spot that shot!

MA Web Design and Content Planning
Web Thesis Project Final Report

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17,132 words

Contents

Appendix A - Attached separately

Appendix B - Attached separately

Section I. Concept

Twitter description

"The community-based location guide for UK photographers" (55 characters)

Elevator pitch

Many photographers are either only hobbyists, or part-time freelancers. Especially as a portrait, fashion and lifestyle photographer, one needs to constantly scout out new and interesting locations to act as backdrops to a shoot, to complement the initial idea and theme. However, such photographers often don't have the time to personally scout out new locations and spots, and no budget to hire a location from professional companies as that is very expensive with prices generally not being significantly different regardless of whether the shoot is for personal or commercial purposes. There are also street photographers who shoot artistic portraits of strangers, for example the participants of the 100 Strangers project[1]. I am doing the project myself and have often had discussions with fellow photographers about the need for a good background to make a good portrait. Young creatives are also often seen around London, shooting editorials featuring their designs or make-up skills; unpaid jobs with no budget available. Therefore there is clearly a need for interesting spots that are easily and freely accessible to the general public so photographers can plan their shoots with these in mind.

To come up with ideas one could resort to a web search, but upon doing so one finds no specific resource for this purpose. There are forums here and there and of course image galleries such as Flickr and 500px, but these rely on users tagging their photos, setting the privacy to 'public', and in any case the most popular images will already express the photographer's angle and vision, with Photoshop and the right moment playing a big part in how the shot looks. This is not desirable if someone wants to know how a spot will look 'as-is', so they can envision their own shot using that spot.

This is the aim of my site – to collect information on interesting spots (starting with London, where I live) that can be used to generate ideas and plan photography sessions. Some locations may have limitations or restrictions depending on the type of photography and gear you use or the time of day, and the site contains information about this as well. Visitors are encouraged to submit spots they find, and an incentive scheme is in place (featured contributor).

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[1] https://www.flickr.com/groups/100strangers/

Longer description of the problem and value proposition

I came up with the name Spot That Shot for the site; a word play on spotting the perfect spot for your shot – hopefully this name suggests what it's all about and is short but memorable enough to become a strong brand if it takes off.

The site serves both hobbyists and professionals who make money from their photography. Despite what many people believe, margins are tight for most professionals, and commercial clients are often unwilling to pay extra for a location once they have paid for transport costs, a model and a hair and make-up artist (if applicable). Private clients are the models themselves, so such jobs rule out location houses altogether. The last option is that the theme of the photograph one wants to take simply demands an outdoor, open location such as street photography where, despite the focus being on the subject (a person or several people) the setting still matters. A good photograph can be turned into an excellent one by considering the background as well as the subject. What a good location incorporates is not necessarily just an interesting element or colours, but also helps the photographer work with the light available, helps avoid crowds and distractions, allows them a special vantage point, and so on.

It can be something seemingly as insignificant as an interesting wall in a back alley, for example – I recently took a portrait that made use of the leading lines and soft light of an alleyway near Highbury station, a spot one would not know about unless they are familiar with the area. Spot That Shot changes this. If a photographer is in a certain area they can search based on a postcode or point of interest, and results within a specified radius are displayed. They are sorted by distance and show an overview of what to expect from the spot.

Each spot has a dedicated detail page that contains useful information about it, which is not something you could necessarily by just browsing Google Street View, for example.

To search for spot ideas anyone can simply type in a search query and filter the results by distance, spot type (background or location – more on this later), and features (such as whether there is public transport nearby).

Users can create accounts with optional profile information. Registered users are potential candidates for featured contributor which involves promotion of their work on the homepage and is hopefully a good incentive for people to share spots.

The Reading Room section (essentially a blog) contains site news and information about relevant aspects of photography, both from myself and guests (interviews with fellow

photographers) as this not only adds valuable content to the site but helps SEO and indirectly promotes my own photography business as well.

Section II. Business

General business environment

The popularity of photography in general has probably never been greater than nowadays, with DSLRs becoming more affordable and plenty of information available online for aspiring photographers to teach themselves. However, many people are only freelancers with another day job to help them get by, or don't even want to earn money from it at all and only do it as a hobby. The popularity and accessibility of photography is precisely what is the downfall of the 'full time professional photographer'; the existence of better camera phones and cheaper consumer level cameras have deflated the market rates for personal photography work such as portraiture, families, babies and weddings. The median salary for photographers in the US in 2012 was just $28,490 per year, or $13.70 per hour[2] (around £17,000 and £8 respectively). 60% of photographers were self-employed and one in three worked only part-time. These are only those who have registered as a business of course; there cannot possibly be a valid statistic about those who only do it as a hobby or without paying taxes. I could not find similarly reliable statistics for the UK but we can probably assume the situation is not much different; if anything the market here is smaller and offers fewer jobs for full time professionals. Casual photography is what it's all about these days; Instagram has seen to that.

To illustrate the popularity of photography, the forum for the website Digital Photography School has 255,661 registered users[3] and the street photography group 100 Strangers on Flickr has 9,508 members[4]. Having spent time in both of these communities I can safely say that of those who regularly participate, a large proportion of members are either hobbyists or freelancers with a day job and limited budgets. However, even full time photographers have strict budgets as gear is expensive and judging by the above salary statistics many of them do not earn much at all.

Especially in the 100 Strangers Flickr group, which is a street portraiture project (photographing subjects with their explicit consent and knowledge) there is often talk of the 'right background', but upon browsing websites such as Model Mayhem or PurplePort where models and photographers can team up for shoots, it also transpires that many shoots are done on location, either because there are more varied options outdoors, or due to restricted budgets; sometimes both. I personally know several street photographers

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[2] United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Media-and-Communication/Photographers.htm (accessed 8/1/14)

[3] As of 8/1/14

[4] As of 8/1/14

who are always on the lookout for good spots for their portraits and some even decide not to take a photo of a compelling subject if there is no suitable backdrop.

To get a better idea of the photography landscape out there, I created a survey which I will is described in more detail in the Research section of this report. I posted this in several forums, so while only representative of a particular segment of the photography world, it will at least help provide some insight into photographers' behaviour regarding location choices.

Renting locations is generally very expensive and reserved only for large budget commercial work. For example, the vintage chic themed pub *Paradise* in Kensal Green, which can be rented out for shoots but is not a fully dedicated location house, charges £100 per hour for one room. *Photo-locations.com* charges £100+VAT just for the booking fee. *Shootfactory.co.uk* quoted a £95 booking fee and a £1,250 day fee for a randomly selected location in North London. Upon browsing websites of many location houses it becomes clear that they are geared towards those with a big budget and a production team, as they feature complete apartments and houses, but without lighting equipment available – which, if shooting inside, will be very important but prohibitively expensive for those who only want to practice and do a shoot for their own enjoyment or for budding fashion photographers building their portfolios. There are also those who actually want to shoot outdoors: street photographers, and portrait/engagement/family/wedding photographers who make up a large number of part-time professional photographers I have come across in the UK. There are also landscape photographers, who most likely do already have a lot of ways to find locations to photograph but may still come across Spot That Shot and draw inspiration from it, so they are not completely excluded either.

Value of the project

Spot That Shot fills a niche: catering for those who want to, or have no choice but to take photos outdoors and want some location inspiration. Ideally these are easily accessible with no booking requirements, and easily searchable based on location or certain filters. Initially the focus is on London locations plus a couple of other cities I have been to, but I have actively worked on drumming up interest and there are now locations from various parts of the UK available. It is hopefully an especially valuable resource for street photographers, those doing the 100 Strangers project, or engagement/lifestyle photographers who would for example do a walk with the subject(s) in an area and aim to capture beautiful shots of them doing everyday poses and activities. There will always be a demand for ideas for such locations as long as the aforementioned types of photographers exist. It can also be a useful tool for photographers on the go, who may be in an area they don't know very well so need to know where the good spots are.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

There do not appear to be any noteworthy UK competitors therefore there is an untapped 'market' here which could allow the site to grow quickly if word got out about it. It is based on making things easier and simpler for users, compared to trawling forums and slightly unrelated websites for location ideas. There is also the aforementioned 'on-the-go' side of it, which at present does not seem to otherwise exist in a format specifically geared towards photographers looking for locations while out and about, and this can help them do that.

Weaknesses

Reliance on user-generated content is always a gamble and this site is no exception; without users contributing to the spot database the content will not satisfy viewers who live in areas not covered by the site. I am creating content continuously but it is mainly limited to Greater London.

There is no incentive apart from the Featured Contributor idea to submit locations so all we can do is hope that the community will be self-sustaining enough in this respect. In terms of marketing, the hardest part was and still is getting the word out there to kickstart user activity on the site. This is difficult but essential.

Opportunities

Building this website was not only a good opportunity to help the photography community but also improved my information architecture and back-end programming skills, which in turn will increase my attractiveness to potential employers later on. If it picks up it is a great opportunity to get my name out there, drive more traffic to my own photography business and generate revenue from sponsorship deals somewhere down the line, via advertising and the articles in the Reading Room. This is of course more a long-term aim and was not within the scope of the original Thesis Project.

Threats

The two main threats were the back-end programming challenges that I had to overcome, and the potential financial burden of the images and mapping plugin on the site. I was confident that I would be able to overcome the programming challenges as I had someone to help me if I needed it; as for the costs, these would initially be small as the site starts out, but specialist advertising will be incorporated into the site if they start mounting. As traffic increases, hopefully so will ad revenue.

Project aims for the long term

The main aim was to create something useful, for as wide an audience as possible, but it was also a personal project that will look good in my portfolio and show that I am passionate about photography as well as web design. I want to combine these two activities in my future working life therefore it was a valuable undertaking in that sense even if it does not take off.

The site is not expected to generate profit at first, but to at least have enough income to pay for hosting costs after a while. Initially this will most probably not happen but I will monitor statistics, and if there is a steady rise in visitor numbers it will help predict longer-term costs and help me decide the future of the site.

The secondary aim was and still is to expand my web development skills, familiarise myself with various technologies that I may never be exposed to otherwise, and learn about how to put a dynamic website together and maintain it.

Section III. Research

This section looks at and analyses competitor, cognate and non-cognate websites to gain understanding of what works and what doesn't for them. The results helped give me ideas for how to structure and design Spot That Shot.

Competitors

There do not appear to be any direct competitors offering the same service – not in the United Kingdom, at least. Searches on various combinations of the keywords 'UK', 'London', 'photo', 'photography', 'location', 'ideas', with 'free' an extra option on Google, Yahoo and Ecosia did not bring up any all-in-one sites, only various one-off blog posts, forums or regional websites such as the Sevenoaks Camera Club for example. In the survey I created to gauge photographers' potential interest in my site, I included the question *'Are there any freely available resources for finding locations that you use regularly?'* to see if they knew about a site I didn't. There were only two sites mentioned that weren't forums; Derelict London and an Australian site which is just like Spot That Shot but focuses only on Australian spots. Therefore it is not a competitor and will be analysed as a cognate website. As for Derelict London, strictly speaking it's not a competitor either, but it was the closest I could find to one so it was examined as such.

Derelict London[5]

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[5] http://www.derelictlondon.com/
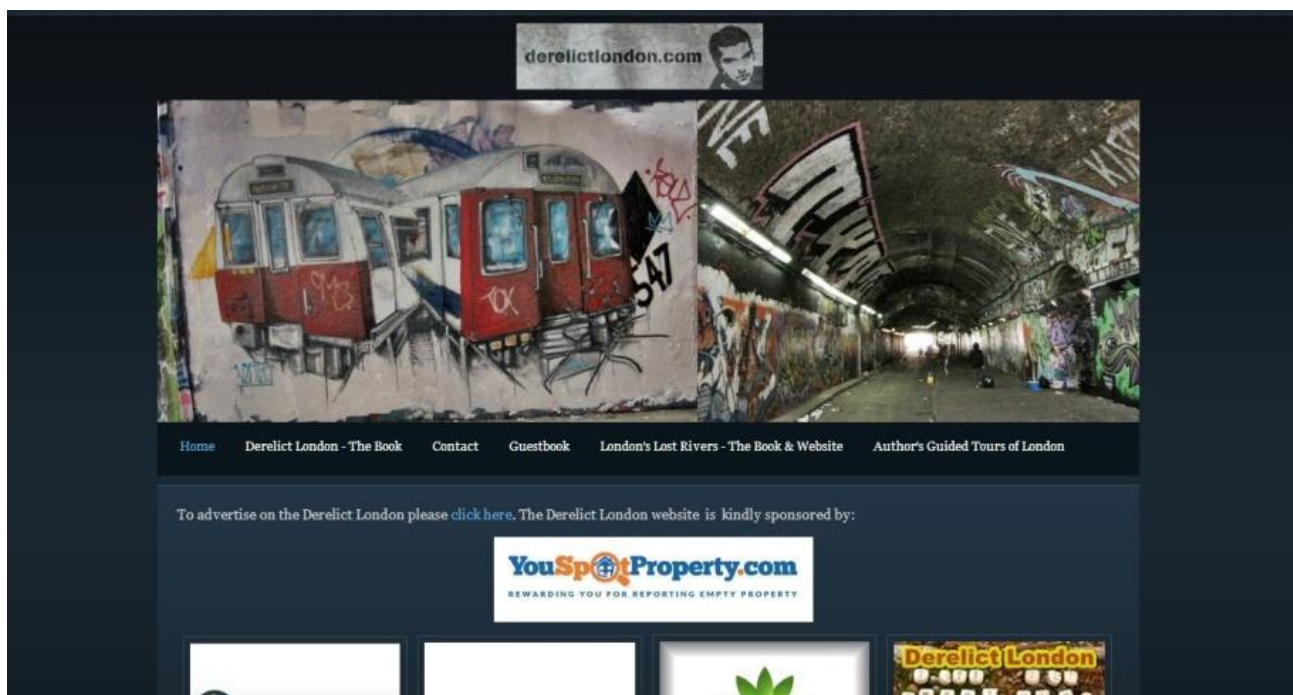
In the author's own words, *"Derelict London is an unusual photographic portrait (of over 3000 pics by Paul Talling) of the nations capital"*. This statement is below the fold however so at first glance the purpose of the site is not clear for the first-time visitor. Despite this, his stat counter says he has had over 1.5 million visitors and been mentioned in Time Out London so he is clearly providing quality content that many people have found, either via search engines or word of mouth.

The site does not have any particular aim apart from showcasing Paul's photographs of derelict places, which have since been collected into a book as well. It can be considered a portfolio site, although it is not very well designed and organised. Nevertheless it is a valuable resource for photographers looking for run-down locations around London.

There is no strong branding apparent on the site, with the template containing only a small logo and lots of advertising on the homepage. Paul's explanation of what the site is about appears as a long chunk of text even further down the page. He says the site is over ten years old and is for his own enjoyment; he does not claim to be a professional photographer and merely has an interest in derelict places. This personal tone makes him appear friendly and approachable, which is what I want Spot That Shot to be like as well. The copy could do with proofreading and editing though, as there are spelling and punctuation mistakes dotted around the site which is acceptable for a personal website but can be damaging for a site like mine which needs to build on trust and a sense of professionalism and reliability.

Derelict London is updated frequently, but you have to scroll quite far down the home page to realise there are new sections dedicated to recent updates. Below these are the regular sections which consist of very long pages with lots of photos and information about each location, often including its history. There is a small search box at the very bottom of the homepage but nowhere else, and there is no useful site-wide navigation. If you want to change categories you have to go back to the home page and select a new one. This is far from an ideal user experience, although as mentioned before, Paul's aim is simply to collect the locations on his site in some way, not to be a photography location scouting service. There are rough addresses but no maps.

The content itself is extensive and the photographs are of good quality, just the kind that I would want to include on Spot That Shot. However, I have come across several articles that state that the building has since been demolished or renovated; on Spot That Shot such locations would have to be updated and re-categorised or removed entirely as they would no longer be useful and relevant.

Below is a summary of what I can take away from this website and build on when considering the approach for Spot That Shot. The 'bad' points are based on the imaginary scenario of Derelict London being a direct competitor though; they are not necessarily bad for a personal portfolio site.

Good:

- Extensive and valuable content
- Personal and therefore friendly tone
- Status elevated in the eyes of new visitors by referring to features in Time Out, The Independent, BBC Radio etc.

Bad:

- Lack of clarity about the site's purpose and intention for new users
- No branding or identity
- Difficult to navigate between categories
- Only one page per category – pages are too long
- No maps/access information
- Visually unappealing

Derelict Places[6]

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[6] http://www.derelictplaces.co.uk/
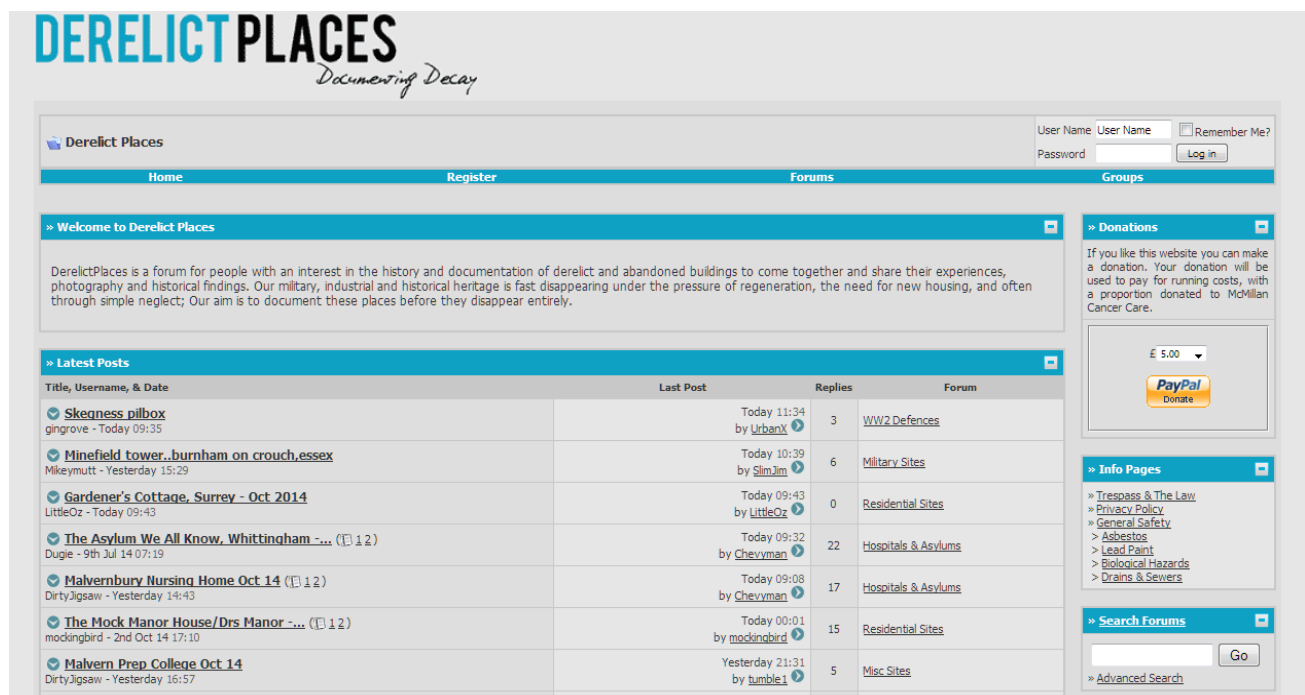
While on the subject of derelict locations, another survey respondent mentioned this forum as a resource he or she uses to location scout. A forum is usually not an ideal platform for location scouting due to its structure that is not geared towards the optimal user experience for such a use case, but there is some wonderful content in this one and it has over 1,200 active users. If other forums such as this one appear for different categories of locations, they can become real competitors to my site so I need to make mine as simple to use as possible.

Despite the great content, there is no formal structure to posts. Users post as much or as little as they like about a location – often it is not even obvious what town the location is in as there is only a title and some images. It is not possible to view or sort locations based on user ratings or distance from a custom location. This is where my site would have the edge, and I could contact users of the forum to request permission to use their content on my site, helping spread the word about it too.

The visual design is old-fashioned and certainly unappealing; it is too busy and looks very dated, not likely to draw younger users.

*If the query 'London' is left out of the searches and the term is only 'photo locations' or 'photo hotspots' the search results show a different pattern. I found two websites that are dedicated to photography hotspots around the world; **ShotHotSpot** and **Photospots**. Neither of them is focused on the UK; in fact they are completely global in terms of content and lack focus.Moreover, Photospots doesn't have any UK content at this time and thus is not considered a direct competitor for the purposes of this report.*

ShotHotSpots[7]

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[7] http://www.shothotspot.com/

This site was created by Darren Johnson for the exact same reason my thesis project will be: he couldn't find useful information about photo hotspots. This site is less than a year old and relies mainly on geolocation information, pulling photos from Flickr and Panoramio. There is an option to submit a spot yourself, but he claims there are already millions on the site due to the automatic aggregating of popular spots. The homepage has four CTAs and a large search box, with some recent spots below – it's simple and straightforward but I find it slightly sterile.

There is an advanced search/filter option which also relies on Flickr/Panoramio data, and the results are shown mainly on a map, with a small list to the site with not much information unless you hover over the pin on the map. You can see star ratings for spots but it could be improved on – see TripAdvisor analysis in the non-cognate section of this report.
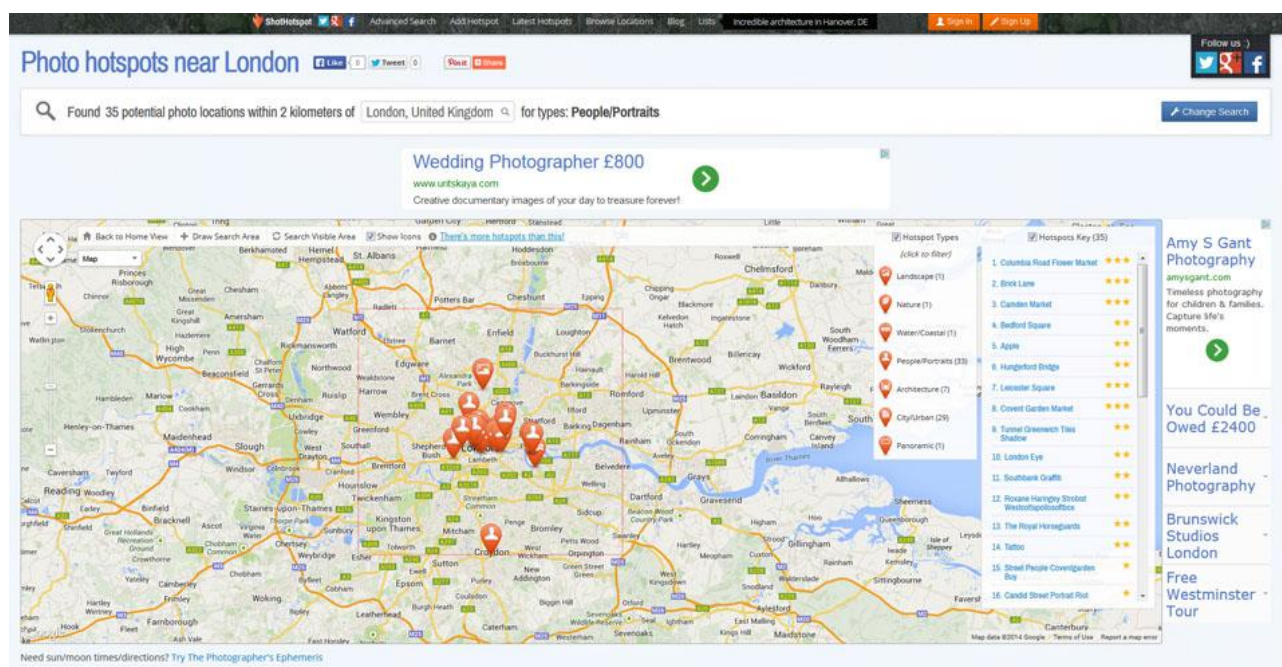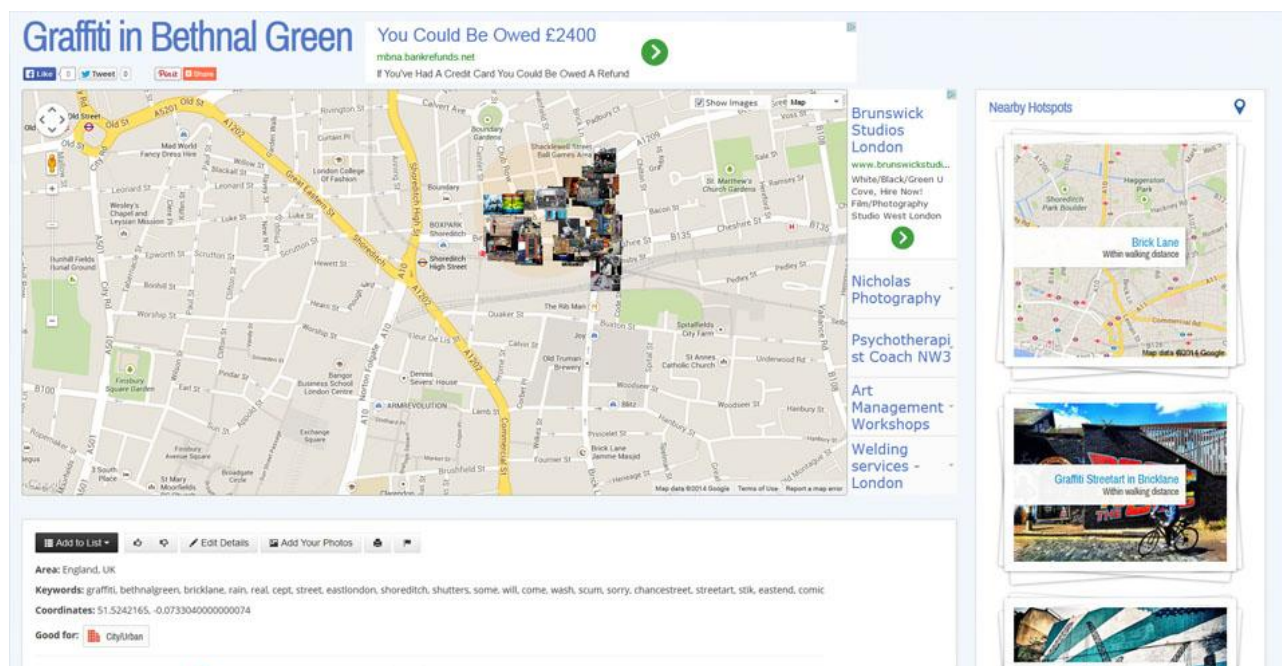
Even on the individual spot page the top half of the page is taken up by a large map – the way you can hover over photos in the area is quite cool, but adds further steps to your journey in finding what you want.

The site is visually quite appealing, slick and modern, built with the Bootstrap framework, and uses the Disqus plugin for comments as well as Flickr and Panoramio APIs to pull in the content and Google Maps for mapping. It also relies heavily on JavaScript. The site has 366 Likes on Facebook meaning it has at least some kind of regular user base.

Overall this is a strong competitor as it appears to have a solid backend and a constant stream of new content due to the automation. However, the latter could be to its disadvantage as it is not curated by a human being at all, and is not specific to one country/region. It offers too much choice and a lot of it is not necessarily useful for someone who just wants to see locations as they are, and not photos of anything taken *at* those locations. For example, there were photos of signs in shop windows from Brick Lane in my search for a place suitable for portraits in Bethnal Green.

Good:

- Lots of data
- No reliance on user generated content for the site specifically
- Visually appealing
- Sophisticated mapping
- 'Good for...' labels on each spot

Bad:

- Due to automated content updating, many photos aren't helpful for someone trying to get a feel for a spot (lots of Flickr images with people in them, heavy Photoshop etc)
- *Too* much mapping in my opinion: choices not laid out in a way that allows for easy overview of options based on something other than location on a map
- Global scope – feels a little impersonal and too wide-ranging

Cognate websites

The aforementioned Australian Hot Spots website is the closest cognate website to Spot That Shot, with the same idea, collecting beautiful Australian locations. Looking at it made me reconsider my original plan to focus on only 'people' photography; it contains many places that are good for other types of photography as well, it just depends on what the user wants to use them for. I reached out to the owner asking them if they would like to be affiliates but did not receive a response.

Photography Hotspots Australia[8]
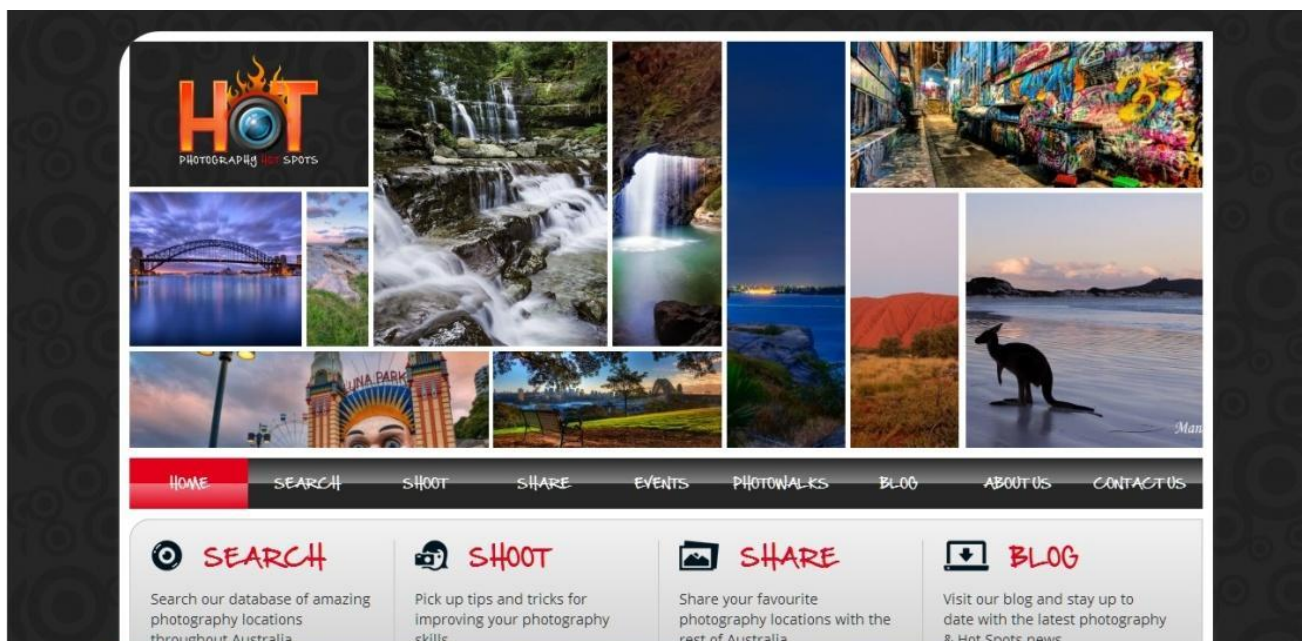
This website is by far the closest to what I am hoping to achieve with Spot That Shot, so there is a more in-depth, section-by-section analysis of this one compared to the rest.

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[8] http://photographyhotspots.com.au/

Upon entering the site it is immediately clear what it's about, and the one-word CTAs with a short description each are efficient yet friendly, speaking directly to the user. The top banner is actually a clickable collage of available locations, which I didn't realise at first. I incorporated the short, CTA-like section name idea into Spot That Shot later.

Further down the page there is a personal and friendly summary of the site's goal (sharing the beautiful locations of Australia) and is, just like in Derelict London's case, by a named person (Rob Potter) which hopefully helps the user feel the creator's personal good intentions for building the site. The home page also features the latest location, picks of the day & week, random locations, quick search by state (which is more like a filter), social media icons and newsletter signup field. The site has a blog and photo tips section too, presumably at least partly for SEO purposes. A Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest share button is available at the top of every location page. Advertising blocks are incorporated subtly and effectively into the design.

Everything is there on the home page that I would add myself, however the arrangement is not ideal. The design is much better than that of Derelict London but is still somewhat clunky and too large; an attempt seems to have been made to make it responsive but implementation is poor and the layout breaks at low and medium widths.

Search page

The main search page has three sections: Recently added, Most popular and Biggest contributors. However, it does not offer anything else, with the quick search and region-based search still only available via the right sidebar, just like on all other pages. Therefore this is a little misleading for users. The keyword search is perhaps the most useful but the site could do with some more filter options, especially for the NSW area that has around 180 locations which you can currently only order by date added, or alphabetically.

Submitting a location

Submitting a spot is nicely encouraged on the search results page as well as having the constant reminder in the top navigation. The submission form itself is well thought-out and something I plan to roughly follow as it separates the form into visually more manageable chunks, which I feel does a good job of not deterring users who may feel they 'can't be bothered' to complete a longer form.

It allows the user to upload 3 images, maximum 750KB each. I find the former rule a good approach, three images should convey the essence of the place well, although the locations submitted so far often have professional quality, often noticeably retouched photography which I am not sure I want to have on my site. The 750KB limit is also too little; users may not want to bother resizing their pictures just for this, especially if they're uploading via a smartphone. For Spot That Shot I set a 2MB limit and decided to resize the image on the server to ensure I only store the smallest required size.

The Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy are referenced before a submission is sent, the user has to agree and this is important as some locations may need permits or may be dangerous, and the site needs to include this warning somewhere to avoid potential lawsuits. This is another aspect that I copied for my own project.

Shoot: photography tips

The Shoot section is well laid out, with post titles clearly visible and ordered nicely with an image for each one, making them look interesting and encouraging. The content is excellent for SEO and adds value to the site. I took inspiration from this grid view for my project but added a featured article to the top, to make the most recent one stand out more.

About

The About page adds another layer of personality to the picture, with a little info about the founder and how the site came to be, a thank you section dedicated to the developer who helped build it, and a section about how it works, encouraging people to share locations and gain exposure for their work. All this invokes a feeling of belonging to a community, with a shared love of photography and beautiful locations.

The other sections are for promoting the photo walks the founder sets up from time to time, also a good way to promote his business. While I don't plan to do photo walks (there are plenty around London as it is) this could be a good idea for new content, to promote walks.

Overall this website is a very good template for mine, with a lot to learn from it both in terms of what I think works and what I feel could be improved on. It is encouraging that the site has been online for over 4 years now and the photo walks it promotes are attended by 15-20 people on average, meaning there is interest in such a site in

Australia; as long as there is sufficient marketing for it, I believe there is potential for this kind of site in the United Kingdom as well.

Photospots[9]
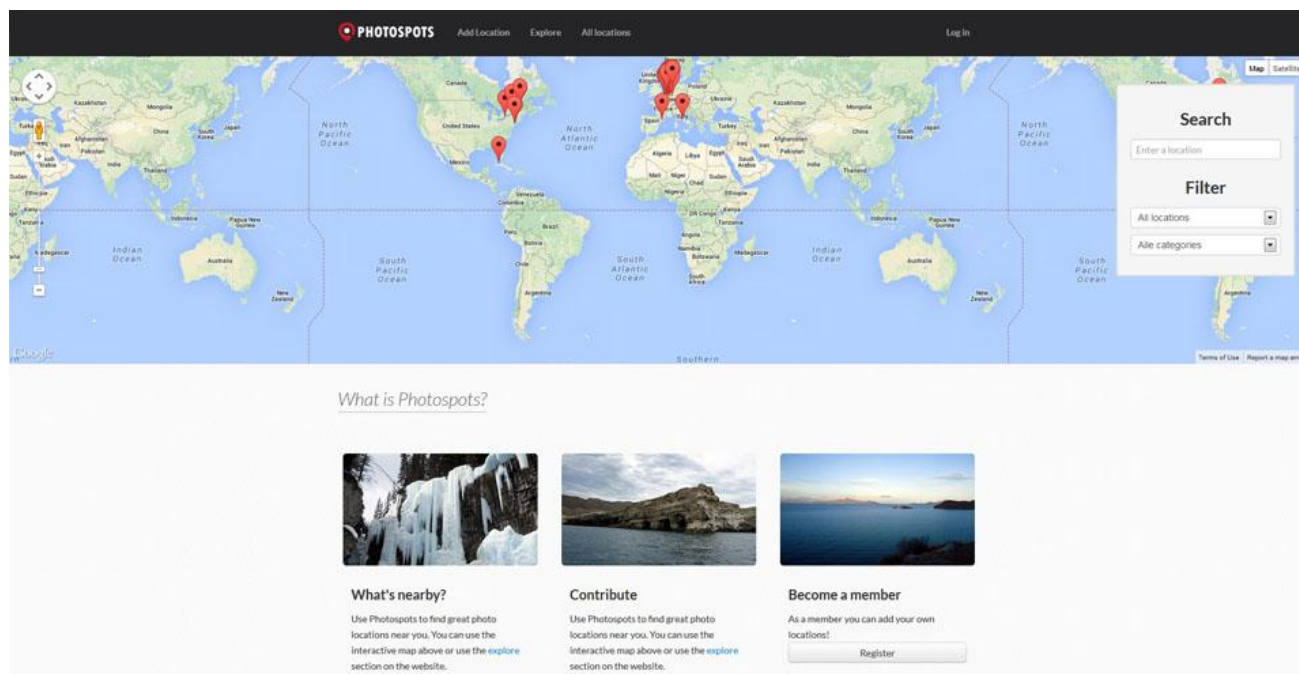
I only want to briefly mention this site; it is not a direct competitor because it does not feature any UK locations at the moment but seems to have content mainly from the Netherlands, with a few other spots in other European countries, the USA and Canada. It doesn't appear to rely on APIs to pull content in, and is more pared down compared to ShotHotSpots, with a more minimal Google Maps tile on every location page. It also has a basic filter for its search but it's not very flexible. There is no About page to explain how the content is curated or who is behind it. In terms of technology, this site also uses Bootstrap, Google Maps, and has a Facebook page with only 2 likes despite a relatively regular update stream on there.

The simple, clean layout here is nice and the mapping works well, but there is a lack of personality and sense of community that could definitely be improved on.

Non-cognate websites

The main objective of my site is to help people search and filter locations easily, and to quickly be able to see a summary of what the spot can offer them and how far it is from their preferred location. I consider travel websites such as TripAdvisor and Expedia to

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[9] http://www.photo-spots.com/en/

fulfil a similar objective, with sophisticated systems to help users find exactly what they need. The user journey on these websites is almost identical to what it would be on my site:

-> Vague idea of location or category

-> Type keyword(s) into search / select filters

-> Get list of available results with summaries

-> OPTIONAL: sort results based on a certain criterion

-> Click on the ones that look interesting based on the summary

-> Review all available information on separate page for each result.

TripAdvisor[10]

I could have analysed any of the well-known travel websites but I visit TripAdvisor almost every time I go on holiday as it has so much useful information about the attractions in the city I plan to visit, including reviews by other users, and it's laid out in a way that is easy to use, unlike Expedia for example, which has a very confusing homepage and its search section is not as clearly organised.

Users can upload new attractions too, and for this and their reviews they receive little badges. While this in itself is not a huge reward, it is still nice to be recognised for one's

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[10] http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/

contributions in some way. Eventually, if a user submits enough reviews and ratings, they will move up in the rankings and receive titles such as Senior Reviewer and Top Contributor. This adds weight to their subsequent reviews, helping other users as they will know that such a review is not a paid one by the place it's about but a genuine one by an experienced user. This is something I want to take on board: to recognise regular contributors in some way.

HighMaintenance69
Derby, United Kingdom

Senior Contributor

36 reviews

15 hotel reviews

21 helpful votes

The home page of TripAdvisor features a top navigation bar that takes the user to separate sections of the site. There's a smaller search bar at the top and a very prominent 'advanced search' area with a CTA in the middle of the screen (I did this with Spot That Shot as well). Below the fold there are random recent reviews of random locations; links to articles that could give the user travel ideas; a spotlight destination, and finally lots of quick links to popular destinations. However, my suspicion is that people come to the site with at least some idea of what they are looking for so they wouldn't often get lower down than the big search box on the home page. Nevertheless I followed this structure of providing supporting content lower down the homepage, such as the articles, featured contributor, and recent spots of course.

Searching for hotels
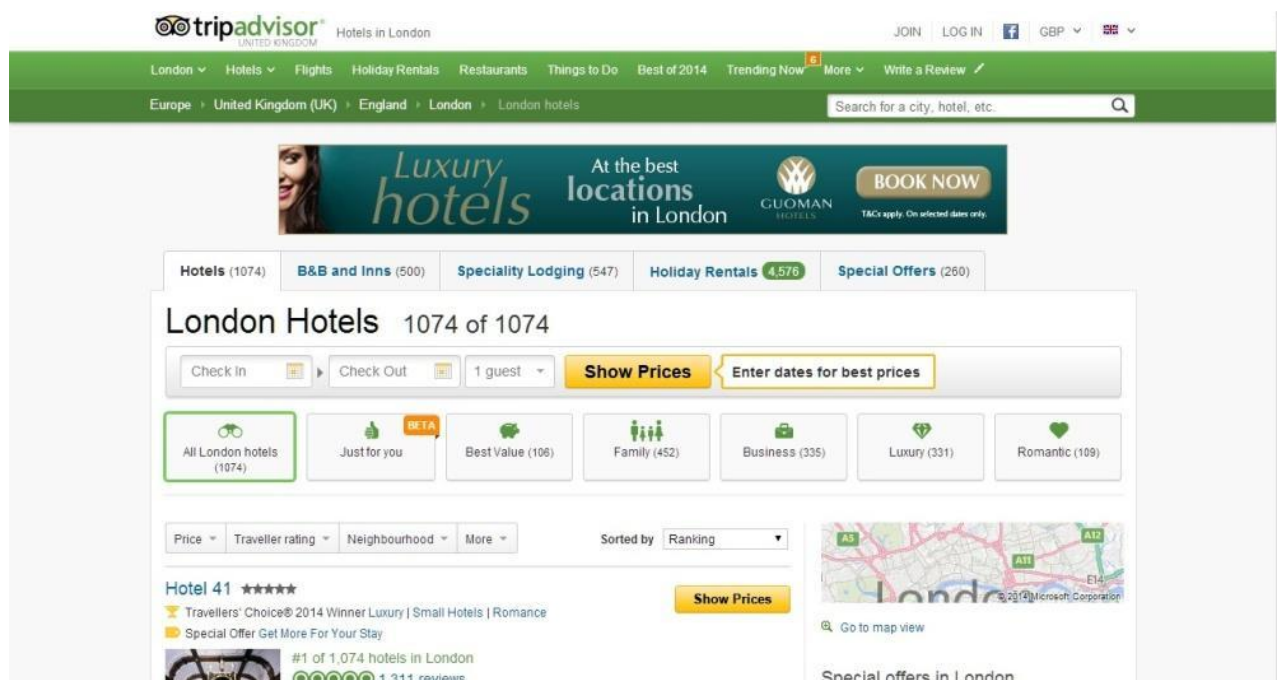
Advertising is incorporated into the design, most prominently as a banner at the top just above the results, and then lower down the page in the right sidebar as text boxes with sponsored links and display ads.

Let's say we are looking for a hotel in London. Hovering over the 'Hotels' top nav option it appears as a popular destination, saving users a few keystrokes. The results appearing can then be categorised based on hotel type, guest circumstances (family/romantic etc) and filtered by price, ranking and star rating. The details of each search result are summarised – photograph, star rating, address, reviews, ranking, and pull quotes from user reviews. These are very useful and allow users to skim the results easily without spending too much time reading details and scrolling through long pages.

The detail page includes more information and options to book – this does not apply to my project though so I am not discussing that aspect.

On the whole I find TripAdvisor a very good example of a non-cognate website that I can learn from and base my layouts on; the clarity of its interface while presenting quite a lot of useful information is its best feature.

Section IV. Commodity

Target audience

The target audience was originally identified as being *UK-based photographers of any skill level and experience, including hobbyists, part-time and full-time photographers, who are on a budget and whose main interest is photographing* <u>people.</u>

NOTE: As the project went on I removed the 'people photographer' criterion as I realised that the site can be a good resource for any kind of photography, if it has good and varied content and it doesn't make sense to limit the scope in that sense. This makes a lot of the below explanation, written before the site build, redundant but as it is an insight into my process at the time I have decided to leave it in.

For the sake of simplicity in this report I will refer to the above target group as 'portrait photographers' since the term 'people photographer' is not a widely used term.

This group of photographers was identified as the target due to the varied backdrop and location requirements of creative editorial, fashion, engagement/wedding and other types of 'people' photography, as well as taking into consideration street photographers looking for interesting candids or posed street portraits. The fact that I myself am a portrait photographer and have experience of trying to find locations for my shoots is also a reason as it gives me first-hand insight into the process.

To gauge the current situation of the target group, I created a quantitative survey with generic questions, keeping the concept of the Thesis Project deliberately ambiguous for the respondents so as to not influence their responses. All they knew was that the project is something to do with locations.

Quantitative research: a survey of 102 photographers

The survey was posted on several platforms portrait photographers visit:

- *100 Strangers* Flickr group – discussion thread[11]
- *The Portrait Group* Flickr group – discussion thread[12]
- *People Portraits* Flickr group – discussion thread[13]
- Digital Photography School – forum[14]

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[11] http://www.flickr.com/groups/100strangers/discuss/ Accessed 13/2/14

[12] http://www.flickr.com/groups/theportraitgroup/discuss/ Accessed 13/2/14

[13] http://www.flickr.com/groups/people/discuss/ Accessed 13/2/14

[14] http://digital-photography-school.com/forum/ Accessed 13/2/14

- Street Portraits – Facebook group (closed, members only)

I specifically asked only portrait photographers to fill in the survey, but as a control measure there was also a survey question asking what kind of photography they do, and this disqualified 4 responses that said 'landscape', 'sports' or 'bird photography'. This left me with **98 valid responses**. Though still a small sample considering the number of visitors interested in photography based on the site stats detailed in the Research Report, it is nevertheless a valuable insight into preferences.

Based on the responses the following conclusions could be drawn up for the target audience:

- Wide range of skills and backgrounds
- Two-thirds are 'reasonably' or 'very' experienced
- Yet over half don't make any money from photography
- Almost half shoot mostly outdoors
- The majority have never paid for locations
- Use of online tools to find locations is low, users rely more on pre-existing knowledge of areas

Despite the above, interest in using such a tool, if one was available, is high with only 8% of respondents saying they would definitely *not* use it.

The full set of raw data is available in **Appendix A** of this report.

The survey's main limitation is that it did not ask for the reasoning for the answers therefore we cannot tell whether the reason people don't pay for locations is that location houses are too expensive, or because people simply don't know where to look. The survey also didn't target UK photographers specifically, but 20% of responses did come from this area (highlighted in blue in Appendix A) with the majority of the others coming from the US. This is not necessarily a limitation in the long run as if the site becomes successful it can branch out and offer local versions for the US which has a much larger population and potential user base.

Qualitative research: focus group

To combat the limitations of the quantitative survey, a smaller scale qualitative questionnaire was set up to act as a virtual focus group. The aim was to receive responses from just 5 people, all from the UK this time. Only 3 out of 5 responded but they

did give me some ideas that I'd not considered before, such as inclusion of public toilet proximity for models to get changed there, for example. They were all excited about the idea of Spot That Shot and their opinion about the Australian photo spot website was that it's too complicated to get to the actual spot detail pages although the content is good.

The full set of responses (plus my original questions) is available in **Appendix B** of this report.

All three respondents were male which was disappointing but I follow the work of several female photographers (Anna Hardy, Kate Hopewell-Smith, Beth Moseley, Lily Sawyer, to name a few) across the UK and I tried to include my impressions of their work when I created my personas. These women shoot portraits, families/babies and weddings mostly, and from what I've gathered via their blogs and personal information, many of them got into photography as a hobby first, shooting outside a lot and working on small non-commercial jobs. This supports my idea of Spot That Shot being potentially quite useful for portrait photographers.

Personas

Based on the research carried out the following personas have been created:

Graham, 50, Head of Operations
Graham lives in a small Norfolk town and commutes into Norwich for his 9-5 job at the local council, where he's worked for 20 years and has a stable position. He leads a middle-class life, shops at Waitrose, enjoys hiking and has a wife and 2 teenage sons. He took up photography after his first son was born and he has been a hobbyist ever since. He likes buying new gear and is interested in photographing families and couples as well as landscapes during his hikes.

Tim, 26, Designer
Tim is a bohemian spirit, who is exploring his ideas as an artist and fashion designer specialising in printed T-shirts. He loves parties and meeting new people, and often asks his friends to be his models to promote his latest shirt designs. Tim is a decent photographer but doesn't have much money to spend on models or a studio, so he tries to do it all around London with amateur models, mostly his friends. He is a bit lazy and prefers convenience above all, even if it

means he has to settle for a randomly chosen location due to lack of research. Despite his financial limits, Tim is tech-savvy and loves gadgets; he always gets his hands on the latest Apple products.

Carrie, 35, Photographer
After her daughter was born Carrie discovered her love of portrait photography and went full time after her network of other young mums proved to be a steady target market. She has her own home studio but likes to do family shoots outside too. She often uses the same locations over and over again as she likes to stick with what she knows; she has little time to spend on scouting new locations. In her free time Carrie likes watching comedy films and gardening. She is thinking of branching out into wedding photography this year.

Spot That Shot aims to fulfil the creative and practical needs of the above three people simultaneously by being
- simple and quick to use
- modern and slick in design and layout but intuitive and self-explanatory at the same time
- eventually full of high quality but varied content.

As I was building the site I constantly asked myself, 'would Graham/Tim/Carrie find what they're looking for this way? Would they be happy with this presentation of the spot info?' and all in all I feel the site suitably caters for all three of them despite their very varied backgrounds.

Google AdWords research

I took a look at Google AdWords to see how many search queries were made for certain keywords *in the UK*, per month (US searches generate much higher volumes than the figures below).

According to the tool's estimates, there was either no available data, or there is generally low to medium competition for the keywords I entered, and search volumes are generally low (approx. 20 a month) except for 'photography ideas' which is 1,300 a month. This is positive and negative at the same time; positive in the sense that there is little competition so the site will be more easily noticed, and negative in the sense that it would be much better if the search volume was high with low competition levels. However we

cannot tell if this is because photographers try a couple of times then give up as they realise there is no such service in the UK so they will not try to search again for the same keywords. I concluded that even if my site does not end up benefitting a large number of people, it is still a valuable learning journey for me and that is a large part of the 'business' case, so it doesn't matter if public interest is low to start with; I can try to generate demand by advertising it across multiple platforms.

However, interestingly, on SEMRush.com I found that among the top keywords for shothotspot.com, several did not include 'photography' – they were simply things like 'places in Buckinghamshire' therefore in the headings of the result pages, the word 'places' is a good candidate for inclusion.

Content

The draft sitemap below is to illustrate the simple structure I planned for Spot That Shot before the build, enabling the user to easily see the available options and to reach their goal in as few clicks as possible.
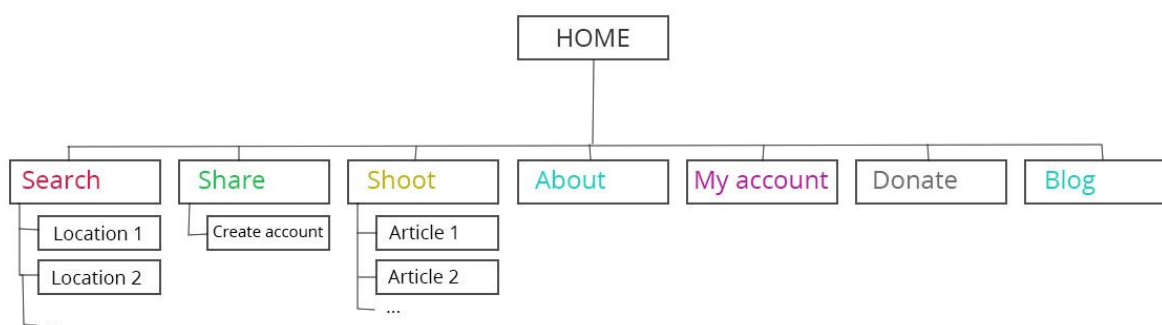
The project is more **a web app** than a website, and the user journey needs to be as simple as possible, with **few levels and clear CTAs**.

The home page must include a search box at the top with advanced search & filtering options that take the user straight to a list of results with the pre-applied filters.

The location pages are dynamic and generated from the database based on the user's search terms; the Shoot pages (eventually renamed 'Read') will contain useful information about location & street photography, including legal information, technical tips and stories from guest authors to drive traffic and provide quality content, thus reinforcing the idea that this is a serious and trustworthy site.

User accounts with a location bookmarking feature will be included in the service offered, and these will facilitate uploading of locations. At first I considered allowing guests to

upload but as the signup process is relatively simple I decided to require signup for added protection against spammers.

Content sources

Content is both internally and externally created. A starting database was built from my and a few other photographers' contributions and users can now add their own. I had planned to incorporate technology to pull in external content from Flickr as well, however the image size requirements for Spot That Shot are strict to keep everything consistent in appearance, and Flickr would not allow direct downloading of user images, only linking to them, which is not what I envisioned so for now this plan is on hold.

Curation and quality

To ensure consistent quality, monitoring of submissions is important however I do not want people to be put off submitting spots by having to wait for their content to appear on the site. To give them instant gratification, moderation is retrospective, with the option for any user to flag subpar content which I will then review and action if necessary.

The user journey

Possible reasons for site visit:

- To find a location (Main objective)
- To submit a location
- To read the information/tips about specific topics (most likely this traffic would come via search engines)

User journey 1: Finding a location

Arrive via home page **>** Type search query into search box **>** View list of results **>** Click on a result OR Search again on same page

If clicked on a result:
>Favourite (in progress) / Rate (in progress) / Comment / Flag

User journey 2: Submitting a location

Arrive via home page **>** Click on 'Share' **>** Choose spot type **>** Fill in form **>** Send **>** Review OR Submit another

- Form broken down into manageable sections as per suggestion in Research Report

User journey 3: Reading informational pages

This type of user is likely to come to such a page directly via search engines, so the info pages need to have content that will make the user want to stay on the website and explore other pages. Suggested articles/CTA button at the top and bottom of article; Share This plugin have been implemented. The Disqus plugin also suggests other posts on the website.

User experience

The keywords for a good user experience on the site have been identified as follows:

1. **Responsiveness**
   This refers to the fact that the site needs to work well across devices, both for practical reasons (give photographers on the go the opportunity to refer to location information from their mobile devices) and to build trust/appear legitimate and professional.

2. **Performance**
   Following on from the responsive requirement, the site also needs to be reasonably fast on mobile connections.

3. **Personalisation**
   Different people will have different location needs, and to avoid redundant searches every time a user wants to refer to a promising location, a bookmarking feature has to be implemented as well as potentially a 'save search preferences' option. This will be tied to user profiles, and is in progress at the moment.

4. **Simplicity**
   The most important keyword. The whole idea of this project is to simplify a process that many users go through but find cumbersome/inefficient. The user wants to get to specific information which needs to be available via as few clicks and forms as possible.

Section V. Firmness

General front-end technologies

The site is written in **HTML5** as the aim is to make it future-proof and make use of the new tags and structure that HTML5 offers. A shiv is in place for older browsers. The site is meant to be more focused on functionality rather than aesthetics so **CSS3** is only used where it is a visual enhancement; core functionality is not reliant on that. To facilitate writing CSS, the pre-processor **Sass** was chosen to hold colour and font stack variables and rem fallback units for IE8.

The use of **JavaScript** and **jQuery** to aid presentation is generally discouraged in the web design community, and in general I agree with this however in Spot That Shot's case, because mapping is a crucial part of the functionality, the site will only be properly usable if JS is enabled. This means I have much more liberty to use it for presentation as well if it is simpler than trying to achieve something with CSS alone. The jQuery library is linked to Google's CDN which users will hopefully have cached on their machines already thus reducing page load times. For the radius slider in the search box, **jQuery UI** is used.

As photographers are generally a relatively tech-savvy target audience, I did not focus on making the site look consistent in IE 7 and 8. The site is usable as the HTML is there, but will not look the same as those browsers will only get the 'mobile' view, without media queries. I am not bothered by this because I did not consider it to be worth my time achieving that for what will be a very low percentage of visitors. Since I started monitoring site stats (May 2014), there have been only 17 sessions out of 685 started from IE (2.48% of the total). Two of those were from IE8, and no IE7 activity has been registered at all. The two IE8 sessions were on September 30 and October 1 so either this was someone checking on our thesis projects just before the presentations, or just a coincidence!

As such I am reassured in my views that it would not have been worth all the effort to make the site look great in IE7 and 8; my audience is much more modern than that. I do plan to implement an IE stylesheet at some point however it is not a priority.

General back-end technologies

PHP and **MySQL** were chosen as the back-end technologies to power the site. Having had no prior back-end programming experience I saw PHP as a reasonable choice to start with as it has a less steep learning curve than **Ruby on Rails**, which was another option I had considered and researched due to the desirability of Ruby skills in today's job market. My third option was **C# ASP.NET** which I have a little experience with due to my previous project management job in such a development environment, but because it is proprietary

technology it is less portable across hosting providers and more troublesome to maintain, with a steeper learning curve than PHP, so I dismissed it. I am not seeing Spot That Shot as a money-making business so I need to reduce the costs involved in making it as much as possible, meaning open-source software is my best bet.

CMS or no CMS?

Again, having had no experience implementing a design into a CMS, I had wanted to use one that was not too difficult to get started with and would have ample support resources online. The reason for wanting to use a CMS was first and foremost the security and robustness it would have provided out of the box.

I liked the idea of **Perch** or **WordPress**, as these are CMSes that use PHP and are generally favoured by designers who don't know a lot about development. Perch had no discount though and the full price was not something I was prepared to pay so WordPress remained as the other option. I started reading *Pro WordPress Theme Development* (Onishi, 2013) to get an idea of what is possible with WordPress, but I did not see how I could base a strongly database-driven site on that technology with my limited experience - and I wasn't convinced it was worth trying at all.

My last option was to not have a CMS at all, only page templates and possibly some admin pages for the more day to day admin tasks such as retrospectively moderating flagged posts and checking new uploads. My reasoning for this choice was that it would help me understand how CMSes are built in terms of interacting with the database, and allow me to practise my PHP skills in a more hands-on way.

The concern with rolling my own mini CMS though was security. Even if someone only wants to hack the site for fun, not for any other malicious intent (stealing email addresses for example), it would be very undesirable for that to happen and I do not want users to lose trust in the site if they realise it was hacked at any point, especially as my site involves user accounts. Reiterating that I am an inexperienced back-end developer, for these security reasons (worried that I could not code it up securely enough) I concluded that a CMS may be the better choice after all.

The other reason a CMS is be useful is that I had planned to have posts (articles) in a section and they'd be updated much more easily if there was a CMS in place. However these pages would be just text and images and there would not be regular updates so they would be manageable via HTML pages and/or a DIY CMS.

By the end of May I was still undecided and asked Adam Onishi's opinion about the value of attempting to build the site with WordPress without over-reliance on plugins or custom

functions that, again, I did not feel I was equipped enough to write myself especially as I was offered a full time job around that time. His response was, in summary, that while he thinks it is doable, it would involve a lot of wrangling that might not be worth the trouble.

Despite this, I had decided to try to make WordPress work for me; I started implementation (more on this in the relevant section later) but in the end settled for a different setup with no CMS and the CakePHP framework.

PHP frameworks

Coding in pure PHP may be troublesome and unnecessary if one can make use of a framework, just like it is the case with JavaScript and the jQuery framework. However, as I was a complete beginner to PHP my view was that it would be too early to use a framework on top. I would not understand it well enough and it would be difficult to troubleshoot. At that time, just to be sure, I did look into what was available and found that the most commonly mentioned frameworks were **CodeIgniter**, **CakePHP**, **Yii** and **Laravel**, each with its own merits and flaws, and various debates in the coding community about how real those merits or flaws are. Laravel's extensive documentation and my personal admiration of Jeffrey Way's work tempted me more than the other three did, but upon reading some of the documentation I concluded that a framework was still too early at that stage as I did not understand enough of the documentation to be able to make it do what I wanted. I did think that towards the end of the build phase, once I become more comfortable with PHP, I can include a framework and convert my code to work with it at that point.

However, all this changed once I realised WordPress wasn't working for me, and I ended up using CakePHP – more on this in the Implementation section.

Plugins, APIs and libraries

Mapping and location search

The most important plugin is for mapping, to help users search for locations and show any given location on a map separately on its detail page. The options I considered for this were **Google Maps/Places API v3**, **OpenStreetMap**, **Bing Maps**, **MapQuest**, and **MapBox**. Having researched the daily quotas for each, their features and documentation, I felt that Google Maps was the best choice for several reasons. Firstly, the quota is high enough – the Maps API allows 25,000 map loads per day, and the Places API (used for geocoding and the autocomplete feature in the search box) allows 100,000 requests which will

definitely be enough for my application[15]. According to Google, only 0.35% of their global Maps user base has traffic so high that they have to pay for these services[16], so the quota is definitely not something a small, new application like mine would reach any time soon. The documentation is extremely straightforward and clear, and I also want to use Google Maps because of the familiarity users would have with it, being the most widespread mapping tool online these days.

As an extra layer, I considered using **Leaflet.js**, an open source mapping library that is lightweight and accessible for both desktop browsers and mobile devices and helps provide interactivity. However in the end this was not used as I didn't deem it necessary – the maps look customised enough for my purposes with a custom pin and infowindows; and I didn't want to increase page load times any more with an extra library seeing as the Places API causes a bottleneck in page load times already, unfortunately.

The Places API is further integrated with **Geocomplete**, a jQuery library that displays an autocomplete dropdown of possible search queries based on the Places API, then converts the selected Places location to latitude and longitude values, thus enabling my application to display spots within a specified radius from the user's original search query.

Commenting

For comments under each location and the tutorials/articles I am using **Disqus** which has SEO advantages and the benefit of anyone being able to comment even as a guest, not requiring an account on my own website. This could help people ask questions easily if they need to, and could lead to them signing up properly if they are happy with the experience. Disqus also provides an easy overview of posts for moderating purposes, and suggests two other posts under each main comment section, thus potentially increasing user engagement with related posts.

Image uploading

The GPL-licensed PHP class **class.upload.php** by Verot.net was chosen as an easy-to-configure image uploading class for the back-end. This can upload, crop and resize images in all the ways I need it to, to generate the three different versions of each user-uploaded image to be used across the website in different places.

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[15] https://developers.google.com/maps/faq (Accessed 5/4/14)

[16] http://googlegeodevelopers.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/understanding-how-maps-api-usage-limits.html (Accessed 5/4/14)

External images

I had planned to use the **Flickr API** to pull in images hosted on Flickr if a user chooses that method of submitting a location. A machine tag would have been generated upon submission and the user would have had to go to Flickr to add the tag provided to the image of the location they submitted. Having thought about the art direction of my site though, and the fact that the machine tag process adds an extra offsite step that could distract users and deter them from choosing that method, I decided not to implement this. The limitations on the ways Flickr images could be displayed (without cropping, for example, and not really as images only embedded links) proved to be too much trouble for what they'd be worth, although I may revisit this at a later stage if site activity increases.

Hosting

Bandwidth and storage space are factors to consider when choosing a hosting plan, and it would be good to have access to above the web root although with shared hosting this, as far as I am aware, is not possible at all. I needed to be able to turn on mod_rewrite in my .htaccess files due to the CakePHP application, and have access to at least one extra MySQL database. I chose **1&1** as my provider because they have very good 24/7 support and their Unlimited plan allows me unlimited bandwidth and ample storage for images. I host two other websites under this plan already, and as such, until I exhaust my storage space on the server, Spot That Shot will not cost me extra for the time being. If it starts costing me, I will evaluate advertising options and whether it is worth keeping the site online or not.

Section VI. Delight

The target audience for my project is varied in gender, age and lifestyle, so the design needed to be universal and generic enough to appeal to this broad spectrum of users. On top of that, a web app's design needs to be functional and straightforward above all, and light enough (i.e. no heavy textures or unnecessary imagery) to perform well on mobile networks.

Despite these considerations it is important to establish a strong, recognisable brand for the app. This led to my decision to go for a flat, modern style with a focus on mainly iconography and colours to guide the user's eye to the most important details. Thus, my branding is heavily based on an accent colour and simple, clean typography to be memorable but unobtrusive enough to allow the spot information to take centre stage.

Style tiles

A style tile was used to present initial ideas; after the crit session it was revised to reflect the feedback. As the implementation started and the site was gradually designed in the browser, I made various further changes to the style, detailed below.

*The first iteration of the style tile*
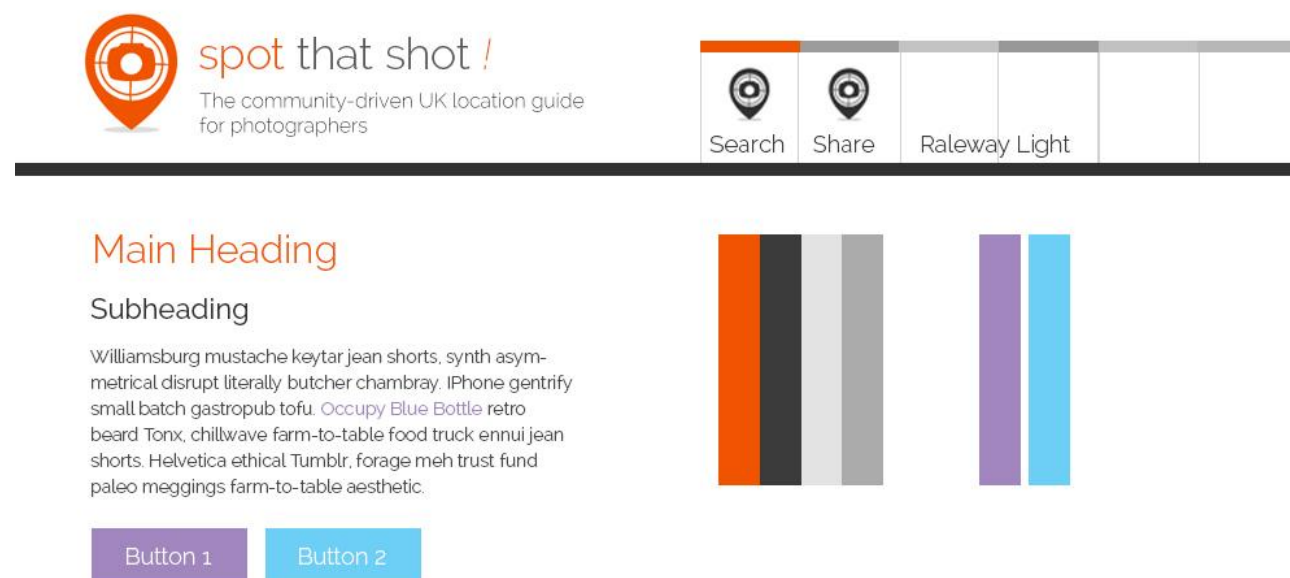
The revised tile
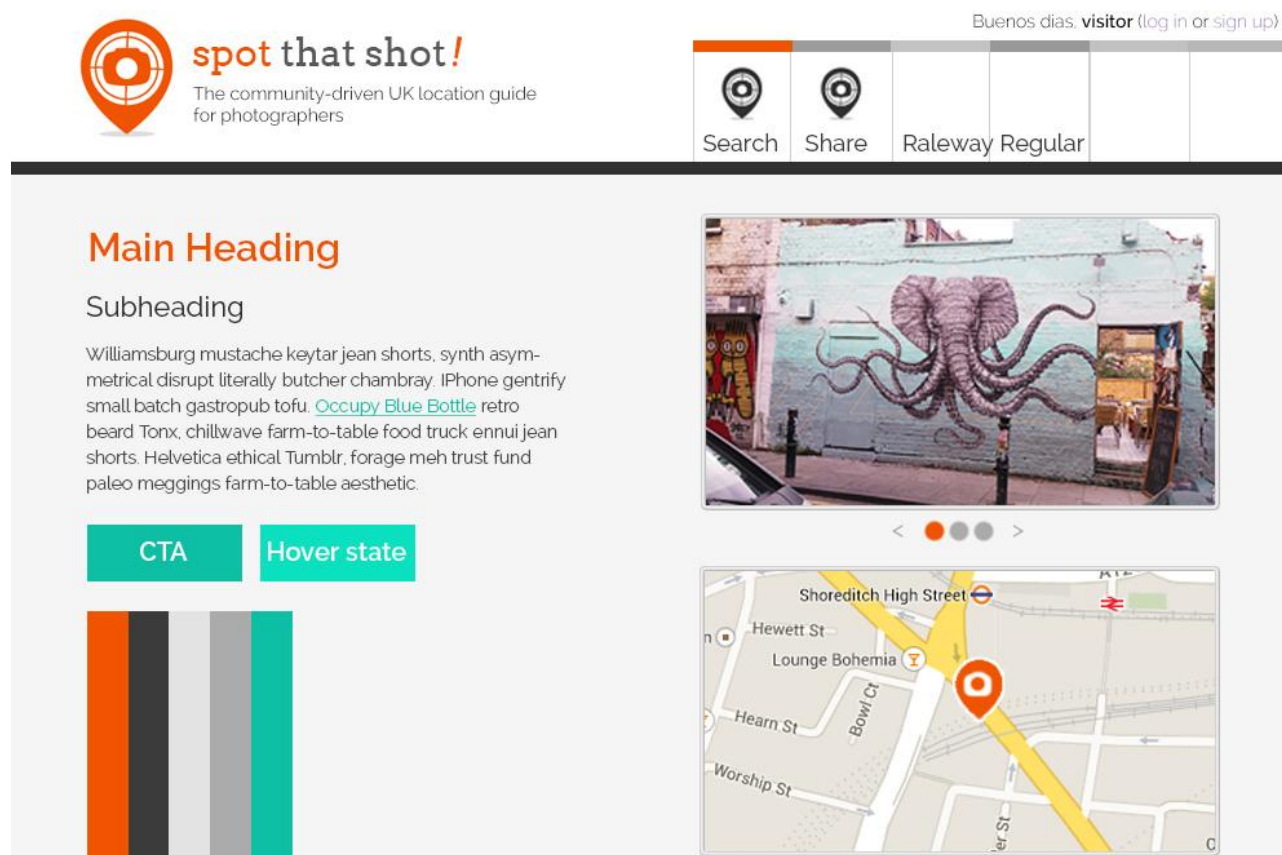
Figure X: The final website

About us / FAQs

Spot That Shot is a brand new web app and we thought you might have a few questions about it, so here's a general overview of what we're about and what you can do here. For technical issues and help using the site, head on over to our dedicated Help page. And if you still have unanswered questions, feel free to email us at hello[at]spotthatshot.co.uk or tweet us @SpotThatShot!

- How did Spot That Shot come about?
- How do I use the site? What do I get out of it?
- Can you make the site do [X] / offer [Y]?
- How come it's free? Is there a catch?
- I've come across duplicate or low-quality uploads. It's annoying, can you do something about that?
- Who is behind the site's development?

How did Spot That Shot come about?

Branding elements

Colour

To build trust and familiarity I wanted to use a warm colour for the brand; blue is known to build trust too, but there are so many blue websites out there, especially web apps relying on Bootstrap that I wanted to steer clear of this and establish a more unique brand identity. After considering warmer tones of purple, red and orange I settled on orange because purple is often identified with feminism and might be seen as too feminine (close to pink), while red is the colour of danger and would be too stark an accent colour. This left a reddish orange shade that I do not often encounter for brands, helping mine stand out more. The colour was slightly more orange at first but I then darkened it so it is now almost red depending on what monitor it's viewed on.

Neutral, less saturated colours were chosen to complement the orange for the interface design, as per the initial idea below. Orange, cyan, off-black and light grey are the main colours, with a light yellow used as a highlight in certain areas. Originally I had planned to use gold as an accent colour instead of cyan but the design lacked punch that way.

Initial colour ideas

The first style tile included two variations on a CTA/link accent colour: purple and blue. I was undecided about which one worked better, or if they worked at all. In response to the feedback that said they don't work very well, I amended the colour to a brighter, more eye-catching turquoise which was used for the holding page design but was updated to cyan before the full site launched, and looks much better as its coolness counterbalances the warm oranges that are abundant across the site. The text colour is an off-black and light grey is used as a background and soft accent/border colour. It was tricky to choose colours that worked with the very striking orange I was set on using, but I feel the current colours work well together.

The final colours

| #ed3b1d | #00d3ec | #404040 | #fefede | #bababa |
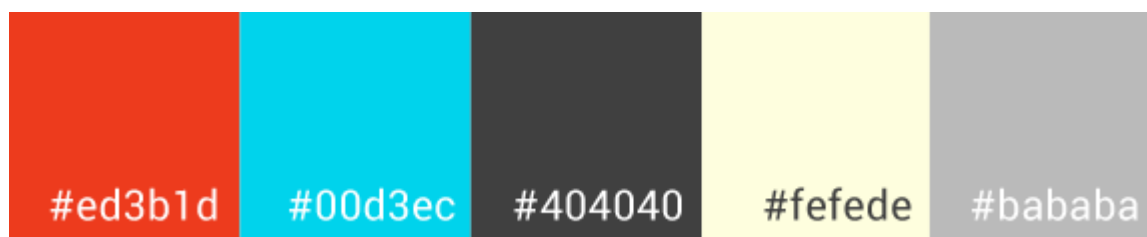
2. Logo & icon

As this is an application that relies on user engagement to establish a community, it needs to have an easily identifiable logo, with variants of the shape to be used across the site as map pins or other markers where required. The shape needs to convey the purpose of the site: mapping locations and photography, and has to work with the brand name, Spot That Shot, itself a play on words alluding to firearms as well as photography. The logo has to be simple enough to work in monochrome and be scaleable to very small sizes without losing detail (or if detail is removed it should still remain recognisable).

This led me to brainstorm variations on a pin with a crosshair and a camera inside; the goal was to have a shape with enough solid colour to make it work in orange and as an inverted version as well (i.e. as a punched out shape from a solid colour).

The version both myself and the class liked best was the version in the middle. This was easy to simplify into a pin version for map markers in a smaller size.

The text (which is part of the full logo) was at first done in the Raleway typeface, but it lacked personality and was a little sterile, not to mention unbalanced with the chunkier pin icon. The second iteration saw it changed to Arvo which worked much better. The tagline that can be used on larger versions of the logo is Roboto, to fit in with the rest of the site's design.

I also kept in mind the option of displaying the pin centered above the text in the logo, not just to the left of the text, as some designs I do may require this (for example, the holding page looked much better with the centered version). The current logo design allows for this.

The logo was created using Adobe Illustrator.

Initial logo ideas

The final logo

3. Navigation

I was inspired by the Green Belt Festival's[17] navigation that uses simple icons and colour to highlight each section:
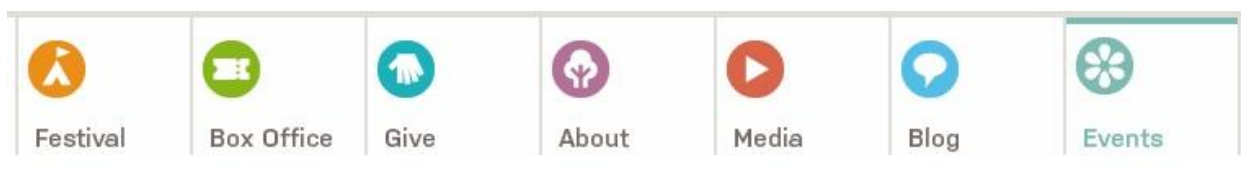
My aim was to simplify this further, with the icons themselves one colour and an irregular shape, similar in style to the ones used in the About section on this page[18]:

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[17] http://www.greenbelt.org.uk/ Accessed 8/10/14

[18] http://chilicongraphic.com/ Accessed 8/10/14
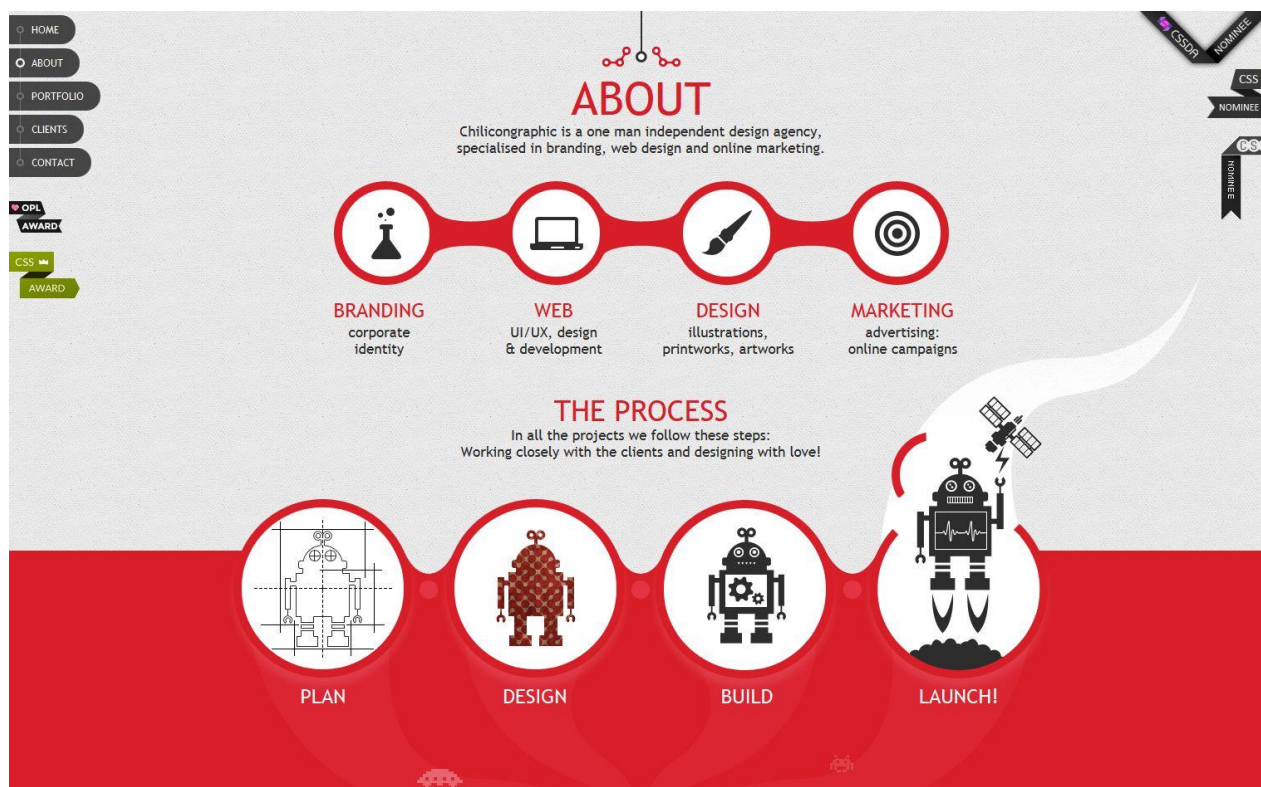
This translates well to smaller screens where icons are often easier to navigate than simple text labels. The following sketches show my initial ideas about how this would work on smaller screens then moving onto medium and larger ones. The final design that went live is almost exactly as I had planned it.
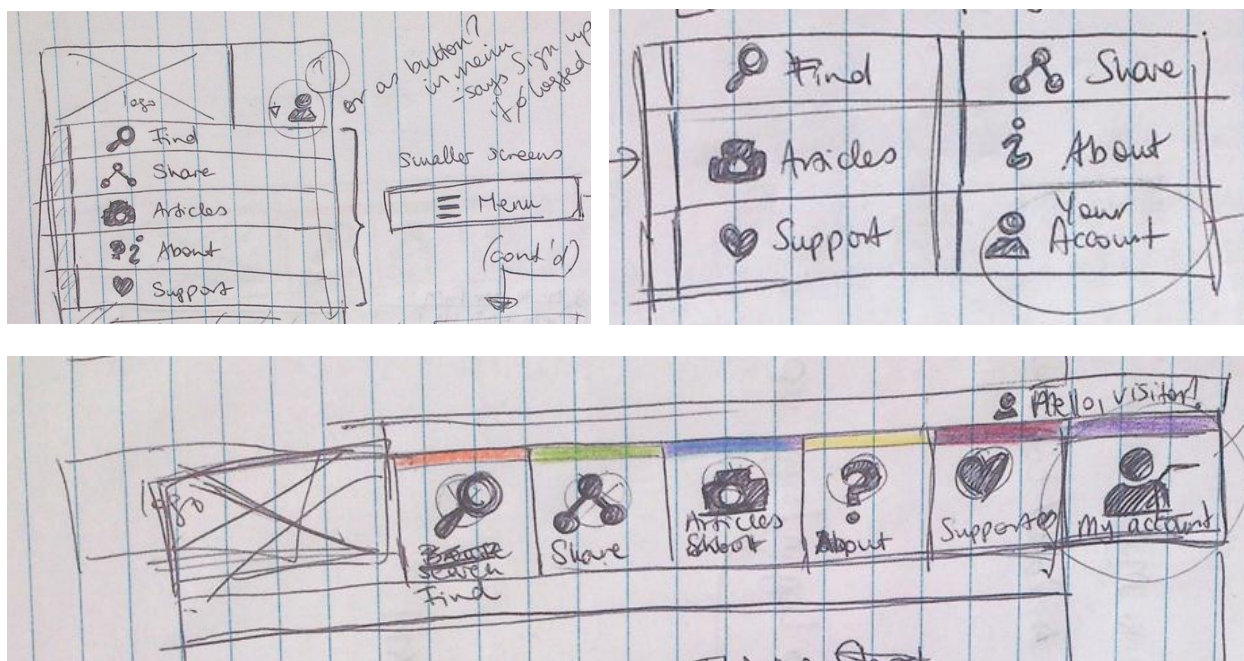
The style tiles suggest that my original idea was to grey out the inactive sections in the top navigation, but in the end I chose to keep them coloured and have a light grey tint to

the active tab. However, following feedback received after the presentations I am considering changing this and going back to the original plan.

4. Typography

Font choice plays a part in performance, since too many different web font requests can slow the app down. To complement the flat design and aid legibility I thought to use a sans-serif font that was designed for use on the web. It had to be one with various weights and styles to allow me some variety for headlines and CTAs. Some very popular ones, Open Sans, Roboto and Droid Sans were dismissed initially because while they are very legible, they also lack personality and considering I only plan to use that one font on my site, I wanted something a little more playful. Therefore I chose Raleway, which fulfils all the above criteria. The second iteration of the style tile uses Raleway Regular, Medium and Semibold.

Interestingly, shortly after I started converting my prototype into a full site, I decided I didn't like Raleway after all for this site because it's all about images and information, and it was just a little too difficult to skim-read especially on smaller displays. Therefore Roboto was chosen as a font with admittedly less character but very good legibility.

At first the logo typography was also in Raleway (Light) but feedback was that it is too light and doesn't stand out enough. As such I ended up changing it to Arvo, a slab serif that works well with Raleway and has more personality but retains the geometric nature and the shape of the 'a' Raleway uses. Even after the change to Roboto for the main site, I kept Arvo as it works equally well with Roboto in this case.

The CTA typography was also updated to be larger and bolder to draw more attention.

5. Maps and images

In response to the feedback received after the Delight crit, I added a map and an image slider to the revised style tile. These are meant to show roughly how I imagined them in the location detail pages. In my opinion this proves that the rest of the design doesn't distract from these elements.

The final version of this module is a tabbed system that blends unobtrusively into the overall design.

The final gallery/map element
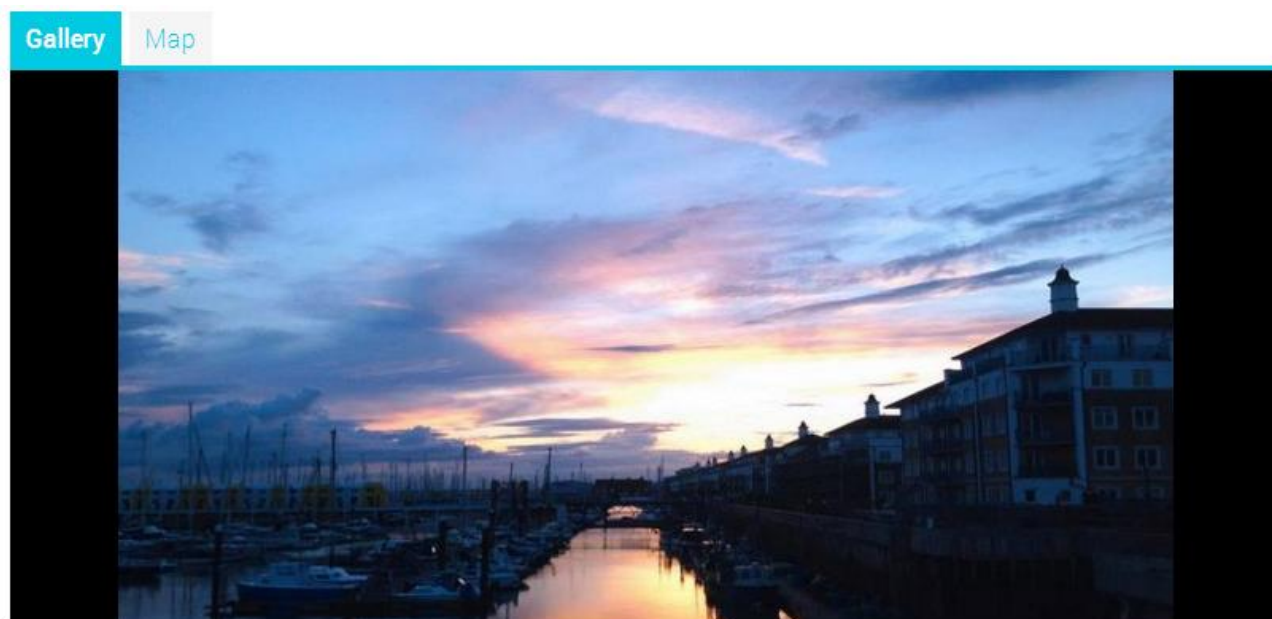
Section VII. Implementation

Even before the visuals for the site had been more or less decided, a prototype for the site was already in progress to ensure I had a clear idea of how the search would work. This was shown during the Prototype presentations in May 2014 and was using the Google Places API with Geocomplete to search for spots. At this stage it was all written in pure PHP and the MySQL query was also a long manually written one, but it worked and displayed results, with certain details, in a list view.

The next step was creating the **spot details page HTML template**, which the results clicked through to. This was done by manipulating the query strings in the links, depending on what the ID of the spot in question was in the database. The page was populated with data pulled from the database, again all using pure PHP.

After this I built the HTML templates for the **homepage**, **Reading Room landing page**, and **generic content pages** (i.e. single articles, About, Support, etc). These were styled as they were being coded in HTML.

During this phase I was also working on a **holding page** (see next page) to go up as soon as possible so that I could promote the site and drum up interest even before the full version went live. This featured two opportunities to sign up to an alert (via MailChimp), at the beginning and the end of the page, so that when the full version does go live I can alert a user base to that. This was done in flat HTML and CSS, went live on 10 June and was available online until 6 September.

Front-end implementation: steps and challenges

There were various smaller challenges I came across during the implementation phase; nothing major but put together I did spend a lot of time with tweaks. At times these were due to my 'design in the browser' approach, while I experimented with what looked best, working my way up from mobile view to a wide desktop at 1300 pixels wide.

1. CSS vs Sass

Using Sass for basic things such as colour, size, and font stack variables was useful, but at one point my situation was such that I had to use various other computers that I could access other than my own. These didn't have Scout (Sass compiler) installed and I thought that it would be fine to switch to pure CSS at that stage, which ended up becoming quite long-winded and challenging to maintain. The final CSS file is over 2,000 lines, although it's minified on the server reducing its size to around 70% of the original.

spot that shot!

The hotspot & location database
for UK photographers

Coming soon

Be the first to hear about our launch!

Your email address:

☐ I'd also like to sign up as a contributor (Learn more)

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES*

*Don't worry - we won't use your information for anything other than
sending you very occasional updates about Spot That Shot. Promise.

Have you ever been out on a photo shoot and spent too long **looking for the perfect background?**

Did you ever wish you could just open your favourite map app, type **"nearby photo locations"** and
instantly find a beautiful, hidden gem recommended by many other photographers?

Wouldn't it be great if you could **share a cool spot you discovered** with fellow photographers, and
discuss location options in general?

If you answered 'yes' to any of those, Spot That Shot is the app for you.

Spot That Shot helps you find, review and suggest the UK's best photo spots and locations in only a
few clicks and also upload your own photos of them. Plus, it's a web app so you can access it
anywhere via any device.

We're launching soon so if you're interested sign up to our updates!

How it works

1. Shoot

Seen a good spot? Take a
shot of it with your camera
or smartphone (geotagging
recommended).

2. Share

Upload the spot plus a few
details about it to Spot That
Shot. Sharing is caring!

3. Search

Your spot will be searchable
by other photographers -
and you can search for
spots uploaded by others,
too.

Interested in contributing?

That's awesome, and we'd love to hear from you! The more of us there are to build this resource, the
better it will be for everyone. Even if you only share one spot, that's already one more than we'd have
without you!

As a way of saying thank you, we'd like to feature all our contributors on this page until we launch, and
we have further special recognition in store after that for those who help lift this project off the ground.
Of course once the site is live you can sign up and share spots at any time as well.

Our lovely supporters

As this holding page is brand new, there is nothing here yet, but will be populated very soon!

Sounds good, what do I do?

If you sign up for updates and tick the *'I'd also like to sign up as a contributor'* box then we'll get in
touch via the email address you provided with the guidelines for sharing spots. You can also contact
us at hello [at] spotthatshot.co.uk if you have any questions.

Your email address:

☐ I'd also like to sign up as a contributor

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES!

spot that shot!

2. Sticky footer

This was one of the fiddliest aspects of the build. I wanted a footer that stuck to the bottom of the page no matter how short the preceding content area is (i.e. doesn't jump up to the middle of the page if that's only the amount of content on the page). I tried to make it work without extra HTML wrappers around the header, main content and footer, but this proved impossible and I ended up putting a wrapper div around these three elements, and the footer now works based on Ryan Fait's method[19].
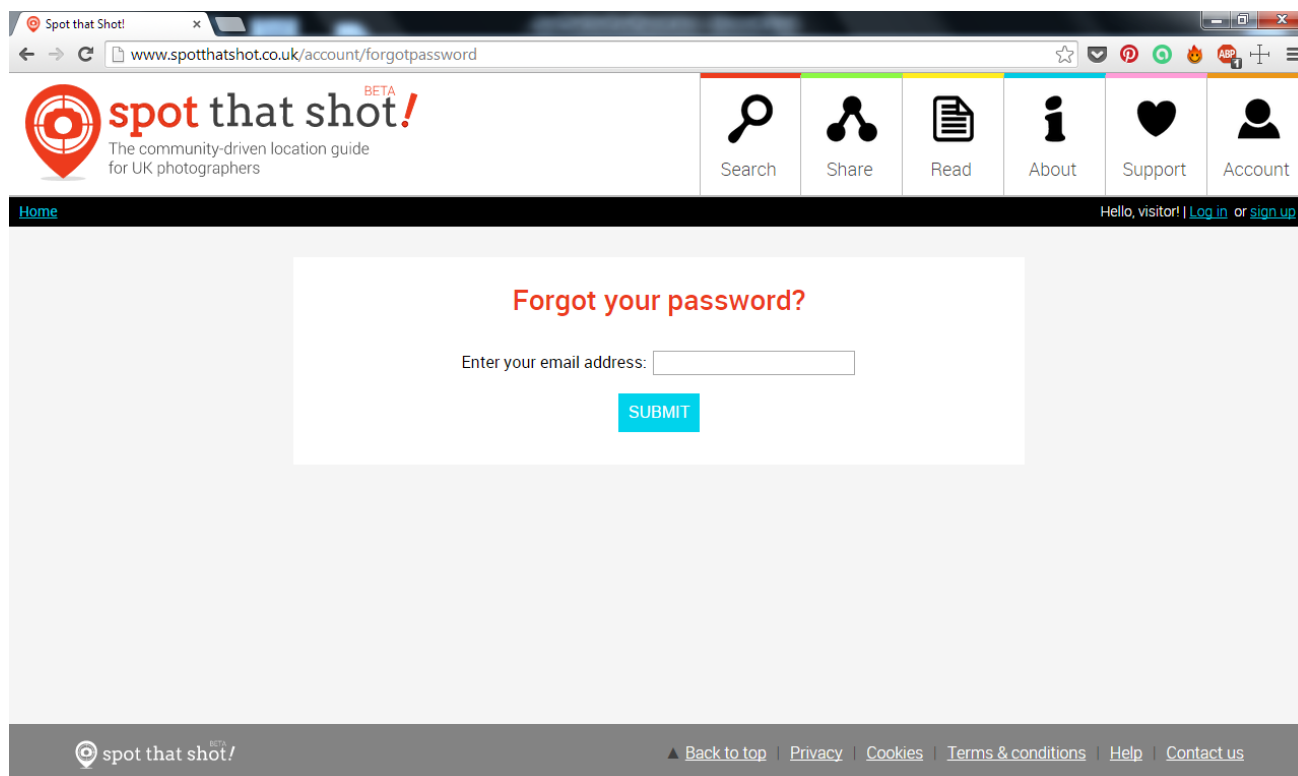
3. Image list/grid

I am using a regular list + highlighted item styling on the Reading Room index page and the Search index page in the Browse Spots section. This is responsive and goes from a simple list to a 2, then 3 column grid.

Styling the rows to make it fully responsive and space the columns equally required the use of CSS3 selectors and a lot of testing.

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[19] http://ryanfait.com/html5-sticky-footer/ Accessed 11/8/14
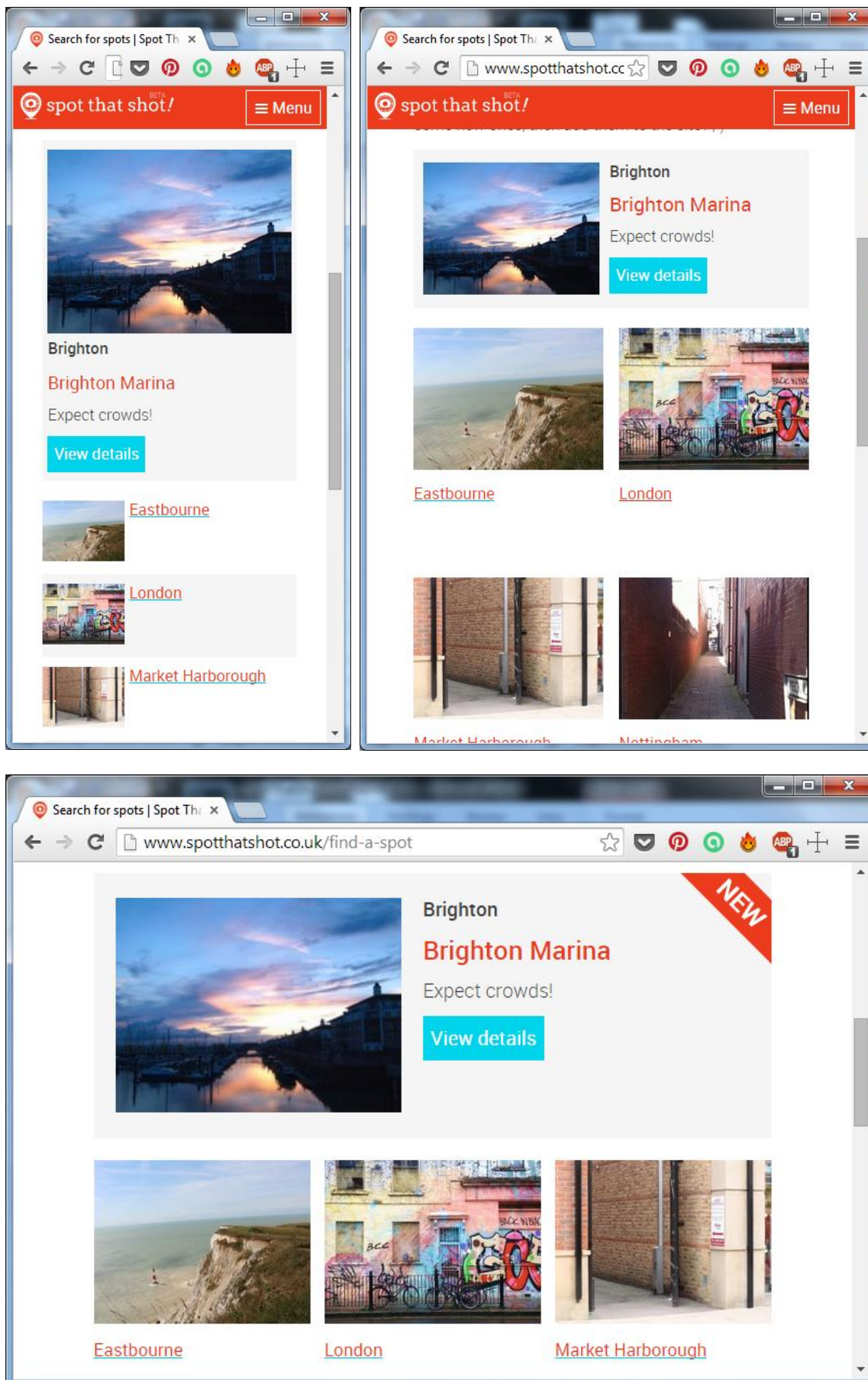
4. WordPress theme

As per the original plan detailed in the Firmness section of this report, I had planned to use WordPress as my CMS and would therefore have had to create a theme first, before setting up the database and the custom taxonomies for each spot, custom functions and the rest.

Following the steps in *Pro Wordpress Theme Development* the theming part of the process went well despite being time-consuming; although not completed the theme worked with the homepage and the spot details pages implemented and I had started working on setting up custom taxonomies for the spot details page template. I considered treating each spot as a 'post' but set up as a custom 'spot' post type (aptly, only rearranging the letters in the original word!) so users could enter all the details there.

Unfortunately this is where it became too complicated for my understanding and hours of fruitless internet searches led to shelving the back-end for a while and working on the CSS again.

5. Google Maps and Places APIs with Geocomplete

These were not difficult to implement at all, bar one complication that required a change in the back-end. I used the official Google[20] and Geocomplete[21] documentations to find spots and plot them on the maps appearing on various pages. I added a custom marker image and an infowindow above each of these on mouseover. The markers on the results page (where several markers are shown together) are clickable and lead to the individual spot page, on which the marker isn't clickable and there's no infowindow, since there's no reason for that.

6. jQuery image slider on 'Location' type spot detail page

For spots that are 'locations' (i.e. not simple backgrounds but places where a shoot can take place from various angles) the user can upload three images, which are displayed in a simple responsive slider I wrote myself using jQuery. I didn't want to use a library for the slider to reduce dependencies and page load times. The navigation chevrons are simply large < and > symbols and have ample padding for smaller viewports to easily be clickable. At a later date I plan to experiment with adding touch events for swiping on touchscreens.

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[20] https://developers.google.com/maps/documentation/javascript/tutorial Accessed 6/10/14
[21] http://ubilabs.github.io/geocomplete/ Accessed 6/10/14
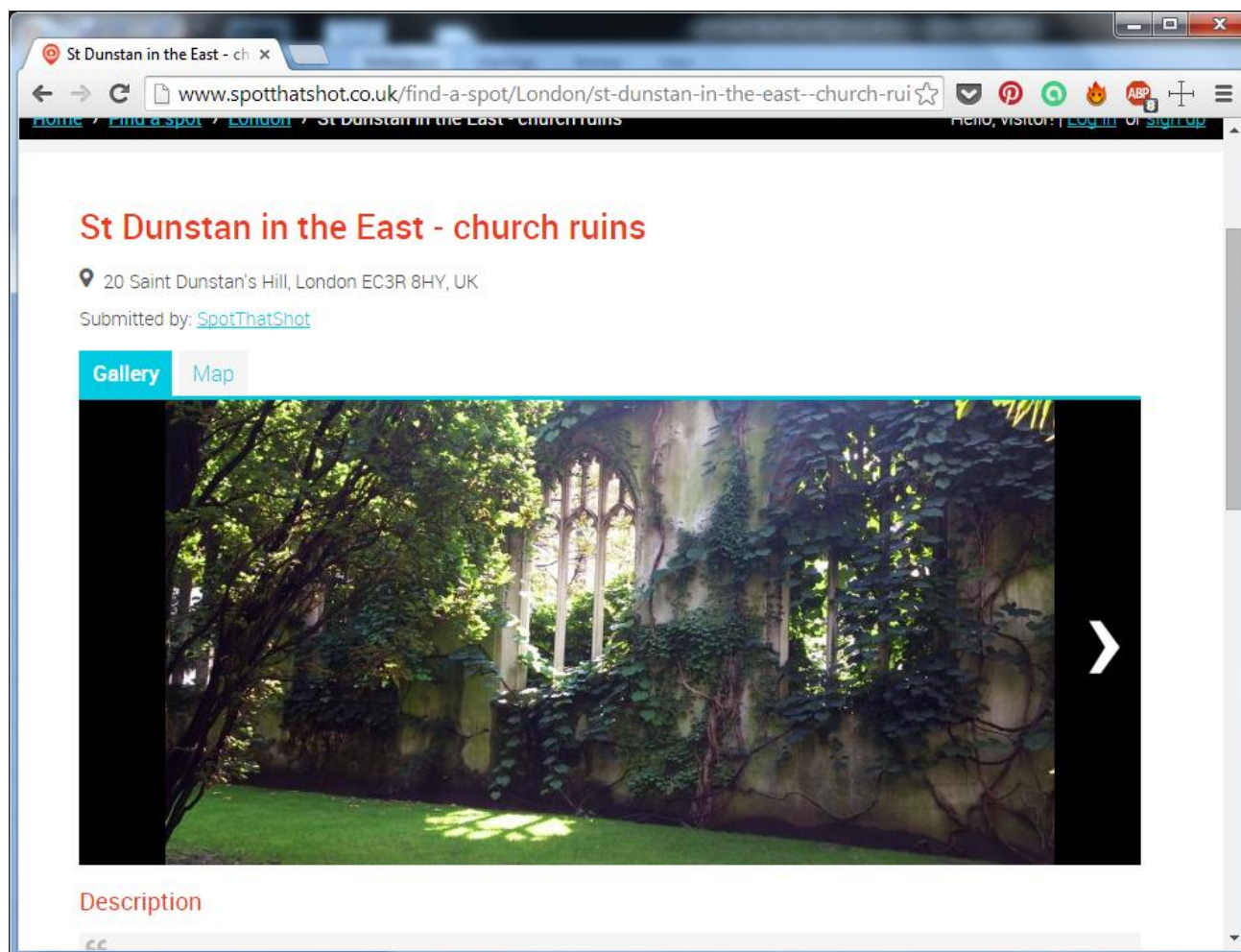
7. Web fonts

The site uses two web fonts: Roboto and a custom icon font I put together using the IcoMoon web app's stock icons combined with some that I added myself. The icon font is embedded using @font-face in the CSS and Roboto is loaded via Google Fonts simply because the likelihood that the user already has it cached on their machine is high. Roboto was served almost 8 billion times between 30 September and 6 October 2014. I did experiment with embedding Roboto as @font-face too, but this would have actually been slower because of the lack of caching on each new machine I tried it with.

Font views in the last week

7,958,443,664

This is the total number of times Roboto was served by the Google Font API over the last week.
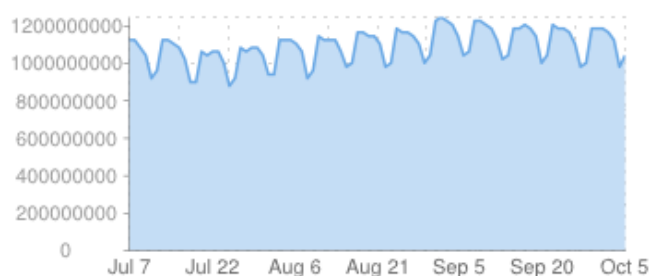
8. MailChimp signup form

Setting up the mailing list meant people would be trusting me with their email addresses, and trusting me not to spam them. To reinforce this trust I created a privacy policy page confirming their details would not be passed on to third parties, and this was prominent on the signup form itself as well.

It is important to make signup boxes as simple as possible and mine consisted only of an email address box to make it as quick as possible. In every email the user receives they have the option to unsubscribe – this is the default if you use MailChimp.

9. Responsive logo

The logo image is different depending on viewport size; on smaller viewports it is just the logo without the tagline, and above 768 px it is swapped using JavaScript to the larger version. This is not normally an ideal solution but I did not want to use the background-image technique for the logo swap because if the CSS fails it would still not work, and has the added minus of nothing displaying at all if that happens, while if the JavaScript fails at least there is still a logo image there in the HTML.

To ensure the logo is sharp on HD/retina displays, it was implemented using SVG with a PNG fallback; however the only browsers among my target ones that don't support SVG are IE8 (extremely low usage, see Site analysis) and Android browser 2.3 which was tested to ensure the PNG fallback is activated.

Back-end implementation

Due to the difficulties and uncertainties I encountered during my research on WordPress, in July I made the decision to switch to CakePHP to power my website. I had not anticipated the length of time required for, and complexity of, the task I had undertaken and with a full time job it was not possible for me to do everything myself, considering my extremely limited back-end development experience. I therefore enlisted help of an experienced back-end developer, discussed the options with him and he agreed that CakePHP is a good fit for Spot That Shot. He is experienced in working with object-oriented MVC frameworks but had not used PHP before, so the project was beneficial for both of us: I would be spared a lot of time and could allow myself to focus on finishing the front-end (mostly the mapping and responsive CSS), generate content and promote the site. The MVC aspect of CakePHP also meant that we could work on the project simultaneously and mostly unconnected with each other, as he mostly only touched the files containing the logic so did not interfere with my front-end work in progress.

Tasks the developer was solely responsible for:

- Setting up the user account system and related verification on pages where it is needed
- Implementing image uploads using class.upload.php
- Configuring permalinks (SEO-friendly URLs) and other URL routing tasks
- Setting cookies to ensure cookie policy notification doesn't appear again

These are therefore not explained in detail in this report.

Step 1: Database setup

I set up a MySQL database with 5 tables: *spots*, *users*, *images*, *posts*, and *suggestededits*.

- *Spots* holds information about each separate spot and contains a foreign key column, *uploaded_by*, linking to Users
- *Users* holds information about each separate user
- *Images* holds image paths to each spot image on the server and contains a foreign key column *spot_id* linked with Spots
- *Posts* holds blog post data including the body of the post itself
- *Suggestededits* is for collecting flagged spots and edits users suggest to them (no activity recorded here yet)

The naming conventions for this follow the CakePHP ones to facilitate quick retrieval of data without writing lengthy queries.

Step 2: Creation of Reading Room back-end

When it was decided that we would use CakePHP for the back-end I started to read up on it myself and built the Reading Room section based on the CakePHP Cookbook's beginner tutorial[22]. The learning curve was steep but the logic itself was not complicated - it was more about finding out the right syntax or function to use. The step by step instructions helped me create the blog without problems.

Step 3: Integration of pure PHP and MySQL code with CakePHP

I had already written a reasonable amount of back-end code and MySQL queries for my prototype and then the rest of the page templates I had coded up, but for these to work with CakePHP they had to be repurposed and rearranged. Some of this I did myself but most of it was the developer as he worked much faster than me and I had already done it once even if that code would not get used.

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[22] http://book.cakephp.org/2.0/en/tutorials-and-examples/blog/blog.html Accessed 6/10/14

Step 4: Separate work

At this point we worked on our separate tasks and backed up all the files every day to Dropbox.

Step 5: Deployment

The first version of the site (which included the Share, About and Account sections plus the footer links) was deployed on 6 September 2014. The deployment checklist was as follows:

- Amend .htaccess files to suit live server environment
- Compress images
- Minify JavaScript and CSS
- Change database access credentials in CakePHP config file

Similarly, the full version of the site followed this checklist when it went live on 28 September 2014.

Performance testing: Google PageSpeed

It was difficult to test the site's real speed locally since everything loaded much faster, therefore once the site went live I used Google's PageSpeed to evaluate the performance of the site.

On Mobile the homepage scores 63/100 and on Desktop 76/100, with the following suggestions:

- Eliminate render-blocking JavaScript and CSS in above-the-fold content
- Enable compression
- Leverage browser caching
- Minify HTML

The first list item is the one causing the most concern (the others are only yellow warnings), and one I wrangled with quite a lot to no avail. The main bottleneck is, as far as I can tell, the Google Places library that must be loaded in the <head> and can't be loaded asynchronously for it to work properly.

To offset that performance overhead I will look into fixing the other three points as soon as possible if my shared hosting plan allows compression and caching settings to be changed.

On a page that doesn't use any mapping libraries, such as the individual article page http://www.spotthatshot.co.uk/posts/introducing-the-full-site-new-features-whats-still-cooking-and-your-chance-to-be-featured-contributor, PageSpeed gives it a score of **77/100 (Mobile)** and **86/100 (Desktop)** with only the browser caching suggestion highlighted in red on the Mobile tab, with the other suggestions the same as the first list above in yellow so this is much more encouraging.

Performance testing: Yslow

The Yslow Chrome extension gave my site a performance score of **80 (Grade B).** It also refers to setting HTTP headers to manage caching better, using cookie-free domains and a CDN to serve static resources such as images, and recommends combining my JavaScript files into one, however the latter is not feasible as most of those are external JS files such as the jQuery library and Google Maps+Places.

Yslow seems to have some limitations though and I am not sure how reliable it is. It gave my compression settings (such as gzipping) an A, even though there is no gzipping on my site. It also gave my image scaling a C, saying I should not set image sizes in the HTML, but that is not happening either so perhaps we need to take its assessment with a grain of salt – or perhaps sugar?

Layout testing

The site was tested in the following browsers:

- Android Browser (Android 2.3)
- Chrome (Windows, Mac, Android 4.1, Android tablet)
- Dolphin (Android 4.1, Android tablet)
- Firefox (Windows & Mac)
- Internet Explorer 8 (IETester for Windows)
- Internet Explorer 9-11 (Windows)
- Mobile Safari (iPad 3)
- Opera Next (Windows)
- Safari (Mac)

The only unreliable testing environment is of course IETester but as I was unable to find a machine with real IE8 installed on it already, or an install file for the software online, this was the closest solution, but it's already been said that IE8 is not a priority.

Section VIII. Site analysis

The site went online in three stages: first a holding page, then a limited functionality version that only allowed user account creation and sharing of spots, then finally the full version.

Google Universal Analytics (GA) was implemented to track statistics right from the start. However, the actual numbers are higher than those logged by Google because the script can be blocked via browser plugins such as AdBlock Plus. I tested this myself and it did not record any of my own sessions from the desktop, neither in real time nor retrospectively, when ABP was active. Seeing as photographers are generally a tech-savvy user group (as mentioned earlier regarding the negligible usage of Internet Explorer 9 and below recorded by GA) we can assume that at least a certain percentage of users has an ad blocker installed.

Holding page (16 May – 5 September 2014)

Pre-launch promotion

The existence of the holding page was promoted via the following platforms:

- 100 Strangers Flickr group forum (global user base)
- Digital Photography School forum (global user base, mostly US though)
- London Photo Walk Facebook group (UK user base)
- My personal Facebook page (global user base)
- Personally to some of my photographer acquaintances

This is admittedly not a huge number of promotional avenues and is something that in retrospect I realise I should have focussed on more.

Statistics

While the holding page was active (over a three and a half month period), GA logged **343 sessions**, **229 unique users** and **886 pageviews**. The site was only actually one page, so the reason for this discrepancy between sessions and pageviews is most likely the existence of an extra iframe at the bottom of the page as this was the only way I could display the MailChimp signup form twice on the same page. That iframe also had the GA code in it, and when someone signed up for the email alerts they were redirected to the homepage after the process was completed, logging another pageview. At this stage, the bounce rate and pageviews/session stat is not relevant either due to the inaccuracies caused by the iframes.

The MailChimp alert list received **20 signups** during the holding page's 'lifespan', 15 of those coming from email addresses I did not recognise and can be considered organic leads. This meant I had at least 15 people I could alert as soon as the final site went live.

On 15 June I did another round of promotion via the channels in the list above, and this caused a spike in sessions (41 on that day). After this it was encouraging that the site received 2-3 views a day even without further promotion.

Restricted functionality application (6 – 27 September 2014)

The reason to put this live before the finished product was to have a starting database of spots, hopefully from various cities, by the time the full version is done so users would not be restricted to spots from London.

This phase of the site included another round of promotions via the aforementioned channels, and in addition, a Twitter account was created a week before the launch. Occasionally I would browse Twitter for UK photographers' profiles and follow them, hoping for a follow back, which worked more often than not, although I did not have enough time to dedicate to this and the Spot That Shot Twitter account now has 19 followers while following 25 people. I did not want to mass follow people all at once as if they looked at the account's stats it would be very obvious, so I wanted to space it out.

The news about the site going up was also shared this time on my photography business' Facebook page as well as my personal one.

Statistics

Although this stage was only three weeks long the statistics were comparably much better than for the holding page: **188 sessions** from **143 users** were logged. The holding page received less than twice these number despite being online for over five times as long. The pageview statistics are even better: **2,013** compared to the previous period's 886.

The average session duration of over 10 minutes and the average number of pages per session (10) was extremely encouraging, as was the **43.09% bounce rate** which is healthy bordering on excellent (Walter, 2008, p. 77). Walter also states that a high number of pageviews compared to unique visitors may be a red flag indicating it takes too many clicks for users to navigate to the desired content, but having looked at the user flow it is clear that most of them were interested in the About or other informational pages, then went on to sign up or at least look at the signup form.
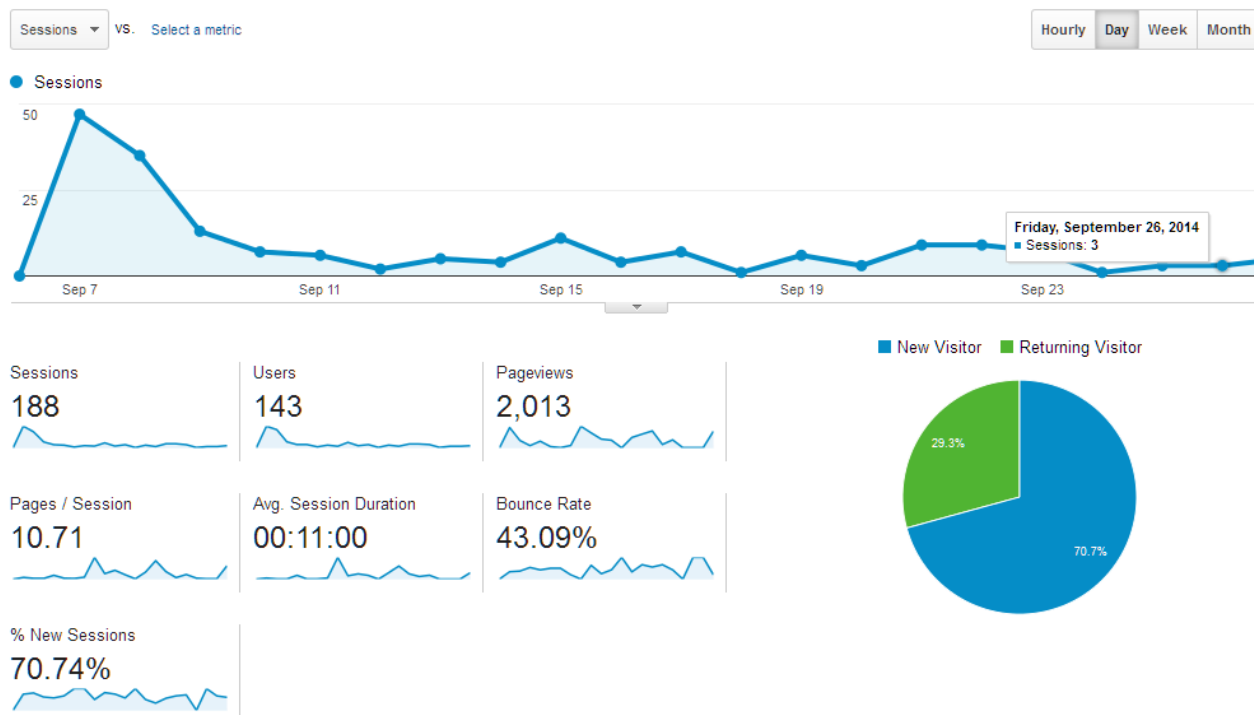
Full version (28 September onwards)

This iteration of the site is barely a week old, but as such we can gauge the initial reaction of the public to the finished version of the site while it's still fresh, and make adjustments accordingly. Facebook and Instagram accounts were set up a few days after the launch based on recommendations received during the presentations.

Starting statistics of the full site

In just 8 days (as no promotion was done on the evening of the 28th) the site managed **195 sessions** from **140 users**, and **1,055 pageviews** which is more than the previous version had in three weeks. The bounce rate decreased to **42.56%** but the average session duration returned to a more realistic 3:33 minutes and so did the average number of pages/session with 5 compared to the previous 10. The number of returning visitors has increased as well, making up 40% of the total number of sessions over this 8 day period.

Overall statistics

Between 16 May and 7 October 2014, Spot That Shot has had:

- 3,955 pageviews
- 479 unique users, 214 (30%) from the UK
- 727 sessions (34% returning visitors)
- A 31.77% bounce rate
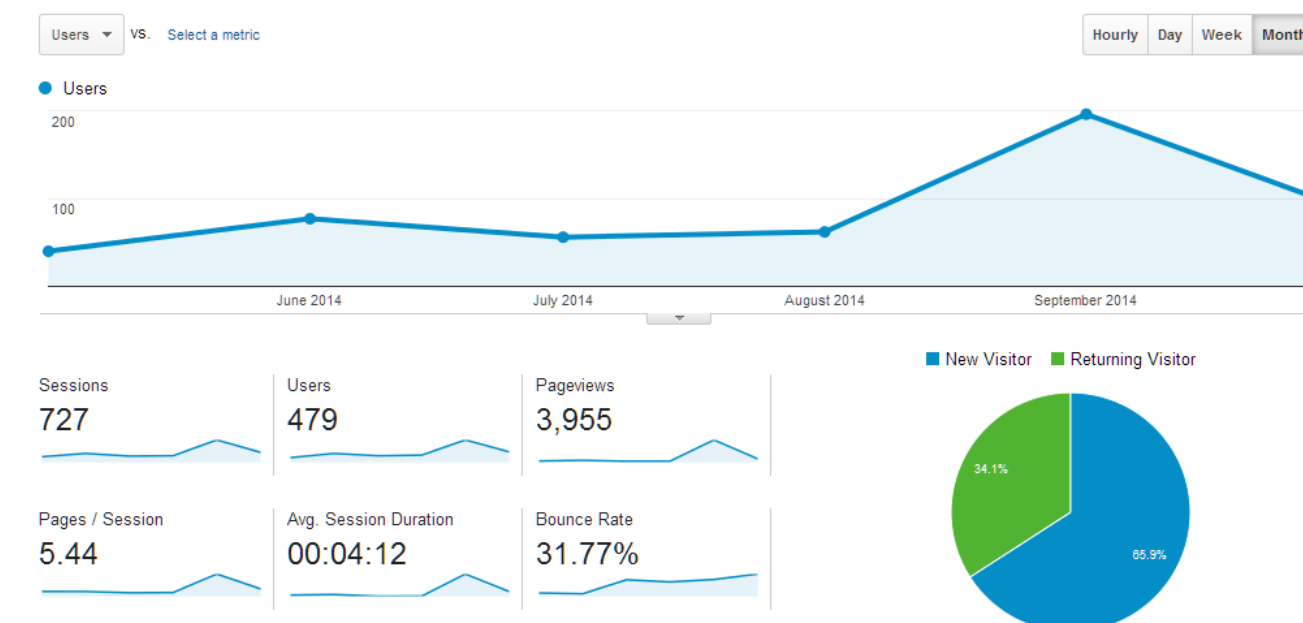
Over half the users accessed the site from the Chrome browser, with, predictably, Safari and Firefox among the top three as well. Internet Explorer use was low, and out of the 19 sessions, 14 were from IE11 which is now as modern a browser as any, so my assumption that photography enthusiasts have up-to-date software seems to have been proven correct.

| Browser	Sessions	% Sessions	
1. Chrome	426		58.68%
2. Safari	92		12.67%
3. Firefox	68		9.37%
4. Safari (in-app)	53		7.30%
5. Android Browser	49		6.75%
6. Internet Explorer	19		2.62%
7. Mozilla Compatible Agent	12		1.65%
8. Opera	6		0.83%
9. YaBrowser	1		0.14%

User base analysis

My target demographic was the UK photography community, and this niche was expressly stated every time I promoted the site on various other sites, so I expected most of my users to be from the UK, closely followed by US users due to my online acquaintances on various forums being from that region too.
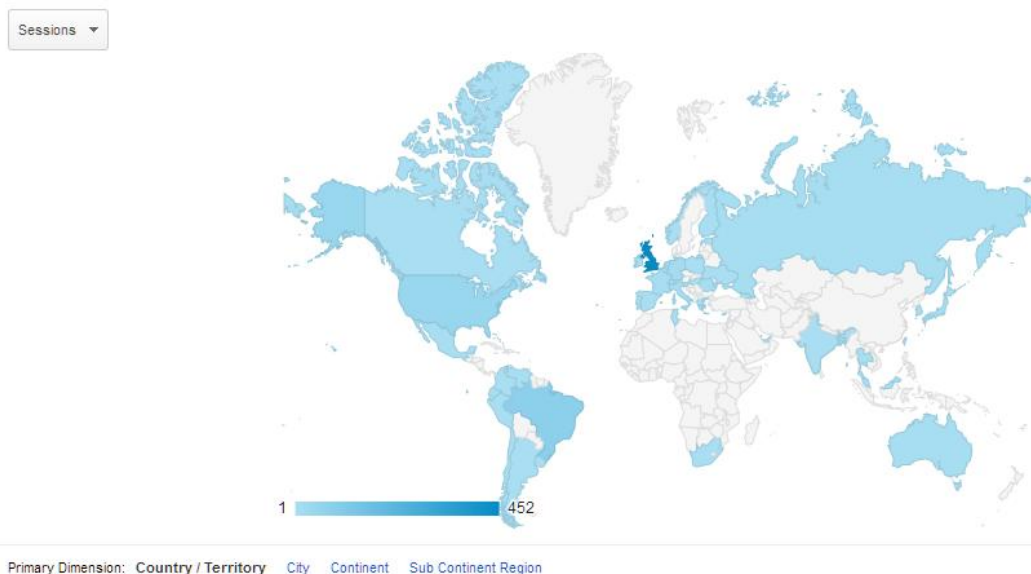
The above map shows how the site received traffic from many regions but the UK did account for 62% of all sessions and 51% of new users. **The UK bounce rate is just 22%,** well below the site average, which I consider a major success and an indicator of visitors being happy with the site. The UK also comes in above the site average for number of pages per session (7.5 compared to 5.45) and the average session duration is 6:33 minutes, a stark contrast with other regions that are all below 2 minutes.

Most of the UK visits came from Greater London and the south-east of England, which may mean interest in spots from these regions is potentially high and such content would be welcomed in the future.

A featured spot is posted to Instagram (and cross-posted to Twitter and Facebook) every couple of days to generate inbound traffic and potentially new user interaction. So far the Instagram page has 4 followers and the Facebook page has 26 Likes, so there is clearly a lot to be done still on these fronts!
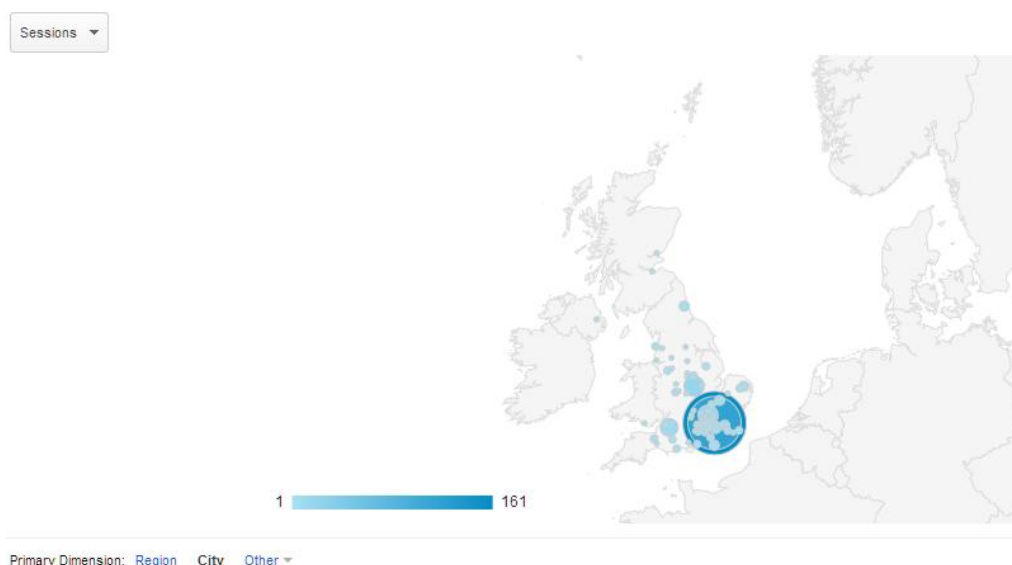
The new vs returning visitor ratio at this stage in the site's lifespan is rationally acceptable – I want to draw more new visitors than the number that return for now, as it means the site is growing fast. Eventually of course the returning visitor numbers should increase slightly, showing user appreciation for the site's content and displaying consistent engagement. It is again important to reiterate that the returning visitor numbers do not include my own (extensive) testing on my desktop devices as these use Adblock Plus and block Google Analytics from collecting stats, so they are a more or less accurate indicator of the level of interest from genuine users.

Registered users and active engagement

Passive user engagement is one thing – but Spot That Shot relies, in the long term, on user-generated content, so an important factor to consider is active user engagement, i.e. creation of accounts, submission of spots, and commenting on/sharing pages.

So far, there are **just 12 registered users**, not counting the 4 accounts I have set up myself, and **only 3 out of 12 have contributed spots**. While this is fine in the early stages of the site, it will soon have to pick up more than this – I will need to look into how the engagement rates could be boosted, starting with more site promotion and going from there. I will need to examine what puts people off – do they get to the signup stage and then give up when they see the form – or do they not even reach the form?

One user, of his own accord, emailed me to tell me he loved the idea of the site and has sent the URL to Amateur Photographer Magazine in case they want to feature it. I will contact other publications to see if they would be interested in featuring a link to the site, although they may see this as advertising and would be disinclined to feature it for free, so I will have to word the idea carefully.

Section IX. Evaluation and future plans for the site

On the whole…

To assess the success of this project, let's refer back to the four keywords I laid down in the planning phase (see the Commodity section).

- ✓ **Responsiveness**
  This refers to the fact that the site needs to work well across devices, both for practical reasons (give photographers on the go the opportunity to refer to location information from their mobile devices) and to build trust/appear legitimate and professional.

The site was designed mostly in the browser, with a mobile-first approach, and has been tested in several browsers to ensure it looks correct.

- \- **Performance**
  Following on from the responsive requirement, the site also needs to be reasonably fast on mobile connections.

This part still needs work, as detailed in the Implementation section; the page speeds are slower than what I am happy with, mostly due to the Google libraries being loaded in the <head> that cannot be set to async. However I did optimise all images, minified CSS and JavaScript, loaded non-essential scripts in the footer, and chose a popular web font with just three styles (light, normal, bold) in the hope that it will already be cached on machines or be available as a local font on Android devices.

- \- **Personalisation**
  Different people will have different location needs, and to avoid redundant searches every time a user wants to refer to a promising location, a bookmarking feature has to be implemented as well as potentially a 'save search preferences' option.

This has not been implemented, but there is not much active user engagement yet (what with only 12 users) so it is not a problem. The bookmarking feature is already work in progress.

- ✓ **Simplicity**
  The most important keyword. The whole idea of this project is to simplify a process that many users go through but find cumbersome/inefficient. The user wants to get to specific information which needs to be available via as few clicks and forms as possible.

The design of the site is simple and straightforward without distractions. Users can click through to a spot detail page in just 1 step if they choose one from the homepage, 2 if they

do a search from the homepage, or 3 if they choose to browse localities instead of entering a search query.

The signup and spot submission forms are as pared down as possible, with small, manageable chunks of information required from the user at any one time. Even images are cropped for the user, all they have to do is ensure their uploads are not above a reasonable 2MB.

Aesthetics

Design-wise, I am not 100% happy with the way the site looks at the moment – I will be tweaking the top navigation and the grid layout styles and am considering swapping the mobile menu's orange background to a white one, with a coloured logo, to be consistent with the large viewport version.

However I feel the design is successful in terms of being a flat, app-y style that doesn't distract from the content but has enough of a personality to not look unprofessional. It just needs minor changes that, had I decided to work with a developer earlier, would have made it into the thesis version as well.

Learning outcomes

In the Business section I stated that my aim for this project is not to make money; while down the line that would be desirable, my main goal is a.) to create something potentially useful for the wider photography community, and b.) to learn about back-end coding and pick up new skills.

The first criterion has been fulfilled of course, since the site works as originally intended. But the learning part of the plan was the most important, and a lot of learning happened during the project. It was extremely useful to build such a complex site; I realised that I could not do everything myself because there is just not enough time sometimes. Nevertheless I dedicated time to building a simpler part of the site (the Reading Room) using the chosen technology that I otherwise didn't know much about, and it felt very rewarding when it worked. Learning the basics of object-oriented PHP in an MVC environment was something that will undoubtedly be useful for my future projects, and all this reassured me that I am more a designer than a developer (which is ironic because the design suffered due to my attempts at development).

Plans for the site going forward

The following list has been drawn up, ordered by how urgently I plan for it to be done:

- Work on social media presence, to generate inbound traffic and links

- Work on making page speeds faster
- Continue adding new spots to the database
- Write another article
- Tweak design
- Add spot favouriting option
- Add spot rating system
- Make homepage Recent Spots area into scrolling carousel (without added libraries if possible)

Site usage will continuously be monitored and hopefully conclusions can be drawn from how the users interact with the site to help me make decisions about potential improvements.

Building Spot That Shot has been a hugely rewarding (if at times frustrating) experience, and it has fulfilled its main objective which was for me to create a portfolio piece I can be proud of despite the challenges I faced while creating it. I feel I have succeeded in that – now Phase 2 begins: to succeed in converting those passive visitors to regular, contributing users!

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Form Responses

Timestamp	Which country are you located in?	If you're located in the UNITED KINGDOM, what city/town?	What kind of people photography are you mostly into?	What is your photography skill level/experience?	Do you make money from your photography?	Where do your shoots usually take place?	Have you ever paid to use a location?	If you replied YES to the above, what type of locations have you paid for?	If you don't usually pay for locations, how do you find suitable spots for your shoots?	Are there any freely available resources for finding locations that you use regularly? (either online or offline)	Would you use a website that is dedicated to freely accessible location information, to give you ideas based on where you are?
1/8/2014 11:34:16	United States		Weddings	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Outdoors, public area with permit	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	none that I know of	No
1/8/2014 19:45:55	South Africa		Portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way		No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Definitely
1/8/2014 20:02:39	Australia		sports and family "candids"	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe
1/8/2014 20:03:52	USA		Portrait	Very experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	mix of private indoor/outdoor properties	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Online image sharing sites/forums which can offer location based groups can be great resources for both visual imagery and interactive insight.	Maybe
1/8/2014 20:12:26	USA		Portraits	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	Mostly indoors/studio	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	This is for film makers (but also still photographers) in Oregon http://or.reel-scout.com/loc_results.aspx	Definitely
1/8/2014 20:39:15	UAE		Portraits	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Don't know	Maybe
1/8/2014 20:44:58	UK	Aberdeen	street	Very experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Google Maps, Flickr Maps	Maybe
1/8/2014 20:53:16	Norge		portrait	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Facebook	Definitely
1/8/2014 20:57:58	Holland		street / portrait	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Google street view	Maybe
1/8/2014 21:11:12	Belgium		street	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	Google earth	Maybe
1/8/2014 21:12:10	England	London	Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	None that I know of, wish there were.	Definitely
1/8/2014 21:43:31	spain		portraits	Some experience	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	no, I don't think so	Definitely
1/8/2014 22:00:54	United States of America		Portraits	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	I'm not aware of any.	Definitely
1/8/2014 22:10:36	England	London	Portraits	Very experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		Going out physically to location scout	Public space in a great city like London is like a film set with thousands of places to use as backdrops	No
1/8/2014 22:37:08	United States		Portraits boudior wildlife street	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	??	Definitely
1/8/2014 23:13:58	United States		wedding	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout, wedding venue chosen by client	None that I utilize.	Maybe
1/8/2014 23:30:21	United Kingdom	Tiverton	Portrait, Fashion, Headshots	Very experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Not that I know of.	Maybe
1/8/2014 23:41:32	United States		Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	No	Maybe

Timestamp	Country	City	Genre	Experience	Business?	Setting	Permission?	Locations	Location method	Notes	Interested?	Extra
1/8/2014 23:48:02	United States		sports	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	Mostly outdoors	Yes	Outdoors, public area with permit	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	Normally the various ballparks and stadiums around the U.S.	Maybe	
1/9/2014 0:27:34	usa		portrait,	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Wander		Maybe	
1/9/2014 1:28:11	USA		Portraits/Kids/Lands	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	When traveling to locations to shoot or just exploring I keep a notebook with me. When I see a place that looks interesting I make a note on it and come back later to check it out.	Definitely	
1/9/2014 2:12:34	Qatar		Portraits/street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	TPE	Maybe	
1/9/2014 2:38:33	Australia		street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe	
1/9/2014 2:41:17	Australia		portraits, street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe	
1/9/2014 2:57:46	Thailand		Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios, Location houses, Outdoors, private property	Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	Yes.	Maybe	
1/9/2014 3:06:48	us		portraits, street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	i don't know	Maybe	
1/9/2014 3:37:16	United States		street and home snapshots	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Don't know	Maybe	
1/9/2014 3:46:49	USA		portraits, weddings	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout, asking clients	Looking at local Flickr groups and other local photographers' web sites to see locations they are using. Good Luck on your Masters!!	Definitely	
1/9/2014 4:18:17	India		Fashion, portraits	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	Mostly indoors/studio	Yes	Outdoors, public area with permit	My own studio	Not very sure. I use my own studio or friends / family locations or public places.	Definitely	
1/9/2014 4:22:44	Australia		portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	Yes	Studios	Browsing forums	Facebook	Maybe	
1/9/2014 5:13:15	Australia		Portraits, glamour, boudoir	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Online search of local council websites and tourist bureau websites for the area in question.	Definitely	
1/9/2014 5:38:47	Australia		Candid	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	N A	Maybe	
1/9/2014 6:17:27	United States	San Diego	Nature	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	N/A	Maybe	invalid - not people photography
1/9/2014 7:27:14	Canada		street, family, lifestyle portraits	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout, Often people have an idea where they'd like to be photographed.	Nope.	Maybe	

Timestamp	Country	City	Genre	Experience	Business	Indoor/Outdoor	Yes/No	Location	How find locations	Location website	Would use	Notes
1/9/2014 7:34:29	UK	Warwick	Sports / Street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	There is an urban / derelict building website that is used mainly by photographers to get location info but I can't recall the name as I have it bookmarked	Definitely	
1/9/2014 10:41:47	Italy		Candid portrait, Candid street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	No	No	
1/9/2014 11:10:17	Germany		concert	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly indoors/studio	Yes	Studios	n/a	no	Definitely	
1/9/2014 12:44:32	United Kingdom	Manchester	Portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Not aware of any.	Maybe	
1/9/2014 13:01:59	Canada	Ottawa	Portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		Going out physically to location scout	Don't know.	Maybe	
1/9/2014 13:27:09	USA		Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Definitely	
1/9/2014 13:36:52	Cayman Islands		Street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		my camera is part of my life. I carry it with me whereever I go.Thus, I shoot photos whereever I am.	Yes, going out doors with one's camera provides the photographer with endless 'free' resources for their 'street' photography...	No	
1/9/2014 15:07:29	United Kingdom	Slough	portrait/lifestyle	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Maybe	
1/9/2014 15:41:26	UK	London	portraits/fashion	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios, Location houses, Outdoors, private property, Outdoors, public area with permit	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	Plenty of location type sites on the www.	Definitely	
1/9/2014 15:54:33	switzerland		portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	yes, the tourists informations sites that gives nice places to see and google maps if I'm interested in parks in a city for example.	Maybe	
1/9/2014 18:31:51	Germany		landscape	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	Yes	Location houses, Outdoors, public area with permit	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	...	Definitely	invalid - not people photography
1/9/2014 18:49:14	Germany		portrait	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Browsing forums	internet forums (i.e. dslr-forum.de)	Maybe	
1/9/2014 21:22:06	Australia		Portraits	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	http://photographyhotspo	Maybe	
1/9/2014 23:08:08	USA		Portraits	Very experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family	No	Definitely	
1/10/2014 1:46:08	USA		Portraits	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	No	Definitely	
1/10/2014 2:10:00	United States		street and portraits	Very experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Google Maps	Maybe	
1/10/2014 3:17:19	United States		street	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe	
1/10/2014 5:13:36	New Zealamd		Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Browsing forums	No	Definitely	
1/10/2014 7:52:00	us		portraits	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	A balanced mix of the above	No		Asking friends and family	dp	Maybe	

Timestamp	Country	Location	Photography	Experience	Business	Indoor/Outdoor			Finding locations	Resources	Interested
1/10/2014 8:32:11	UK	Newcastle	Weddings & Commercial	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	A balanced mix of the above	No		Going out physically to location scout	Not sure, I just go and look for them.	Maybe
1/10/2014 10:39:19	Australia		portrait, events	Very experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Depends on the event and venue	Maybe
1/10/2014 10:41:17	INDIA		FASHION	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	Google search	Definitely
1/10/2014 10:51:20	Italy		portraits, street	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Maybe
1/10/2014 11:39:56	Italy		portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Maybe
1/10/2014 11:41:30	india		bird photography	Beginner	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	no.	No	invalid - not people photography
1/10/2014 11:41:36	Australia		portraits	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe
1/10/2014 11:46:36	UK	Teignmouth NR Exeter	Portraits	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, My studio	Nothing Ive found	Definitely
1/10/2014 13:39:30	United States		portraits/ street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	no	Definitely
1/10/2014 12:59:59	China		portrait	Some experience	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	no	Maybe
1/10/2014 14:44:54	U.S.A.		portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	no	Maybe
1/10/2014 14:47:08	italy		portraits	Beginner	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly indoors/studio	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Definitely
1/10/2014 16:02:13	United Kingdom	London	Street portraits and photography	Reasonably experienced	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Definitely
1/10/2014 17:02:25	Canada		Portrait	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	no	No
1/10/2014 20:58:15	England	Welling. Kent	Portraits	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	None that I know of	Definitely
1/10/2014 21:31:42	United States		portraits, street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Outdoors, public area with permit	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout, Google Earth then scout it	Google Earth	Definitely
1/11/2014 0:16:23	U.S.A.		Street, Candid, Event	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.	Maybe
1/11/2014 4:33:31	Canada		Portraits	Very experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	No	Maybe
1/11/2014 7:51:23	United Kingdom	Nottingham	Portraits	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout, Ideas from others in a creative team	Facebook uk photo locations group www. derelictplaces.co. uk	Definitely
1/11/2014 12:45:02	England	Newcastle upon Tyne	Street	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Maybe
1/11/2014 17:42:46	Nicaragua		potraits in natural environment	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	no- not in Nicaragua!	Maybe
1/12/2014 2:03:34	Canada		portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly indoors/studio	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	not that I know of...	Definitely
1/12/2014 2:49:06	USA		landscape	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Nothing that I use as a regular resource. I simply search the internet.	Maybe

Timestamp	Country	City	Subject	Experience	Business	Indoor/Outdoor	Studio	Studio type	Methods	Resources	Interest
1/12/2014 4:57:23	USA		Street, portraits	Reasonably experienced	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	No	Definitely
1/12/2014 13:48:31	USA		Anyone breathing	Very experienced	Yes, it's my main source of income	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	unkown	Definitely
1/12/2014 15:24:43	USA		Environmental portraiture	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	I'll use keyword searches on Flickr.	Definitely
1/12/2014 15:38:30	Germany		portraits, street	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	google maps.	Maybe
1/12/2014 18:52:06	USA		Candid shots	Beginner	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	No	Maybe
1/12/2014 19:12:04	Belgium		Portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Photography forums (e.g. fotoapparatuur.nl); not structured.	Definitely
1/12/2014 19:30:54	UK	London	Headshots	Very experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	Google Streetview Purpleport discussion groups Flickr discussion groups	Definitely
1/12/2014 23:23:06	Canada		Informal street portraits	Reasonably experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Don't know of any. I just gravitate to areas where I know people will be congregating in numbers, some of whom might be "hanging out" or not overly rushed.	Maybe
1/13/2014 0:57:20	Australia		family	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	No	Definitely
1/13/2014 1:51:44	uk	london	portraits	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	not that i am aware of.	Maybe
1/13/2014 4:27:22	United States of America		street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	no	Maybe
1/13/2014 11:57:04	USA		Vintage, portraits, pin-up	Very experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	Not that I know of	No
1/13/2014 21:50:35	USA		Street	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Google Maps	Maybe
1/14/2014 19:37:53	United States		Street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	no	Definitely
1/15/2014 16:02:35	US		portraits, fashion	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Browsing forums, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	google.com and google maps to look up areas and maps flickr.com	Definitely
1/16/2014 23:53:21	Australia		portrait / street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly indoors/studio	No		Browsing forums, Going out physically to location scout	No	Definitely
1/20/2014 2:28:58	United States		Street	Some experience	No, but I would like to and am working on that	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	None other than the ones in the last question.	Definitely

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1/21/2014 0:40:02	Canada		Portraits / Street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	Google Earth? I take mental notes of possible locations whether I'm shooting or not.	No
1/21/2014 1:04:36	United States		portrait/event/street	Very experienced	Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	A balanced mix of the above	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Google Maps, Google Local,	Maybe
1/21/2014 3:31:13	UK	London	street	Reasonably experienced	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	No	Maybe
1/21/2014 10:36:20	Canada		theme / fashion / portraits	Some experience	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	Mostly indoors/studio	Yes	Studios, Hall rental	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Going out physically to location scout	no	Maybe
1/21/2014 19:26:43	UK	Chippenham	portraits & boudoir	Very experienced	No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	A balanced mix of the above	Yes	Studios, Hotels	I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Asking friends and family, Going out physically to location scout	Not exactly a Yes but you may find it helpful to know: I browse other location finding sites for ideas of similar locations, but avoid the actual given locations like the plague. :-O I don't want to see the same backgrounds appearing in other photographers' work as mine!	Maybe
1/22/2014 9:13:41	Israe l(presently) Finalnd and USA too		Portraits & street photography	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	No.	Maybe
1/22/2014 11:25:18	United states		Street	Reasonably experienced	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area, Typing keywords into search engines / image search, Going out physically to location scout	Community calendars looking for events, tourist brochures.if going to a new area check it out on flickr and on line.	Definitely
1/22/2014 13:10:53	uk	Bicester	street	Some experience	Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	Mostly outdoors	No		I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	not that i am aware of	No
1/22/2014 20:49:10	England	Warwick	Street	Reasonably experienced	No, but I would like to and am working on that	Mostly outdoors	No		Going out physically to location scout	Google street	Maybe

98 valid responses, 4 invalid (below data updated to reflect this)	21 countries	20 (20%) of responses from the UK.
What is your photography skill level/experience?		
Beginner	8	
Some experience	28	
Reasonably experienced	42	
Very experienced	20	
Do you make money from your photography?		
No, it's just a hobby and will stay that way	40	
No, but I would like to and am working on that	14	
Occasionally, but not yet registered as a business/freelancer	25	
Occasionally, and registered as a business/freelancer	11	
Yes, it's my main source of income	8	
Where do your shoots usually take place?		
Mostly outdoors	44	
Mostly indoors/studio	7	
A balanced mix of the above	46	
Have you ever paid to use a location?		
No	80	
Yes	18	

If you replied YES to the above, what type of locations have you paid for?		
Studios	13	
Location houses	2	
Outdoors, private property	2	
Outdoors, public area with permit	5	
Other	3	
If you don't usually pay for locations, how do you find suitable spots for your shoots?		
I use my pre-existing knowledge of an area	81	
Asking friends and family	29	
Browsing forums	15	
Typing keywords into search engines / image search	13	
Going out physically to location scout	67	
Other	10	
Would you use a website that is dedicated to freely accessible location information, to give you ideas based on where you are?		
Definitely	38	
Maybe	52	
No	8	

A list of all the resources respondents said they have used before to find locations (some more vague than others)
Council websites
Facebook
Flickr
Forums
Google earth
Google maps
Google street view
http://or.reel-scout.com/loc_results.aspx *Oregon, USA
http://photographyhotspots.com.au
http://www.derelictlondon.com/
Image sharing sites
Other photographers websites
PurplePort forums
Search engines
Tourist bureau websites
www.derelictplaces.co.uk

Timestamp	Tell me about the last time you looked for location ideas online.	If you (semi-) regularly look for places online, what do you like about the process, and what don't you like?	If you don't really go online for location ideas, why not? Is it due to lack of good resources, or difficulty of the process, or something else?	Regardless of your current habits of coming up with location ideas, how would you describe an ideal way to do it online (for you personally)?	What do you think about the below website? Please have a quick skim through what it offers. What do you like and/or dislike about it?	In my large-scale survey 92% of respondents said they would Definitely or Maybe use a website dedicated to helping photographers find location ideas. What is your response to this question?	Please describe any other thoughts and past experience you have relating to location/background idea generation and any other comments about the website idea in general.	What's your gender, age and occupation?
2/2/2014 10:35:10	Haven't really looked online as I didn't know where to look	n/a	Lack of ideas on what I really wanted and did not know where to start	I like the idea of having a website that does this and maybe to then split it up into sections eg urban, gritty, park etc	Looks alright, although I would say a lot of the pictures aren't really relevant to backgrounds for portrait photography which is my area of interest. Probably needs to be more focused	Definitely	I think the website is a great idea. The one thing I would say is that it should be focused to be useful and easy to search by location and type etc	Male, 37, Accountant
2/2/2014 22:53:38	Looking for an outdoor wooded location, used google maps and street view to validate. It worked OK but street view is not so good off road.	Not often though I have used maps and streetview occasionally to check out an area before I go there. It's Ok if you have a good idea of where to go but it's not a good discovery tool as there's too much area to cover. It's also then difficult to find out whether there are likely to be any obstacles like security guards with anti photography policies.	I do everything i possibly can online.	I'd love to see a site, similar to model sites, where you stick in a bunch of search criteria, get a list of possible options to then review in detail and if necessary, message directly to relevant people to organise it.	It's a good idea but you have to browse too much to find the right spot. I would love to see search criteria where I could say something like: "greenery, urban, afternoon light, low footfall of passers by, toilet facilities/Change rooms"	I would use it. I occassionally set up shoots with models via PurplePort.com and it's good to be able to suggest a location from the outset, models like to know that you have a clear idea in mind. And to be able to send them details to check it out helps to plan the shoot well beforehand.	Being able to find out if there are any photography policies before going is great, as well as pricing if one needs to pay to shoot there. Info about practicalities like where there are loos, coffee and change facilities if outdoors would be a bonus.	Male, 43, IT Manager

2/14/2014 0:23:48	I went looking for an old hospital for a shoot, I started by googling key words to narrow down the type of location I wanted then I drilled down to a more localized search for the types of buildings I was after. I had mixed success but eventually came upon a website of derelict places that really helped.	I don't like the frustration of having to scout and scout, of not knowing if the location is accessible and what is nearby in terms of practicalities. I enjoy the images I come across when location hunting as these can spark off other ideas in my mid about the shoot or other shoots.	Sometimes I struggle with finding time to go online and search for a location, there seem to be so many demands for my online time. In these cases I often try to think of a location I've seen before or driven past.	I'd like to search by keywords that ought define a location - creepy, derelict, mansion or church, gothic or beautiful estate house and then add in location and have a browser or software that could then present possible matches. To then have options to narrow the search by distance, availability, etc would be excellent. And to finish off a set of images and link to google maps.	The homepage is way too long. The search facility needs to be the main feature on the front page and the quick search takes you to thumbnails that cover a whole area so it's not that easily searchable or split into categories other than area. I actually quite like the detail on the actual location pages when you eventually get to one, but there is a lot of gaff to get there and it takes a lot of effort before you know if it is any use to you.	I would use such a service as I often need locations that differ from shoot to shoot or concept to concept, Ideally I'd like a website that gives location ideas nationally but with searchable criteria from a postcode. To use it I'd like images of the location, possibly being able to search by shoot type/likely use as well and a way to store or share locations into a Facebook page where my shoots are usually organised with the teams.	I think you need a really simple method for photographers and models to add to the database but this needs to go through a vetting process to ensure the quality is maintained. Good luck!	Male, 27, photographer end educational consultant