FOLDERS
COLLECTING RESOURCES IN THE DIGITAL COMMONS

FOLDERS

COLLECTING RESOURCES IN THE DIGITAL COMMONS

Jake Welch

Division of Multi-Disciplinary Design, University of Utah

DES 3520 Design Product Studio 2, Fall 2022, Elpitha Tsoutsounakis

TABLE OF CONTENTS:	PAGES:
RESEARCH & OBSERVATION	1 - 3
OPPORTUNITIES & PARAMETERS	4
PROCESS	5
FINAL PRODUCT	6 - 10
IMPACT	11
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, COLOPHON, BIBLIOGRAPHY	12

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF A NEW DESIGNER

From the beginning of my research, I was interested in the experience of starting as a new designer. The list of resources to surpass the learning curve that comes with this process is long & I strove to understand it by breaking down each element into various steps.

CHOOSE TYPE OF DESIGN	3D, graphics, product, research, motion
LEARN SOFTWARES	Rhino, Adobe Suite, Blender, Processing
FIND FONT RESOURCES	Google Fonts, Open Type Foundry, Font Squirrel
WATCH TUTORIALS/TAKE COURSES	Software, 3D modeling, troubleshooting
FIND ASSETS	Stock image sites, models, HDRI
FIND USEFUL TOOLS	Add-ons, color finder, prompt generator
CONNECT WITH COMMUNITIES	Reddit, Discord, Forums, Clubs, groups
FIND INSPIRATION	Behance, Are.na, peers

OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE FOR DESIGNERS

OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE DEFINITION:

Open-source software (OSS) is computer software that is released under a license in which the copyright holder grants users the rights to use, study, change, and distribute the software and its source code to anyone and for any purpose.

Making software open-source benefits the community as it allows users to use it for free & to develop their own tools, & it benefits the developers. Because the users can help develop & innovate the software further. This aspect would be vital for my final product.

OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE EXAMPLES:

GIMP (Drawing/2D graphics software)

Darktable (Photo editing)

Blender (AfterEffects/3D software)

The Leage of Moveable Type (Type foundry)

AmbientCG (3D materials, HDRIs, assets, etc)

Laurent, A. M. S. (2008). Understanding Open Source and Free Software Licensing. United States: O'Reilly Media.

EXISTING WAYS OF COLLECTING RESOURCES

As I started to hone my research on collecting resources, my research shifted to focus on current places used to find, collect, & use resources. To guide my process of designing a new system, I identified the pros & cons of various platforms on how well they meet the needs of a new designer. Key take-aways are marked in red.

BOOKMARKS

PROS:
- User has total control
- Folders & sub folders make organization simple & effective.
- Can be exported as an .html file

CONS:
- Not collaborative
- Can easily be lost
- Can quickly become disorganized
- No way to find new resources

DISCORD

PROS:
- Channels can be created for any purpose & anyone can contribute
- Can be thorough & well organized
- Has the option of text, voice, & video communication
- Ability to send & receive DM's

CONS:
- Servers are for niche groups
- Can be difficult to find a community unless invited
- No clear way to save & organize resources locally

ARE.NA

PROS:
- Layout is simple
- It is very flexible & can organize anything
- Channels (groups) can be private, public, & collaborative
- Explore tab connects you to similar content
- Groups can be created to act as a shared profile between users

CONS:
- Can be confusing for new users
- Free use is limited
- Connections are convoluted
- No sub folders, channels easily become unorganized

PINTEREST

PROS:
- Easy to find new ideas
- Simple straight forward layout for organization
- Messages allow for easy collaboration with others
- Homepage has an effective algorithm that makes finding new content easy

CONS:
- Collaboration is limited
- Feed is overrun with ads
- Predatory engagement tactics
- Organization is limited to board -- no

OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Design a way for entry-level design students to find resources.

PARAMETERS

WHO'S IT FOR:
Entry-level designers who have access to a computer.

WHAT IT WILL BE:
An easy to use, clear, well organized solution that helps make the experience of entering the design field easier.

WHY I AM MAKING IT:
When starting out as a new designer, it can be difficult to learn new softwares & to find the resources you need to complete projects. I want to make that experience easier.

HOW I WILL DESIGN IT:
With careful consideration of the experience of entering the design field, as well as looking at existing ways to find resources.

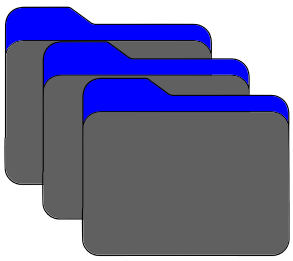
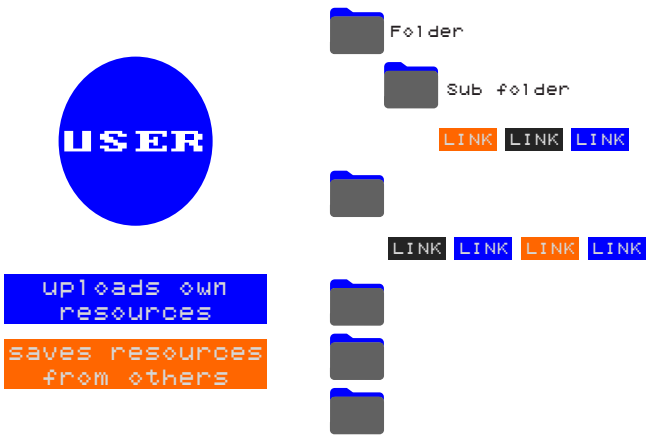
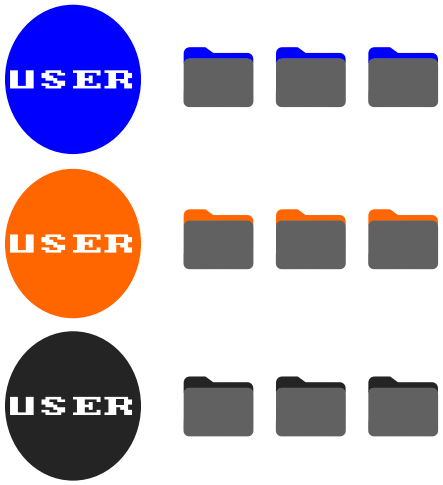


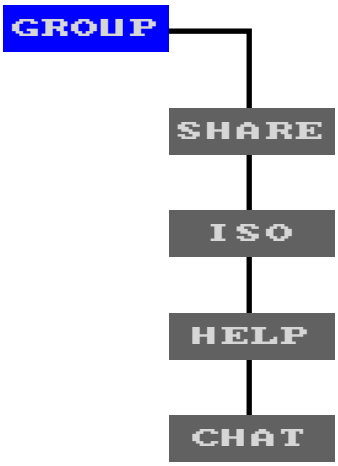
DIAGRAM OF SITE STRUCTURE



- Folders, sub-folders, text & resources are all saved under your account, the user.
- Folders can be private, public, or collaborative.
- Sub-folders allow for more in-depth organization. There are no limits to how many sub-folders you might have.
- Folders can only hold links -- no text, photos, or videos. This keeps the function of the web tool focused on organizing & sharing resources rather than using it to find inspiration or share work.
- All folders can be exported as .html files to be imported into bookmarks, saved onto a flash drive, etc.

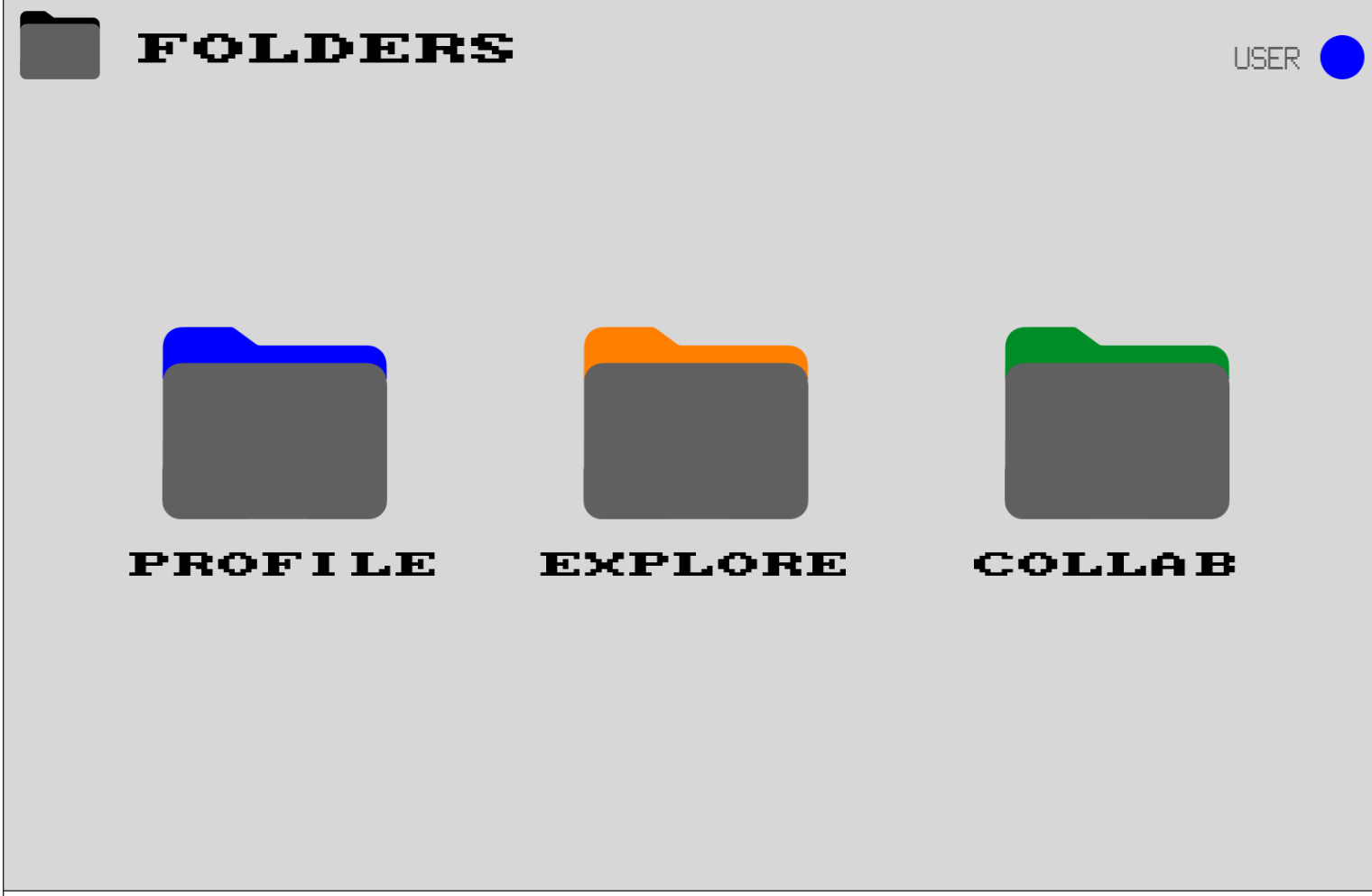


- Public & collaborative folders will be recommended to you & other users on a discover tab where resources tagged with similar interests can be recommended to you.
- Users can save things from these recommendations taking what they need into their collections.
- On the discover tab there would also be a search bar where you could locate other resources.



- On the collab tab, users can join community run groups catered to their interests.
- Each group has channels where users can collab & share resources in various ways
- In the “share tab”, users can share new resources that they found helpful.
- In the ISO tab, users would be able to send out a request for a certain type of resource that they may be struggling to find.
- The help tab would serve for more specific help with a particular skill or issue.
- The chat tab would be a general hub for making connection & communication.

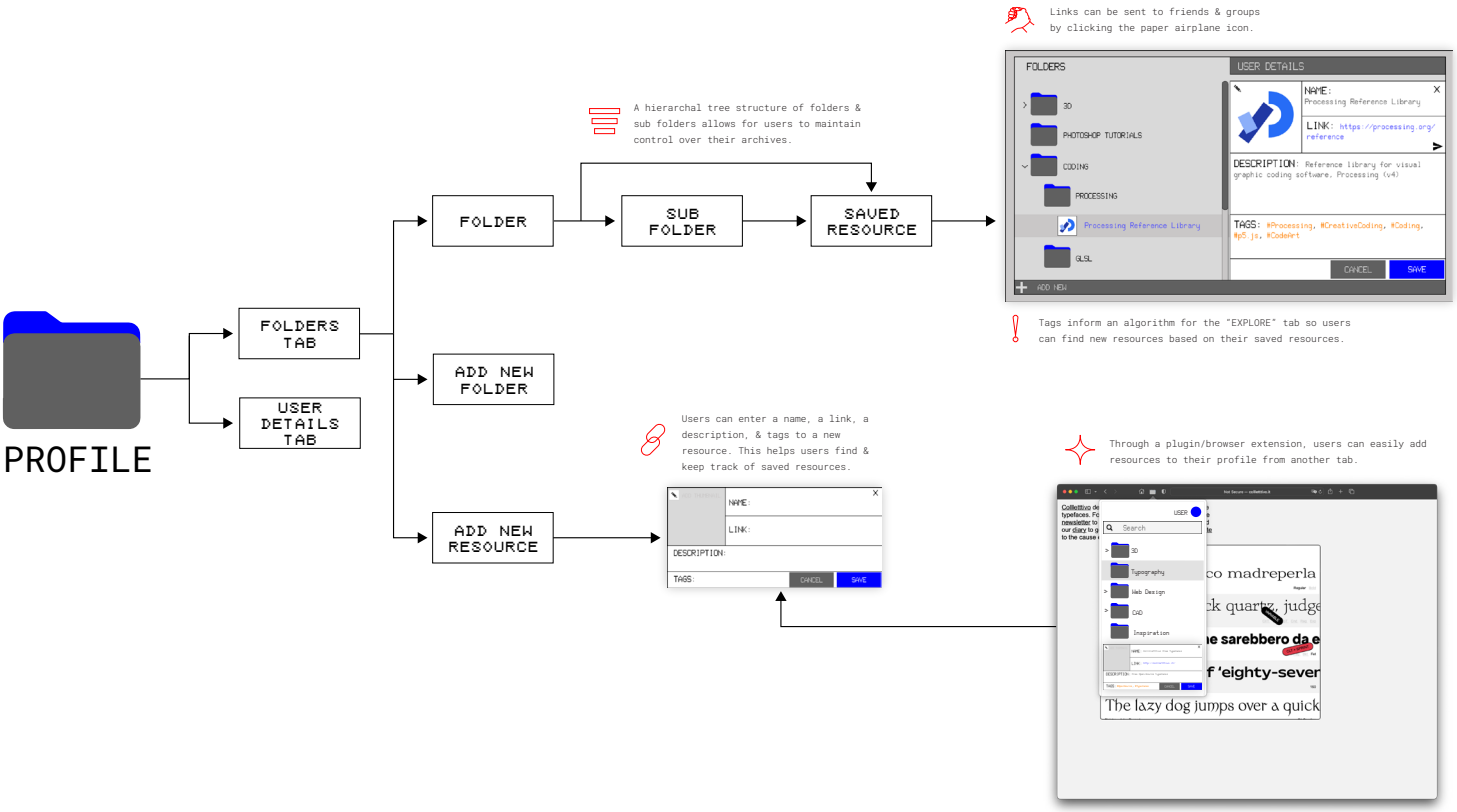
HOME PAGE



Users visiting Folders will be met with this home page, designed to be minimal & straight forward to take the user where they need to go. ‘Profile’ takes users to their saved links, ‘Explore’ takes them to a feed of algorithmically recommended resources, & ‘Collab’ takes them to groups where they can seek & offer help.

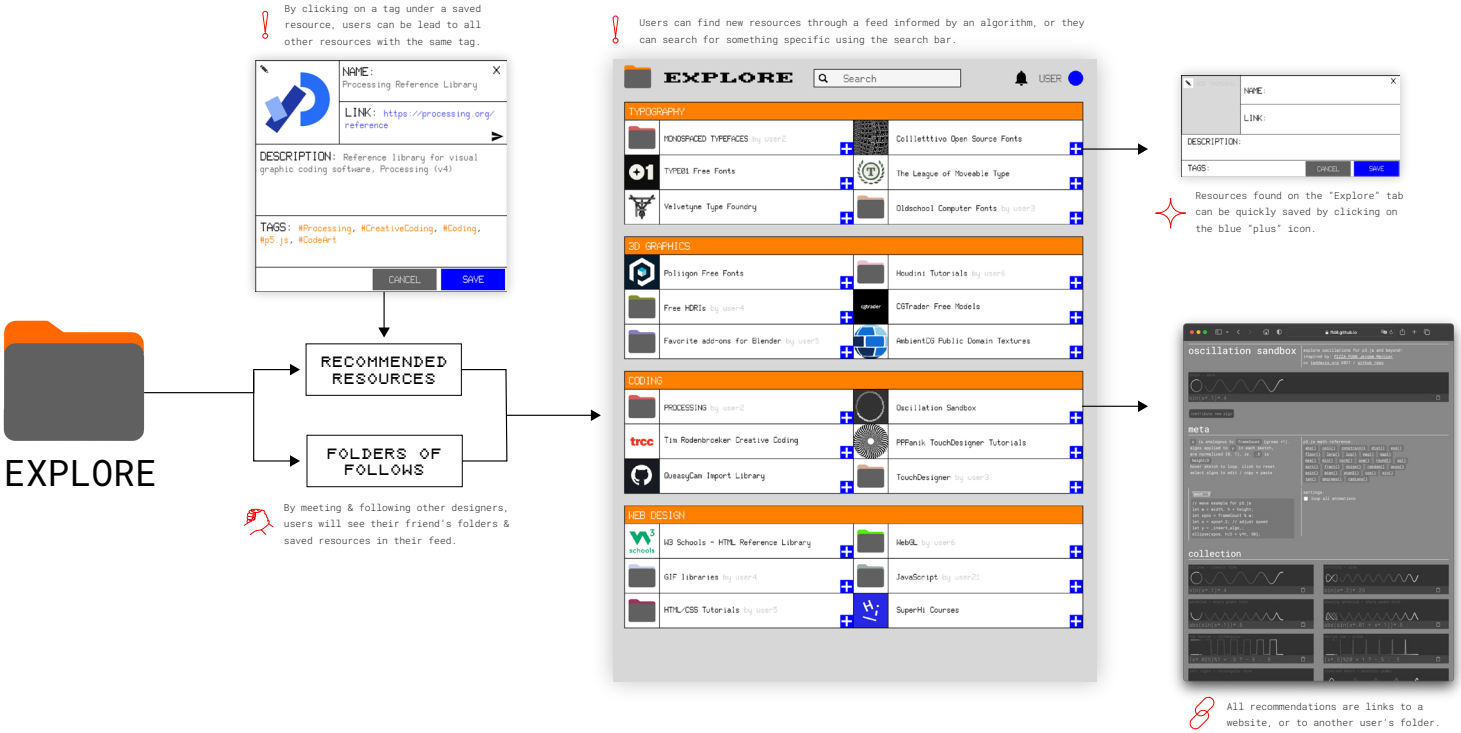
By clicking their profile picture at the top right next to their name, a navigation drop-down menu is revealed.

PROFILE TAB DIAGRAM



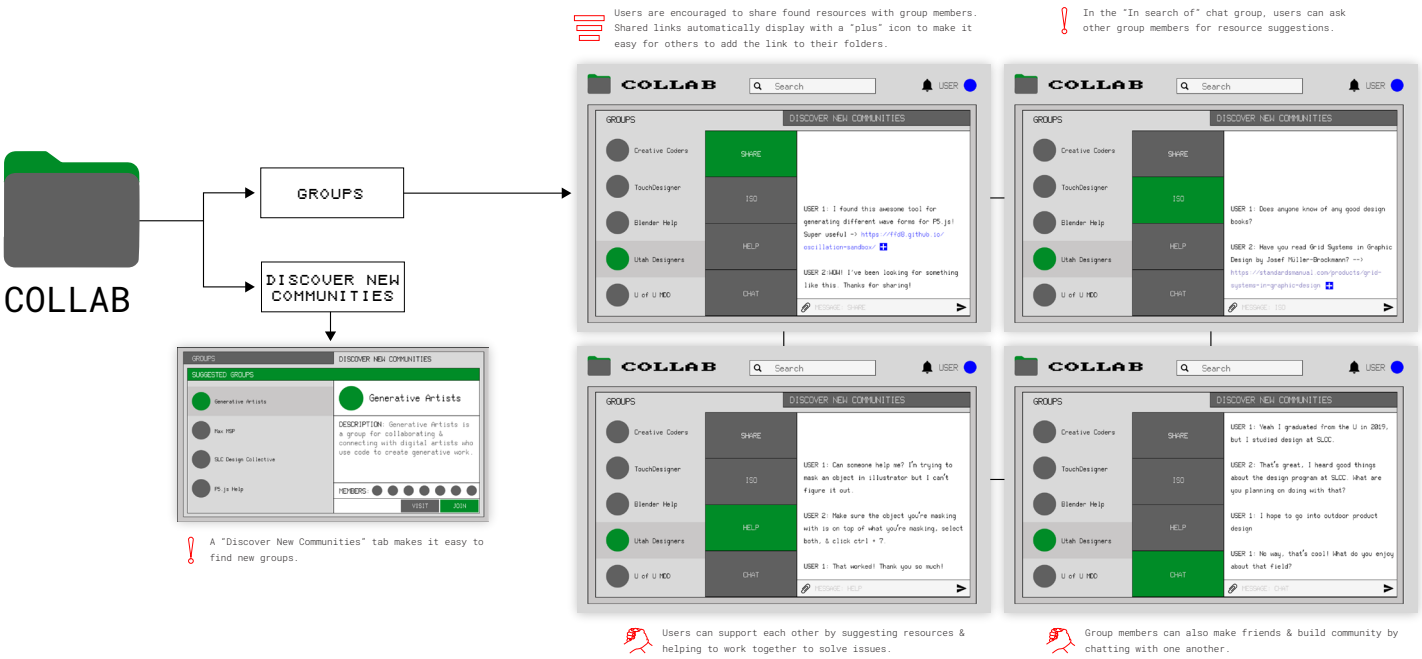
The 'Profile' tab is the hub for all resources saved by the user. Through folders & sub-folders, links can easily be saved, organized, accessed, & shared with others. A separate browser extension for Folders would allow users to save links to resources from any tab or window. When saving a link, users add tags which inform the algorithm for the 'Explore' tab. Resources can also be shared directly within Folders to groups & other users.

EXPLORE TAB DIAGRAM



The 'Explore' tab contains the feed of all algorithmically recommended resources as well as the folders of other users similar to those of the users. Links & folders can be quickly added to the user's own profile by clicking the blue 'plus' icon.

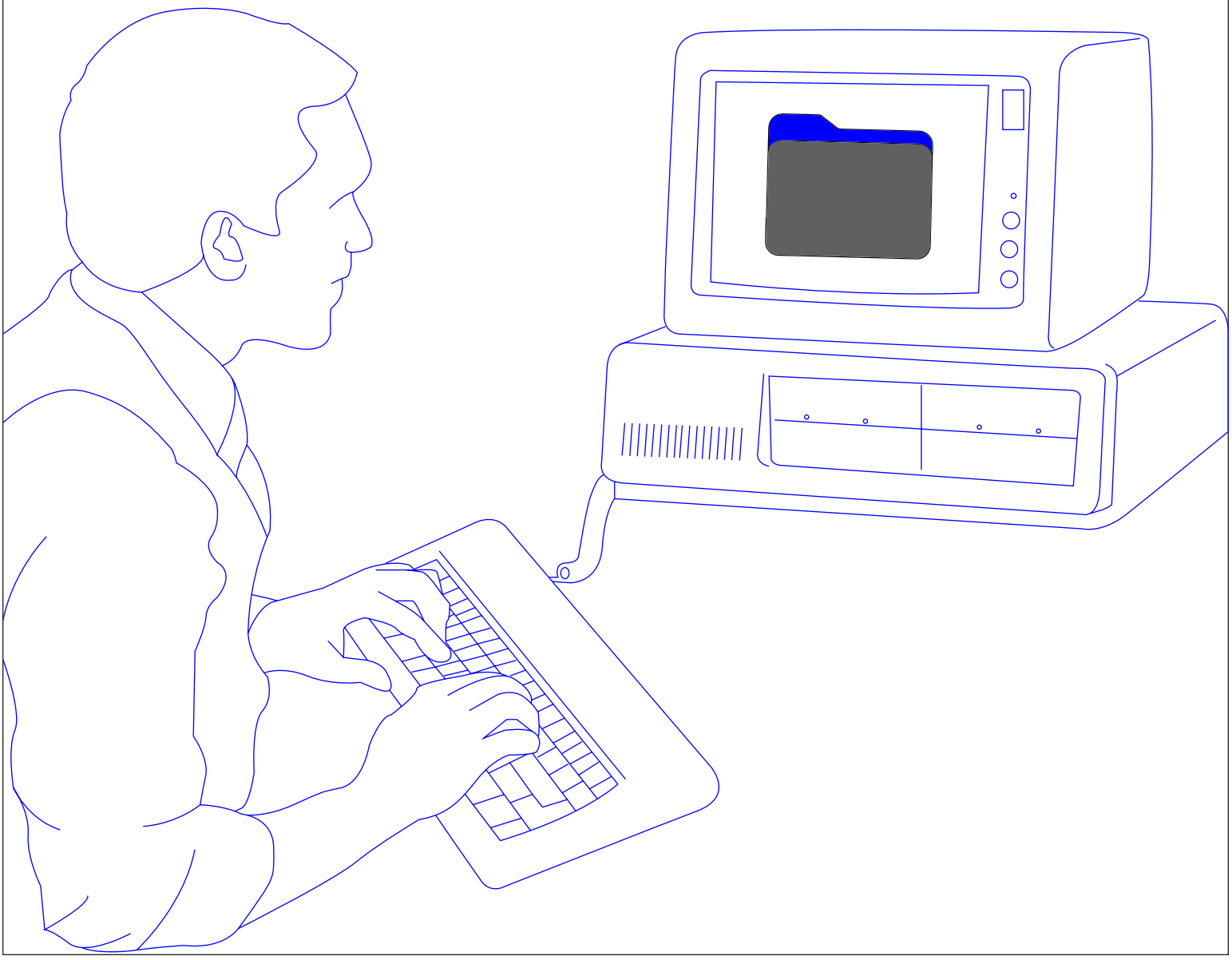
COLLAB TAB DIAGRAM



The 'Collab' tab is where users can find & join groups which cater to their interests. By joining these new communities, users are encouraged to work with each other to strengthen each other in design. Links from the users' profile can be quickly shared here, & resources can be added to their profile by clicking the blue 'plus' icon which will automatically appear next to links.

The full prototype of Folders can be explored by scanning the QR code below (desktop is recommended).

Folders is unlike any other platform for collecting resources,& I believe that it could prove to be an invaluable tool for designers in their every day lives. By staying organized & having the methods to work together with other designers, I imagine the design community being less critical & more collaborative, working together to strengthen one another.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to all who helped with user-testing & providing feedback. Thank you as well to all who supported this project & offered help to build this platform.

COLOPHON

This report utilizes the Roboto Mono light/regular typeface as well as the IBM BIO 2x font. Images are my own are were produced in Processing, Figma & Adobe Illustrator. This report was produced in Adobe Illustrator version 27.0.1 and Adobe InDesign version 18.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Laurent, A. M. S. (2008). Understanding Open Source and Free Software Licensing. United States: O'Reilly Media.

Olise, Florence Nwanne. Organization of Library Resources for Research Productivity: a Survey of the Challenges Encountered by Librarians in Nigeria, Mar. 2021, Pp. 1–16., Accessed 25 Sept. 2022.

“Self-Directed Learning: A Four-Step Process.” Centre for Teaching Excellence, 17 June 2020, https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/self-directed-learning/self-directed-learning-four-step-process.

Tekkol, İlkay Aşkin, and Melek Demirel. “An Investigation of Self-Directed Learning Skills of Undergraduate Students.” Frontiers in Psychology, vol. 9, 2018, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02324.