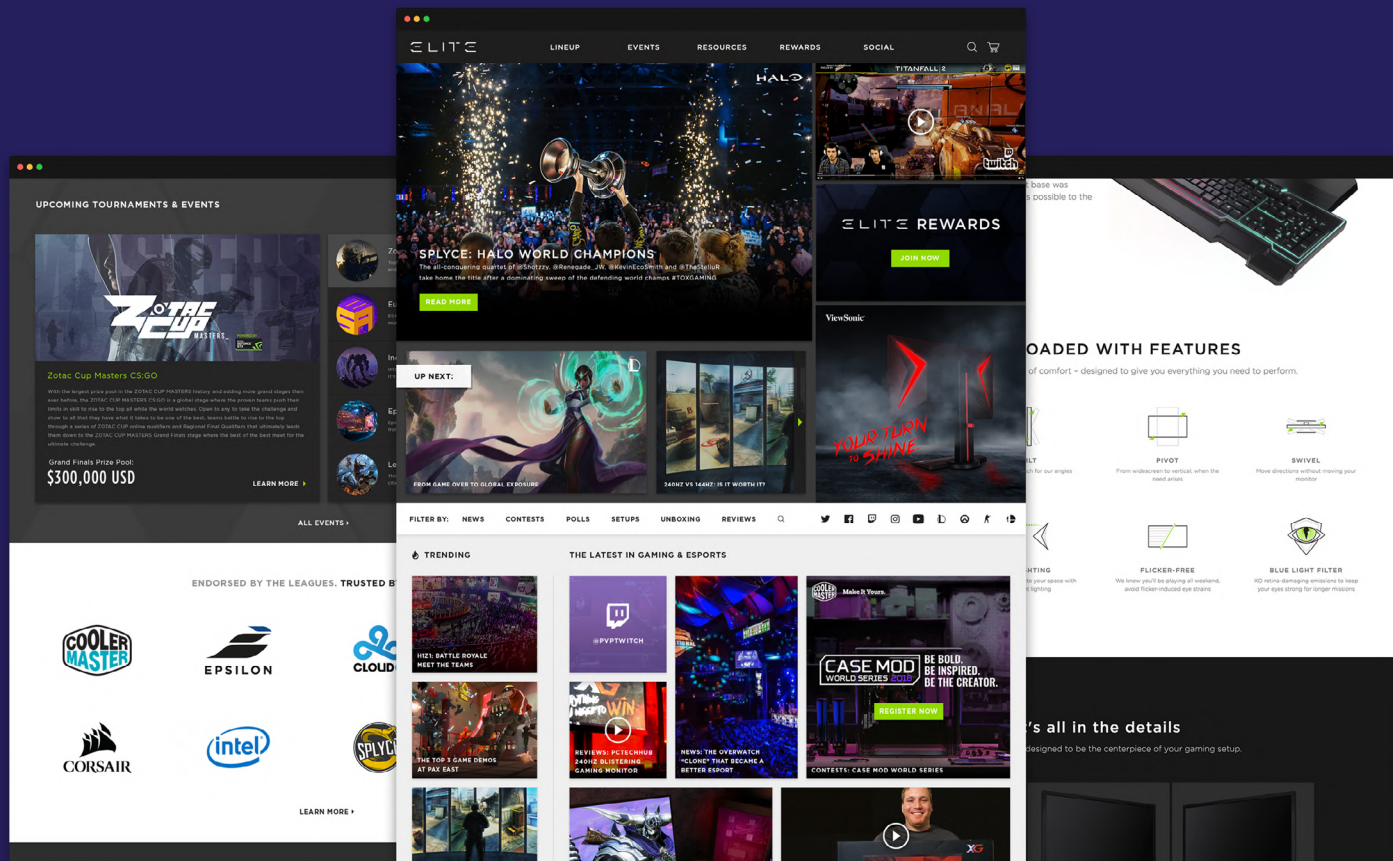CASE STUDY:

Elite Gaming Content Platform

An esports sub-brand of ViewSonic with a line-up dedicated to comfort, reliability and giving gamers a competitive edge

PROJECT

Gaming Content Platform for ViewSonic's sub-brand Elite

ROLE

Lead User Researcher
& UX+UI Designer

SKILLS

User interviews, wireframing, prototyping, sketching, competitive analysis, front-end web development

TOOLS

DEVELOPMENT

HTML CSS JS PHP

SUMMARY

ViewSonic is a market leader in computing, communication and consumer electronic solutions. As they broadened their focus from strictly B2B to B2C-inclusive, they saw an opportunity to remarket their gaming division of monitors. ViewSonic had previously established a gaming line-up of Extreme Gaming (XG) monitors but their website faced challenges with user-friendliness and maintaining user retention. The rebranding of ViewSonic's Elite Gaming, along with a new line of gamer-centered products and the launching of a new Gaming Content Hub set out to build brand trust within the ESports vertical and establish a growing community of Elite gamers.

GOALS:

1. Brand confidence among all levels of gamers

2. Improve usability + establish Gamer-centered design

3. Increase user retention

Research

Competitive Analysis
User Interviews
Surveys
Heatmaps
Page Analytics

"Research is creating new knowledge."

- Neil Armstrong

Competitive Analysis

We used competitive analysis to identify commonalities for establishing a *Community* feel and building up brand image among our direct competitors:

Dell Alienware	ASUS Republic of Gamers (ROG)
Acer Predator	BenQ Zowie

As well as our indirect competitors and other esports industry leaders:

HTC Esports	Razer Community	Corsair Community & Gaming
LogitechG	Fnatic	and others...

84% Displayed upcoming events, sponsorships and/or affiliations with influencers & esports teams
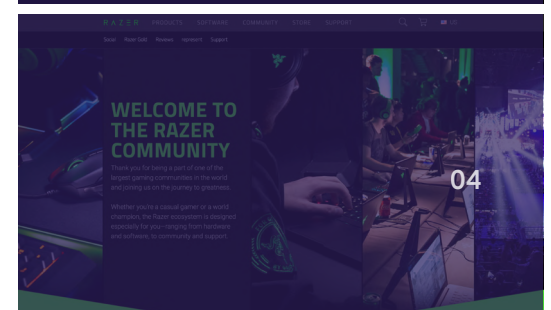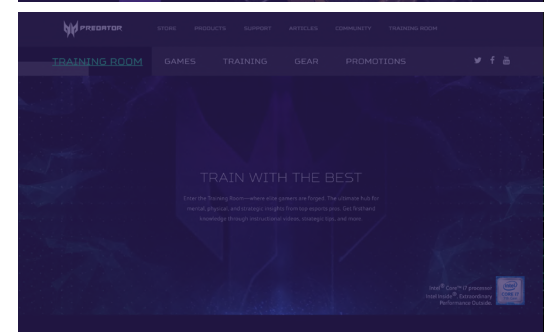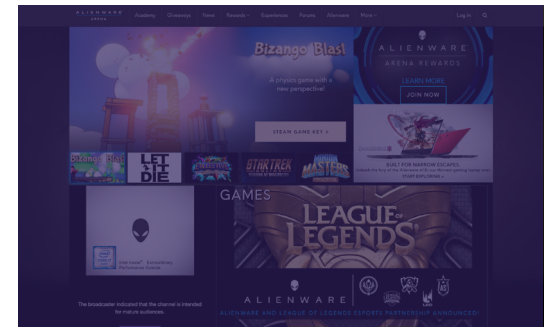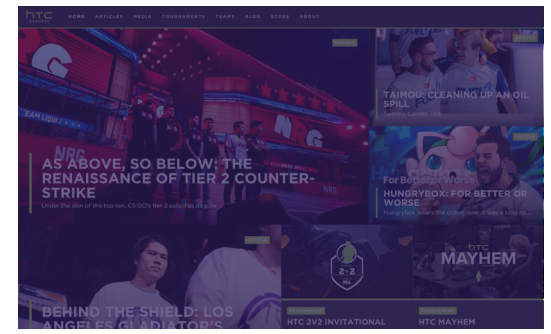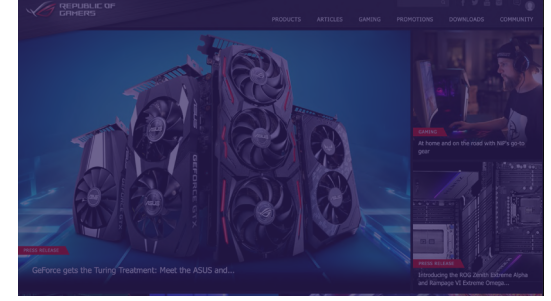
72.6% Provided some form of news, articles, reviews and/or other educational content

57% Offered a discussion forum covering a range of topics from products, mods, games, FAQ etc

43% Established a rewards system, contest opportunities and/or giveaways for their users

04

User Interviews & Surveys

After a round of evaluation, our team concluded the old ViewSonic XG gaming site suffered from many heuristic violations and would benefit from a complete redesign. To validate our assumptions, we conducted our first round of user interviews, surveys and guerrilla usability testing to confirm the pain points of the old site.

For usability testing, we asked gamers (of various experience levels) to complete a variety of tasks including:

• **Find a gaming monitor that would be compatible with your current setup**

• **Find an article about SpeedRunning**

• **Find an upcoming event ViewSonic will be attending**

• **Sign up for the XG newsletter**

Overwhelmingly, a majority of users were unsuccessful in completing these tasks. User surveys and interviews revealed the information architecture offered a frustrating experience, available options were confusing + unintuitive, inconsistencies existed across all pages, page load times were excessive and useful eduational content (though existed) was difficult to find.

91% Complained of long page load times and lack of mobile-friendly experiences

64% Could not complete requested tasks because they could not find where they needed to go

83% Would most likely not return based on lack of content and a frustrating experience

68% Were surprised to learn about ViewSonic's presence in esports & its backing by teams + influencers

Analysis & Iterations

Sketches
Wireframes
Prototypes
User Interviews
Card Sorting
Development

**"Failure is simply the opportunity to begin
again, this time more intelligently."**

- Henry Ford

Sketches

We were now armed with the assumptions that our new Elite gaming site should consist of the following:

• **Better user experience and Gamer-centric design**

• **Readily accessible content pieces:**

  [news, educational articles, reviews, unboxing videos, mod options, social media etc]

• **Upcoming events ViewSonic was attending**

• **Partners, sponsored teams, affiliated influencers**

• **Discussion forums**

• **Contests, giveaways and a loyalty rewards programs**

• **Better defined navigation and a clear user flow**

In an effort to maintain our agile working environment with our engineering team, a cross-disciplinary decision was made to focus on a minimum viable product and put complex features (such as discussion forums and loyalty rewards programs) on the backburner for the next round of updates. With a defined gameplan, we began sketching a variety of layouts.
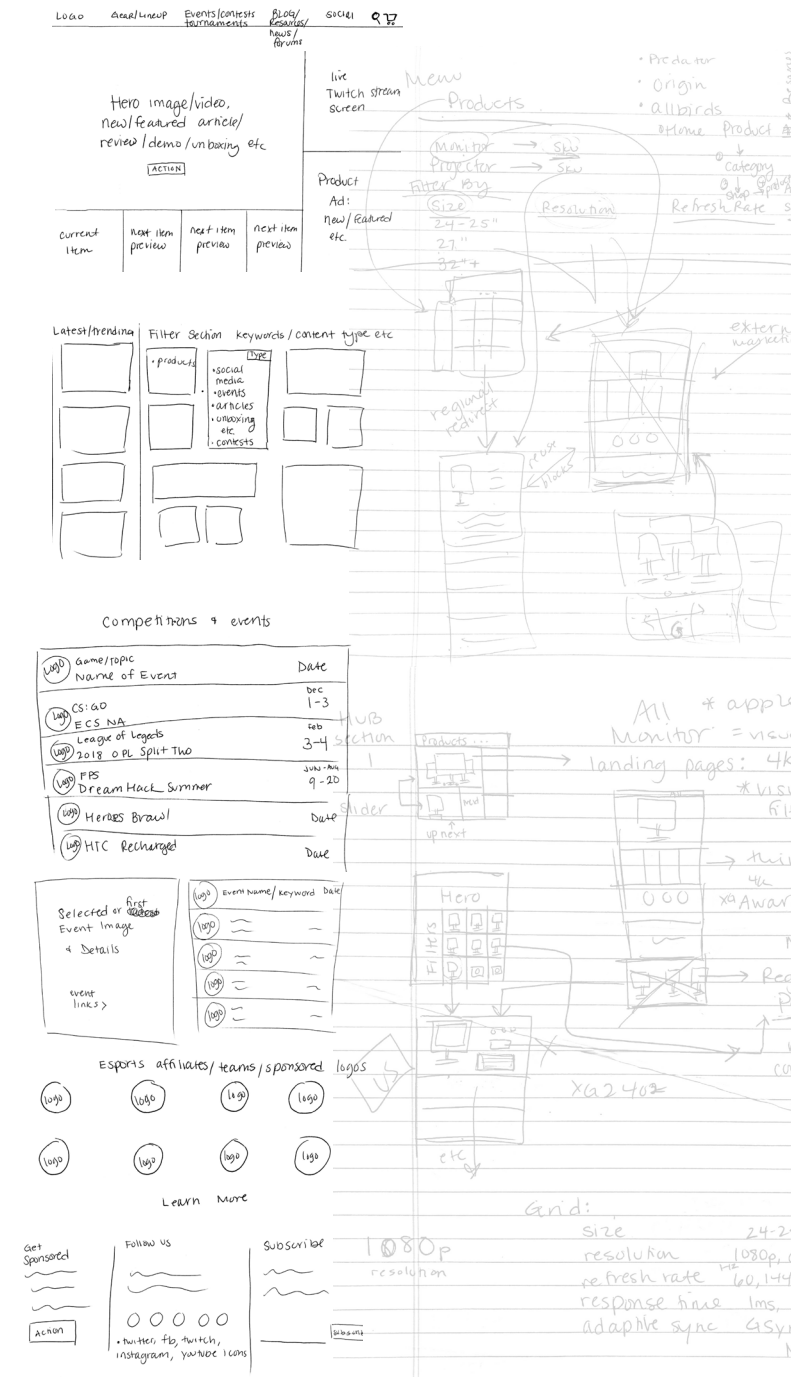
Card Sorting

In order to create an intuitive navigation to meet a gamer's needs, what better way than to ask gamers directly? We conducted card sorting experimentation to better organize our content and products.

Experienced gamers agreed that the top features they looked for when deciding on a gaming monitor were the following:

Size, Refresh Rate, Resolution and **Adaptive Sync Technologies**

Preferred game types would dictate which features took priority. For example: A competitive FPS gamer would look for **Refresh Rate** over **Resolution** & **Size**. Whereas an MMORPG gamer, in search of an immersive experience, would prioritize the opposite. **Adaptive Sync Technologies** were imperitive to match their current gaming setup.

For content types and organization, all levels of gamers suggested that the sample of content presented should be placed in the following categories:

News, Articles, Contests/Polls, Social, Setups/Mods, Unboxing, Reviews and **Technologies**
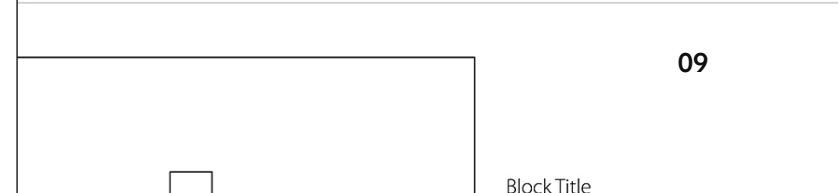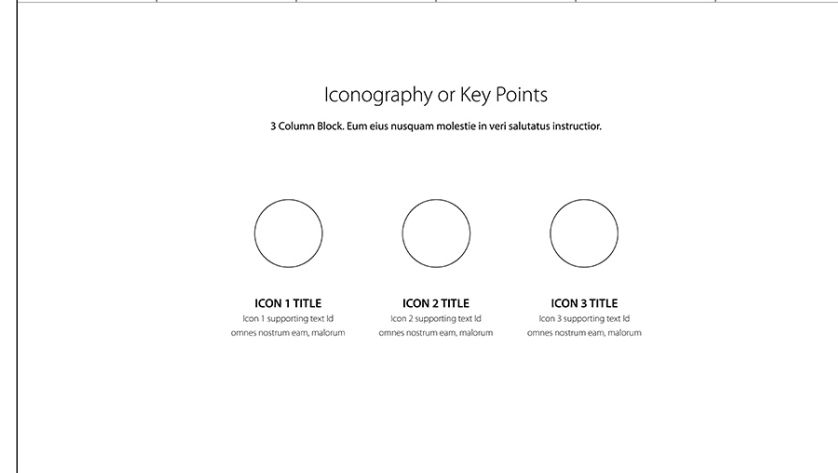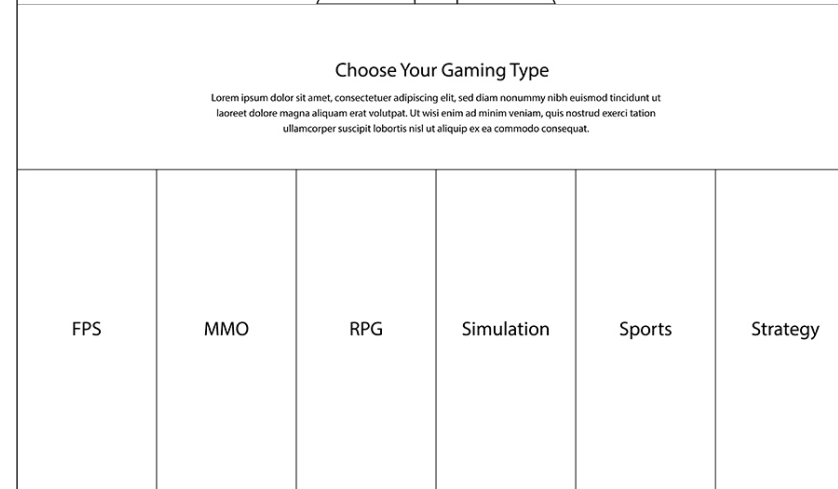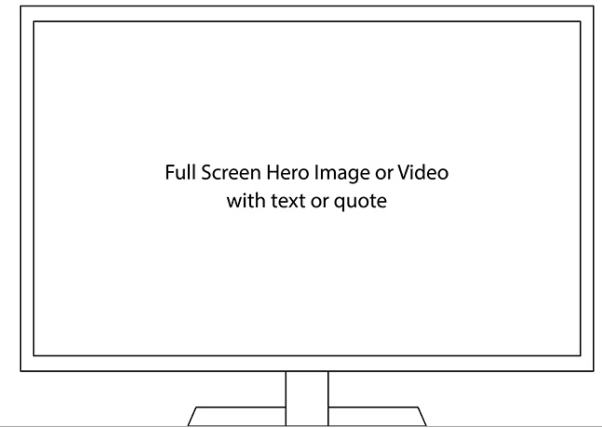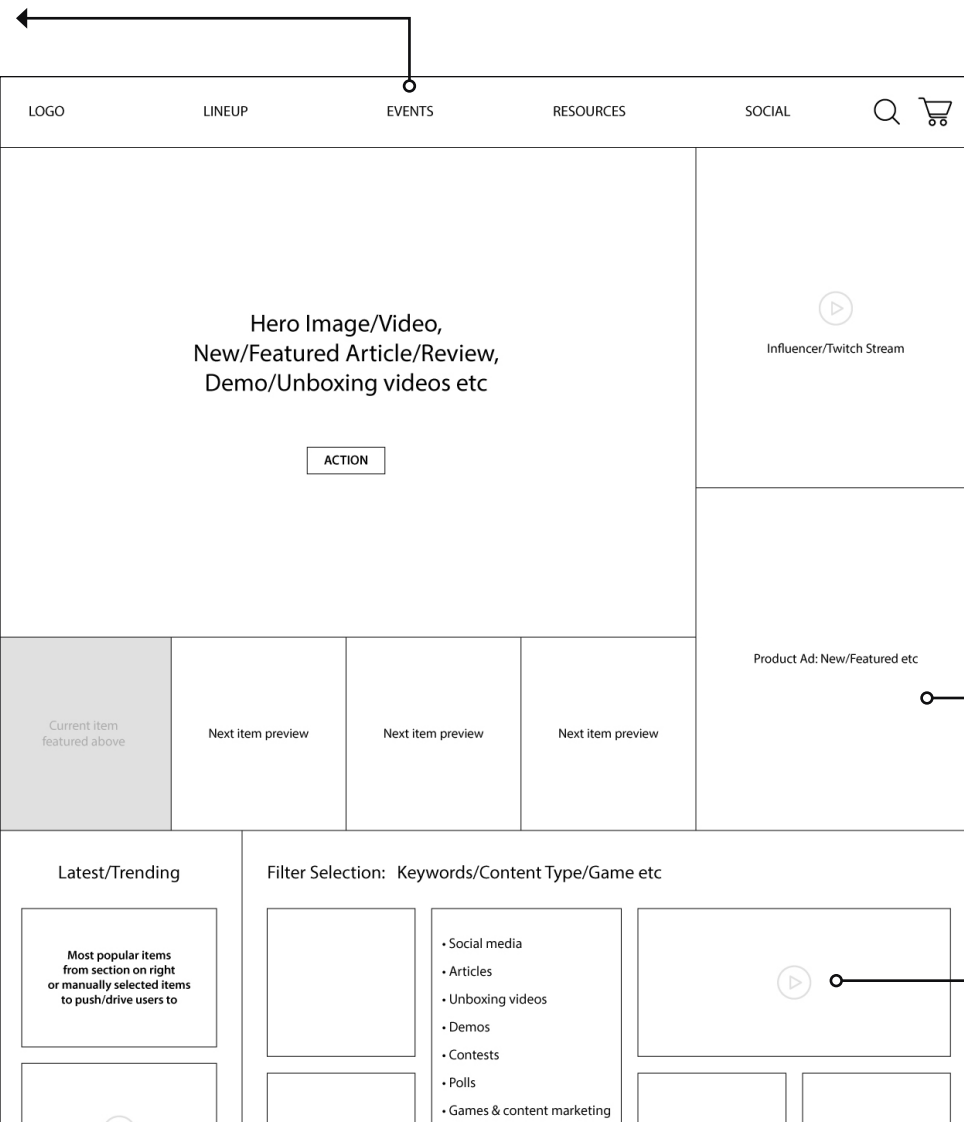
In addition, some gamers took to organizing content pieces by related games. We really felt this idea was in-line with the Gamer-centric MO, so this stuck as well.
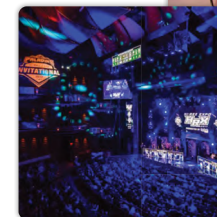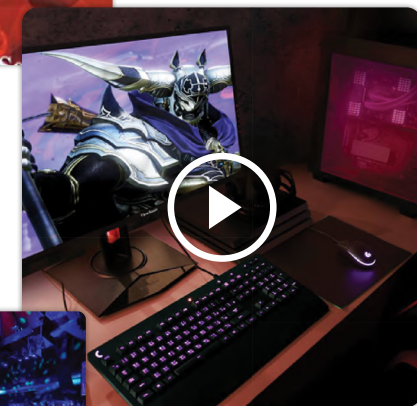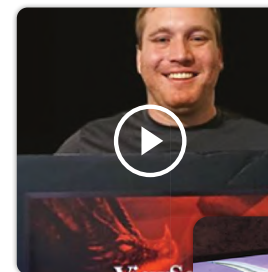
Wireframes

After settling on designs we felt would be the most impactful, we began to convert our sketches into wireframes and outline the user flows.

LOGO   LINEUP   EVENTS   RESOURCES   SOCIAL

Hero Image/Video,
New/Featured Article/Review,
Demo/Unboxing videos etc

ACTION

Influencer/Twitch Stream

Product Ad: New/Featured etc

Current item
featured above

Next item preview

Next item preview

Next item preview

Latest/Trending

Filter Selection: Keywords/Content Type/Game etc

Most popular items
from section on right
or manually selected items
to push/drive users to

• Social media
• Articles
• Unboxing videos
• Demos
• Contests
• Polls
• Games & content marketing

Full Screen Hero Image or Video
with text or quote

Choose Your Gaming Type

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FPS	MMO	RPG	Simulation	Sports	Strategy

Iconography or Key Points

3 Column Block. Eum eius nusquam molestie in veri salutatus instructior.

ICON 1 TITLE
Icon 1 supporting text ld
omnes nostrum eam, malorum

ICON 2 TITLE
Icon 2 supporting text ld
omnes nostrum eam, malorum

ICON 3 TITLE
Icon 3 supporting text ld
omnes nostrum eam, malorum

Block Title

Prototypes & User Feedback

With our navigation and content organization now defined, we took our wireframes to the next level with low-fidelity interactive prototypes and put them to the test with a pool of gamers. We saw a massive improvement in users' success rates to complete the same requested tasks of our previous usability tests.

With positive metrics from gamers of all levels, we began to design high-fidelity interactive prototypes for additional user testing and design feedback. As we worked out the details for UI decisions, our engineering team implemented feedback from our user interview sessions.
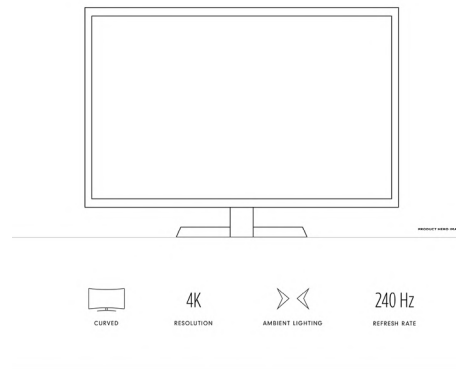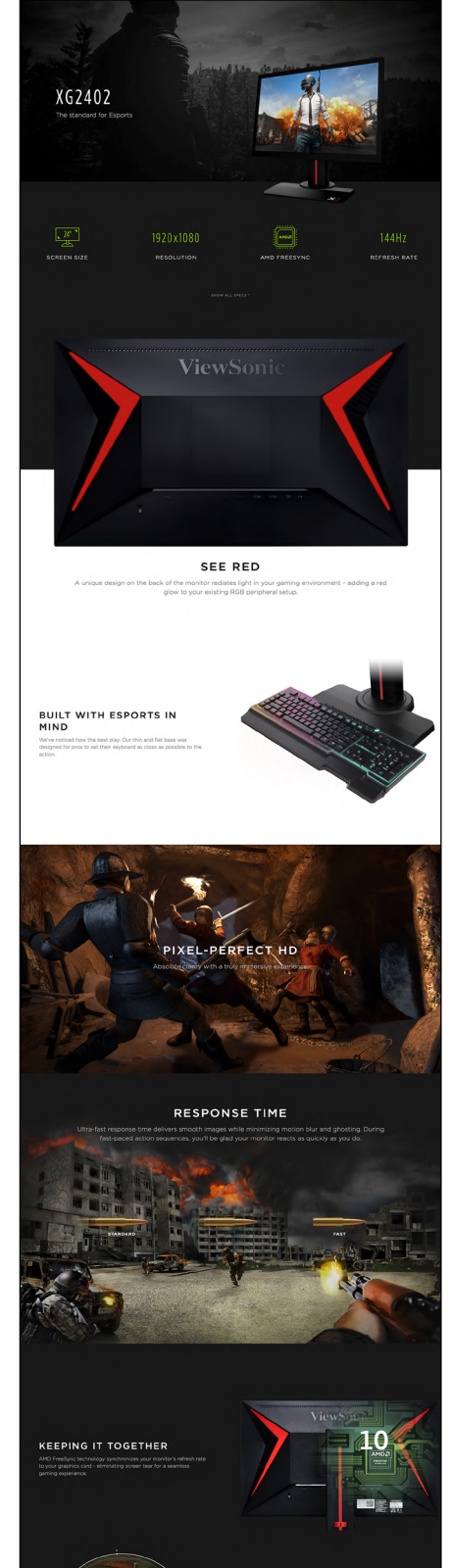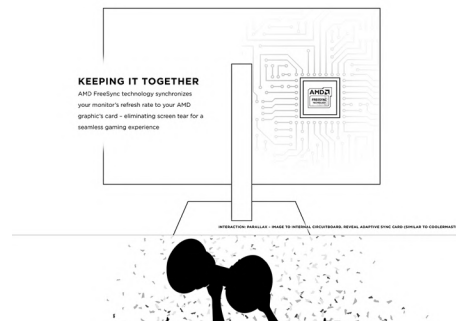
Development Contributions

With high-fidelity prototypes receiving positive feedback, I helped unload some of the front-end development off of our engineering team.

I helped establish a small design system to speed up page development efficiencies as well as develop reusable rich content blocks fed with dynamic data from Magento. I created microinteractions, parallax & gyroscopic functionality, CSS animations, cleaned up the masonry card sorting and ensured the product was consistent with the high-fidelity prototypes.

Some of my favorite aspects of development are: solving problems, future-proofing and bringing design ideas to life. The snippet of code on this page was for an algorithm I created that determined a 3- or 4-column layout based on the number of specific features a product had (product feature counts are not shared across the lineup) and staggering parallax interactions. Because of ViewSonic's vast inventory, individual product pages are not practical. Extra measures have to be taken to future-proof the look of a content block so it can handle any quantity of data.

Outcomes & Reflection

User Interviews
Surveys
Heatmaps
Page Analytics

"Things are only impossible until they're not."

- Jean-Luc Picard

Results

After the much anticipated launch of the Elite gaming content platform, we saw a higher percentage of organic traffic, more time spent on pages, an increase in user rentention measured over the first few months, as well as a decrease bounce rates. Satisfaction surveys revealed gamers felt confidence in ViewSonic's content because they not only attended/sponsored events they were interested in, but also collaborated with other brands they trusted. Usability testing results for the same tasks revealed a significant improvement in success rates.

Next Steps & Takeaways

As previously mentioned, for our next round of updates ViewSonic is looking to integrate the aforementioned Discussion Forums and Loyalty Rewards Program – both of which will require additional iterative design and user testing (to be continued!).

Due to global SKU limitations, checkout functionality is not an option at this time. Rerouting users to their local region's Amazon page is not a great user experience but is the only viable option until all regions are on the same ecommerce platform. If there were one thing in this project I would like to have changed, it would be this.