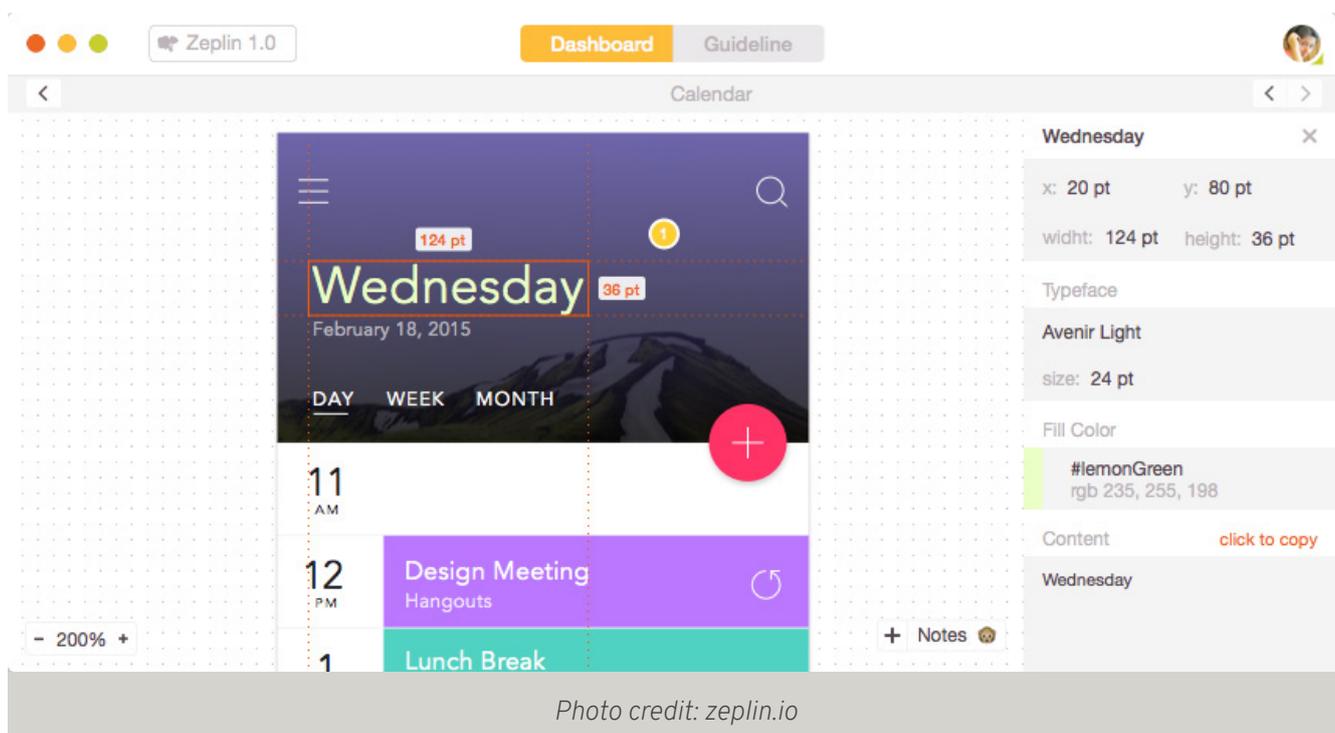# Documentation And Collaborating With Developers

7 DOCUMENTATION AND COLLABORATING WITH DEVELOPERS

Occasionally, when designs get developed, the end product may not look quite the same. This disconnect between product and design is not unusual as developers and designers focus on very different roles in the creation. Try some of these apps to help bridge the gap:

Zeplin

Photo credit: zeplin.io

Zeplin is a big help in the handover process. Designers and front-end developers can collaborate easily, check for alignment of different elements and download assets to begin building.

How to use it

Create a project folder and upload your mockups. You can arrange them by sections for easier referencing. Annotations will automatically be added to the designs (sizes, colours, margins and even CSS suggestion for certain elements). This will give the developer information much more clearly.

How not to use it

Developers may not understand if you give a random spacing value between 2 elements because the way developers code the website may be different (they use container blocks to do a section instead of coding each individual element). Zeplin does not support revision history, so your team need to tell the developers what changes were made.

Best way to get value from it

Plugin your Sketch App with Zeplin and import your artboards right away.

Useful links

Features:

- https://zeplin.io/features

Developer & Designer collaboration:

- https://webdesign.tutsplus.com/articles/sketch-and-zeplin-helping-designers-and-developers-collaborate--cms-26421

Why love Zeplin:

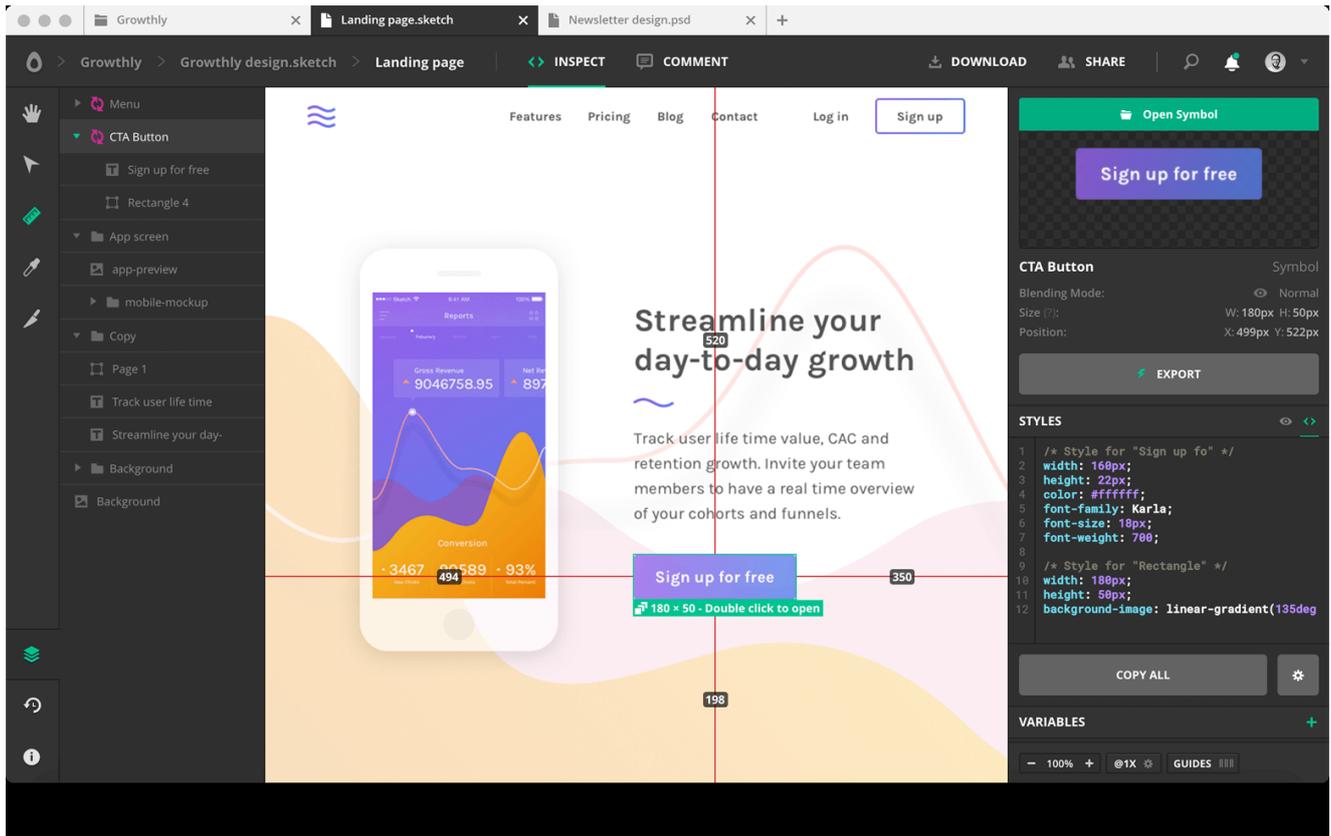- http://blog.jimbaca.com/why-i-love-zeplin/

Avocode

Photo credit: avocode.com

A program with the same function as Zeplin, Avocode was built for the process of going from Sketch to code. This bridges more efficiently the gap between the design and coding stages of web development.

How to use it

Create designs using either XD or PSD or Sketch or Figma and then upload it to Avocode to generate the designs into art code (such as CSS, Less, Sass, SCSS, Stylus, React Native, CSS in JS, Swift, and Android). Your developers will also be able to export text layers as plain text, images or html codes.

Best way to get value from it

This will be an advantage for designers who don't have basic coding knowledge or any preferences.

Once the designs are uploaded into Avocode, you can take an inside look on how the codes are created. This way, you can understand how CSS and other coding languages work. It is, however, good for designers to know the basics as it'll help in future project collaborations with developers

- Avocode's 14 day free trial lets you familiarise yourself with it before subscribing.
- Keep your team updated and in sync by connecting with Slack or Dropbox.
- Use its revision history tool to communicate efficiently with developers on any changes.

Useful links

Features:

- https://avocode.com/features

How to use Avocode to inspect Photoshop and Sketch files:

- https://webdesign.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-use-avocode-to-inspect-your-photoshop-and-sketch-files--cms-23440
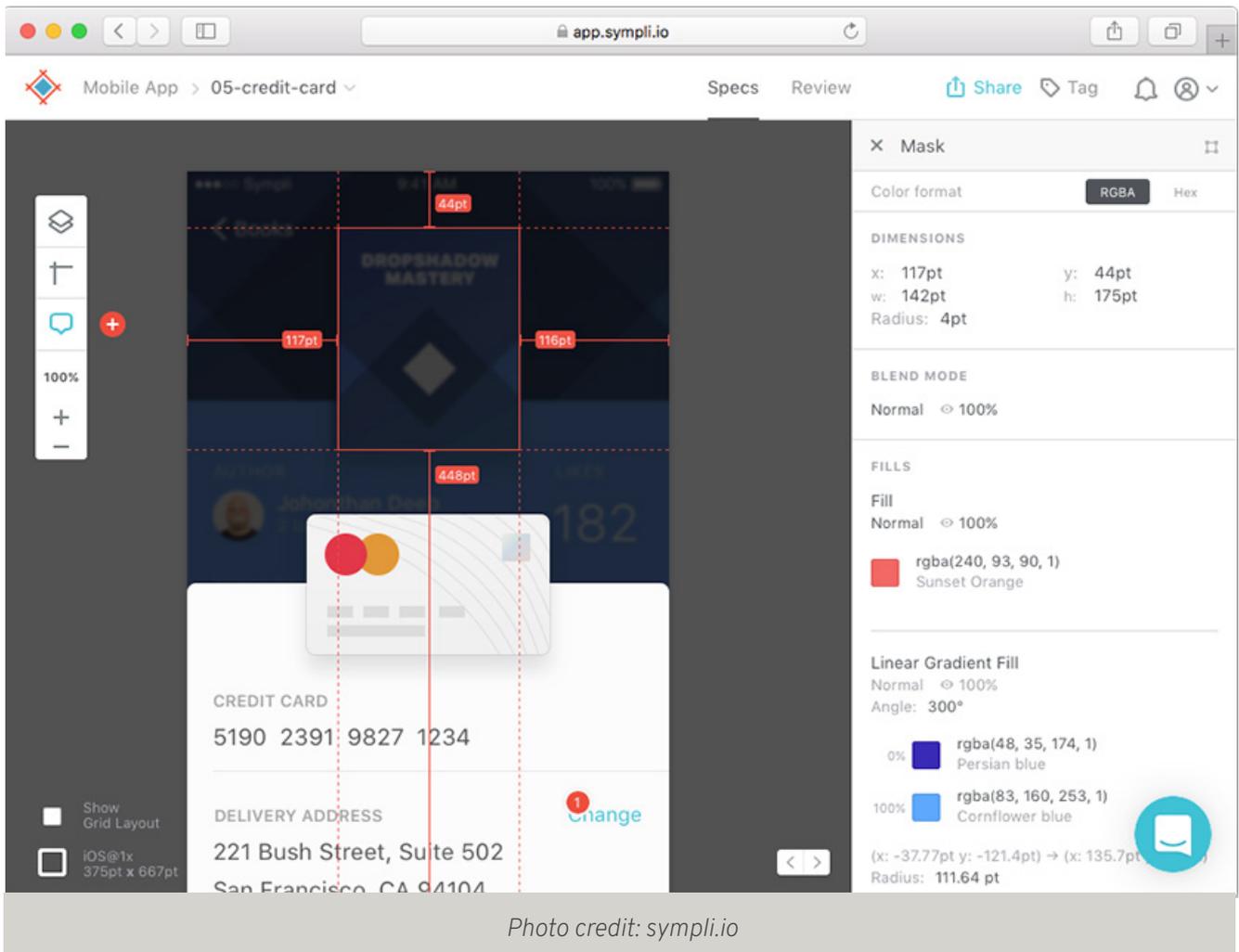
Creo

Photo credit: sympli.io

Sympli is a collaboration tool between designers and developers. Install the plugins for Sketch or Photoshop, and work together to bring team collaboration to a new level.

How to use it
Upload your design mockups and your developers will be able to view the design and specifications. Assets can also be directly downloaded from there. Your team and the developers can also communicate in Sympli through comments and annotations on the design.

Best way to get value from it
Sympli not only works well with Designers and Developers; other roles such as Project Manager (PM) and QA Professional can also collaborate conveniently. The PM has tools to track down the progress and version changes while the QA Professional can communicate with developers easily using its commenting and annotation tools.
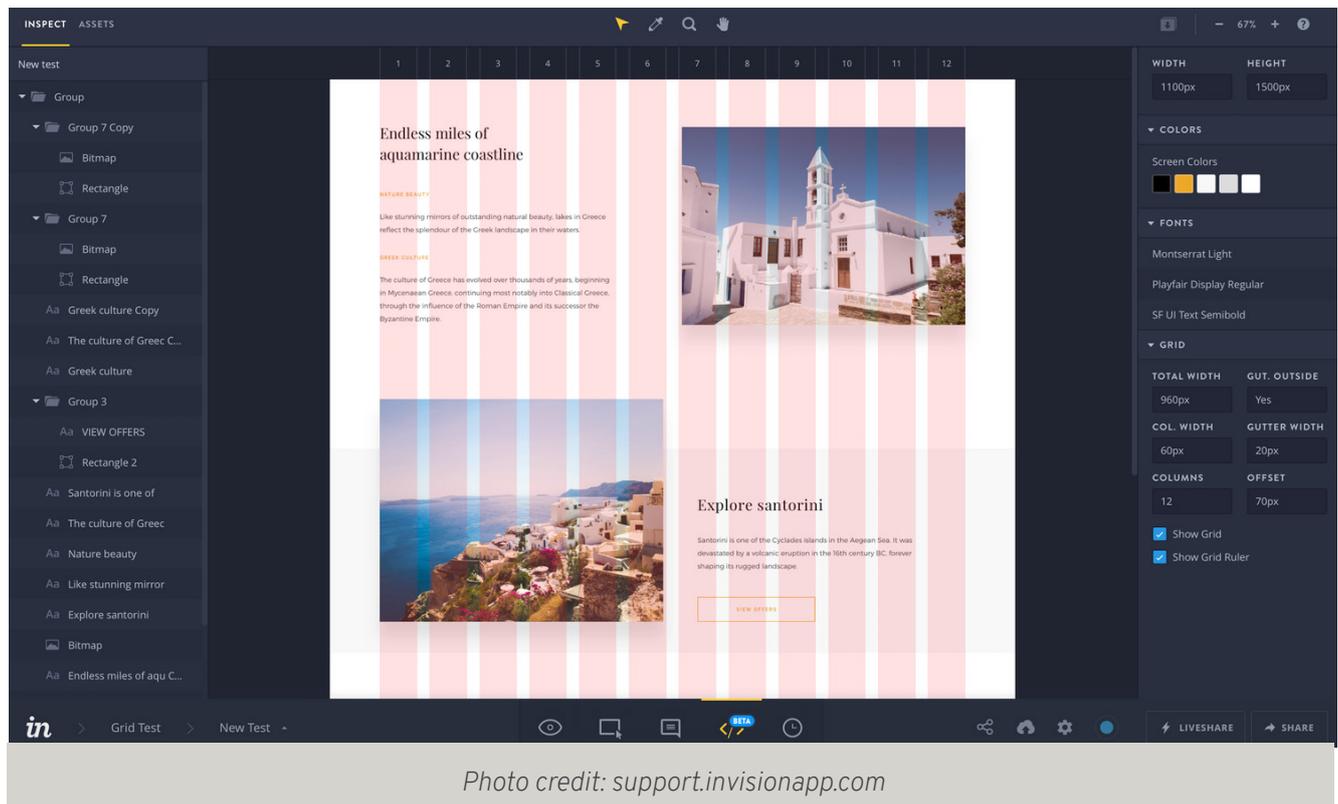
You can effortlessly track down any changes by using the Visual Design Comparison tool. Two versions can be placed side by side for easy comparison. From there, developers can see the revisions on a property level. For example, if a color changes slightly or a border becomes 1px thicker, they can easily spot them and make the changes.

Useful links
Features:
• https://sympli.io/
• http://help.sympli.io
• https://sympli.io/blog/

Invision Inspect

Photo credit: support.invisionapp.com

Apart from the regular uploading of screens and creating the interaction between screens, Invision also offers the Inspect tool where design-to-development process is made better. Access measurements, colors, assets and communicate freely with your developers.

How to use it

In Inspect mode, you may see information such as the exact artboard dimensions, colours and fonts used in the document file, as well as any other colours saved in the document file (Sketch app). Clicking on the element itself will give the developers information about the element properties and codes for the developer to use (according to the style used - CSS, LESS, SASS, SCSS, Stylus etc).

How not to use it

Do not flatten the layers before uploading it into Invision. This will result into developers only seeing the properties of the flattened image instead of individual layers.

Best way to get value from it

Similarly to other collaboration tools, use the comment function to convey information easily. Many tools only allow you to download assets per page, but for Invision Inspect, you can toggle to the full list view and download all assets within the project. This is definitely a good function for developers to retrieve all the assets at one go, especially if there are many screens on the project.

Useful links

Features:

- https://support.invisionapp.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000650823

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