



GRADUATION REPORT

Abstract

This report was created for a free graduation assignment and presents the development of an interactive webcomic website, structured according to the Design Thinking Model.

Written by Jessica Lehl
Studentnumber 472208

Saxion University of Applied Sciences
Graduation 2022-2023
Graduation Teacher: Herman Paassen
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1. INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs will elaborate on the graduation project and its purpose, personal ambitions that align within the project as well as an introduction to the company and client.

1.1 The Graduation Project

The graduation project is the final assignment for the Bachelor diploma of CMGT (Creative Media and Game Technologies) at Saxion University of Applied Sciences. During the project the student works fulltime on a 20 week lasting, complex assignment within a professional situation in which they need to integrate knowledge skills and attitude relating to the CMGT competencies one to six and ten to 12. Theory and practice will stand in connection with practical research and design using applicable design models like Design Thinking.

Duties and responsibilities of the student include the creation of a professional, valuable and usable product in regular exchange with a company supervisor, a presentation and defence as well as the submission of a draft and final report. Furthermore, throughout this process, the student is expected to work in communication with a graduation circle, a graduation teacher and stakeholder.

The purpose of the project is to determine the extent to which a student can solve the client's challenges within the professional field of CMGT.

1.2 Personal Ambition

My main learning goals can be summarized in the following three statements:

1. As an artist, I want to improve my digital 2D art skills so that I can build a stronger portfolio and social media profile which attracts more users.
2. As an aspiring comic artist, I want to improve my understanding of visual storytelling so that I can better implement my drawing skills into a comic that I would like to release in the future.
3. As an aspiring freelance artist, I want to learn how to build a professional website so that I can present my own comic in a professional manner and use the knowledge I have gained to build my own portfolio website to compliment my artwork.

As a fourth year CMGT artist, my ultimate goal is to become a freelance artist by publishing a comic which could potentially attract and engage people enough to offer for example a subscription service or paid products such as sellable mini comics which would help me sustain myself with the creation of art. Therefore, the graduation project will assist me in discovering a unique way to present and publish a comic which I would release in the future.

The main skills I aim to improve throughout the creation of the comic and the website are my understanding in visual storytelling, digital art and web design. Furthermore, I expect to gather more technical knowledge on how to build a suitable website for the purpose of releasing a comic and how to implement interactivity into the comic.

By making use of the Design Thinking Model, it will be possible to design a product which will meet the CMGT requirements.

1.3 The Brand

"DnDumbercomics" is the name of the interactive comic brand that is yet to be established. The brand consists of two artists, Jamy Lee Marie Borninkhof and me, Jessica Lehl who are living in Gronau, Germany. Jamy is a traditional and digital artist with a critical mindset and a

bachelor's degree in psychology who has about 10 years of experience creating art and working on her own comic. I am a fourth year CMGT artist with experience in digital art and 2D animation even prior to my studies.

Together, we have the mission to give people a break from a dull daily routine and let them dive into a "fun-tastical and meaningful adventure"(J. L. M. Borninkhof, personal communication, 4 April 2023) in the form of our comics which will express our passion and excitement for playing tabletop "roleplaying games (RPGs)" such as "Dungeons & Dragons (D&D)", and our experience and the lessons we have learned going through life.

The voice of our brand is authentic & approachable, passionate & motivating, and simple & playful. Our tone can be summarized in the following three statements:

1. Authentic & Approachable: We value a friendly, but genuine communication with our customer.
2. Passionate & Motivating: We are driven by our passion and thus, want to encourage others to find and follow their sparks as well.
3. Simple & Playful: We avoid unnecessarily complex sentences and are not afraid to joke around. We are also scared of big words.

1.4 The Portfolio

So far, it is planned that DnDumbercomics will release a comic series called "DnDumber" on its own website along with comic related posts on social media accounts.

DnDumber is a comic adventure series which is based on a Dungeons & Dragons game between friends. It is taking place in a fantasy middle age setting and revolves around three antiheroes who are gradually becoming heroes on their initially selfish quests to break their own curses and become the greatest villain of all time. It's a fun story themed around insecurities and finding your true need in life.

Regarding the process, the comic is currently on the stage of plot development (Larson, 2014). The current state of the outline can be viewed in the document named "DnDumber_Outline_ver009.pdf" which is accessible in the Appendix. Furthermore, the basic character arcs and designs have also been established and published on a shared discord server as well as organized on a creative writing software called "Campfire" (*Campfire - Writing Software for Authors and Worldbuilders*, n.d.).

1.5 The Stakeholder

Jan-Roman Pikula is a highly talented Dutch staff artist who is known for his detailed and retro-style artwork, particularly in the Dutch Disney magazines published by Sanoma (Schuddeboom, 2021). Born in 1983 in Enschede, Pikula studied Art and Technology at Saxion University of Applied Sciences and attended Rens Benerink's Cartoonschool in Amsterdam. He started his career as an apprentice at the art studio of Dutch Donald Duck weekly in early 2006 and has been an illustrator and comic artist for the magazine ever since (Schuddeboom, 2021).

Pikula's illustration work in Donald Duck mostly includes creating covers for Donald Duck and Donald Duck Extra (Schuddeboom, 2021). He also developed original characters for fake Duckburg advertisements on the Donald Duck website and has played a significant role in the "Mickey Mouse" riddle comic "Mickey Lost T Op" (Schuddeboom, 2021). Additionally, Pikula has drawn comic stories for Donald Duck, including gag strips and longer stories written by freelance scriptwriters.

As a stakeholder to the project, Jan-Roman Pikula participates in decision-making, provides guidance and ensures that the project aligns with its intended goals and objectives. With his involvement, the free assignment project gains an essential contributor to the creative process of the comic.

2. EMPATHIZE

2.1 Target Audience

With a comic that is based on Dungeons & Dragons, the main target audience shares an interest in the tabletop roleplaying game, or generally the adventure series genre, and enjoys reading comics.

With over 50 million people worldwide who interacted with Dungeons & Dragons since its roots in the mid-1970s and increasing representation in media, the roleplay game is gradually gaining popularity (Diamond, 2022). According to statistics retrieved from Wizards of the Coast, 40% of D&D players are 25 years old or younger (Hoffer, 2020). Additionally, it is estimated that 40% of the players are female and 60% are male.

Furthermore, while recent studies show that with 63% the majority of comic book readers are male (Gitnux, 2023), webcomics, more specifically Webtoon statistics, show that gender is almost evenly distributed with 58% among their readers being female (Salkowitz, 2021).

Therefore, the main target audience for the product will be teens and young adults of all gender between 16 to 25 years who are from the western world, share an interest in D&D and comics and are stuck in their routine seeking for meaning in their preferred media.

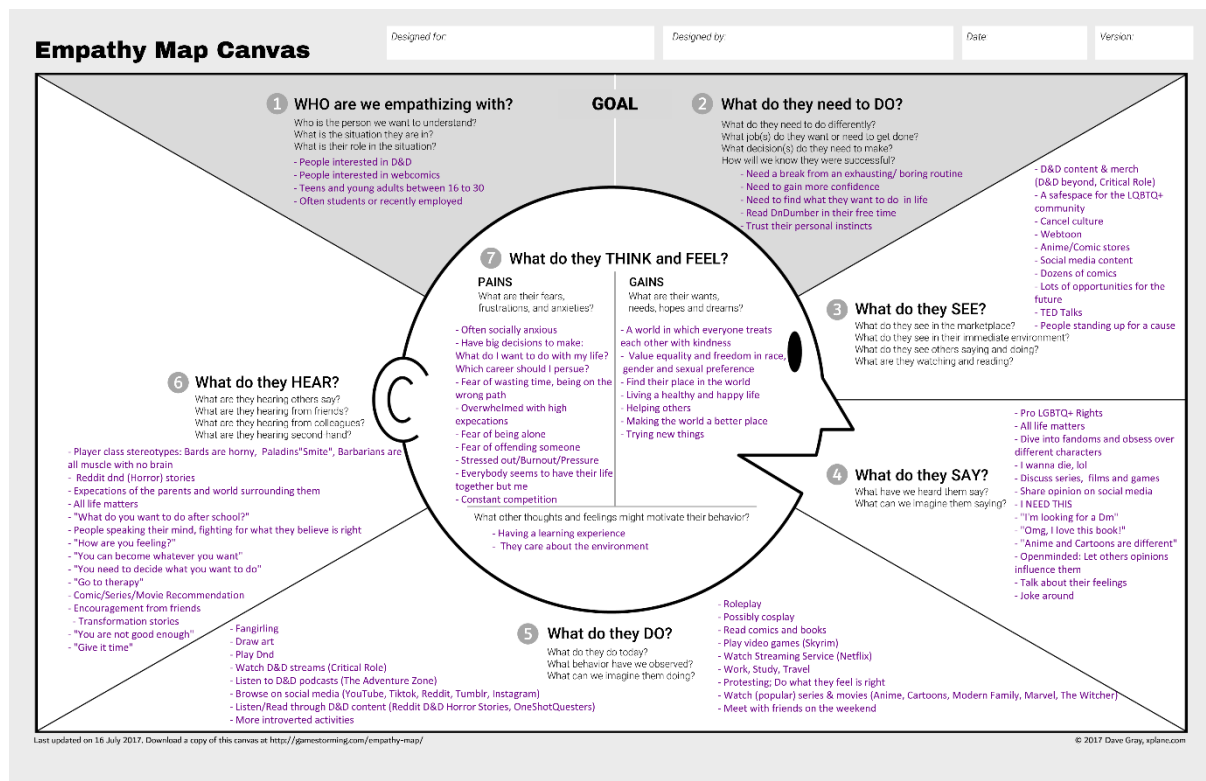


Figure 1 - Empathy Map DnDumber (Gray, 2018)

To emphasize with the target audience, I created an Empathy Map which Can be viewed in Figure 1 and more easily accessed in the "DnDumber_Empathy_Map.png" document in the Appendix.

2.2 The Market

To make the best choice regarding the format of the DnDumber comic, it's important to understand webcomics and look at possible competitors.

2.2.1 Webcomics

Webcomics are comics that are published online and offer diverse styles, formats, and genres. They range from long-form graphic novels to short gag-a-day strips and slice-of-life comics (Sanchez, n.d.). Some incorporate multimedia elements like animation and sound. Popular formats include wordless comics that tell stories through graphics, image-and-word comics with separate panels, and graphic novels that allow for a more extensive story universe (*What Is a Comic Book and What Are Its Main Features?*, n.d.).

Webcomics are often created by independent artists and can be read for free. Revenue generation methods vary, including premium content, merchandise, advertising, crowdfunding, and fan support platforms like Patreon (Dowthwaite, 2017).

More information and research conducted on webcomics can be retrieved from the document "Additional_Comic_Research.pdf" in the Appendix.

2.2.2 Competitors

In addition to exploring webcomic formats, it is crucial to examine webcomics with themes or concepts similar to DnDumber, excluding gag-based comics since DnDumber is expected to be a story-based comic.

An example of a traditional comic competitor is "The Misadventurers" (*Products – Joseph A. Michael Fantasy Author – Image Scout AC Comics*, n.d.), a printed comic series with a D&D adventure theme. Created by "OH Comics!" and initially funded through Kickstarter, it follows a pair of banished misfits teaming up to defeat bizarre villains.

Other competitors in the adventure series genre include webcomics like "Table Titans," "Dungeon Diaries," and "Looking for Group" (Tasker, 2020), all centred around Dungeons and Dragons.

Furthermore, adaptations of famous podcasts like "The Adventure Zone" and web series like "Critical Role: Vox Machina" are a compelling competition. "Critical Role" and Dark Horse Comics (2020; *Dark Horse Comics*, n.d.) have released various comic books, including the "VOX MACHINA ORIGINS" series based on their "Tal'Dorei" D&D campaign (2020), as well as "Critical Role: The Mighty Nein," which collects the backstories of D&D characters from the streaming show.

"The Adventure Zone" has its own series of graphic novels, with the most recent release being "The Eleventh Hour" (*The Adventure Zone | Series*, n.d.), featuring the humorous exploits of three adventurers in a fantasy realm. Considering the story, style, and genre of DnDumber, "The Adventure Zone" emerges as a significant competitor.

Other webcomics with adventure or mystery themes, not necessarily D&D related, include "Gunnerkrigg Court," "Stand Still, Stay Silent," and "Cucumber Quest" (Reber, 2016; *Recommended Webcomics*, n.d.; *What Story Driven Webcomics Are Worth Reading?*, n.d.).

"Gunnerkrigg Court" is an ongoing webcomic blending mythology and science (*Gunnerkrigg Court (Webcomic)*, n.d.), while "Stand Still, Stay Silent" explores Nordic mythology in a post-apocalyptic setting (*Stand Still. Stay Silent - Webcomic*, n.d.). "Cucumber Quest" presents a light-hearted tale set in a fantasy world inhabited by anthropomorphic rabbits (*Cucumber Quest*, n.d.).

Additionally, multimedia comics like "Unsounded" can incorporate GIFs, falling into the epic fantasy adventure genre with elements of horror, profanity, and morally ambiguous characters (Cope, n.d.).

However, the most notable competitor and inspiration for the interactive comic format is the multimedia webcomic "Homestuck." With its interactive segments and complexity, it has been considered "the Ulysses of the Internet" (Orsini, 2012). Notably, "Homestuck" concluded in 2016.

More on the competitors and their comic as well as website attributes can be found in the document titled "Comic_Comparison.png" in the Appendix.

3. DEFINE

3.1 Problem Statement

DnDumbercomics wants to create a sample page of an interactive, multimedia comic and release it on a website which will be used to publish the completed comic in the future and will be accessible to the userbase who mainly consist of young adults interested in comics and fantasy tabletop roleplaying games.

3.2 Research Goals

- When reading the comic, the user is intrigued by the narrative and would like to see more content. (2)
- The user considers the art of the comic to be visually pleasing, professional and consistent. (2)
- The reader can take in the content of the comic effortlessly. The comic panels are easy to follow, and the font is simple to read. (2)
- The user had no issues navigating through the website of the comic. (1)
- The user had a positive experience with the interactive aspect of the comic. It didn't distract them from the narrative. (3)
- The website works properly, there are no bugs or long loading times. (1 & 3)

3.3 Main Question

How to create minimum two sample pages for an interactive multimedia comic published on an individual, professional website which is crafted with a website builder and engages an audience from 16 to 25 who are interested in fantasy tabletop roleplaying games and comics?

3.4 Sub Questions

1. How to craft a website with a website builder which can host and support an interactive comic whilst attracting and engaging the user?
2. How to create at least two professional comic pages which support the character designs, genre and the overall narrative of DnDumber?
3. How to implement interactive segments into the comic?

3.5 Methodology

The STAR Method Model, originally used for job interviews (*Using the STAR Method for Your next Behavioral Interview (Worksheet Included)*, 2022), is adapted in this research to describe the research methods and define sub-questions (see Figure 2). The STAR acronym represents Source, Type, Approach, and Result, guiding data collection and analysis.

Source describes the global strategy to gathering the necessary data and the decision between using existing (secondary) data or collecting individual data.

Type refers to the type of media. Depending on research objectives, either quantitative or qualitative data collection is required. Quantitative data involves numerical information, statistical analysis and measurable variables (Hillemann, 2023). Qualitative data on the other hand encompasses non-numerical data, including questionnaires, interviews and observations. It describes qualities or characteristics, therefore focussing on stories, events and examples.

Approach answers the questions of “where” and “how” to collect the data and why primary or secondary data has been chosen.

Results is the final concept of the STAR Method Model. It determines how the results and collected data contribute to answering the research question or objective.

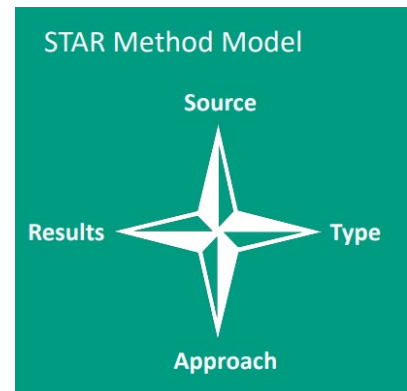


Figure 2 - The Star Method Model (Roosen, 2020)

3.5.1 Sub-Question 1 – Crafting the Website

STAR: Question 1

- **Source**
To research how to build a website, both primary and secondary data will be utilized. The primary data is used to discover shared attributes of popular webcomics. As for secondary data, articles, tutorials, and studying features of different webcomics provide insights.
- **Type**
Both qualitative and quantitative data are employed to determine visually pleasing website attributes. The analysis of popular webcomics offers quantitative understanding, while individual impression and prior knowledge contribute qualitative insights.
- **Approach**
For the primary data which includes understanding the attributes of popular webcomic sites, the approach that will be taken is looking at and analysing the features of at least five different webcomics. Furthermore, reading through articles on the web as well as studying and following tutorials on YouTube, LinkedInLearning and the online portal of website builders, will provide valuable insights into the best practices for understanding how to use a website builder efficiently.
- **Results**
The research findings will determine the design choices for a visually appealing and user-friendly website and provide guidance on how to use a website builder.

3.5.2 Sub-Question 2 – Creating Comic Pages

STAR: Question 2

- *Source*
Both, primary and secondary data are gathered to create the comic pages. Primary data will be collected by comparing different webcomics and identifying similarities. This comparative analysis will provide valuable insights into effective approaches and attributes that can be applied to DnDumber. Furthermore, secondary data will be used to explore popular webcomics and summarize general art rules such as perspective and elements specific to comics such as panels.
- *Type*
Both quantitative and qualitative data are used to decide on attributes for the DnDumber comic. Attributes of successful webcomics are studied quantitatively while my personal impression and expertise as a storyboard artist and storyteller contribute qualitative insights.
- *Approach*
To identify common attributes in popular comics, webcomics are compared and surveys may be conducted to gather feedback on preferred layouts and colour schemes. Secondary data is drawn from relevant sources such as previous projects like Minor Skilled which include character design, 2D animation and storytelling. Moreover, the data will be retrieved from tutorials and web resources.
- *Results*
The results will help to determine the colour, style, and layout for the comic pages and provide important insights into the comic medium, including how to guide the reader's eye and create an immersive experience.

3.4.3 Sub-Question 3 – Implementing Interactive Segments

STAR: Question 3

- *Source*
Mainly secondary data will be used which will include looking at existing examples on how interactive segments can be integrated into media. Furthermore, primary data can be sought from web developers if needed.
- *Type*
Both qualitative and quantitative data are employed. Inspiration from animated comics contribute to quantitative data, while qualitative data focusses on effective implementation of interactive elements.
- *Approach*
To understand how to implement the interactive segments, YouTube tutorials and website builder resources offer guidance. Furthermore, assistance from web developers may be sought for coding.
- *Results*
The research findings determine an effective approach for implementing interactive elements, enhancing the comic experience and minimizing distractions from the narrative.

3.5 Scope

During this project two products will be developed.

3.6.1 Deliverable 1: Comic

The first product will be a set of minimum two comic pages which present a scene of the DnDumber narrative.

Inclusions

- *Moodboard*
A moodboard will be developed that captures the desired aesthetic, atmosphere and visual style of the comic. This will help guide the overall look and feel.
- *Character Line-up*
A character line-up will be created to visually present the characters of DnDumber in comparison to each other. This will also ensure more consistency in the artwork within the comic.
- *Script Excerpt*
Based on the story, a short script will be provided which outlines the dialogue, narration and actions for each page. This script will be an excerpt of the first episode of DnDumber.
- *Comic Pages*
Each page will include artwork for the environment, characters and colour that match the style and genre of the story. The art will be designed to be visually appealing and easily reproducible.
- *Comic Elements*
The comic will incorporate various comic elements including speech balloons, sound effects (SFX), panels, gutters, and captions. These elements will be strategically placed and visually coherent with the rest of the artwork. Furthermore, a suitable font will be selected for the dialogue, captions, and more, ensuring readability and stylistic harmony.
- *Interactive Element*
Lastly, an interactive element will be incorporated in the comic, enhancing reader engagement and interactivity. This interaction could for example involve clickable hotspots (*Adding Clickable Hotspots to Images*, n.d.; Mindstamp: The Interactive Video Platform, 2020) which could show images, play animations and sounds, or lead to a different website.

Exclusions

- *Thought Balloons and Captions*
The comic will either exclude or limit the usage of captions and thought balloons. This exclusion is based on the decision to keep the reader as close to the action as possible and the character's thoughts mysterious adding to the suspense of the story.

Assumptions

- *Comedy and Adventure Genre*
While DnDumber will gradually take on a more serious tone as the story progresses, the overall comic continues to primarily fall under the comedy and adventure genre, blending humorous elements with thrilling and entertaining

storytelling. Thus, the dialogue, scenes and overall narrative will reflect the characteristics and tropes commonly found in the alluded genres.

- *Stylized Cartoon Artstyle*

The comic will feature a highly stylized cartoon artstyle, with exaggerated proportions, vibrant colours, and expressive character designs. The goal is to create visually appealing and engaging artwork that captures the essence of a comedic adventure series. Furthermore, the environmental art will draw inspiration from Carles Dalmau's detailed and immersive illustrations (*Carles Dalmau on Instagram*, n.d.).

- *Familiarity with Comics*

Another assumption is that the target audience is already familiar with webcomics and enjoys this form of visual storytelling. Thus, they understand the conventions of comic book panels, speech balloons and other comic elements.

Constraints

- *Excerpt Instead of Episode*

Due to the limited time available, the comic pages will feature an excerpt of the story rather than an entire episode. This constraint allows for an accurate and condensed representation of the narrative within the given time frame of 4-6 months.

- *Simplified Interactivity*

Given the time frame and a lack of expertise in programming, the interactive elements of the comic will be kept simple and straightforward so that the implementation is feasible.

- *Simplified Art*

The art of the comic will be simple to recreate. This constraint aims to ensure the maintenance of a cohesive and visually appealing look for the comic.

3.6.2 Deliverable 2: Website

The second deliverable is a website hosting and complimenting the DnDumber comic.

Inclusions

- *Matching Design Elements*

The website carries a design that is consistent and compliments the comic theme and genre. This also includes the design of a logo which matches DnDumber. Furthermore, to ensure consistency throughout the website appropriate fonts and colour schemes will be chosen, reflecting the overall visual style of the comic.

- *If possible, Optimization*

The website will be optimized to ensure fast loading times, providing a seamless user experience.

Exclusion

- *Unessential Webpages*

The focus of the website lays on showcasing and presenting the comic itself. Therefore, webpages that don't directly stand in connection to reading the comic online as for example a shop page or a page dedicated to the artists, will not be created for this project.

Assumptions

- *Internet Access and Navigation Skills*

Next to an interest in comics, it is assumed that the target audience has access to the internet and possess the necessary skills to navigate and interact with a website efficiently.

Constraints

- *Simplified Website Design*

Due to a limited development time, the website for the comic will be designed and built with a focus on simplicity.

- *Use of Website Builder*

Due to the absence of extensive programming expertise and time, a website builder will be utilized to create the comic's website. This approach allows for an efficient and user-friendly construction of the website without the need for extensive coding.

4. IDEATE & PROTOTYPE

4.1 Interactive Integration

Various ideas for incorporating interactive elements into the comic have been considered. These ideas encompass different levels of interactivity and potential influence on the narrative:

1. Integrating simple mini games that don't influence the narrative
 - Clicker game
 - Point-and-Click game
 - Mini Flash-Game
2. Integrating small interactions that don't influence the narrative
 - Scanning a QR code to see an animated page
 - Playing videos
 - Showing/Hiding text
 - Turning on/off sound
 - Adjusting/changing the interface
3. Integrating small interactions that will influence the narrative
 - Choose your own path or perspective
 - The viewer can choose whether they want to read the story from the perspective of one character or the other
 - Collecting secrets
 - Leading viewers to secret pages through actions such as continuously clicking specific objects, collecting items, or deciphering secret messages

While these ideas are considered for future use, the chosen interaction element involves clicking specific character panels on the page to trigger animations.

4.2 Website Building

To build a website for DnDumber, it is necessary to pick a website builder which can assist in creating an appealing website.

4.2.1 Working in WordPress

The leader amongst website builders in relation to webcomics is WordPress (Staff, 2016). Many websites recommended using this website builder because of its robust content management system (essekia, 2017). Additionally, numerous plugins and themes that are specifically designed for comics and storytelling allow creators to enhance the webcomic experience with features responsive image galleries, navigation menus and commenting systems (BestWebSoft, n.d.; Raval, 2020).

Generally there are two different versions of WordPress: WordPress.com and WordPress.org (Nimmons, 2022).

WordPress.org includes WordPress as a core software kit as well as some free plugins and themes. While the WordPress software is completely free, it is necessary to purchase a hosting service to run the website (Nimmons, 2022).

WordPress.com offers a service based website solution. Building a website with WordPress.com means using and buying a service that includes the WordPress software. It includes hosting a domain and other support services provided by a company called Automattic (Nimmons, 2022). Choosing to work with WordPress.com requires less technical knowledge. However, it is notable that the purchasable packages will come with a monthly or yearly fee and that WordPress.com is comparably less flexible and customizable than the WordPress software.

While WordPress.org does seem like the best long term solution for building a website, it is more feasible to use WordPress.com given my limited time for the project and programming knowledge.

Throughout my first attempt of creating the website (see Figure 3), I came across different navigation hurdles given that I was unfamiliar with the surface, and tutorials were often overwhelming due to the website's great offer on different functionalities. Moreover, I wasn't comfortable with utilizing the box-based navigation on the website. Furthermore, the comic template "TooCheke" (Raval, 2020) which I initially wanted to use to create the webcomic, was targeted at the WordPress software instead of the

website. However, my biggest issue was that I wanted to create a basic layout before paying to launch the website but was very limited especially in terms of templates and fonts that I wanted to test for the website. Hence, I became overwhelmed with such a new surface and decided to seek out help.

After explaining the problems that I have encountered in WordPress and the desired features of the webcomic website to Miroslav Batchkarov who is a Software Development Engineer at Amazon Web Services, Miroslav suggested using another website builder like Wix since the functionality of the website should be sufficient for my ambitions.



Figure 3 - DnDumber Website Attempt in WordPress (Lehl & WordPress, n.d.)

Following his advice by looking up more information on the Wix website builder, I could confirm that due to its near-unlimited customization and user-friendly interface, Wix is a sufficient choice (*5 Best (Affordable) Website Builders for Webcomics in 2023*, 2020).

4.2.2 Working in WIX

Wix offers a wide range of customizable templates. These templates provide a professional starting point, allowing the user to easily create an engaging webcomic website without the need for extensive coding.

Following a tutorial of comic book creator Walter Ostlie (*About/Contact – Walter Ostlie*, n.d.), I used the free DIY Blog template as my starting point to create the comic website as showcased in Figure 4 (Walter Ostlie, 2021; Wixpress, n.d.).

Generally, I aimed to create a homepage structure that is straightforward and easily accessible like the homepage for “Homestuck.com”.

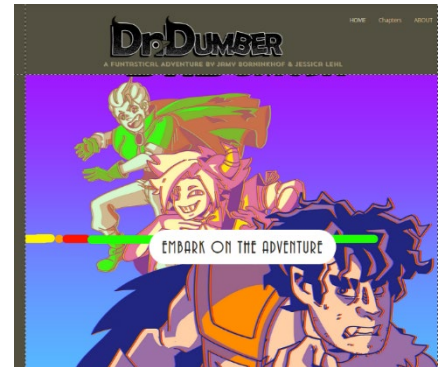


Figure 4 - DnDumber Early Prototype with DIY Blog Template

Besides the homepage and the first three comic pages, I also created Icons which could lead to a section about the character and chapter overview in the future.

Website Style

For the style of the website, I wanted to create something unique and visually appealing. So, I decided to blend the subject of medieval fantasy with an internet aesthetic. This idea was inspired by my interest in liminal space images (see Figure 5) which often mix elements that do not belong together and thus, can feel surreal.



Figure 5 - Liminal Space Example (TruLyte, 2023.)

Coding

Creating an interactive webcomic involved creating a code that would play an animation upon interaction. Initially, I found coding to be challenging, as it was outside my area of expertise. However, with some research and assistance, I discovered different solutions to implement the desired animations.

To access the code, I turned on Dev Mode in Wix. On the suggestion of Mustafa Taha who studies psychology and has no prior experience in coding, I wanted to attempt using AI to create a code. Therefore, I explored different websites that could generate code and ultimately settled on a website called “openai.com” (OpenAI, n.d.) which allowed for an easy communication with AI. The AI created the code demonstrated in Figure 6. However, I could not understand how to implement the code with my lack of experience in JavaScript.

```
javascript
<script>
function changeImage() {
  var image = document.getElementById("myImage");
  image.src = "new_image.jpg";
}
</script>
```

Figure 6 - AI Generated Code (OpenAi, n.d.)

Exploring the Wix tools, I then discovered the “Multi-State Box”, which allowed me to change the state of a box when pressed. My idea was to use this box to play my animation by creating a still image as a first state, then, a GIF that plays once as a second state.

While I was already familiar with the overall animation process, it was challenging to find a way to export the animation as a GIF file. Therefore, I followed multiple tutorials on YouTube to guide me (HowToAvenge101, 2022; Julieanne Kost, 2022; Just tell me how to do it, 2017).

After drawing the frames in Clip Studio Paint, using animation folders, and exporting them as an image sequence, I imported the images into Photoshop by clicking “File → Scripts → Load Files into Stack”. Then, I selected the image sequence after clicking on “Browse”. Originally, I attempted to export the GIF in After Effects, but I considered Photoshop to be more feasible due to more suitable export settings.

In Photoshop, I cropped the frames under “Image → Trim → Transparent Pixels” or “Image → Crop” and opened the timeline under “Window → Timeline”. If necessary, I would adjust the cropped image manually such as demonstrated in Figure 7.



Figure 7 - Crop Tool in Photoshop

The next step was to click on the “Create Frame Animation” button and select “Make Frames From Layers” in the submenu. Since the animation plays in reverse, it is also necessary to select “Reverse Frames”.

Then, to adjust the framerate, I selected “Convert to Video Timeline” and “Set Timeline Frame Rate”. I set the framerate to 24 “frames per second (fps)” to match the framerate in Clip Studio Paint (see Figure 8).

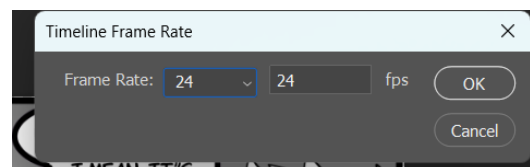


Figure 8 - Timeline Frame Rate in Photoshop

Lastly, I exported the animation by clicking “File → Export → Save For Web (Legacy)” and adjusted the export options by setting the format to “GIF”. I decreased the image size and set the looping options to “Once”. Occasionally, it was necessary to adjust the dithering options too, to avoid white edges by either selecting “No dither”, or “Diffusion” and setting the matte to the colour of the edges. Figure 9 showcases the export settings.

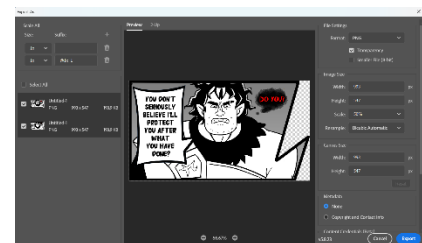


Figure 9 - Save For Web Export Menu

Code

We added the following code to our [page tab](#):

```
1 $w.onReady(function () {
2   $w("#button1").onClick(() => {
3     $w("#myStatebox").changeState("state2");
4   });
5   $w("#button2").onClick(() => {
6     $w("#myStatebox").changeState("state1");
7   });
8 });
```

Javascript

Figure 10 - Multi State Box Code (Velo Tutorial, n.d.)

Although the basic animation was functional, there were still two problems I needed to solve. The main problem was that the images flickered before switching states. The second issue laid within the difficulty of adjusting the size of the images within the Multiple-State Box. To tackle the main issue, I found that inserting a transparent placeholder image could be a potential fix (*Dealing with Blinking Images*, 2018). However, I was not certain whether the solution was

feasible and how to correctly implement it. Consequently, I've reached out to Miroslav Batchkarov for assistance.

As he looked through ways to integrate the Multiple State Box, I explained that I was also open to dismiss the idea entirely and use an "On Click – Show Image" solution. Therefore, Miroslav showed me a simple code which could replace an image file with another when clicked. The code is depicted in Figure 11.

```
$w.onReady(function () {
    $w("#SH2Still1").onClick((e) => {
        $w("#SH2Still1").hide();
        $w("#SH2Move").show();
    });
});
```

Figure 11 - Code of Animated Images

In addition to helping me with the code, Miroslav also explained to me the most effective way to test the website by opening it on a private tab and recommended to reduce the image sizes to improve the website's performance.

After implementing the code, I came across the animate option in Wix and decided to include animations for a more engaging viewer experience. I tested out multiple animation pre-sets and manually adjusted the duration, speed and delay of the animation.

With the images placed, the code implemented, and the animations applied, the episode page became fully functional.

4.3 Comic Creation

4.3.1 Script

To structure the comic, I created a script and divided it into sections based on the comic pages like depicted in Figure 12. Then, I added the page dialogue into Clip Studio Paint before beginning to sketch the layout. This approach helped to visualize the composition and pace of the comic.

PAGE 1
 S: "You don't seriously believe I'll protect you after what you've done to me, do you?"
 C: "Kinda... I mean, it's not that bad. You're barely even hurt!"
 (C: "Spitting a few fur balls every now and then, but overall...")
 S: "YOU FRAMED ME FOR YOUR CRIMES! Do you have any idea how long it took me to settle down?"
 C: unfazed "Not really, no..."
 S: takes note of Con's calm heartbeat "Grr-" [Temper-meter rises]

PAGE 2
 S: "Consider yourself lucky, I haven't slashed open your skin... yet."
 C: "Oh, I very much do! Thanks!"
 S: Grabs Con by the collar "One second and I could easily snap your spine."
 C: "I know, I know..." mutters "Show off..."
 S: "Tch-" releases him /

Figure 12 – DnDumber Script Excerpt

The scene portrayed on the three pages takes place after the intimidating werewolf character Shakir and the bard and criminal con-artist Con escaped a group of guards. It is notable that Shakir despises Con since Con had framed Shakir for his crimes. However, he is simultaneously impressed with Con since he, unlike the remaining townsfolk, does not fear him despite his intimidating aura.

The full script of the scene can be accessed in the Appendix document named "DnDumber_Script".

4.3.2 Moodboard

To establish the visual direction and mood for the webcomic, I created the moodboard in Figure 13 that encapsulated the following components.

Regarding the style, the comic features clear line art. The characters are designed in a classic cartoon style that allows for expressive and dynamic movements. Moreover, the backgrounds are inspired by the style of Carles Dalmau.

The overall tone of the comic is primarily goofy, evoking a light-hearted and humorous atmosphere. However, the mood can also shift to a gloomy ambiance when necessary to enhance storytelling elements.

Generally, the moodboard shows how the comic explores fantasy and adventurous themes.



Figure 13 - DnDumber Moodboard

4.3.3 Character Line-up

The Character Designs, demonstrated in Figures 14 and 15 have been created through a carefully considered iteration process.

The “DnDumber_Design_Document.pdf” in the Appendix features information on the iteration process of the characters and design choices throughout the comic.



Figure 14 - Character Line-Up Front

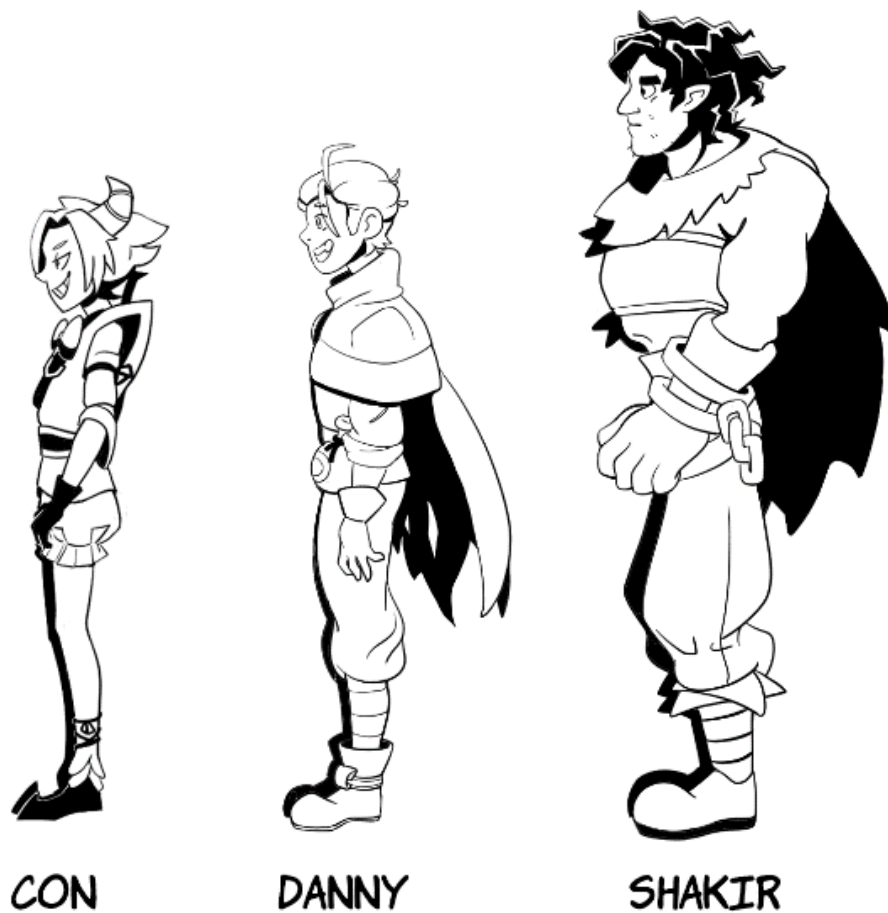


Figure 15 - Character Line-Up Side

4.3.4 Setting up Clip Studio Paint

When it comes to choosing a software for creating a webcomic, Clip Studio Paint is a highly recommended option.

Clip Studio Paint offers a wide range of features and functionalities specifically designed for comic creation. For instance, it gives artists the opportunity to work with vector layers which allow for a non-destructive editing process and offers tools such as thicken/thin brush strokes for precise line work. Furthermore, the software supports working in RGB mode which can also be converted to CMYK for printing purposes, ensuring accurate colour representation (ClipStudioOfficial, 2017).

To set up the Clip Studio Paint file for the DnDumber webcomic, one must create a new document. Generally, it is recommended to either choose the manga standard comic size (see Figure 17) or the US standard size (see Figure 16) dimensions (Simon, 2021).

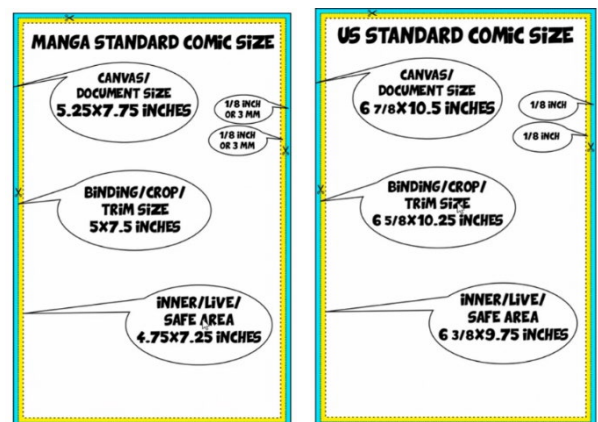


Figure 17 - Manga Standard Comic Size (Simon, 2021) Figure 16 - US Standard Comic Size (Simon, 2021)

To ensure a smooth viewing experience, I opted for the US standard comic size. To avoid issues, I selected a higher resolution of 600 dpi for printing instead of the standard 300 dpi. However, it is crucial to find a balance between image quality and file size, as excessively large resolutions can lead to longer loading times for the audience (Walter Ostlie, 2021).

Furthermore, the comic pre-set in Clip Studio Paint divided the canvas into three squares as showcased in Figure 18. The inner square is the main area for creating the content of the comic pages whilst the middle square represents the final format without any dialogue, allowing the reader to focus on important visual elements. Finally, the outer square can be referred to as the bleed area and serves the function to prevent white edges in the final images if they are not precisely cropped (SimonWL, 2020). Accordingly, Figure 19 showcases my effort to place the most eminent visual elements and dialogue into the most inner square.

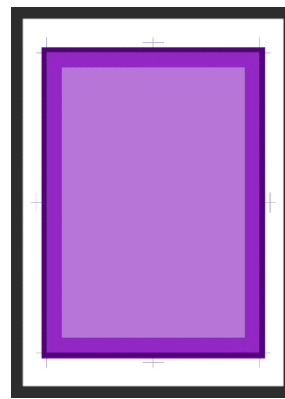


Figure 18 - Comic Square Division in Clip Studio Paint



Figure 19 – Comic Division on First Page Layout

4.3.5 Working in Clip Studio Paint

Clipping Masks

Clip Studio Paint offers a “Frame Border” tool which allows the comic artist to create a panel and draw only within the designated area. However, I made the decision not to utilize this tool since I wanted to ease the process of animating elements later and be very liberate with the panel form like in Figure 20.



Figure 20 - Manually Adjusted Panel Shape

Due to this decision, I made use of the “Clipping Mask”. Sorting my layers and using this tool correctly allowed me to draw non-destructively, as demonstrated in Figure 21.



Figure 21 - Non-Destructive Drawing Example

Pureref

Using the sub view window in Clip Studio Paint provides the user with a convenient way to view different parts of the canvas and references.

However, I made use of a software named “PureRef” to view my references which include the character line-ups, character poses and more.

PureRef is a software which facilitates the process of dragging references into a canvas. As demonstrated in Figure 22 the primary function of the software lies in the viewing of reference images on top of other software. A major advantage to using the software over the implemented sub view window in Clip Studio is the flexibility in movement and the possibility of viewing an unlimited number of images at once.

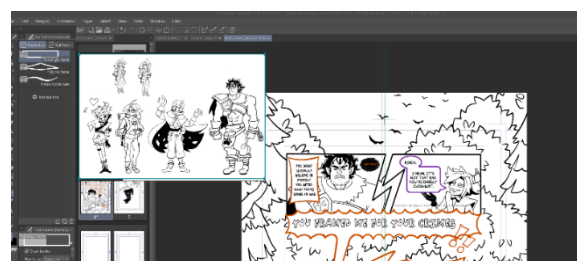


Figure 22 - PureRef Viewing the Character Line-Up

Brush Tool

To maintain a clean image and continuity, I adjusted the basic G-Brush in Clip Studio Paint and disabled the pen pressure sensitivity.

Regarding the brush size, a range of 5 to 20 pixels was chosen. The specific size depends on the proximity of the drawn objects. While objects in the foreground, were depicted with a larger brush size, objects in the background have a thinner line width. This implied a bit of depth to the image despite the lack of pen pressure.

Colour Palette

Deciding on the colours of the comic was difficult due to a large range of options. Therefore, I decided to start small by beginning with a colour choice for the speech balloons but explored 40 different colours such as demonstrated in Figure 23. Eventually, I narrowed down my options to six colours that I found most appealing. To gain further insights, I conducted a survey amongst my target audience on Instagram, seeking their preference.



Figure 23 - Colour Iterations for the Speech Balloons

Continuing with the colours for the background, I selected a light colour scheme with two main colours, namely pink and green. However, I still needed to determine the colours for the characters. Taking inspiration from works like Undertale and Homestuck, I opted for relatively simple character colours (see Figure 24). This decision not only aligned with my artistic influences but also reduced the workload involved in animating the comic.

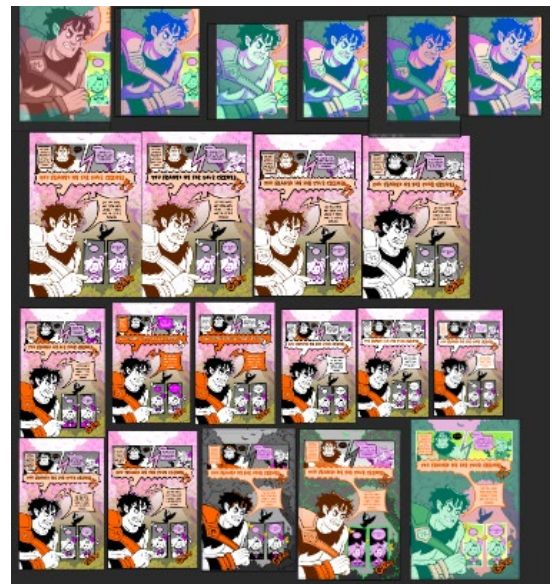


Figure 24 - Colour Iterations for the Character and Background

However, I later realized that the chosen colour scheme for the speech balloons did not harmonize well with the colour choices I made for the panel. As a result, I changed the colour to black and white. This decision was also made based on the feedback from artist Jamy Borninkhof who guided me throughout the comic process and particularly highlighted that the colour of the speech balloons was too distracting if the characters themselves were black and white.

Fonts

In my search for suitable fonts, I explored various free-to-use comic fonts available on websites like “DaFont” (*DaFont - Schriftarten Zum Download*, n.d.). I compared the fonts by writing out a sentence from the comic, such as demonstrated in Figure 25.

Generally, I required two fonts, one regular font and one font specifically for Shakir’s dialogue to emphasize his intimidating demeanor.

The regular font I chose for the comic was “Komika Hand“. I chose this font since it matched the fun and adventurous atmosphere of the comic whilst also including various similar versions, so that it becomes easy to change the font to match a specific mood.

For Shakir a font named “Abdomentality” was chosen. But upon further reflection, I began to question the readability of the font. Feedback from Jan-Roman Pikula confirmed my doubts, as he pointed out that the word “I’ll” becomes “somewhat of a blob” and that “it’s better to use a more conventional font, [that is] not too artsy” (J.-R. Pikula, personal communication, 16 June 2023).

To address this concern, I made the decision to change Shakir’s font to “Take Looks“.

4.3.6 First Page

To create the first page of the webcomic, I drew upon my knowledge of art and storyboarding to develop two distinct layouts.

Layout 1

In the first layout, the distinct shape of the panels and speech balloons were used to represent Shakir’s anger (see Figure 27). Furthermore, I incorporated a contrast in size between Shakir and Con. This decision ensures to emphasize Shakir’s imposing size and creates a comedic effect fitting to the mood of the comic.



Figure 25 - Font Comparison

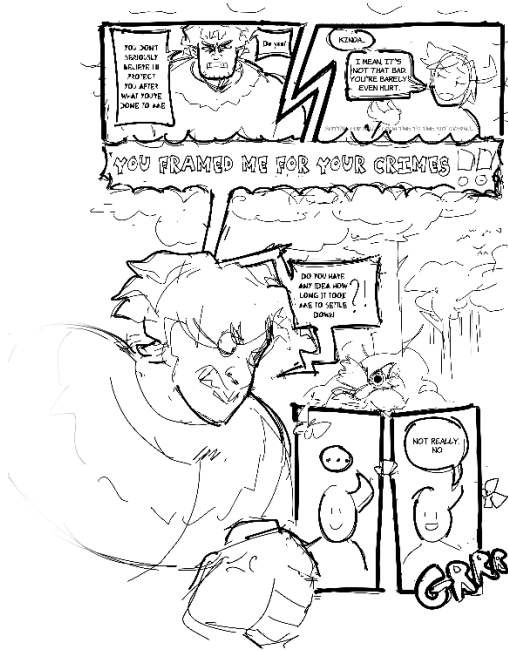


Figure 27 - Layout 1 Before Applying Feedback



Figure 26 - Layout 1 After Applying Feedback

After receiving some feedback from Jamy Borninkhof, I made some adjustments to the layout in Figure 26. One important modification was adding visual weight to Shakir's words to show his anger by increasing the size of the font and speech balloon. Additionally, I adjusted the background elements to guide the viewer's focus towards the speech balloon. I also adjusted its position to help the reading flow.

Layout 2

In the second layout which can be viewed in Figure 29, the use of shape language also emphasizes Shakir's anger throughout the panels. However, in contrary to the first layout, both characters directly face each other to create more tension. Additionally, I implemented the idea of a dark speech balloon for the moments in which characters ask Con a question to imply that Con is compelled to answer questions due to a truth curse. This element added mystery to the story.

Furthermore, Shakir is framing Con's panels with his hands, literally putting pressure onto him with his position to create a more tense confrontation and convey his anger.



Figure 29 - Layout 2 Before Applying Feedback



Figure 28 - Layout 2 After Applying Feedback

Feedback from Jamy on the second page highlighted the need for a better reading flow by creating a clearer Z shaped pattern. Therefore, I adjusted the layout in Figure 28.

After showcasing both layouts to Jan-Roman Pikula and confirming that both are viable options for the page, I decided to base my decision off my personal preference and the result of a survey I conducted on Instagram (see Figure 30). The survey was held on my art account @jessterscastle and the results showed that a majority of five people voted for the first layout while only one person voted for the second one. Furthermore, Jamy and I both agreed that the first layout seemed more interesting since it carried more dynamic poses. Therefore, it was chosen as the first page layout of DnDumber.

Based on the sketch, I created an attempt at the line art in Figure 31 and reached out to Jan-Roman for feedback. For Shakir, he pointed out that the pose could be further pushed and exaggerated by rounding the muscles. Additionally, the shape of the speech balloon tail could be further improved.

WHICH LAYOUT LOOKS BETTER TO YOU?

First one! Duh.	63%
Definitely the second one!!	13%

Figure 30 - Instagram Survey on Page Layout



Figure 31 – First Page Line Art Before Feedback



Figure 32- Jan-Roman's First Page Suggestions

Other feedback included thinner line art for background elements and more use of exclamation marks.

Thus, I applied the feedback in Figure 32 and furthermore created animations for a few panels based on how I imagined the characters to move.

Furthermore, I made the page more vivid by including GIFs like flying butterflies which would play constantly throughout the page. With that, the first and most important page has been completed (see Figure 33).

4.3.7 Second Page

After creating the first page layout, choosing a layout for the second page became an easier process. I created a basic (Figure 35) and refined (Figure 34) sketch to depict a scene in which Shakir grabs Con.

It is notable that Shakir progressively approached Con within the panels to the point that the characters faced each other within a shared panel. This added an intriguing sense of progression to the narrative.

Furthermore, the inclusion of a rising “Thermometer” was used to exaggerate Shakir’s anger in a comedic way.

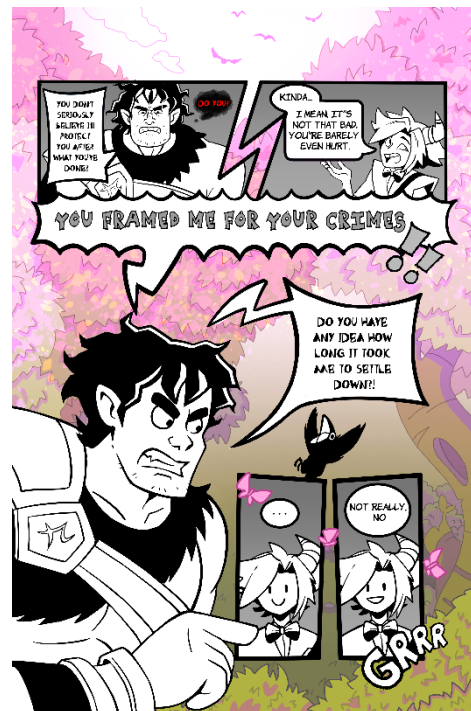


Figure 33 - Completed First Page

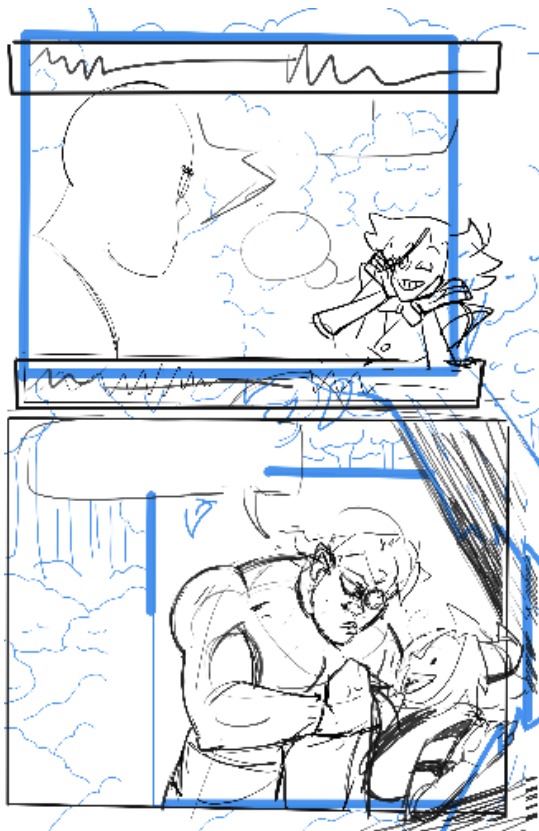


Figure 35 – Sketch Layout of Second Page



Figure 34 – Line Art of Second Page

Regarding the poses, I have used multiple references including Donald Duck comics to find ways in which I could exaggerate an action pose. Hence, the general poses were improved compared to the first sketch of the first page.

However, feedback from Jan-Roman pointed me towards continuity issues. Among these were missing elements such as Con's glove, Shakir's chains, the shadow on Con's bowtie, Shakir's shoulder armour piece and Con's bandolier. These and more issues are visualized in Jan-Roman's page suggestions in Figure 36.

Lastly, to create a background, I made sure to leave enough space for the panels and use background elements to support the reading flow. Figure 37 visualizes the completed second page.

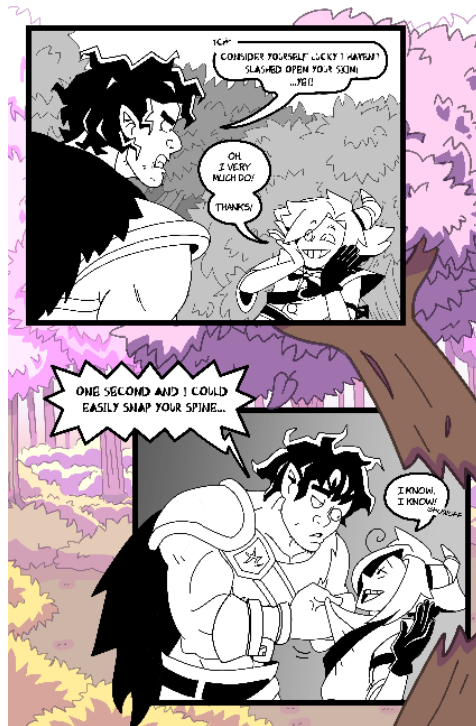


Figure 37 - Completed Second Page

4.3.8 Third Page

The third page of the webcomic shifts the focal point from Shakir's anger to his perception of Con. I emphasized this by drawing a large frame of Con's playful reaction in Figure 38. However, upon showing my process to Jamy, she pointed out that the pose was too dull. She suggested to pick a pose that was more in perspective. Therefore, I iterated upon the sketch.

Sharing the iterated page with Jamy, she hinted towards some anatomical issues, regarding the hands of the characters, Con's head shape and the perspective on Con's drawing in Figure 40.



Figure 38 – First Con Sketch on Second Page

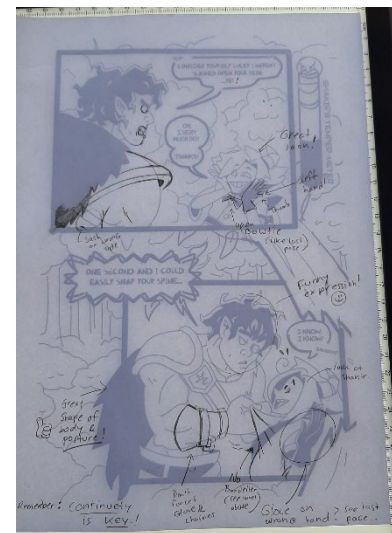


Figure 36 - Jan-Roman's Second Page Suggestions

Making use of different references, I iterated upon the layout in Figure 39. But after applying the feedback, Con's pose lost a lot of dynamic. Thus, I decided to reach out to Jan-Roman to ask for his assistance.



Figure 40 – Jamy's Feedback on the Third Page



Figure 39 – Third Page After Applying Feedback

With the help of Jan-Roman's foreshortening-sketch of Con and additional feedback in Figure 41, I completed the third page (see Figure 42).



Figure 41 – Jan-Roman's Third Page Suggestions

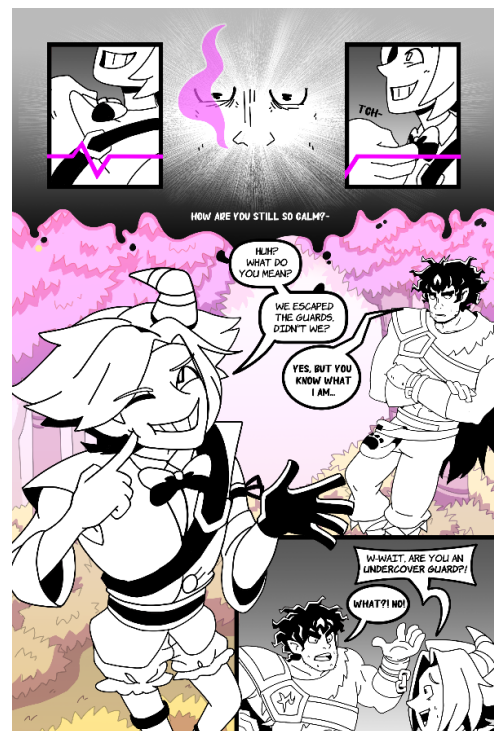


Figure 42 – Completed Third Page

4.4 Implementing the Pages

During the process of implementing the completed pages into the website, I realized that potential readers were not immediately aware of the interactive elements of the pages. To address this issue, I generated multiple ideas with rapid ideation techniques (see Figure 43). Eventually, I narrowed down my ideas to four choices. To evaluate the feasibility and potential impact of each idea, I conducted a SWOT analysis by considering each ideas' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

4.4.1 First Idea – Greyed Out Interface

The first idea included the first page of the comic being greyed out and showing an animation of a mouse arrow clicking on one of the panels and a message saying “Click the panels “ (see Figure 44).

Table 1 showcases the SWOT analysis of the first idea.

Table 1 - SWOT Analysis of Idea One

Strength	Weakness
Can't be missed, easily disappears on click	Animated background elements may distract the viewer
Opportunity	Threat
User finds the explanation to be very simple and remembers how to engage with the comic	The users will not want to engage with the comic in the first place since there are too many animated elements

Evaluation:

Although the interactivity explanation screen is very evident, there's a significant risk that the implementation of the idea may lead to a cluttered user interface. Therefore, this idea is not the most viable solution.

4.4.2 Second Idea – Circle Marker

The second idea included a marker circling the interactive elements and labelling them with a “Click Me” message (see Figure 45).

Table 2 showcases the SWOT analysis of the second idea.



Figure 43 - Rapid Ideation for Interaction Cue



Figure 44 - First Idea for Interaction Cue

Table 2 - SWOT Analysis of Idea Two

Strength	Weakness
Size is small, not too distracting	Could look messy, could make the viewer need to scroll to the left and right to read the message
Opportunity	Threat
User is neither too distracted nor misses the message and thus learns how to engage with the comic	User potentially feels inconvenienced by the scrolling and refrains from engaging with the page any further

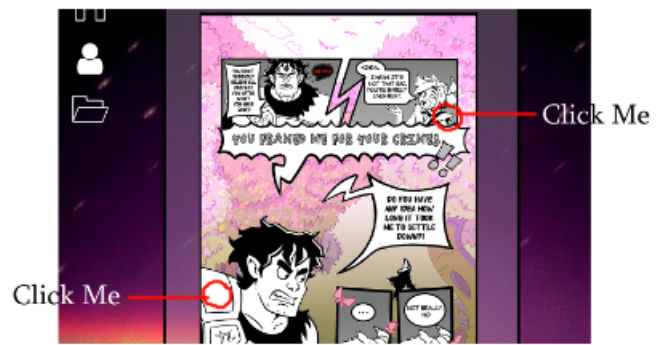


Figure 45 - Second Idea for Interaction Cue

Evaluation:

The potential inconvenience resulting from the second idea is minimal, as the message is not positioned directly atop the center of the page, and the likelihood of overlooking the interaction is relatively low. Consequently, Idea 2 emerges as a promising solution.

4.4.3 Third Idea – Arrow

The third idea included the page showing an animated arrow with a “Click me” message which points towards one or multiple animated panels (see Figure 46).

Table 3 showcases the SWOT analysis of the third Idea.

Table 3 – SWOT Analysis of Idea Three

Strength	Weakness
Size is small and thus, too distracting	Could look messy, could make the viewer need to scroll to the left
Opportunity	Threat
User is neither too distracted nor misses the message and thus learns how to engage with the comic	User potentially overlooks the arrow or feels inconvenienced by the scrolling and refrains from engaging with the page any further.

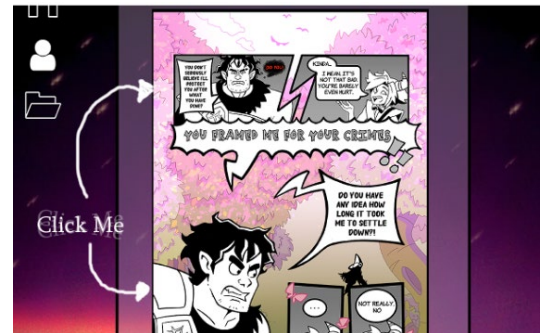


Figure 46 – Third Idea for Interaction Cue

Evaluation:

The third idea resembles idea two with the benefit that the arrow is located on one side. Therefore, this solution stands as a practical and viable option.

4.4.4 Fourth Idea – Blinking Interface

The fourth and final idea included the animated panels blinking until they are clicked (see Figure 47).

Table 4 showcases the SWOT analysis of the fourth Idea.

Table 4 - SWOT Analysis of Idea Four

Strength	Weakness
No potentially distracting text	Removed gaming aspect – the viewer doesn't need to find animated panels
Opportunity	Threat
User appreciates viewing every animated panel	Viewer could indirectly take the blinking animation as an insult to their intelligence or perceive it as annoying over time and refuse to further engage with the comic

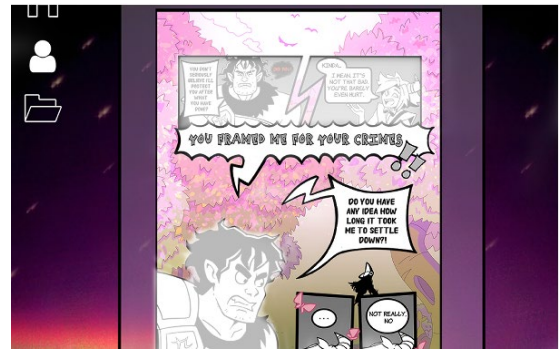


Figure 47 – Fourth Idea for Interaction Cue

Evaluation:

The blinking panels can become increasingly bothersome over time so that it poses a considerable risk of the user losing interest in the comic. Therefore, I do not consider this idea to be an optimal solution.

After evaluating and comparing the results of the SWOT analysis, I narrowed down the ideas to the most feasible solutions to refer to the interactive segments, namely ideas two and three.

5 TESTING

5.1 Test plan

The main objective of the test was to determine which of the two solutions fit better to point the viewer towards the interactivity of the comic and whether the overall comic and website were well received.

The test itself was an A/B test that was held in a remote usability in which I observed the tester through an online video call in their natural environment. Furthermore, the test took place on the tester's preferred software which enabled screensharing. Suggested platforms included Discord, Teams, Zoom and Google Meet. This led to most tests being held on Discord in exception for one that was held on Zoom.

Regarding the number of testers, I settled on an even number of six people. That way, half of the testers can begin testing with version A (idea three), and the other half is first exposed to version B (idea two). Thus, the results wouldn't be influenced by which version the testers were exposed to first. Figures 48 and 49 demonstrate the differences between the two versions.

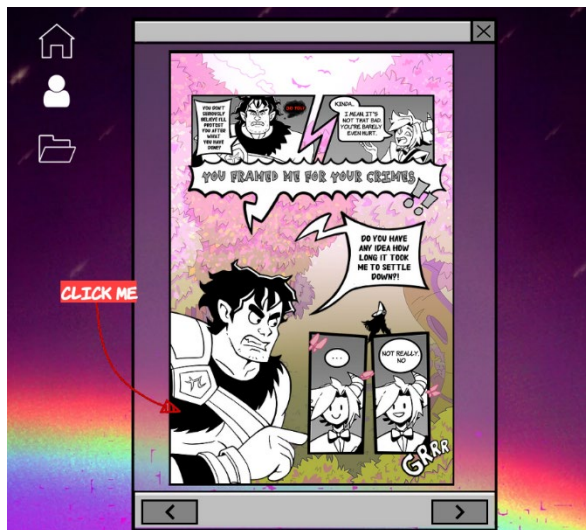


Figure 49 – Website Version A

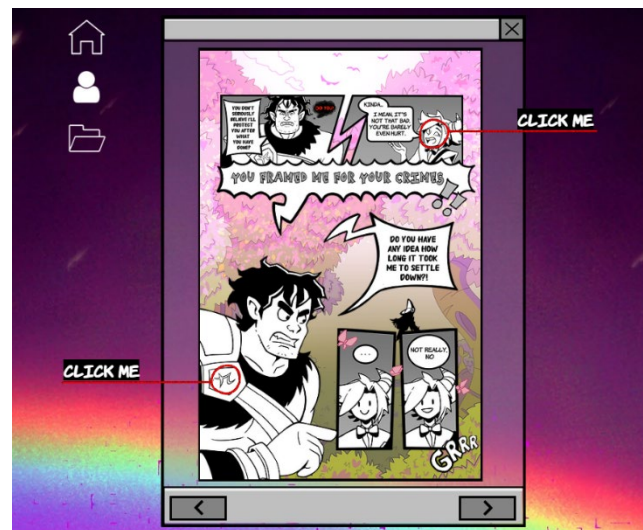


Figure 48 - Website Version B

All testers were between 16 to 25 years and shared an interest in comics. However, two testers were not familiar with tabletop RPGs.

To begin the test, the user was informed about the basic testing process and the context of the comic by reading through the message in Figure 50.

During the test, I let the user interact freely with the website while taking notes on how they engage with and navigate through it. In the case of the viewer not taking note of basic website functionalities such as the interactive elements, I helped to guide them.

Once the user has successfully interacted with the comic and read through the three pages, I referred them to the other version and finally to the questionnaire in Figure 51 (Lehl, 2023).

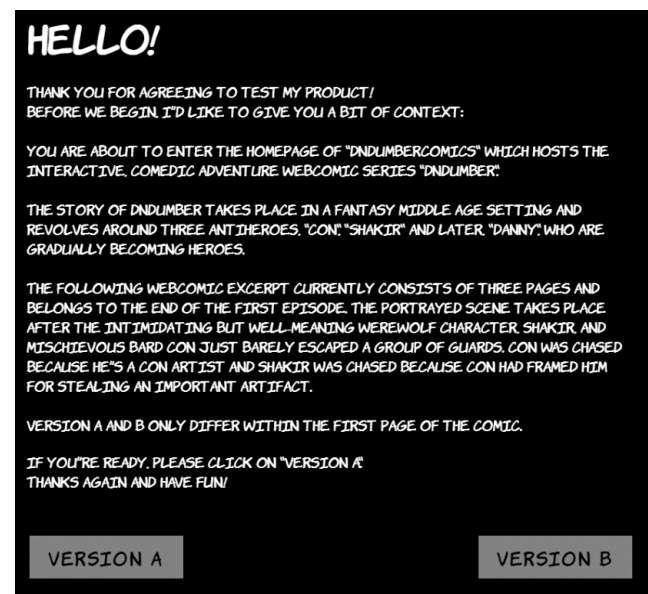


Figure 50 – Test Introduction

4. If You Answered With "Yes" on the Previous Question, Please Indicate Your Level of Interest in Fantasy Tabletop Roleplaying Games Like "Dungeons & Dragons" on a Scale of 1 to 5.

When Navigating Through the Website on a Scale of 1 to 5.

1: Not Interested at All
2: Not Very Interested
3: Neither Interested Nor Uninterested
4: Interested
5: Highly Interested

☐ 2: Easy
☐ 3: Neutral
☐ 4: Difficult
☐ 5: Very Difficult

* 6. Please Rate Your Perception of the Narrative, Particularly the Character Dialogue, Within the Webcomic on a Scale of 1 to 5 in Terms of Interest.

☐ 1: Not Interesting at All
☐ 2: Not Very Interesting
☐ 3: Neither Interesting Nor Uninteresting

Figure 51 - DnDumber Questionnaire (Lehl, 2023)

The questionnaire was created in [surveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymokey.com) and held without observation to avoid any influence on the answer. It included the following 10 questions, demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5 - Questionnaire Questions and Their Functions

No.	Type of Question	Question	Function
1	Multiple Choice	Which Version of the “DnDumber” Webcomic Did You Test First?	Assure that both version A and B have each been tested first three times
2	Multiple Choice	Which Version of the “DnDumber” Webcomic Did You Prefer?	Find out which interaction cue works best
3	Multiple Choice	Are you Familiar With Fantasy Tabletop Roleplaying Games Like “Dungeons & Dragons”?	Find out whether not being familiar with D&D influenced their opinion on the comic
4	Likert Scale	If You Answered With “Yes” on the Previous Question, Please indicate Your Level of Interest in Fantasy Tabletop Roleplaying Games Like “Dungeons & Dragons” on a Scale of 1 to 5.	Assure the audience’s interest in D&D
5	Likert Scale	Please Rate Your Perceived Difficulty When Navigating Through the Website on a Scale of 1 to 5.	Find out whether the website interface is intuitive
6	Likert Scale	Please Rate Your Perception of the Narrative, Particularly the Character Dialogue, Within the Webcomic on a Scale of 1 to 5 in Terms of Interest.	Find out whether the dialogue is interestingly written and whether the narrative is intriguing
7	Likert Scale	Please Rate Your Level of Satisfaction With the Interactive Elements (Clickable Animations) of the Webcomic on a Scale of 1 to 5.	Find out whether the animations are well received
8	Likert Scale	Please Rate the Visual Appeal of the Art Within the Webcomic on a Scale of 1 to 5.	Find out whether the art is well received
9	Likert Scale	Please Indicate Your Level of Interest in Reading the Full Release of the Webcomic on a Scale of 1 to 5.	Find out whether people in the target group are interested in the release of the comic
10	Open-ended	In Your Opinion, What Aspects of the Webcomic And/or the Website Could Be Improved?	Discover things that could be improved before the release of the comic

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Table 6 demonstrates the conclusions that can be drawn from the results of the A/B test.

Table 6 - Questionnaire Conclusions

Tested Aspect	Result	Conclusion
Interaction Cue	66,67% preferred version A (arrow) over version B (circle)	The arrow pointing at an animated segment was the preferred solution
Tabletop RPG Influence	The people who are not familiar with tabletop RPGs, voted for version B (circle) and found the website easier to navigate	Unfamiliarity with tabletop RPGs does mostly not influence the results of the survey
Website Interface	50% of testers found the website very easy to navigate, the remaining 50% found it easy	The website is simple to navigate
Narrative and Dialogue	66,67% of testers found the narrative interesting, the remaining 33,33% found it very interesting	The narrative is interesting to read
Interactive Elements	66,67% of testers were satisfied with the interactive elements, the remaining 33,33% were very satisfied	The interactive elements were well received
Visual Appeal	83,33% of testers found the art within the comic very appealing, the remaining 16,67% found it appealing	The art in the comic is very appealing
Interest in the Full Release	All 100% of the testers would be very interested in reading the comic	People are very engaged in reading the comic

Based on the results of the test, I have derived the following recommendations.

First and foremost, the conclusions of the test show that although small adjustments regarding the placement of the arrow can be made, it is recommended to use version A to point towards the interactivity of the comic.

In terms of the style and interface of the webcomic and the website, a notable observation was that the font may be challenging to read on page one due to the amount of text. The recommendations for this issue include using a thinner font or splitting the long dialogue into two sections. I personally prefer the latter approach since using a thinner font may compromise Shakir's intimidating tone of voice.

Furthermore, a tester had highlighted that the icons used in the webcomic were unclear in representing their intend. It was suggested that they should also appear on the main page. Thus, recommendations for the website include revising the icons to improve clarity and ensure that they are displayed on the main page.

Regarding the functionality, two testers expressed a desire for the animations to be replayable, which could also be considered as a recommendation for improving the website.

However most importantly, the user feedback highlighted some flaws in the performance of the website, as three out of six testers had experience minor issues with the animation or interface, often due to a bad Wi-Fi connection. There are multiple recommendations regarding how to

address this matter. One can consider to further reduce the size of the images and GIFs or potentially remove the animated page introduction. However, it can also be worth conducting further research, exploring better optimization techniques that will improve loading time, particularly for the animations.

For more insight on conclusion and user feedback, please refer to the document titled “DnDumber_AB-Testing_Notes.pdf” in the Appendix.

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