



Calloo Callay™

ZuLBOT

ZULA PLAY

da Vinci Spring Semester

Independent Study

Alan Vollmer

Ian Ragland

Introduction.

This is a compilation of the work completed by Alan Vollmer and Ian Ragland over the course of their Spring semester's independent study. Working alongside Andy Azula, Sharon Azula, Darren Foote, and Aaron Forrester, we were able to fully embrace the experiential learning aspect of our program to the highest degree imaginable. Da Vinci's curriculum armed us with the foundational knowledge to immediately engage within the early ideation phases of this company, and make an impactful plunge from the start of our involvement.

Along the way of creating the perfect children's book/toy combination, we faced the euphoric victories and soul-crushing setbacks that inevitably come with starting your own venture. With help from the amazing Zulaplay team, we were able to persevere through major pivots, rebranding efforts, domain changes, legal roadblocks, and business model restructuring without ever losing momentum or faith in our product.

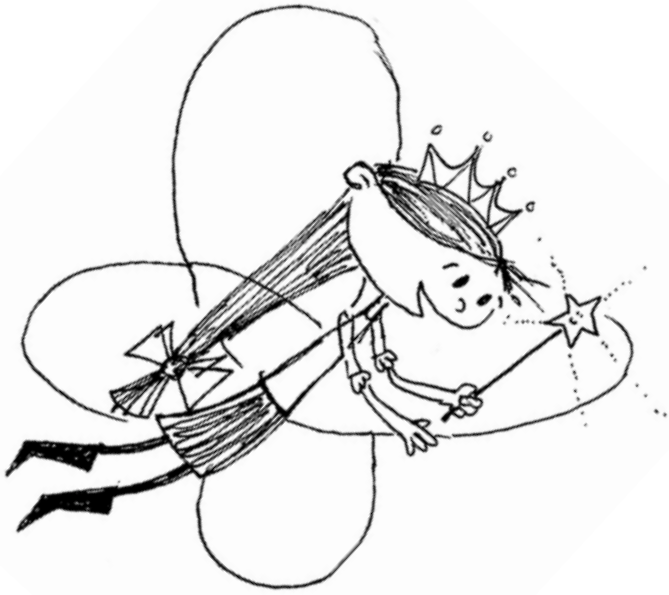
Throughout this process, we assisted in the development of competitive strategies, formation of partnerships, user testing facilitation, rapid prototyping planning, and proposal writing. In a creative vein, we were also tasked with page colorization, animation of a promotional cartoon, creating mood boards/packaging inspiration, iterating story drafts, and lastly... designing this final book to showcase the progression of our skills.

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The Story.



THE ADVENTURES OF THE TOOTH BRIGADE

The Tooth Fairy needs help! There are too many teeth to keep track of and to collect every single night. One day she finds three little monsters in search of a purpose and asks them to help her collect and protect teeth until she can arrive in the night. Together the three monsters form The Tooth Brigade. But the Brigade has room for lots more monsters who are looking for a purpose as well.

01

Lead Insights.

What's our Why?

Sharon and Andy made a unique observation regarding the phases of young life. They said to themselves: How might we better prepare parents for the unique phases of a child's life? Also: How might we engage children in a meaningful way during these phases to help guide them and teach them vital information, all while "playing".

The primary insight that led them to The Tooth Fairy myth (spoiler), is the simple fact that over 1.5 million 'baby' teeth fall out in any given day around the world. This time period is usually a source of stress for both the parents and the child. The parents, often new parents, forget to retrieve the tooth at night. The child is scared that a part of their anatomy just fell out. The parents wonder how much money is average? The parents are worried that the child will see them/wake up when they go to perform the duties of the tooth fairy. And sometimes the child will not notify the parents as a way to "test" the validity/reality of the tooth fairy. Kids are smart.

All of these stressors are pain points that we can attempt to solve. Through our product line we aim to provide an app-based reminder service. Our toy encourages engagement with the product. The child needs to notify the tooth fairy, as they are putting the tooth in the possession of a third party (The Tooth Brigade toy). The story actively encourages kids that the tooth fairy is a very busy fairy, allowing for the possibility that she might not come that night. Also, the book has fact sheets in the back pages that educate kids and parents on proper tooth care, when to pull a tooth, and the importance of baby teeth in regard to adult teeth (they are more important than you think).

Opportunity

Our opportunity comes from the somewhat vague details surrounding the myth of The Tooth Fairy. It would be impossible to change the mythos surrounding Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny at this point. These are well-established characters with regulated rituals surrounding them. The Tooth Fairy, on the other hand, is often a grey-area for parents. How much money is appropriate? How much are other parents giving? What do I put the tooth in? Should I get my child a tooth pillow? How does The Tooth Fairy get into the house? What does she do with the teeth once she takes them?

The questions can go on and on. And it was in this gap that Sharon and Andy saw their opportunity for a new market share. By creating a character base around The Tooth Fairy, without directly affecting her story or mythos, they were able to capture their audience (children) without attempting to change overall behavior of their customer (parents).



02

Value Proposition.

Our Mission

Our mission is to inspire change through play. Pretty simple, right? We thought so too. Zula Play produces toys and stories that enrich the lives of children and their parents. We pledge to encourage kids and parents to play together and even learn together. While we're at it, we decided it'd also be nice to give back to organizations that help children in need.

For kids, we strive to invoke a joy of interaction and pride in learning. For their parents, we hope there will be a mutual value creation in this same vein. For the planet, we vow to do no harm and source as sustainably as we can – disclaimer: no worlds were harmed in the process of our development. We believe the more we encourage to play, the more we can help. By stressing our core values (imagination, creativity, fun, learning, and quality), we will continue to make a positive impact on everyone we aim to affect.

What We Provide

For children, we provide a new way to engage with the Tooth Fairy. We created a fun avenue for them to learn why their baby teeth are important and how they should be cared for. Tangibly, we will make Tooth Fairy pillows, books, video Content, an interactive app, and most importantly – membership into the Tooth Brigade!

For parents, we simply give them an awesome book to read with their children. The tooth Pillow is designed to be easily grabbed, and alleviates the prize/money swapping process for them. The app will remind them the night the Tooth Fairy is coming.

Wait, we were
teaching kids that
entire time??



For dentists, we have a bunch of fun video assets to entertain kids while in their offices. Also, we're providing educational material that teaches kids about tooth care because sometimes they just need to hear it in an animated fashion for the message to be delivered clearly.

03

Competitors.

Competitive Analysis

One of the first major tasks we were faced with was defining our segment in the seemingly flooded market. We did a thorough mining of products similar to what we were aiming to create, and compiled it into one analysis document. Once complete, we had a compilation of 25 different brands, each with one or more products for sale. Our analysis criteria began with the name of the product/company and a link to their primary website. Below, we included all channels the product is available for purchase, and its approximate retail cost. Following, we listed exact specifications of each toy listed. Every product listed included multiple screenshots and angles for our reference, as well as special notes or important pieces of information that could serve us well going forward when we decided on how to position ourselves.

Market Segment

We concluded the document with a summary of all of findings. This contained an average suggested retail price, an average size, and pinpointed channels of distribution that seemed to be the norm. Any standout notes were recounted at the end if it was pivotal enough to consider in the prototyping phase of our toy. Although we set the competitive analysis off to the side until we begin thinking about packaging and distribution again, it was nice to have our market segment defined in order to shift focus on perfecting our product in a way that stands out from the rest of the competition.

04

User Testing.

Methods

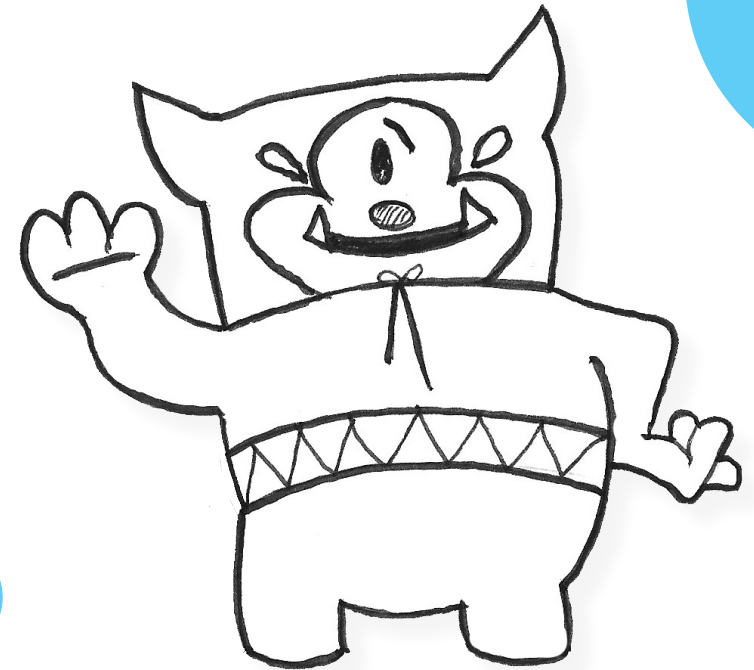
Our primary testing groups consisted of 5-8 year old children. We organized readings at a local business that specializes in providing theatre classes to children. The children in these classes represented a great mixture of demographics and psychographics (as much as 7-year-olds have psychographics). Within each class was a representation of different genders, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds, providing ample metrics for how the story was perceived. We incorporated A/B testing into our story readings by switching which story was read to each group over the course of several weeks. Through this method we were able to pinpoint which characters and plot points made strong impressions on the kids, and adjust the story accordingly.

Discovery

Our testing as it applied to the design of the overall characters took a different track. For each monster, Andy and Sharon built doll prototypes with varying colors and textures. This became a cumbersome practice, and at the suggestion of Darren Foote and the team, we decided to begin iterating with paper prototypes for the dolls. This method would solve for two assumption tracks - the overall design of the characters (color, shape, clothing, etc.) and also for the design of the dolls. Andy created a board with five iterations on it. This was then shown to children and they were asked to pick their favorite and least favorite version of each character. We put specific emphasis on which iterations appealed to young girls, as we wanted to make sure that our story did not exclude their preferences.

A speech bubble with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the top left. Inside the bubble, the text reads: "You mean we weren't just reading that book for fun??".

You mean we weren't just reading that book for fun??



05

Pivots.

First Pivot

From our findings it was decided that the alternative iteration of the story (Alan's version) was not viable in its current state. The rhyming pattern had a hypnotic effect on the children listening and most of the subplot was not retained. This was further illustrated when asking children which of their books were their favorites. Through a comparison of story structure, it was found that subplot does not typically exist in children's stories. Therefore, it was determined that Alan's story needed a significant re-write. During the process of re-drafting and re-writing this story, we encountered a pivot that shifted Alan's focus from writing to animating.

First Pivot

Through connecting with various potential stakeholders, Andy and Sharon we able to get a meeting with the owner of Virginia Family Dentistry. Prior to this meeting it was assumed we would be able to sell/market our product in dentists offices. When this option was brought up during the meeting it was quickly shot down for a simple reason: dental administrators aren't going to be willing to 'ring up' a customer for something that isn't dental care. The POS system in a dentist's office isn't built for regular sales. However, despite this, we found another area of opportunity. The owner indicated that the monitors set up in waiting rooms in dentists offices would be a great place to advertise our product. From there it was decided that we should also create an animate version of our story to place on those monitors and direct customers to our website.

Rebranding

During the course of our testing, Sharon and Andy were in constant contact with their IP lawyers as well, discussing trademarks and copyright on the name of the company "Calloo Callay". It was during this time that they discovered a French toy company named "Kaloo" that also made plush toys. Their lawyer, in his words, stated that if Sharon and Andy wanted to be "overly cautious" and avoid potential litigation, they should change the name of the company. Over the next two weeks we eventually landed on "ZulBot" as the second iteration of the name. One week later it was changed again to "ZulaPlay". This has become the permanent name of the company as it is open to manipulation into names such as ZulaPublish, ZulaTech, ZulaApparel, ZulaCasual, ZulaRoom, ZulaSleep, ZulaTots, ZulaSport, and ZulaBot. Andy and Sharon are potentially going into alternative markets apart from story books and toys, and this branding allows them the freedom to take those risks into other markets without losing brand identity.

06

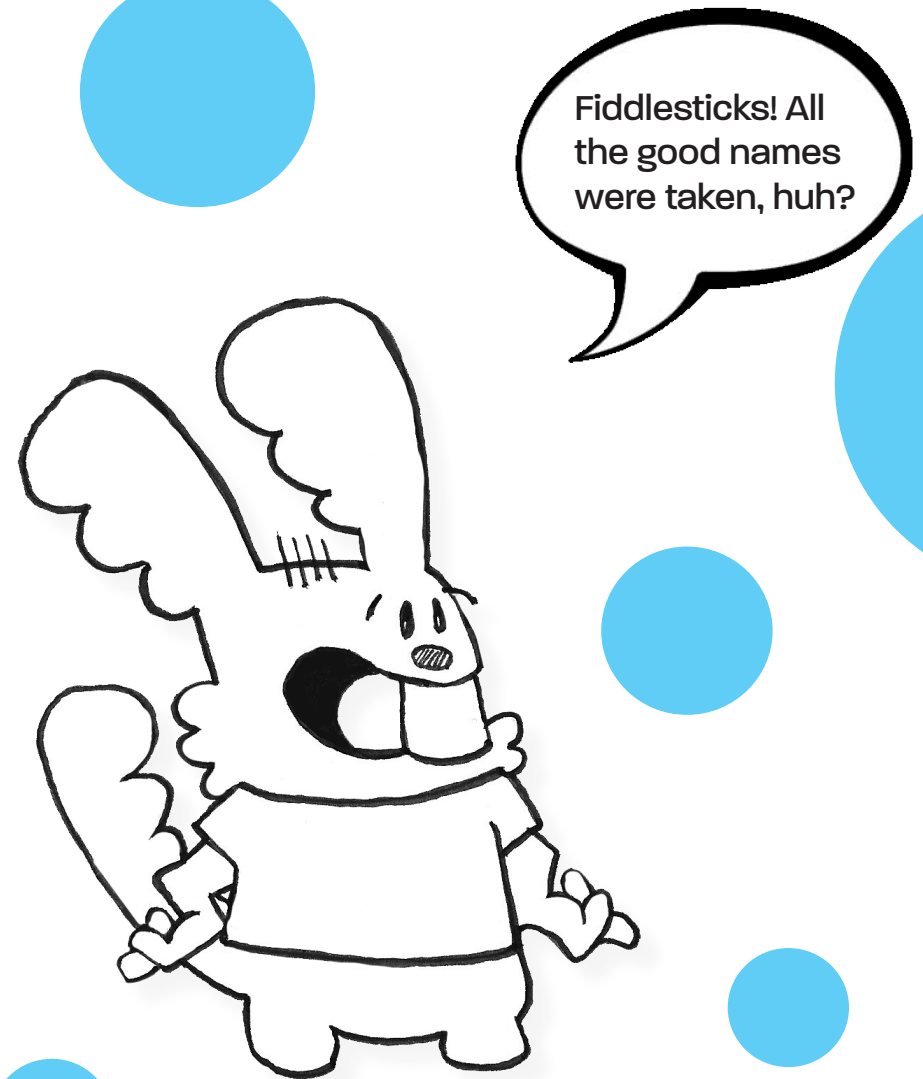
Legalities.

Intellectual property

Intellectual property is everything. There's no wonder as to why da Vinci places so much emphasis on protecting your ideas and ensuring you don't infringe on other's mental creations. Luckily for us, Andy and Sharon had been working with a business lawyer who made them aware of a possible 'likelihood of confusion' that arose late in our semester regarding our initial name "Calloo Callay". Although the company was overseas, children's toys were their focal point and they had been established for much longer than us. Once made aware of this roadblock, the troubles were only getting started.

After a couple weeks of surveying the United States Patent and Trademark database, intense google searching, and triple checking that Urban Dictionary hadn't come up with a disgusting alternative to our desired name change, we landed on ZulaPlay. No exaggeration – this process lasted for weeks, withstood multiple consultations with the lawyer, and consisted of countless deep dives on the internet. Rabbit holes were a regular thing at this point. Hmm... come to think of it, maybe this process was the subliminal inspiration for our final logo!

In all seriousness, this occurrence taught us the importance of working alongside a legal team in the early stages of a startup. Luckily, the team didn't get marketing crazy and were able to easily rebrand and purchase our new domains with mitigated frustration. We were fortunate to have such an anticipatory team that managed to think ahead for when this day could possibly come. The outcome could've been much worse in different circumstances.



07

Future Goals.

Alan's Goals

Alan's future goals with this company pertain to motion graphics, storytelling, and writing. Through attempting to illustrate the story in Adobe AfterEffects, Alan has found a new passion for animation and 4-dimensional motion graphics. The factor of time and space being manipulated through a 2-dimensional interface has provided ample challenge for him to pursue. In crafting a children's story, especially one that is meant to continue use of characters in another story, Alan has found a new respect for children's book authors. Crafting characters without the ability to use subplot and internal monologue has also provided a new type of creative challenge. Alan hopes to continue writing in this way as he finds it to be wonderful practice for the skill of distilling information into its purest form. This is especially helpful when crafting pitches for businesses.

Ian's Goals

Ian, having found his creative niche, hopes to continue building proposals, colorizing spreads of future stories, and contributing to the development of sub-brands launching under the ZulaPlay umbrella. He has aspirations of becoming more involved in the overall design and experience of the brand. Specifically, he would like to focus on designing creative packaging and assisting in the development of the ZulaPlay app in the near future. Ian would also love the opportunity, once this product goes to market, to design a unique point-of-sale experience for the customers. While Ian was more involved in character name generation, proposal-building, and research & development this semester, that was simply because of the phase this startup was in. Now, with frequent testing and rapid prototyping occurring, the book/toy combo is beginning to take shape. Now that the foundation is set, he aspires to help position the brand in terms of overall creative appeal.


08

Fun Stuff.

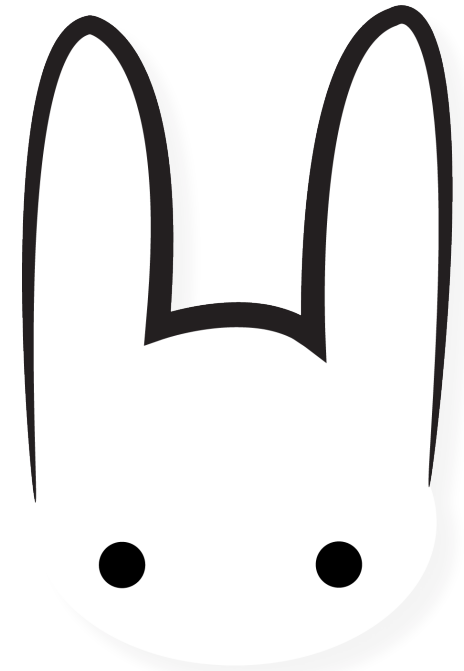
Description

We will spare you the eons of research and numerous spreads of raw data. If you really want to see it, trust us, we've got it... What you really want to see is the fun stuff, right? Well, don't worry – we've got that too! In the final section of this book, you will see a photo of our early stage prototypes (book and toy), renderings of our close-to-final book format and our concept for the ZulaPlay app. You'll also see our final landmark, tag line, and font.

Right when you think you couldn't possibly be having any more fun, you're in for another treat. We've got colorized character illustrations, mood board & packaging inspiration, and a screenshot of our website's landing page waiting for you! Without further ado, we now present the grand finale of our semester's work.



Woohoo!
You're finally
showing them
the fun stuff??



Deliverables.

Last semester when crafting the independent study proposal, our list of deliverables was unrealistic to say the least. That's the nature of the beast we've dubbed "startup". There's no formula to this – no linear approach to constructing the perfect venture. In fact, it's just failure upon failure until a little glimmer of hope emerges from a new insight. Then you just have to run with it and hope for the best.

We ran with it – we did our best. After many trials and hundreds of errors, this is the final set of deliverables we surfaced with. Only those who have been on the inside of this process can truly appreciate our outcome, given the time frame and multiple pivots we were forced to take throughout the semester.

And now, on a final note – time to sit back and enjoy all the fun stuff. Because in the end, it always helps to play!





Final Branding.

The logo features a stylized white rabbit face with long, upright ears and two black dots for eyes. The word "ZULA" is written in a dark blue, textured, sans-serif font, and "PLAY" is written in an orange, textured, sans-serif font. The rabbit's face is positioned behind the letter "A" in "ZULA" and the letter "P" in "PLAY".

ZULA PLAY

IT HELPS TO PLAY

Standards

Font:
VENEER (REGULAR)

Colors:



#26216b



#f2612e

Characters.



Finn

Potato

Olly

Mood board & Packaging Concepts.

Mood Board



Packaging



Website.

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



The image features the text "ZULA PLAY" in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "ZULA" is dark blue, and "PLAY" is orange. The text is slightly tilted upwards. The background is white with several light blue circles of various sizes scattered around.

ZULA PLAY