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Individual Report
- Dydd Bin Project -
2024 - 2025

Summary

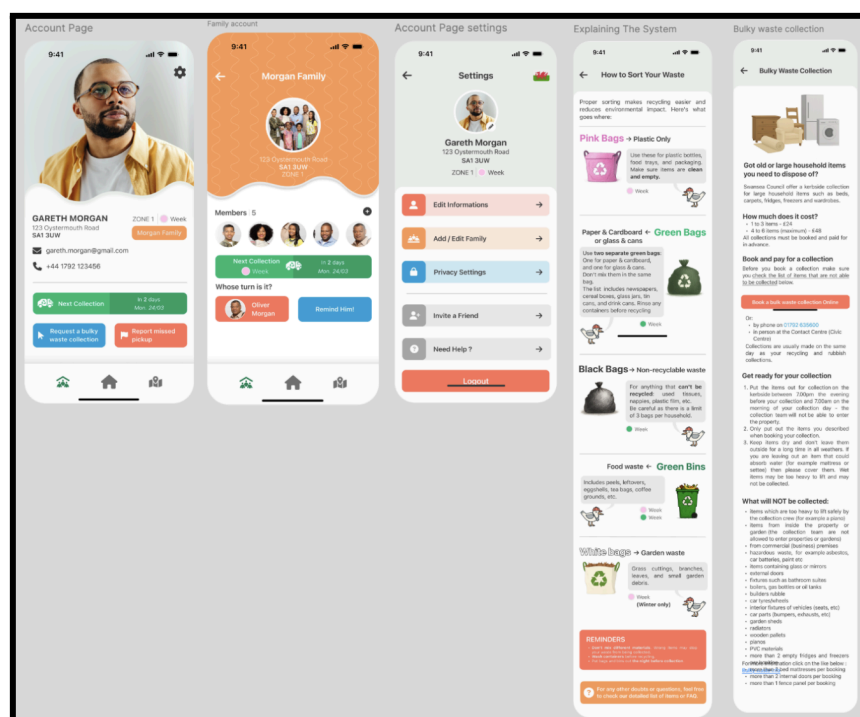
Project Overview and Personal Role.....	3
Cross-Cultural Teamwork and Team Dynamics.....	4
Project Challenges and Presentations.....	4
Solution Limitations and Reflections.....	5
Personal Growth and Lessons Learned.....	5
Conclusion.....	5
References:.....	6

Project Overview and Personal Role

As a French student collaborating with UK students on the Dydd Bin project, I initially felt both excited and apprehensive about our cultural differences. The project had dual objectives: redesigning the physical bin collection system and developing a mobile app to improve waste management.

I took on the role of app designer, working closely with Armand Octeau (another French student). Together, we led the UI/UX prototyping process in Figma. I personally designed screens for user accounts, family page, settings, waste sorting guides, and bulky waste collection. Our entire team collaborated on the app's architecture and color palette. I also contributed to project communications by creating presentation slides and an interactive quiz to engage our audience.

Throughout the design process, we applied Nielsen's usability heuristics [2] and we remained mindful of implementation feasibility, ensuring our designs used standard UI components that would be straightforward to code if the project advanced to development.



The designs I made on Figma for our app.

Cross-Cultural Teamwork and Team Dynamics

Working in a multicultural team revealed fascinating differences in work approaches. My French teammates (Armand & Maéva) and I typically preferred well-defined plans and clear organization from the start, while our British teammates were more comfortable with flexible, evolving processes. This aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory [1], where French culture scores higher on uncertainty avoidance compared to British culture.

This experience enhanced my cultural awareness and communication skills. I learned to be more flexible while also explaining to UK teammates why some structure was important to me. This mutual adaptation created a balanced working environment.

Our team functioned well overall, with each member bringing unique strengths:

- **Sarah (myself) - 4.5/5:** I took ownership of the app prototype development, maintained consistent communication, and contributed significantly to presentations.
- **Armand - 4.5/5:** His prior knowledge in design and app development was essential. He provided valuable technical insights about implementation feasibility while co-leading the design work.
- **Ava - 4.5/5:** She created the app's mascot character, adding personality to our interface. Her exceptional public speaking skills, leadership, and reliable work were crucial to our success.
- **Beccy - 4/5:** She conducted thorough market research on existing waste management solutions and user preferences, providing valuable insights that shaped our approach.
- **Maeva - 4/5:** She researched funding opportunities and developed cost analyses that helped us understand the financial viability of our proposals.
- **Sharmaine - 3.5/5:** Though sometimes late with deliverables, her content on the bin prototype was thoughtful and well-made, demonstrating commitment to quality.

Throughout challenges, we maintained a supportive atmosphere, offering help when deadlines tightened to ensure cohesive results.

Project Challenges and Presentations

A significant challenge was balancing our dual project focus. The broad scope of simultaneously redesigning the physical bin system and developing an app was perhaps too ambitious. I found the app direction more concrete and achievable within our timeframe, while the bin system redesign involved complex operational changes beyond our control.

We eventually addressed this by dividing into two teams: one for the app and one for the bin system redesign. This clearer structure helped restore focus after initial confusion.

Our project journey included three key presentations. After our first presentation, following our professor's recommendation, we contacted Swansea's Council hoping to collaborate.

Unfortunately, they weren't interested, which initially destabilized our team and forced us to approach the project more theoretically without their input.

Our second presentation faced unexpected challenges when we were cut short because another group needed the room. We had to rush through the final section in barely a minute, very disruptive but we did it.

Fortunately, our final presentation was highly successful. Well-prepared from previous experiences, each team member delivered confidently. The interactive quiz engaged the audience, and our prototype demonstration received positive feedback.

Solution Limitations and Reflections

Our solution had several limitations: The app remained at prototype stage without real-user testing, and its success would depend on data integration with council systems, a technical challenge beyond our will. The bin system redesign stayed somewhat conceptual without resources for piloting, making impact speculative. Additionally, our Swansea-specific focus might not transfer to regions with different waste management systems.

These limitations highlight that while successful as a student exercise, implementing our solution would require additional development and testing.

Future Work

Our prototype would require further development to become a viable solution. Next steps include: conducting user testing with diverse demographics including elderly residents, developing a technical implementation plan for secure integration with council systems and creating alternatives for residents without smartphones. This structured approach would validate our concept while addressing the limitations identified.

Personal Growth and Lessons Learned

This project significantly developed both my technical and personal skills. I'm proud of my design contributions and role in improving our presentation's clarity and visual appeal. My collaborative skills grew through working with Armand, we successfully merged ideas without conflict, which can be challenging in co-design situations.

I learned valuable lessons about team management. Early on, I sometimes assumed everyone understood deliverables the same way I did, when confusion actually existed. In hindsight, a clear document outlining roles and scope would have prevented misunderstandings.

Conclusion

The Dydd Bin project was a valuable learning experience that enhanced both my design capabilities and cross-cultural collaboration skills. Despite challenges, including the council's lack of interest, presentation interruptions, and the complexity of balancing dual project goals, we delivered a well-received solution with a polished app prototype and bin system recommendations.

The project taught me to adapt to different working styles, clearly define project scope, and prepare contingency plans for presentations. I also recognize that external collaboration isn't always guaranteed. These insights will serve me well in future projects, making me a more effective designer and team member capable of bridging cultural differences to achieve cohesive results.

Reference:

[1] Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions (uncertainty avoidance, individualism, etc.) – comparisons between French and British work culture.

[2] Nielsen, J. (1994). 10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design. Nielsen Norman Group.