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**Major Project
Report**

MA Web Design & Content Planning

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Phase I - Concept

Twitter Description

A resincraft guide for busy people with a focus on information for beginners and quick projects. (96 characters)

Brainstorming

I initially had difficulty thinking of a website idea for my major project. Looking at previous students' work, I was most attracted to the sites where the students used their knowledge to 'teach' users how to do something. This was most evident in a fake food craft site, as well as a custom PC build site. Both sites used the creators' knowledge of a subject to pass on guidance to users.

This idea of offering expertise and guidance appealed to me, not least because of my own background in teaching and education. However, I was not sure how I would implement this in my own work. I do not consider myself 'expert' in anything. As a creative writing tutor, I toyed with the idea of creating a writing guide, but this did not appeal to me as I did not feel I had the authority to do this.

The craft I was most adept at was crocheting. However, crochet projects can take weeks to complete, which was not ideal when I would also have coursework deadlines, language learning, and part-time tutoring work to consider. While crochet was a great diversion from everyday life, I simply did not have time to devote myself to a craft of that type with so many other obligations.

I asked myself the question: If I felt I was unable to be creative due to time constraints, then how many others in the world faced the same issue?

I remembered I had been gifted a resin kit. I had never used it, but the concept seemed ideal to me - one could create little works of art in the time it took to mix and pour. A quick search told me that this only amounted to a few minutes out of the day. Thus, I decided resin was the way forward.

Elevator Pitch

We all have different reasons for wanting to learn a craft, whether it's for creative fulfilment or even in hope of turning it into a business one day.

Whichever the reason, it is not always easy to fit crafts into our day-to-day lives. We simply have too much to do, and too little time to do it.

This is where resin comes in. While this craft may seem daunting at first, it only takes a few minutes. This leaves us plenty of time to get on with our day while still being able to scratch that creative itch.

It's not always clear where to start with resin. While there are plenty of tutorial videos and websites out there, we can never be sure if we are getting the 'right' information as beginners. It can leave us a little frustrated; how can we know if the resources we're using are efficient and beginner-friendly?

If only there were a simple, no-nonsense resource that could tell us in a straightforward way what we need to start making our projects. A one-stop shop that tells us what we need to know.

This is the premise of my website, a resincraft guide for beginners. Users can learn the fundamentals of the craft quickly and start making projects straight away by following short, simple tutorials.

The Problem

Many people take up crafts for all sorts of reasons. Some of us need to feel fulfilled creatively, and our daily lives do not satisfy this need. Others may simply feel bored and are simply looking for a new challenge. On the other hand, some may be looking to start a business they can run from home.

However, life can get in the way of learning crafts. The balance of work, family, chores, and obligations can push our creativity to the wayside. Many of us don't have the time or even the energy to devote to arty pursuits. Also, some crafts can be painstakingly slow, and we don't see finished results for weeks or even months.

This is where resincraft might be the best choice for a creative outlet. We can make beautiful works of art in the time it takes to mix and pour, and let time take care of the rest while we get on with our day.

Phase 1: Concept - Intro

There are plenty of resources for learning resincraft online. Too many, perhaps. This can be rather frustrating, as well as confusing. As we trawl through tutorials, resin websites, and online courses, we begin to ask questions: Is this website telling us to use this set of materials because they're the best? Or are they just trying to sell us their online wares? Why does this tutorial have so much chatter in it instead of getting straight to the point? And do we really need to sit through course after course to learn how to get started?

The Value Proposition

Featuring easy, fast tutorials as well as accessible, simple guidance on what is needed, the site will encourage users to work with resin from the start without needing to build up their experience or knowledge first.

USP

My proposed website is not looking to sell anything. That is, unlike many resin resources online, there is no monetary gain through affiliate links or product pages. The tone of the site is also not aiming to be 'expert'. I am, after all, a beginner to the craft myself, and will not profess superior knowledge. Instead, the site's message will convey "This is what works for me, and perhaps it will work for you." In this sense, the site's tone will strive to be truthful, frank, and reliable.

Manifesto

The proposed website will aim to appeal to newcomers to resincraft by using an uncluttered interface that is easy to navigate, uses simple language, and carefully chosen visuals to help guide the user. It will feature a tutorial page where users can follow along with a video, or else follow simple steps to complete projects. The site will additionally feature pages that give simple tips for beginners. It will also strive to be accessible to all who use it.

Business & Cultural Context

Examining the Problem in More Detail

It should come as little surprise to hear that there is a connection between craft activities and mental health. According to [mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk), 37.1% of women and 29.9% of men reported high levels of anxiety in 2022/23. Furthermore, in England, women are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders as men.

The Crafts Council website refers to a 2019 BBC survey that came to the conclusion that creative endeavours can “[make you happier](#).” Over 75% of the 50,000 participants for the BBC Arts Great British Creativity Test stated that creativity could help reduce stress and anxiety, with almost a quarter naming some manner of craft practice as their favourite activity.

When I started learning to crochet, I too found it to be a great stress-killer. Concentrating on counting the stitches, when coupled with a good Spotify playlist, helped me practise a kind of ‘mindfulness’ that tuned out the outside world.

However, my urge to take up a craft of some description was not borne out of a need to quell anxiety, but boredom. My job at the time lacked much in the way of creativity. Thus crochet in the evenings formed an outlet and foil to the tedious daytime. As noted in the BBC survey, 69% of participants used creative outlets as a ‘self-development tool’ to build up self-esteem.

However, a crochet project could take hours, days, and in some cases, weeks – time that, in my mind’s eye, could have been spent learning a new career path. I felt I should ‘be productive’ with my free-time, and crochet itself came to become an undeserving source of stress, if done at all.

In the UK, almost 1 in 2 adults feel that they have “very limited” free time for themselves during the working week, according to a survey of 1000 participants [reported on the HR News website](#). With housework, personal admin, and food prep taking up a busy worker’s evening, it is little wonder some may feel they have no time to sit and do crafts, particular in hourly stretches.

However, this does not mean that people need to give up on learning to make things. BBC Arts editor Lamia Dabboussy said of the BBC survey: “Lots of us lead increasingly busy lives and this research shows that even a small amount of time spent on creative pursuits can really make a difference.”

Phase 1: Concept - Business & Cultural Context

A craft does not have to take over all of one's free time. My proposed site aims to introduce busy people to a creative outlet that does not take too much out of their day. Unlike time-consuming hobbies such as knitting or crochet, resin-making can be done in mere minutes, with the majority of time going into curing. While some may argue this removes the therapeutic aspect of creation, I firmly believe that the acts of choosing and mixing colours, preparing and measuring liquid resin, and selecting extra visual touches allows the creator to give their full attention to a project and immerse themselves. They also have the added bonus of reassurance that they will not lose their evening while doing it, which could otherwise put them off trying a craft at all. Ultimately, crafters are able to create beautiful objects without feeling pressured by time constraints.

The website should serve as a general starting point for beginners. It introduces crafters to the tools they will need to get started, as well as provide tutorials for particular aspects of the craft, such as colouring, embedding, mixing, and dos and don'ts. It also includes tutorials for particular types of projects, such as working with natural objects. I decided that these tutorials should be short and concise. Any videos should be no longer than six - eight minutes, due to the site's emphasis on time constraints.

The Site's Place on the Web

There are numerous resources for learning about resin craft on the web. The site craft-resin.co.uk is particularly comprehensive, with a series of attractive tutorials labelled as 'courses.' These courses are fairly in-depth, and are made up of several videos of varying length. Their format is similar to that of Udemy or LinkedIn Learning, and often require the user to complete quizzes to move on to the next component of the course. One tutorial, when all videos are watched back-to-back, is 77 minutes in length. While users with fewer time constraints may feel that such courses are beneficial, others may be put off by these somewhat daunting course durations. Furthermore, the more time they are trawling through quizzes, the less time they actually have to make crafts. I therefore do not believe such sites are an attractive option to my users.

Youtube videos are also becoming more popular for learning resin, and can be immensely helpful. However, there are similar tropes across a lot of Youtube tutorials that I have tried to avoid. These include 'cutesy' music, as well as introductions that can often feature a lot of 'waffle.' Just as I find myself skipping the first few minutes of recipes, crochet, and resin tutorials while the presenter chatters away, I have aimed to make any instructional material as to the point as possible.

While there are increasing numbers of resin craft tutorials and resources across the web, the majority of them are to be found on sites that sell resin supplies, including <https://www.craft-resin.co.uk/>. There is no mistaking a monetary motive in the tutorials, which often include links to product pages. While some may find this convenient, the majority of new resin crafters will most likely buy cheap starter kits, which can easily be found on Amazon or Etsy. My website encourages users to start making projects right away, using the tools they have to hand. Projects are relatively simple, without the need for elaborate items.

Phase 1: Concept - Business & Cultural Context

It is therefore my intention to make a concise, informative website that educates busy people on the basics of resin craft. It is as much a website designed for myself as anyone else, especially because I am learning the craft myself. In this sense, I have strived to curate my own learning for the user, pulled from numerous sources.

SWOT Analysis

Having begun to pin down what my site's place on the web might be, I decided at this point to perform a S.W.O.T analysis.

Strengths

The site will be concise and minimalist in its approach, meaning that users can quickly find the information they are looking for. It will also not be looking to make a profit, meaning that information is 'honest' and not motivated by monetary gain.

Weaknesses

I am by no means an expert in resincraft, which runs the risk of me a) giving inaccurate guidance or b) making mistakes in my tutorials. I will try to rectify this by pointing out any errors I make as I go. I also expect there to be difficulties with working with new technologies (either in content creation or in development) that will need to be overcome.

Opportunities

The site will not be limited to a handful of tutorials; rather, I can choose to add content after the project's deadline and well into the future. It may also be possible to expand it to include more complex content as my own knowledge of the craft evolves.

Threats

Resin is an increasingly popular craft, and as such, more and more sites and courses are appearing online. Furthermore, creators of these resources most likely have much more experience and specialised knowledge than I do. This is why I think it best to take the 'by a beginner, for beginners' approach.

Revenue Generation

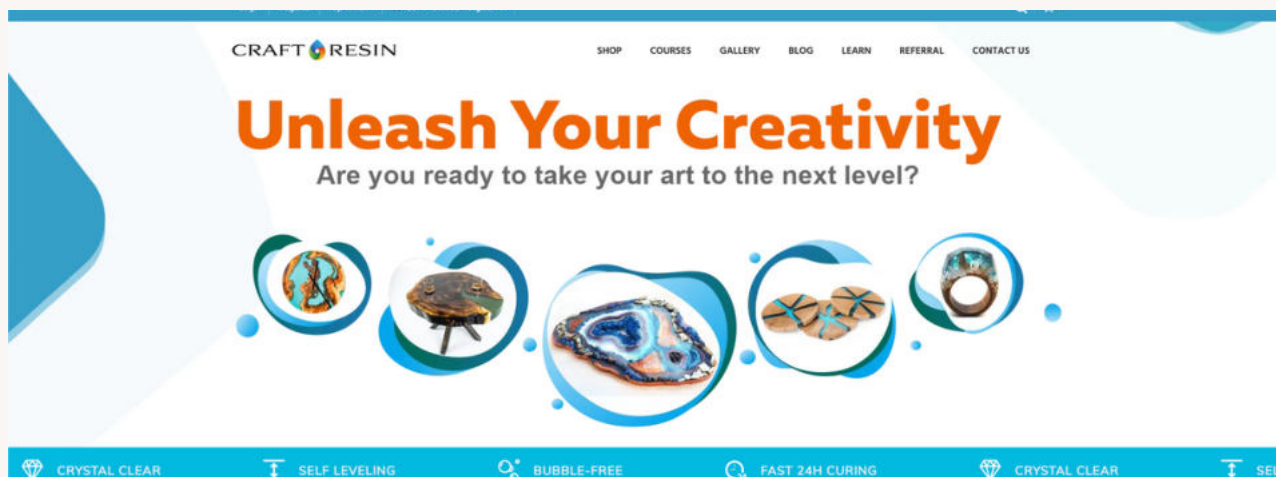
I do not intend this site to generate profit through advertising or selling products of any kind, as this would detract from its USP as a straightforward guide for beginners with no monetary motive. I therefore do not plan for revenue generation with my proposed website.

Research

It was important to research the existing digital landscape to see how many, if any, resources there were dedicated to resin craft. While I knew there were plenty of Youtube channels that featured resin tutorials, I was uncertain if there would be many websites. As I was to discover, more and more resources are cropping up, with differing levels of specialisation.

Cognate Sites

<https://craft-resin.co.uk/>



Premise

A comprehensive site that includes a shop, extensive tutorial course list, and also a referral programme where links can be exchanged for monetary reward.

Observations

- The shop features heavily, with the shop link being the first link in the primary navigation. Products are listed on the homepage
- Tutorials are referred to as 'Courses'. Some are free, while others require payment. Tutorial lengths range from 12-77 minutes
- The colour scheme is simple, with a white background, blue header, and orange details.
- Users need to enrol and log in to access courses

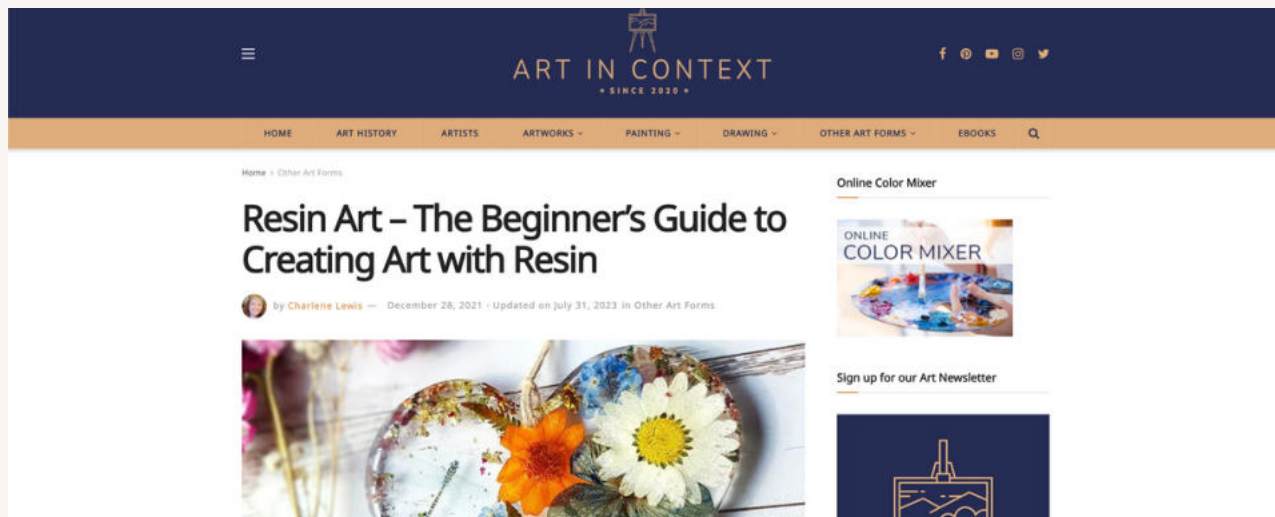
How my site will differ

Some courses are similar to Udemy or LinkedIn Learning courses in format, with sections and quizzes that need to be completed before moving on to the next. The course lengths along with the need to log in can become very time-consuming.

Phase 1: Concept - Research

I plan to make no tutorial longer than 6-8 minutes in length for busy users. My proposed site will also not feature a shop. The idea of a simple colour scheme on a white or off-white background appeals to me in terms of simplicity and 'straightforward' design.

<https://artincontext.org/resin-art/>



Premise

A mammoth site that collates different art forms and mediums, gives the history of each art type, and provides step-by-step guides on how to work with each medium, including resin.

Observations

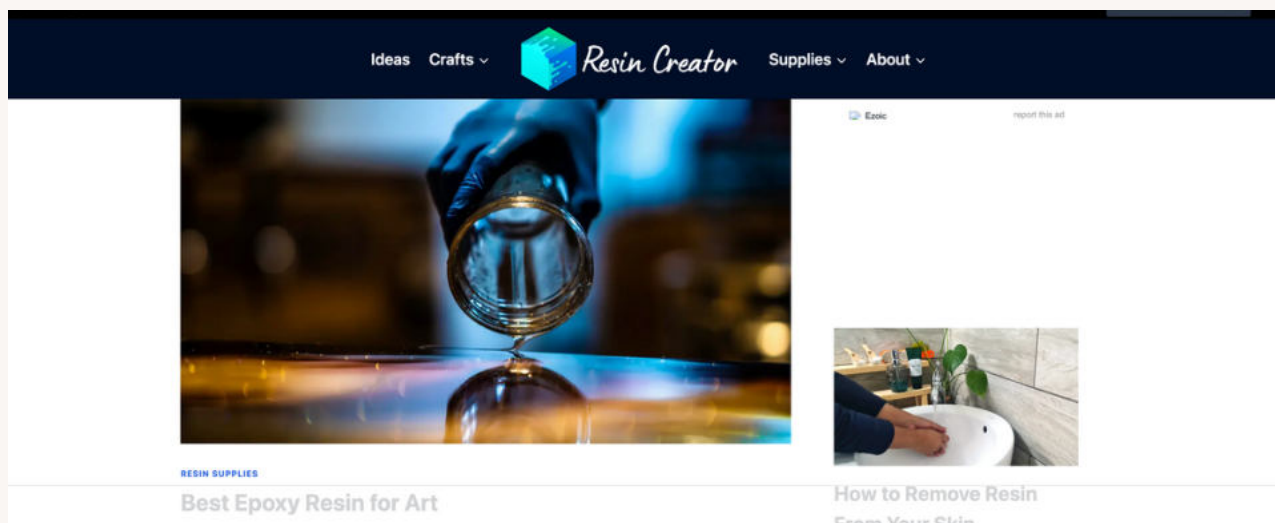
- The site does not specialise in one art form, but instead collates information on many
- The navigation is thus extensive, with drop downs for each category
- The combination of dark blue and bronze on white gives an official, authoritative feel to the site
- The content is comprehensive. The section on resin for beginners is also very long and comprises of one article

How my site will differ

This site is not particularly niche, and appears to be a one stop shop for all things related to art, as opposed to focusing on one craft in particular. The resin section's length is extensive, and quite a long read. I intend to break down my guide into more digestible chunks so that busy users can find what they need quickly.

Phase 1: Concept - Research

<https://resincreator.com/resin-for-art/>



Premise

A site that curates tips and guides on resin craft for all experience levels. There are extensive articles and pages on different techniques and materials, as well as a safety guide.

Observations

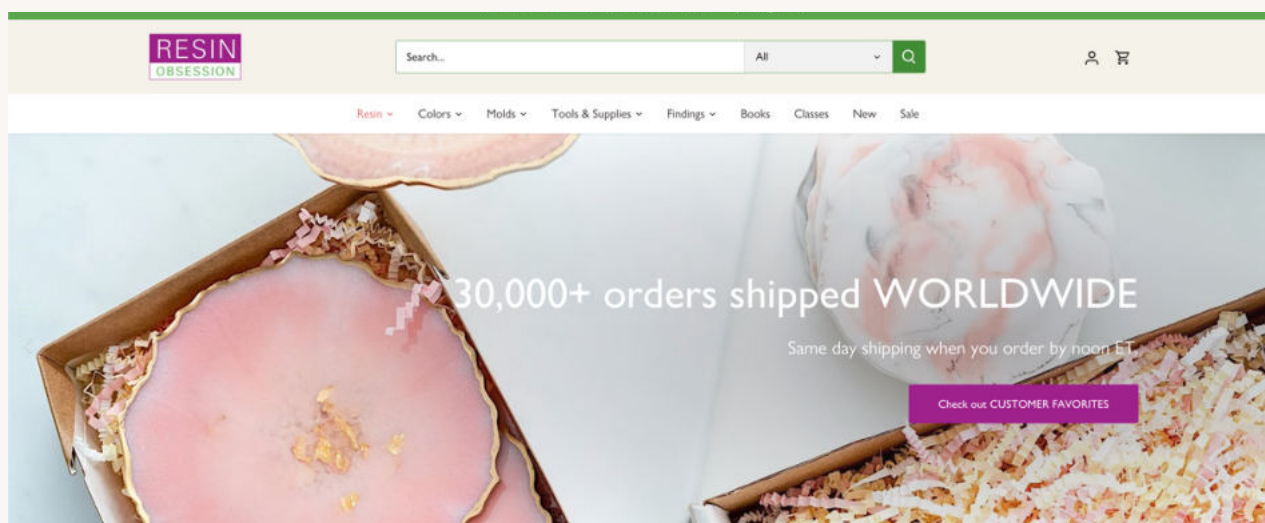
- The primary navigation is relatively simple, with dropdown options for each navigation item
- The site gives 'honest' reviews of different materials that do not look to 'sell' products
- There is an 'Ideas' section that displays inspirational images for projects
- the site features paid advertising

How my site will differ

Of all the cognate sites, this seems most like my own proposed website in that it is run by enthusiasts of differing experience levels. It also does not appear to have a shop as such, and instead generates revenue through advertising. This enables it to review materials with a degree of honesty. I do not plan to feature paid advertising, as I do not wish to clutter the interface. I also do not plan to feature reviews of products, and just keep the focus on the tutorials themselves.

Phase 1: Concept - Research

<https://www.resinobsession.com/>



Premise

Large site by a resin expert that gives tips, extensive knowledge of materials and techniques. Also features a materials shop, as well as paid courses in person or online.

Observations

- The site uses a warm, friendly tone (including emojis and all-caps)
- Most tutorials and articles link to products from the site shop
- Workshops and online learning cost between 197-225USD
- Content knowledge is comprehensive, and broken down into subcategories. The search bar is prominent in the header

How my site will differ

This site's creator has extensive experience of working with resin, and thus has a plethora of tips to share. It would be unrealistic of me to expect to aim for the same level of content, and also to monetise any learning. The friendly tone of the site is useful to bear in mind.

Non-cognate Sites

<https://bellacococrochet.com/>



Phase 1: Concept - Research

Premise

A site with specialist crochet knowledge that features paid downloadable patterns, an online store, and video tutorials. The creator's persona plays a large part in the site's content.

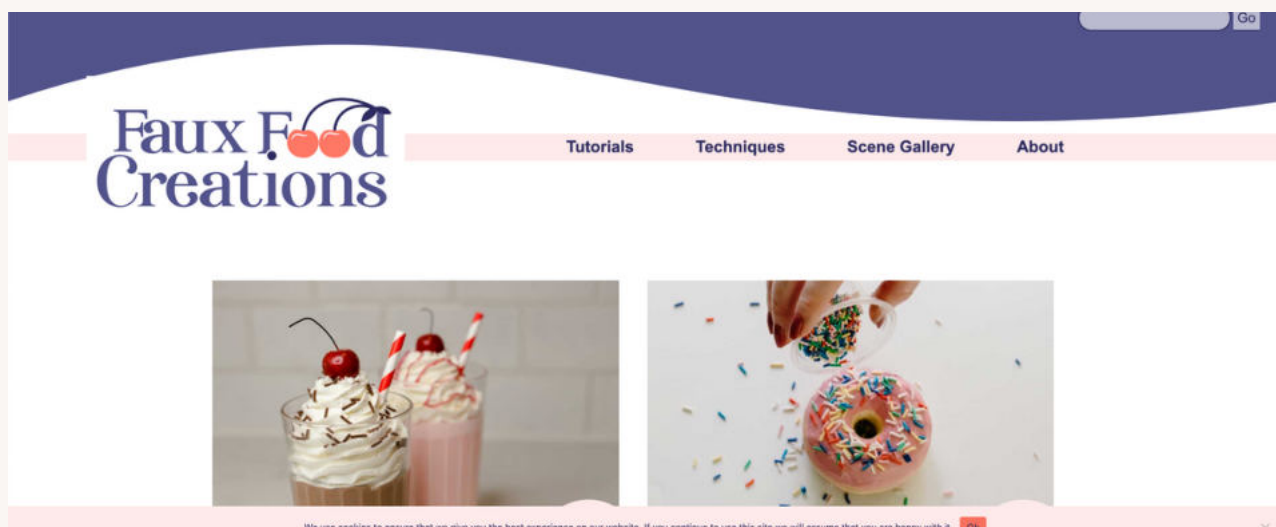
Observations

- Tutorials are links to Youtube videos
- The creator's image and voice is distinctive, with many images of the creator on each page
- The shop is a prominent feature, and products are linked to from the home page
- The site feel is, in a word, 'girly', with pastel colouring, florid fonts, and its overall content tone

How my site will differ

Being no 'expert' in the field, I will not be able to rely on reputation or a persona to help 'sell' my site. As such, I will not be inserting myself into the content and instead keep the focus on tutorial content. Also, while I will narrow down my intended audience during my research phase, I do not want to run the risk of alienating novice crafters by making the design too focused on a particular user type.

<https://fauxfoodcreations.com/>



Premise

A website that features tutorials on how to create and display fake/prop food.

Phase 1: Concept - Research

Observations

- The navigation is simple, with tutorials easy to find by category
- The logo is attractive and prominent on the page
- Tutorials offer video as well as step by step instructions
- The use of images is sparing, and the interface is uncluttered

How my site will differ

While the subject matter is different, this site shares a common goal as my own; both aim to inform users about a craft through a simple set of tutorials. One difference I can potentially spot is that while this site does not necessarily target beginners, mine will place more emphasis on how novices can get started.

Summary

There is an increasing number of websites that specialise in resin art. However, at present the majority of them seem to feature shop components or monetised courses. Not many seem to exist that do not feature an income source. Furthermore, tutorials can be lengthy on some sites, while others have a lot of subcategories that could be overwhelming in number to a beginner. I believe that a stripped back, minimalist site closer in nature to FauxFoodCreations would be the best way to approach my site, with no monetary motive in order to attract new users. I would also like the design to be universally appealing, as opposed to making the target audience too niche straight away.

Phase 2 - Planning Commodity

Who is the User?

According to [Wunderlabel.com](https://www.wunderlabel.com), a website that examines online craft sale trends, around 87% of sellers on the craft trading site Etsy are women. Furthermore, the average age of sellers is 39. This is further explored by the Anthony Thomas Agency, who [writes in a blog post](#) that the average age of crafters is 35-44, though this age range is decreasing over time. They also point out that the majority are women who live in homes with 2.94 people. “In summary, if there is a so-called “average crafter,” that person is likely to be a middle-aged woman with children.” Bearing these figures in mind, my site is primarily aimed at female older millennials, who are statistically more inclined to pursue a new craft. That said, the site should be just as functional to anyone interested in learning a new hobby, as it is important not to exclude groups when making any website.

When embarking on my user research, I decided to reach out to resin crafters directly in order to build more of an understanding of who they were. For this I opted to conduct a Q&A on the /Resin subreddit, where I asked the group what drew them to the craft, as well as what might frustrate them about the medium. However, I noticed that the community was not particularly active, with an average of 0-3 replies on each post. I was therefore not sure if I would receive many replies. However, in a 24-hour period I received over 15 replies to my initial question. Some of these answers were deeply personal when giving their reasons for starting to make resin, and the reasons differed greatly. I noted that recurring reasons included:

- a need for a creative outlet
- dealing with grief
- alleviating stress

Phase 2: Planning - Commodity

What made you want to try resincraft?

Hi everyone, I've been tentatively trying out resin jewellery-making using some moulds and A/B resins I got off Amazon. I'm really enjoying it so far, but was just curious - what made you start wanting to work with resin? What put you off the idea, if anything? I'm finding it can be tricky to identify the right tools for the job at times. Still struggling with that stupid little hand drill the set came with!

Would love to know your thoughts on this exciting little craft!

I started making small items out of resin after I was diagnosed with breast cancer and dealing with some neighbors being shitty sorta sent me in a dark place. Usually in a good mood, but before that I made beaded cultural jewelry and would attend pop up events. Once I got a clear from my doctor that if I set up my space properly and wasn't going to be inhaling toxic fumes or harsh chemicals, I got a little resin kit from Amazon and was super excited that I made something (used molds from Amazon) that didn't suck. Most of the first pieces I made were still soft and bendy with bubbles all over cause I mixed the resin like a nut lol but I continued watching tutorial vids and asking for advice on how to improve. And got better....I'm still a newbie, but I like experimenting with different mediums with my current favorite things to make with resin being customized grinders.

Overall I love that no matter what crazy ideas I come up with, there's a very good chance that I'll be able to make it work with a bit of advice and work when it comes to doing a boredom project with resin. Though I highly doubt that I'll ever work up the courage to sell anything I've made out of resin (not my focus or goal), it's a great creative outlet for me aside sketching.

I'm also becoming a hoarder of molds and resin inclusions lol.

I started it as a hobby to cope with grief about 5 years ago. It sort of morphed into working solely with flowers and resin, which was a passion I shared with the person I lost. So now I preserve flowers from weddings, memorials, and special occasions and cast them in resin. It's become my full time job and I really pour my heart into every piece I make.

Expensive hobby though, sheesh.

Initial Reddit questions and example responses

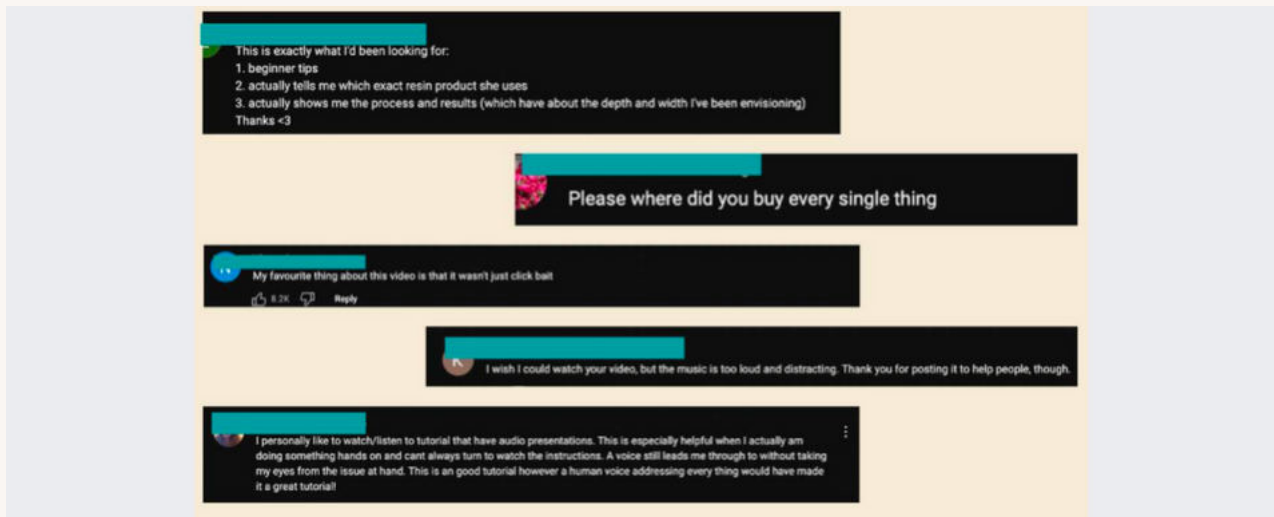
Furthermore, many of the replies seem to reflect my projected demographic; for example, many appeared to come from women. The pain points they listed for resincraft include:

- safety risks
- price of materials
- identifying the best tools for use
- mess/space

As Youtube was cited as a common resource in my Reddit Q&A, I decided to pursue further research both in order to flesh out my user profiles further and also help refine what my content should include. I gathered user comments from resincraft Youtube tutorials, being sure to include videos aimed at both complete beginners and more advanced crafters. The comments mainly consist of feedback on the video content, as well as troubleshooting issues with users' own projects. From their feedback, it became clear that users:

- preferred content that was to the point with no 'babble'
- wanted information on where to source crafting materials
- preferred voice direction over distracting background music
- wanted clear, step-by-step instructions

Phase 2: Planning - Commodity



Examples of comments on existing Youtube tutorials

It was at this point I felt I could create user personas based on the Redditors I had interacted with. These user profiles are amalgamations of the responses I received from the Reddit community, with similar circumstances and motivations. They also share the same pain points as both the Reddit and Youtube communities. Furthermore, just as the Reddit community does, these user personas use a variety of influences in locating information on resincraft, such as social media, online search engines, or directly from peers.



About

Beth is a newly qualified veterinarian, and for the last few years has been studying towards her qualification while working full-time. She has recently begun feeling burned out, and is interested in taking up a craft she can do in the evenings as a therapeutic exercise.


Goals

- to find an interesting craft to do
- to find the craft enjoyable and not take it too seriously
- to still have time left over for socialising

Frustrations

- some learning materials seem very technical
- online tutorials are often long
- concerned about mess and having enough space

Group A



About

Caroline has recently suffered a loss in the family and has taken up resin craft at her partner's suggestion as a pastime they can do together to help distract her. They have made some simple items together, but are looking for new ideas. They mostly look at Youtube videos for inspiration.

Goals

- to spend quality time with her partner making crafts
- to experiment with different ideas for projects
- to avoid spending too much on supplies

Frustrations

- the costs for tools and materials add up quickly
- online tutorials do not always explain where materials can be found

Group B

Phase 2: Planning - Commodity

The image displays two user persona profiles. The first profile, for Sam (41), is set against a pink background. It includes a portrait of Sam, an 'About' section describing her previous online sales and current interest in resin, 'Goals' such as building skills and fitting learning into her schedule, and 'Frustrations' like time-consuming courses and the need for focus. The second profile, for Deborah (48), is set against a green background. It includes a portrait of Deborah, an 'About' section describing her as a gardener who wastes flowers and has a recent health scare, 'Goals' like avoiding waste and working safely, and 'Frustrations' like uncertainty about safety and tutorials that skip steps. Both profiles are labeled as Group C and Group D respectively.

Sam, 41

About

Sam previously sold crochet pieces online, but has found it to be too time-consuming since the birth of her second child. She is keen to learn a craft that takes less time in the hope of making it into a supplementary income. Sam has enrolled in some courses online to learn more about resin.

Goals

- to build her skills in resin craft
- to fit learning around her daily schedule
- to learn quickly in order to start an online business soon

Frustrations

- online courses are time-consuming
- tutorials need intense focus, which is difficult when caring for children full-time

Group C

Deborah, 48

About

Deborah is a gardener and sells flowers at her local farmer's market as a side job. She has found that a lot of flowers are often wasted, and has decided to try drying and embedding them in resin to give away as gifts. She has had a recent health scare, which caused a lot of stress.

Goals

- to avoid wasting flowers
- to work with resin safely
- to alleviate stress through a craft

Frustrations

- is unsure about safety measures
- tutorials often gloss over steps and assume prior knowledge

Group D

User persona profiles representing Groups A - D

User Journeys: My Site & Real-life Scenarios

It was worth considering how my users would most likely access my site. More than one Reddit response stated that they looked for tutorials on Youtube when they started learning the craft. It therefore made sense to create a Youtube channel for users to browse as a first point of call that would then link to my site for additional information and resources. The type of device used to access the site was also worth considering. For example, one of my personas is looking to start a business while juggling duties at home. They may not have time to sit down at a desktop computer to do their research, and therefore might choose to access the site via mobile or tablet.

Depending on each user, the user journey might look a little different. When plotting out user journeys, I bore my user personas, as well as their influences, user stories, and job stories in mind.

Phase 2: Planning - Commodity

Group A/Beth: views resincraft content on Instagram → follows tutorials on Youtube → navigates to my website from there → checks the length of the tutorials in the tutorial section to see if they are long

Group B/Caroline: views my tutorials on Youtube → active on Reddit community → locates site and navigates to the tutorials to see if materials are listed/easily sourced and affordable, as well as if there are plenty of creative ideas

Group C/Sam: has been trying to follow online courses online but finds they require a lot of time and deep focus → searches for alternatives → finds my site and navigates to tutorials to see if instructions are clear/have audio directions

Group D/Deborah: hears about resincraft through friends → watches some Youtube tutorials → searches online for more information → finds my site and navigates to safety section for guidance

Content Strategy

From my user research, it is clear that due to my users' concerns over time-constraints, budget, difficulty levels, safety, and need for inspiration, my site must include:

- video tutorials with audio for those who might become distracted
- concise videos with no 'filler' content/'babbling'
- clear instructions
- a section on safety that is easy to find
- clear information on where materials can be sourced
- cost of materials for budgeters

The information architecture must also be simple and easy to navigate. I decided that it would be beneficial to use a stripped-back, minimal approach to the design to help facilitate this, with tutorials, setup tips and safety precautions all easily accessible from the home screen.

As progress on my website continued to evolve, it was in my interest to refer back to my UX research to ensure I was fulfilling the user's needs, as well as solving their problems. Further explanation of my UX Research for the project can be found on my [course blog](#).

Delight

In my research for my proposed website, I determined that the users of my site are primarily:

- women aged 35-44
- looking for a creative outlet
- keen to craft as a means of alleviating stress

Furthermore, these users may:

- have little free time
- be unsure of how to get started
- have varying experience levels and budgets

These concepts factored heavily into the planning of the visual design and content of my website.

Tone of Language

During my research for the project, I interacted with the Resin community on Reddit to find out what drew them to the craft. The replies were open, warm, and helpful. Some gave very detailed replies and were not afraid of opening up about their personal circumstances. The tone was therefore friendly and informal, but often struck more sombre notes as they disclosed more distressing reasons for needing to find a creative outlet. Several users also mentioned that they found it difficult to know where to start.

Setting the tone of language in my website is therefore potentially challenging in that it needs to bear in mind that users need to find information quickly, but also feel welcomed and 'safe' in introducing them to a craft that could possibly seem overwhelming for beginners. This means that the tone needs to be simultaneously concise and minimal while being warm and friendly in tone.

The focus on the therapeutic side of learning a craft also means that I want to avoid using overly excitable, bubbly language, such as the use (or overuse) of exclamation marks and emphasis including uppercase 'shouting', which can serve as a distraction and trivialise the reasons that led to the user wanting to learn to make resin. Instead, I intend to use soothing, friendly language. The underlying tone can be summarised as:

"Let's have a nice sit down and make some lovely things together."

Brand Identity

To begin the process of establishing a brand identity, I started by brainstorming words that could be associated with the site's content and mission.

calming/therapeutic words:

tranquil

lagoon

oasis

azure

cure

heal

artistic/crafty words:

create

curate

inspire

craft

pour

canvas

Name

cure8:

I chose this name because it combines the concepts of therapy and healing, as well as the resin curing process. The word 'curate' may also appeal to those looking for artistic projects, while the '8' is a reference to the time it takes to create a project.

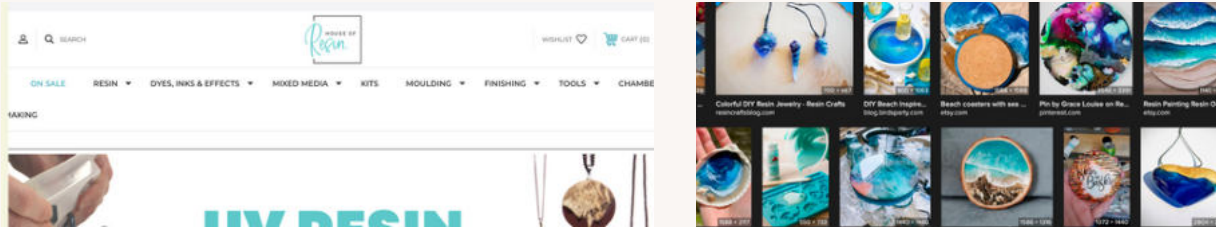
Initially I had come up with resin8, but this was unfortunately taken by a resin e-commerce site. However, cure8 combines the idea of therapy and art, as well as the short time one can spend on the craft.

Colour

From the word association brainstorming (particularly the 'therapeutic' words), it is possible to draw connotations. In regard to colour, the words bring up ideas of cool, relaxing blues and turquoises reminiscent of the sea, or perhaps a swimming pool. I felt that these would contrast well against a cool, off-white background for a simple, minimalistic feel.

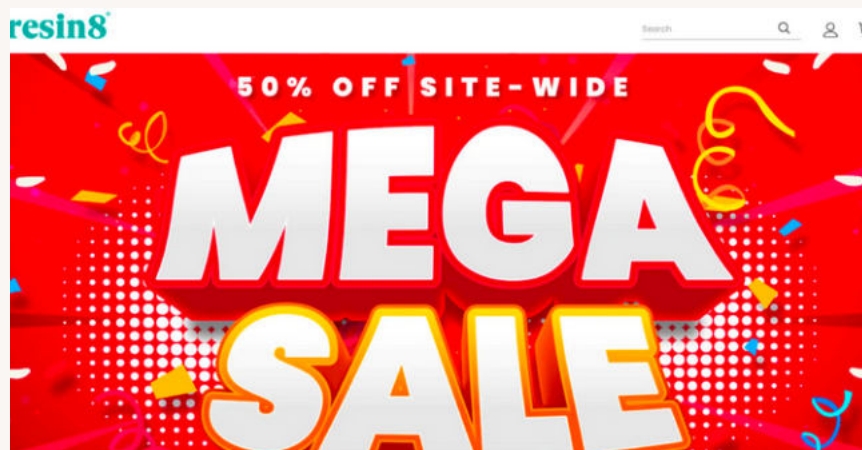
Phase 2: Planning - Delight

Next, I explored cognate sites to see if there were any commonalities in their colour schemes. I noted that resin8.co.uk used a teal colour for its logo, while houseofresin.co.uk uses a similar shade for its headings. Indeed, there seems to be an existing connotation between resin art and the colour blue, or more specifically turquoises and teals. Furthermore, the dominant recurring colours in search results for 'resin' are shades of blue and turquoise.



Teals and blues tend to be associated with resincraft.

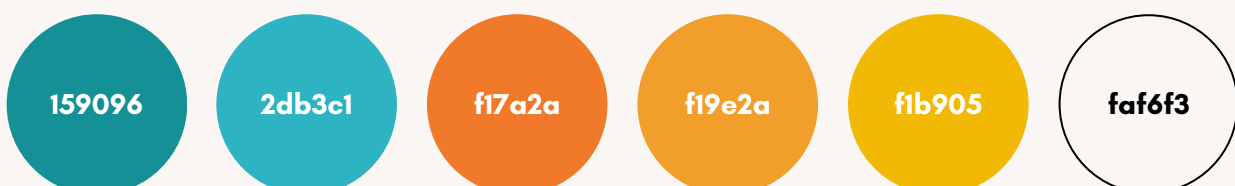
A closer inspection of the resin8 site revealed a lot of red on banners announcing item sales, as well as uppercase lettering. The result is eye-catching and loud, but highlights the site's primary mission of being an e-commerce site. Red, with its connotations of aggression, would not be suited to a site that promotes resincraft as a therapeutic exercise.



Reds on existing sites can appear aggressive.

However, to prevent the turquoise and whites from looking too clinical, I decided that the turquoise should be offset by a contrasting, warm colour. Complementary colours for turquoise include burnt oranges. I also wished to include lighter shades of ochre or orange, reminiscent of sunshine and positivity. I wished for these shades to be used lightly throughout the site.

Final Colour Scheme



Type

As my users are most likely be busy people looking for clear guidance on how to start making resin, fonts for the site should be clear, easily scannable and simple. I therefore propose to use a sans-serif font for both headers and body text, with no more than two font families on the site. I wanted such fonts to be more rounded rather than angular to keep the theme of being soothing and calming, and not 'edgy'. Initially, I experimented with the Google Fonts Paytone One and Archivo Black, as they seemed to fit the bill. However, I ultimately opted for the thick strokes of the Google Font Hammersmith One for easily scannable headings, as well as its relatively wide spacing for a 'simplistic' feel. Palanquin, with its rounded edges and large counters, would help make each letter more distinctive and is therefore well-suited to body text.

cure8

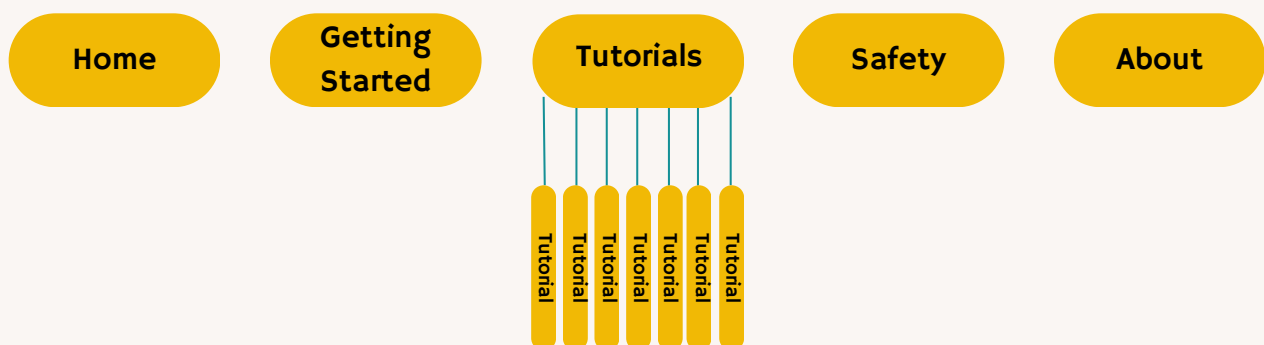
Hammersmith One

Resincraft for beginners

Palanquin

Information Architecture

The website structure will be simple and scaled down, primarily so that new crafters are not overwhelmed by too many options.



Other pages will include an Accessibility Statement, 404 Error page, Sitemap, and Privacy Policy.

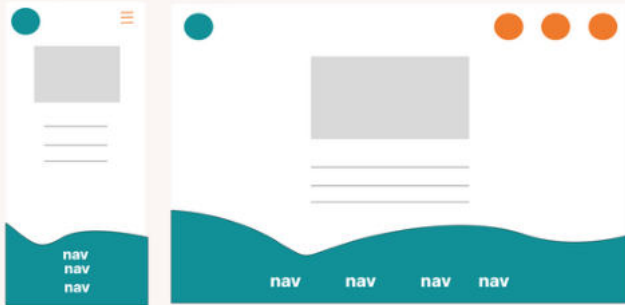
Layout

Due to user time constraints, I plan to take a minimalistic approach to the site layout. Users should not be overwhelmed by choice, and as such will not be presented with too many navigation options.

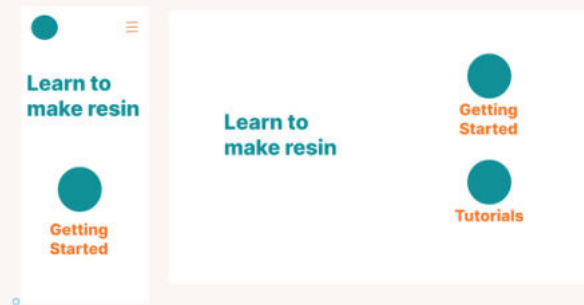
Phase 2: Planning - Delight

The homepage would potentially take a full page spread format, with the most important navigation options clearly grouped together. This helps guide the user to the exact content they need.

Other pages, such as the tutorial pages, would take on a more conventional design pattern, with a top and footer navigation. For smaller viewports, I plan to use a 'hamburger' navigation menu to keep clutter to a minimum.



Mobile & Desktop Tutorial page



Mobile & Desktop Home Page

Logo

Starting with the concept of art as therapy, I was initially interested in using images associated with healthcare as part of my imagery. Glass apothecary jars, as seen in chemists of yesteryear, might suit this idea. With their jewel-like appearance, these multicoloured jars of coloured water are also reminiscent of what can be created with resin itself. I therefore experimented with incorporating this into the logo.



Ultimately, this concept was too medicinal.

However, as was pointed out by tutors during the Delight presentation, this visual was far too reminiscent of medicinal connotations, detracting from the idea of crafts. It was apparent that while I was aiming for an idea of 'healing', using medicinal imagery would ultimately not work as it made the site's subject rather ambiguous.

Phase 2: Planning - Delight

I then decided to work with more abstract imagery for my logo, and played with the idea of a droplet, reminiscent of water. I also experimented with some floating circles outside of the droplet to signify the idea of the two circles in '8', as well as resemble resin 'blobs'.



I began working with more abstract ideas.

As my graphic design skills were somewhat elementary, this droplet concept served as a jumping off point that my tutor Prisca then expanded upon. She demonstrated to me how the text could be incorporated into the logo, and how the circles should be inside the droplet to give an idea of resin's texture.

The final logo's droplet includes the idea of layering through its use of a teal upper section and a light amber lower section. It also features a curved line beneath the text that has an upward arc, denoting an optimistic learning 'curve'.



Main logo and icon.

The smaller icon would serve well as a recognisable icon to be used in social media and Youtube idents, in addition to being used as a tab favicon.

Images & Iconography

I decided that waves would be an interesting addition, perhaps used to separate the header and footer. This would fit into the thematic ideas of the ocean explored during my word association exercise.

I also planned to include small icons to denote content, such as a measuring cup next to the section on measuring resin. These would be created with SVGs for scalability.

Firmness



My site is primarily content-driven, and as such I recognise that I should put as much time and care into the content as I would the coding of the overall website. It is also important to follow the content-first approach we have learned over the course of the MA, and I should therefore start with the content. The site's content includes:

- Home page: very simple with prominent navigation
- Tutorial pages: 9-10 in total – video, images, instructions, relevant links
- Your setup/getting started: text, images
- Safety: text
- About: text, images

Content Production

I plan to film resin craft tutorials using a static, top-down approach, where the workstation is the focus of the video. The camera would be mounted on a desktop mount for stability. I also intend to shoot footage on an iPhone 13. As the card artist Cathy Zielske points out in her [demonstration of how she films her own tutorials](#), modern iPhones are more than adequate for capturing quality footage, particularly if the camera is stationary.

After some research, I decided that video would be shot via the MoviePro app, [which is a useful tool for collating footage](#). I intended to use iMovie for editing the footage; while Final Cut Pro is available, iMovie's simple interface would enable me to work with relative ease and speed.

Videos would not feature recorded sound, as I intended to use added voiceover to narrate the tutorial steps. Not only would this help avoid any unwanted background noise, I would not need to rerecord entire videos simply because of issues with my wording or other audio hiccups. [According to Think Media's tutorial on voiceover](#), modern MacBook Pros have good quality built-in mics, but after testing this for my prototype, I opted to record audio using the Voice Memos app in my iPhone for better sound quality. For accessibility, my video tutorials would use clear annotations for each step.

Videos would then be published on Youtube. I believed it would be necessary to upload to Youtube despite its monetised ads, because according to my research with the Reddit community, beginner crafters often use Youtube as their starting point for learning. It is also more financially viable for me, as other video hosts often require a payment plan.

Site Promotion

I plan to set up a cure8 Instagram account to promote the website, as well as add relevant posts to my Mastodon account. Furthermore, I intended to post as myself in the Resin community on Reddit. I did not believe that posting from an official cure8 account would be well-received on Reddit, which seems to favour communicating with individuals rather than brands looking to 'sell' something.

Posts on Instagram would feature images of created works accompanied by the cure8 logo. These would be created and optimised in PhotoShop. I also planned to upload short clips of tutorials or works in progress featuring royalty-free background music. The Splice video editing app allows users to create content directly on their phones and features a wide range of royalty-free music.

Posts on all three platforms should be made regularly for the duration of the project's creation (May – September), as well as beyond. Instagram posts could be made at least weekly as a quick way to build followers (there are currently 12.7m posts featuring the #resin tag, and 12.6m featuring #resinArt).

Technology

Domain

I decided that as my website's name is cure8, I would use the simple domain name cure8.uk. As costs given for crafting materials are in GBP, there is therefore a need for geographical clarity in my domain name. I bought this domain name from Clook (£15.98 GBP for 2 years), as it appeared to be better value than Google's £10 per year cost.

Hosting

While we have been using Clook for our coursework hosting so far, I thought it best to explore other options. According to several sites including crazyegg.com, Hostinger is the best overall choice for most people's needs, citing fast load times and affordability.

Overleaf is a comparison provided by financesonline.com:

Phase 2: Planning - Firmness

Clook	vs	Hostinger	
ASK VENDOR A QUESTION			
Shared Web Hosting Plans		Shared Web Hosting Plans	
Price:	£25/year	Price:	\$1.39/month
Storage:	200MB	Storage:	30 GB
Bandwidth:	5GB	Bandwidth:	100 GB
No. of domains:	1	No. of domains:	1
No. of emails:	No info	No. of emails:	1
Dedicated Server Plans		VPS Hosting Plans	
Price:	£279/month	Price:	\$3.95/mo
Storage:	No info	Storage:	20 GB
Bandwidth:	1TB	Bandwidth:	1000 GB
Type of processor	Dell / HP Hardware	No. of domains:	No info

Clook	vs	Hostinger	
ASK VENDOR A QUESTION			
Available Support		Available Support	
email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
phone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	phone	<input type="checkbox"/>
live support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	live support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
training	<input type="checkbox"/>	training	<input type="checkbox"/>
tickets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	tickets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
knowledge base	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	knowledge base	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Hostinger is evidently the more affordable choice with prices starting at \$1.39 p/m. Their storage is also far superior.

However, crazyegg.com reports regular downtime with shared and Hostinger's WordPress hosting, which can leave sites un-viewable for up to one full day a month. Furthermore, Website Planet's [review of Hostinger](#) states that the chat customer support mainly consists of links to documentation, with few 'human' responses.

As someone very new to any sort of backend development, I would rather not be met with bot-like customer support in times of distress, especially when I can get Carl from Clook on the phone in less than 60 seconds. Clook also clearly states its inclusion of a free SSL certificate, an encryption tool that helps keep user data secure. For this reason, I will continue to work with Clook for my hosting.

Front-end Tech

My website would be comprised of the following technologies:

- HTML/CSS for markup and styling
- PHP for modular includes of repeat content, copyright date, and CMS implementation.
- JavaScript – for any added interactivity or added delight. I will factor in the possibility of using JavaScript for creating a theme switcher. However, ultimately, I do not wish to use JavaScript for the sake of it if interactive elements can be achieved using the more robust layers or even a well-implemented Wordpress plugin.
- Images – I plan to create subtle graphics for my website, and therefore will work with SVG in Illustrator. For photographic images, I will convert JPG images to WebP for increased performance.

My user group setup would play a part in my design's layout. Many users, such as those browsing for creative ideas in Group B, will most likely be using a phone or tablet, and I must therefore take a mobile-first approach to my design.

Content Management

While my site will be for the most part static, updates will occur periodically as I add more tutorial pages. It would be in my interest to use a content management system to achieve this, as it would cut down the need to hard code each page individually when a tutorial template could be more efficient.

I plan to use WordPress for my content management for several reasons:

- open-source
- 41% marketshare, making it a valuable tool to learn career-wise.
- One of the more intuitive, simple content management systems. As I plan to create websites for those who do not have tech backgrounds, it is important that they are able to manage their content independently.
- access to a variety of plugins

Potential Plugins

As Wordpress is unfamiliar territory for me, I will play it by ear in terms of which plugins I will use. However, some early potential options include Yoast for enhanced SEO, as well as enabled comments for the Tutorial pages.

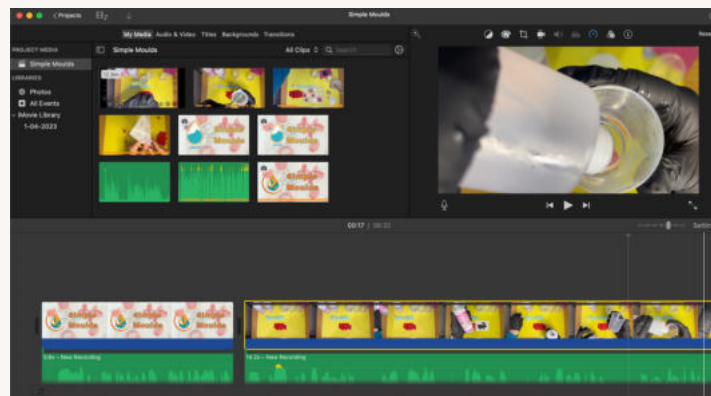
Building my WordPress theme and is the area I felt most intimidated by due to my lack of experience. As such, I expected to spend a great deal of time on learning it.

Phase 3 - Prototype

Presentation

For the final section of the planning period of the project, I created a prototype of my proposed site. This was mainly to help tutors understand what my vision of the site would entail, as well as view content in its context.

Following a summary of the prior crit sessions, I focused on creating a prototype for one of the tutorials, as the tutorials would be the main draw of the content. To that end, it was necessary to create my first video tutorial, a daunting prospect.



Editing my first tutorial video.

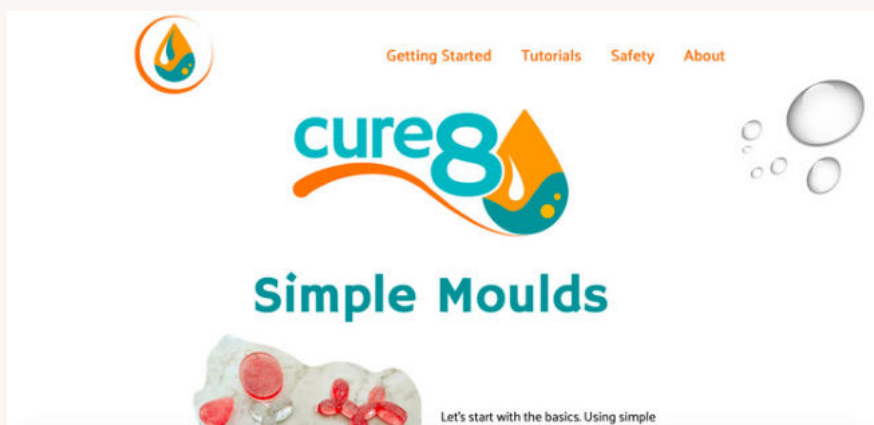
I presented layouts for both widescreen and mobile view for the the tutorial page. The overall layout, colour scheme, and tone of voice received positive feedback, as did the final font choices. Another point that received positive feedback was my decision to include an image mask on the tutorial's main image; the image is enclosed in a 'splatter' effect instead of a traditional rectangle or square. I did this to help reduce the angular appearance and make the design more rounded and 'soft'.



Mobile tutorial page and 'splatter' mask.

Phase 3: Prototype

I had also tried to inject a little fun into the interface by adding a resin 'blob' graphic to the header. However, this proved to be a little distracting from the rest of the header contents, and it was suggested by tutors that the blobs be used sparingly in the page body, perhaps before headings as bullet points.



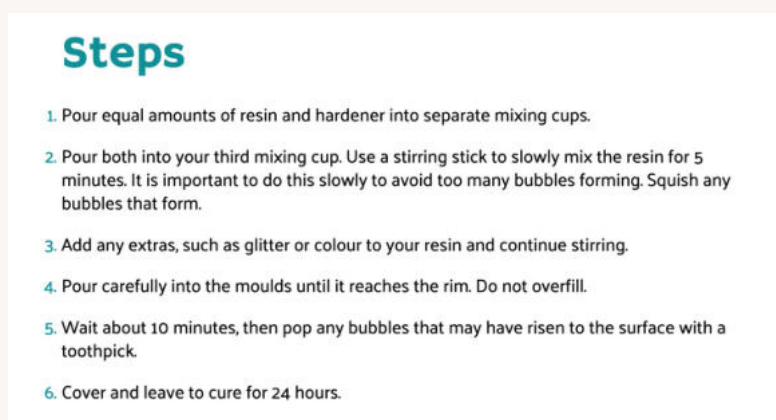
Desktop tutorial prototype with 'blob' in header.

The footer did not yet have a wave background image on it as I knew I would require more time to play with SVGs, colour effects, and decide on how a final shape would look.



'The prototype features a 'plain' footer.

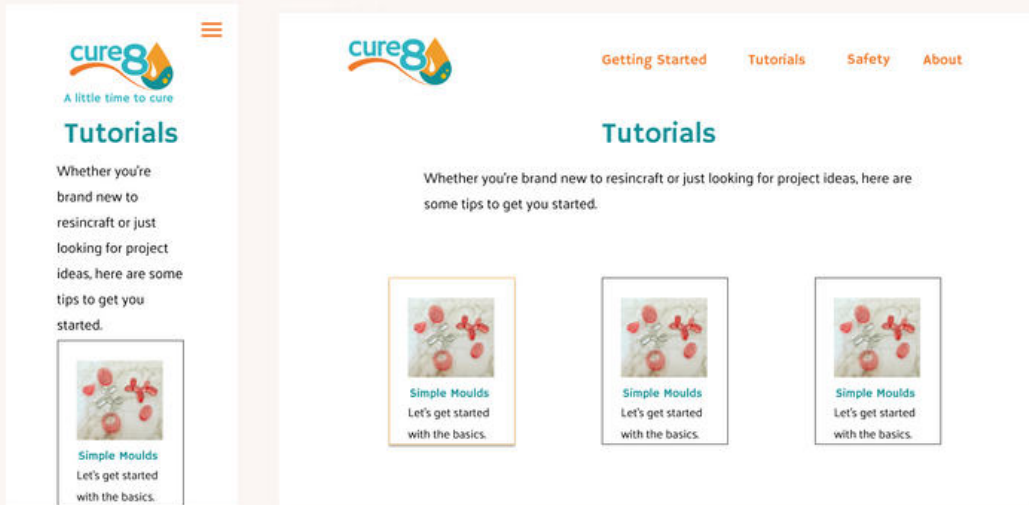
On my tutorial page, I had initially proposed having the steps as text only. However, tutors pointed out that it would be helpful to include image stills from the tutorials to help guide users.



The tutorial steps are text-only in the prototype.

Phase 3: Prototype

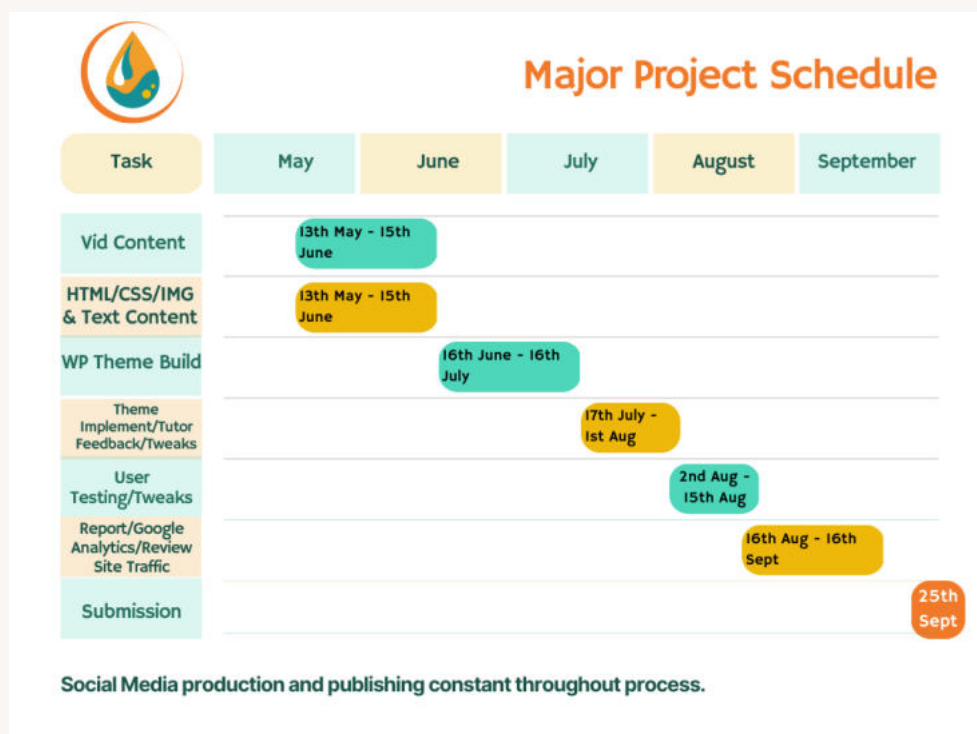
I also created wireframes in Figma to illustrate the site architecture and rough mockups of the overall site layout.



Ultimately, creating the prototype gave me a rough guide to work from when entering the implementation stage. It also gave me a greater understanding of how much work would need to go into creating the content. I realised from my first video that shooting, editing, creating voiceovers, and then uploading to my Youtube channel would be a time-consuming process, and that I should be generous with the timespan required.

Schedule

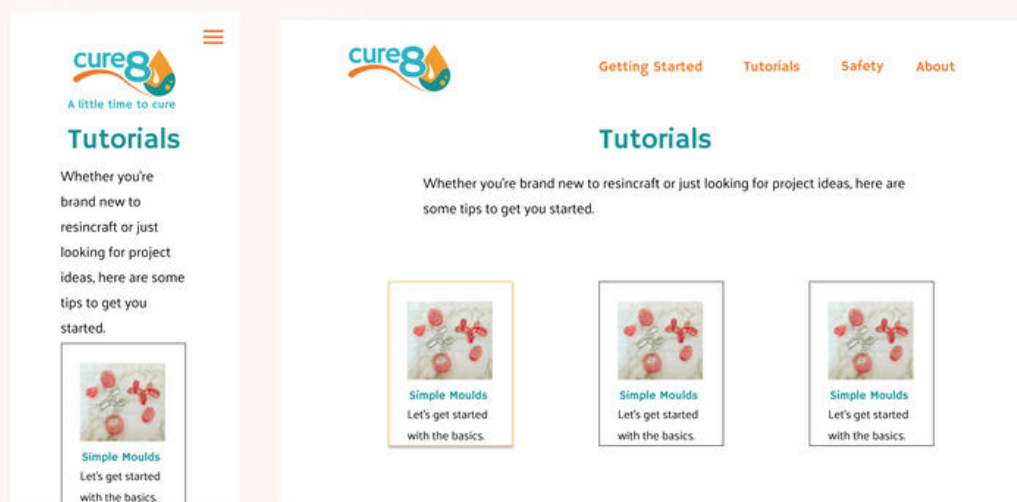
I built a Gantt chart to illustrate a schedule of works. This broke down the various activities I would undertake before and after the site launch.



Phase 4 - Implementation

Prototype Completion

Following our course's content-first philosophy, I began creating the copy for my website's pages. At this point, I had only created one tutorial, and so I focused on the Getting Started, Safety, and About pages. For the tutorial landing page, I decided to use 'cards' to represent each tutorial link. To finalise the site's layout and appearance, I created mockups in Figma. These would serve as guides to refer to during the theme build. However, I knew that some changes would occur, such as the decision to use rounded corners for the cards to create a softer overall feel to the content. While the mockups were immensely helpful in ensuring that I was not designing 'blindly' during the theme build, I was keen to see how the design would develop organically to suit the content.



Figma mockup of the tutorial landing page

Content Creation

I started with the written content for the non-tutorial pages, such as the Getting Started, Safety, and About pages. These could be written using my own existing knowledge of resin, as well as by conducting research on resin. For this, I looked up guidance from established resin sites, such as <https://www.resinobsession.com/>. I also consulted books for basic beginners' tips, such as Taylor Mitchell's Epoxy Resin for Beginners.

Phase 4: Implementation

However, I knew that it would be best to create written tutorial content once the tutorial videos had been filmed, as the written steps would summarise the content of the videos. I would also not have any images to work with until the resin items had actually been created. It was therefore essential to begin work on the tutorials as early as possible.

There were several factors that I needed to bear in mind when filming my tutorials. Firstly, the environment would need to be well ventilated as per safety recommendations when working with resin. This meant that using campus workspaces would not be the best option, just as university accommodation would not be ideal. This, coupled with ideal lighting, meant that I could not feasibly start working with large quantities of resin until I moved house later in the summer. In my new flat, I had much more space, ventilation, and light to work with.

I filmed my tutorials as planned with an overhead mount for my iPhone, and then edited them using iMovie, which comes with most Macs as standard. These were voiced over with the iPhone Voice Memo app. I was keen to work with these low cost technologies as I believe that content creation should be accessible to everyone, and not just those who can afford expensive equipment. This reflects the ideology of my project; even those on a budget should be able to create.

Despite this, my choice of craft for this project did incur a lot of additional expenses. There is no denying that resincraft is a lot more expensive than other mediums, as the costs of the materials can mount up quickly. Additionally, finding the correct materials for the tutorials could also be difficult. This, along with the cost of the domain, meant that the project was far from cheap. This was my reasoning for including a cost estimate for each tutorial.

I filmed most of my tutorials in July - August, with a further couple filmed at the end of August. The reason for the gap was that I was concerned that I was neglecting finalising my theme build by focusing too much on the tutorial content. By shifting between aspects of the site build, I felt more secure that I was not neglecting areas of the project and leaving them as afterthoughts. During filming I learned that I had underestimated how many sittings each tutorial would require. Many of the projects required me to add multiple layers of resin, which meant waiting until the first layer had cured. This could take up to 24 hours. I would also have to wait until the natural lighting was optimal. This meant that one tutorial could take up to five recording sessions. In other words, it was never as straightforward as simply sitting down and filming a tutorial over the course of a day.



One tutorial could take up to five recording sessions.

Theme Build

Getting started with Wordpress was by far the biggest challenge in terms of building the site. Up until this point in the course, I had only worked with static pages in HTML and CSS, with PHP includes for site modularity and vanilla JavaScript for behavioural enhancement. Thus, learning to work with a CMS was a new challenge that I initially found very intimidating.

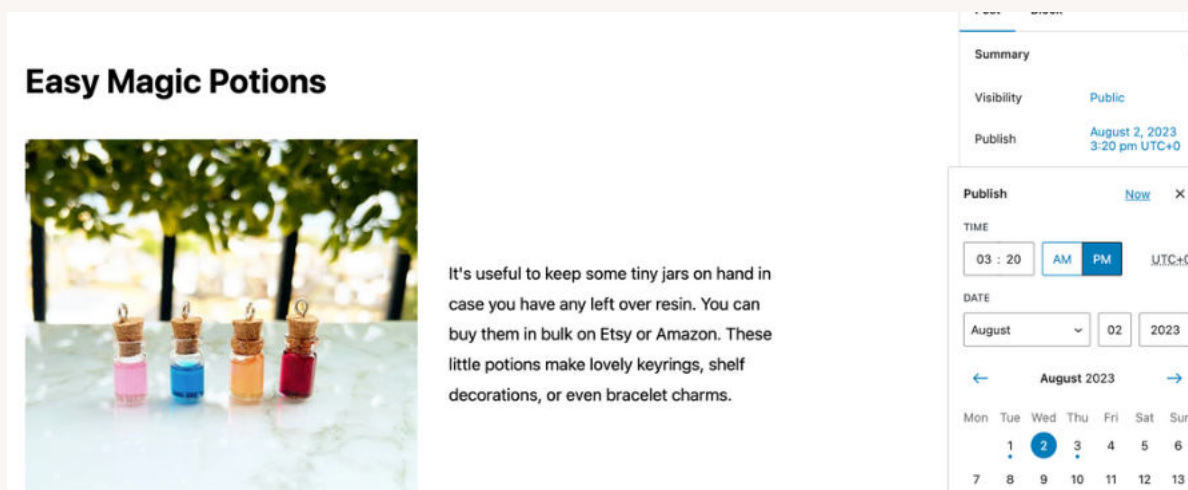
Using our tutor Prisca's [starter theme](#) as a guide, I gradually learned how to introduce my custom design to my Wordpress site and the different approach to implementing CSS by enqueueing sheets in a functions template. One particular point of confusion early on was how to target certain elements in my CSS. It was not always a guarantee how Wordpress would choose to render my elements; for example, it often generated `<div>`s around content that I did not account for. It was therefore essential to use the Dev Tools to inspect my page and adjust my CSS selectors accordingly. A particular example of difficulty with selectors was that the default container for navigation items in Wordpress is `<div>`, which is not particularly semantic. It was therefore necessary to use a container string argument to adjust the default container.

```
<?php wp_nav_menu(array('theme_location'=>'primary', 'container' => 'nav')); ?>
```

It was necessary to change Wordpress's default nav container.

Wordpress also generates classes for elements. To a certain extent, while the course has warned against the overuse of `<div>`s and classes in favour of sophisticated semantics and combinator selectors, I found that it was necessary to overlook this at times in order to work with Wordpress efficiently; sometimes combinators would not enable the styling to work, and I had no choice but to select elements by class or id.

Adapting to Wordpress's original concept as a blogging platform also meant that I could use it to alter the appearance of my content. On my tutorial landing page, I could rearrange the order of my post cards/tutorials by changing the posts' publishing dates, for example.



The image shows a WordPress post titled "Easy Magic Potions" with a photo of four small jars on a table. The text of the post reads: "It's useful to keep some tiny jars on hand in case you have any left over resin. You can buy them in bulk on Etsy or Amazon. These little potions make lovely keyrings, shelf decorations, or even bracelet charms." To the right, the WordPress publishing settings are visible, showing the post is set to be published on August 2, 2023, at 03:20 AM UTC+0. A calendar view below the date picker shows the date August 2, 2023, is selected.

The order of my posts could be changed by manipulating the publishing date settings.

Phase 4: Implementation

Learning Wordpress's idiosyncrasies was also rewarding in that it often meant I could minimise my CSS. The ability to choose to switch between side-by-side images and text or stacked mobile content through the block editor meant that I could remove the Flexbox styling in my prototype. Furthermore, it was easy to include an introductory paragraph to my tutorial landing page by adding a description to my 'tutorial' category, which could then be pulled into my `category.php` file.

```
<p><?php echo category_description(3); ?></p>
```

Tutorials

If you're looking for resincraft ideas, perhaps one of the tutorials below will inspire you. These can be easily adapted to become more elaborate as you add your own creative flourishes to your projects. For absolute beginners, I recommend starting with the [Simple Moulds](#) tutorial.



Category descriptions could be pulled directly into the content.

Site Build

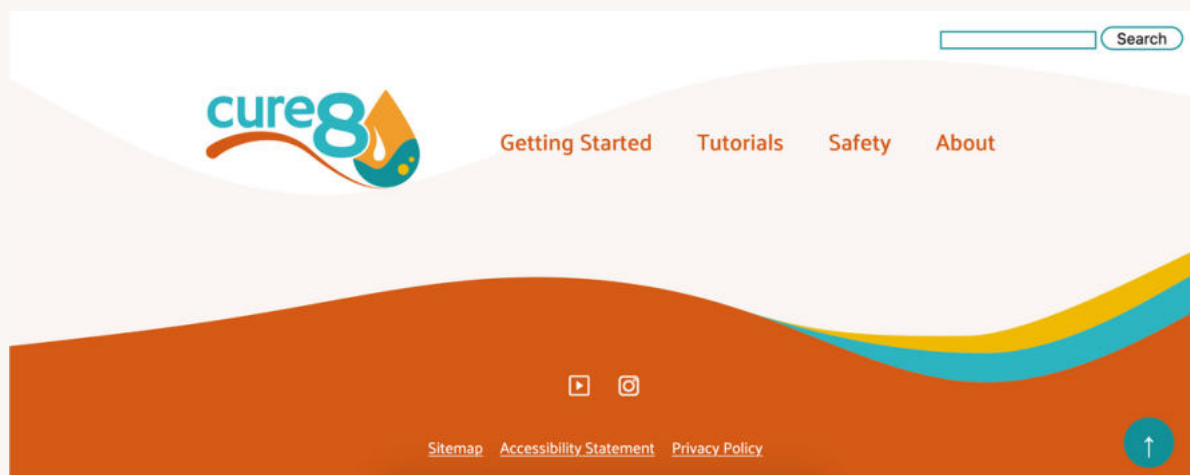
I built my site in tandem with learning Wordpress's mechanics, which meant that I often needed to adjust my code accordingly. For example, grouping content together in the block editor would produce `<div>`s that would need to be accounted for in my stylesheet.

I also changed some aspects of my prototype when faced with the content in context. For example, I used a four-column CSS Grid for my tutorial landing page layout, which upon inspection made the content seem cramped. This took away from the minimalist feel to the content I was aiming for, and so I changed it to a three-column grid.

Another change I made from the prototype was to make the main body of the site an off-white, almost beige colour. I felt this would be less jarring on the eye than my original stark white, as I felt it was somewhat too clinical.

However, I chose to include a pure white 'wave' in my header on wider viewports that reflected the upward curve in the logo. While it is rather subtle and does not contrast against the off-white body, I felt it was a nice, decorative addition reminiscent of flowing resin.

Phase 4: Implementation



Header and footer waves.

My footer also uses a dark amber curve on larger viewports. In the past, I have tended to neglect my footers and admittedly treated them almost like afterthoughts. Rather than relegating the footer to ‘that bit at the bottom of the page’, I chose to make it a colourful decorative element on the page, with ‘layers’ of yellow and blue not unlike the layers found in resincraft. The content of the footer is relatively simple, containing only the secondary navigation and social media links.

Keeping with modern design patterns, I chose to display a search bar in the top right of my header to help users locate the content they need.

On wider viewports, my footer also features a ‘back to top’ fixed link to help guide users back to the start of the page. While I could have used JavaScript to make it disappear at a certain point on the page, I chose not to. I did not wish to weigh my site down with JavaScript just for one small function, especially when the ‘back to top’ link is not intrusive on the screen.

I created my home page last, as I wanted to ensure that the rest of the content was in place first to help me decide what was best to include. The home page presented a challenge in that it has a different layout to the other pages, and so I created a new template especially for it. It is the only page that has CSS Grid applied to the entire main layout. It also features a Call to Action ‘Let’s Get Started’ link that takes the user to the Getting Started page.

Another distinctive feature of the home page is that it is the only part of the website that features animation on its text; I wanted the page title to gradually fade in to create a calming, ‘mirage’ feel.

On wider viewports, I have implemented ‘smartnav’ to help indicate to the user which page they are currently viewing. This is easily achieved by using Wordpress’s ability to select the current navigation item.

```
/* underlining the current menu item */
.current-menu-item {
  border-bottom: 2px solid var(--headings);
}
```

Implementing ‘smartnav’ via CSS.

Phase 4: Implementation

For added visual delight, I chose to create small SVG graphics next to each of the subheadings in my Getting Started page. This is because the page is quite text-heavy, and I wished to add visual cues to help guide the user.

For the purposes of semantics and ensuring the HTML is reserved only for meaningful content, all decorative images are added to the site via CSS.



I was keen to implement a Dark Mode that would allow users to switch between the default version of the site and a darkened one to help prevent eye strain. The WP Dark Mode plugin seemed a good bet due to the high number of positive reviews, as well as its ease of use. However, when I tried to include it, a bug prevented the switch toggle from displaying, and when I reached out to the plugin developers, they required my admin credentials plus a staging site to troubleshoot it. I felt it was too risky to hand over my details so late in the development process, as I did not wish to encounter any unexpected problems so close to the deadline date for the sake of a plugin. I therefore opted not to include a dark theme for the time being, but I do plan to add one at a later date.

Plugins

I have tried to keep Wordpress plugins to a minimum as I do not want my site to be loaded with excess JavaScript, which may cause performance issues. However, some proved to be very useful in my site build.

Yoast

Yoast enabled me to optimise my site's SEO by easily adding in meta descriptions to my pages and posts in the block editor. It seemed a sensible choice to include to help drive traffic to my site.

Contact Form 7

As this was a well-reviewed, popular plugin, I chose to include it in my About page and Accessibility Statement as a means for users to contact me. This was preferable to simply including my email address in the text, which would render my contact details vulnerable to malicious attacks.

CookieYes

CookieYes is a popular plugin that manages websites' privacy policies. As my website tutorials allow users to leave comments, their contact details might be saved in cookies for up to a year. It is therefore important to be transparent and direct them to information on the Privacy Policy page. CookieYes enabled me to easily customise the banner so that it was consistent with the rest of my site's design.

WPvivid Backup Plugin

While I was saving my website's progress in other platforms such as Sync and Dropbox, I wanted an additional layer of support. This plugin enabled me to back up my entire site in a single click, which I would do whenever I made major changes.

Accessibility

I have taken several steps to ensure my site is accessible for my users. I included a 'skipnav' element to my pages that would allow users of assistive technology to skip straight to the content, which I then tested with my Mac's inbuilt screen reader, VoiceOver. However, one change I did make was to remove the accesskey from the code, as according to [WebAIM](#), "Accesskeys often conflict with user or assistive technology shortcut keys and should be avoided or implemented with care."



Skipnav has no accesskey as per WAVE WebAIM's recommendation.

In my content, I also added annotations to my tutorial videos that displayed the key steps for each segment. Furthermore, I also included the full written steps in my video descriptions.

While my website does not feature much animation except for the home page, I included a ([prefers-reduced-motion](#)) media query to my CSS, in case users would prefer not to see motion on the page.

```
/* Remove all animations, transitions and smooth scroll for people that prefer not to see them - thanks, Prisca! */
@media (prefers-reduced-motion: reduce) {
  html:focus-within {
    scroll-behavior: auto;
  }

  *,
  *::before,
  *::after {
    animation-duration: 0.01ms !important;
    animation-iteration-count: 1 !important;
    transition-duration: 0.01ms !important;
    scroll-behavior: auto !important;
  }
}
```

A reduced motion query is present for users who prefer it.

Phase 4: Implementation

I noticed while checking through my site that the original dark amber I was using for links and the footer background was not contrasting well with the white background, receiving a WCAG score of only 2.88 and therefore failing the contrast check. To correct this, I chose a darker, earthier tone to meet WGAG's AA status. This also required me to change all my SVG graphic colours for consistency.

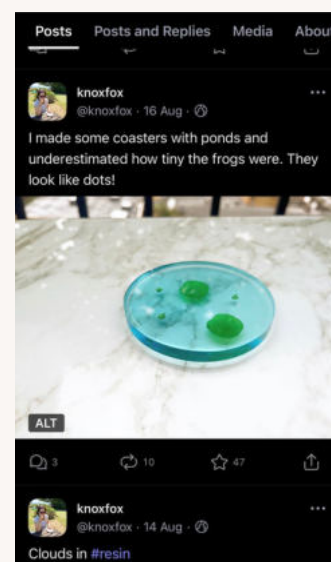
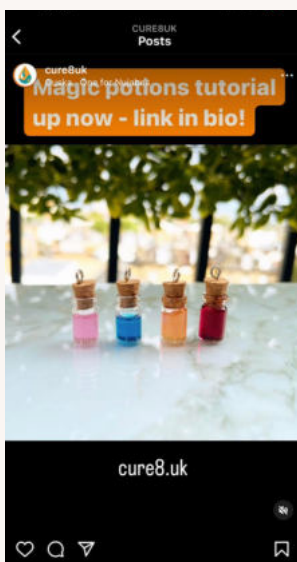
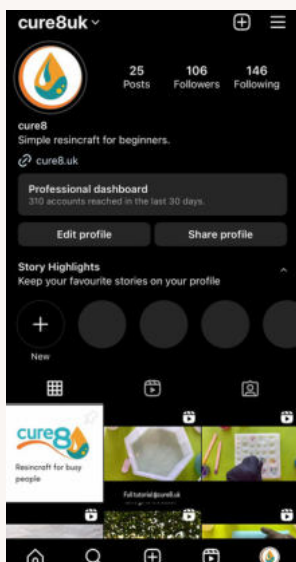


It was necessary to adjust the link colour for contrast.

Site Promotion

Early on in my site development I realised that promoting my site would not be as simple as making a few Instagram posts. While I had begun making basic image posts as early as April, I realised that I would need to build up followers, or else risk quacking into the void. To begin building up followers, I actively followed similar resincraft accounts and interacted with them regularly by liking or leaving comments on their own posts. I also switched to a business account to view insights. Soon, I began building a small following of my own. Thus, I learned the importance of extending my reach by building a presence far before the site launch and interacting with others.

I continued to post reels on Instagram using images and appropriate hashtags. I also posted from time to time on Mastodon, the federated Twitter alternative. While I did not see much interaction at first, I was pleasantly surprised to see that one of my posts had been favourited 47 times and reblogged 10 times. Thus even more 'obscure' platforms enabled me to promote my work.



Examples of branded and non-branded promotional posts on Instagram and Mastodon.

Phase 4: Implementation

Creating the cure8 Youtube channel also enabled me to include links to my site, which I added to the video descriptions upon the site's launch in early September. I also created title cards at the start and end of each video that featured the site's icon logo to help viewers associate the content with my site's branding.



Example Youtube video title card.

When my site launched, I began posting more regularly on Instagram, firstly to announce the site's launch as a pinned post, and then creating reels on an almost daily basis. These featured either clips from tutorials or still images, as well as calming, lo-fi music that suited my brand. According to [Statusphere](#), reels are “the driving force behind time spent on Instagram in 2023, they're the go-to format for reach and engagement.”

I also created posts on the Reddit Resin community and Mastodon announcing the site's launch, which also received some upvotes and favourites.

In terms of SEO, the Yoast plugin was helpful in allowing me to see the most search variations of my key phrases, as well as the strength of my meta descriptions. I also set up Google Analytics to help me view my site's traffic.

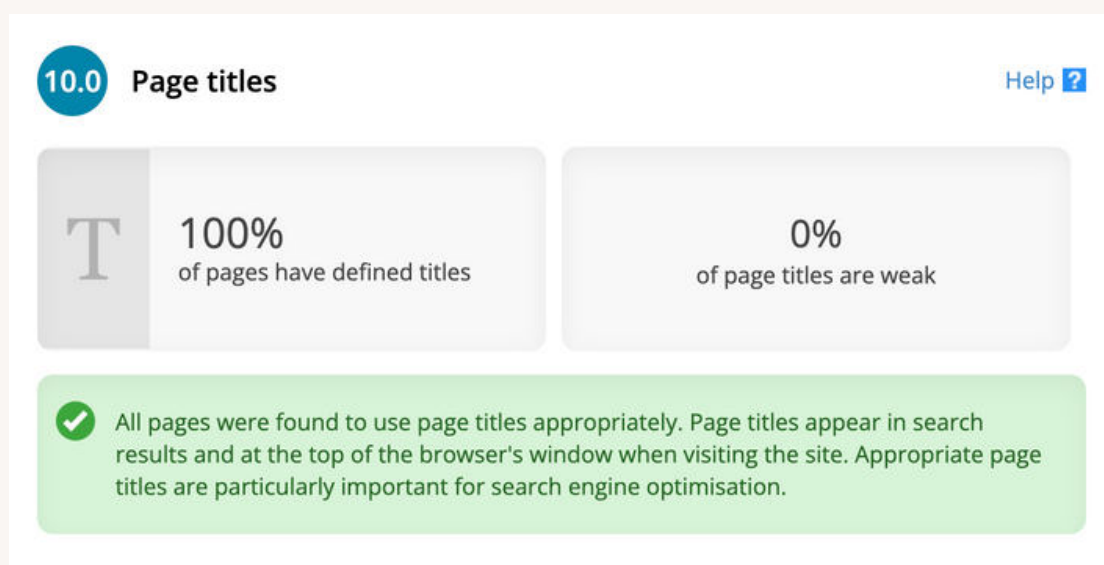
User Testing

I admittedly received little site feedback in my Instagram, Reddit, and Mastodon posts about the site's launch, despite requesting it. However, feedback from peers and friends was positive. I ran tests on the site myself in different browsers both on desktop and mobile (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, 2 iPhones, and one Android device) to ensure the site ran consistently and smoothly on all platforms. Running the site through [W3C validators](#) proved that my CSS was error-free. However, the HTML generated by Wordpress contained some unavoidable trailing slashes.

Phase 5 - Analysis

Performance

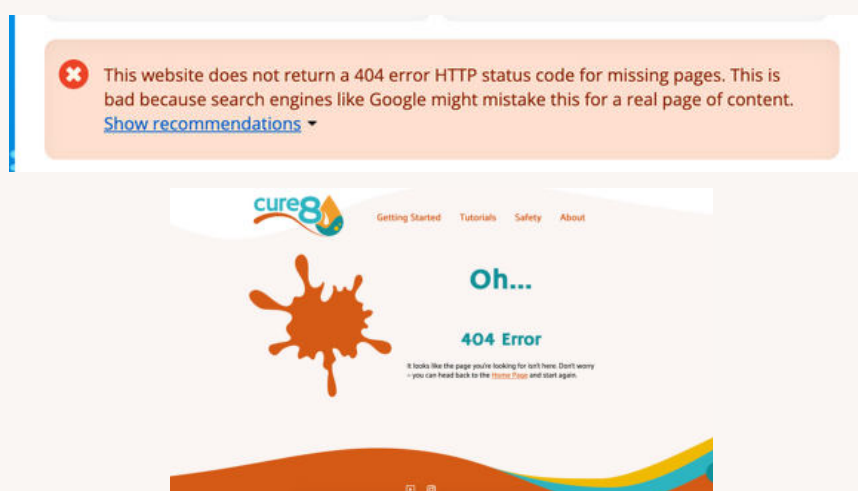
Analysing the site's performance on [Nibbler](#) was helpful in showing the site's strengths and weaknesses in terms of usability. A lot of the positive points can be attributed to Wordpress's inbuilt block editor features, and page titles, headings, URL formats, and internal links all receive a score of 10.



The screenshot shows a performance report for 'Page titles' with a score of 10.0. It features two metrics: '100% of pages have defined titles' and '0% of page titles are weak'. A green message box states: 'All pages were found to use page titles appropriately. Page titles appear in search results and at the top of the browser's window when visiting the site. Appropriate page titles are particularly important for search engine optimisation.'

Nibbler praises the site's use of titles.

Some points of concern raised by Nibbler include a lack of a 404 error page, which surprised me as there is a tested custom `404.php` file in the theme build.

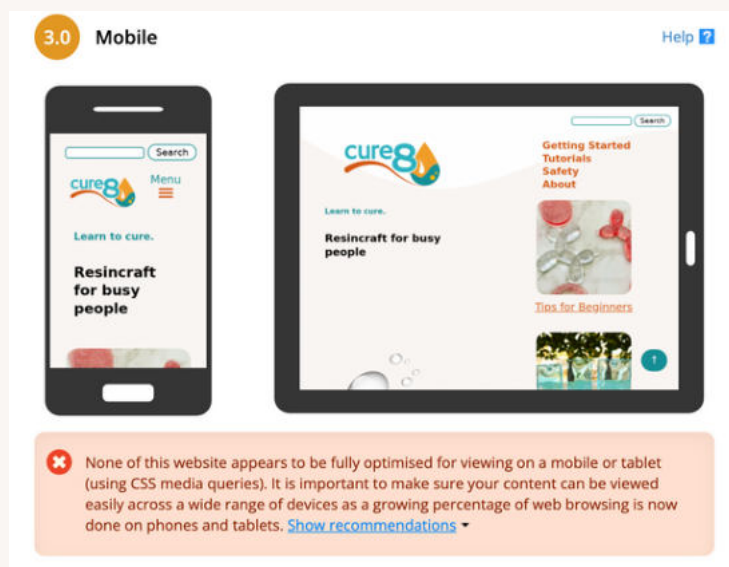


The top part of the screenshot shows an error message: 'This website does not return a 404 error HTTP status code for missing pages. This is bad because search engines like Google might mistake this for a real page of content. [Show recommendations](#)'. Below this is a screenshot of a 404 error page with the text: 'Oh... 404 Error. It looks like the page you're looking for isn't here. Don't worry - you can head back to the [Home Page](#) and start again.'

Nibbler does not seem to recognise the 404.php file.

Phase 5: Analysis

Another source of confusion is Nibbler’s assertion that the site has not been optimised for mobile, and specifically does not include CSS media queries. However, this is not the case, and the theme CSS takes a mobile-first approach and does include media queries for various viewport sizes.



The site does indeed take a mobile-first approach.

I am not entirely certain at this stage why these features are not appearing in the Nibbler report, but I intend to investigate further beyond the site’s submission date as to why these errors are occurring. It could be the case that something in my Wordpress’s theme configuration is not being recognised by Nibbler.

PageSpeed Insights

According to Google’s PageSpeed Insights, the site performs significantly better on desktop than on mobile, with the Largest Contentful Paint taking 0.9s to load as opposed to the mobile view’s 3.5s. This is also reflected in the Blocking Time, where users need to wait 0 seconds to click on content on the desktop version, but need to wait 10ms on mobile view. While this is still deemed ‘good’ by Google, the Contentful Paint speed on mobile is worth considering improvement. The [Nitropack website](#) offers ideas for how to improve Largest Contentful Paint speeds, citing image optimisation as a key to speed improvement. As all photographic images have been compressed for optimisation and converted to WebP for smaller file sizes, it could be the case that my site would benefit from an upgraded hosting plan, or that a plugin could be causing the issue. I would like to explore this further in future iterations of my website.

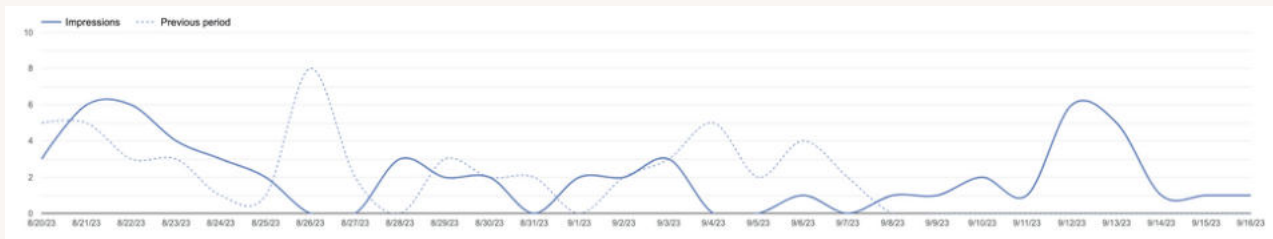
Metric	Mobile	Desktop
Largest Contentful Paint Time it takes for the page to load	3.5 s Needs improvement	0.9 s Good
Cumulative Layout Shift How stable the elements on the page are	0.242 Needs improvement	0.127 Needs improvement
Total Blocking Time How long people had to wait after the page loaded before they could click something	10 ms Good	0 ms Good

Mobile and Desktop Google PageSpeed Insights

Traffic

Considering that the site's launch was only announced on social media on 1st September, analysing the site's traffic as it stands is potentially misleading, particularly as the majority of views may be from coursemates and tutors looking to offer feedback. I believe that it would be beneficial to monitor the site's traffic further down the line, once there has been more time to promote it and gather an organic following.

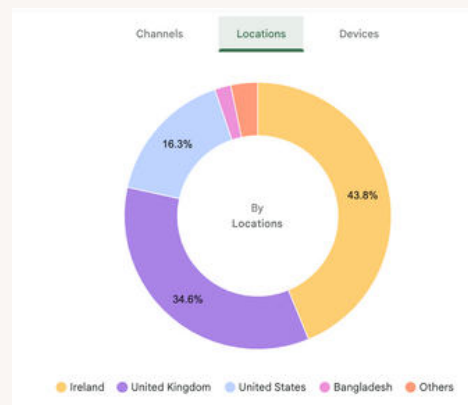
That said, Google Analytics reports 153 total visits, with 58 total impressions.



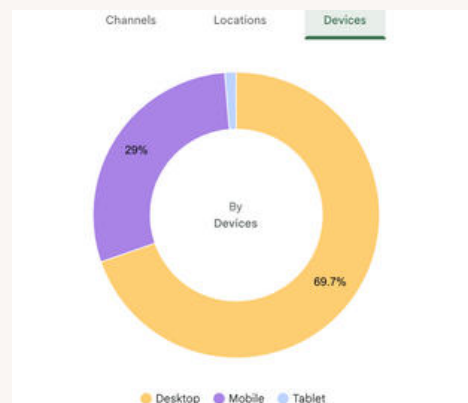
We see a rise in views on the day the site was presented to the 2023 cohort. There is also a rise on 1st September, when site launch announcements were posted to Instagram, Mastodon and Reddit.

The User

Google's Site Kit allows us a glimpse of who the user is, as well as their browsing habits. I was surprised to see that according to Google, the majority of users seem to be based in Ireland at 43.8%, with the UK following closely behind. I am unable to offer much insight as to why this might be; I did consider that perhaps some of my tutorial product links might have an Irish connection, but this does not seem to be the case.

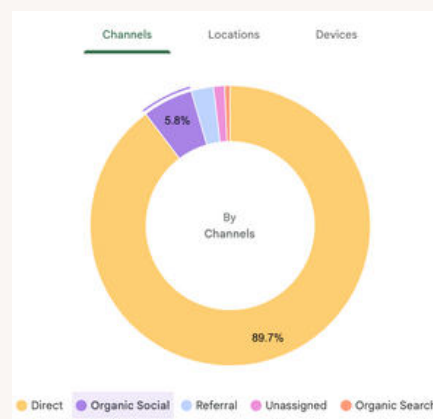


The majority of users all seem to visit the site on desktop, but I attribute this more to fellow students and tutors visiting the site in an educational capacity. According to [Research.com](https://www.research.com), 53% of web browsing was done on mobile in 2019, and I do not expect that organic users would use my site any differently.



Phase 5: Analysis

We also see that at 89.7%, most users are visiting the site directly, as opposed to through link referrals. I am keen to see how this will evolve once the course is finished and as I continue to promote the site on social media.



Content Engagement

Using Google Analytics, we can see that the homepage has received the most views as of 17th September, and at 51.15% has the highest Engagement Rate, followed by the tutorial landing page. Of the tutorial posts, the one that received the highest Session Duration was the Beach Scene Charms with 1m 32s. Interestingly, the About page seems to have the highest session duration of all with 3m 23s. It would be interesting to revisit these statistics in future to see what changes might occur.

Title	Pageviews	Sessions	Engagement Rate	Session Duration
1. cure8 /	215	131	51.15%	1m 32s
2. Tutorials Archives - cure8 /category/tutorials/	75	43	13.95%	1m 36s
3. About - cure8 /about/	58	40	12.5%	3m 23s
4. Getting Started - cure8 /getting-started/	53	35	11.43%	55s
5. Safety - cure8 /safety/	45	31	16.13%	11s
6. Beach Scene Charms - cure8 /beach-scene-charms/	20	15	20%	1m 32s
7. Sitemap - cure8 /sitemap/	15	17	23.53%	14s
8. Easy Magic Potions - cure8 /easy-magic-potions/	14	13	23.08%	31s
9. Cloud Block - cure8 /floating-cloud-block/	14	11	9.09%	1m 1s
10. Accessibility Statement - cure8 /accessibility-statement/	11	11	9.09%	12s

Thus far users seem to have spent the most time on the About page.

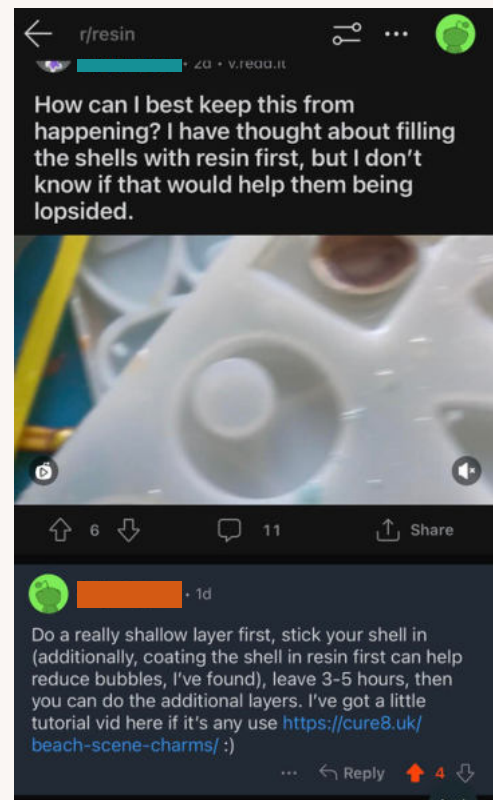
Keyword Planner

Although the Yoast plugin was very helpful in allowing me to analyse my keyword choices by integrating Semrush's keyword planning function, I did also make some adjustments using Google Keyword Planner. However, a lot of the proposed keywords had high levels of competition, while terms with lower competition had much lower search term counts. Collating meaningful keywords was therefore an interesting challenge. As search terms for resin might change over time, it would be worth revising resin-related search terms and deriving relevant keywords from them, particularly as I add more content.

Conclusion

This project was challenging for a variety of reasons, but the aspect I found most challenging was how much freedom there was in how I implemented the website, as well as the choice of subject matter. Prior project briefs on the course had included outlines of what needed to be included in the content, as well as technical specifications. I was thus used to working with guidelines, and so suddenly needing to make content decisions myself was a refreshing challenge, if somewhat daunting.

Researching my users was an enjoyable exercise, as it cemented the idea that this was my first 'real' project; that is, a website designed for people to actually use, as opposed to a theoretical demonstration of my capabilities. Interacting with people who might benefit from visiting my site was an exercise in 'connecting the dots'; the course had taught me how to design and implement a website, but it was only through user research that I fully began to comprehend the 'why' behind design decision-making. It was also gratifying to offer my website content as a potential solution to crafters' problems in the Reddit community.



Offering real-world solutions on the Reddit Resin community.

Shifting between different 'modes' was also initially a challenge in that in the space of one day I might be creating content, only to switch to working on my Wordpress theme design, followed by some social media promotion. It was sometimes tempting to only concentrate on one aspect of the project at the risk of neglecting other areas. This was particularly true of the theme design, which I found to be the most daunting aspect of the project. As working with Wordpress was new territory for me and a source of anxiety, I initially ran the risk of focusing on it so much that my content creation was being pushed aside. I managed to combat this by splitting my time evenly between the two on any given day. After all, the content was the reason users would visit the site, and should therefore not be treated as an afterthought. Creating social media reels and posts was a much more familiar activity, and became an enjoyable evening exercise.

Conclusion

While the learning curve for custom themes in Wordpress was quite steep initially, it was nowhere near as difficult as I had built it up to be, and I soon came to appreciate the convenience of a post template that content could be dropped into in a matter of minutes. Furthermore, I feel far better equipped should I ever choose to make websites for clients, as custom Wordpress themes give them the autonomy to post their own content without the need for development knowledge.

Working with resin was often challenging in that results can be unpredictable, and I was very much learning the craft myself as I progressed in my content creation. While tutorial creation was a time-consuming and even costly process, I believe that it helped me further understand my users' pain points with resin. This is reflected in the tutorials, where I point out difficult areas and even my own mistakes. By identifying with the user, I was able to make my content relevant to them.

My proposed schedule of works was perhaps overly optimistic, as I had intended for the site to be launched by August. I attribute the delay to underestimating the time needed for the content creation process, as well as becoming familiar with Wordpress. Future projects will have a much more realistic timeline, and will most likely not need as much time spent on getting to grips with Wordpress as a CMS.

I would like to keep adding tutorials to my website in future, as well as continue to promote it on its social media channels. I cannot expect the site's traffic to increase unless the content remains 'fresh', especially as frequently updated websites tend to receive more traffic and are favoured in search engine results.

I am particularly keen to monitor the site's scope beyond its context as a university project, and would like to see what kind of users it will attract. For this reason, I plan to remain active in the Reddit Resin community to keep up to date on what crafting issues users might encounter, and see if I can offer tutorial solutions.

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