

June newsletter

Welcome to the Design Systems newsletter — your monthly update on design at scale across Sprout.

This month, the team has been primarily focused on planning for Q3 and system maintenance. We've seen an influx of contributions to the system over the past month, and it's been an absolute joy to work with our contributors to shepherd their work into the system. Keep reading to learn what we've shipped this month, and get a deep dive into the work being done by **Design Working Groups**.

What's new this month

- The Design Systems team spent some time this month **planning out our Q3 roadmap**. While most of our time over the next two quarters will be spent refreshing the Seeds website, implementing a new collaboration model, and continuing to iterate on and add to our system, we also have lots of other exciting initiatives that we want to pursue. [As always, you can check out the team's backlog on our wiki page to learn more about our roadmap.](#)
- Thanks to frequent contributor Jules Simplicio, **we've added a new Skeleton component to Seeds** that makes it easy to build loading experiences that improve perceived performance and reduce user frustration around load times. [Check out the documentation for Skeleton loaders on Seeds.](#)
- We also added another long-requested component — Toasts! **The new Toast component** is used to send lightweight notifications to users in our products. [We have a wealth of documentation around how to use Toasts in Seeds](#), including a toast-builder tool and considerations for toasts on mobile devices.
- If you hadn't noticed, the Engagement team has shipped **the ability for users to customize the density of message cells in the inbox**. This is powered by the Message component in Seeds, and [we've added a new recipe that allows you to see the same message in each density](#). If you want to allow this customization for users in your zone, it's very simple to do with our Message component.
- New network partners in our app means new resources in our system. To support the addition of Glassdoor reviews, **we've added the [Glassdoor logo to our icon system](#) and [their brand color to our design tokens](#).**



Working groups

Learn how designers at Sprout are breaking out of their zones to solve hard problems



Collaboration doesn't always come easy, but it's absolutely key to designing effective experiences for our customers. Collaboration can be even more difficult when it's cross-zone or cross-discipline, but designers at Sprout have adopted a unique and exciting way to make that easier — working groups!

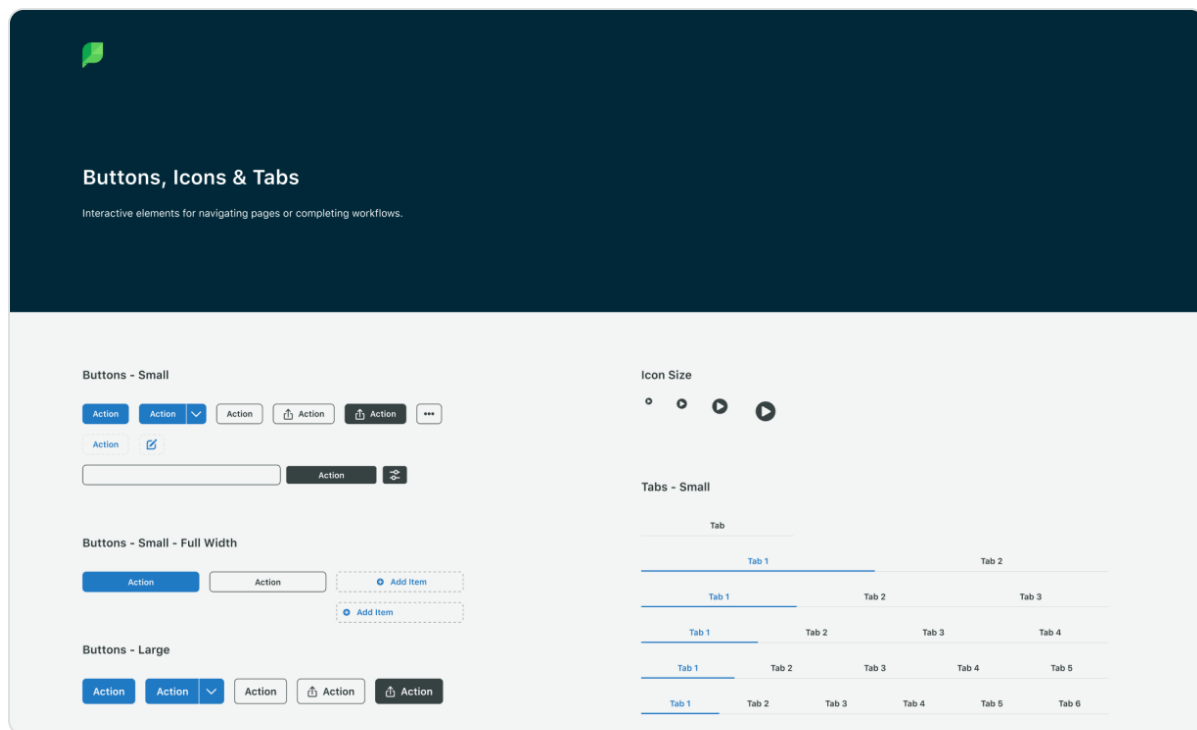
Design working groups (WGs) are teams of designers who come together to solve specific problems that impact the work of multiple zones. These groups work across disciplines when appropriate to improve our teams, processes, and products. Today we'll take a look at two of the current design WGs to learn how they are collaborating to solve hard problems.

UI Kit working group



This working group is made up of designers from both product and brand creative who are focused on how to best utilize our design tool of choice (Figma). The group currently includes Nathan Sanders (who leads the group), Jessie Bohannon, Jules Simplicio, Mark Montri, Melissa Roadmap, Melissa Flowers, Stanton Valentino, and Susan Densa.

Design Systems chatted with Nathan about the UI Kit working group and their current focus. For those who aren't familiar, a "UI Kit" is a collection of pre-designed components that make up our product and web designs.



A screenshot of our UI Kit showing the button, icon, and tab components, which make it easy for designers to quickly create mockups that follow our design patterns.

The adoption of Figma as a new design tool at the beginning of the year meant that our designers needed to rebuild many of the UI Kits and other assets that couldn't be transferred over. "With the move to Figma as our design tool and the completion of Nectar, there was a need to provide all designers with a set of high quality components to quickly build out new features with a degree of quality and consistency we have come to expect with the introduction of Nectar," said Nathan, going on to say that "the input from every zone was needed to create components and experiences that fit user needs while maintaining a consistent set of design principles that helped in making the app more cohesive."

"Our main focus is the health of our UI libraries and how we maintain and grow them," Nathan says, adding that "we have been working on a contribution model for handling additions and updates to the UI Kit that will make it easier for other designers to propose updates to styles and to help identify components that should be included in the library."

UI Kits are crucial infrastructure for our designers, and Nathan emphasized to us how helpful it has been to source a diverse and varied range of perspectives. But that collaboration can bring its own challenges as well — "the biggest issue working groups face is that [the work is] all voluntary, so it can be hard to find time to dedicate to the working group initiatives [alongside] any other zone obligations," says Nathan.

Finally, we asked Nathan to share a few things that we can expect to see from the UI Kit working group in the future:

- A more formalized contribution process to request changes and additions to the UI kit.

- Migrating the app screenshots used on the marketing site and help center articles to utilize our UI kits.
- User research to better understand how designers are using the libraries and to better optimize the organization of components.

[To learn more about the UI Kit working group, check out their page on the wiki.](#) If you have thoughts or questions for the group, check out the #talk-figma channel on Slack.

Filters working group

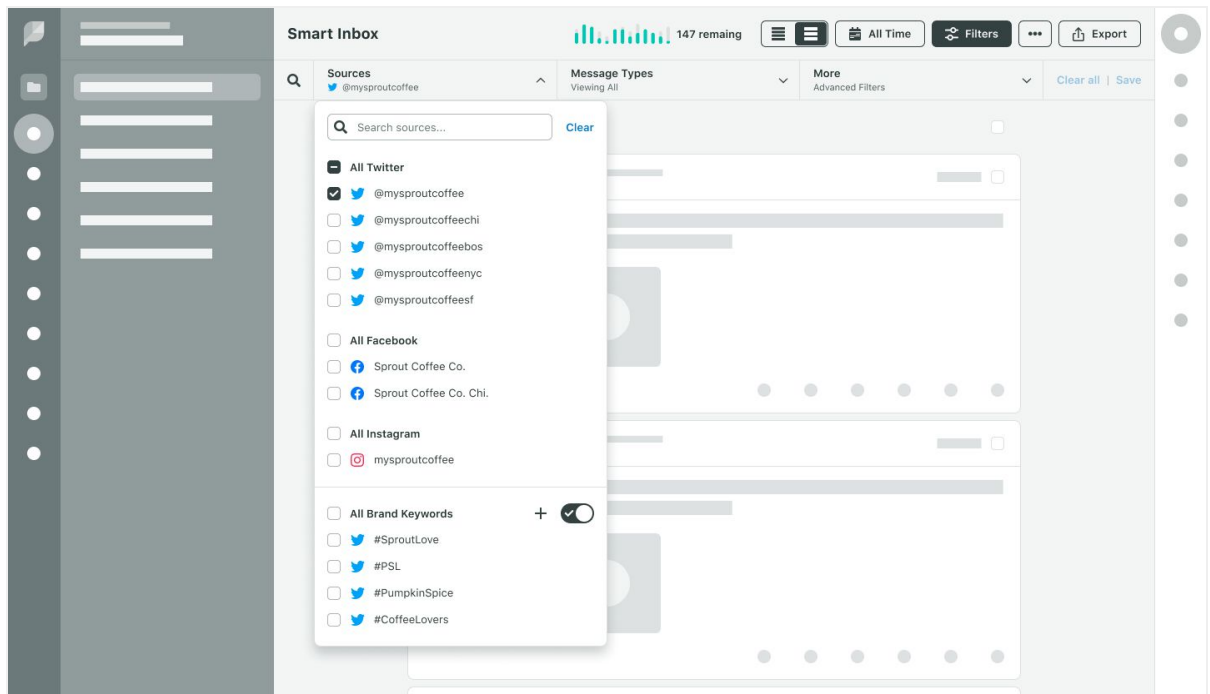


While some working groups are focused on improving internal processes and tools, others are centered around our product and the needs of our users. The Filter working group is one of these — consisting of Kevin Bertram, Kelly Burke, and Nathan Sanders, this team is specifically focused on improving the experience of filtering in the Sprout web app. We chatted with Kevin Bertram to learn a little more about this group and the work they’re doing.

So what does “an improved filtering experience” look like? “We’re trying to create a simple, repeatable, understandable, familiar system for our users,” says Kevin. In more concrete terms, that looks like:

- Make filters take up less space
- Make their connection to what you’re seeing on the page more obvious
- Make it easy to see the summary of all applied filters
- Make them behave the same across the app

The following screenshot shows an example of what this improved filtering experience may eventually look like in our app:



But how did the group land on this direction? Here's what Kevin had to say:

Our teams kept on running into problems with filters. It's often one of the trickiest aspects of our UX to design for. We identified these problems and brought them to a product review for discussion. Problems were validated and prioritized based on feedback from Product leadership.

From there, we met with cross-discipline, cross-zone groups to further clarify zone-specific user needs and UX nuances. Collecting this range of perspectives helped us hone in on the most common and pressing needs.

Working groups need to involve partners from other disciplines in order to refine and validate their ideas, but sometimes getting input from large groups of people can pose a challenge. Kevin says that they are constantly thinking about this: "it all makes me wonder about the most effective way for far-reaching collaborative work to be inclusive of all voices and perspectives. How can a small group efficiently and effectively channel, amplify, and distill the needs of a larger group?".

Sometimes answering that question means getting creative. One way that the Filters working group did this was by holding a workshop with designers, engineers, and product managers to explore ideas by sketching with crayons:

Q SEARCH



ANY IMAGINABLE FILTER
IS SEARCHABLE



HORIZONTAL
FILTER BAR

- Saved searches?
Profile, tags, Network
Keywords
Tags
Profiles
Section
Auto complete initial search

save search → Reports
Recent Person
Popular Person

Tags >
Authors >
Option
Key Words
Exclude

Simple Advanced
Tags
Network



Have an advanced filter option
Hide filters that would return no results

add top level filter search



filtering is most useful when only a few filters are selected.

We asked Kevin what was next for the Filters working group — “the goal is to take this system and see how it applies to all app areas in even further detail. There are a lot of nooks and crannies still left to explore. Keep an eye out for an upcoming Product Review for how we’re thinking about tackling this work in the Inbox.” In the meantime, [if you’d like to learn more about this group you can check out their page on the wiki.](#)

Thank you to Kevin and Nathan for taking the time to chat with us about their respective working groups! If you have follow up questions or thoughts for the WGs, we encourage you to reach out to any of the members on Slack.

Something you'd like to see featured in the Design Systems newsletter? We're looking to shine a spotlight on the creative and innovative ways that makers across Sprout are using our design system to deliver amazing experiences. Reach out to **@chase** on Slack with ideas or suggestions!

— Design Systems

Have questions, feedback, or ideas for the Design Systems team? [Send us an email](#) or [check out our wiki page](#) to get in touch and to read past issues of our newsletter. If you would like to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please send an email to design-systems-newsletter+unsubscribe@sproutsocial.com.