

Sustainability in Digital Design



How can we design visually appealing UI's that are also sustainable?

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." — Albert Einstein

Did you know that...

- Technologies will be responsible for more carbon emissions in 2025 than any country except China, India and the United States. - *Internet Health Report 2018*
- The internet is accountable for about 3.7% of the world's carbon emissions per year - *Sarah Griffiths (BBC) 6th March 2020*
- The internet has an impact on the climate that's roughly comparable to the aviation industry - *Ovo Energy 2022*



So what is digital sustainability and sustainable digital design?

- It's about figuring out how to design, adapt, and guide the technologies of our digital age toward meeting local and global sustainability goals
- It's about minimizing carbon emissions and designing products that are as energy efficient as possible
- It includes anything from the way a digital device is wired to products that are meant to last rather than to be replaced as soon as they become outdated



Problem / Challenge

- Many people are not aware of their carbon footprint when browsing or streaming online
- There are not enough concepts out there that will help educate designers, clients and individuals about digital sustainability
- The topic about digital sustainability is not talked about enough
- Sustainability in digital design is not activated enough in the way designers work

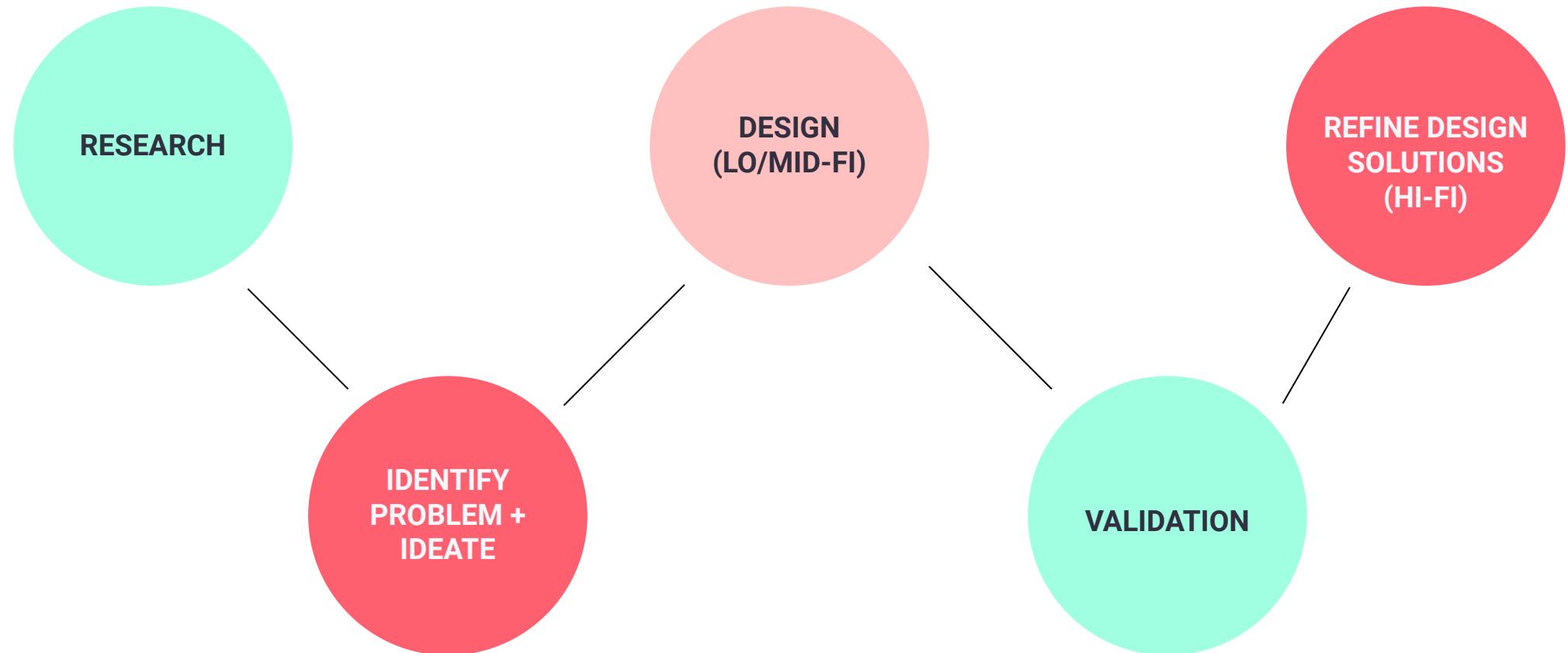


Project Mission

We are the future. We are the ones who can make a difference.

- Educate both designers at Grow + Digitalist and being able to educate others
- Come up with a concept that will help designers create sustainable UI's that are visually appealing
- Address why we are making it, how people will use it, and how it reflects our strategy to create a safer environment
- Decrease the amount of energy usage by helping digital designers make more informed choices about their visual creations





HOW MIGHT WE...

How might we design visually appealing UI's that are also sustainable?

How might we make the user aware of their digital carbon footprint?

How might we educate both employees and others in digital sustainability?

How might we incorporate sustainability in the development processes from beginning to end?

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Design Challenge Framework

How might we design visually appealing UI's that are also sustainable?

WHY?

Reducing the digital carbon footprint

Give Grow an advantage among their competitors

Create awareness about digital sustainability for both designers at Grow, clients and individuals

Educate and have set guidelines

WHO?

UX/UI Designers & Developers
When designing and developing digital services/products and when developing a brand identity

In workshops/meetings to spread awareness

WHAT?

Create a concept that will be useful to explain why we are using it, how it will be used, and how it reflects the strategy towards digital sustainability

Prioritization

Effort = Low/Mid
Reach = Mid
Impact = High

Goals of the workshop:

- Meet with designers to get useful insights
- Explore ideas/concepts and create sketches
- Decide on a couple of concept directions that can get developed and tested

Decisions to make:

- What do designers need to create sustainable interfaces?
- How can we activate designers to actually start doing it?



Figma Template

Pros:

- Available for designers to duplicate/use as guidelines and inspiration
- Explains the impact of design decisions

Cons:

- Only accessible for people who work or are familiar with Figma
- Users might just read through the template a few times

Figma has about 4 million users

But there are no design templates/plugins available for how to design sustainable UI's

Figma Plugin

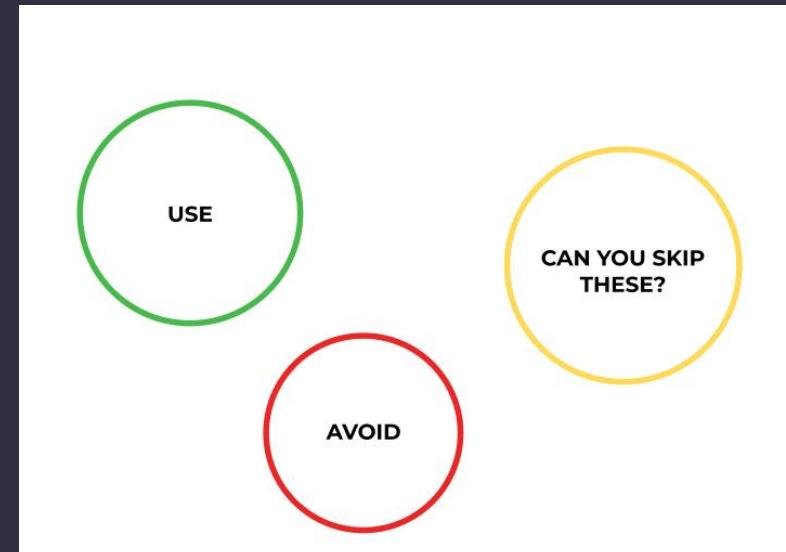
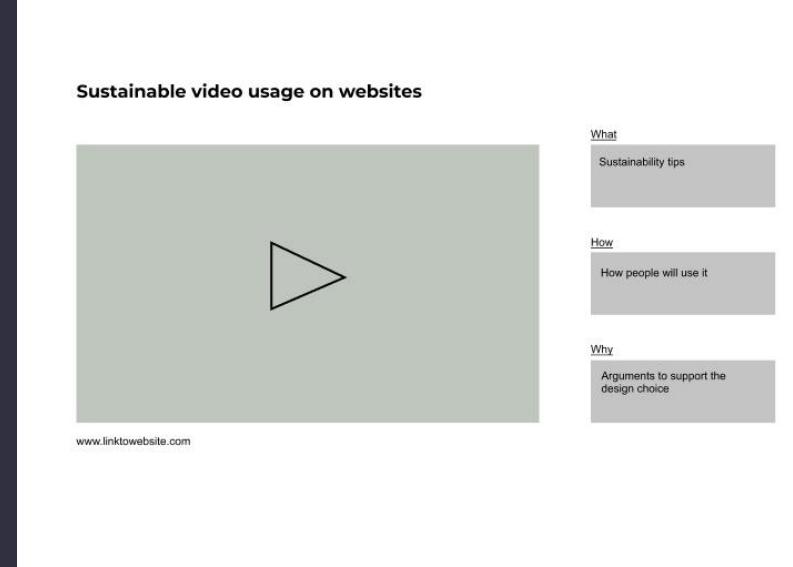
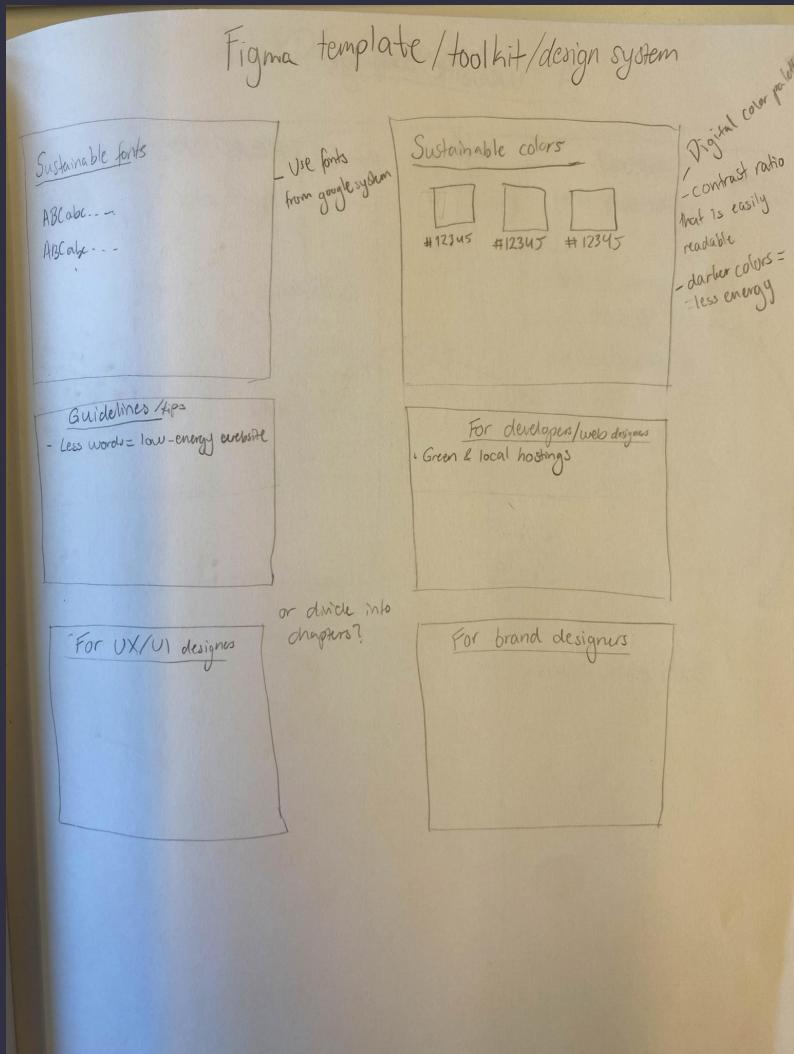
Pros:

- Active tool to use when designing to check if your components are sustainable
- More useful in the long run

Cons:

- Takes long time to develop
- More experienced back-end developing skills needed
- Only accessible for people who work or are familiar with Figma

Design process / Lo-Fi



Concept Validation

Info

- 11 participants got to vote for either concept A (figma template) or concept B (figma plugin) and add their feedback

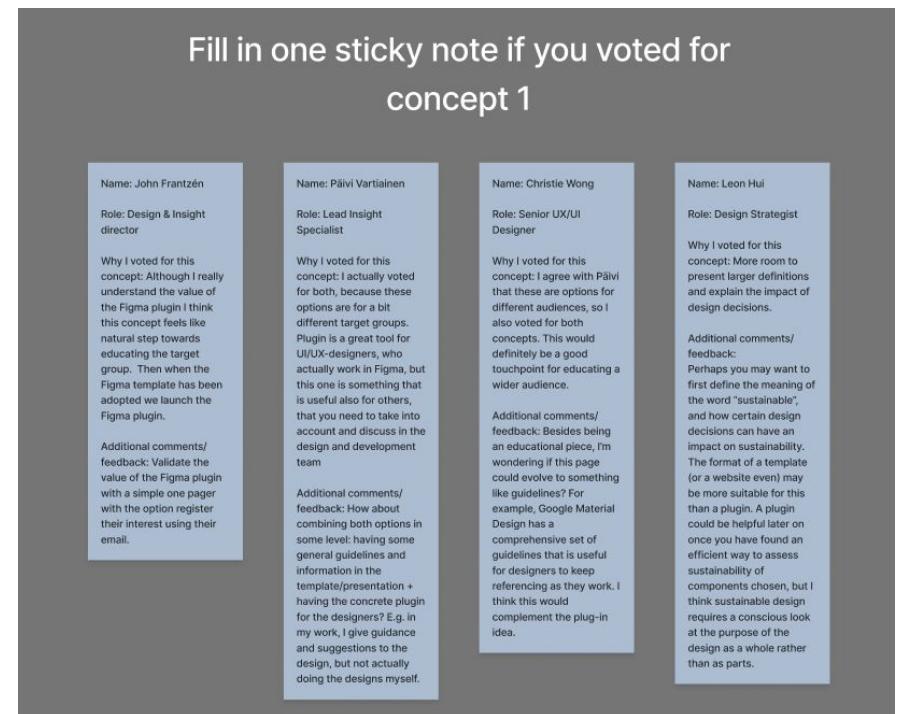
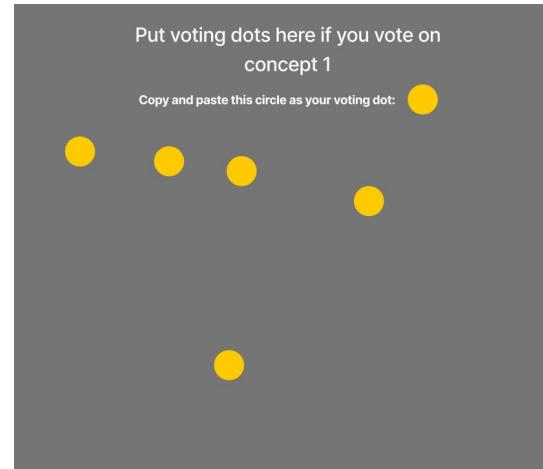
Insights from participants

Concept 1 (Figma Template):

- "Has more room to present larger definitions and explain the impact of design decisions"
- "Feels like natural step towards educating the target group"
- "A good touchpoint for educating a wider audience"

Concept 2 (Figma Plugin):

- "This concept gives me constant feedback as I am working"
- "As a designer I would love to have easy way to check my designs during the development and Figma plugin is a great idea for this purpose"



Result

Concept 2 won in votes but a lot of the participants actually voted for both of them, and expressed that they could see them complement each other.

Decision

A decision was made to go for concept 1 (figma template + supportive website) even though it got the least amount of votes. The figma template would be manageable for me to do design myself and the figma plugin would be a future project with more help from developers.



At Grow + Digitalist I got the opportunity to..

- Of course, learn about digital sustainability
- Collaborate and work in a professional environment
- Refresh my coding skills
- Work with developers
- Learn about how a design process works from beginning to end
- Develop my skills in Figma

In the future I will...

- Explore and develop my skills further in the research and ideation phase by having more workshops and user testings
- Optimize my design process
- Keep an open mind to changes that can happen
- Spread the word about the importance of sustainability in digital design
- Design more sustainable projects!

THANK YOU!

Any questions?