NextChapter

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Goal: To create a social media platform that encourages book completion, helps readers discover books worth their time and money, and fosters a vibrant reading community through book-club-style discussions.

Description: NextChapter is a social media platform designed for readers to track their progress, engage in meaningful discussions, and discover books tailored to their interests. By integrating book completion incentives, personalized recommendations, and interactive book club features, NextChapter builds a community-driven space where readers can connect, share insights, and stay motivated to finish their next great read.

Target Group: Our target audience includes both avid and occasional readers who are active on social media, primarily ranging from late teens to early thirties. We aim to engage those who aspire to make reading a hobby but struggle to do so consistently on their own.

Value Proposition: NextChapter enhances the reading experience by combining social engagement with personalized book discovery. It provides structured accountability through book clubs and discussion groups, motivating readers to complete books while fostering a sense of community. Unlike traditional platforms that focus solely on reviews or recommendations, NextChapter integrates interactive features that support engagement throughout the reading journey.

Problem Description: Many people want to read more but struggle with motivation, pacing, and finding the right books. While social media plays a significant role in book discovery, it often lacks a structured way to encourage book completion. Readers frequently lack a community that shares their reading speed or taste, making discussions difficult. Additionally, fear of spoilers discourages engagement during the reading process.

User Research Findings:

- Most participants use social media (TikTok, YouTube, Goodreads, Reddit) to discover new books. Avid readers also frequent bookstores and make selections based on book content rather than online reviews alone.
- While some readers actively participate in book discussions, many prefer to observe rather than engage.
- Community-driven accountability, such as buddy reads or book clubs, increases motivation to complete books, especially when there's anticipation of post-reading discussions.
- A lack of discussion stems from the difficulty of finding people with similar reading speeds or book preferences.
- Fear of spoilers limits engagement during the reading process.
- Book completion is driven by a sense of fulfillment, even when parts of a book are slow or unengaging.
- Other key motivators for finishing books include quality of writing, level of engagement, and excitement in the story.
- Readers who purchase books are more likely to finish them.
- A shared reading pace within a community can encourage consistent progress.

Key Features:

- **Spoiler Control:** A feature that censors certain comments or discussions until the user marks the book as finished (similar to Letterboxd).
- **Progress Tracking:** Users can log their reading progress and set goals for book completion.
- **Book Club Integration:** Readers can join virtual book clubs that match their reading pace and interests.
- **Personalized Recommendations:** AI-driven suggestions based on reading habits, social interactions, and book preferences.
- **Discussion Forums:** Interactive spaces where readers can engage in guided discussions without fear of spoilers.

User Research:

Methodology:

We have conducted semi-structured interviews with 5 participants. Participants were selected based on Screener questions.

Research Questions:

1. How do readers discover and decide what book to read next?
2. How do people enrich their reading process through communities?
3. What factors influence reading enjoyment and completion?

Participant one
Male, 23, lives in New York City works in the technology sector, of South Asian descent, generally reads 3-5 books every six months, 20% non-fiction, mostly science fiction and fantasy, generally prefers ebooks but also likes physical copies

1.
2. Generally uses goodreads, youtube channel called Booktube, authors that are liked already, used to go to the library and just read book synopsis to see if it was worth picking up
3. Mostly sci-fi and fantasy, can read some popular crime non-fiction but likes reading about the make believe
4. Sometimes ask friends and a few goodreads reviewers with similar tastes to find books
5.
6. Yes, likes to discuss books with friends after they've read them or if they were recommended but its harder to find people with the same pace of reading
7. Tend to engage with friends over the phone or through goodreads comments, will occasionally read a reddit thread and comment if feeling particularly passionate
8. In smaller groups or with people they know, prefers discussion, otherwise would rather observe
9. A lot more motivated through sharing, incentivized to actually finish a book if it was known that a friend was waiting to discuss
10. Not really, like previously stated, active on goodreads and sometimes reddit
11.
12. Finish 70 percent of books
13. Try to stick it out unless the pacing is too slow or just run out of time, tend to be an all or nothing reader
14. If keeps checking phone while reading or if book seems more like a chore to finish
15. If I want to engage with content about the book or want to talk to someone about interesting things that are happening with the characters or the plot, overall eagerness to finish and discuss
16. Do not want to come across any spoilers, will try to read faster to engage
17. Not really, just try to get through depending on how busy they are

Interview interpretation:

- **Personalized Recommendations & Social Discovery:** This participant relies on Goodreads, BookTube, and trusted reviewers for book discovery, suggesting that NextChapter should integrate personalized recommendations influenced by both algorithms and community-driven suggestions.
- **Flexible Community Engagement:** Prefers discussing books with close friends after finishing but is mostly a passive observer in larger discussions, indicating that NextChapter should offer both active participation and low-commitment engagement options like upvoting or reacting to discussions.
- **Reading Motivation & Completion Support:** Tends to finish 70% of books but struggles with slow pacing or distractions, so features like buddy reads, progress check-ins, and spoiler-free discussion groups could encourage completion without adding pressure.

- **Adaptable Reading Structure & Spoiler Sensitivity**: Reads at their own pace but speeds up to avoid spoilers, highlighting the need for NextChapter to offer optional structured reading groups while ensuring spoiler-protected discussions

Participant two
Female, 20, attends the Skidmore College, generally reads 3-4 books per year, mostly literary fiction and fantasy

1.
2. Reads the blurb of the book to get a sense of whether she will enjoy the books' themes. Reads the first couple pages. Appreciates books with strong visuals and an aesthetic hardcover.
3. Mostly sticks to genres within the realms of social justice and romance. Romance is more of a personal preference, while she mostly reads social justice books for academic reasons.
4. Most often hears about book recommendations via word of mouth from friends. She also sometimes learns about books through their movie adaptations.
5.
6. She occasionally engages in informal discussion with friends and classmates about books while reading it. She is actively involved in reading Fanfiction (Wattpad) and enjoys engaging in discussion via the comment section. She enjoys discussing the similarities and differences between movies and their original book source material.
7. She discusses novels in-person with friends, but she discusses more informal works (e.g. fanfiction) in online forums.
8. She actively participates in discussions.
9. Due to "fear of missing out," she would be motivated to read more and engage in discussion if she knew that other people were also in a similar position.
10. Not currently in a formal community.
11. Important that other people share similar tastes. She likes to be in the same headspace as others.
12.
13. Finishes ~60% of books.
14. Abandons.
15. No character development/very repetitive/predictable
16. If she has a desire to read a book during her free time and certain themes resonate with her, she thinks a book is worth her time. She also enjoys having a physical/mental connection to a book she is reading.
17. She does not want to feel "behind" when she is reading a book. She would want to read at a pace that matches a book club so she can engage in sophisticated discussion.
18. No checkpoints. She reads at her own, undetermined pace.

Interview Interpretation:

- Very socially-driven reader who relies heavily on peer influence; chooses books through friend recommendations, discusses actively with friends, and would be motivated to read more by "fear of missing out." Her engagement differs by format, as she prefers in-person for traditional books, online for fanfiction.
- Reads selectively and values emotional resonance; completes about 60% of books, abandons those lacking character development or that feel predictable. Seeks books that create a "physical/mental connection" and strongly values aesthetic qualities like cover design.
- Shows distinct separation between academic and personal reading; approaches social justice books academically while romance serves personal interests. This carries into her discussion patterns, with different communities for different types of content.

Participant three
Female, 20, attends the University of Michigan, generally reads 2-3 books per year, mostly social justice and romance

1.
2. Watches TikTok videos suggesting books. Compiles all recommendations in a list. Reads book description blurbs from the video. Reads books that are available online.
3. Reads lots of different genres. Comfortable with branching out.
4. Reads books that are suggested by social media algorithm.
5. Believes in discussing books after completing them. She thinks the process of reading books is a very solitary activity.
6. Prefers discussing books in person, with friends.
7. Observes other reader activity, but likes engaging in active discussions.
8. Believes she is more engaged in the reading experience when she is discussion books with others in the form of a book club.
9. Has friends on GoodReads, enjoys commencing on friends' reviews of other books. She does not tend to write reviews herself.
10. Thinks it is important to engage in discussion with people who share similar tastes because they can recommend other things and you can trust that they are good.
11.
12. Finishes ~ 70% of books.
13. Abandons if uninterested.
14. Dislikes the quality of writing. Does not think there is character development. Unrealistic, out-of-character dialogue.
15. Believes if you have the urge to pick up the book and read it, then it is worth your time.
16. She wants to match the pace of a book club in order to avoid spoilers. She does not feel compelled to discuss a book with other people who are ahead.
17. Does not follow checkpoints; reads at her own pace.

Interview Interpretation:

- Highly social reader driven by peer influence; selects books through friend recommendations, engages in dual discussion modes (in-person for novels, online for fanfiction), and is motivated to participate in reading communities.
- Selective reader seeking meaningful engagement; 60% completion rate, abandons predictable books or those lacking character development. Values both physical aspects (aesthetic covers) and emotional connection to the material.
- Maintains clear boundaries between academic and recreational reading; approaches social justice topics academically while romance reading serves personal interests. Shows strong desire for shared reading experiences and matching "headspace" with others.

Participant four
Male, 22, student at Boston University pursuing dentistry, East Asian descent, generally reads 6-7 books per year, mostly fiction, equal mix of physical and online copies but prefers physical, last read a book last week, regularly uses social media

1. Generally uses social media and professors/friends for recommendations.
    1. Picks books based off "current obsessions" as well as recommendations. Recommendations from friends, tiktoks, youtube, goodreads, or school (college english class, professors mentioning books in reference).
    2. Mostly stays in fiction as a genre because he finds the storytelling interesting and more engaging.
2. More of a quiet observer of discussion about books. Finds it interesting but not necessary.
    1. Engages mildly in discussion with other readers, mostly consulting goodreads while reading book to get insight into what other readers are thinking (doesn't mind spoilers).
    2. Partakes in in person discussions with friends, online discussions are usually on goodreads reviews. Interested in other people's understanding of the book.
    3. Tends to observe more than participate actively.
    4. Shows interest in joining a community online that would share reading experiences with others.
    5. Doesn't mind different preferences in books with other people.
3. Mostly interested in the "big picture" of the book, finds most fulfillment in books that have a "deeper meaning"
    1. 40% completion rate
    2. Abandons unenjoyable books
    3. Abandons books if unhappy with book choice, or simply stop when no longer enjoyable. Doens't necessarily feel like not finishing book is a waste of time.
    4. Finds book worth reading if an interest is found in its themes,plot is less important but still plays a role. Interest usually falls from understanding end result (doesnt mind boring chapters if story holistically is interesting)
    5. Feels more inclined to engage with "harder" books to look for help and confirm understanding with other readers.
    6. No deadlines

Interview Interpretation:

Participant five
Female, 19, student at University of Michigan, East Asian descent, generally reads around 20 books per year, mostly fiction, memoirs, all physical, reads daily, regularly uses social media

1. Likes to find books in person (in bookstores), usually uses social media otherwise
2. TItle, genre, length, aesthetics of a book affect decisions. Some recommendations from goodreads, youtube.
3. Wants to read more nonfiction (more memoirs)
    1. Recommendations from others prompt her to explore
4. Usually goes to bookstore to find a book/online 75% online 25% in person (usually more spontaneous)
    1. Mostly Goodreads
5. More observing discussions, curious about others opinions. Doesn't engage in in person discussion but possibly due to lack of shared interests with readers around her.
6. Doesn't usually discuss books
    1. When discussing, prefers to do so after reading book because of SPOILERS
    2. Mildly interested in finding a community online
7. Possibly doesn't engage in discussions because of lack of people who share her interests in the same genres around her?
8. Interesting point is that readers who buy books may have a tendency to finish a book even if they find it unenjoyable.
    1. 90% completion rate
    2. Usually finishes book if over halfway through *book buying habits may affect*
    3. Abandons if the book is boring or the writing style is unenjoyable (hard to follow)
    4. In finding worthwhile books characters are important, interesting cohesive plot (even if its boring at some points the end should be engaging)
    5. Usually don't want to engage if book is hard to read
    6. No deadlines, just, doesn't like stopping in the middle of a chapter.

Conclusions

1. Most participants use social media (Tiktok, Youtube, Goodreads, Reddit) to find new books. It seems that generally more avid readers still frequent bookstores and make judgements based on the books themselves.
2. While some readers actively participate in book discussions, **many prefer to observe rather than engage**. Community-driven accountability, like buddy reads or book clubs, can significantly increase motivation to complete books, especially when there's anticipation of post-reading discussions. Lack of discussions seems to come from lack of people around the participants who share the same reading pace or taste in books. *However, the desire to avoid spoilers often limits engagement during the reading process.*
3. Book completion is usually motivated by a sense of fulfillment when finishing the book (even if it is boring in some parts the end result brings something to the table.) Other factors are quality of writing, engagement (how exciting the book is), *Those who buy books are more likely to finish books.* Pacing could be motivated by a community of readers at the same pace.

*spoilers may play an important factor in our app. It would be beneficial to have a feature that censors certain comments/discussions until the user indicates having finished the book. (like letterboxd)