



CASE STUDY

GRID AUTOSPORT COMPANION SERVICE

IN 2014 I LED THE UX DESIGN FOR THE GRID AUTOSPORT WEB COMPANION SERVICE



THE SERVICE

- GRID AUTOSPORT IS CODEMASTERS LATEST INSTALLMENT IN THE GRID CONSOLE GAME SERIES
- GRID AUTOSPORT REQUIRED A COMPANION SERVICE TO DRIVE SOCIAL COMPETITION, INCREASE RETENTION AND ADD VALUE TO THE GAME'S MULTIPLAYER COMPONENT
- RACENET HAS OVER 1 MILLION USERS, AND PROVIDES ADDITIONAL COMPETITIVE AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONALITY TO CODEMASTERS RACING GAMES
- THE SERVICE IS ACCESSIBLE VIA WEB ON DESKTOP, TABLET AND MOBILE



RACENET SUPPORTS EVERY MAJOR CONSOLE CODEMASTERS GAME SINCE 2012

THE MISSION

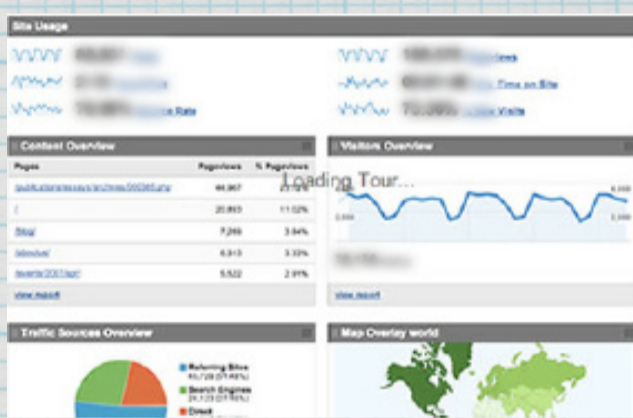
- DESIGN A STUNNING AND COMPLEMENTARY WEB-BASED GAME EXTENSION SERVICE FOR GRID AUTOSPORT
- LEAD USER-TESTING AND ANALYZE USER METRICS TO PROVIDE THE BEST UX POSSIBLE
- BUILD THE SERVICE WITH A 'DEDICATED-APP' QUALITY AND FEEL ACROSS ALL DEVICES
- WORK CLOSELY WITH THE ART AND DESIGN TEAMS TO ENSURE SEAMLESS INTEGRATION WITH THE GAME
- DESIGN AND BUILD NEW SOCIAL FEATURES TO IMPROVE GAME RETENTION



THE UX CHALLENGE REVOLVED AROUND THE DENSITY OF DATA; ELEGANTLY INTERTWINING AND SMOOTHLY INTEGRATING MANY VARIED SECTIONS OF CONTENT, OFTEN DISPARATE AND ONLY marginally RELATED.

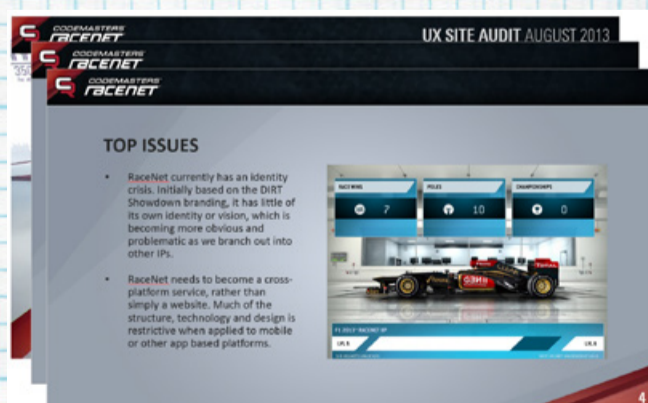
PRE-PLANNING

DATA SHOWED A RAPIDLY INCREASING NUMBER OF USERS PREFERRING TO ACCESS THE SERVICE ON MOBILE. AS SUCH I TOOK A MOBILE-FIRST APPROACH, SCALING UP TO TABLET AND DESKTOP USING A THREE COLUMN STRUCTURE. ENSURING THE EXPERIENCE FELT AS MUCH LIKE A DEDICATED APP WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF MY DECISIONS, AND SO THE NAVIGATION AND SEVERAL MORE COMPLEX FEATURES WOULD BE PURPOSE BUILT FOR TOUCH DEVICES SEPERATELY TO DESKTOP.



USER DATA

USER DATA WAS AVAILABLE FROM PREVIOUS RACENET SERVICES. I ANALYZED THIS TO INFORM MANY OF MY DESIGN DECISIONS. EXISTING DEMOGRAPHICS AND PERSONAS WERE AVAILABLE ALSO. THESE WERE UPDATED AND TWEAKED FOR PURPOSE.



SERVICE AUDIT

EXISTING SERVICES ON RACENET WERE REVIEWED, AND ISSUES IDENTIFIED. DENSITY OF DATA, RESPONSIVENESS OF THE NAVIGATION AND VISUAL FEEDBACK FOR INPUT WERE IDENTIFIED AS PROBLEM AREAS TO IMPROVE WITH AUTOSPORT.



USER TESTING

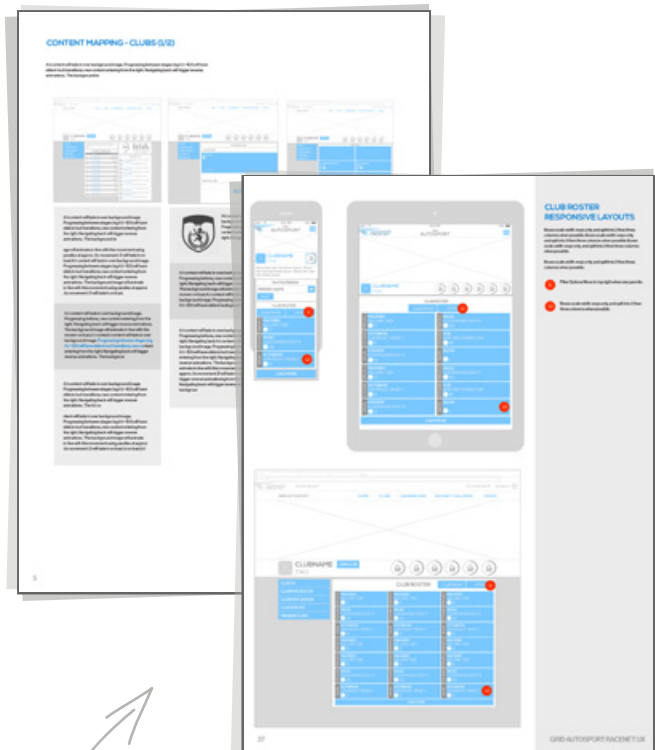
USER TESTING WAS USED THROUGHOUT THE DESIGN AND BUILD. INITIALLY WE USED PEER TESTING, AND EXPANDED TO A SINGLE ROUND OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY TESTING. THE RESULTS WERE INVALUABLE IN POLISHING USER FLOWS FOR SOME OF THE MORE COMPLEX SYSTEMS, SUCH AS THE EMBLEM EDITOR.

UX DESIGN

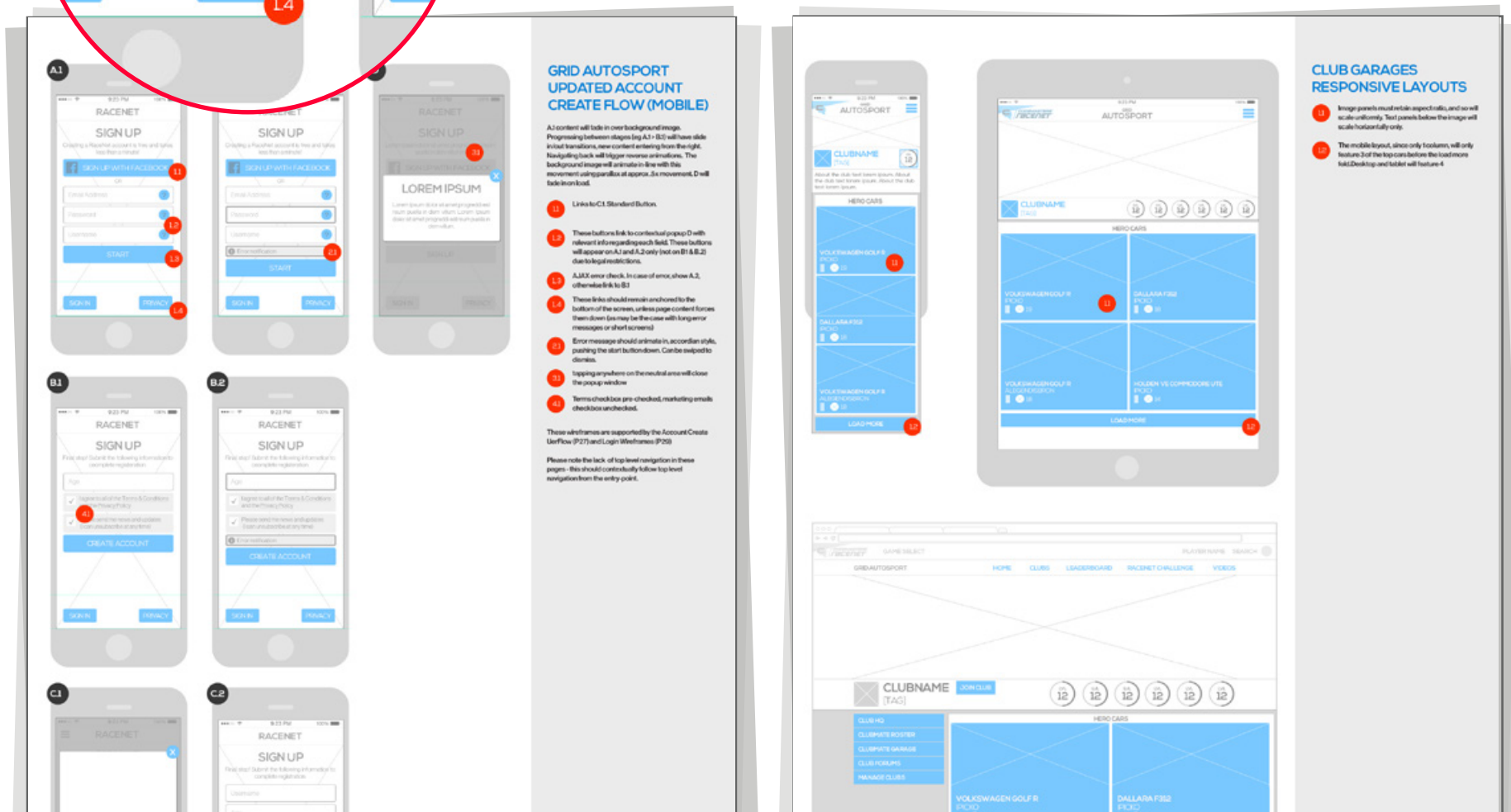
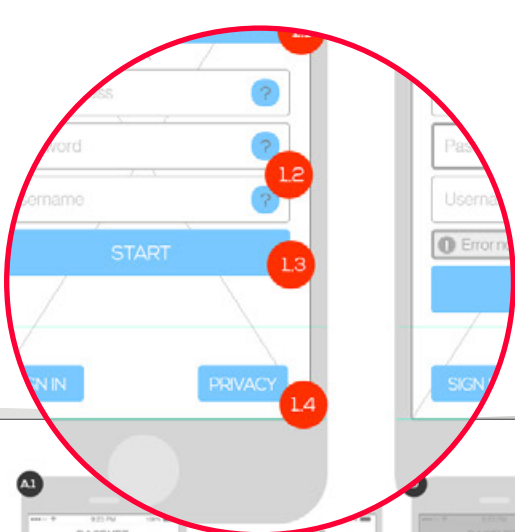
WIREFRAMING & CONTENT MAPPING

I CREATED BOTH STATIC AND INTERACTIVE WIREFRAMES FOR THIS PROJECT BASED ON THE COMPLEXITY OF EACH SYSTEM. AN EXTRA LEVEL OF DETAIL WAS APPLIED AT THIS STAGE, TO MAKE UP FOR A RESOURCE BOTTLENECK IN WEB DEVELOPMENT; CLARITY ON THE DESIGNS ALLOWED STAKEHOLDERS TO CONFIDENTLY SIGN OFF ON FEATURES AND DESIGNS WHILE STILL IN WIREFRAME.

COLLABORATION WITH ART AND DESIGN WAS THOROUGHLY ENCOURAGED DURING THIS STAGE, AND PROVIDED A SEAMLESS HANDOVER.



Clear and complete documentation is a critical component in the process; it ensures clarity for the stakeholders and allows graphic designers to understand the UX requirements. This in turn facilitates creativity, whilst maintaining the vision for the user experience.

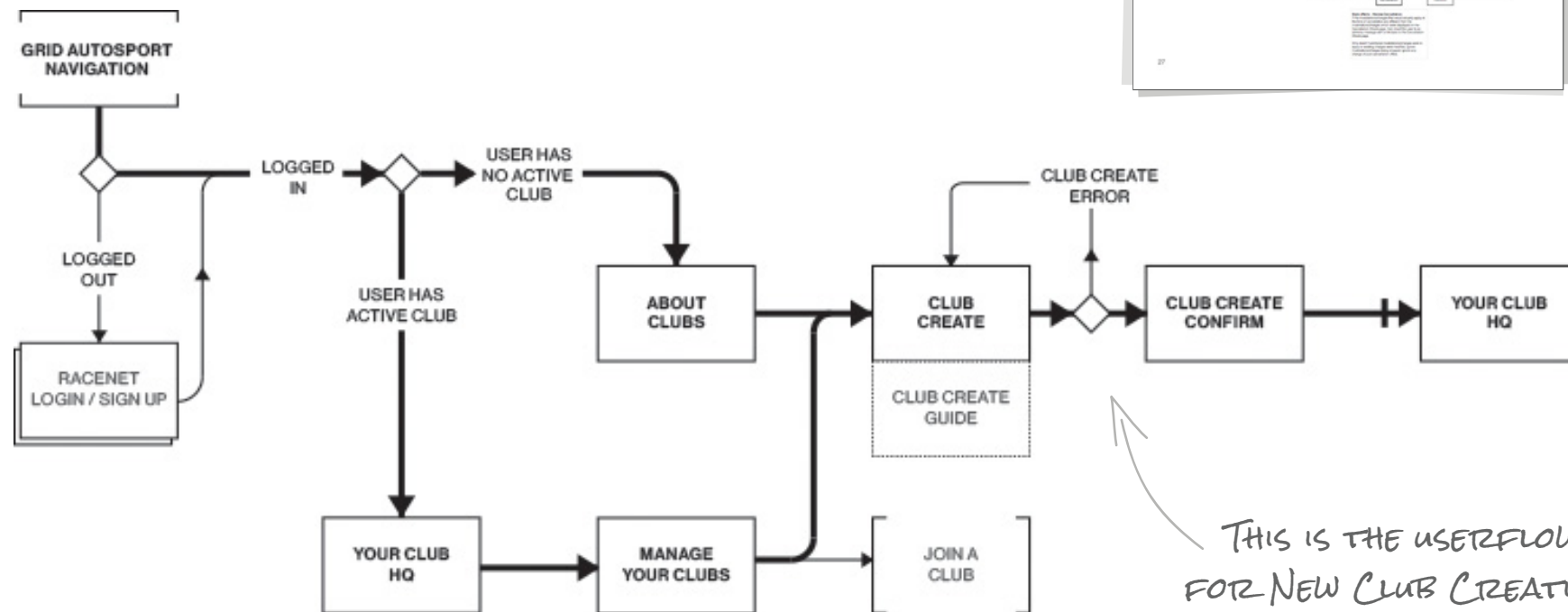
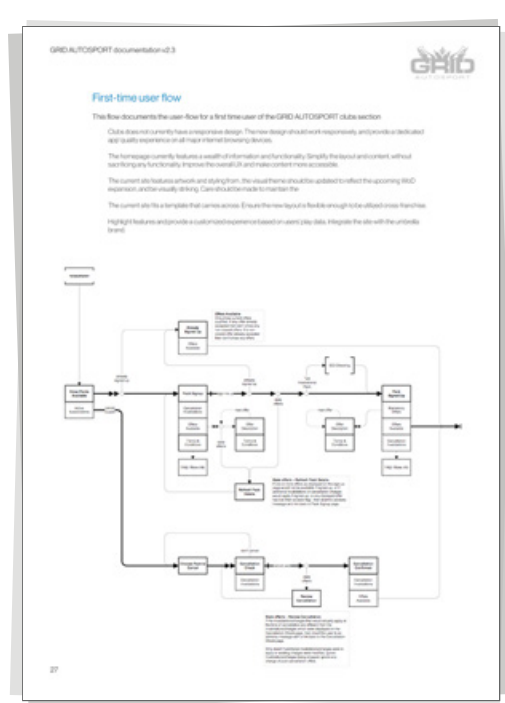


SITE STRUCTURE

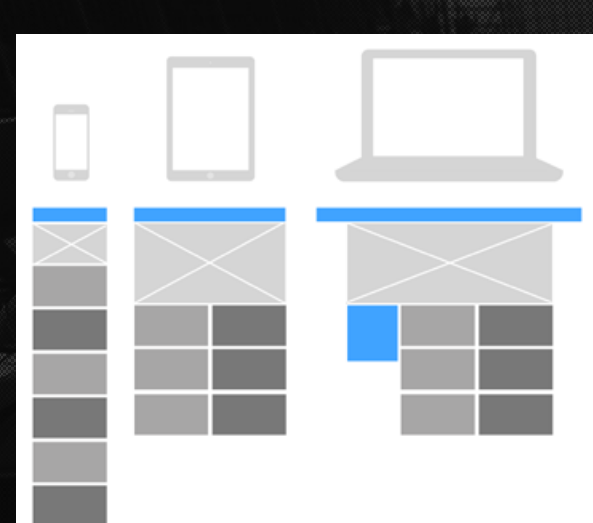
CONTENT MAPPING REVEALED THAT THE DENSITY OF DATA WAS SUCH AS TO RULE OUT A COMPLETELY FLAT STRUCTURE. I OPTED INSTEAD FOR A TWO-TIER SITE HEIRACHY THAT WOULD ORGANISE CONTENT LOGICALLY, AND ALLOW QUICK AND INTUATIVE ACCESS TO THE RELEVANT CONTENT. I ALSO WANTED TO KEEP THE STRUCTURE AND INDIVIDUAL PAGE CONTENT IDENTICAL FOR MOBILE AND DESKTOP, SO THAT FAMILIARITY COULD BE MAINTAINED FOR CROSS-DEVICE USERS.

USER FLOWS

THE CLUBS SECTION HAS A LOT OF CONTEXTUAL DATA AND COMPLEX USER JOURNEYS. I MAPPED OUT AND REFINED THE CRITICAL USER FLOWS, WITH AN EYE TO ENSURE THEY WERE AS FRICTIONLESS AND INTUATIVE AS POSSIBLE. DOCUMENTATION PROVED INCREDIBLY USEFUL FOR THE PROGRAMMERS, ALLOWING THEM TO WORK WITH MINIMAL ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE.



THIS IS THE USERFLOW FOR NEW CLUB CREATION.



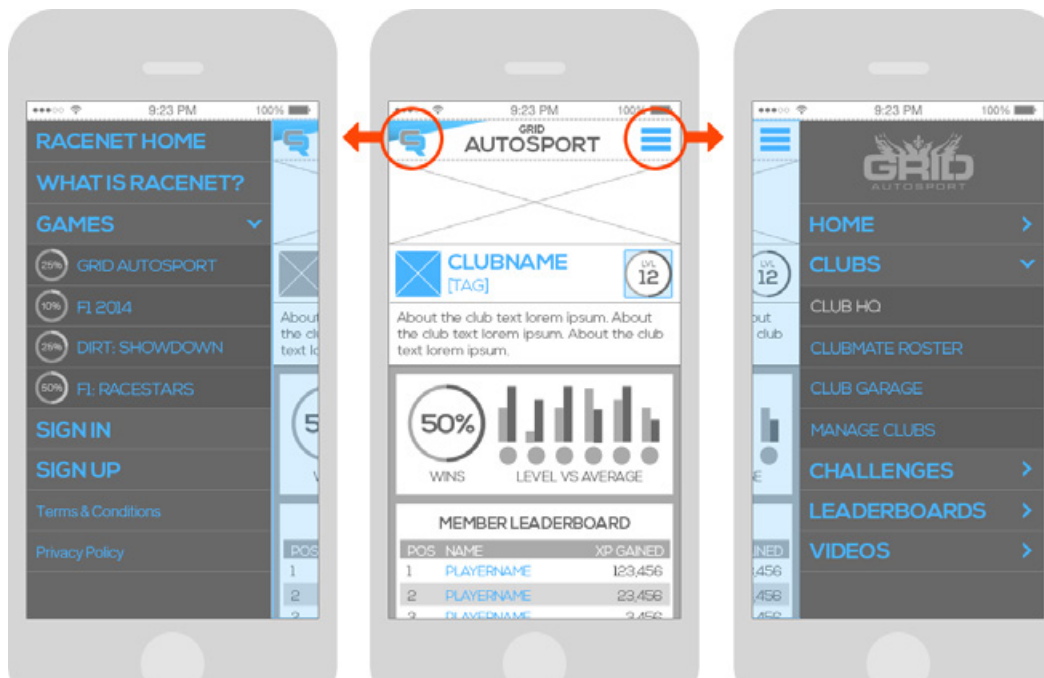
RESPONSIVE DESIGN

3 BREAK POINTS WERE BUILT INTO THIS DESIGN. AT MOBILE THE LAYOUT FOLLOWED A SIMPLE 1 COLUMN STRUCTURE, WHICH EXPANDS INTO 2 AT TABLET AND 2+ VERTICAL NAV AT DESKTOP. EACH COLUMN WAS DESIGNED WITH A REASONABLE DEGREE OF FLUIDITY, ENSURING THAT THE LAYOUTS WOULD WORK PERFECTLY AT ANY SIZE BETWEEN EACH BREAK POINT.

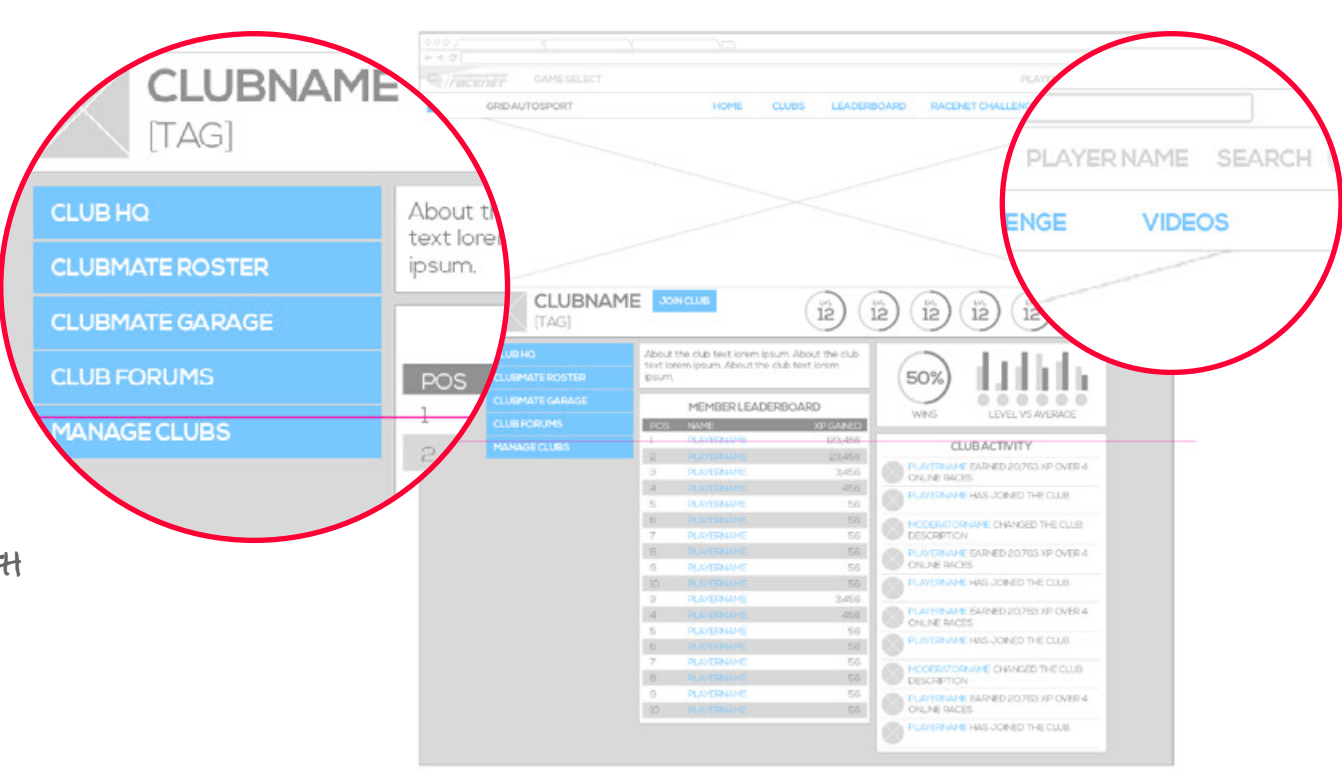
NAVIGATION

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE BEST EXPERIENCE ON ALL DEVICES, I DESIGNED THE NAVIGATION AS BESPOKE FOR BOTH DESKTOP AND TOUCH DEVICES.

MOBILE DEVICES FEATURE A FAMILIAR HAMBURGER-STYLE SLIDE OUT NAVIGATION, SIZED SPECIFICALLY FOR QUICK AND ERROR-FREE TOUCH NAVIGATION, WITH OPTIONAL SWIPE FUNCTIONALITY

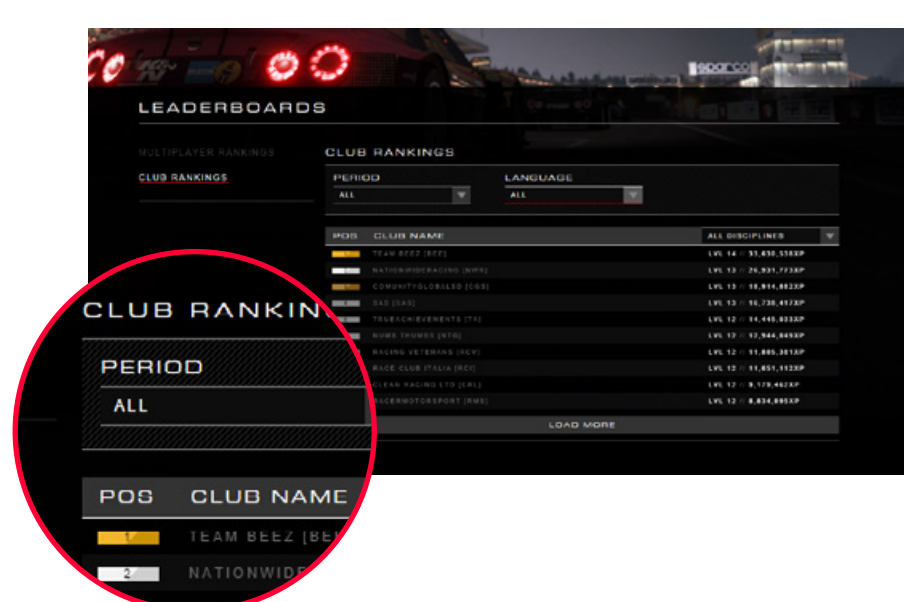


DESKTOP FEATURES A MORE WEB-STANDARD HORIZONTAL NAVIGATION, WITH CONTEXTUAL VERTICAL NAV FOR SECOND TIER PAGES



VISUAL DESIGN

THROUGHOUT THE UX DESIGN PROCESS CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO THE VISUAL STYLE OF THE GAME - THE GAME AND THE RACENET SERVICE WOULD NEED TO SHARE A VISUAL LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO FEEL CONNECTED. COMMUNICATING AND WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE GRAPHIC DESIGNERS, REMAINING FLEXIBLE AND PROVIDING CLEAR ANNOTATED DOCUMENTATION ENSURED THE QUALITY OF USER EXPERIENCE WAS MAINTAINED.



THE GAME'S FRONT-END UI IS ELEGANT AND CLEAN. THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSLATING THIS STYLE WAS DUE TO THE INCREASED DENSITY OF DATA. CARE NEEDED TO BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN THE MINIMALISTIC AESTHETIC



INFOGRAPHICS

VISUALLY ENGAGING AND USEFUL INFOGRAPHICS WERE CALLED FOR AS PART OF THE BRIEF, AND REQUIRED NEW SOLUTIONS AS TO HOW THE MINIMALISTIC UI STYLE COULD BE CARRIED ACROSS INTO GRAPHICAL ELEMENTS. THE INFOGRAPHICS WERE PAIRED BACK TO THEIR MOST SIMPLE IMPLEMENTATION, YET RETAINING A PIXEL-PERFECT PRECISION IN ORDER TO RETAIN VISUAL IMPACT.



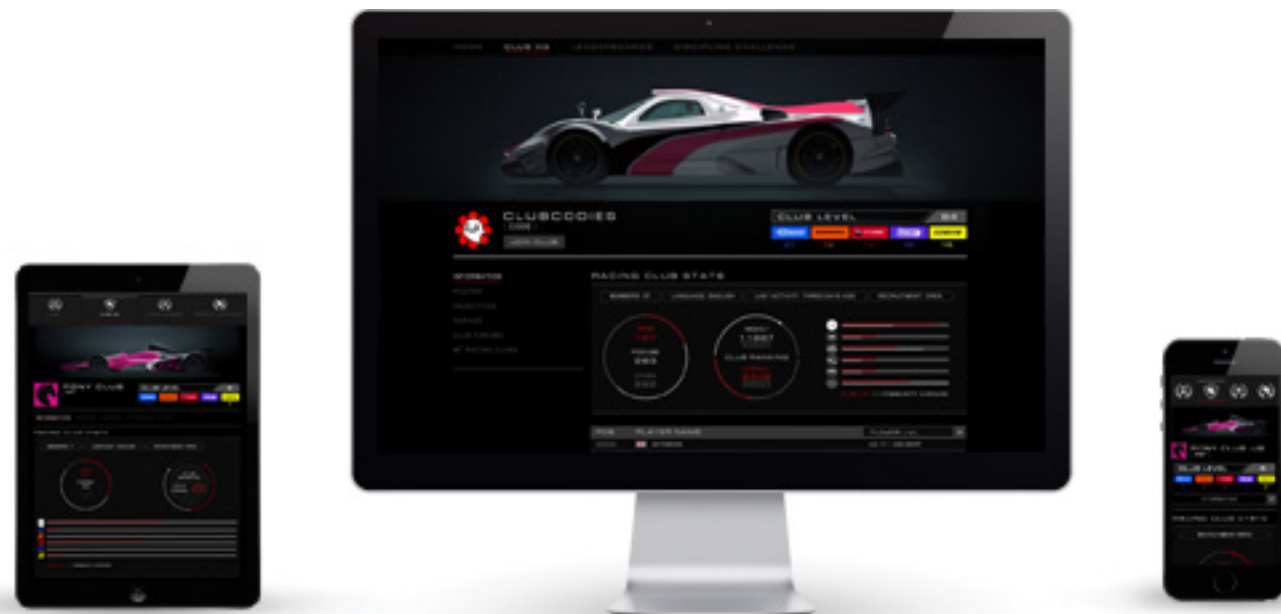
CONTENT LAYERING

IN ORDER TO FACILITATE SMOOTH NAVIGATION, I OPTED FOR CERTAIN PAGE ELEMENTS TO SNAP TO THE SCREEN FRAME. PART OF THE VISUAL DESIGN ALSO CALLED FOR PARALLAX MOVEMENT OF THE BACKGROUND, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF DEPTH.



OUTCOME

THE SERVICE LAUNCHED ALONGSIDE GRID AUTOSPORT IN JULY 2014. IT WAS AN IMMEDIATE HIT, AND IS NOW THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CODEMASTERS GAME COMPANION SERVICE TO DATE. PLAYER FEEDBACK AND USER DATA HAS BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE.



70%
OF PLAYERS CREATED OR LOGGED INTO A RACENET ACCOUNT, BRINGING ACCOUNTS TO 1.2 MILLION

43%
OF VISITORS WERE MOBILE TRAFFIC, UP FROM 32%

25%
OF PLAYERS CREATED A CLUB, AND WERE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

12% IMPROVEMENT
IN BOUNCE RATE ON AVERAGE ACROSS THE SERVICE COMPARED TO GRID 2

7 MINUTES
AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON THE SERVICE PER VISIT, UP FROM 4.5 MINUTES