

Unexpected insights from Stylish Elephants

I've just recently started trying to write a mobile app in Elm. I've found this to be an awesome experience. It lets me prototype the GUI **surprisingly fast**.
(see also: PWA, create-elm-app)



The next boost to my productivity came with the funnily named "**stylish-elephants**" library. It does a very good job at abstracting away HTML+CSS into saner "layout" primitives. (Note, that it's not 100% perfect; but fortunately, it provides an escape hatch back to low level HTML+CSS handling if needed.)

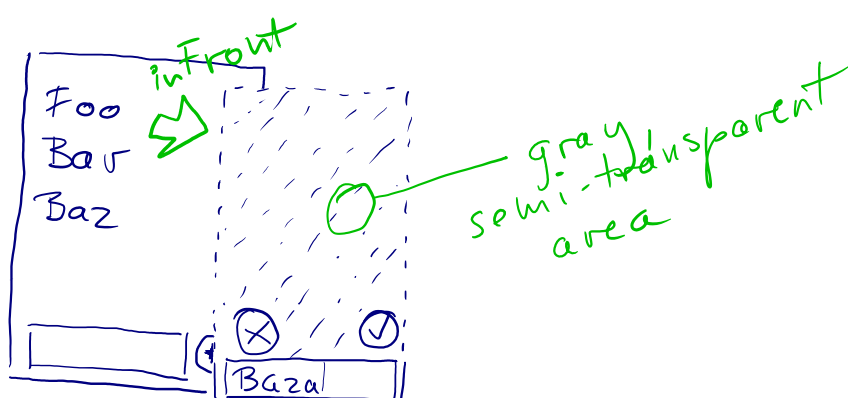
Just yesterday the API of "**stylish-elephants**" pushed me to discover an interesting insight **about my own app**. Specifically, for a layout like shown below, with a bottom panel changing from "New Task" to "Edit Task":

< screenshots >



For a long time, I struggled with how to make a working **"grayed-out" effect** for selected components on the second screen. I went to Elm Slack channel a few times, asking the same question repeatedly in various ways. Finally, thanks to some hints from @mgriffiths and @redd on Elm Slack I managed to find a solution. Once I discovered it, I was very surprised to realize, that it in fact describes a correct semantic intuition: the "Edit Task" operation is actually a "modal dialog", so it is perfectly reasonable to put it **on a completely new layer**, fully obscuring the regular list of tasks.

The internal layout I have now looks like this:



The "Edit Task" widget is now part of a completely new, full-screen layer! This layer, when displayed, is superimposed over the initial task list. The rest of the layer is taken by a half-opaque gray filler, which creates a "grayed-out" / "disabled" effect for components on first layer.

I find it very rare that an API would make me discover some new, better understanding of my code and what it models. That "**stylish-elephants**" by github.com/mgriffiths achieved this is in my eyes a big compliment for the library and its author.

THANKS DAD

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