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From Market Research to Product Design: The Process of Building the WebGuru Al Optimization Tool

by

Zhen Bi

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Art in Visual Communication Design

School/Department of <u>Design</u>
College of Art and Design

Rochester Institute of Technology Rochester, NY April 08, 2024

Committee Approval

We, the undersigned committee members, certify that we have advised and/or supervised the candidate on the work described in this thesis. We further certify that we have reviewed the thesis and approved it in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design.
Adam Smith
Visual Communication Design, Associate Professor / Thesis Advisor
Date
Mike Strobert Graduate Director of the Visual Communication Design, Associate Professor / Thesis Advisor
Date

Abstract

The COVID-19 virus has brought a significant transformation in e-commerce, with a lot of businesses not only selling products in physical stores but also conducting transactions online. However, the cost and expertise required for personalized website design and programming are prohibitive for a lot of small business owners. This has prompted many small business owners to adopt generic templates, failing to characterize their products and get the style they really want.

In 2023, rapid advances in artificial intelligence technologies have resulted in a range of tools capable of generating text and images, catalyzing a transformation in online content creation. In response to this gap, WebGuru was created as an innovative AI platform designed to provide small business owners with powerful website optimization capabilities.

This paper introduces WebGuru, an innovative e-commerce website optimization tool designed for users without a technical or design background. By using artificial intelligence, WebGuru enables image optimization, the integration of text with images, and the generation of personalized website styles through simple text commands. This study delves into the key Al-driven design elements of WebGuru, including image processing algorithms, natural language processing modules, and style generation networks. It explores how these Al techniques can improve usability, attractiveness, personalization, customization, and efficiency for users.

Key Words

E-commerce, Artificial Intelligence Technologies, Website Optimization

Problem and Solution

Because of COVID-19, more and more small business owners are transitioning into the digital marketplace. However, many of them lacked foundational skills in design and programming, which posed a huge obstacle to effectively aligning website design with their product style and engaging customers.

WebGuru is a response to the rapid growth of AI tools designed to improve productivity. By utilizing advanced AI technology, WebGuru provides small business owners with an intuitive platform that simplifies the process of optimizing websites. The solution enables users to produce websites that match their brand image and also increase engagement without knowledge of design or programming.

Project Summary

The emergence of AI tools has brought about a revolution in efficiency across various industries. By the close of 2022, "Generative AI" had become a widely recognized term, with AI applications like ChatGPT and Midjourney gaining prominence. AI tools, encompassing capabilities such as image generation, chatbots, image processing, and data analytics, are now beginning to provide tailored, precise, and aesthetically enhancing solutions. These innovations have the potential to effectively address the current difficulties of small business owners.

For users without design foundations to produce professional visuals, AI can refine images to enhance their visual appeal. For those struggling with design skills or unsure how to effectively showcase product features, AI can facilitate the seamless integration of text and visuals. Additionally, for those burdened by inefficiencies, AI can offer a variety of high-quality design options, significantly reducing the time and effort required in the design process.

WebGuru is an online AI tool that provides an efficient solution for users to optimize their websites. Users can upload their website, enter text commands, and next WebGuru generates a customized design solution based on these requirements.

First, WebGuru improves image quality through machine learning algorithms. When a user selects an image and enters their requirements, WebGuru uses a convolutional neural network to analyze the image and provide users with customized requirements. This process not only adjusts the quality of the image but also ensures that the output results match other images on the website. Also, to help users clarify their needs, WebGuru provides a specialized glossary of terms based on user's text commands. This enables users to precisely articulate their requirements for optimal editing results. The lasso tool further enables users to select and refine specific parts of an image to meet detailed customization requests.

Secondly, WebGuru specializes in integrating images and text to enhance the presentation of product details. Natural language processing techniques are used to understand and interpret user inputs, facilitating the display of personalized product details based on those inputs. This integration enhances visual appeal and also enhances user interaction by providing a seamless combination of textual information and visual cues.

In addition, WebGuru offers a comprehensive website design solution with global and local modes, differentiated by color and layout positioning. The global modification toolbar is accessed via a button in the upper left corner, allowing users to enter a wide range of design changes. WebGuru's AI system can develop intelligent and innovative design solutions based on the types of products offered on the site. This feature enables users to try out various designs, compare them, and select their favorite options. Once a design is chosen, it can be applied consistently across the whole website with the flexibility to make further modifications.

WebGuru's designs are deeply integrated with AI technology such as convolutional neural networks for image analysis and natural language processing for text integration. Every decision in the development of WebGuru is based on creating a user-customized product and delivering an intuitive user experience. This AI integration not only helps with technical tasks but also enriches the creative process, making WebGuru a powerful tool for transforming e-commerce sites efficiently and effectively.

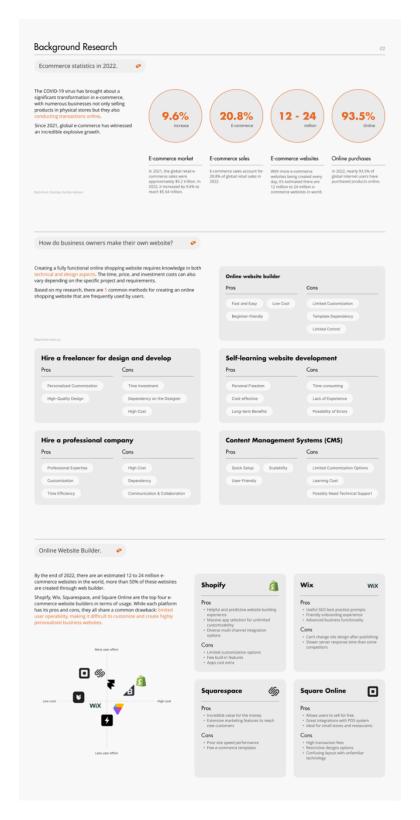
User feedback played a crucial role in refining the interface. I interviewed 6 users and showed them a prototype of the tool during the high-fidelity design phase with several iterations and tweaks. Based on the feedback, I optimized the font size, text command modes, number of tools, and controls to enhance the visual experience and simplify operations. For example, in response to user feedback that the text command mode was complex and difficult to learn and use quickly, I simplified the command structure, provided more intuitive verbal prompts, and added a dynamic guidance system to the interface to help users use the text commands effectively. In addition, I adjusted the default font size to accommodate prolonged reading and improve comfort for users. Through feedback on the control methods, I redesigned the toolbar layout and simplified the tool-switching process. This change improved the smooth operation of WebGuru. These adjustments not only optimized user experience but also improved overall user satisfaction. Through continuous user testing and feedback loops, WebGuru's design was gradually refined to better meet the needs of its target user groups.

Conclusions

WebGuru is the latest example of the effective use of AI to personalize website design for small business owners. By combining efficiency, personalization, and actionability, WebGuru meets the pressing need for an intuitive and effective website optimization tool in the booming field of e-commerce. Looking ahead, this thesis proposes to further investigate how emerging AI technologies, such as advanced natural language processing and predictive analytics be integrated into WebGuru. Exploring these technologies may lead to deeper customization options that can enhance user satisfaction and efficiency. These advancements may enable WebGuru to adapt to user behavior and preferences in realtime dynamically, adjusting the site's aesthetics.

WebGuru not only demonstrates the practical application of AI in enhancing e-commerce platforms but also lays the foundation for future innovations in digital commerce. This thesis emphasizes that Alpowered tools have the potential to revolutionize how small businesses participate in the digital marketplace, potentially influencing future design trends and how design integrates with business strategy. By facilitating more personalized and engaging experiences, WebGuru may play a key role in shaping the future of e-commerce, making digital transformation feasible for businesses of all sizes.

Expanded Thesis Defense Presentation



User Research 03



In order to gain a deeper understanding of how small business owners manage their websites, I interviewed three target users. Exploring how they built their e-commerce websites and their related experiences and feelings.



Handmade Prodcucts Shop Owner

"As a designer, I am capable of independently designing my website. Due to my lack of programming skills, it is h s. Ultimately leading me to settle for a reasonably suitable online website template."



Clothing Retail Shop Owner

entire process, from design and production to going live, took a long time to complete."



Trendy Brand Store Owner

"Since I am neither skilled in design nor coding, my only option is to find a template online to build my website. However, I am unsure of how to te to make my website look more appealing."

This project is dedicated to meet the needs of small business owners who have an urgent need to build a website but lack professional design skills and cannot invest lots of time

In response to these characteristics, I deeply analyzed and drew a persona of my target user.



29 years old Single

Zoe Lee

Rochester, New York

Small Business Owner

Zoe Lee has an store specializing in designer jewelry. To promote her products more effectively, she decides to create an website. Because she lack of design and programming skills and want to save time and money, Zoe chooses to us

However, she finds the website's performance unsatisfactory, few people shopping through the website. This leads her to consider whether she

Needs

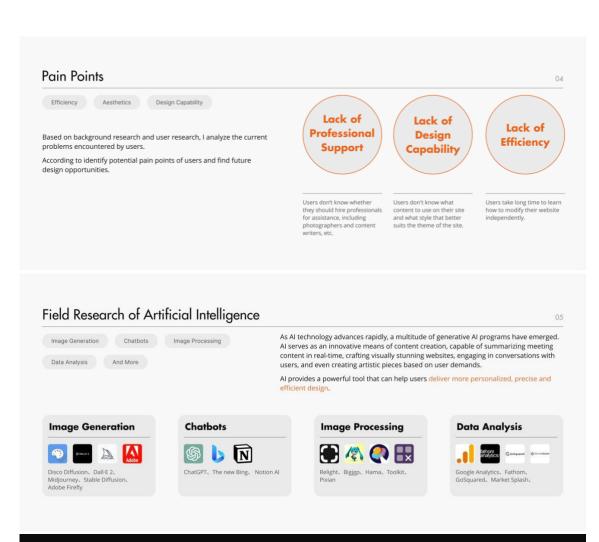
- presence

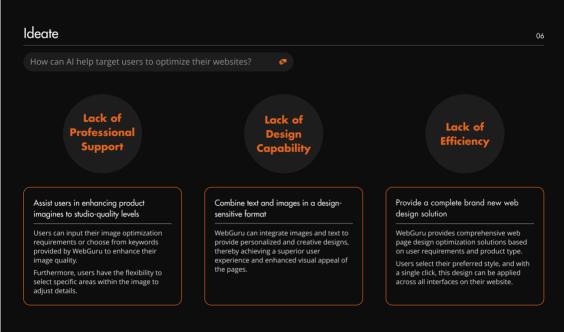
 Save time and money by finding costeffective solutions

 Enhance brand awareness and

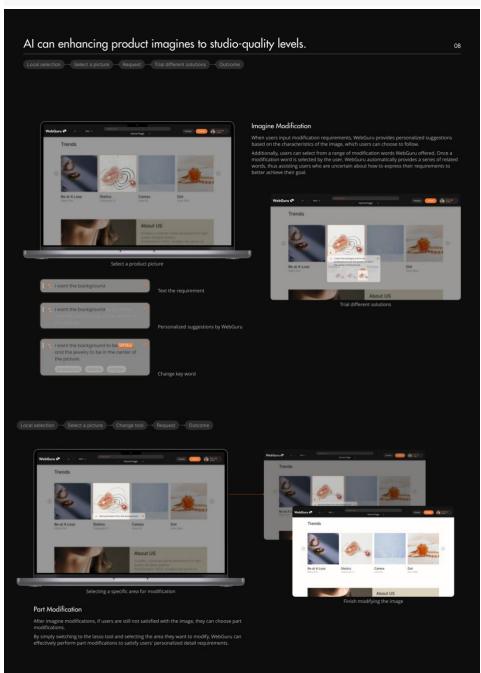
Pain Points

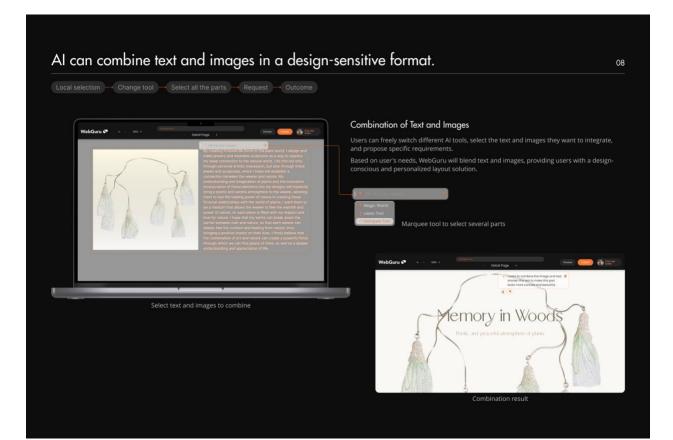
- Lacks skills and experience to create and design a professional website on her own
- The chosen online website template doesn't provide satisfactory results and fails to meet business requirements

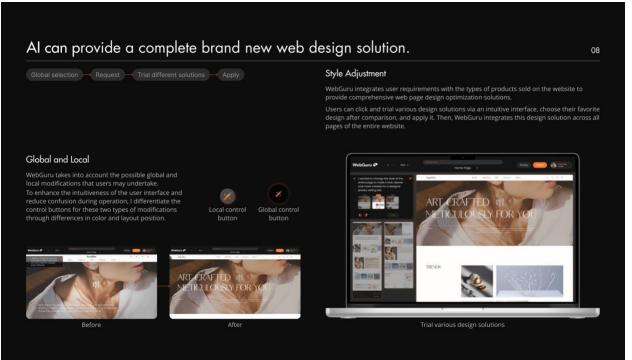












Design Guide



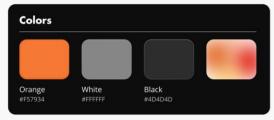
I adopted the Glassmorphism style in this design, using its semi-transparent characteristic to effectively emphasize the hierarchical relationship.

Also, as a design style adds depth and shadow, without noticeable color changes. It not only giving the UI a sense of layering but also strengthening the user's identification between the system itself and the modified page.





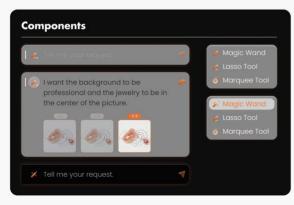


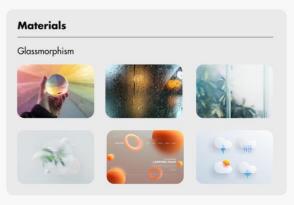










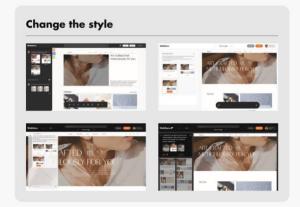


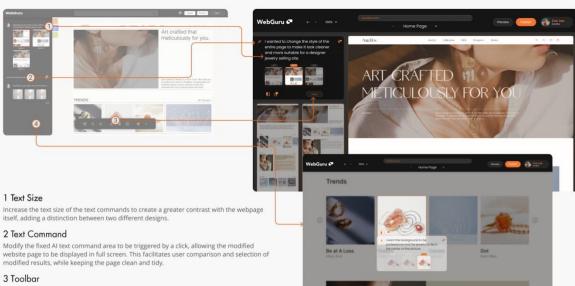
Iteration 10

What do users think of this tool?

I interviewed 6 users and showed them a demo of this tool. Based on their feedback, I made several changes to the program.







Remove the fixed toolbar and streamline the number of tools based on user habits, reducing the complexity of user interactions.

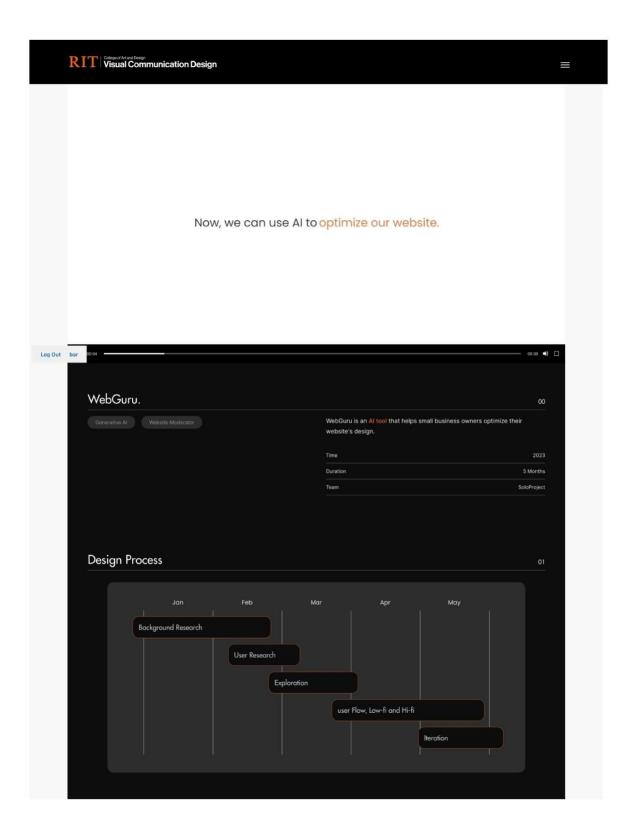
4 Global and Local Control

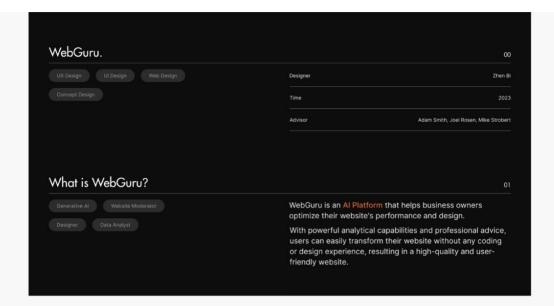
Differentiate global control and local control through color, helping users distinguish between partial modifications and overall modifications. Minimize user confusion during operations.

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Semplice Screenshot





Background Research

02

Ecommerce statistics in 2022.

The COVID-19 virus has brought about a significant transformation in e-commerce, with numerous businesses not only selling products in physical stores but they also

Since 2021, global e-commerce has witnessed

9.6%

20.8%

12 - 24

93.5%

E-commerce market

E-commerce sales

E-commerce websites

Online purchases In 2022, nearly 93.5% of global internet users have purchased products online.

In 2021, the global retail e-commerce sales were approximately \$5.2 trillion, In 2022, it increased by 9.6% to reach \$5.54 trillion.

E-commerce sales account for 20.8% of global retail sales in 2022. With more e-commerce websites being created every day, it's estimated there are 12 million to 24 million e-commerce websites in world.

How do business owners make their own website?

Creating a fully functional online shopping website requires knowledge in both technical and design aspects. The time, price, and investment costs can also vary depending on the specific project and requirements.

Based on my research, there are 5 common methods for creating an online shopping website that are frequently used by users.

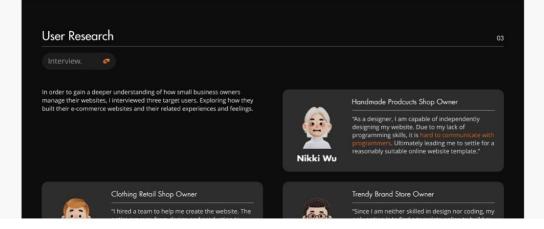
Hire a freelancer for design and develop

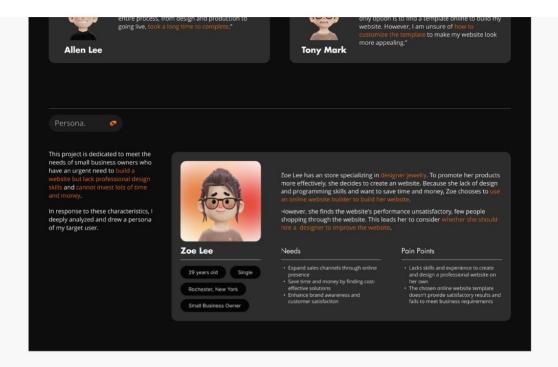
Cons

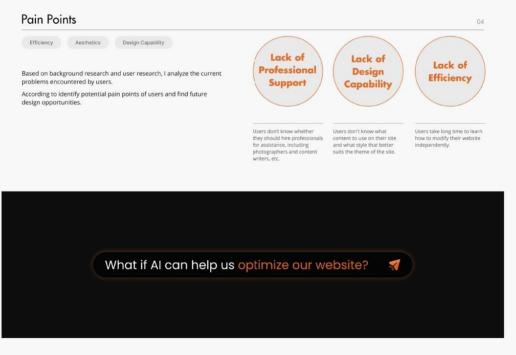
Self-learning website development

Cons



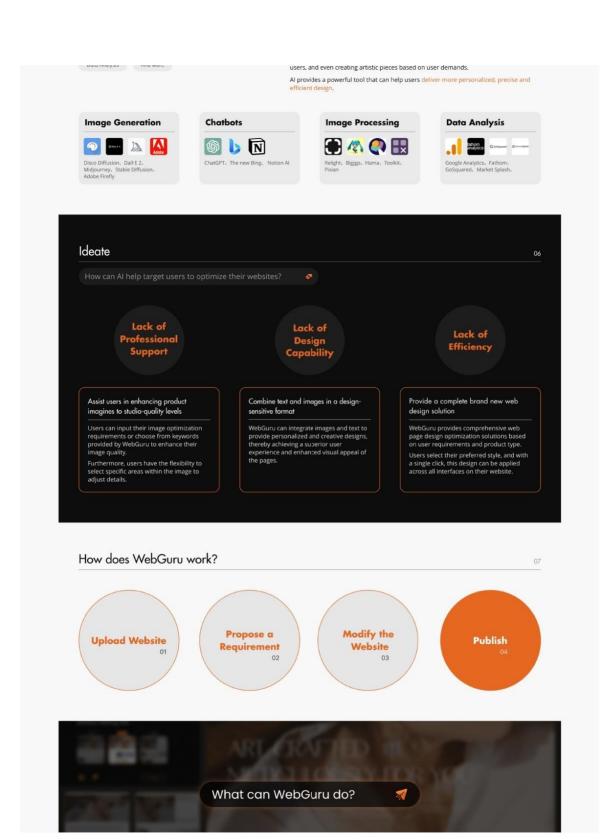


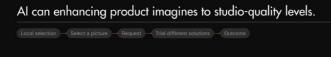






Data Analysis And Mora





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Salart a product picture



Imagine Madification

When users input modification requirements, WebGuru provides personalized suggestions based on the characteristics of the image, which users can choose to follow.

Additionally, users can select from a range of modification words WebGuru offered. Once a modification word is selected by the user, WebGuru automatically provides a series of related words, thus assisting users who are uncertain about how to express their requirements to better achieve their goal.



Local selection — Select a picture — Change tool — Request — Outcome



Selecting a specific area for modification

Part Modification

After imagine modifications, if users are still not satisfied with the image, they can choose part modifications.

effectively perform part modifications to satisfy users' personalized detail requirements.

