UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF CIS-GENDERED SHOPPING EXPERIENCE ON NON-BINARY AND TRANS INDIVIDUALS

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INTRODUCTION

Our project's goal was to understand the shopping experiences of trans and non-binary individuals when using cis-gendered shopping platforms. Our target audience were individuals who identify as trans or non-binary and are above 18 years of age. In total, we conducted 5 contextual inquiries as a team and recruited participants from the Rochester Institute of Technology.

We analysed our findings by creating 5 flow models, 5 sequence models, 5 artifact models, 3 physical models, and 1 cultural model. During our interviews, we found that there were several problems our users faced when shopping online. In the following slides, we list these problems and potential vision/solutions for our project.

INTERPRETATION NOTES

U05: Non-binary student at RIT

U05: I U03: I usually shop for clothes from thrift stores., online & offline. No designated male-female sections make me comfortable.

U05: Thrift store clothes are cheaper, affordable, and have a large variety of items.

U05: There are some preferred websites that help me find my style but do not fit me well

U05: I do not shop from branded stores because their sizing charts are not accurate, and the clothing apparel does not fit me properly.

U05: Some brands that are specially catered towards non-binary people, have their logo printed wide on their apparel. Although I appreciate that there are specific clothes availa for non-binary people, what I'm concerned about is if a non-binary person who's not out of the closet yet but wants to wear these clothes, cannot really wear them publicly in the fear of be

U05: If I'm shopping online, I to rely on customer reviews.

U05: In my opinion, basics lik there's something in an afford

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U04: Non-binary art student who has a plus-sized body type

U04: I usually shop online if I'm looking for something specific. Apart from that, I like to shop offline for 'unexpected' outfits.

U04: I think non-binary clothing is not super inclusive to people who have plus-sized bodies. If you think of cis-gendered shopping sites, I don't see inclusive images ever.

U04: I have personal values when it comes to shopping. I prefer to buy clothes only if they are made from recycled materials. I also like wearing solid-colored clothes that have modern geometric pattern designs on them.

U04: I have been shopping from non-binary brands for a while now so I usually go back to them if I have to buy a new product as I know and trust their quality.

U03: Non-binary student at RIT

U03: I usually shop for clothes in thrift stores. Because it is easy to find clothes that fit me well. And it does not have any designated sections for males and females. So I feel more comfortable shopping there.

U03: There are a few online websites where I could find the clothes that fit me. One of them is Uniqlo.

U03: When I saw that a website had male and female sections, I didn't know which one I a little weird.

shop in the "Men" section. But it was tricky when I had fit me perfectly and most of the time, I would have to

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U02: Trans-male student at RIT

U02: Does not prefer to shop online.

U02: Only shops online when they need a specific thing and are certain about it.

U02: Chooses clothes online based on their sizing experiences offline, however with a high level of uncertainty.

U02: Shops at goodwill/thrift stores as there are no separate male and female sections and cheap prices.

U02: Is not very well aware of gender-neutral brands.

U02: Had to lose weight in order to fit into male clothing.

U02: Faced issues initially with the sizing of men's pants. Men's pants are usually sized for flatter bottoms.

U02: Would actually have to rip the pockets off men's pants and sew them on women's pants.

U01: Non-binary biomedical student at RIT

U01: I like shopping at thrift stores. Because I find clothes of the styles I like & I like th clothes are not in very obvious sections.

U01: Growing up, before I was comfortable with my identity it was a difficult experie shopping.

U01: I shop at both men's and women's sections & identify as non-binary.

U01: Men's size is too big. I go for tom-boyish clothes in the women's section instead

U01: 50/50 if they would ever use a find my size quiz.

U01: I prefer in-person shopping - because they get to try clothes out and see how th

U01: Only cis-gendered sections are problematic.

U01: Clothes do not have a gender.

U01: H&M is a 5/10 rating

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s lengthy. I think over a period of time, I started to like vay.

n at a few stores other than thrift stores, I've noticed ore 'pink' colored clothes and with frill designs. I did

in every store, either online or physical stores, the ers. I don't want to dress up every day like a pride flag. I y casual wear.

KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERPRETATION

01.
Some trans and non-binary individuals shop from both men's and women's sections. However, some of them face gender dysphoria when shopping from the gender section they used to identify with.

02.
One participant who transitioned into the male gender had to lose weight to fit into male clothing. It was a common theme that individuals needed more sizing options due to varied body types.

03.
After transitioning, individuals feel confused about having to select a gender when shopping in cis-gendered stores. Sometimes, they do not know what to select and it makes them feel weird.

04.
Pride clothing in retail stores often has bright and flashy colours. Trans/non-binary individuals struggle with finding clothing that fits their style and taste after their transition.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM
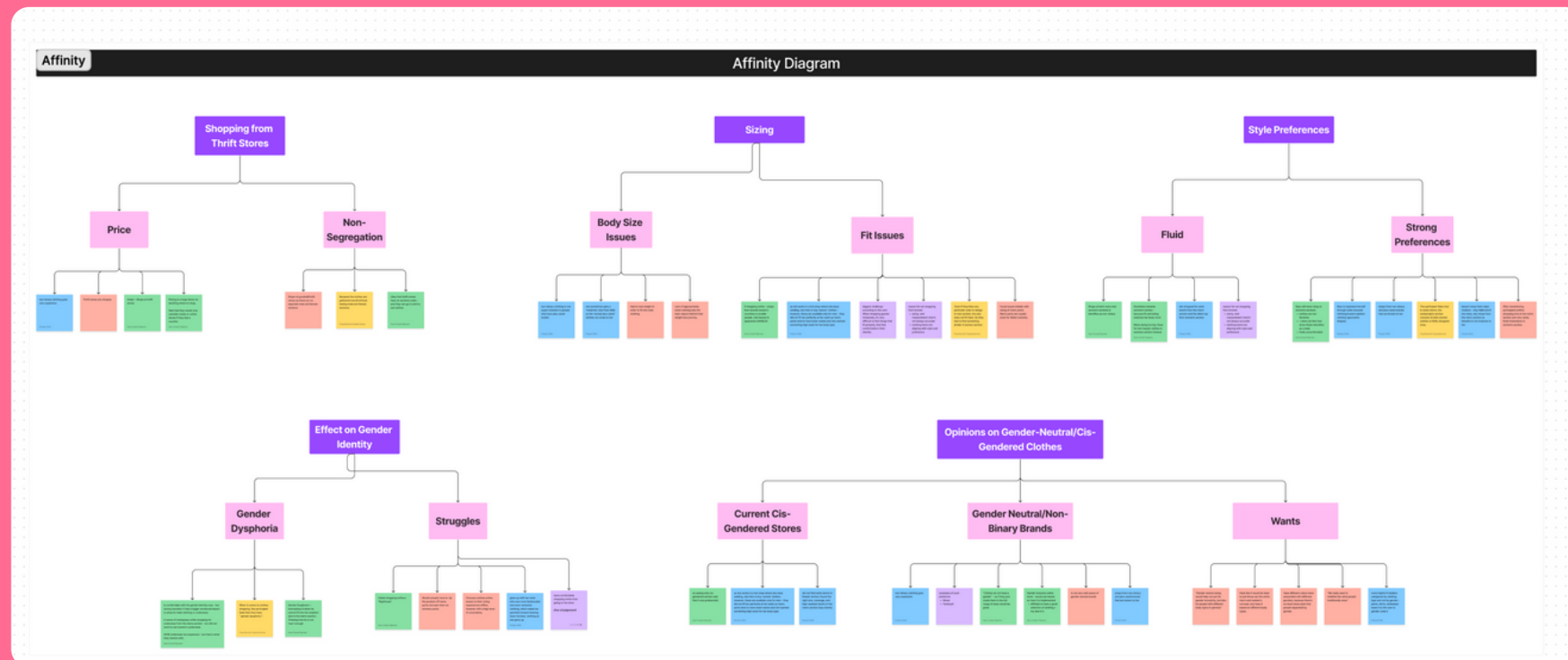
Our affinity diagram helped to understand the problems our participants faced and form patterns among them. We observed that:

1. Sizing is a major issue:
Individuals lost weight or shopped from the maternity section to find the right size. The fit of clothing is also often not very comfortable.

2. Struggle to find clothes that match their style:
After transition, individuals would not be able to match their clothing with their identity. For ex: male to female transition does not mean they want to wear 'feminine' clothes.

AFFINITY DIAGRAM (CONT.)
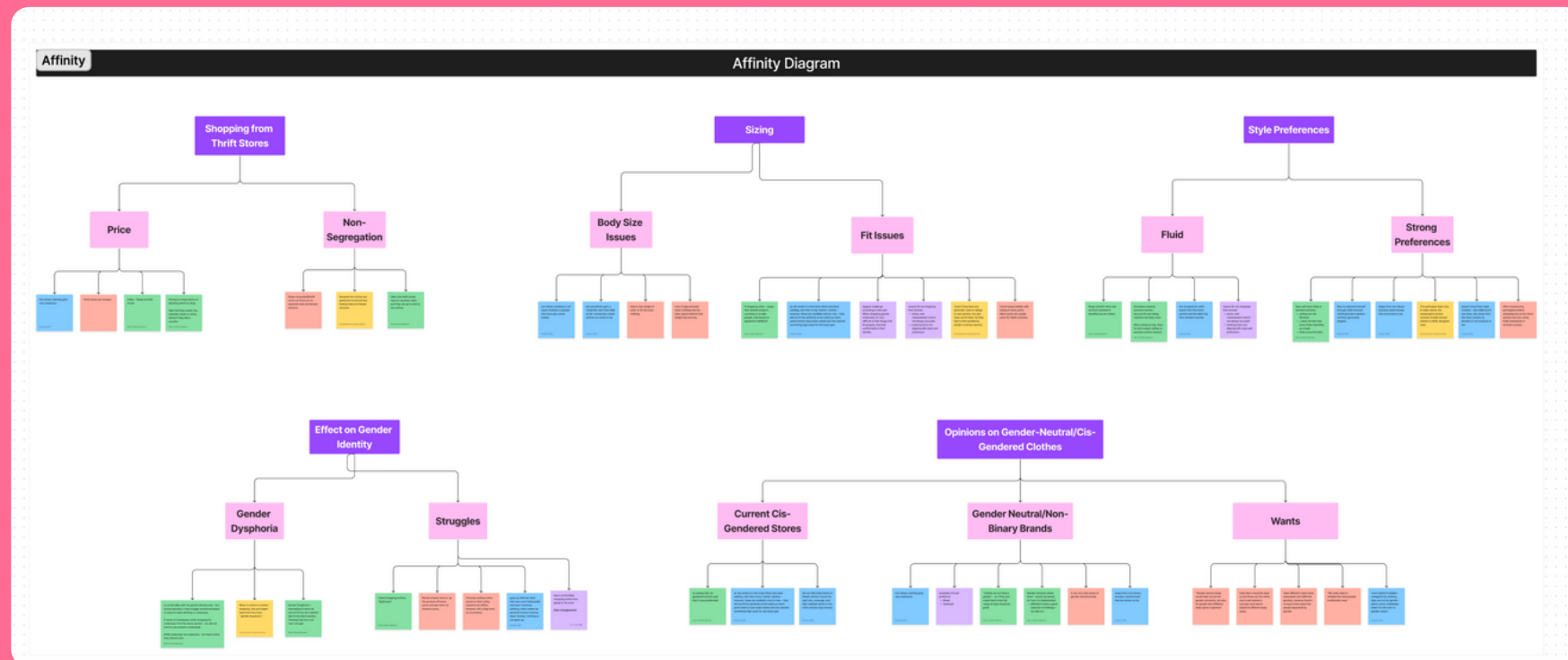
3. The effect of gender dysphoria:
During the transition or immediately after, participants struggled with shopping from the gender section they used to identify with. For ex: if a male who recently transitioned cannot find the right clothing, he would think he is not 'man' enough to fit in but also did not want to shop from the women's section.

4. Opinions for a more inclusive shopping experience:
Participants said it would be better to organise clothing by product type (tops, pants, etc.) and body sizes rather than gender to cater to everyone's needs.

CONSOLIDATED SEQUENCE DIAGRAM

On a very high level, all our participants followed a similar pattern of steps to order a product online. They would open a clothing brand's website, browse through their products, view a product individually and in detail, and finally add it to their cart to check out.

Since this was an online shopping experience based research, the roles involved were the trans/non-binary/gender-nonconforming users and the retailers from where they shop.

Activity	Intent	Steps
Opening a browser and searching for a clothing store website	To buy a new outfit	• Switch on the laptop or phone • Click on the web browser and land on the browser's homepage • Type the name of a specific clothing store or specific product (ex: men's formal wear) in the search bar
Browsing through the clothing store's website	To find the right product to buy	• Type the product name in the search bar (eg: dress) or click on the category of the product needed • Browse through the given collection of the products available • Click on the specific product that they liked to view more details
Viewing the shortlisted product in more detail	To review if this product matches their needs	• Open the sizing chart to look for their size • Figure out which size fits them the best • Select their size to see if it is in stock • If that size is in stock, select a color that appeals to them (if multiple colors are available) • Scrolls to the reviews section • Browses through multiple good and bad reviews to check the overall size, fit, and quality of the product • Sees images (sometimes) of other customers wearing the same product
Adding to cart	To purchase the product	• Clicks on the specific product to view more details

WE LEARNT THAT...

TRANS AND NON-BINARY INDIVDUALS STRUGGLE TO SHOP FROM CIS-GENDERED CLOTHING SYSTEMS. FINDING THE RIGHT SIZE FOR THEIR BODY IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM.

LOOKING FOR CLOTHING THAT MATCHES THEIR STYLE AFTER THEIR GENDER/IDENTITY TRANSITION IS DIFFICULT AS PRIDE CLOTHING IS EITHER TOO FLASHY OR TOO DULL. THERE IS NO IN BETWEEN.

INDIVIDUALS FACE GENDER DYSPHORIA WHEN SHOPPING FROM THE GENDER SECTION THEY USED TO IDENTIFY AS. SOME STRONGLY BELIEVE AGAINST SHOPPING FROM THOSE SECTIONS.

BRAINSTORMED IDEAS

Online retailers could redesign their store to adopt a size chart or guide based on an individual's body measurements. Retailers could also use inclusive imaging so all individuals, irrespective of their body size and gender identity, feel welcome to browse through the products.

Instead of manually browsing through various platforms, users can enter their body size details and style preferences into a universal gender-neutral clothing extension.

HERE IS OUR VISION 1

A browser extension that detects the e-commerce brand you're shopping from and helps you find your size for that brand.

The extension does this by taking in your body measurements and mapping them to the brand's size charts in the male and female sections and finally recommends the closest fit for your personal body needs irrespective of your gender.
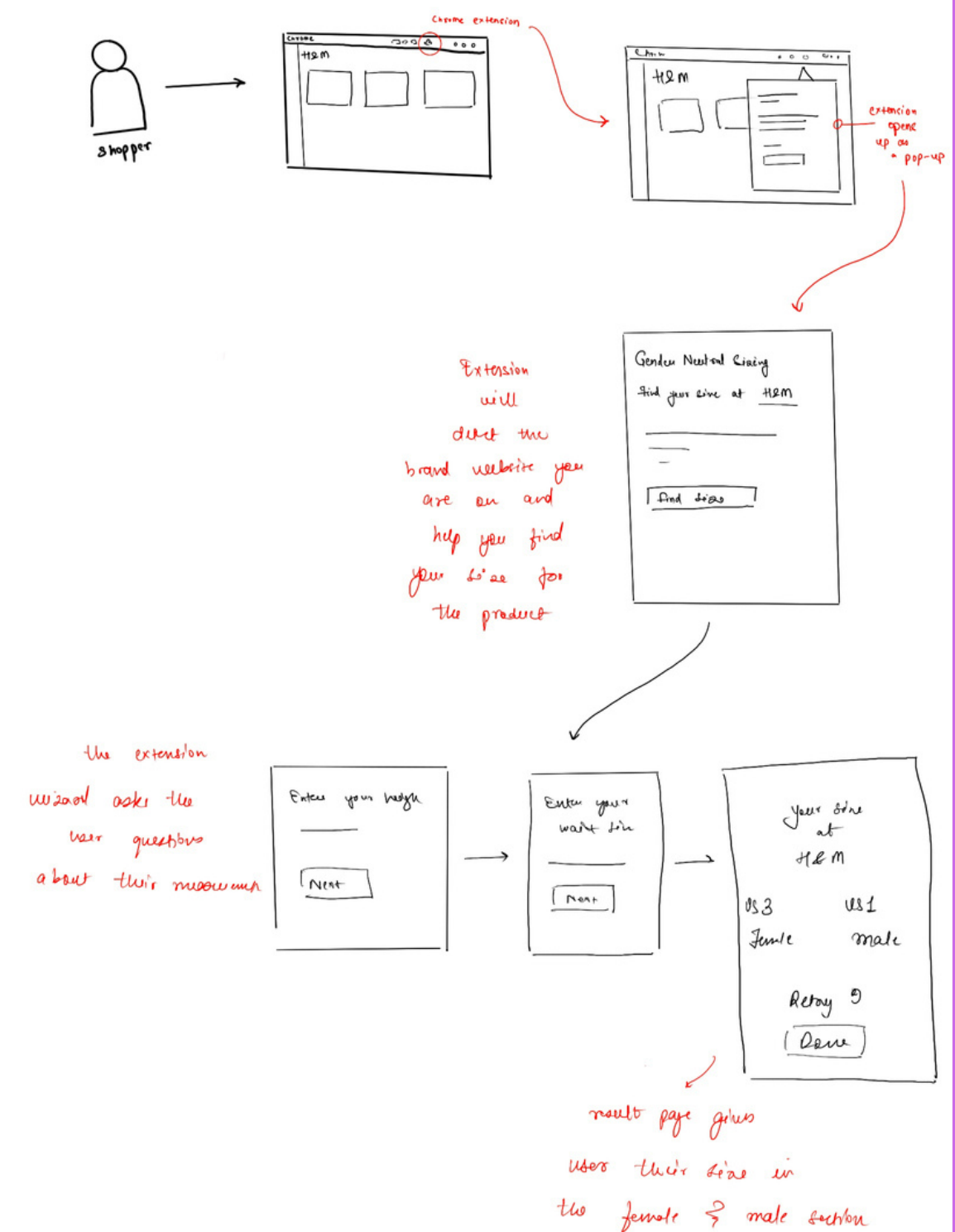
HERE IS OUR VISION 2

Secondly, we envision gender-neutral e-commerce stores. We imagine that this could be achieved by removing categories of gender labels (male/female) and providing categorization by apparel type such as shirts, pants, skirts, swimwear, etc.

In addition to this, providing sizes for all apparel in the entire range from the smallest in current female sizing to the largest in male sizing would allow users regardless of their gender or body type to shop from these stores. They can shop like they normally do without having to choose from cis-gendered shopping categories, therefore making the experience more inclusive.
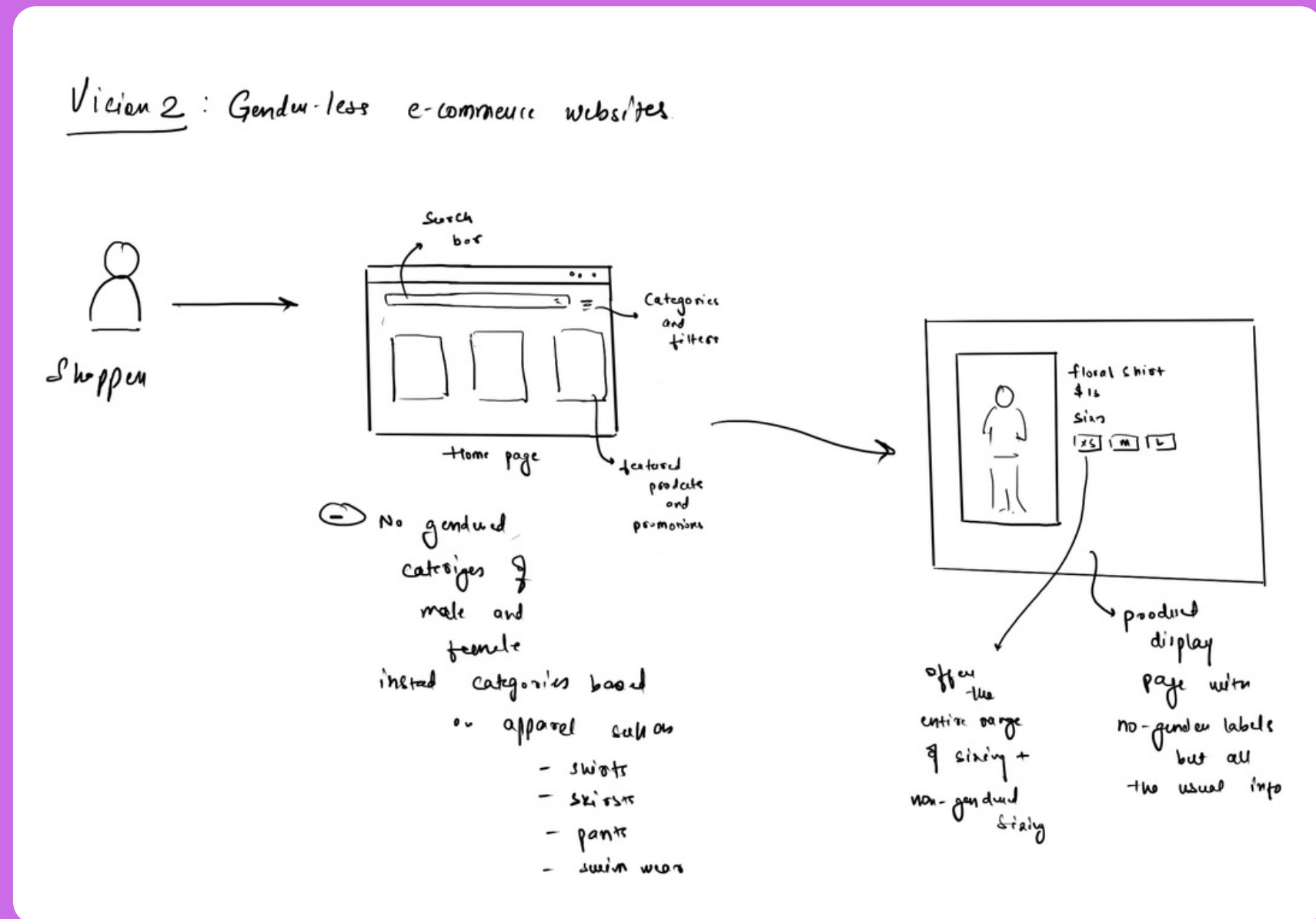
STORYBOARDS

1

Arthur is a non-binary individual who struggles to find clothes that make him feel comfortable in his identity. Disheartened by the traditional gender divisions in physical stores, Arthur seeks inclusivity but is met with disappointment

2
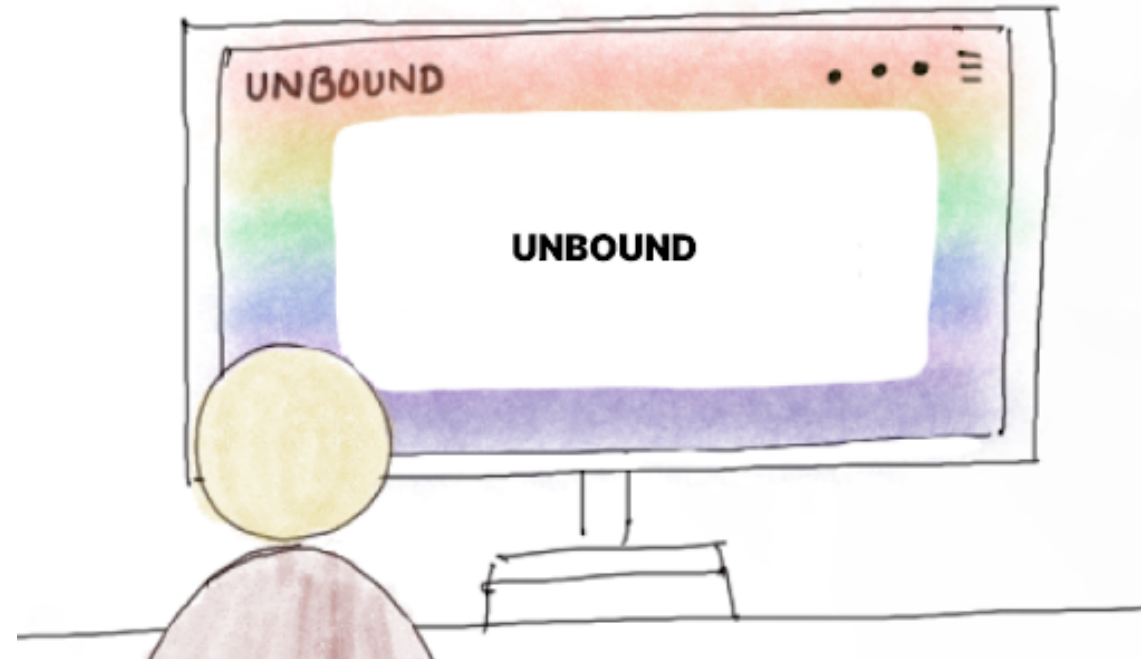
Turning to online shopping, Arthur encounters a dearth of options. Upon a recommendation, Arthur discovers UNBOUND- an embodiment of gender-neutral fashion- through their website.
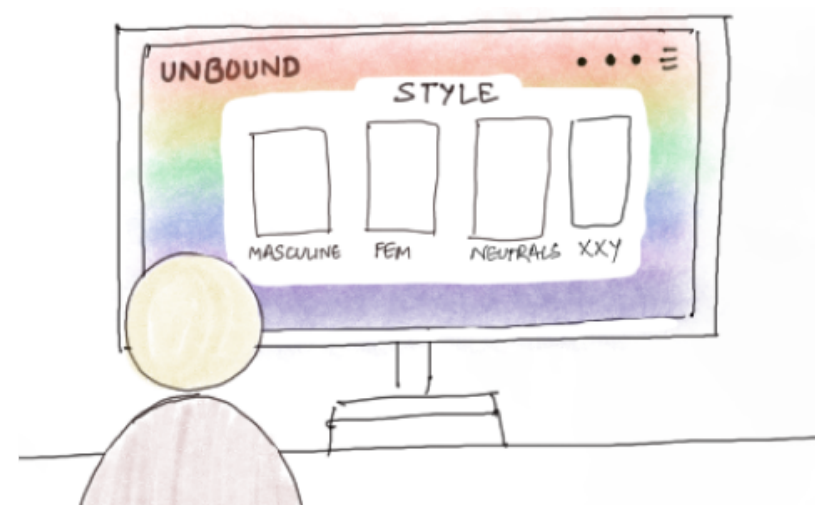
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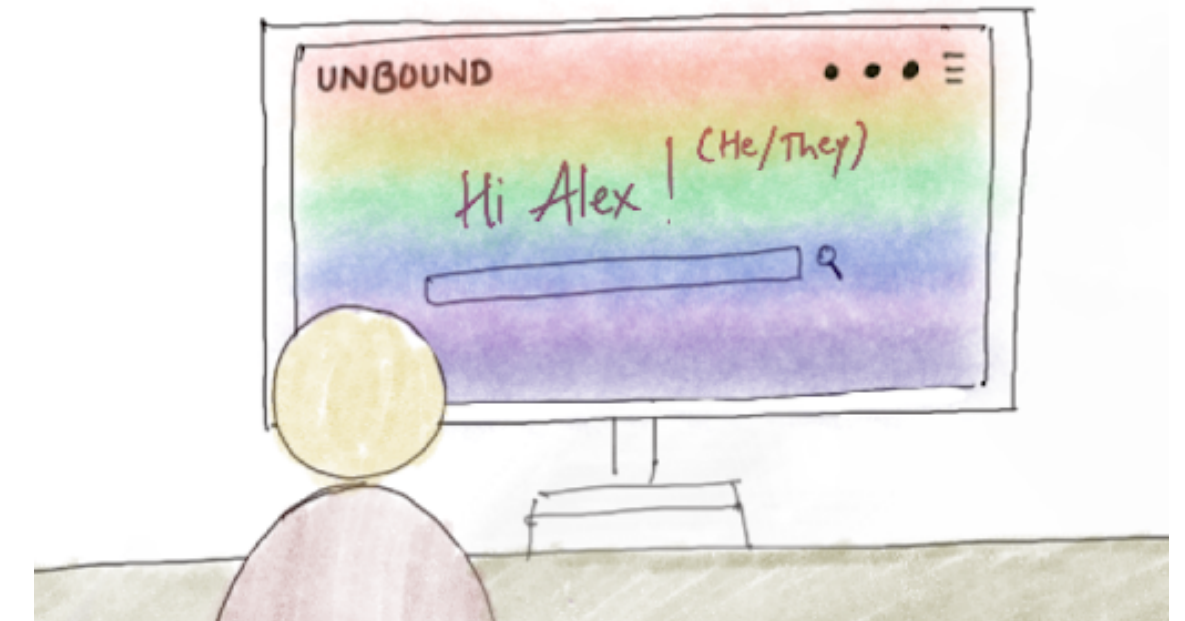
Eager to change, Arthur registers an account, adopting the pseudonym Alex and indicating their pronouns as He/They. After setting up their profile, Alex logs in. The welcome page not only acknowledges Alex by their preferred name but also respects and displays their chosen pronouns.
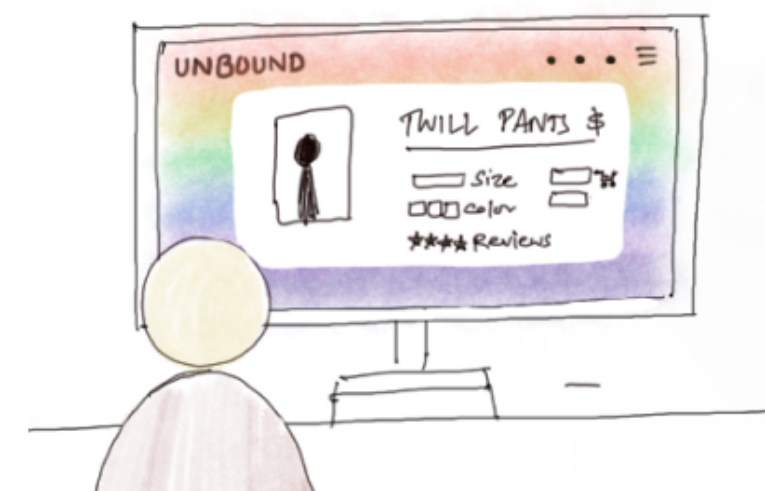
STORYBOARDS (CONT.)

4

Delving into the expansive style preferences, Alex curates their fashion journey from a myriad of non-gendered options.

5
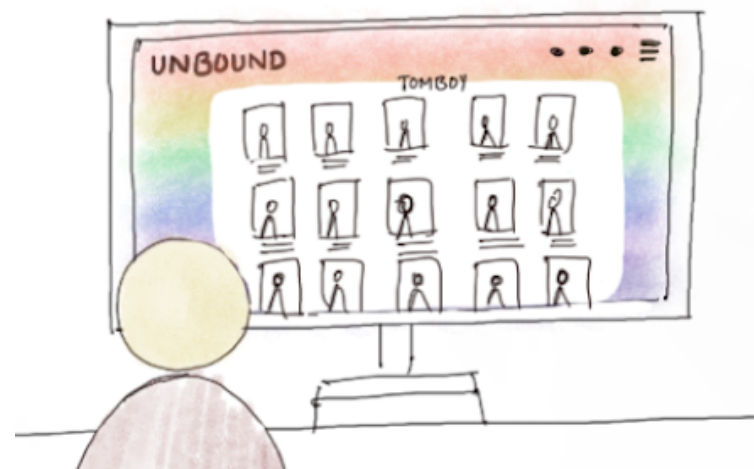
Guided by their chosen style preference, Alex is seamlessly directed to UNBOUND's extensive library of collections. From casual to formal wear, each collection celebrates the diversity of gender-inclusive fashion, offering Alex a spectrum of choices that resonate with their unique style.
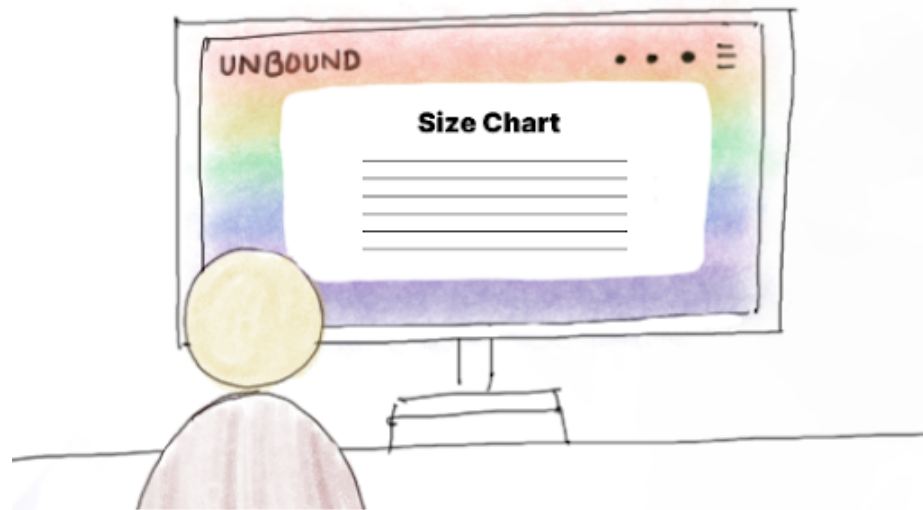
6

A chosen clothing item leads Alex to an informative product description, where they can explore sizing, peruse reviews, select colors, and seamlessly add to their cart.

STORYBOARDS (CONT.)

7

Empowered by an inclusive sizing chart, Alex navigates detailed measurements, ensuring the perfect fit for their unique expression

8

Reading heartfelt reviews, Alex is moved by personal stories attesting to how the clothing has supported others' diverse gender expression.

9

Post-purchase, Alex is encouraged to join UNBOUND's thriving online community. Here, they can engage with like-minded individuals, share styling tips, and celebrate diverse gender expressions.

STORYBOARDS (CONT.)

10

Post-purchase, Alex is encouraged to join UNBOUND's thriving online community. Here, they can engage with like-minded individuals, share styling tips, and celebrate diverse gender expressions.

USE CASE 1

Description: This use case describes how a non-binary individual uses an online clothing retail website with body type selection and inclusive sizing charts to enhance their shopping experience.

Primary Actor: Non-binary individual

Preconditions:
- The website must have an inclusive design, with options for body type selection and comprehensive sizing charts.
- The website's interface will not have cis-gendered categorizations.
- The user aims to find clothing that fits their personal style and body type.

Normal Course of Action:
- Accessing the Website: The non-binary individual logs into the inclusive online clothing retail website.
- Selecting Body Type: They select their body type from a non-gendered list of options to personalize the shopping experience.
- Browsing Clothing Styles: The user browses through clothing styles without gendered sections or labels.
- Utilizing the Inclusive Sizing Chart: They use an inclusive sizing chart that provides detailed measurements to find the right fit.
- Reviewing and Selecting Items: The individual reviews the fit and style of items through the sizing chart and selects items to add to their cart.
- Completing the Purchase: The user completes their purchase with a secure and privacy-respecting checkout process.

USE CASE 2

Description: This use case outlines how a user, particularly those exploring or affirming their gender identity or having gender dysphoria experiences a tailored shopping journey on an online clothing retail website. The website provides style choices free from cis-gendered categories and encourages positive gender expression through clothing.

Preconditions:
- The website is designed to be inclusive by taking into consideration the individual's identity/pronouns and providing style preferences tailored to them.
- Style preferences are diverse and not tied to traditional cis-gender categories.
- The platform actively seeks to support and enhance the user's gender expression journey.

Primary Actor: Non-binary individual

Normal Course of Action:
- **Personalized Greeting:** The website greets the user with their preferred names and pronouns.
- **Style Preference Selection:** The user selects their style preferences from various options. For example, tomboy, feminine, masculine, or other, without the need to navigate gendered categories.
- **Empowering Style Descriptions:** The user who has gender dysphoria and is a little shy in shopping for clothes will be motivated by seeing the clothes are divided by clothing type and size rather than gender and can choose different styles.
- **Narrative Reviews:** The user reads the reviews of clothes that share personal stories about how clothing has supported other customers' gender expression.
- **Comfortable Shopping:** The user navigates through different sections, selects clothes based on their style and size, adds them to the cart, and purchases the product.

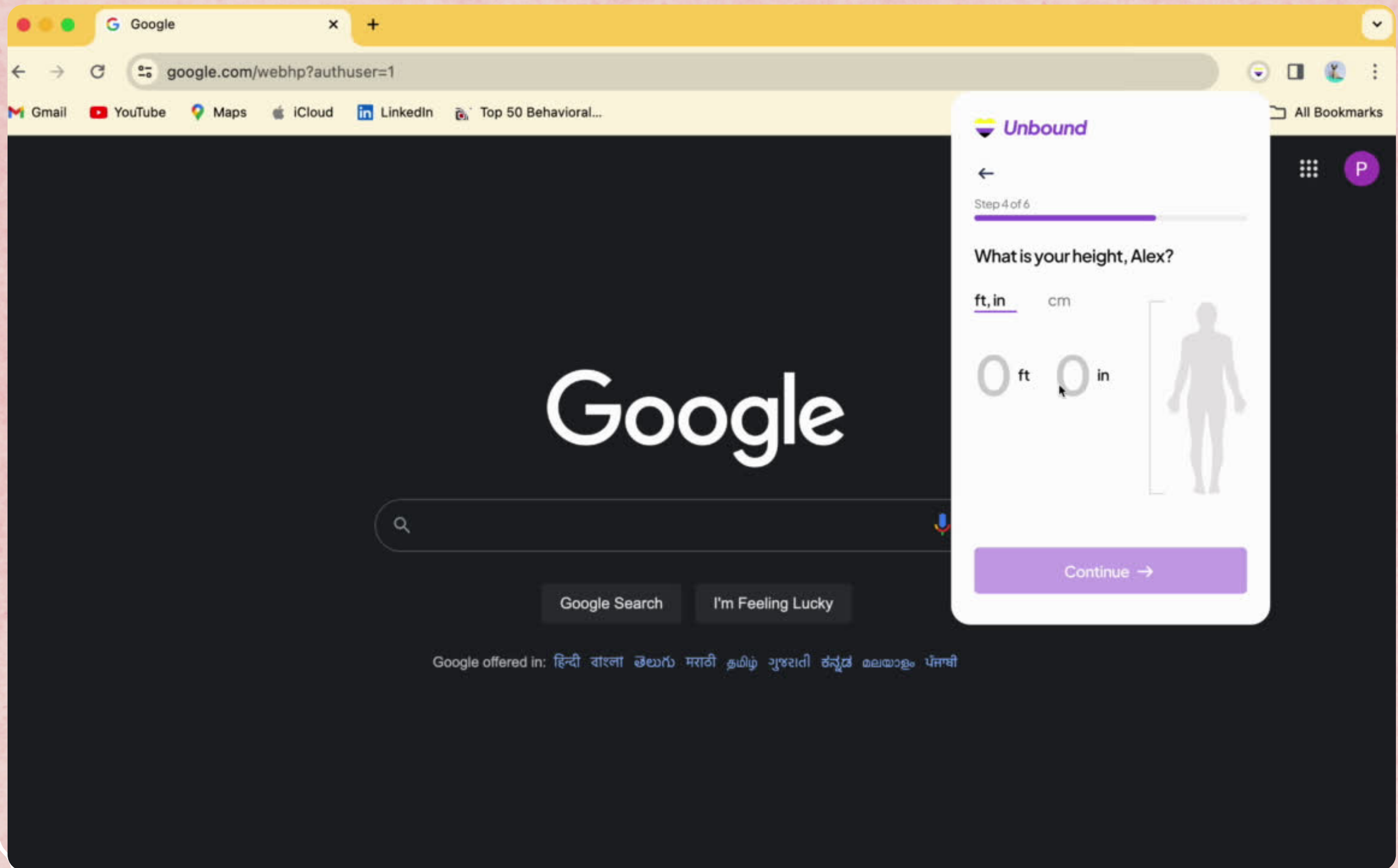# OUR DESIGN SOLUTION

Part 1: Entering the user's details

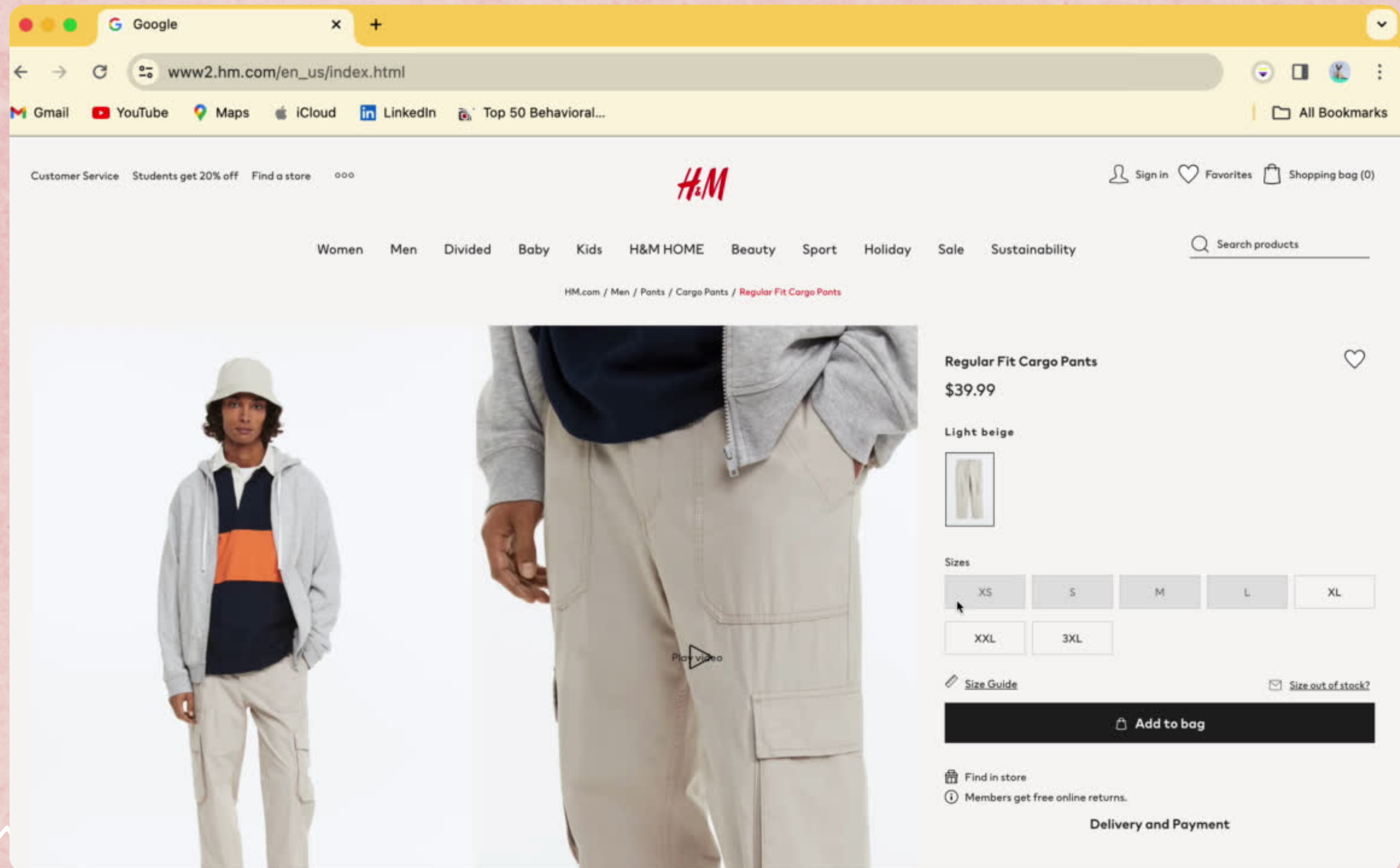# OUR DESIGN SOLUTION

Part 1: Entering the user's details

Part 2: Body measurements of the user

OUR DESIGN SOLUTION

Link to Figma file

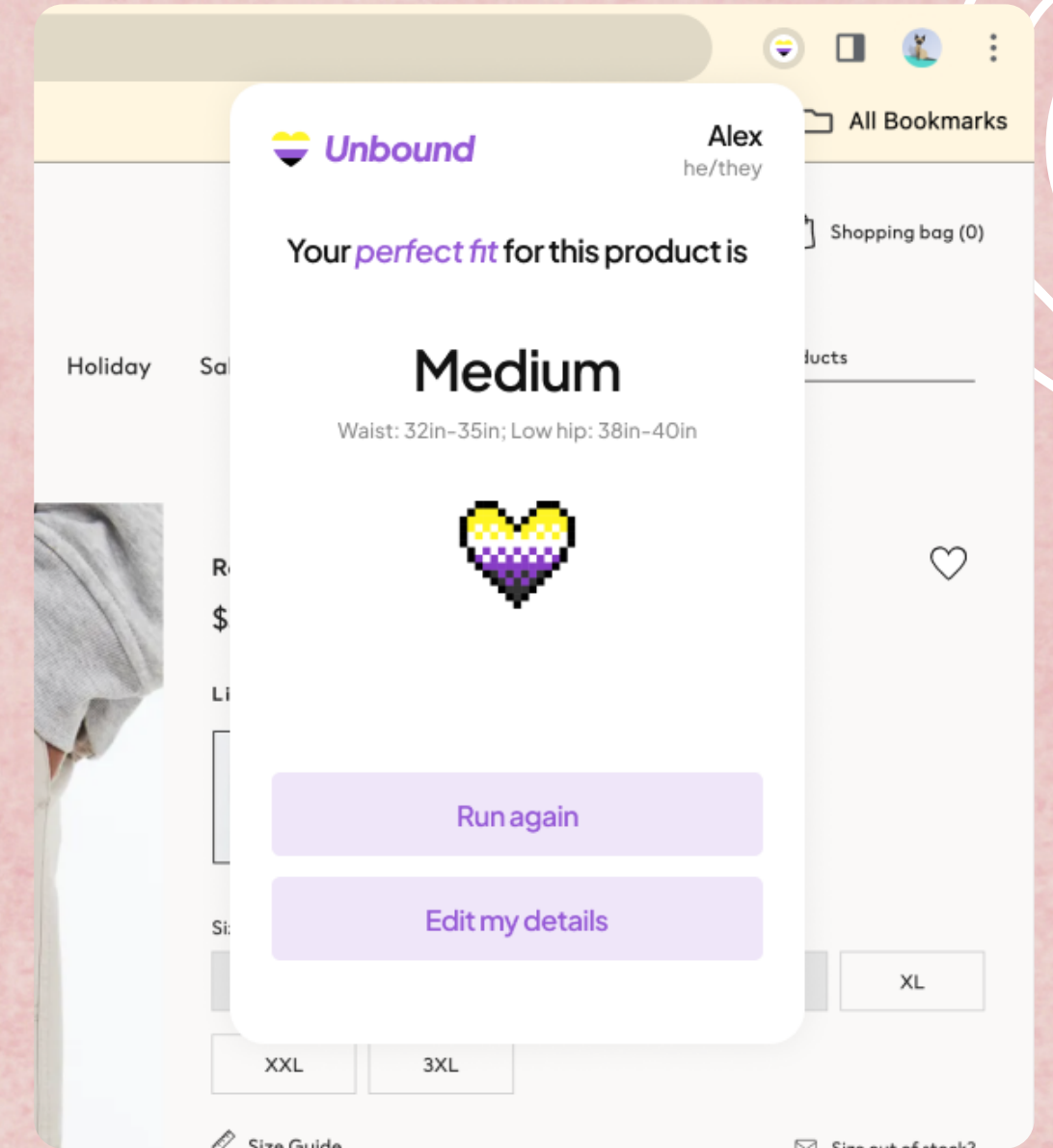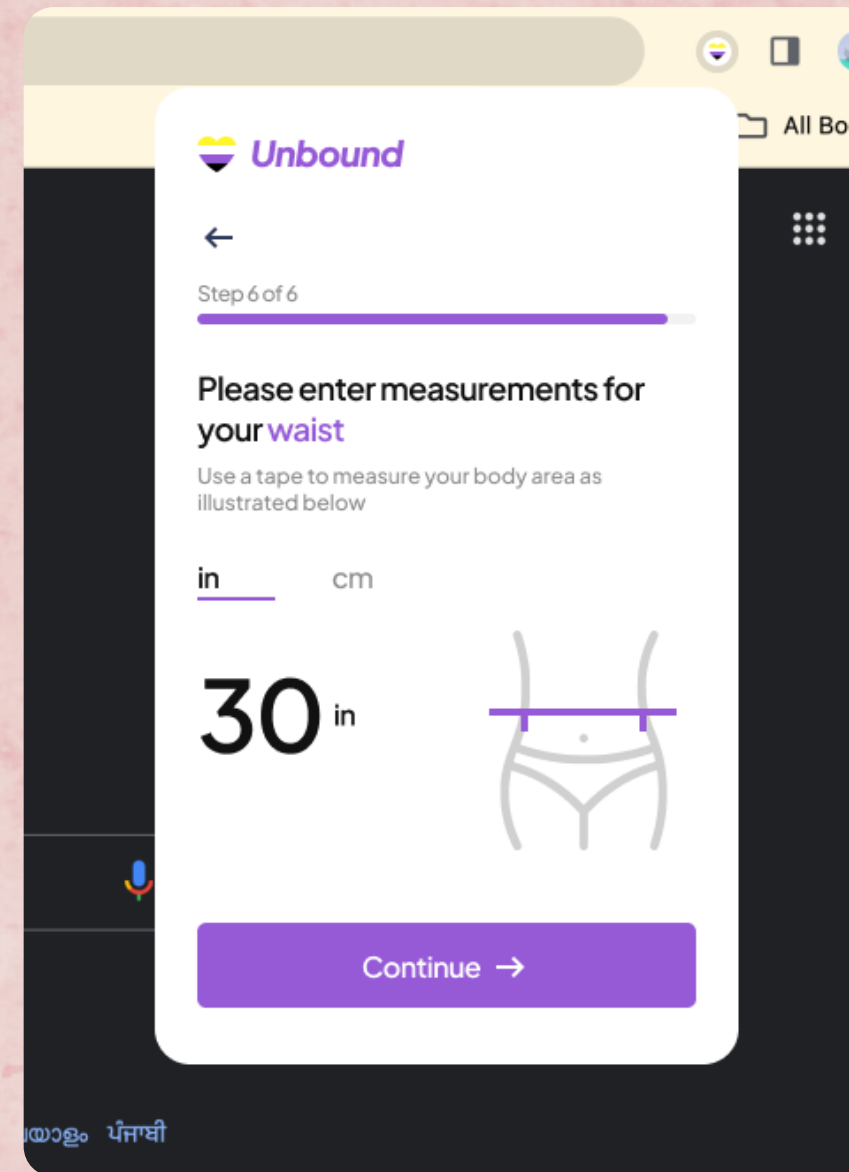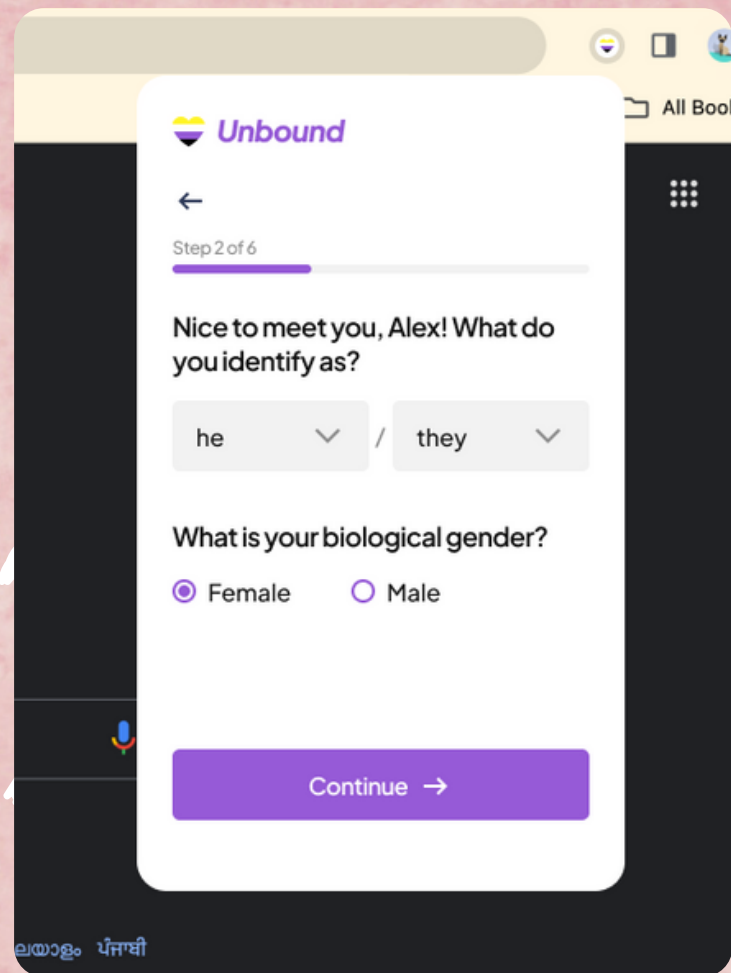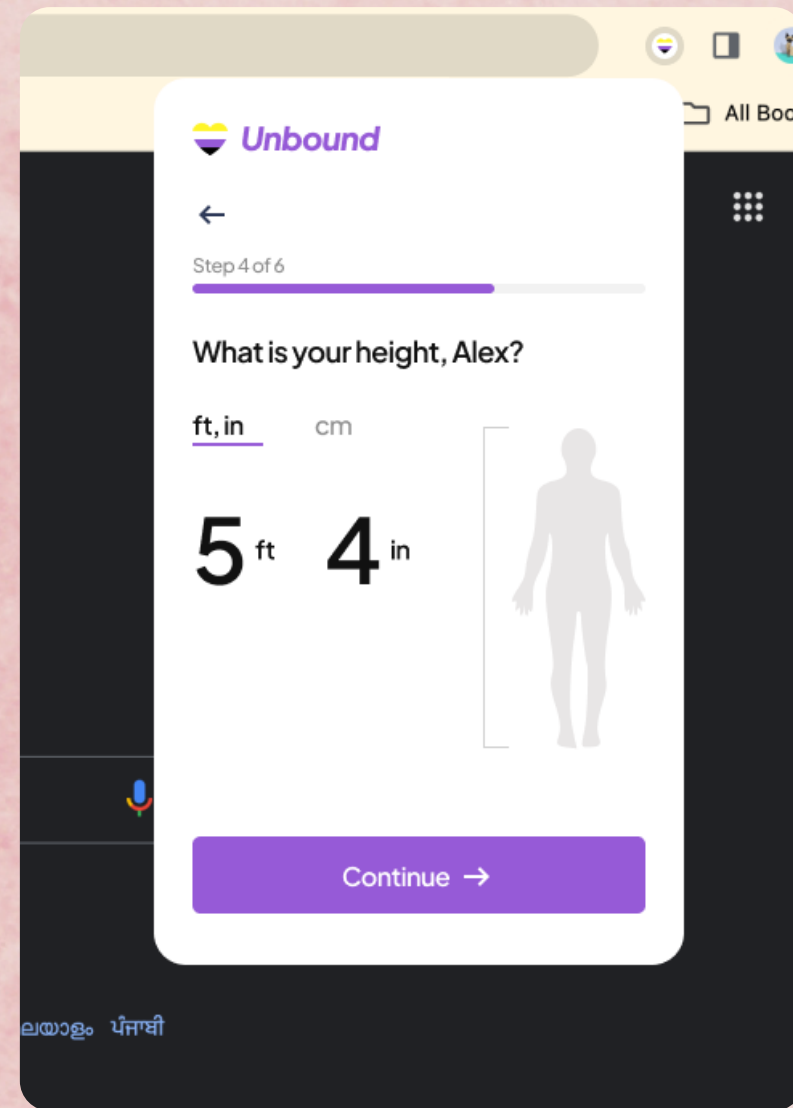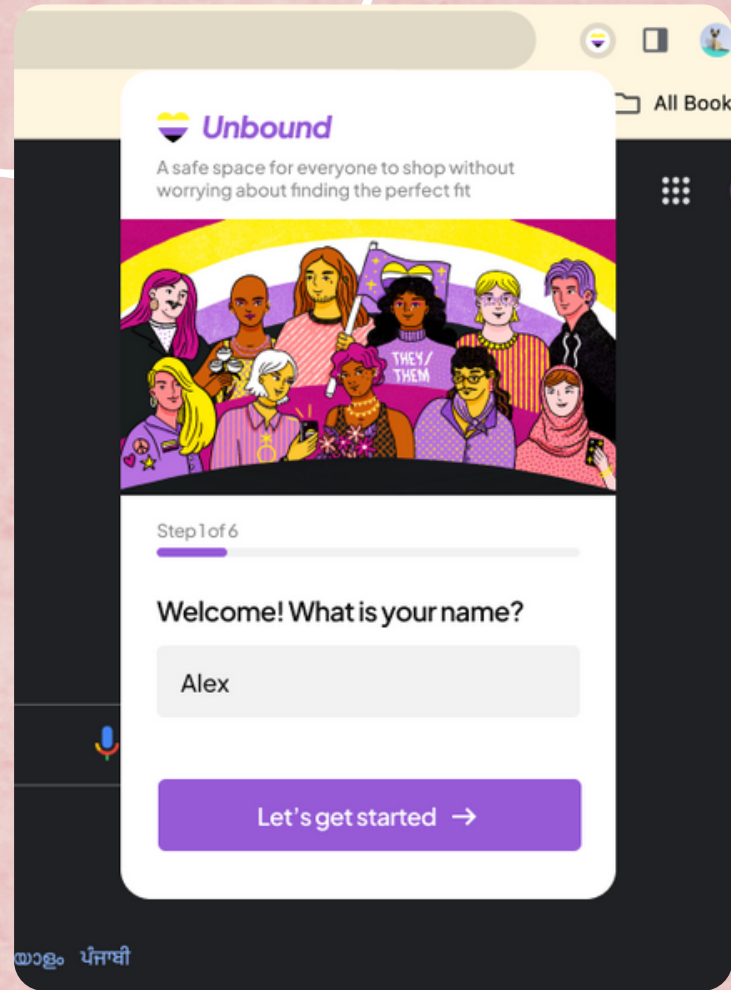Part 1: Entering the user's details

Part 2: Body measurements of the user

Part 3: Running the plugin on a retail store's product

OUR DESIGN SOLUTION

THANK YOU VERY MUCH