4. She gets prompted by the screens that her number is up. She approaches the counter and completes her task with a pleasant attitude.

# Concept 3 - Den Haag Mobile

The third concept aimed to be a hub for all of the different segmented platforms and services of the Municipality, which will change the way people experience the service at the Atrium. The app will know when the user arrives to their appointment at the Municipality and will automatically check in for them, this will take away the friction within touchpoints and in the same time, smoothen the experience for the users. The app will also be linked to the users personal data and Digi-ID, so when the user needs any of their personal data or document, it will be available for them individually on the app. Through harnessing the potential of smart devices, the user will be informed and guided through the interactions of the Municipality by sending the user push notifications and by offering helpful guidance when needed.

## Den Haag Mobile



“We have too many apps”  
 “I just want it simple and effective”



## The Concept

The current situation regarding the gemeente's digital presence is very segmented within departments. With a single mobile application, all the services can be displayed and offered through one system within the user's smart device (it will work as a hub for the different platforms and services). Most importantly, it will change the way people experience the service at the Atrium. Through GPS, personal identification, and harnessing the potential of smart devices, we will streamline the user journey through the Gemeente.



## The touch-points

It starts at home when visitors will use the brand new app to make an appointment. Once an appointment is made, the app will show them with all of the required papers, then they come to Atrium and the checking system knows that they have arrived and prepares them for their appointment. The visitors can always revisit the app and double check if all their papers are in order. As soon as their appointment is next the app will push a notification to her telling her that they are next. After finishing their appointment and leaving the building the app senses that they visitor has left the premise and a notification will pop again on their phone asking for feedback of their visits

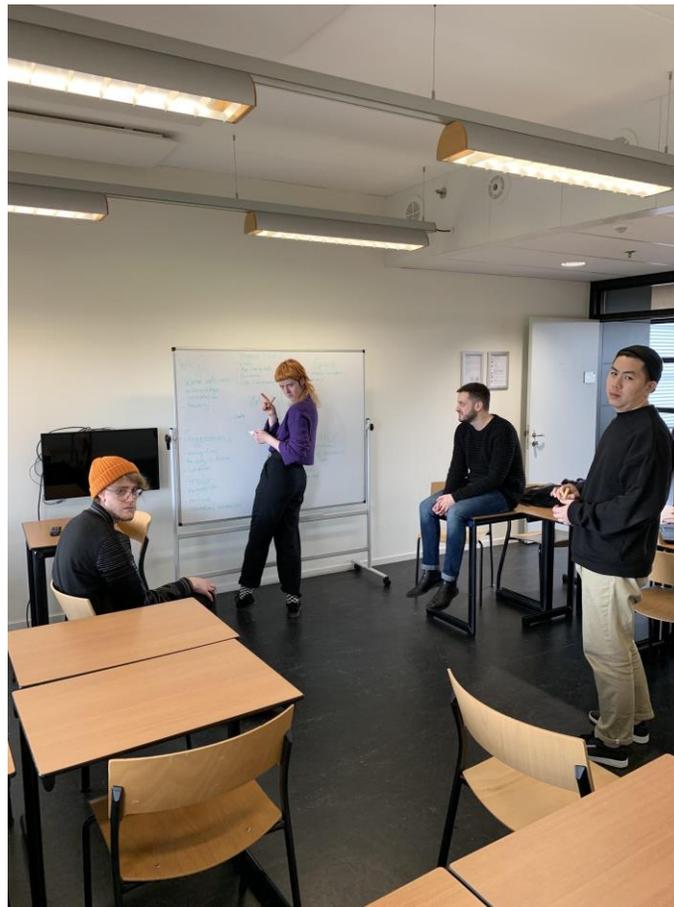


## Client & target audience response

After meeting and discussion with the stakeholders at the school, our team found out that the Municipality had also some plans for modular furniture in their earlier design drafts, but it was not used or implemented in the atrium yet. On the other hand, the client seemed to appreciate the idea of empowering the Municipality's hosts and using the visitor's trusting sentiments for the virtual assistant. They also liked the idea of unifying all of their departments and services under one easy to access application, since right now it is very scattered. At the end of the meeting our team left with valuable insights of what the client would like to see in the final concept.

# Iteration

Since the client mainly seemed to be interested in the “Virtual Host” and the “Den Haag Mobile” concepts, the decision was made to unify both concepts and iterate upon them. We did so by making a big map of functionalities that we wanted, why we wanted them, and how we wanted to implement them in our final concept and prioritizing them with the ‘Moscow’ method. In the end our team decided to explore a chatbot functionality for the virtual host, to make the user feel more connected to the host and make the experience more seamless.

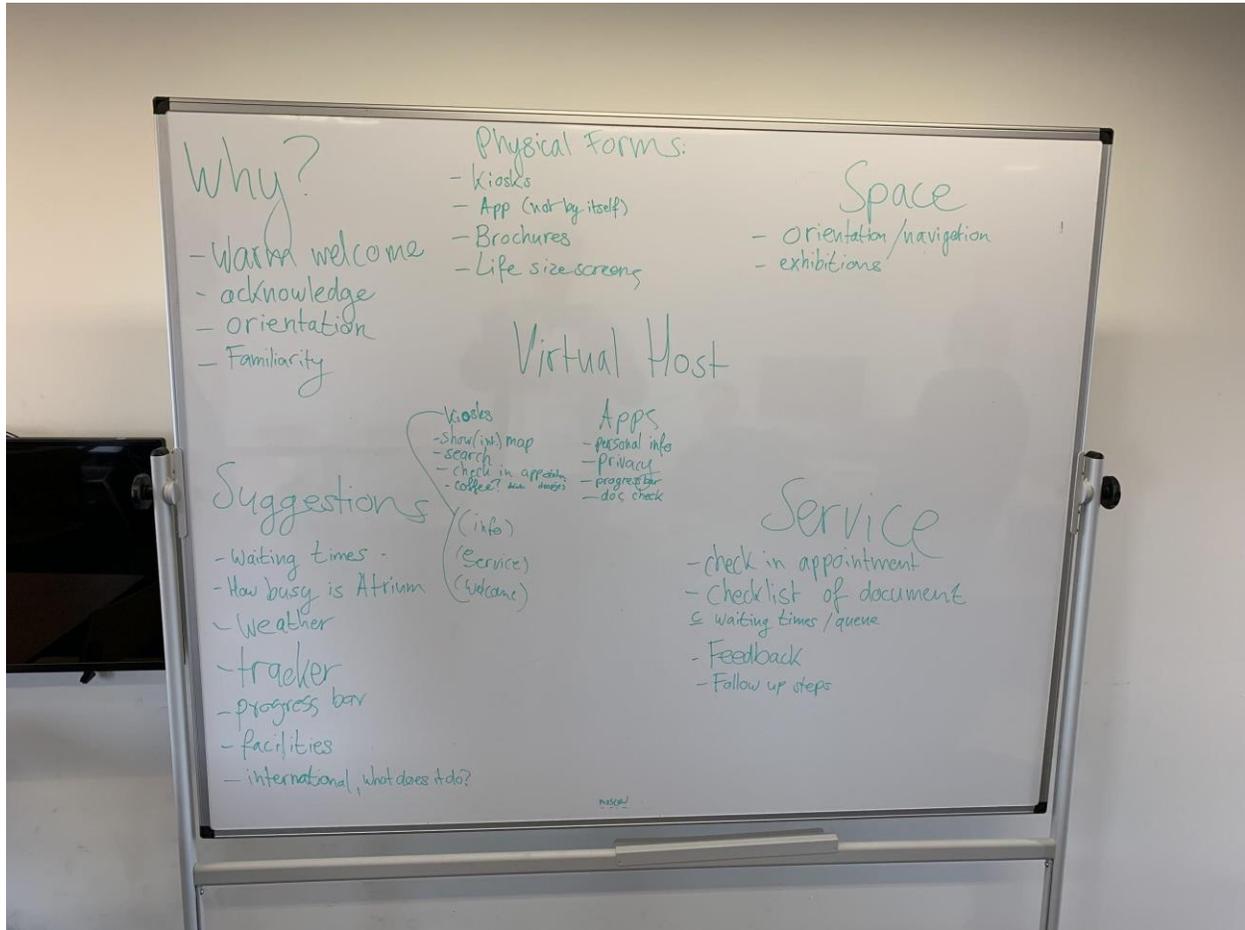


## Technology involved

- Smartphones
- Kiosks
- Life Size screens
- Chatbot

## Analysis:

- The kiosks are still needed, because the older people are not that tech savvy
- The kiosks are still needed in case any visitor doesn't have the app
- The hardest step for the user is making the appointment



## Client feedback

After meeting the client and proposing our three concepts at the Municipality, we had to realize couple things. The client overall agreed with the design decisions that we took with the combined idea of the Virtual Host and the App but they also pointed out that they would like to change the setting of the atrium, and gave us a glance of intel about what the designing agency who got the project for the atriums redesign has in mind.

# Testing and Prototyping

Although our team had a novel concept, rigorous prototyping was necessary before any work could be done on the final design. Our team started out with a desktop walkthrough and quickly iterated to a staged service prototype. To keep the test subjects immersed in the user testing, we had to create prototypes with representations of the actual physical touchpoints in both prototypes. Since service design is something that is made with the thought of a lot of people using it, our team had to have a lot of users testing it.

## First Prototypes

In the end of the project a low fidelity prototype was created for two types of screens: kiosks and phones. The purpose of them was to showcase how our proposed service would work and to be used in our service video prototype. After these prototypes outlived their purpose, we iterated upon them in our final prototype video for a sleeker, more concise design according to The Hague Municipality's style guide.

## Scale Model

### Description & pictures

In order to better empathise with the user journey and test our design, our team created a scale model out of cardboard. A 2D map was created and printed out, all of the touchpoints were made out of cardboard and the prominent characters were drawn.



## Phone Prototype

We tried to maintain the spirit of the screens used in the desktop walkthrough, but it was quickly apparent that they needed some fine tuning. The video provides insights on how to navigate through the app, because due to the nature of prototyping software it might not always be apparent on what to do next. Also, due to Google Chrome's limitations, the emojis used in the prototype do not show up, but they should be okay on Safari.

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/1ad684cc-377f-4d14-5986-8d2be773646f-6ce7/?fullscreen>

## Kiosk Prototype

This prototype is pretty self explanatory, since it's essentially based on the functionalities found in the mobile version, just adapted for a bigger screen that would be used by the public in the Municipality, instead of an individual on their phone.

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/16e9d13b-6a55-4f9c-796d-a02487619b9d-60d8/?fullscreen>

## Feedback

Through our testing there wasn't too much complaints on the functionalities, since it was pretty self-explanatory and reminded users of the minimalist iMessaging platform, but since it looked like an established platform, our team came to a consensus that the prototype had to be revised to better fit the style of the Municipality in the final video prototype.

## Desktop Walkthrough

This low fidelity prototype was conducted by printing out a 2D map of the space and crafting the physical touchpoints from cardboard and drawing the characters that the user interacts with. The purpose of this method was to give an concise overview of the whole space and the interactions that happen in it, using a paper version of the app, cardboards for the touchpoints of the atrium and a small figure (acting as the user) attached to a string.

We conducted several user tests with people who didn't know anything about the project and also some fellow classmates. After the first couple desktop walkthroughs our team set down to discuss, what went well, where has to be still some changes, all based on the oral feedback from the users. We added extra signs to the walkthrough and changed some parts in the app as well; then we asked more people to test the prototype, and as we anticipated it, the feedbacks of the users was more positive, and they understood the flow of the experience.

With that in our head we settled on to recreate the experience in reality, in order to see how the experience would look like real space.



## Videos

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12F-hUr9T5KtFCibzrd0iQvFRiuArXMR9/view?usp=sharing>

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yyXEL\\_j\\_vrnS9agF0XZrQl5TJrDkaW2/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yyXEL_j_vrnS9agF0XZrQl5TJrDkaW2/view?usp=sharing)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16bf4B-x5lqfRLqsS7y-ruyOOr3ifJ9sW/view?usp=sharing>

## Service Video Prototype

After conducting various iterations of desktop walkthroughs our team decided to make a video showcasing how our actual concept would work, using a classroom provided by the University, that emulates the Municipality touchpoints as it would be in the building. Our team used several TV displays to create a Wizard of Oz prototype about the experience. On one of the screens the Virtual assistant would be on welcoming the people entering, and on another screen to showcase the future kiosk & app system and to see how the experience would look like as a whole, by adding chairs and desk for the “employees”. The purpose of this video was to have a point of reference for us if anything still needed changing before we moved on to our final design.



Video

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FJDq6CqYWotctOKUECMuKxbM4pmGKX\\_o/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FJDq6CqYWotctOKUECMuKxbM4pmGKX_o/view?usp=sharing)

# Final Design

The final design isn't that much different from the initial concepts, but we did change the design of the mobile and kiosk interface to more align with our virtual assistant/chatbot option, we also added smells to the final concept, in order to make the experience pleasant for the user, from the first step in the atrium space. Since the beginning of the design process we had our mind set on a main direction, to create an app or a virtual host for the atrium space. Through the many iterations and after receiving a lot of feedback from the users & the client our final prototype and video arise.

## Story

John just moved to The Hague and he needs to go register at his new address. He has never been to the Municipality and doesn't really know what to expect. He opens the Municipality website at home to read up on what he might need to know before going there and he finds out through an ad, that they have a handy application that can help you with all of your Municipality needs.

He downloads the application through the app store and is greeted by the Municipality's virtual assistant - Pat. Pat prompts him to login with his DigID and once he's done, he starts chatting with Pat. John texts Pat that he wants to register at the Municipality. He picks a time and date, and is instructed on the documents that he needs to bring. Once the talk with Pat is over the objective of registering at the Municipality is scheduled in Johns' agenda with reminders of which documents he needs.

On the day of his appointment John travels to the Municipality, enters, smells the fresh beachy smell emitted near the entrances and exits, and is greeted by the virtual assistant on a huge screen. He gets a notification on his phone from the virtual assistant greeting him and telling him to check in by the kiosk. Once John approaches the kiosk, he clicks "yes" answering the question of "do you have an appointment?". He scans his QR code by the terminal in the kiosk and is instructed by a video showing him where he needs to go, both on his phone and kiosk.

While John is waiting for his appointment, he sits down on a bench, but gets a notification on his phone suggesting him to look around at the art exhibitions. While he's looking around his phone gives him a notification that it's time for his appointment right now. He comes up to the balie and hands his documents to the worker. The balie worker checks all of Johns documents and gives him new documents confirming his registration.

At the end, once John has fulfilled his objectives at the Municipality, he starts to head towards the exit. He sees a screen with the assistant waving at him along the way. Once he leaves the Municipality, he gets a notification on his phone asking him how he liked the service.

## Testing

Before we commenced to take the final film in the Municipality, we tested out how would we like to film for our prototype. Given that we didn't have our physical prototypes finished, Arthur played the role of the welcoming screen, holding a piece of blue paper symbolising the screen while Armandas acted as the user, and walked in/ tried to use the kiosk. Ping took all the videos while Pablo was coordinating and "scaling" the space for the final video.

## Videos

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bEQkwrIAqIVWlcQwvqYGCMcCBtJOINpN/view?usp=sharing>  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pSmDn1zHtvL1\\_qFqYc76jpcVK7pnMmXQ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pSmDn1zHtvL1_qFqYc76jpcVK7pnMmXQ/view?usp=sharing)

## Video Prototype

To showcase multiple scenarios in which the app or kiosk could be used, the video has two screens showing simultaneously what options the user has when interacting with the system, which in the end lead to the same outcome, a satisfied user. Our group filmed the whole video at the Municipality and prepared the cardboard kiosk and a big screen for the welcoming host. Pien prepared the cartboards, Armandas dressed as Pat, Pablo was John, Arthur was the balie worker and Ping was filming the whole video.

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1JX591dGjV\\_rH8B3RJ1I20r1XYG6\\_hD\\_s](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1JX591dGjV_rH8B3RJ1I20r1XYG6_hD_s)

## Conclusion

Every week working towards this project had been an invaluable addition to our final prototype. Especially the service design and internet of things , since their knowledge helped us to generate a system that enhanced the way how users and workers experienced the visit.

Designing for a space and its limitations really helped our team dive deep and think outside of the box, since couldn't veer off too far from the main architects design. This influenced the way our team converged our proposed concepts, with careful consideration on what to keep and what to leave out. At the end, the concept seemingly fulfilled the needs of the client, and the

Municipality board offered the groups to continue on what they made and keep on working on the space redesign in the following period either as a project or a graduation project.

We feel humbled to be able to create an experience/concept that makes people's life easier and more enjoyable during the process.

## Appendix A: Client handout



The Hague

# Pat: A virtual host for The Hague Municipality

## Meet Pat!

Pat is a virtual host in service of The Hague Municipality. He's there to help with every need the citizens of The Hague might have. He is present **through every channel** in which the citizens can reach the municipality.

The users said...

"I can't tell where I should go"

"I want to feel more welcomed and cared for"

"I'm an expat and was very lost when I arrived"

"It's hard to tell when they're call me up"



### Greeting system



Pat is always stationed at the entrance points of the atrium to welcome guests and guide them inside.

### The app



The app is the municipality's hub. Users can manage their affairs, find information about the atrium and it's location feature helps users know what to do when arriving at the atrium.

### The kiosks



The new kiosks will work in unison with the app, as well as offer solutions to users without a smartphone.

The atrium is also enhanced with a **scent of sea minerals and magnolias**, designed to help increase user satisfaction. Together with Pat, The Hague Municipality's **identity and relationship** are strengthened with every visit.

# 2D Map: Pat, the virtual host

