Kang's Personal Statement

Kexin Kang is now a female designer from China. She mainly works in visual communication design and is studying in the UK.

Kang likes to try various new techniques and apply them to her design projects. Therefore, Kang's design projects are not limited to graphic design such as book editing, poster design, UIUX design, etc. Others include installation design, interactive design, immersive space design, and other non-traditional projects of a visual communication designer.

Kang's understanding of the job of "visual communication designer" is different from others. Kang believes that visual expression should not be confined to a flat surface. Visual communication is divided into two parts: communication and design. She believes it should be communicated with the audience in a design way, and people can read the message that the designer wants to convey through the design work. Therefore, Kang believes that formalism is not desirable in an actual design project. Artwork can be beautiful, but it cannot be beautiful simply for the sake of beauty, and it cannot be the kind of beauty without content. First, make sure that the work can accurately express the information, and then ensure the beauty of the work on this basis. That's why Kang loves it when audiences can come to experience or appreciate her work with thought and welcomes them to come back to her with different interpretations.

However, Kang will not deliberately make her design work irrelevant to graphic design. Kang will consider the design concept while thinking about what form can best express the concept. Kang is very open to learning new technologies, such as fashion design, fabric design, modeling, Arduino, programming, and even some biological research, psychology, philosophy, and religion. These may become her goals to enrich her design. She will focus on expressing concepts, reasonably using new technologies, and combining them with graphic design.

Kang's latest work is a project called FoxFocus. This is a UIUX design that aims to

help people improve their concentration through music and reduce the time they spend using their phones when doing things that require concentration. She designed the usage of this app to be similar to a simulation business game, providing people with appropriate fun during the time they need to concentrate with interesting usage methods and cute and healing game images. This is not the first time that Kang has designed the interaction of an app in the form of a game. She has tried it in her designs in previous years. She hopes to use the power of her design to add highlights to the ordinary UIUX design and make ordinary interactions extraordinary.

This is also Kang's unique design habit, which is to use design ingenuity to make a design that is stereotypical to the audience become new.   For example, using unusual materials to make posters, using unconventional typesetting methods to fit the design tone, etc. A sculpture, a piece of clothing, or a space may be the final output of her design, and she hopes that her design will not be bound.

Analysis and Reflection on My Project

The project I'm working on now is called FoxFocus. It's an app that improves people's concentration by playing music, allowing users to reduce distractions and reduce the frequency of using their phones.
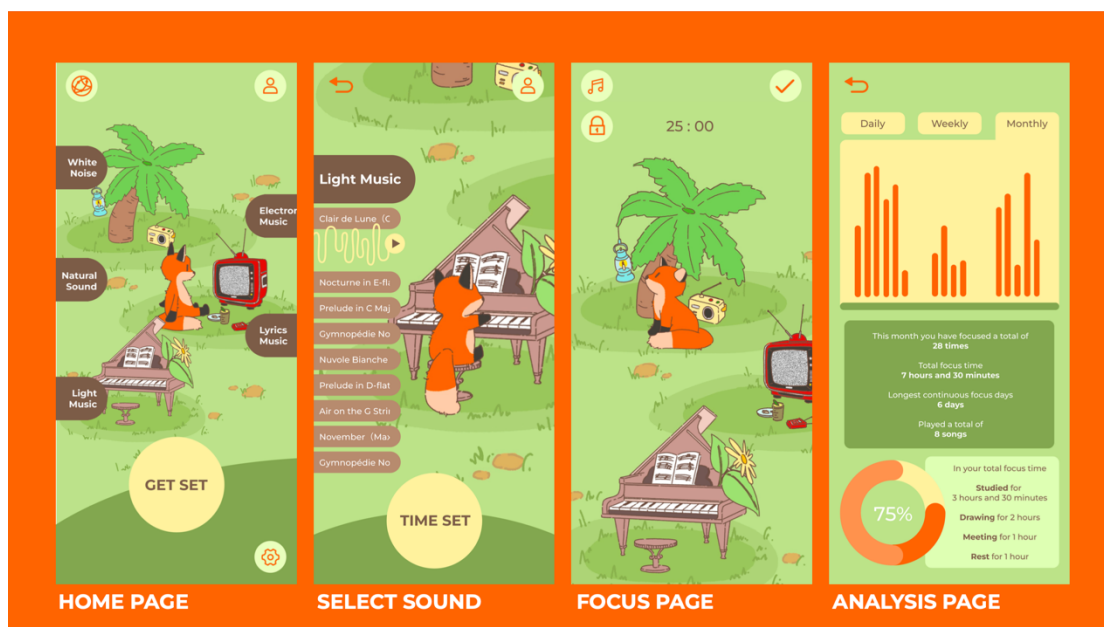
Why did I name this app FoxFocus? It's because I hope that users can clearly understand what this app is about from the name, for example, when searching for the app they need in the app store, they can know the positioning of FoxFocus from the name. So, I extracted "Focus" as a keyword and used it as part of the name. Secondly, I plan to design this app in a game-like form, so I need a main character as the audience's first-person perspective. I also hope that this main character is in line with the overall cute and healing atmosphere of the app. Thinking from these requirements, I found that the fox is a good character. The fox can represent the image of intelligence and agility, and in nature, foxes are also very sensitive to sound, which corresponds to the main content of my app. The most interesting point is that the pronunciation of fox and focus are very similar, which provides some interesting elements to the name and can attract users' attention to this app. All the design elements in the app are also close to the cute and healing atmosphere. The overall color scheme is soft but not monotonous, and the modern sans serif font and the cute

character design that is full of healing create a warm and comfortable visual experience for users.
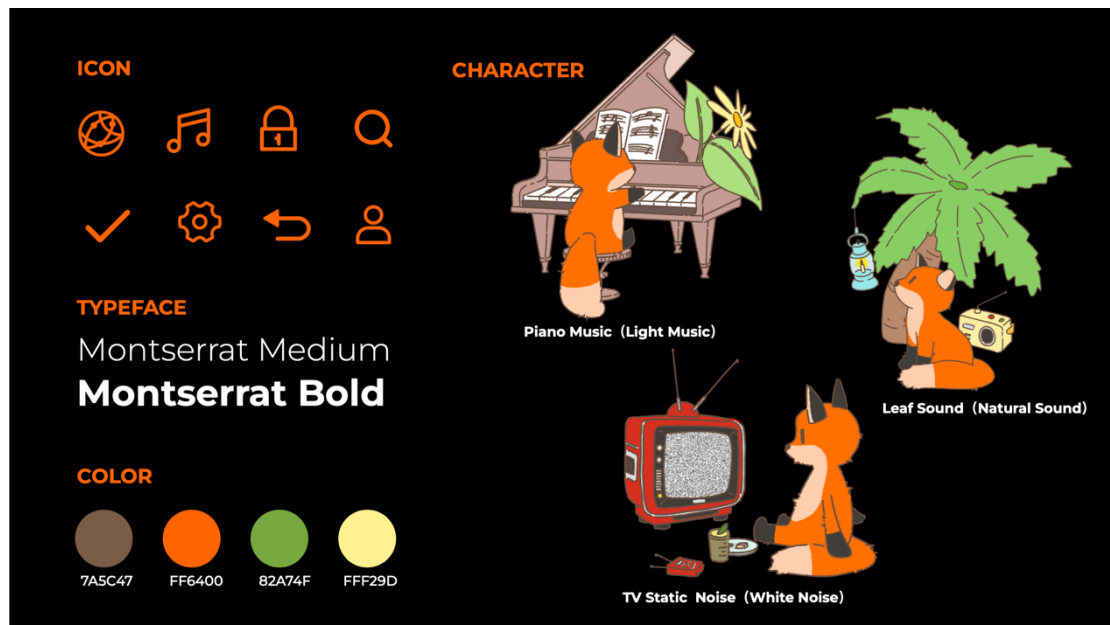
There is a request to create an app that can effectively help people reduce their smartphone usage, which is a common social pain point that affects many people. A meta-analysis reported that the prevalence of smartphone addiction ranges between 39% and 40% globally, highlighting the widespread nature of this issue (Alhassan et al., 2018). To address this pain point, I chose to use music as the subject to achieve this request.

The reason why I chose to use music to solve the pain point is that before officially starting the design work, I collected feedback from 40 adults over the age of 21 through a questionnaire survey to gain an in-depth understanding of their views on the relationship between mobile phone use and concentration. The survey results show that the vast majority of respondents said that when they are focused on a task, the interference of mobile phones often leads to distraction. They also generally believe that reducing the interference of mobile phones is crucial to improving concentration. When asked how to solve this problem, more people in the survey said that listening to music is a common way for them, which can effectively block external interference and help them refocus on the task itself. In addition to conducting questionnaires for the app audience, I also conducted research to ensure the correctness, scientificity, and

feasibility of the design direction. During the research, I saw in the academic journal Current Directions in Psychological Science that Schellenberg (2005, p. 318) stated that "music training has been shown to improve cognitive abilities, particularly in areas such as attention and memory, by enhancing brain function and increasing neural connectivity." This shows that music, as a medium that can be naturally integrated into daily life, not only meets the needs of users to reduce interference but also helps people improve their concentration through its unique neural mechanism. The preliminary research, this provided a clear direction for my application design - using the functional characteristics of music to create a tool that can effectively improve the user's concentration state.

In addition, I also conducted market research. I found that there is many music software on the market, but there is no function to help people concentrate. Therefore, FoxFocus should have a clearer purpose. For example, research on music types, data recording, lock screen, and other functions that help people reduce the use of mobile phones and increase concentration, making it difficult to replace and distinguish it from the common music software on the market.

In addition to these, I also used PACT for analysis and also made two user portraits based on the subjects of the questionnaire. FoxFocus is a music software that specializes in helping people improve their concentration. I mainly studied music classification. Because not all types of music are suitable for helping people concentrate, I first conducted a second in-depth user survey through a questionnaire survey. In this survey, I also learned people's preferences for different types of music. These preliminary surveys will provide great help for the music classification method in my software.

In terms of app operation, I conducted user testing with low-fidelity pictures. When conducting user testing in Figma Prototype, I found that there were some problems with the flow logic, and some buttons sometimes felt clumsy or unresponsive on different pages. This was a very effective user test, which helped me sort out the existing operation logic, and the opinions raised by users were very effective in

helping me think out of the box.
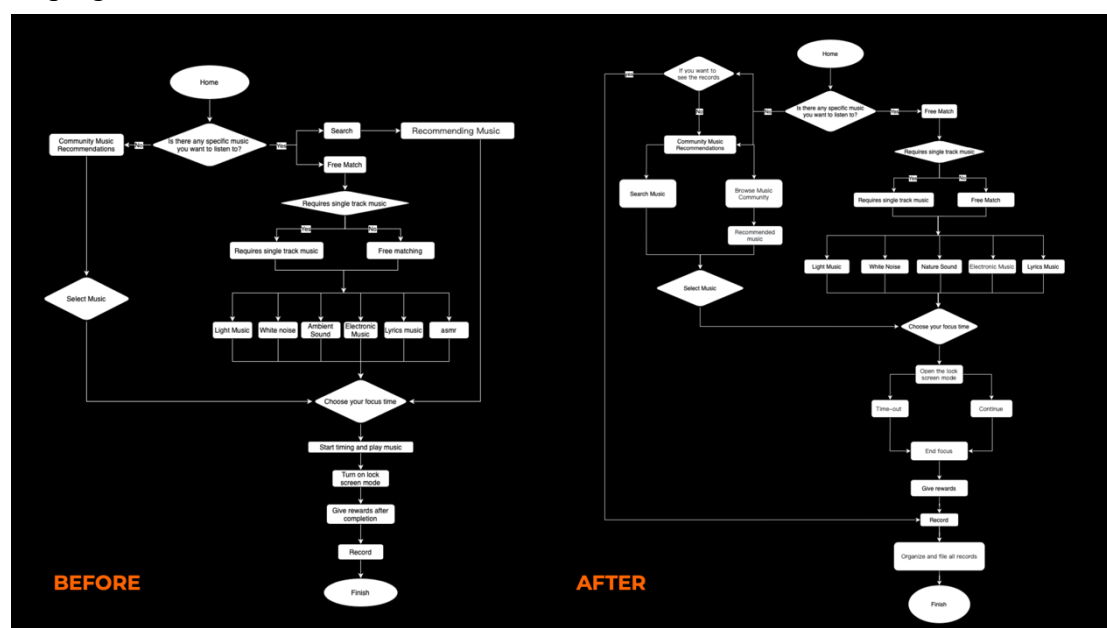
I think FoxFocus is solving social problems very well, but I think there are still parts of this project that need improvement. For example, after identifying music as the main subject, to more closely connect FoxFocus with improving attention, more research should be added to the classification of music. Now I just use the questionnaire to satisfy the preferences of the audience first and set the music they proposed as the music classification in the app, but the classification of music is also particular. As noted by Fontenot (2022), binaural beats in the gamma frequency range (above 30 Hz) have been linked to better focus and cognitive performance, attributed to gamma waves' connection to higher-order cognitive activities. For example, as mentioned in this article That way, if I need to filter the music in depth, there are still many parts that I need to pay attention to. Additionally, a key aspect that I believe needs improvement is user testing. In this project, I only conducted one user test during the design process. Although this test significantly improved the rigor of the application logic, it also made me more deeply aware of the core position of user testing in app design. I should set up user tests multiple times so that I can personally understand the shortcomings in the design, and at the same time, I can gain in-depth insight into the user's behavior patterns and actual needs, so that I can effectively provide accurate guidance for subsequent design iterations.

I think this project has effectively helped me sort out the steps of UIUX design. I have not systematically studied UIUX design before, but this time I designed it from beginning to end. From the early steps of setting the topic, research, investigation, and user analysis to the formulation of the later operation logic, I have a complete understanding of the design of the visual elements in the software. And through this project, I realized that even the steps that are not presented outside the final app are also very important, such as academic research phones, drawing user portraits, multiple user tests, etc., which are all indispensable content.

Reference list

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