ADOPTDADOG

Information Architecture

Research Report & Information Summary

Haley Quinn

December 13, 2021

Table of Contents

Background

For my all inclusive dog adoption application, users will be able to search through multiple adoption websites, customize their searches, receive notifications for updates, add dogs to favorites, create customized user profiles and so much more.

There are about **6.3 million animals in shelters in the United States and 3.1 million of these are dogs**, but somehow it can seem nearly impossible to find a dog that fits the user's criteria [10]. Whether the dog needs to be hypoallergenic, pet friendly, small, etc., my dog adoption application will refine searches through as many adoption websites and postings as possible all in one place. The goal is to **avoid endless searches, wasted phone calls and excessive trips to shelters** to find a dog that either isn't there, was sold or doesn't fit the individual's needs.

Executive Summary

The application Adoptdadog was created for and following guidelines from an Information Architecture course RUCD130. The purpose of the application is to create a platform for adopting dogs that is well organized, customizable, has notifications and overall creates the easiest experience for users trying to find a dog.

The demand for adoptable dogs has increased exponentially since the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to this increase in demand, about 44% of people in the US already have a dog, and the "Adopt Don't Shop" movement is growing exponentially [3]. Despite this need, one of the biggest problems users have can be finding a dog that fits their individual needs. This is supported by my own personal experience as well as those I asked in my user research.

Overall, searching through multiple adoption websites and calling numerous shelters can be time consuming and frustrating. To avoid this and create an overall pleasing experience for users, Adoptdadog will:

1. *Allow for users to create and customize their own account.*

2. *Send notifications to user's phones or email (depending which platform they use Adoptdadog on, mobile or desktop view).*

3. *Enable searching through thousands of adoptable dog's profiles.*

4. *Enable refined searches for customized user results.*

Executive Summary cont.

- Despite the demand for such an application, it's important to question how and what devices user's would prefer to search through. If users would still rather go to a shelter or use standard methods to find their dog, then need for an application would be less applicable. Therefore, it is important to question who would use and benefit from an application over the traditional dog search process.

- Research provided in the User Testing section of this document researches and determines that the application would indeed be beneficial to 100% of interviewed participants.

Mission

- The **mission** of Adoptdadog is to make it easier for people to find and adopt a dog that fits their needs.
  - *Many people want a hypoallergenic dog, a certain size dog, certain breed, age, or a dog that overall fits their lifestyle. Adoptdadog takes the user's needs into account by creating a customized search experience where users have their own account to save their search criteria/favorite dogs, can turn on notifications for when a suitable dog becomes available and overall create the most seamless experience searching for a dog.*

- Adoptdadog also allows for adoptable dog searching all in one place.
  - *No more searching through dozens of websites and shelters losing track of where you have and haven't looked, Adoptdadog will provide users with the most organized experience yet by searching through thousands of databases and shelter postings all in one place.*

Vision

- The **vision** for Adoptdadog is to decrease the number of dogs killed in shelters drastically by giving adoptable dogs loving homes and stopping puppy mills.

- A portion of the proceeds collected in the app will be used to fund the apps growth/advertising as well as donate to animal shelters. A mission that thousands of brands, companies and business would love to support.

Audience

o The audience for Adoptdadog is extremely diverse.

o Considering about 67% of households in America own a pet, the demand is extremely high [10].

o In addition, approximately 1 in 5 households adopted a dog or cat since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic [3].

    o With this being said, the range is typically between early adulthood to late/middle adulthood where the individual is not too young to properly care for a dog or too old to handle a new dog.

Adoptdadog users will be from this pool of interested dog buyers and are willing to go the extra mile to adopt a dog rather than shop for one. Our User Research shows that 100% of participants are even willing to spend small fee to be apart of an application that encourages and facilitates easy dog adoption.

User Persona: Johanna

- 38 year old female

- Married with two kids and has one dog

- Johanna works part time as a freelance graphic designer so she can spend quality time with with her family.

- She lives in a suburban town with a medium sized backyard.

- She drops her dog Rufus off at doggy daycare 3x a week when she works.

- Johanna is looking to adopt another dog to keep Rufus company while she's away, but she is struggling to find a dog that's hypoallergenic and young.

User Testing: Research Questions and Methodology

Research Questions

- Do participants think an advanced application would be helpful for dog adoption?

- Is there a correlation between age and preference for digital dog adoption searching vs. traditional in store searching?

- How do prior dog adoption experiences affect willingness to adopt a dog digitally?

Methodology

Recruitment included ensuring participants like dogs, have a dog, had a dog and/or wish to get a dog at some point. General personal information such as participant age and gender was recorded for background/persona information as well (if agreed upon). A debriefing of who I am, what the questions are for and what the questions will answer was explained to participants prior. The participants were then asked a script of questions to determine if a dog adoption application would be beneficial and to whom.

Script of Questions

(If participant agreed, gathered the participant's age and gender for background/persona information).

1. Are you a dog owner? If so, is your dog adopted?

2. If you could adopt a dog, would you?

3. What would prevent you from adopting a dog?

4. If you were to adopt a dog, would you prefer to search online first or pop in to shelters?

5. If you have used an adoption search platform recently, did you like your experience? Is there anything you would have changed?

6. Do you think a mobile application for finding adoptable dogs would be beneficial? Why or why not?

7. Would you rather use your phone or computer to search for a dog? Why?

8. Do you think receiving updates and notifications would be helpful for the adoption process?

9. Would you pay a small fee to be apart of a dog adoption application's community?

The most important findings are presented in the following chart
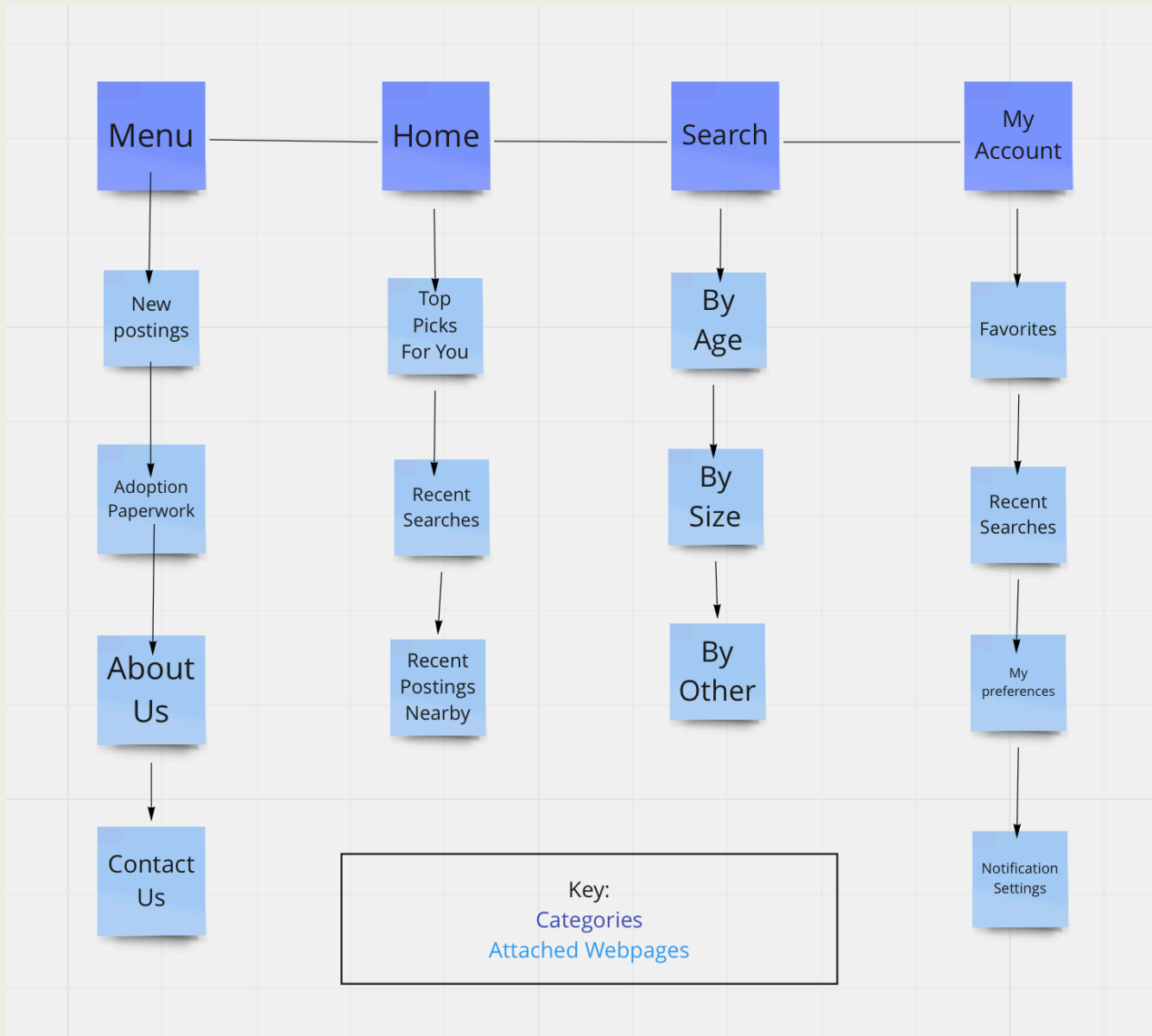
Chart & Observations

■ The following chart displays data from a User Research Interview and User Testing with Wireframes.

   – *Participants in wireframe testing showed no signs of hesitation.*

   – *No changes were made and results were as expected.*

Observation/Research	Main Gatherings	Application to IA
User Research Interview	• 8/8 users would pay a small fee to be apart of a dog adoption community • 7/8 participants interviewed searched through adoption websites before • 6/8 found the adoption search process difficult • 8/8 thought the application would be beneficial • 6/8 users would rather use a desktop to search for a dog	• Increase funds/ budget for teams • Organization, search optimization, etc., will be better for Adoptdadog • Increases need/support for app • Make sure email notifications are sent out as well as an organized film to fill out
User Testing - Wireframe	• Users were able to complete various search tasks easily	• The basic organization/structure is good

Architectural Strategies

- The apps content will be organized simply with a shallow hierarchy so users are able to navigate easily without getting lost.

- Considering Adoptdadog functions best and is recommended to be used in its application form, it's better to avoid using breadcrumbs.

  - *This is why the hierarchy is kept simple and a "back" button will be used to easily navigate back and forth.*

  - *The logo on the top of the screen will also act as a home button to bring users back to the main screen whenever need be (as seen in mobile wireframe examples).*

Site Map

- The hierarchy of the website is simple because one of the main goals of the app is to achieve simplicity.
  - *There are only two main levels and through user testing it was not determined that more levels are necessary.*
  - *During testing users were able to easily complete tasks I assigned them and were not confused by hierarchical placements.*

- I used card sorting with two participants and incorporated the results into the resulting site map.
  - *The only difference between card sorting results and my site map was between the menu drop down and home webpages.*
    - It was decided that as long as the attached webpages were easily accessible it did not matter if they fell under home or menu.

■ For the **search interface** on the website, I will have the option for searches to be more subsetted based on users preferences. For example, I will create a search that asks for: location, dog's age, dog's size and an "other" option. This format is actually very similar to Zillow's' search interface where users can do a broad search or a more refined subsetted search as I just described [5]. Although one site focuses on houses while the other focuses on dogs, both aim to get the best most accurate and refined results for the user. Having search results that match/best match the user's requests will allow users to feel understood individually, satisfied and have an overall less overwhelming search experience.

■ In addition to the search optimization, the **home page** is also crucial to my final project.If the first impression of the site is not welcoming, well organized, visually appealing and easy to use, then users are less likely to engage in the site. The search bar is easy to find on the home page and search results are shown with easy to filter options so users are quickly able to see the advantage our site/app allows for.

Wireframes Explained

Mobile Application Emphasize

■ Aside from search optimization, the app's key feature allows for notifications to go off on the user's mobile phone Lock Screen, alerting them when a dog of their interest is available. This can be done for the site version as well, but mainly by sending notifications to the user's email. Therefore the notification isn't as readily available or easy to visualize on the site as it is on the app.

■ Application's are typically faster than websites as well as more convenient to use. Considering adopting a dog can require user's to be alert at all times for when the dog of their choosing becomes available, this makes the mobile app version more appealing and efficient for it's purpose. With this in mind I chose to design the mobile version first and then adapt to the website version. To emphasize the importance and benefits of using the apps to users, I included the download app option on the website as well as a brief description of why it is beneficial.
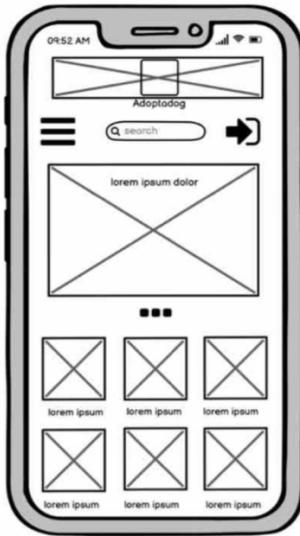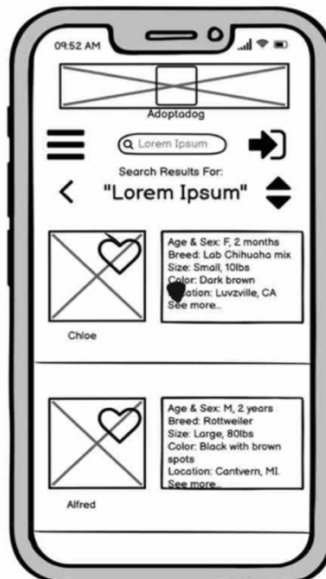
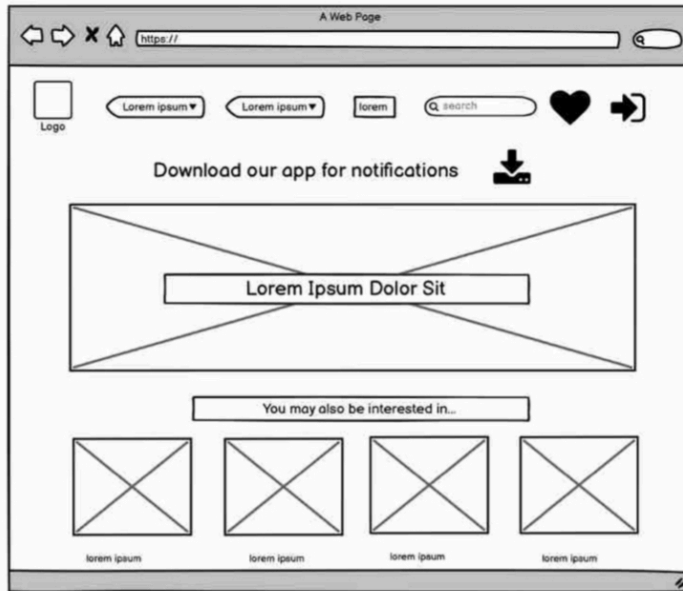Mobile View Homepage
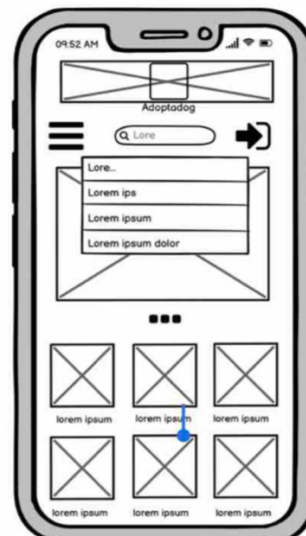
Mobile View Search

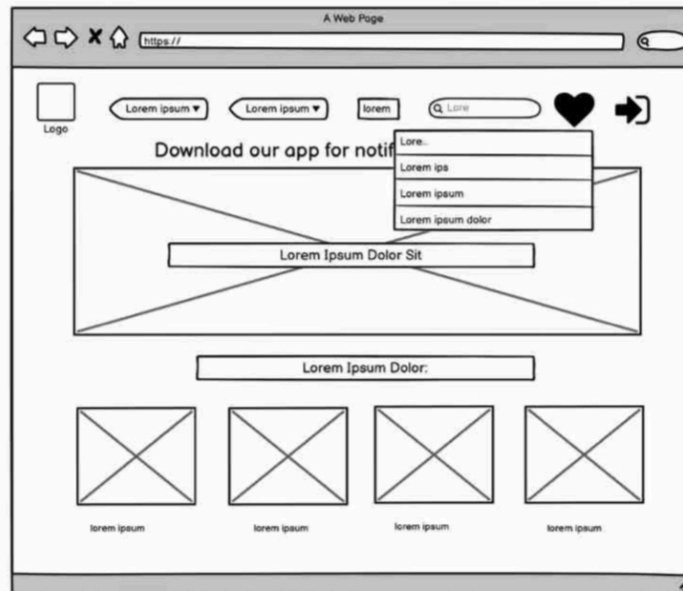Mobile View Search Results

Refining Mobile View Search

- Mobile Wireframes for Adoptdadog
  - *Homepage*
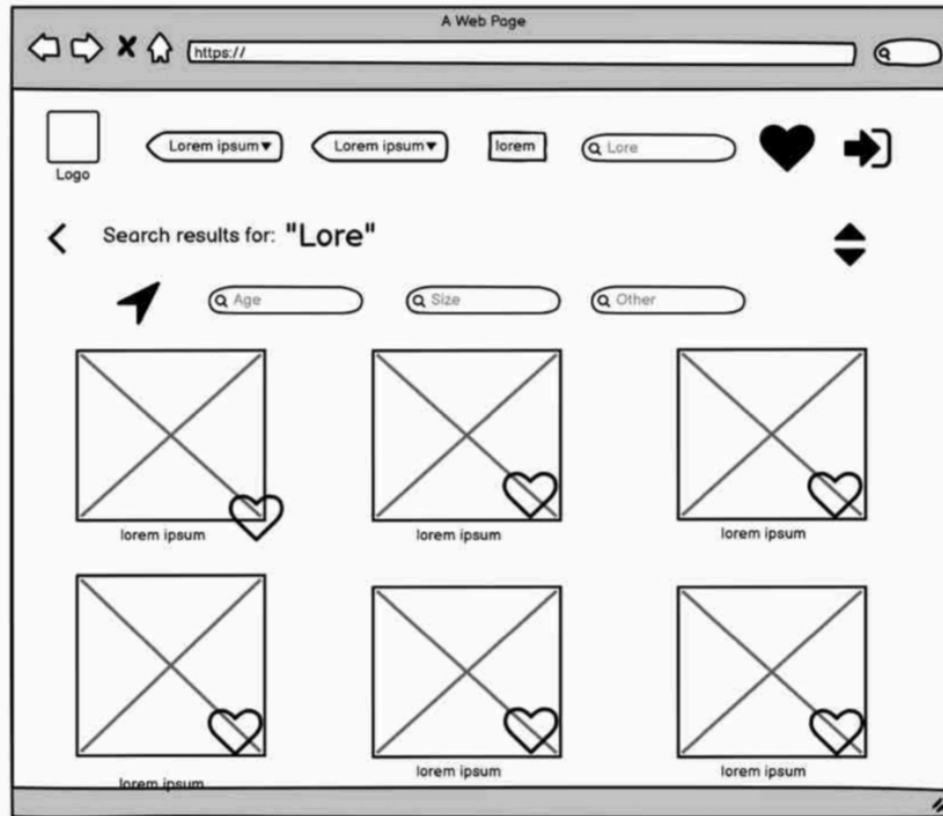 - *Search*
  - *Search Results*
  - *Refining Search*

Home Page Desktop View

Desktop Search

- Desktop Wireframes for Adoptdadog
  - *Homepage*
  - *Search*

Desktop Search Results

- Desktop Wireframes for Adoptdadog
  - *Search Results*

Content Management

Content is the most important component to any platform. With this being said, the organization, effectiveness and structure of the content will be prioritized so it is most effective for the app's audiences. For this application, content will include information from various shelters, dog adoption sites, adoption information, visuals/information on numerous dogs, user specified information and more. The navigation will be optimized in order to prioritize the access to this content by including proper thesauri and metadata.

Navigation will be optimized by optimizing searches. This will be prioritized by allowing for refined searches as well by including thesauri and facets. Specifically, as shown in the previous wireframe (mobile refined searches), subsetted searches will be included so users can make individualized and specific searches. For example searching specifically under dog age, sex and gender as seen in the previous wireframes.

Content Management Strategy

IA works closely with content management to ensure all team members have different roles, but work together towards the same goal. A timeline is set in place for team members to follow and ensure all development and design tasks are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. The following sequence will be used as a reference for what steps in what order will be followed in the design/product development path.

1. Research

2. Planning

3. Prototyping

4. Designing

5. Developing

6. Testing

   - *(Going back to a prior step if necessary)*

7. Launching [9]

Content Management Strategy

- When completing the previous numbered steps its important to consider the roles team members will make. Updates for new available dogs will be frequent, so it's important the team is aware of their roles.
  - *IA will update adoption forms and search optimization for new dogs.*
  - *Content management teams will organize dog's metadata and descriptions.*
  - *UI will input the dog's visuals and format the content.*
  - *UX will ensure the interaction with the dogs profiles and the overall application are running as expected.*
    - IA will assist with this as needed as well as make improvements when needed.

Metadata

- Search is a crucial component and distinguishing feature for this app, so it's important it's optimized in all ways possible. One of these ways is through utilizing metadata in a way that allows the app to essentially predict their future behavior/interactions. The application will notice trends in searches and recognize the future metadata for future use.

- Metadata accounts for specific information on the dogs users tend to look for Metadata can also be defined as the data on the data [4]. This data is often the age, size, sex, breed and/or location of the dogs.

  - *Through storage and recognizing patterns when users are searching for specific metadata for a dog Adoptdadog begins to customize and recognize what individuals look for.*

    - This information is specifically utilized under the home page where users are able to view "Top Picks For You."

Thesauri

- Thesauri is used most commonly in the application with synonym use. Considering dog's features, breeds and characteristics can have a variety of names, its important that the thesauri is vast and far reaching.

  - *As seen briefly in the desktop search wireframe, thesauri even assists in fixing and relating searches to the closest synonym available.*

- The thesauri will help show search results and arrange subject terms according to the users search to ensure the best results.

Search Specifications

■ The application also has a search bar specific to the individuals account. This feature allows users to log in and then "search through their favorites."

■ The favorites option will save the dogs that user's feel have the most potential and allow them to easily view them later in the favorites tab.

■ Finding dogs under favorites can be accomplished by searching the dog's name or other distinguishing characteristics after pressing the favorites (heart) tab/button. The search option would look similar to the wireframes below, just under the favorite icon.
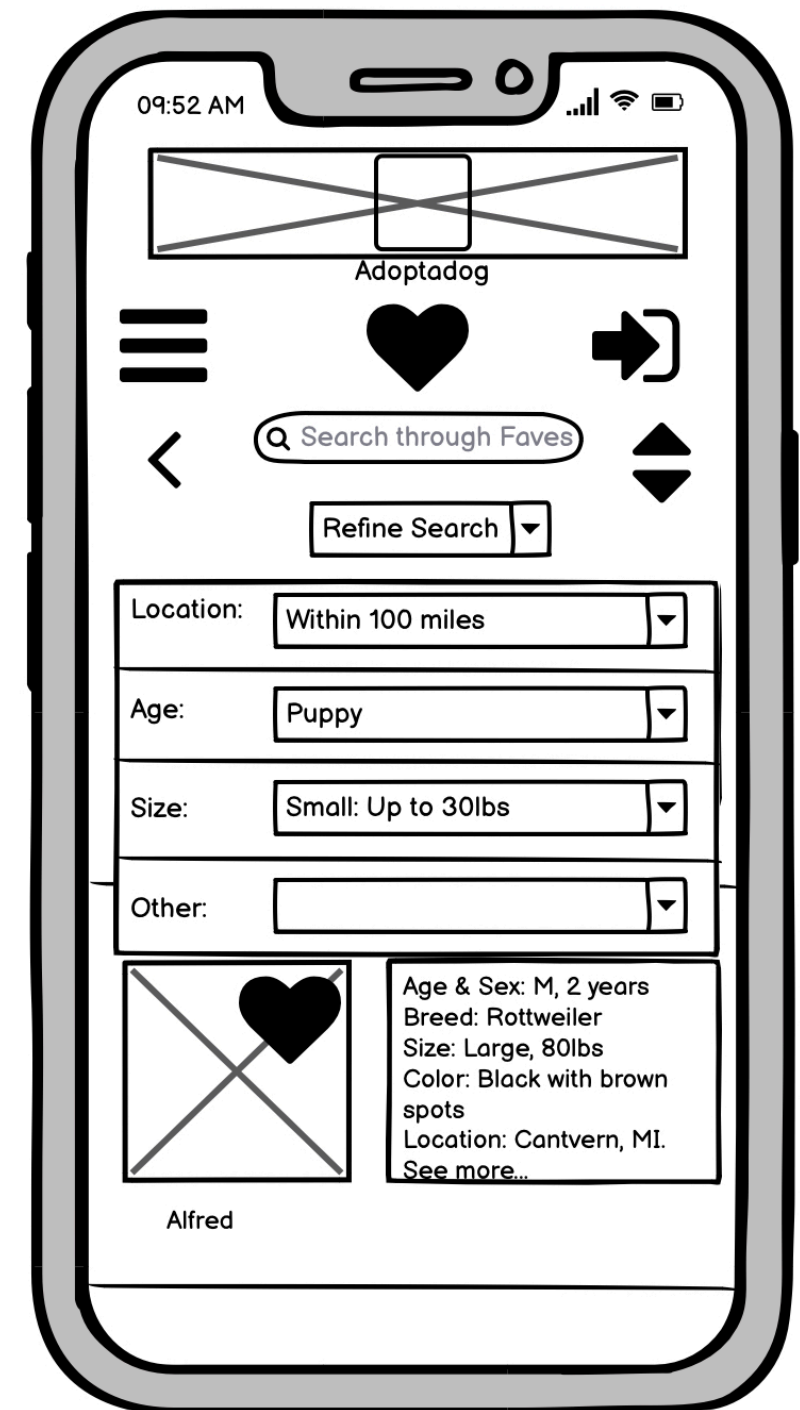
Overall Summary & Closing Statements

Overall this application will use advanced search optimization techniques, easily customizable settings and access to information across numerous dog adoption databases. Making this experience as easy and pleasant as possible for the user compared to other dog adoption websites.

Evidence from user research studies, usability testing and various credible sources support the need for Adoptdadog. By following our apps timeline and plan appropriately, this application will save thousands of dog's lives while giving families the loving companionship they want.

Adopt, don't shop, and make it the best possible experience with Adoptdadog.

Bibliography

[1] Department of Health and Human Services. (2013, October 8). *Information Architecture Basics*. Usability.gov. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/information-architecture.html.

[2] *Ditch traditional wireframes*. UX Magazine. (2021, October 7). Retrieved November 25, 2021, from https://uxmag.com/articles/ditch-traditional-wireframes.

[3] *NEW ASPCA survey shows overwhelming majority of dogs and cats acquired during the pandemic are still in their homes*. ASPCA. (n.d.). Retrieved December 5, 2021, from https://www.aspca.org/about-us/press-releases/new-aspca-survey-shows-overwhelming-majority-dogs-and-cats-acquired-during.

[4] Rosenfeld, L., Morville, P., & Arango, J. (2015). *Information architecture: For the web and beyond*. O'Reilly Media.

[5] *Real estate, apartments, Mortgages & Home values*. Zillow. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2021, from https://www.zillow.com/.

[6] *Section 11.6. The strategy report*. Section 11.6. The Strategy Report | Information Architecture for the World Wide Web: Designing Large-Scale Web Sites. (n.d.). Retrieved November 19, 2021, from https://flylib.com/books/en/4.45.1.86/1/.

[7] Soegaard, M. (n.d.). Hick's law: Making the choice easier for users. The Interaction Design. Foundation. Retrieved November 28, 2021, from https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/hick-s-law-making-the-choice-easier-for-users.

[8] *The influence of chemical, organic and ... - res.mdpi.com*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 17, 2021, from https://res.mdpi.com/d_attachment/agriculture/agriculture-09-00122/article_deploy/agriculture-09-00122.pdf.

[9] Tubik. (2017, June 16). *Information architecture: Effective techniques for designers.* Medium. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from https://uxplanet.org/information-architecture-effective-techniques-for-designers-3c993956b1e1.

[10] *U.S. pet ownership statistics*. American Veterinary Medical Association. (n.d.). Retrieved November 17, 2021, from https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/reports-statistics/us-pet-ownership-statistics.

[11] William Craig ~ 8 minutes to read. (n.d.). *The benefits of wireframing a design*. WebFX Blog. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from https://www.webfx.com/blog/web-design/wireframing-benefits/.

[12] *11 facts about animal homelessness*. DoSomething.org. (n.d.). Retrieved December 5, 2021, from https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-animal-homelessness.