



THRED

PRESENTED BY THE THREDS

TWO
HEARTS
REACH
EVERY
DESTINATION

UX CASE STUDY · RESEARCH, DESIGN, PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Spoorthi Madadi

A shared travel-memory app for couples · Heraklion, Crete · May to June 2026

With Raisa and Caleb, University of Virginia · Partner agency: Bizrupt

OVERVIEW

Couples travel together. Thred keeps the whole trip shared.

Three weeks in Heraklion with two teammates, asked to find and solve a problem tourists face in Greece.

We started with an AR concept, tested it with couples in public, and learned they liked the idea more than the product. We pivoted to Thred: each partner's path and photos land on a live map, the lines braid when they meet, and the trip ends as a shareable "thred."

4

field sites, 3 interview scripts

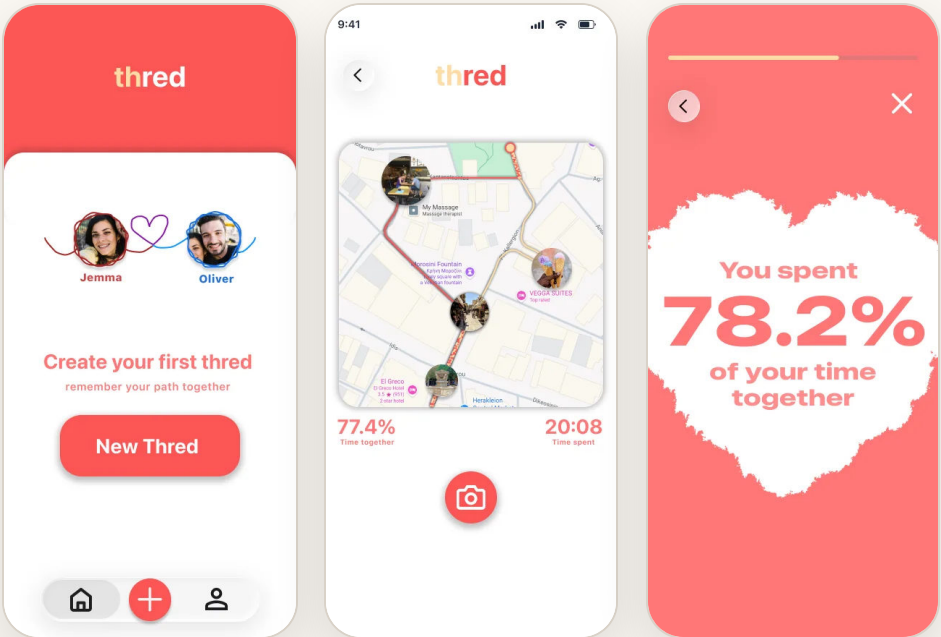
3

rounds of guerrilla testing in public

2

iterations, museum to whole trip

MY ROLE	Field research and interviews, persona and journey map, storyboards and paper prototypes, Figma interaction design, live map built with Claude Code, usability testing and severity scoring
TEAM	Spoorthi Madadi, Raisa, Caleb
TOOLS	Figma, paper, Google Forms and Sheets, Claude Code, Google Maps, Netlify



Home

Live map

Woven thred

Four sites, three scripts, and a matrix of what we didn't know

City of Heraklion · Archaeological Museum · Knossos Palace · Ancient Greek Technology Museum

We watched how visitors moved through each site and ran short interviews with a script written for that setting: planning and navigation in the city, what holds attention in a museum, and how guided tours land for the planner versus the person who came along.

Before designing anything, I sorted what we heard into a Knowns/Unknowns matrix. An affinity diagram then gave us ten requirements. Keeping visitors engaged for the whole visit became our problem.

Known knowns

Visitors rent cars, rely on Google Maps and buses, and get by in English.

Known unknowns

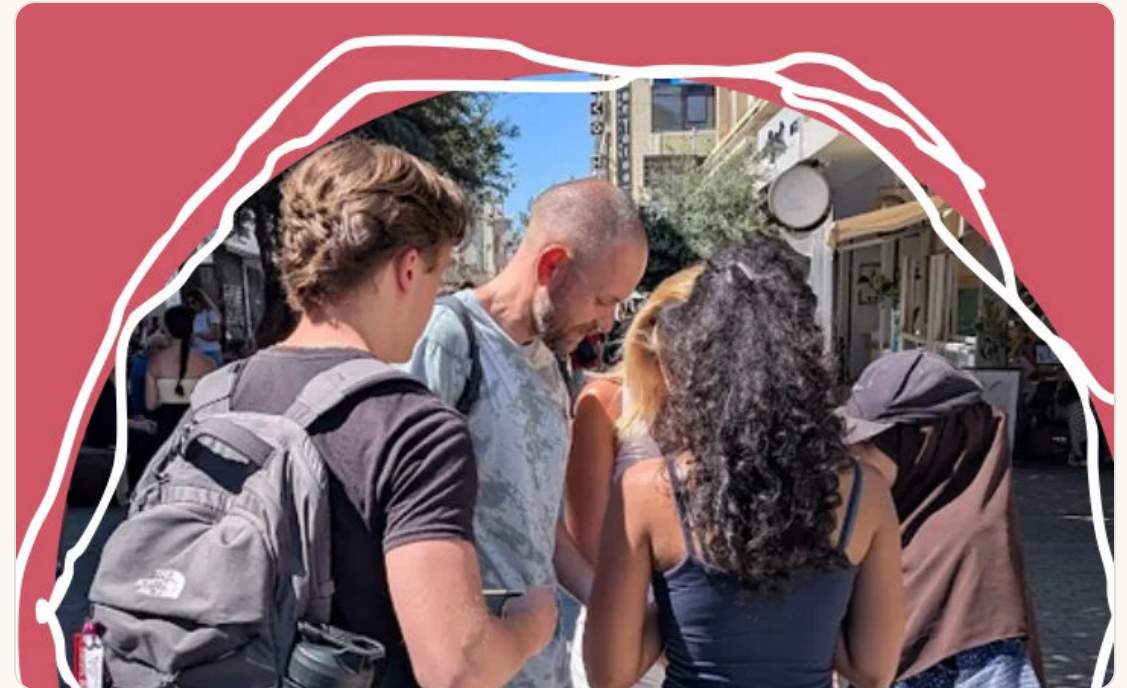
How long do people stay? Who planned the trip? Where do they look for things to do?

Unknown unknowns

Tours vs self-navigation? Is Google's info on hours and prices accurate?

Unknown knowns

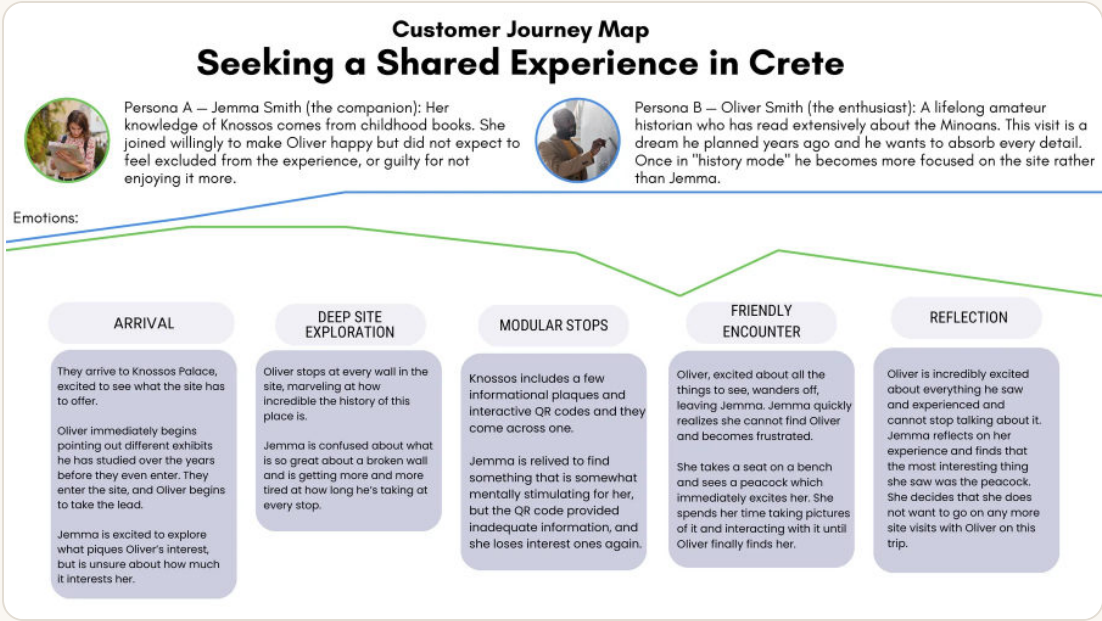
"Tour groups seem disengaged." "People are interested in Minoan history."



Intercept interviews in the city center

Mapping a couple's day at Knossos

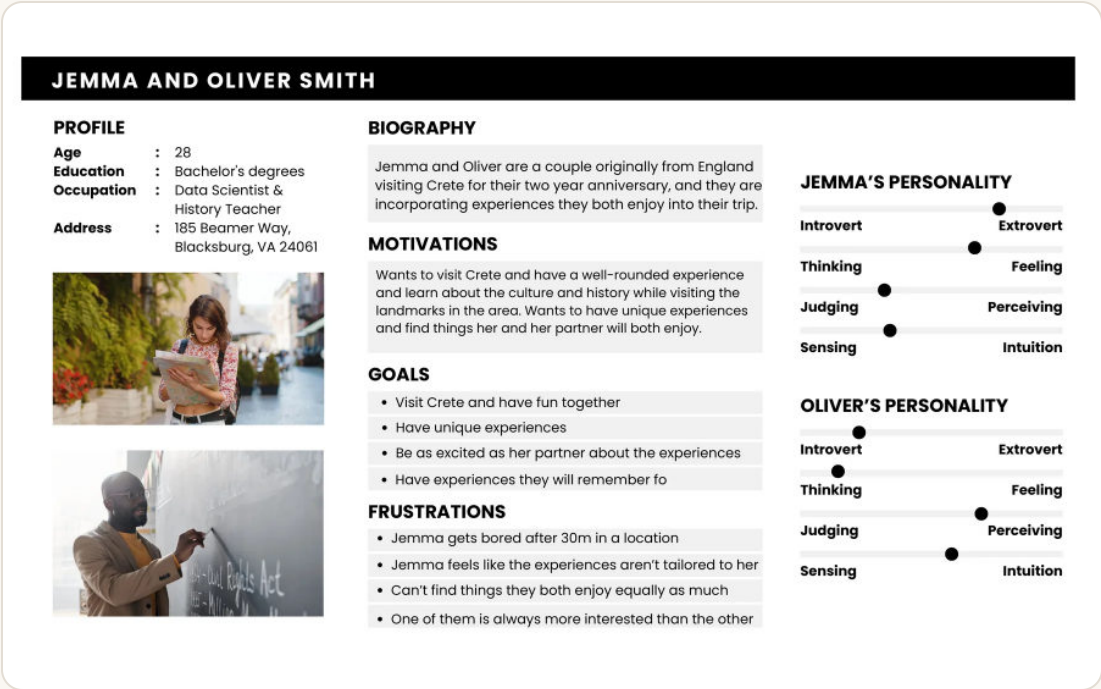
Couples want time together on vacation but struggle to stay engaged when the experience only interests one of them.



Journey map. Where the two partners' emotions diverge is where Thred needed to work.

Scenario. Oliver, a history teacher, wanted Knossos. Jemma came along to be supportive. He wanders into the frescoes and loses her; she waits by the exit. He leaves thrilled, she leaves exhausted.

The failure isn't that they were apart. It's that nothing connected what each of them experienced.



Persona pair: goals, frustrations, and two personality profiles

Time-traveling glasses

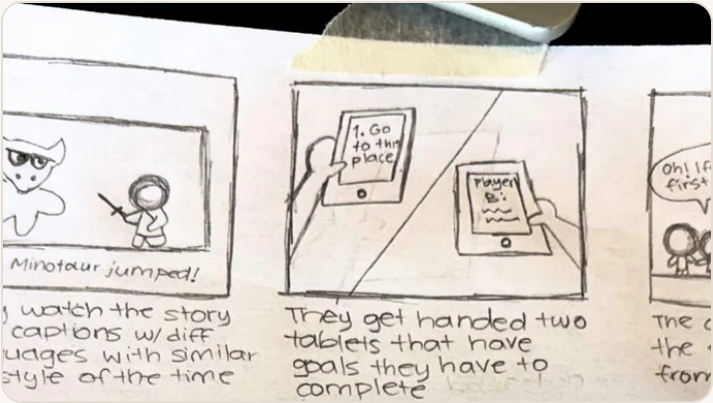
AR at Knossos: characters act out the story, the palace rebuilds itself, and couples align their views to unlock scenes.

I wrote it up as a press release first, to force the value into a paragraph before we drew a screen. Then storyboards, then paper glasses and costumes we could hand to strangers.

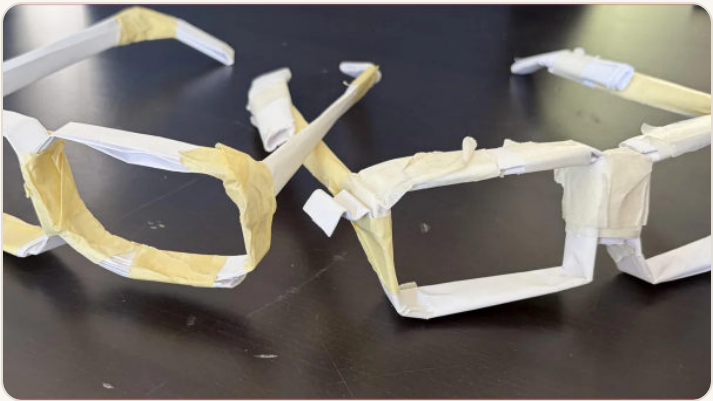
"He's much more interested in history than me, so I would like to have a more interactive experience."

PRESS-RELEASE QUOTE, FROM OUR INTERVIEWS

Guerrilla test. Two public squares, couples in the glasses, seven assessment criteria.



Storyboard



Paper prototypes

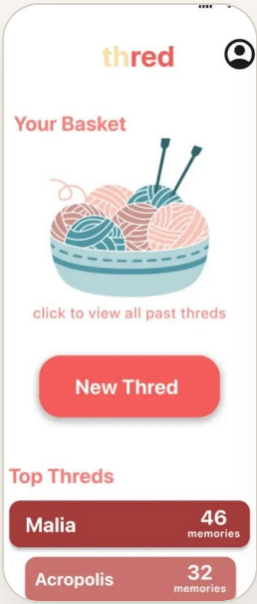


Trying the full kit before taking it out

TASK	WHAT WE SAW
Put glasses on	Too big for some; a few fell off
Turn on / off	Took them off instead
Costumes	Confused; tried to swap outfits
Story	Engaged throughout

First iteration

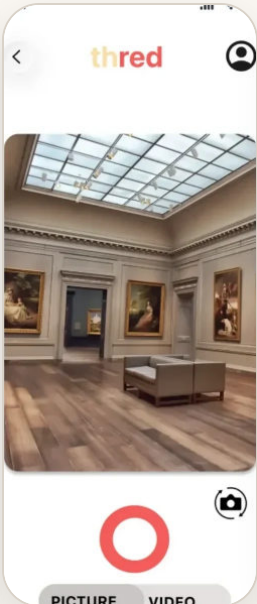
For couples visiting a museum together but drawn to different exhibits: a floor-plan map, a shared basket of threds, an in-app camera, and a woven summary.



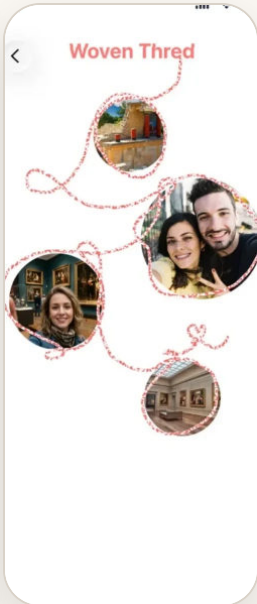
Your basket of threds



Floor-plan map



Camera



Woven thred

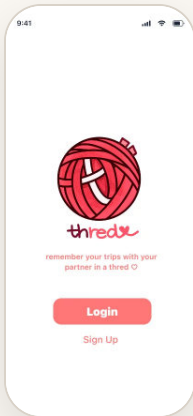
WHAT TESTING CHANGED

FINDING	RESPONSE
"Am I the red one?"	Fixed colors: red is me, blue is my partner
Didn't know which way they were facing	Direction cone; map rotates with you
Stats on the map didn't make sense	Moved to the woven summary
Purple line understood instantly	Made "woven" the hero state
Both partners started separate threds	Pair before the first thred
Basket not obviously tappable	Home redesign with a nav bar

From heuristic evaluations (Nielsen plus three of our own), RITE sessions, and three formative rounds with couples.

Final iteration

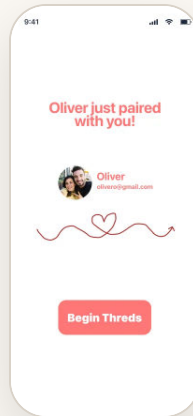
Out of the museum and across the whole trip. Pair, explore, capture, reconnect, relive.



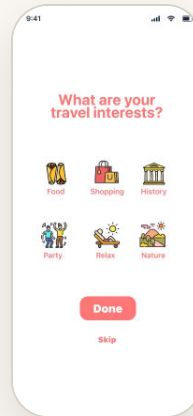
Onboarding



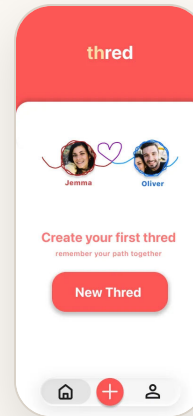
Pair by QR or code



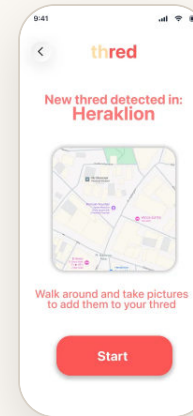
Paired



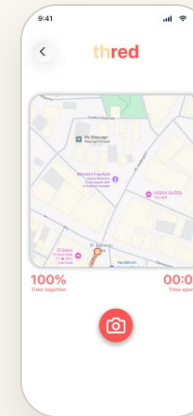
Travel interests



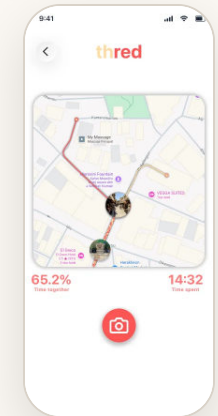
Home: threds on a map



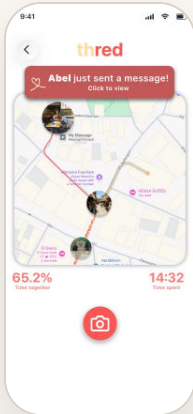
New thred detected



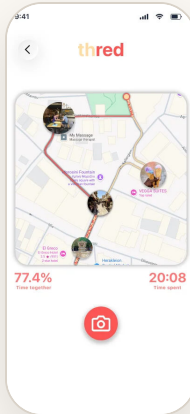
Live map, together



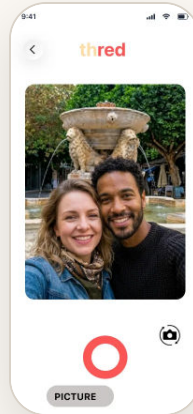
Paths split



Partner sends a message



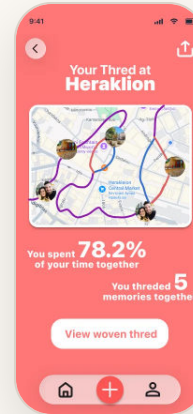
Woven purple as they rejoin



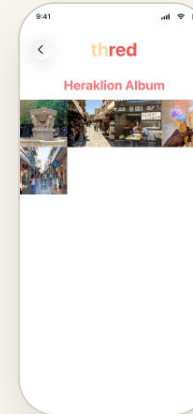
In-app camera



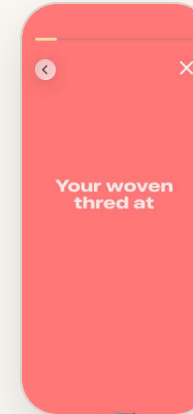
Album photo



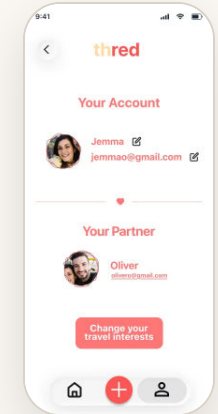
Your thred



Album



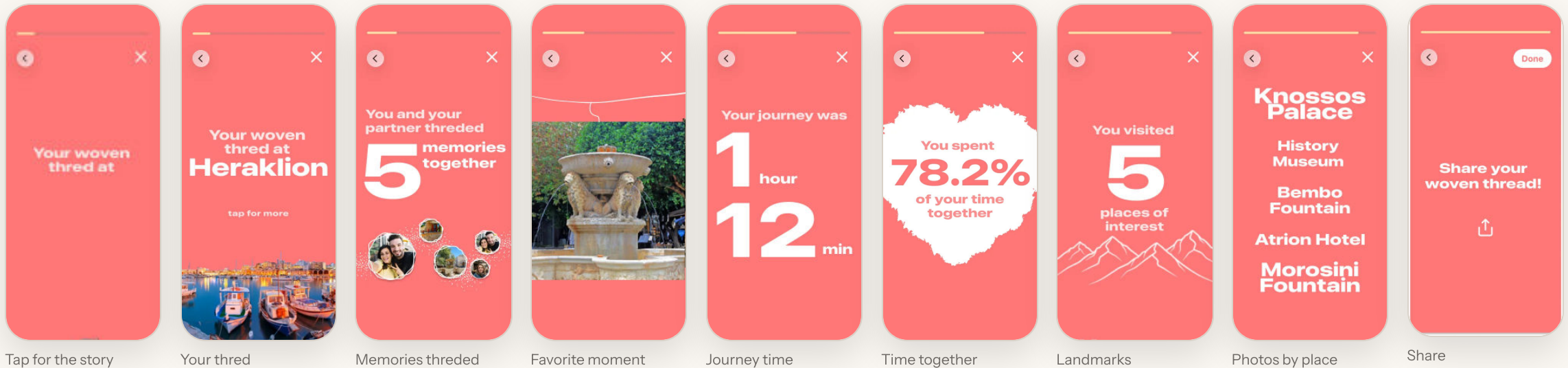
Woven thred



You and your partner

The woven thread

When the trip ends, the app weaves both partners' day into a story to share: memories, time together, landmarks.



Interaction model. Every screen answers one question: where is my partner, what did they just see, what did we do together.

Reconnect loop. After time apart, both partners are prompted to share a photo. Walking back together weaves the lines with no action needed.

Woven summary. Modeled on Wrapped. Testers asked for photos they could tap, so every stat links to its album.

A live map, built with Claude Code

Figma couldn't show paths drawing themselves, so in the last week I built a working web prototype, [live-map.html](#).

01 Describe the behavior

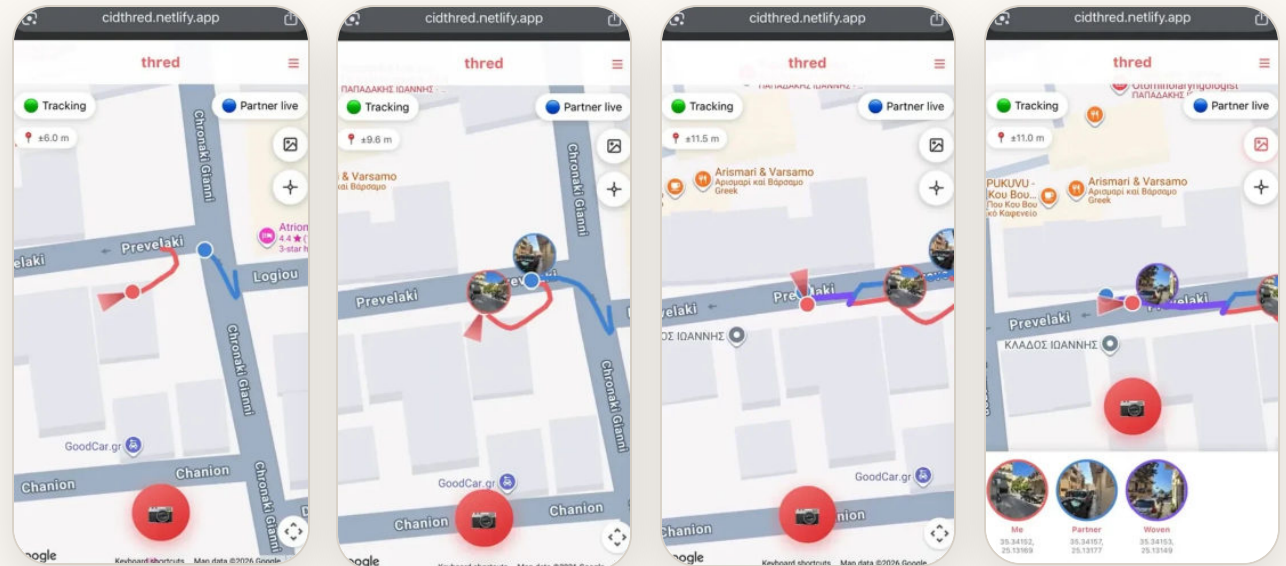
Start and stop tracking, draw my path in red, my partner live in blue, weave purple when we're close, pin each photo where it was taken.

02 Iterate in the terminal

Claude Code built it on the Google Maps API with the browser's geolocation. We refined it turn by turn: accuracy readout, distance, re-center, and Me / Partner / Woven albums.

03 Deploy and walk

Live on Netlify, tested with two phones around Heraklion. The lines drew in real time and braided when we met. Then imported back into Figma through [html.to.design](#).

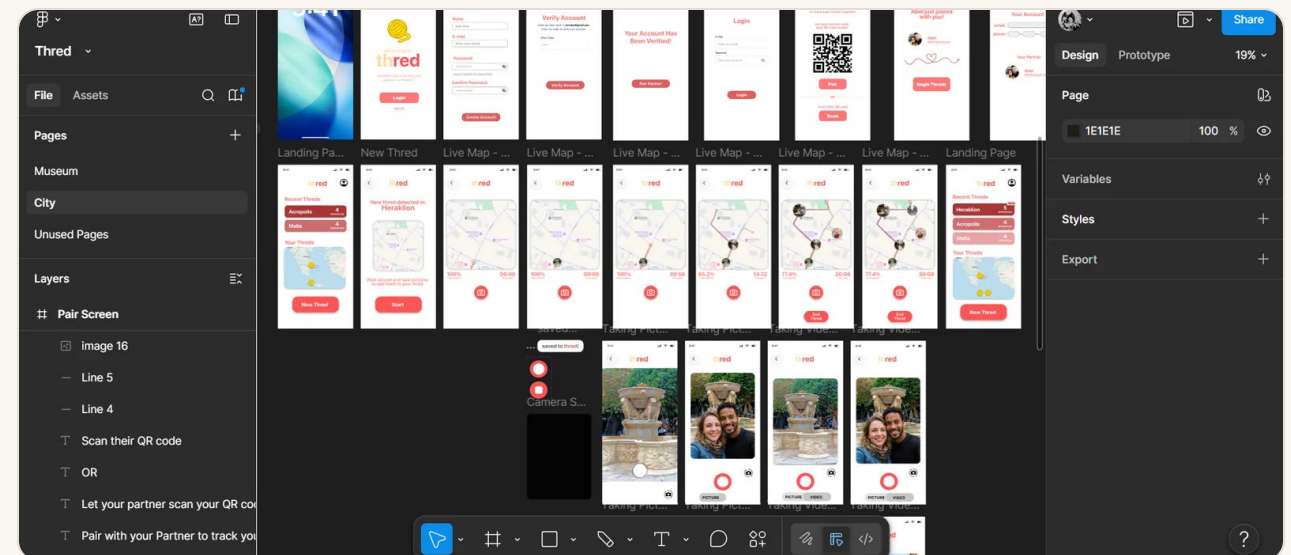


Tracking on

Photos pinned to coordinates

Paths merge as partners meet

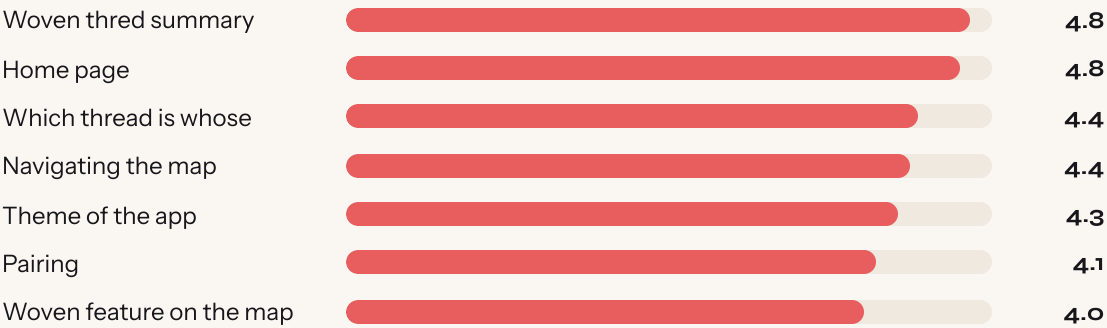
Me · Partner · Woven



The Figma prototype tested alongside the live map

Every measure at 4 or above, without a tutorial

Final guerrilla session, June 12, 2026 · five couples · clarity on a 1 to 5 scale



A week earlier, couples needed an explanation before the purpose clicked. Color coding, the reconnect prompt, and the redesigned home closed that gap.

WHAT COUPLES TOLD US

"You don't have to be on the phone all the time. I like that it creates memories."

JUNE 5, COUPLE 3

"Liked the notification to bring them back together. Wants to click the images in the summary and swipe like a slideshow."

JUNE 5, COUPLE 4

"Not entirely useful if we're already together."

JUNE 12, COUPLE 3. THRED EARNS ITS PLACE WHEN PARTNERS SPLIT, AND THE ROADMAP SHOULD SAY SO.

OUTCOME

A tested interaction model, a working live map, a scored backlog with owners, and a validated theme, presented to the program and our partner agency.

What I'd carry into the next product

- 01

Don't marry the first solution

We loved the glasses. Couples didn't, and the evidence was in by day nine. Killing it early is why Thred exists.
- 02

Direction before details

We lost days polishing screens that were later cut. Zoom out first.
- 03

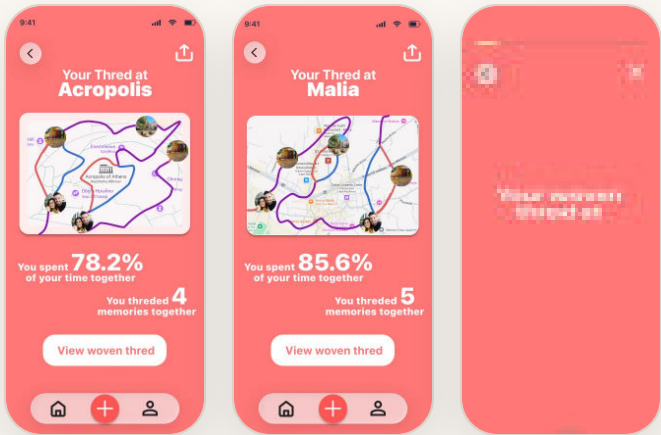
Prototype where the product lives

Testing in public with a phone in hand surfaced orientation, GPS accuracy, and what people do when a notification arrives mid-conversation.
- 04

Build to learn

Claude Code turned "we can't show movement" into a deployed live map in days.

IDEA	WHY
Beyond couples	Families and friend groups asked for it
Recommendation layer	Use the interests collected at onboarding to suggest stops
Tunable reconnect prompts	Independent couples found fixed nudges annoying
Heatmap of photo spots	Where other couples captured moments
Auto-upload from the camera roll	"I already have the photo on my phone"



Acropolis thred Malia thred Woven cover

THANK YOU

Let's pull on **the thread.**

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