

A Case Study for Wizio

by Rebecca Yukelson

Summary

Wizio is an online apartment marketplace utilizing crowd-sourced data to automate the apartment rental search, application and leasing process. Their main goal is to make it easier for college students to find and lease apartments because the current process is quite daunting. Wizio brings value to the apartment search process because their website has only videos and no pictures. A potential tenant can take a virtual tour of apartments on the market both in 360-degree view and through iphone videos uploaded by current tenants.

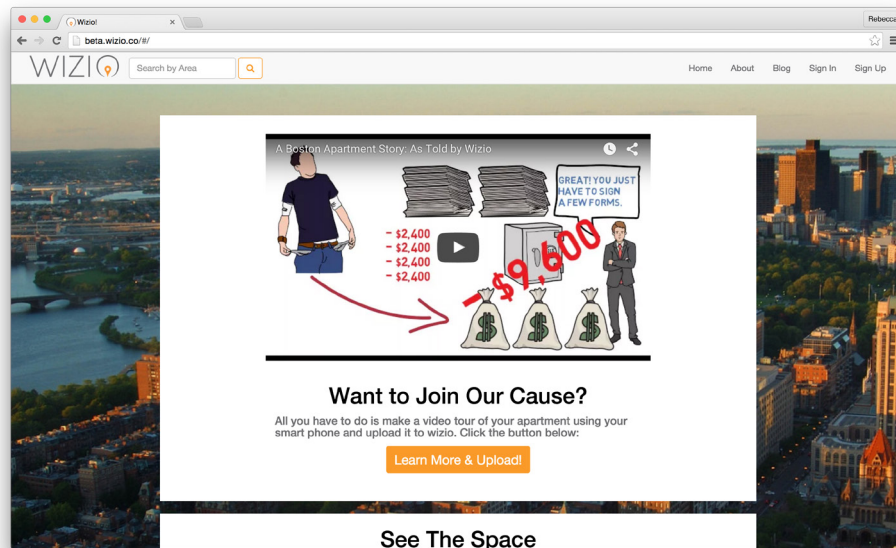
During the fall of 2015, Scout, Northeastern's student-run design studio, took on Wizio as a client to do their branding and responsive website design. Three team members, Rebecca Yukelson, Katie Soldau and Muigai Unaka dedicated their semester to working on the client. By the end of the semester they delivered a refreshed front-end web design for desktop and mobile along with a detailed brand guidelines book.



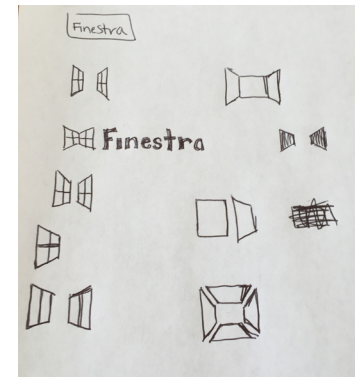
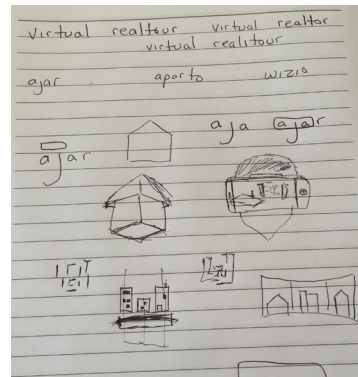
Wizio's old logo before September 2015

Backstory

Wizio is a start-up founded in January of 2015. They entered in the Husky Start up challenge, during which the team expanded and they solidified ideas. Over the summer of 2015, Wizio approached Scout in order to enhance their brand and web presence. The original Wizio logo was an owl, a symbol of wisdom, and signified wisdom in the apartment search and rental process. Although the website has some functionality for apartment searching, it had almost no front-end design. Overall, Wizio needed brand consistency and a new user-friendly and well designed website in order to attract customers to their site.



Wizio released a Beta version of their website on November 1, 2015 just a month before Scout delivered their front end design on December 9, 2015.



Early name brainstorming and logo sketches before Wizio decided to continue using their old name.

Problem- Renaming Wizio?

When Wizio approached Scout for a rebrand, Wizio offered the opportunity for Scout to change the company's name. The name Wizio, came about as an accident. The founders couldn't think of a name, and they decided to use this made-up word. They liked the sound of it because it gave the idea of wisdom and implied people who work there are "Wiz's" at their job.

Although the name Wizio suggests wisdom, nothing about it said they were an apartment search company. Scout wanted to change the name to something that provided more clarity on the company's service.

Scout began brainstorming hundreds of name ideas which was certainly a challenge. Ultimately, Scout really liked two names which were "Open House" and "Real Tour". Both of these names related to apartment touring and implied the idea of openness and honesty in the apartment search process.

When presenting the final two name ideas to Wizio, they really liked "Real Tour" and looked into changing the name with their lawyers and buying the domain and rights to the name. Unfortunately the name was taken, and it was going to be too much trouble to go through a name change after all.

Although they stuck with the name Wizio, Scout developed a tagline to enhance the company's meaning and mission. Early iterations such as "Pin Down the Perfect Apartment" and "Find Your Place" were overall liked by everyone and ultimately Wizio chose the slightly modified tagline "Find Your Space" again due to copy right issues.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Views | 1. Agent | 1. Lock |
| 2. Views360 | 2. QuickAgent | 2. Finestra |
| 3. ViewPad | 3. HonestAgent | 3. Windoor |
| 4. Onsite | 4. BetterBroker | 4. Homespun |
| 5. Pivotal | 5. BrokerBetter | 5. Find |
| 6. PIVITAL | 6. NoBroke | 6. REALtor |
| 7. Means | 7. Apt | 7. Handle |
| 8. Keyway | 8. Open Door | 8. three sixty |
| 9. Onsite | 9. Peep | 9. one eighty |
| 10. Viewpad | 10. People's Apartments | 10. Window |
| 11. KeyPad | 11. Key | 11. Gain |
| 12. PadKey | 12. DoorKey | 12. Roost |
| 13. Aptkey | 13. Aptitude | 13. Den |
| 14. Aptivate | | 14. Access |
| 15. Key360 | | 15. Seek |
| 16. KeyIn | | 16. Clear |
| 17. Keypads | | 17. Reveal |
| 18. Keyster | | 18. Cinch |
| 19. KeyWay | | 19. Unlock |
| 20. ViewApt | | 20. Ajar |
| 21. ViewPoint | | |
| 22. ViewAppointment | | |
| 23. Pano | | |
| 24. Panoram | | |
| 25. Panned | | |
| 26. BirdsEye | | |
| 27. BirdEyeView | | |
| 28. Entrapartment | | |
| 29. Gloview | | |
| 30. Panoramkey | | |
| 31. Aperto / Aparto | | |
| 32. Keythru | | |

Posted on Sep 16

Posted on Sep 18

Posted on Sep 19

Scout presented five early logo sketches to Wizio. They liked the last option with the location pin in a circle.



Problem- Branding

Wizio's need for a new logo presented a compelling design challenge to Scout. The old logo was childish looking, and they needed a new presence that would convey what Wizio is truly about. Members of Scout sat down with Wizio early on in September to do a deep-dive of branding. In the meeting, they brainstormed competitors, other websites, taglines, names and buzzwords. The two teams came up with some descriptors, which could best describe the company's mission. Throughout the design process, Scout kept in mind that Wizio is a company that needs to appear trustworthy, innovative, smart, community-oriented and simple. The brand and web presence evolved around those fundamental ideals.

Scout started this design challenge by sketching new logo ideas. They played with symbols that represented the idea behind Wizio which is "smarter apartment searching". Scout showed an updated sleeker, "wise owl" logo,

while also showing some other icons that related more directly to apartments. Such icons included doors, location pins, and open circles.

When presenting the logo to Wizio, although it was tough for them to do away with their beloved owl, they agreed that the brand needed to say "apartment" more than an owl icon alone could say. Both Scout and team members of Wizio agreed that the location pin in the circle was a compelling mark because it implied location, and the idea of 360-degree viewing was represented by the circle surrounding the pin. The logo further represents the idea of a little pin in a big world which tells a story about a tenant searching for a place to live.

At this point, the branding phase was steering in the right direction, but Scout took a few more weeks to refine the logo, and begin developing a brand system around this mark.

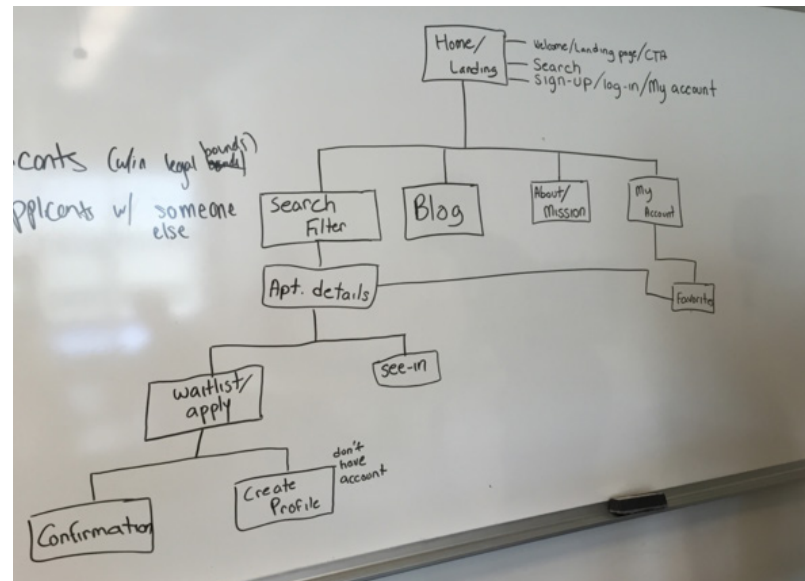


Problem- Website Content

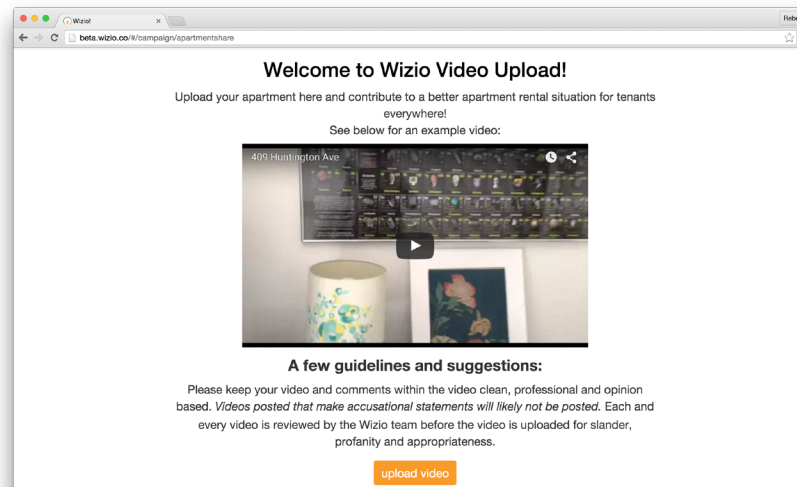
While the branding phase of the project was taking off, Scout and Wizio ran into unique challenges with the content and structure of the website. Wizio originally only wanted to have high quality 360 degree virtual tours on their website but they realized that populating their database with all of those videos was not realistic for the timeline of their launch.

Wizio received advice from an investor to also have videos uploaded from current tenants filmed on their iphones. Although these videos would be of variable quality, it was a unique idea to show the “raw” apartment, so apartment hunters could see what was there. Either way, videos served to be more helpful in an apartment search than pictures.

Since Wizio changed their business model slightly, they decided to launch a campaign to get tenants to upload their apartment to their Beta website. This caused Scout's to change their design slightly to explain the idea of apartment hunting through both virtual tours and tenant-uploaded videos.



Scout and Wizio initially drew a site map on September 20, 2015 which did not include functionality for tenant video uploads. This sitemap showed the flow a tenant would go through to apply for an apartment online. They would search, watch virtual tours, and if they liked a listing, they would click apply.



Wizio's upload video page for the Beta launch. At this state, the site's functionality was solidified but there was still no front-end design and branding taken into consideration.

An early wireframe of the apartment details page designed by Scout. Each apartment listed on this website would have a detailed page like this where a tenant could watch a video tour of the apartment and read and write reviews of the unit, building and landlord. The review functionality was not implemented in final designs due to technology limitations on Wizio's end.

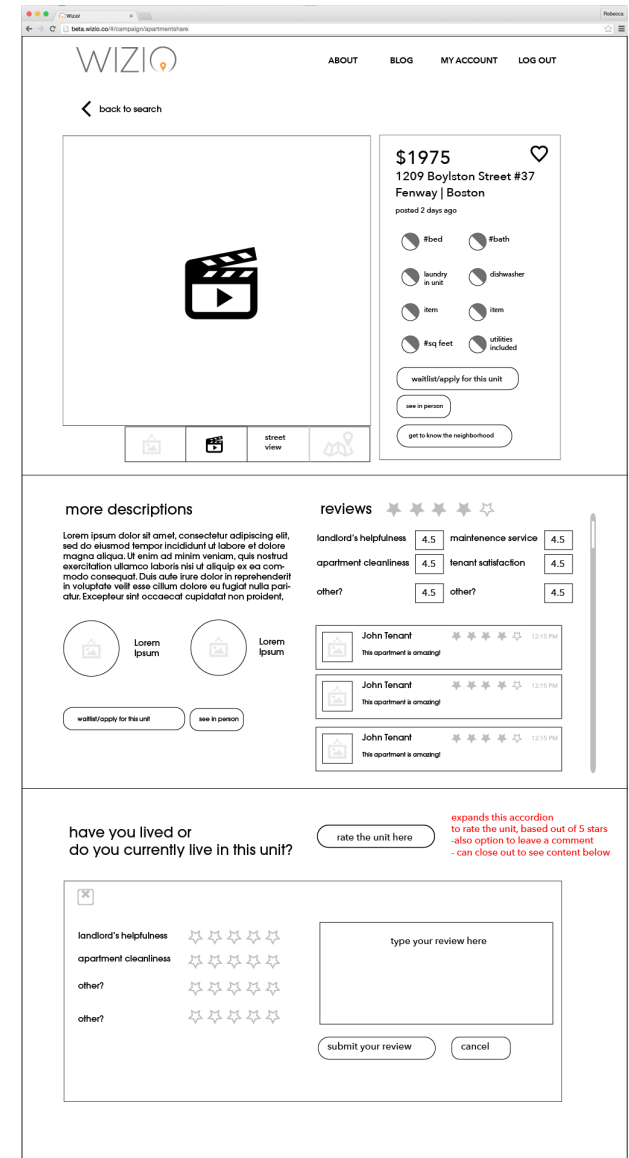
Problem- Website Design for ideal or what is feasible?

Scout wanted the website to have a seamless user experience for tenants to search and upload apartments. For some ideas, Scout had considered the ideal functionality for the website although it wasn't necessarily feasible to implement in the rather short contracted timeline the client had.

One of these ideas was the ability for a tenant to read and write reviews of an apartment online, similar to yelp. Scout felt this functionality was extremely important to eventually execute because that made Wizio truly stand out more from their competitors. If tenants could review their apartments and landlords online, then there would be more transparency and truth in the industry.

When Wizio shared their ideas for the website and what they already had coded functionality for, this did not include review functionality. Since Wizio was such a new company, it was a difficult decision whether to design functionality for the ideal state of the website or to design for what was feasible.

While Scout was trying to push them to design for the ideal and not worry too much about what could actually be coded, Scout and Wizio ultimately met somewhere in the middle. The team decided to design them a website that could be delivered and used now, but to also mock up what some ideal functionality could be. Scout was to include the ideal web design states in the final brand guidelines for future launches of the website. The final delivered website design reflected this compromise but early wireframes showed sketches of ideal situations.



Subtle refinements to the logo such as color, pin size, pointed edges, and a thicker stroke made the final logo (bottom) a success.



Outcome- Logo and Business Cards

The final logo was ultimately a success; it was based off of refinements from the pin logo in the initial brand presentation. We brought the edges of the Open “O” to come to a point rather than a flat edge to further show emphasis on the pin. We made the main branding colors space gray and tangerine. The bright orange color really makes the pin “pop” and implies that Wizio is a fun, young, happy and community oriented company.

The final logo is set in a slightly modified version of the typeface Avant Garde Gothic. The modifications to the typeface were made to give Wizio a unique, authentic brand identifier that could not be easily recreated. Scout made sure that the logo could be legible at all sizes and would look nice in both grayscale and color.

The design of business cards initiated an additional element to the brand which is the orange field of space identified by the pin. This further emphasizes that Wizio has the power to create a home for people. The orange space is meant to be used in all other parts of the brand including the website, social media and future marketing material.

One side of Wizio's business card. The orange pin identifies a field of space which connects directly to the company's tagline, “Find Your Space”.



The first section of Wizio's brand guidelines discuss proper and improper logo usage.

01 primary logo

STANDARD COLOR LOGO
AND CLEAR SPACE



MINIMUM SIZE

WIZIO .3 in

ALTERNATE COLOR OPTIONS
*note use color logo whenever possible



Outcome- Brand Guidelines

Scout delivered a final PDF of brand guidelines to Wizio. Wizio can refer to this whenever they use their logo in a publication or on marketing materials such as stickers, tshirts, etc. If they hire freelance designers in the future, the designer can refer to this for specifics on type, color and imagery to use.

01 logo misuseage



DONT:
Stretch the logo



DONT:
Change the colors



DONT:
Tilt the logo



DONT:
Place on a color, only white
backgrounds or use the knocked out
logo on gray



DONT:
Swap the colors



DONT:
use the secondary logo
in other words



DONT:
Outline the type



DONT:
Add Drop Shadows



DONT:
Make the pin bigger

02 tagline

MAIN TAGLINE

WIZIO | FIND YOUR SPACE

BOTTOM TAGLINE

WIZIO
FIND YOUR SPACE

MINIMUM SIZE

WIZIO | FIND YOUR SPACE .5 in



ENVIRONMENTAL AND HORIZONTAL TAGLINE

WIZIO | FIND YOUR SPACE






The image displays four variations of the WIZIO brand tagline. The first variation, labeled 'MAIN TAGLINE', shows 'WIZIO' in a grey sans-serif font followed by a vertical bar and 'FIND YOUR SPACE' in orange. The second variation, 'BOTTOM TAGLINE', shows 'WIZIO' in grey, a horizontal line, and 'FIND YOUR SPACE' in orange below it. The third variation, 'MINIMUM SIZE', shows the full tagline 'WIZIO | FIND YOUR SPACE' in grey, with a bracket indicating a minimum height of '.5 in' in orange. The fourth variation, 'ENVIRONMENTAL AND HORIZONTAL TAGLINE', shows 'WIZIO' in grey followed by a vertical bar and 'FIND YOUR SPACE' in a large orange font. All variations include a location pin icon inside the letter 'O' of 'WIZIO'.

04 color

CORPORATE COLORS

	
Tangerine	Space gray

ACCENT COLORS

				
Burnt orange	Muted tangerine	Periwinkle blue	Gray blue	Light gray blue

03 typefaces

*note: Both typefaces and all weights must be purchased for use

Avant Garde Gothic

Avant Garde Gothic Extra Light
 Avant Garde Gothic Book
 Avant Garde Gothic Medium
 Avant Garde Gothic Demi
Avant Garde Gothic Bold

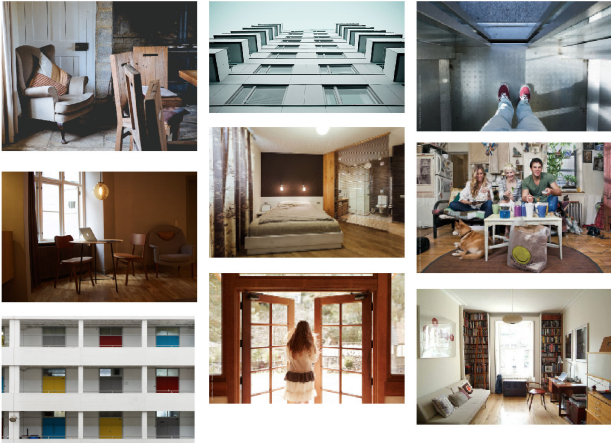


Caecelia

Caecelia 45 Light
 Caecelia 45 Light Italic
 Caecelia 56 Roman
 Caecelia 56 Italic
Caecelia 75 Bold
Caecelia 75 Bold Italic

*If Avant Garde is the primary typeface, Caecelia can be used when visual contrast is needed or for italics.

05 imagery



Thoughtful imagery enhances the look and feel of both the website and marketing material. Use warm-toned, candid apartment images.

*Don't use stock photos of people smiling directly at the camera.

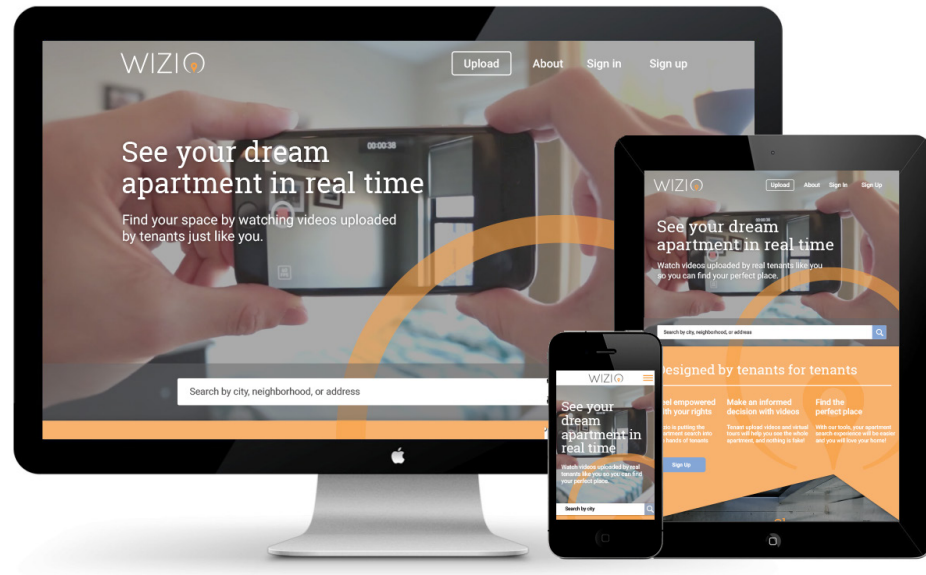
Outcome- Responsive Website

The final website looked great in all three screen sizes. Scout's developers took the website mockups and coded them to be live webpages which are to be launched on December 9, 2015.

The homepage has a soundless video embedded in the background of tenants filming their apartments on their iPhones. This immediately shows users the mission of Wizio before they even click a button.

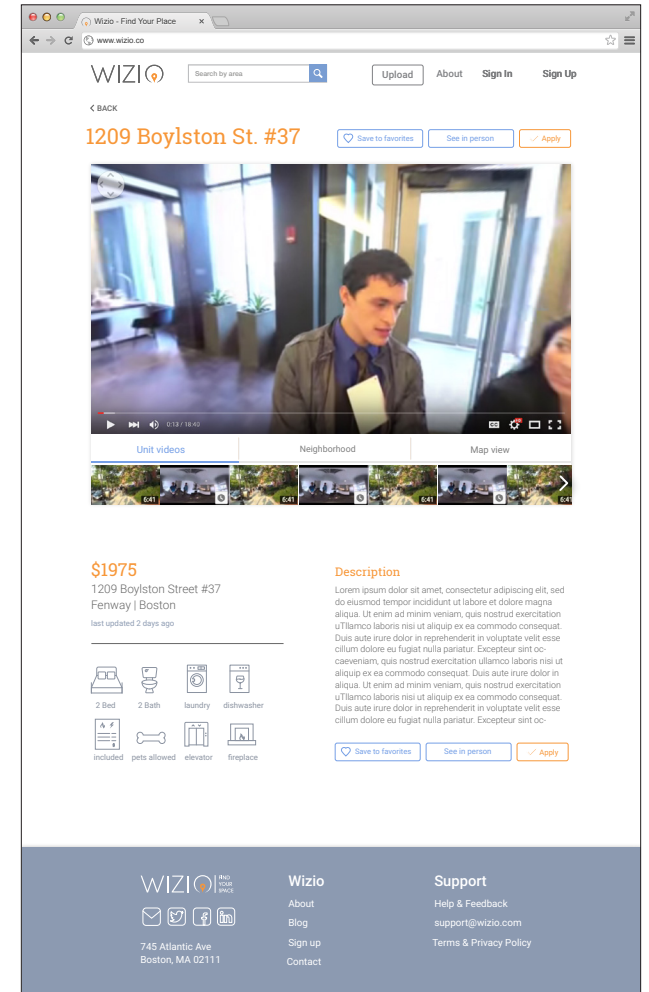
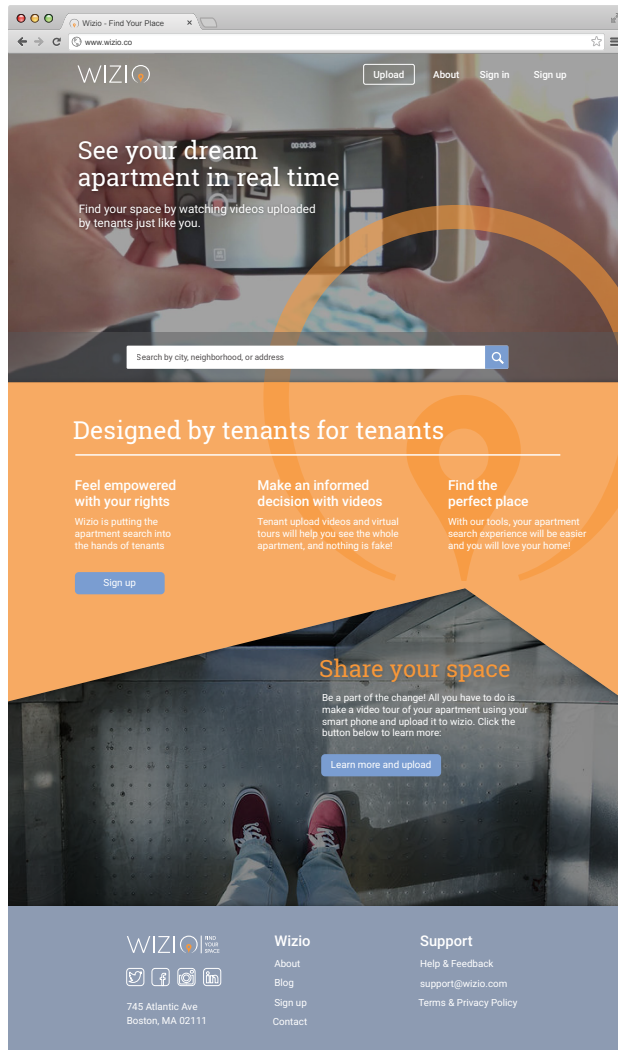
The new homepage design is cleaner, happier and simple to use. A user would trust this company more with this homepage than they would with the original Wizio website.

The rest of the website has a consistent look and feel with the homepage. The pages that have a lot of functionality such as search filter, apartment details, and tenant account have a toned back color palette in order to give the user a simple and non-distracting experience.



Wizio's homepage displayed in all three compatible screen sizes.

Desktop mockups of the home, about and apartment details page (from left to right). The apartment details page is on a white background so the user can focus on the page's functionality rather than being distracted by color.



Reflection

Wizio was a really fun client with which to work. They were always enthusiastic and loved the work that Scout did for them. Although it was a challenge to do design for a company that kept changing their business model and site functionality, Scout did the best they could.

Nevertheless, as Wizio begins to grow, they now have a concrete brand guidelines to follow for future iterations of their website. Ultimately both Scout and Wizio were pleased with the final outcome and both parties recognize that there is a lot potential for more designs in the future.

Wizio's mission to create a better experience for tenants is admirable. With a strong brand presence, they will, Scout hopes, begin to gain a lot of attention from apartment hunters.