

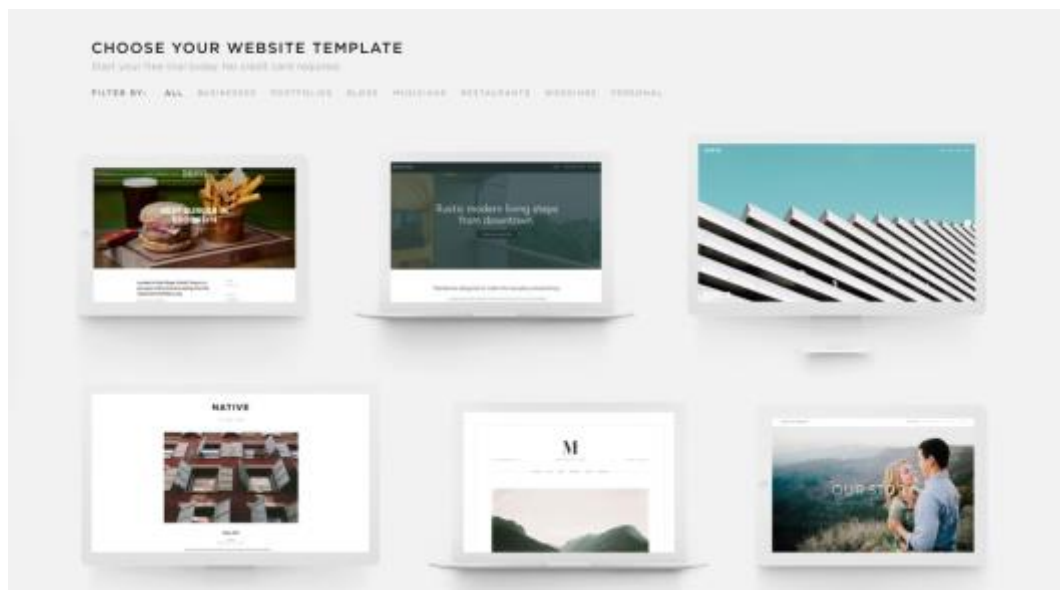
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P1: Crit

Squarespace

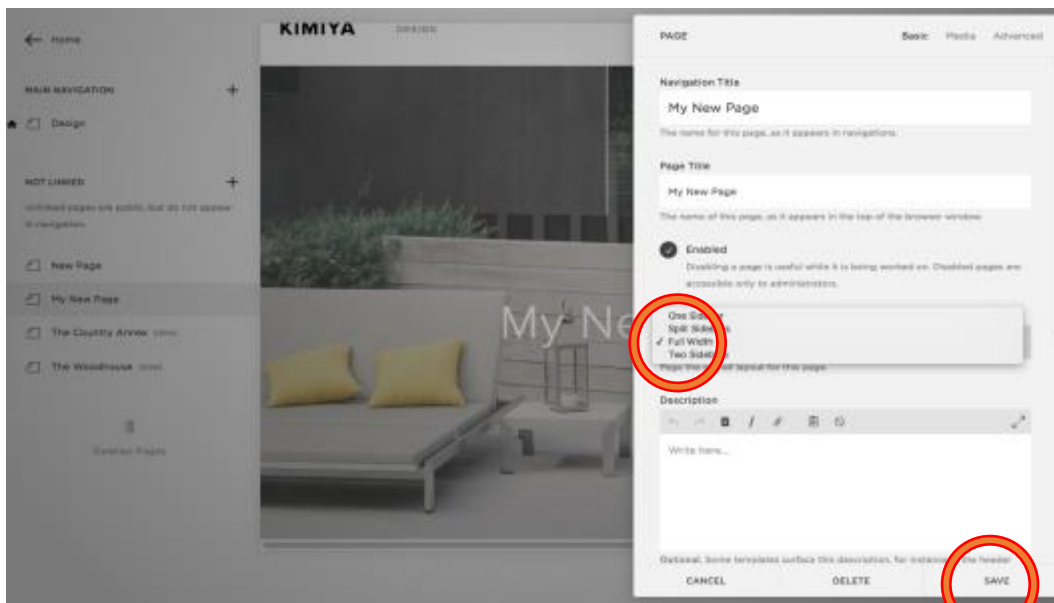
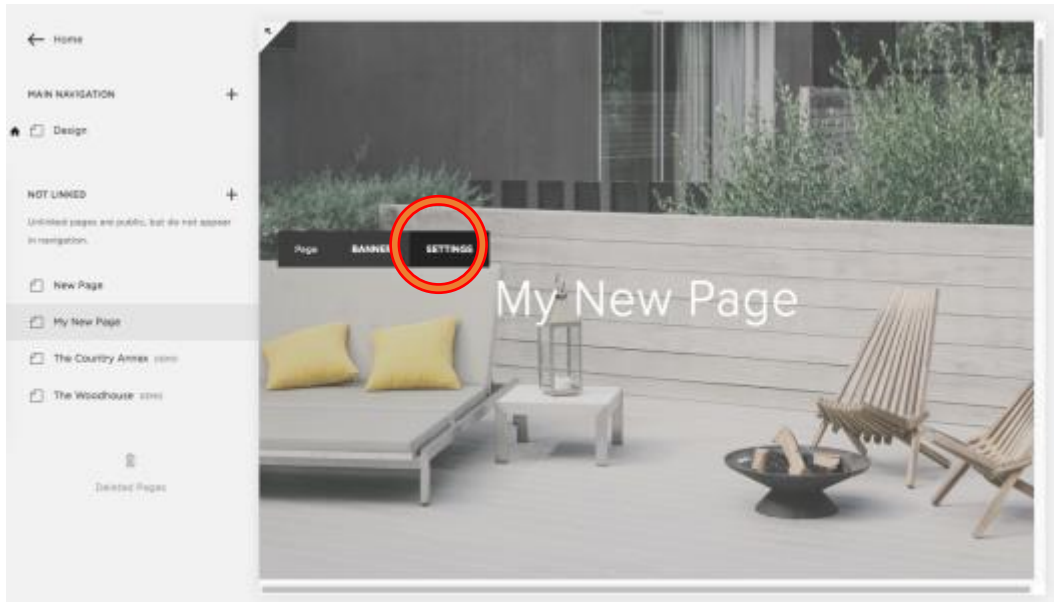
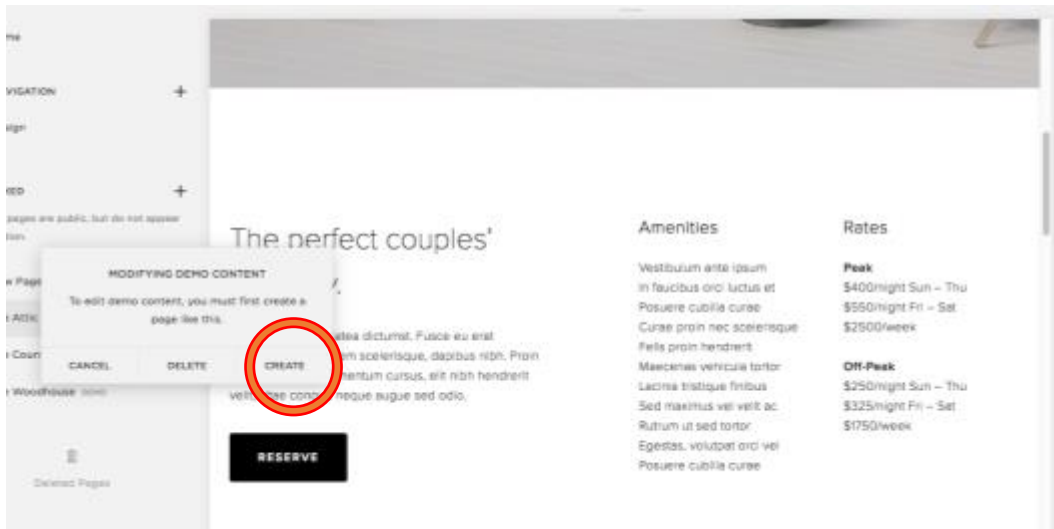
Squarespace is a site builder for people who need a quick and easy way to develop professional-looking websites without having to code. Squarespace seeks to enable inexperienced users or users short on time to create beautiful websites intuitively.

I appreciate the design's ability to introduce appealing possibilities to users through multiple predesigned templates for portfolios, small businesses, and other use-cases. As a novice user myself, templates help me quickly visualize what my site could look like, and reduces a lot of decision-making around content organization and aesthetics.



However, I think the design goals could be better met if the interface facilitated a more supportive and responsive user experience. Squarespace's editor lacks immediate feedback. Users must go through multiple steps before seeing the results of their manipulations. This could not only lead to cognitive overload, but may also discourage exploration and engagement in the site-building experience.

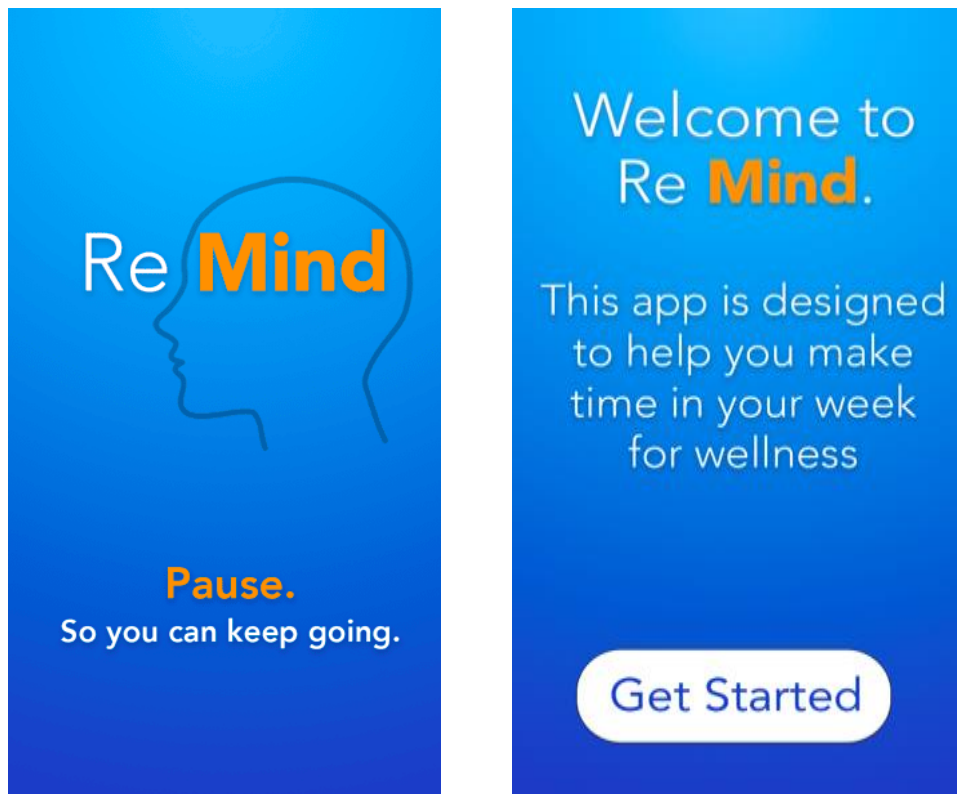
Each customizable element requires a separate click to open a dialogue box of options. For example, editing page layouts requires users to go through a separate module and choose from a limited list of poorly-defined options. Users who need a quick and easy way to make websites may not be familiar with all the technical jargon involved in web design. Their attempt to edit a page quickly becomes a frustrating language experience forcing them to either experiment with each option, or look up information to understand what the options mean.



I wish the interface included more directly interactive and immediately responsive functionality. This would enable users to have greater control over elements (as they would for an image in MS Word) and continuously evaluate their design in real time. 4 steps between actions and results mean: more time and decision-making for each customization. So while Squarespace fills a valuable need, I feel their interface could offer a more fluid and supportive experience.

ReMind

ReMind is a mobile experience that helps high-achieving online high school students learn how to practice and prioritize wellness. My team sought to enable high-anxiety teenagers to gain the tools and strategies they need to take better control of their socio-emotional wellness in a unique digital learning environment.



I think our team succeeded in meeting most of these needs. Students use a notification scheduling system that encourages them to make time for wellness. As they are already accustomed to heavily populated digital calendars for school, ReMind's scheduling feature stands as a familiar process that easily fits with their daily lives. Moreover, I appreciate that the app offers a diverse range of wellness activities, introducing learners to a variety of experiences that enable them to experiment with and gauge what works for them.

Which day(s) would you like your wellness reminders ?

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

What time(s) would you like your reminder?

Tuesday:

:

Friday:

:

Select the wellness activities that you would like to try

Arts

Mindfulness

Nature

Physical

Social

Create your own

While these elements are conducive to a positive, user-centered experience, I think the app makes some assumptions about user motivation and lifestyle. I wish we had designed ReMind to be more practical of student behavior/attitude and potential limitations that may hinder quality learning experiences.

For one, I do not think that seamless lifestyle integration by means of a scheduling system is truly sufficient for helping students build lifelong habits. I think ReMind lacks incentives that motivate students to carry out healthy practices beyond the ReMind experience. Perhaps a more impactful design could include gamified or more incrementally learnable practices. High-achieving teenagers already have a lot on their plate and may not come to understand the importance of wellness if ReMind feels like another assignment on their to-do list. While the scheduling feature is a good lifestyle fit, it may not offer enough motivation or support for students to meet their ultimate learning goals.

I do think my assessment is totally subjective. Given that I personally struggled with the Squarespace interface recently, I had a specific use-case on which to base my evaluation. Design decisions are made by human beings with vastly different backgrounds and understandings. How one designer empathizes with and recognizes user needs could vary greatly with another. There is no single, objective, or right way to design an experience. There are just some designs that are better than others in meeting user needs. But such an assessment depends on who is judging an interface, the current cultural environment, and a lot of other factors. Additionally, when multiple versions of a solution are available, it becomes easier to compare features and see the possibility of what one design could have been. I do not think my subjectivity invalidates my assessment, for I do not think there could be an objective assessment of the efficacy and impact of a design. I think my evaluation (were it to influence the next iteration) helps refine designs with additional nuance and perspective to better meet user goals. In many ways, my opinion (and those of others) are vital to the technology's potential for impact, rendering subjectivity essential.