

FLAG

by Justine Lardeux

DESCRIPTION

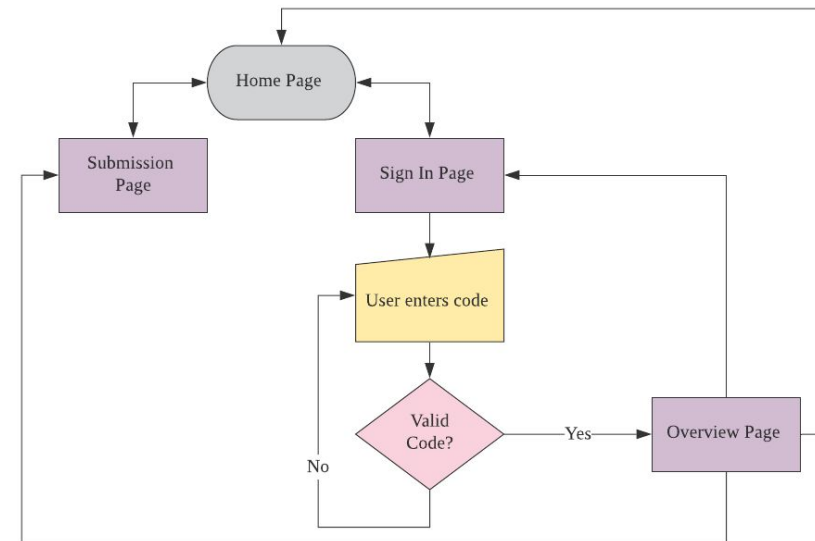
FLAG is a web-based project that allows users to anonymously *flag* or report an individual for a time-specific and/or ongoing aggression. Because the users can choose or create their own flags (acting in the same principle as tags), the reports can be specific and can encompass micro to macro aggressions.

Because of the anonymity and the personalization, the objective is to create an inclusive and safe environment that is meant to identify patterns of aggression in individuals/spaces/locations and to, hopefully, prevent future incidents.

To add protection to the flaggers, the visualization of the flags is restricted to users detaining a valid code. The codes are distributed by mouth-to-ear, so to allow access to trusted individuals.

COMPONENTS

~ NAVIGATION



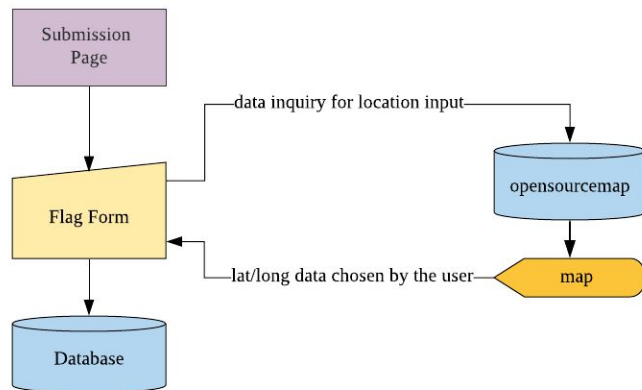
When the user reaches the website, he is directed to the home page. This page contains the FLAG logo and the basic description/mission of the site. A header is permanently placed at the top part of the screen and includes the different links to the website features (left to right order):

1. Home (logo) ~ Link to the homepage.

2. Submit ~ Link to the submission page
3. Access ~ Link to the sign in page

These three links/pages are available for any user. The sign in page allows users with a valid code to access the Overview page, which is the page that displays the submitted flags and the demographic data.

~ SUBMISSION



The process of submitting is quite simple. When in the Submission page, the user is prompted to fill a form to create a new FLAG. The different labels are: Name, Age, Occupation,

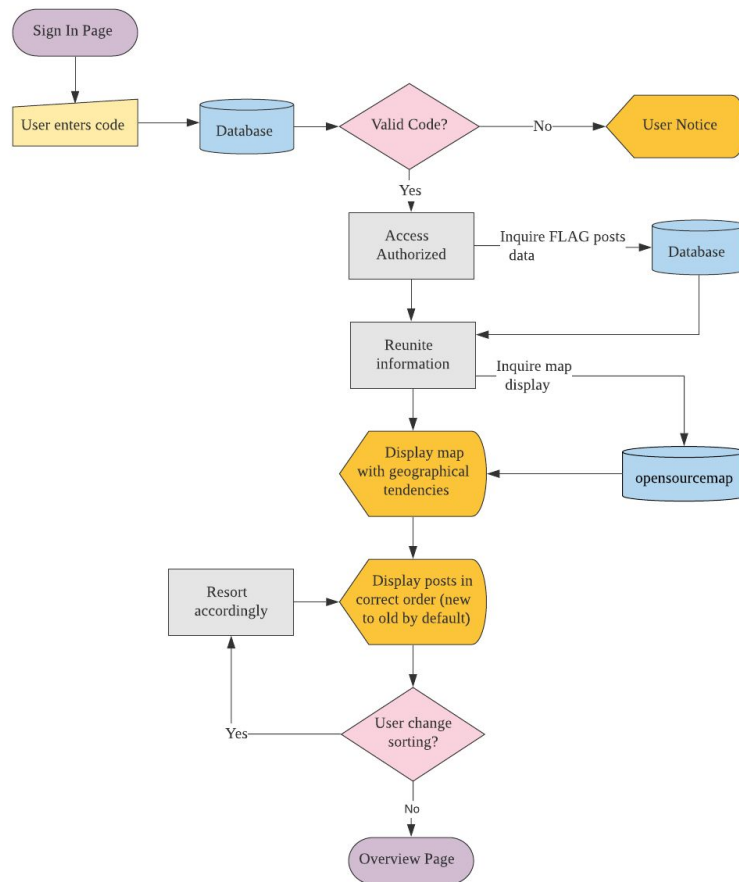
Physical Description, Platform, Date, Time, Place, Flag(s) and Story.

While most of the input types are text, some are different; Date is of type *month* and Time is of type *time*. For the Place, the library **leaflet.js** is included to the code so the user is able to mark on a map (data from **OpenStreetMap**). Finally, the flag(s) is/are selected via a drop-down list of previously used flags (inquired from our database). If the users feel like there is no flag specific to their situation, they can select the option “other” which allows them to write their own flag.

When the user has completed its flag, they can send the form in the database with the submit button. When clicked, the flag is added as an entry in the database. The Place data are saved as latitude and longitude coordinates and by city name. Also, if the user added a or some new flag(s), it/they will also be stored in another table in the database for other users to use in the future.

A FLAG is usually centered around a specific event, but can also encompass few interactions. So, the only required inputs are the Date, the Place and the Flag(s). Any other field can be left empty by the user.

VISUALIZATION



To visualize the flags, the user has to possess a valid code. When the access is granted, the website inquires all the flag enquiries located in the database. Also, with **leaflet.js**, an open source map is generated and modified. For each enquiry, the latitude and longitude data are used to create a saturation marker to illustrate in a visual agglomeration the demographic of micro/macro aggressions flagged. This is to possibly create another way to observe trends.

The enquiries are displayed vertically and from the newest to oldest. Each inquiry is first miniaturized, so only shows the name, age, city and the flags. The user can click on the “post” to maximize it, so to be able to see all the other components. If the user wants to reorder the posts/flags, it can by clicking selecting the desired order (alphabetical -> names and city, chronological -> date and time).

JOURNAL

PRESENT STAGE

At the moment, the basic wireframe of the website is made. The whole navigation structure is written. For now, a fictional access code and post is created as an example. Since the database is not yet created, the passing of information is not enabled. The functions in JavaScript (jQuery) serves to navigate and display the information on the different pages. It also serves as a replacement for the PHP scripts in certain areas, like the code validity. The prototype is then more oriented towards the choice of labels (pertinence) and of basic user interface for navigation (accessibility).

USER TESTING

To test the prototype, I first reached out to people close to me and that already understood the purpose of the project. In that sense, I felt they were more able to give me feedback on the pertinence of the main components.

First, I showed the prototype to four of my friends. The four of them identify as female, are white and cis gendered. They are all

going to university and are in close to their mid-twenties. They brought different concerns or suggestions that were mainly oriented towards the submission form (some problems have already been rectified in the prototype):

- Change the Date to *year-month* instead of *year-month-day* since there is a lot of chance that the users won't remember an exact date.
- Allow the user to research a name or location to filter the results.

They all seem to really appreciate the anonymous submissions, the personalized flags and the idea of a map. Obviously, they all said they had a hard time picturing the website since not a lot of design is implemented. They also expressed an interest in being able to comment/share with other users.

Secondly, I showed my prototype to my parents. They are cis-gendered, white and in their mid-fifties. The whole concept seemed a bit more new to them but they were really interested by the fact that the flags are shared across a community instead of on other social media platforms to protect the victims. They thought that the prototype showed a concept that could prevent future aggressions and were really enthusiastic about it. The

main concern for them is the accessibility. They had a hard time understanding the layout and possible finish look. So, I perceived that my prototype was missing some important design aspects. The design has to be more clear.

For them, my website was lacking resources references and information for victims and their friends and family. They should also be clearly integrated and accessible for any user.

Thirdly, I received feedback from my teacher. A lot of important aspects were explored. Particularly, three components need to be revised:

- The Map: The display should be designed in a way that the targeted trends are clearly illustrated, without a “Google Map” appearance.
- The Resources: The website should contain resources and information for victims and their peers.
- The UI/UX: The website should be made for mobile. The user should be able to access the resources and to submit flags *on the spot*, everywhere and anytime. What would facilitate that is a website that is mobile-friendly (also, possibly an app).

FUTURE

For the future, there is a lot of components I need to add or modify.

For the **overall design**, I need to **minimally** make the website for mobile devices. This means that I have to change my basic wireframe and structure. Ideally, I would make the website an app, which would make the project even more accessible for mobile phones. I also need to work on the website aesthetic and logo.

For the **homepage**, I would like to add more information that would be displayed clearly and scrollable. All on the same page, easy access.

For the **submission page**, I am happy with the form components and the submission requirement. I do think it is realistic and still relevant to allow the user to submit a flag with the minimal components enumerated previously. I would probably like to add insights or definition of each entry to add some clarity.

For the **Sign-In page**, I think the mouth-to-ear system with the code is relevant for now. It would be interesting to investigate

other ways of allowing access if there is, at some point, an important number of users or a higher popularity.

For the **visualization page**, I need to revise the whole structure of the map and the posts. Ideally, I would add a research bar. I would also like to allow people to comment on flags, to add a forum section so people can also create their own threads and to allow people to suggest a connection between flags. These features will be explored before the final project submission if the time is permitted. If not, I really wish to explore them outside the frame of the course.