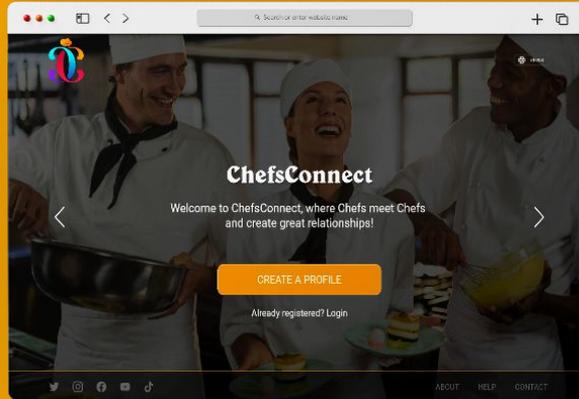
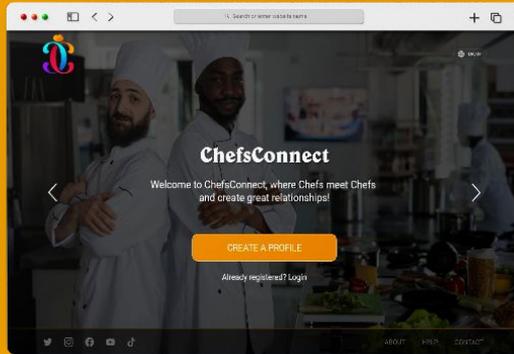


ChefsConnect Website Design



Olanshile Shonoiki

Project overview



The product:

ChefsConnect is a networking platform where chefs of different backgrounds come together to create meaningful networks and relationships. The task was to build a profile creation flow for the website.



Project duration:

September 2022 - October 2022



Project overview



The problem:

Chefs who feel isolated and barely have enough time to socialize outside of work, find currently existing networking sites too general and not tailored to their needs



The goal:

Design a profile creation flow that will be the entry point for new users who intend to use ChefsConnect

Project overview



My role:

UX researcher and designer, designing the website from conception to engineering hand-over



Responsibilities:

Conducting interviews, paper and digital wireframing, low and high-fidelity prototyping, conducting usability studies, accounting for accessibility, and iterating on designs.

User research: summary



I conducted interviews and created empathy maps to understand the users that I will be designing for, and also to know their needs and identify pain points.

I initially assumed that since we were building a networking site for chefs, the primary user group would be professional chefs. Research proved this wrong, as I discovered that the user group was quite larger: it also included other workers in the food industry, culinary students and even hobbyist chefs. This discovery helped in framing the problem in a more inclusive way.

Research helped me to identify their frustrations about being an excluded group in social networking websites.

User research: pain points

1

Exclusion

Users feel their needs aren't being met because most networking sites are too general

2

Oversharing

Users feel that details being requested on social media sites are too many; they want to be selective about what they share

3

Time

Users are usually busy and don't have enough time to connect with others physically

4

Ease of Use

Users want a platform that is easy to use and not complicated

Persona: **Doylla**

Problem statement:

Doylla is a Culinary Student who needs to connect with professional chefs in her community and beyond because she needs to find a mentor that can help her grow in her career



Doylla

Age: 21

Education: Culinary Student

Hometown: Lagos, Nigeria

Family: Single

Occupation: Junior Chef

“In a world of so many selfs, best be yourself”

Goals

- Needs to connect with more people to find a mentor in the industry
- Wants to network without reveal too much about herself

Frustrations

- Feels isolated and alone
- Feels people share too much about themselves online

Doylla is a 21 year old culinary student who is averse to social media.

She would love to meet new people so she can advance her career without sharing too much about herself online. She needs to find a mentor in the industry.

User journey map

I created a journey map for Doylla to discover her frustrations with using current systems and identify pain points that needed to be addressed

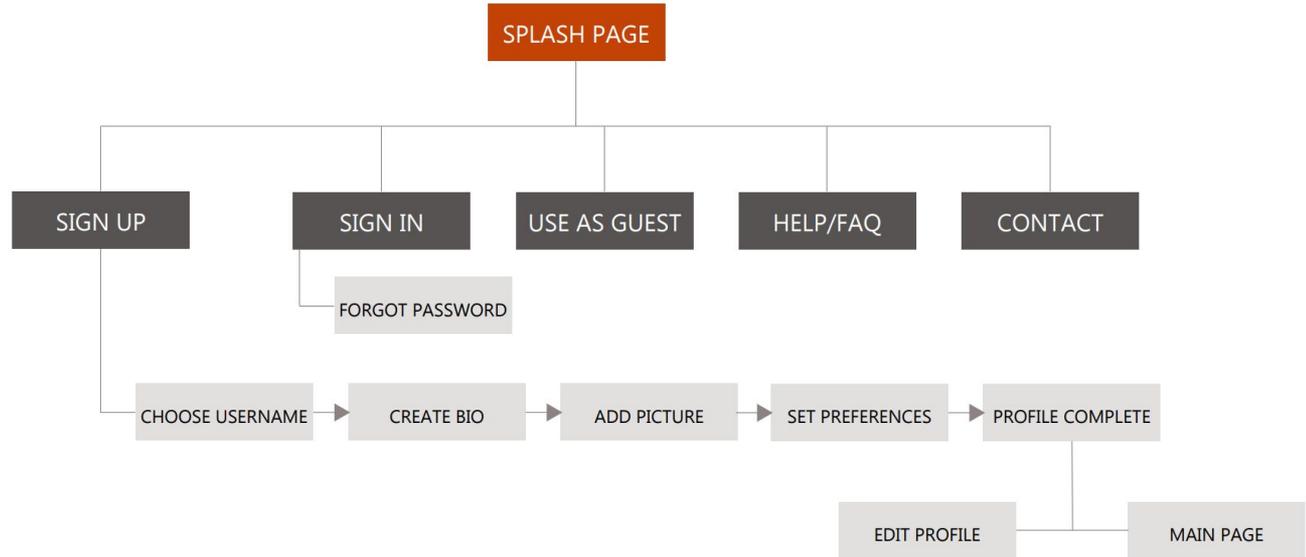
Persona: Doylla

Goal: network with a mentor in a community of professional chefs

ACTION	Search for networking sites	Select a networking sites	Signup or sign in	Fill out profile	Connect with other chefs
TASK LIST	Tasks A. Search for networking site B. Open several in multiple tabs	Tasks A. Go through different sites B. Narrow down a two or three options C. Choose a final one	Tasks A. Go to the sign up page B. Select a user name and password C. Click signup	Tasks A. Upload a profile picture B. Fill in basic details C. Submit form	Tasks A. Read about how to use the site B. Browse through the site
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Overwhelmed with the different available options	Frustrated about the diverse nature and lack of focus on chefs	Excited to begin	Frustrated about filling in multiple items	Excited to finally be signed up
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Create a website targeted at chefs	Improve SEO and make site easily discoverable	Create an inviting and fun interface	Simplify the sign up process	Make it easy to get from signup to participation

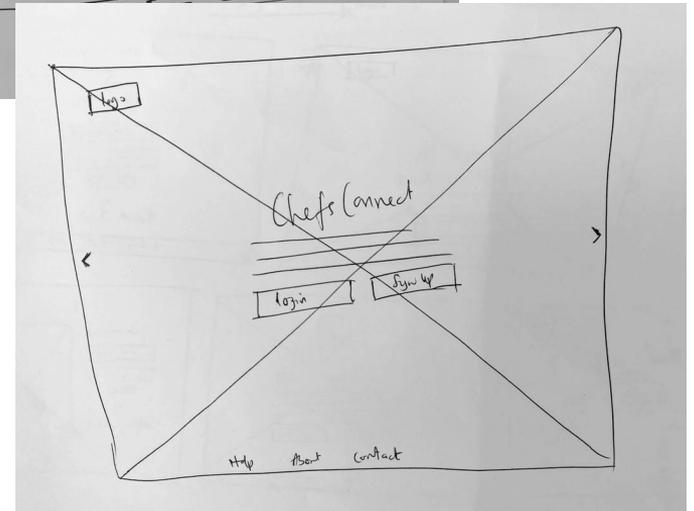
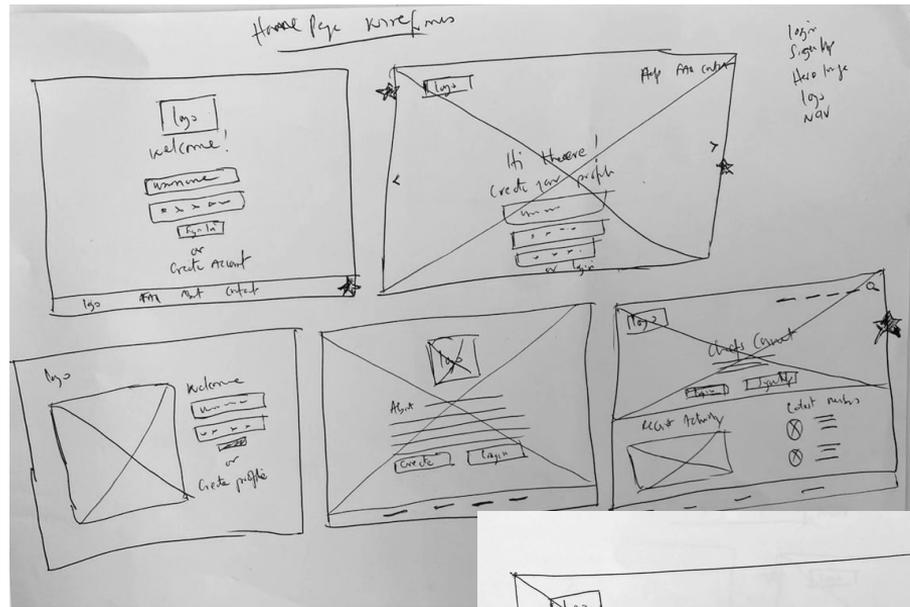
Sitemap

It was important that the profile creation flow be as simple and as direct as possible. Thus, the information architecture followed a sequential structure in addition to a minimal hierarchical structure. I chose this to simplify things for the user



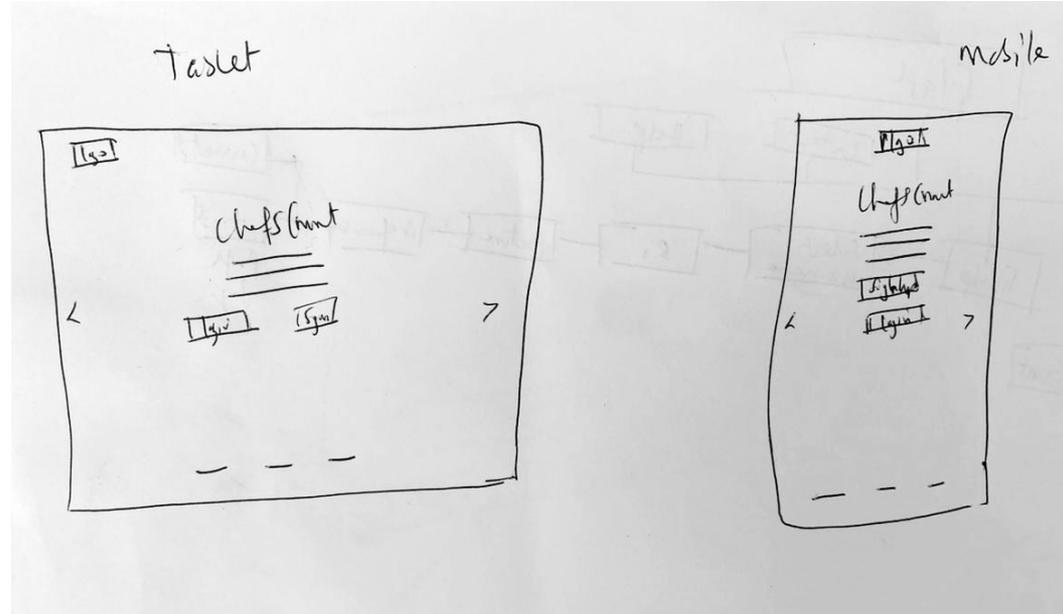
Paper wireframes

I started off the design process with drawing paper wireframes. Due to pain points discovered during research, I made the decision to keep the interface as clutter-free as possible. From the homescreen variations, I settled for one that kept things as simple and welcoming as possible



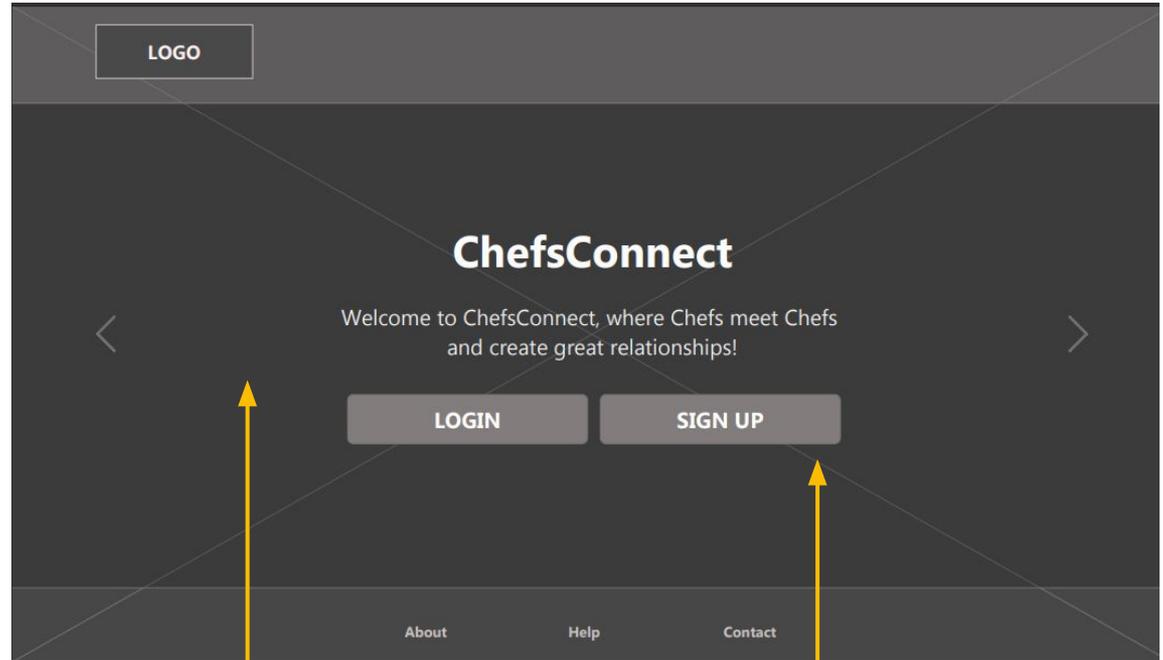
Paper wireframe screen size variation(s)

To make sure the site was fully responsive, I made wireframes in other screen sizes as well: tablet and mobile



Digital wireframes

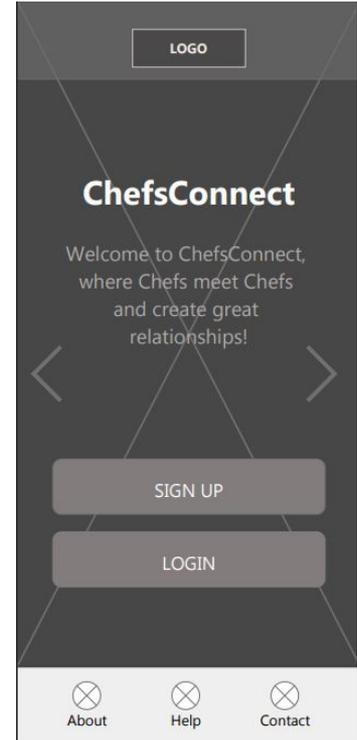
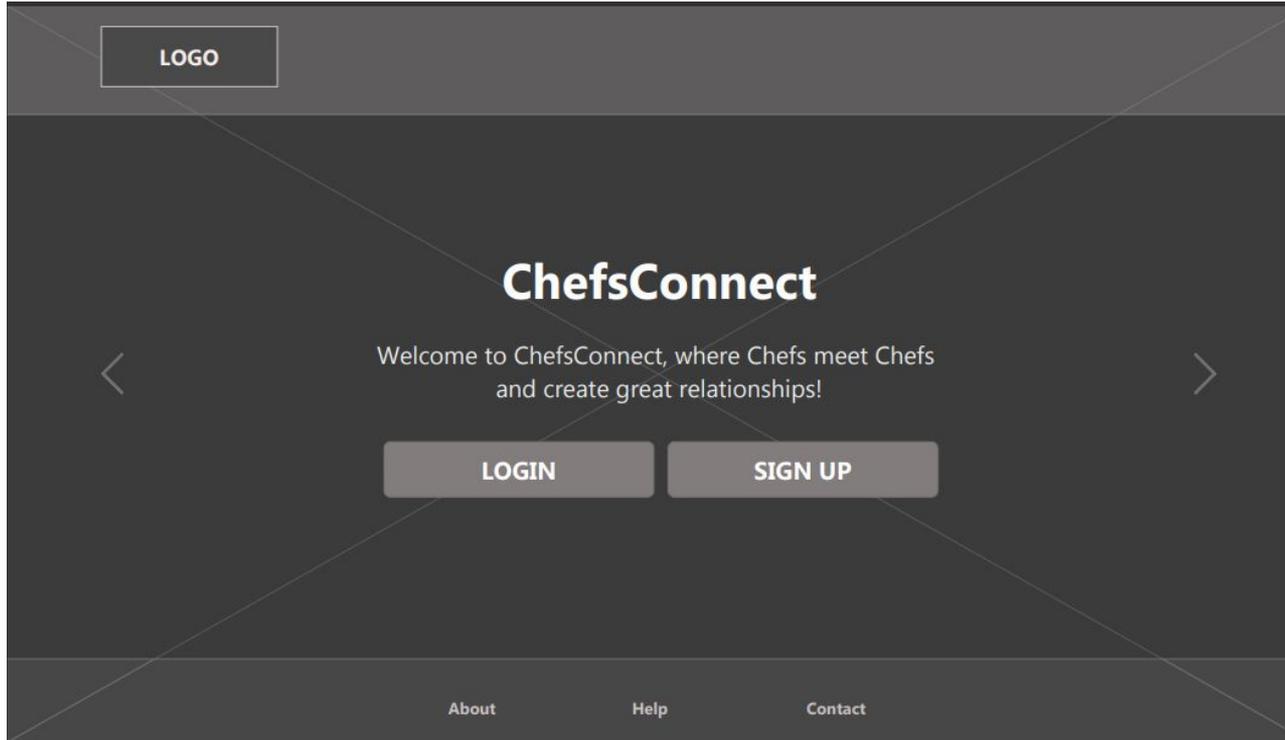
From the paper wireframes, I moved on to digital wireframes. I reinforced the idea of simplicity and warmth, a site that will draw users in and make them comfortable, with as little clutter as possible.



Carousel of large background images of other chefs to show a sense of community

Prominent call to action button to get users focused on the task: profile creation

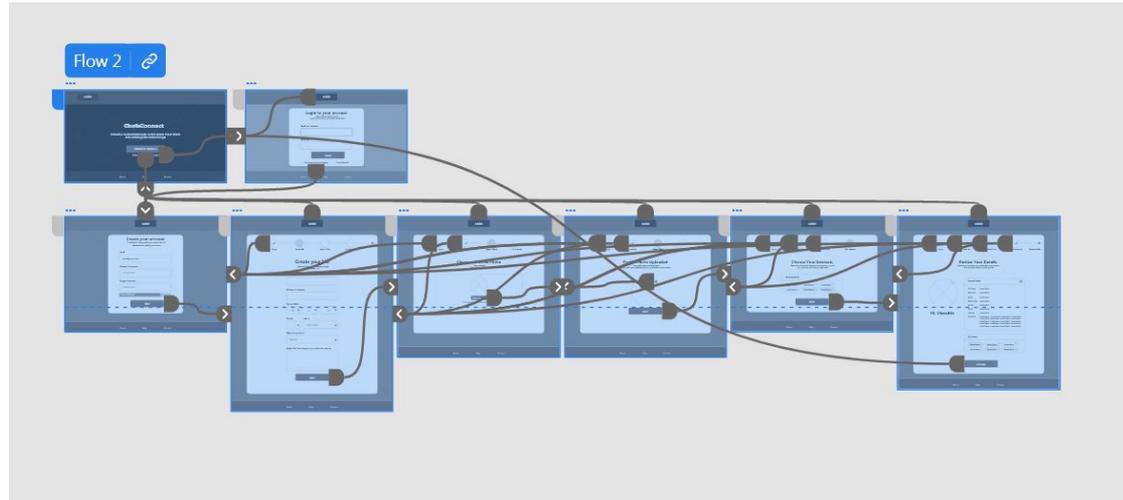
Digital wireframe screen size variation(s)



Low-fidelity prototype

It was important to test functionality so I connected all the digital wireframes to create a prototype for user testing.

I made sure to address pain points discovered during the research process by making the flow as straightforward as possible



[View the low-fidelity prototype for ChefsConnect](#)

Usability study: parameters



Study type:

Unmoderated usability study



Location:

Lagos Nigeria, remote



Participants:

5 participants



Length:

20-30 minutes

Usability study: findings

The usability test with users revealed some findings that needed to be addressed:

1

“Sign Up” vs “Register”

Users found the position and wording of the signup button confusing

2

Headers & landmarks

The page headers weren't communicating the function of each page properly to the users

3

Navigation

Users could only go forward in the flow; they need a way to go back in the flow to edit details as well

Mockups

Based on insights from the usability study, I made some changes in the next design iteration on the mockups. For example, the call to action button on the home page was given more prominence and the copy on it changed. Users thought Login and Signup were similar words.

Before usability study



After usability study



Mockups

To address the issue of the screens not properly communicating the function of the pages, I swapped the position of the progress bar and used larger headers to create hierarchy on the page

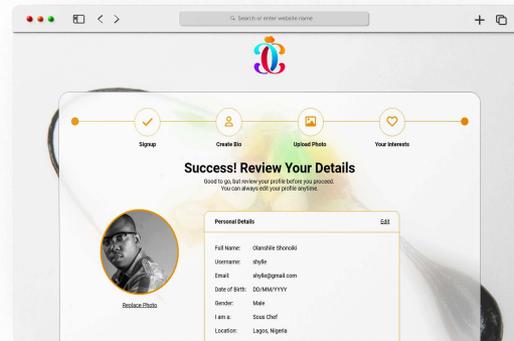
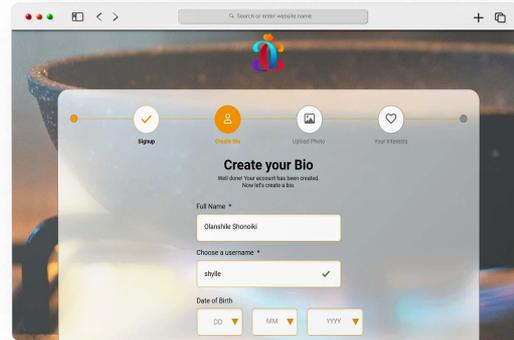
Before usability study

The mockup shows a dark grey header with a 'LOGO' placeholder. Below it, a white card contains the heading 'Account Created!' and the text 'Well done! Your account has been created. Now create a bio.' A progress bar is positioned below the heading, with four steps: 'Signup' (checked), 'Create Bio' (selected), 'Upload Photo', and 'Set Preferences'. Below the progress bar are form fields for 'Your Name', 'Choose a Username', 'Date of Birth' (with DD, MM, and YYYY dropdowns), and 'Gender' with a label 'I am a:'.

After usability study

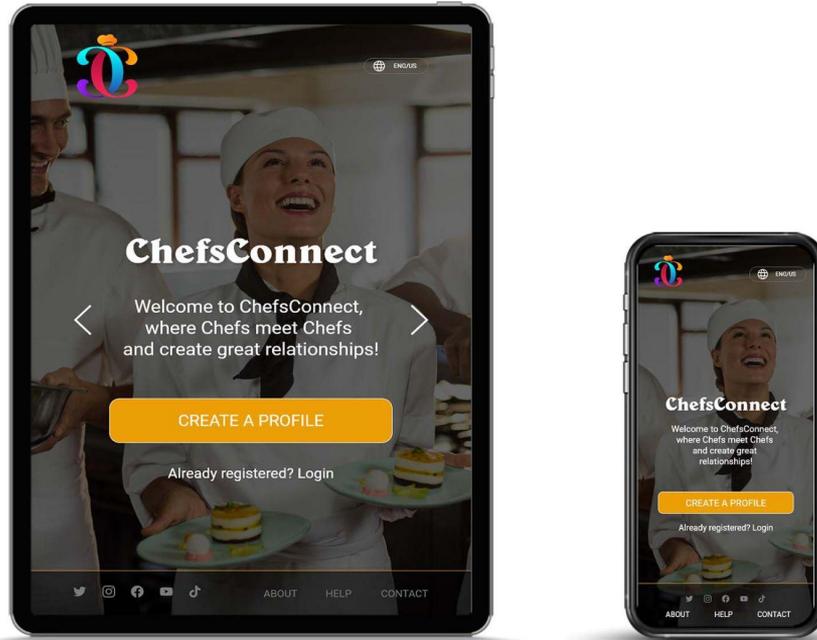
The mockup shows a dark background with a colorful logo at the top. A white card contains a progress bar at the top with four steps: 'Signup' (checked), 'Create Bio' (selected), 'Upload Photo', and 'Your Interests'. Below the progress bar is the heading 'Create your Bio' and the text 'Well done! Your account has been created. Now let's create a bio.' Below this are form fields for 'Full Name *' (with the value 'Olanshile Shonoiki'), 'Choose a username *' (with the value 'shylie' and a green checkmark), and 'Date of Birth' (with DD, MM, and YYYY dropdowns).

Mockups: Original screen size



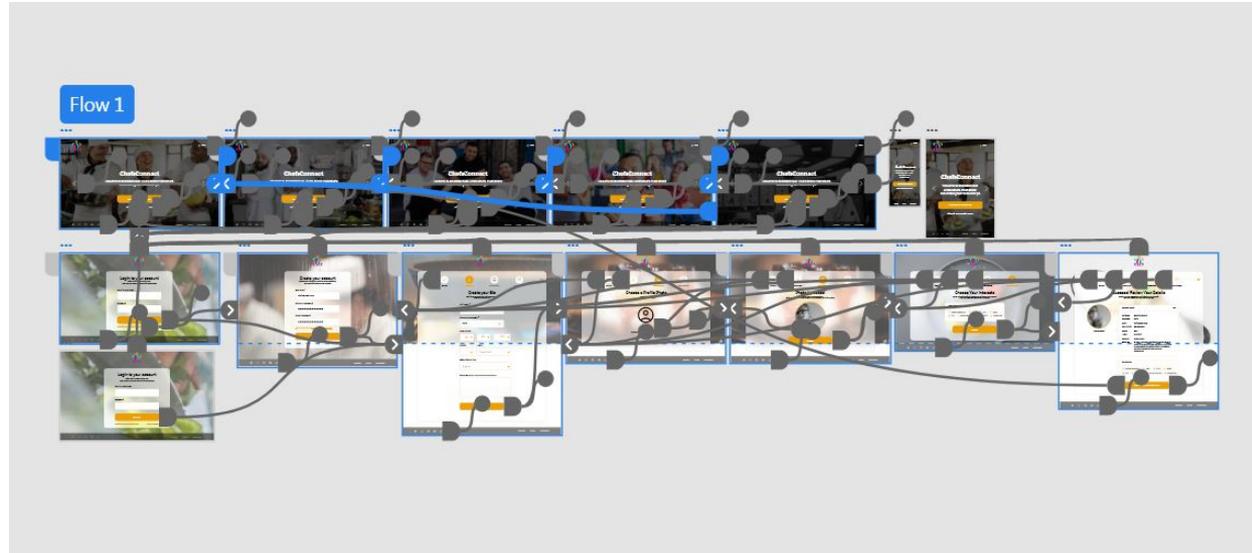
Mockups: Screen size variations

I believed it was important to also create variations in different screen sizes. Not all users will use a desktop browser, thus users should be able to access the site from different devices



High-fidelity prototype

With the mockups completed for different pages, I linked the flow together to create a high fidelity prototype. The high fidelity prototype included changes to the flow as discovered during the usability study



[View the high fidelity prototype of ChefsConnect](#)

Accessibility considerations

1

I used headers to create visual hierarchy and also to act as landmarks for screen readers

2

I used larger body text with good contrast ratio for readability. Text contrast met acceptable WCAG AAA levels while larger text meet AA levels

3

Images were large enough to be seen and also had alt text for ease of use with screen readers

Takeaways



Impact:

Users were happy with the simplicity of the flow and the lack of clutter. They were also pleased about not being required to overshare details.



What I learned:

I discovered that implicit bias creeps up on us unaware despite our best intents. So it is important to keep checking oneself for any designer bias. Earlier, I had assumed that the user group for the design was professional chefs, but research helped reveal and fix that bias to include a wider range of catering and culinary workers.

Next steps

1

Conduct follow-up user tests to determine if the design meets requirements

2

Check for more accessibility issues and reiterate on the design to be more inclusive

Let's connect!



Thank you for reading through! I created this as an entry-level designer, so I am still on a journey to discover better design.

Contact me at: shylle@gmail.com
Or view my portfolio on www.shylle.com