

Final Report for Summer Practicum
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Christie Shin

Assistant Professor, Communication Design July 7, 2016

My summer practicum at Mercury Studio, a New York-based design studio that specializes in branding and digital publication, was very successful and effective. During the 4 weeks of my practicum, Not only did I obtain a feel for the up-to-date design process and workflow, but I also learned how to present a proposal, work with current clients, and collaborate with expertise in the creative industry. I was invited to participate in and experience the complete workflow in the studio, but my task at Mercury was to focus on redesigning the user experience of the "GATHER" app, which was the publication in which I have the great interests.

My role and responsibility with "GATHER" was to design the User Interface(UI) and User Experience(UX). In the first week, I started by analyzing three different kinds of "GATHER" publications (print, web, and app) and understanding different media types. After preliminary research and analysis of the project, I drafted a proposal on how to improve the publication's UI/UX. I worked closely with Nate Mueller, a director of Mercury studio, while developing this proposal. After a few internal meetings, we met with the client and discussed possible improvements as well as new and additional features for the app. Our recommendation was well received and I started to revise the interface design, starting with the Apple iPhone version of the app.

This mobile-first approach reflects our current lifestyle. Since the smartphone is now a primary communication device for many people, the creative process of design begins with a mobile device. Since the original GATHER app was designed for the Apple iPad, the UI/UX was not as effective on the iPhone. I designed a new UI/UX for smartphones with InDesign and mapped the layout using Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) Mobile. AEM is a CMS (Content Management System) and is one of best ways to create a digital publication. I have had some basic experience with AEM before, but this practicum gave me the opportunity to obtain a deeper understanding of the technology. I am very excited to bring all of my experience to both of my recently developed courses, CT412 Immersive Publication Design and CT372 Advanced Digital Typography.

The Brothers Mueller, a collaborative twin duo, are principals, design directors, and technical leads at Mercury. They are working closely with Condé Nast and Adobe in digital publication. In the last week of my practicum, I visited Condé Nast, and Nate walked me through the publishing process of an app for the Android Play Store. This helped me published the Fairy Tale Fashion app¹, which is my research and development (R&D) digital publication project in collaboration with the Museum at FIT since Spring 2016.

Digital publication requires an understanding of new technology and new screen-based design principles. While observing the publication design industry before joining Mercury, I have noticed that the methods of design for digital publications have changed a great deal within recent years. I have introduced and developed digital publication projects in the Communication Design program since 2013. As a result, my work includes several digital typography classes for our Creative Technology and Advertising Design curricular. My practicum was a great opportunity to revitalize my knowledge in the Creative industry and gave me an idea as to which subjects need to be enhanced in our curriculum.

Design is more than just aesthetic. Design is about communication, and often about creating a better experience in order to deliver a message. That is why UI/UX have become more important in design education and the design industry. Integrating advanced technology in our design classes is no longer just an option, but a requirement. For example, an "HTML" page layout is a much more effective approach in terms of responsive design. Our students will not be able to create effective responsive designs without knowledge in coding.

Thanks to FIT's Faculty Development Grants and Awards (FDGA), I was given the opportunity to do a summer practicum at Mercury Studio in New York. I was very grateful for this experience, and look forward to implementing all of the experience and knowledge I have obtained into our curriculum.

¹ iTunes Apple store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id1129370325>

Google Play store: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.fitnyc.fairytalefashionv1>