

March 2020

## Research Report

# Exploring Streaming Platforms and User Goals



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## Introduction

This report details and explains our research process as a step within the Goal-Directed Design Process for a mobile application designed as a class project. This report summarizes the steps that we took from beginning to end to establish the groundwork for creating our movie streaming assistant application as it details expectations, information on the potential domain, and ultimately user goals. The focus of our application is on the concept of delivering a solution to help our users discover, track, and browse digital streaming content across a variety of platforms.

The report begins with exploring what the purpose and challenges our application seeks to achieve before narrowing into more detailed research, interviews, and finally a clear definition as to what our users' goals are. The purpose of these steps are to set our group up for success when designing our application focused on our users' goals.

### The Challenge

1. Establish business needs and goals
2. Become more informed on the domain
3. Explore current technologies and views
4. Understand our users' behaviors and goals

**Goal-Directed Design (GDD)** is a design process learned within our Interaction Design class. This process starts with a research phase to discover information to help inform the design such as current technologies and users goals before moving into modeling to define what our users look like and what their goals. This research allows designers to define requirements for the product in terms of what it aims to do to help solve the user goals before finally creating the framework which is the actual wireframe design and prototype of the product which can be tested and refined to better meet user goals and expectations.

### The steps for the research process:

1. Kickoff meeting to establish expectations, timelines, requirements, define our challenges, and vision statement.
2. Lit Review to gather information relevant to informing us on the potential product domain.
3. Completive Audit to evaluate current offerings and technologies as well as user views on existing products and applications.
4. Stakeholder Interviews to determine expectations and views on the project.
5. User Interviews to better understand our potential users and discover their behaviors and goals.

# Kickoff Meeting

## Overview

As the first stage of GDD, a kickoff meeting is held to define project goals and schedule further stages in the GDD process. Because this is a project for class we have no real clients. As such we sat down and discussed our assumptions to determine the contents of a kickoff meeting would cover and focus on. We accomplished this through the aid of a kickoff meeting worksheet that allowed us to understand and imagine what ideas and concerns may come up during a real kickoff meeting. These are the results of that worksheet, beginning with a problem statement.

Our app intends to address the current state of content streaming services and their lack of transparency and access. The current state of the Content Streaming Services has focused primarily on delivering tailored content according to business goals. What existing products/services fail to address is allowing users to easily explore, discover, and track content available on their platform. Our product will address this gap by allowing users to easily explore their options according to their tastes, discover new and existing content across platforms, and track content as it enters and exits platforms.

We began our research stage with a series of **educated assumptions**.



## Assumptions

We determined that our users are young adults aged 18-29 that watch movies and TV online. They are particular about what they watch and don't just throw anything on as background noise or for entertainment. They enjoy a range of genres or at least a range within a singular genre of movie or show. The user would not be described as a movie or TV fanatic but rather middleground in terms of how much of a focus they put on entertainment.

In regard to where our product would fit into users' lives, we determined that it would be used in the realm of leisure or relaxation. It would be used after work or school in a casual setting such as the home. Our product should be sleek, but still content heavy. Content being defined as the number of movie and TV titles on the app, not simply text-based content. The app is likely to be used in dark settings, and should therefore reflect those settings in its content and look. It should be simplistic and quickly and easily allow users to discover and search for a wide range of content.

We presume that the most important features on our app will be accurate movie and TV titles, ability to search and discover content, customization and filtering of

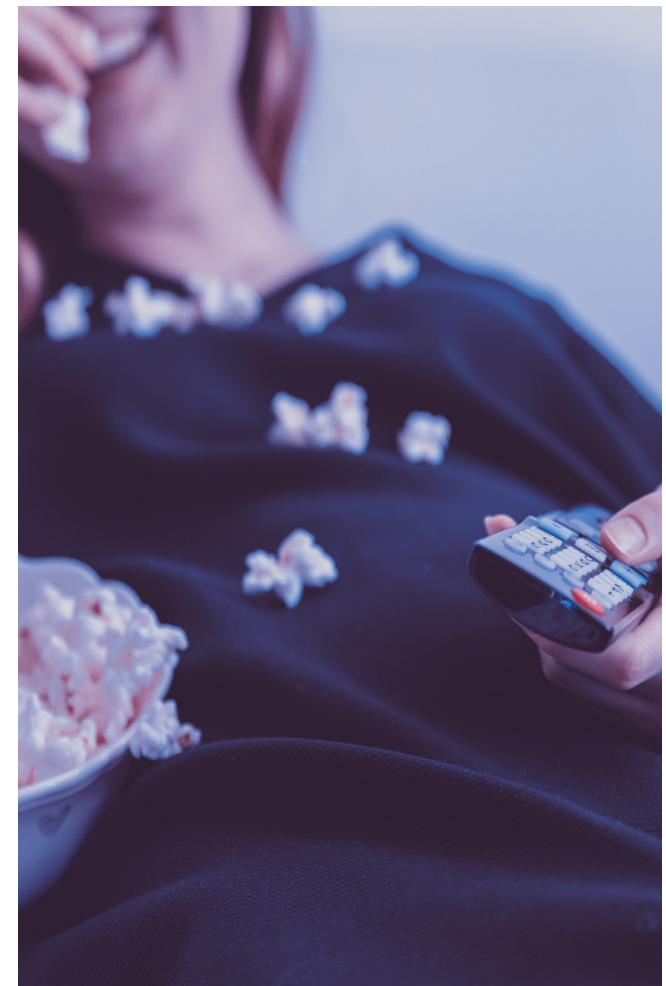


content according to users' preferences or streaming services, clarification of where content can be viewed, categories and genres, information on the show or movie and trailers, and a favorites feature.

Our app will most likely be used at night or on weekends during leisure and relaxation time. It will be used in conjunction with other technologies while the user is in front of their TV or computer, or is planning on being in front of these devices. They will use our product while streaming content or beforehand when they have free time to consider what they will watch later in their day.

Our product aims to solve the issues of discovering and browsing/tracking streaming content. If there was a singular value our users would want from our product, it would be clear and easy access to a large set of content across streaming services. In addition, users would also get the benefits of introductions to new content they weren't knowingly looking for, recommendations, the ability to favorite content, and personalization.

We will acquire the majority of our customers through word of mouth, news articles, podcasts, and grassroots campaigns. We will make money from promoted content or ads, and premium ad-free subscriptions.

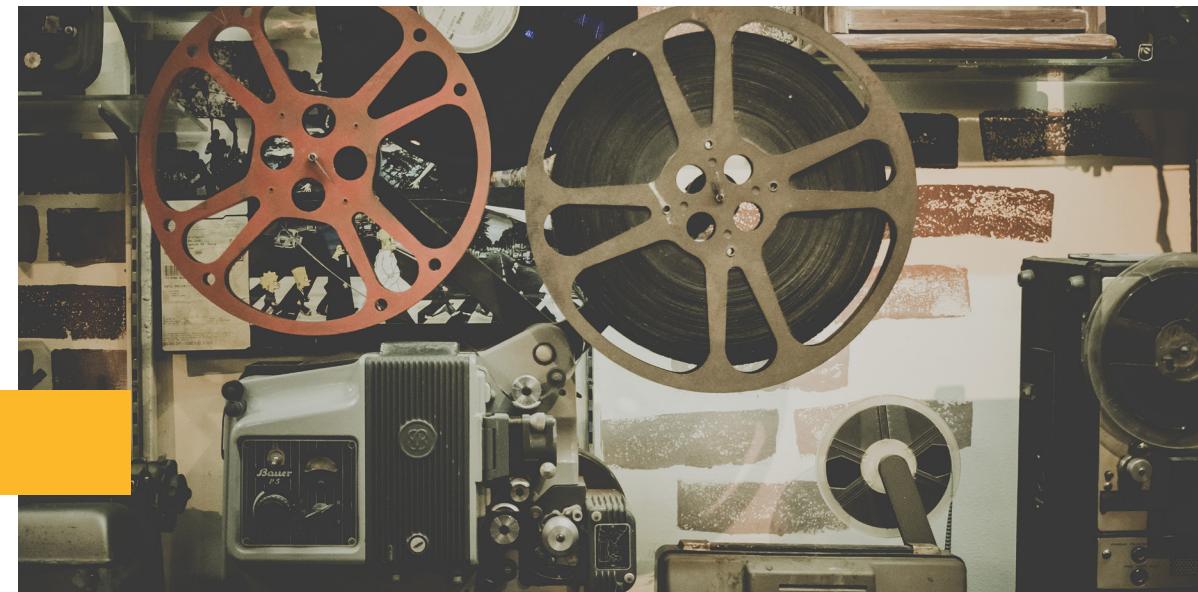


Our primary competition in the market will be movie article websites/suggestion sites such as Decider, and other searchable databases such as JustWatch. We will beat our competition by having better recommendations and customization. We will also deliver content in a more digestible manner that is 100% transparent in regards to movie or TV location and availability.

We will know we are successful when our customers have faster exploration of the platforms' catalogs, less confusion on the platforms, and improved confidence while browsing their platforms.

An assumption that, if proven false will cause our project to fail, is that users struggle to find content, or find existing content searching capabilities to be sufficient for their needs.

## Lit Review



### Introduction

Before conducting stakeholder interviews, our design team reviewed any literature pertaining to our app domain. Normally, as a team, we would collect this literature and use it as a basis for developing questions to ask stakeholders. Because we have no real stakeholders for this project, our literature review is used to give a deeper perspective of the domain we are venturing into.

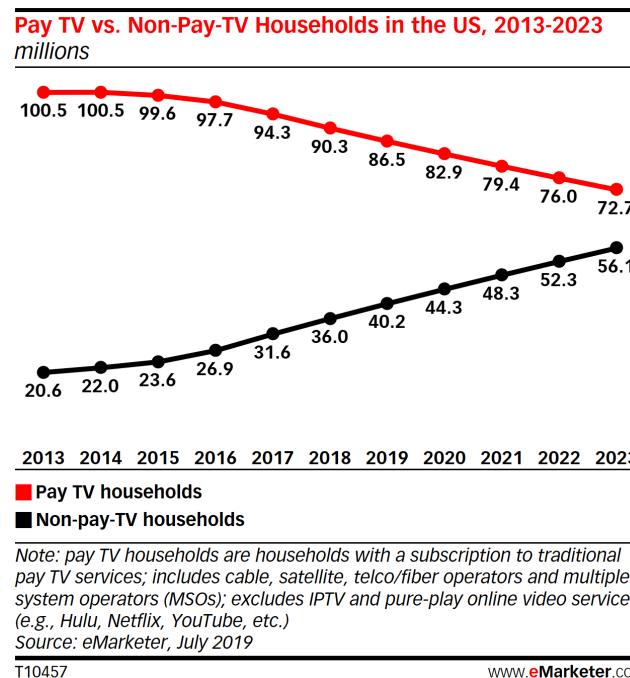
### Landscape of Television

Television today is not the same as television yesterday. Technology is constantly expanding and renewing itself, and certainly the way people watch television has changed since it first came about. In the past, the only way people could watch their favorite shows was through the satellite on their TV or through cable subscriptions. However, with the Internet being as mainstream as it is, people no longer have to rely on cable television as their primary

source for their television shows and movies. According to Bastiaan Baccarne, Tom Evens, and Dimitri Schuurman (2013) this increase of technology and ability to access more television content from more than just the standard television set is due to a "fading connection between 'watching television' and 'the home'" (p. 8). Watching television used to be associated as an at home family experience, but now people can access it and watch whatever and wherever they want.



In 2015, U.S. cable subscriptions declined by 1.13 million, while 2014 saw a loss of only 283,000 subscribers (Convergence Research Group, 2016). A total of 24.6 million households (20.4% of U.S. households) did not have a traditional cable or satellite subscription in 2015. In addition, 2015 added 2.1 million cord-cutter households, up from 1.27 million cord-cutter households in 2014. According to Nielsen (The Nielsen Company, 2016), 40% of Generation Z (ages 15–20), 38% of Millennials (ages 21–34), and 30% of Generation X (ages 35–49) plan to cut the cord on their cable subscriptions. For both Generation Z and Millennials, 31% subscribe to online content providers such as Netflix or Hulu, and 24% of Generation X are online content subscribers.



Digital streaming services have become the primary way most people source their entertainment. Consumers have more choices for TV programming and how that content is acquired than at any other time in the history of television. According to the Nielsen Company, 60% of Americans subscribe to more than one paid video streaming service. Studies also showed that 93% of U.S. consumers say they will either increase or keep their existing streaming services. Through an action referred to as cord-cutting, many consumers are choosing to drop their cable or satellite programming providers in favor of lower-priced and more consumer-friendly programming providers such as Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, and others.

For example, one cord-cutting motivation is to be able to view programming on devices other than home televisions, including devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Additionally, there is the ability to watch programming more specifically tailored to one's tastes and lifestyles. However, there are drawbacks to cord-cutting, including the loss of some convenience as well as the unavailability of some content.



While there's myriad attributes that make a streaming service attractive to users, the content is what ultimately gets them to enter their credit card information. The top four reasons as to why survey participants decided to subscribe to additional streaming services were all content-based, with the top reason being to expand the content that they had available. Content has always

been king, but with the growth of streaming, content creators and rights owners are effectively given more power. Platforms must be able to maintain the programs that audiences want while offering compelling new ones to keep them interested. Wherever good content goes, subscribers will follow.

## Landscape of Streaming

The current generation of children is even more digital than the previous generation. The prevalence of internet connected devices is extremely apparent given the amount of children surfing the web at a young age thanks to the easy access these devices offer. It is estimated according to emarketer.com that approximately 52.4% of kids aged 11 and younger will consume video content online in 2020. Although this number is smaller than kids who watch traditional television, 1 in 9, the time spent watching traditional television has been in decline.



This boom of children consuming entertainment through the internet goes hand in hand with the addition of new streaming platforms. Disney, for instance, is aiming to capitalize on this decrease in traditional television viewership via increasing their viewerbase on the digital landscape with the introduction of their streaming platform Disney+. The platform was said to have been adding nearly a million subscribers a day at

US Digital Video Viewer Penetration, by Age, 2020		
	% of internet users	% of population
0-11	75.8%	52.4%
12-17	96.2%	93.7%
18-24	97.8%	96.8%
25-34	94.3%	91.0%
35-44	91.5%	87.0%
45-54	86.0%	79.8%
55-64	68.7%	59.4%
65+	61.8%	43.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.4%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>

Note: internet users who watch streaming or downloaded video content via any device at least once per month  
Source: eMarketer, March 2019

www.emarketer.com



launch according to MarketWatch. Given their family friendly focus Disney is hoping to capture those children who are watching less content on the television as viewership has dropped from children 11 and under. It is estimated that these children were watching nearly 2 and a half hours of television a day in 2017 and now only 1 hour and 48 minutes in 2019.

## Competitive Audit



All of this data was collected from both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store except for Decider.com information as they do not have a mobile application. Certain applications are platform specific and are noted as such below their individual review cards.

### Evaluating Competitors

To gain a stronger understanding of the domain of online streaming content we conducted a competitive audit to explore existing solutions to see what their solutions to user goals are as well as gain insight into user responses to these implementations. This strategy also gives further insight into potential technologies that can be leveraged to develop a practical solution. We explored both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store in conjunction with a web only service to gain a range of insight on the potential domain.

We started by exploring current solutions on the market to understand what solutions are being delivered.

Taking these solutions we were able to map and compare the various applications to see where certain products provide potential value and where others lack in terms of features and potential value. We targeted the most popular applications and websites to have access to solutions that are most widely used and offer a more developed solution. We decided on Moviebase, Reelgood, JustWatch, Yidio, and Decider.com. Although the website we chose does not have its own mobile application we still determined it to have value as it is something our team was familiar with as two of us had used it prior to explore streaming content.

Once we determined which applications we wanted to explore, we started interacting with each one to determine features that we determined to be useful or important according to assumptions and plans we made in our kickoff meeting. By keeping in mind the idea of how our app would fit into the world of our presumed users, we could target specific features that would help our users complete their goals in addition to other features that we had not considered. This information does not determine what our user goals are or what features will end up in our product but it gives information as to what things we might look for in our user interviews. These products will ultimately become a measuring stick to our solution in terms of functionality, usability, and features.

After exploring the apps for ourselves, we began reading reviews of the applications on both the Play Store

and App Store where applicable. Unfortunately there are no reviews for the Decider.com website and as such it was just used for exploring potential solutions. Our primary focus was on current reviews of the applications as to not conflate pain points or benefits mentioned by users for previous versions of the applications. However, the reviews often did mention things that had changed both in a positive manner and negative. We made note of reviews that mentioned both specific aspects as well as the frequency of reviews that mentioned the same pain points or benefits within the applications. Reviews consisting of shorter comments were not noted beyond the overall rating within the application marketplace as they often held little value in terms of information provided.



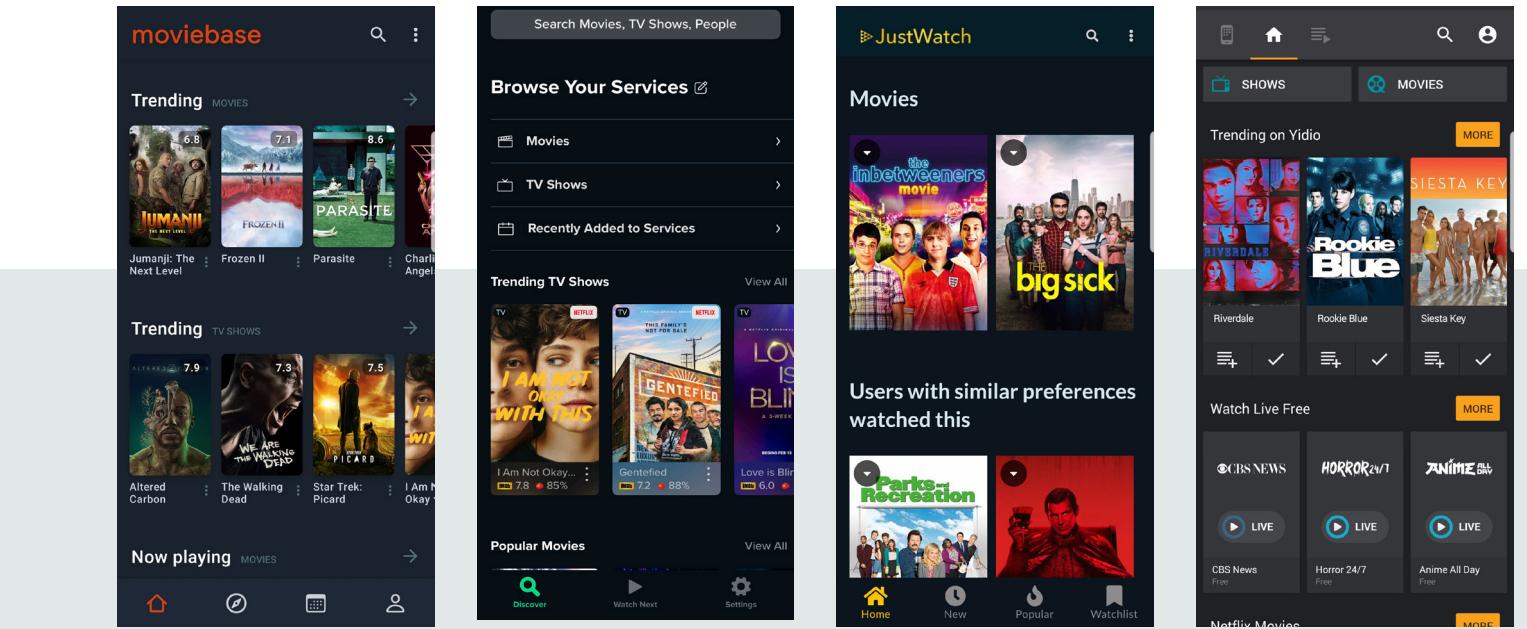
	JustWatch	Yidio	Moviebase	Decider	Reelgood
Features					
List of Saved Content to Watch	✓	✓	✓		✓
Free to Use	✓	Premium Options	Premium Options	✓	✓
Trending Page With Popular Content	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personalization of Recommendations	✓				
Search Content by Streaming Platform	✓			✓	✓
Browse by Genre/Category			✓	✓	
Movie Information and Ratings	✓	✓	✓		✓
Filter by Rating, Genre, and Release Date	✓				
Track Watched Content/Currently Watching			✓		
Social Community Aspect			✓		

Comparison of features across competitors

<b>Moviebase</b> N/A   4.0 ★	<b>Reelgood</b> 4.3   N/A ★	<b>JustWatch</b> 4.4   3.8 ★	<b>Yidio</b> 4.2   3.8 ★
Reviews	Reviews	Reviews	Reviews
<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notifications when new content in a series releases</li> <li>Easy to navigate</li> <li>Trending content</li> <li>No advertisements</li> <li>One time payment for premium</li> <li>Ability to track what to watch and what you have watched</li> </ul> <b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Issues</li> <li>Titles starting with The/A not listed by general name in list</li> <li>Cannot sort watchlist when adding content to a set</li> <li>Navigation is not intuitive</li> <li>No category filter in search</li> </ul>	<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pleasant UI</li> <li>Easy to use</li> <li>Ability to add content to watchlist for a later time</li> <li>Ability to search various platforms</li> <li>Direct link to streaming platform to watch content</li> </ul> <b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Issues</li> <li>Search results missing popular content</li> <li>Toggle for watchlist not clear</li> <li>Difficult to navigate</li> <li>Hard to find platform filter</li> <li>Difficulties with filtering searches</li> </ul>	<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fills in needs of search function within streaming services</li> <li>Ability to filter searches</li> <li>Time Saver</li> <li>Personalization</li> <li>Access to new releases</li> <li>Ability to see ratings</li> </ul> <b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of search filtering</li> <li>Not easy to navigate/use</li> <li>Lack of platform filtering</li> <li>Outdated search results</li> <li>Requires payment for features</li> <li>Inconsistent information</li> <li>Lack of transparency as to what the app is</li> <li>Error with notifications</li> </ul>	<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cataloging content with where to watch it</li> <li>Ability to track content to watch in the future</li> </ul> <b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Issues</li> <li>Search results missing popular content</li> <li>Outdated search results</li> <li>Requires payment for features</li> <li>Inconsistent information</li> <li>Lack of transparency as to what the app is</li> <li>Error with notifications</li> </ul>
Moviebase   Play Store	Reelgood   App Store	JustWatch   App Store & Play Store	Yidio   App Store & Play Store

## Synthesizing Data

We took this information and synthesized it down into the most relevant details primarily focused on frequency of comments or community engagement in the form of marking comments helpful on the Play Store. These points will be used to help focus our application in the framework section after determining our user goals to help avoid potential pain points. This information paired with the other stages within our research all focus on creating a viable solution to meet our user goals while focusing on efficiency and preparation to avoid potential pitfalls. This information also gives greater insight into potential discussions to explore in our interviews.



# Interviews

## Stakeholder Interviews

Because this is a project and we have no real clients, one of the things we had to think about was how to understand what stakeholders would be looking for. Although we did not have real stakeholders, we approached a few areas of concern that stakeholders may have. We determined that, in general, they would be most concerned with product vision, scheduling, user identity, and technical feasibility. These are our interpretations of their concerns.

We believe stakeholders would be interested in the goals that the app was trying to achieve. They would see the need for better tracking of streaming services, and want a solution that would make it more efficient and transparent.

They would see an opportunity for a solution and want discoverability to be the central focus of the project. If our users found what they were looking for, it would be a win for the app. With the amount of new streaming services on the market, stakeholders would think this to be a timely implementation of such a product.

Moving on to project scheduling, there would be a required set interval of time for certain aspects of the project to roll out. This would be to ensure the scope of the project matched the time being invested into it. The entirety of the project would be completed by April 20th with check in points for each stage.

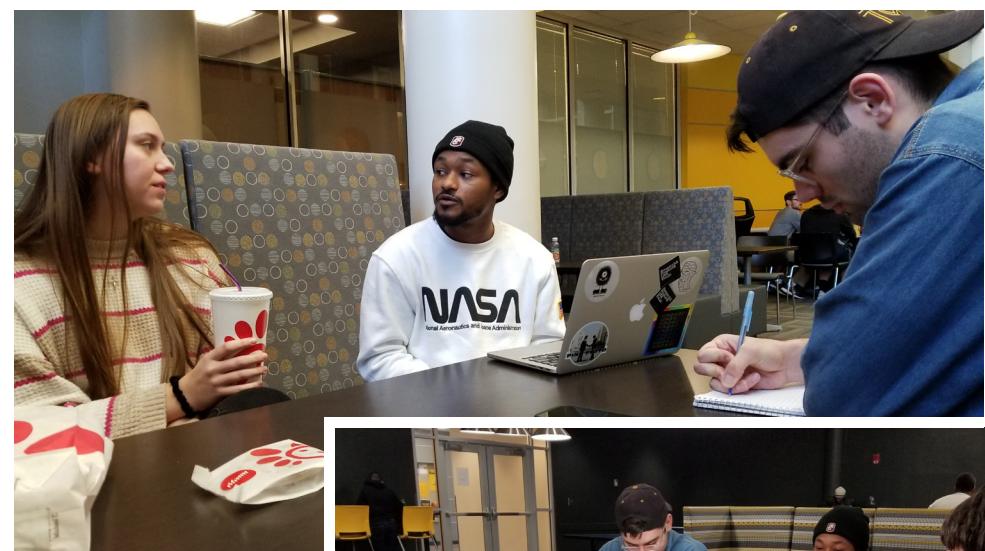
The stakeholders may also be interested in who the target users may be, and how we could best cater to their goals. They determined the users may be those who are casual with streaming services and although they use them frequently, are typically not expert users or complete beginners. They wanted us to research and design with this potential user in mind.

With technical feasibility in mind, stakeholders would be concerned about compiling the large sets of data required to make a product that lived up to its perceived goals. They might feel that the function of the application must match the claims it made in regard to providing users with transparent and discoverable content.

## User Interviews

In order to properly understand who our users are and what their goals are we conducted user interviews to explore who our potential users are, what context the application fits into their lives, their goals and motivations, their mental models, and problems and frustrations within the domain of online streaming. To achieve this knowledge we first created a persona hypothesis to think about what our user might look like in terms of what type of people might use our application, how their needs and behaviors might vary, and what behaviors and environments might need to be explored.

Overall our user interviews went very well. We learned a lot of information about our users ranging from their general life and habits to their specific interaction with streaming platforms. Although our hypothesis was fairly close to reality there were a number of small details about how often and where the users watch content that differed from our initial assumptions. This information discovered is critical in accurately establishing what goals our users have as well as the proper context that our application will fit into the users' lives by establishing patterns among the various participants.



## Persona Hypothesis

The persona hypothesis acts as a means to create discussion and get us on track for moving into interviews. It is the first step in allowing us to identify and synthesize the persona which is the step after research. Based on our research and knowledge on the domain of online streaming we created our persona hypothesis of who we believe our users look like. We came up with the following as our assumed user:

Young adult around 20 years old who watches content (Movies and TV online). They are particular about what they watch, and don't just throw anything on as background noise for entertainment. Enjoys a range of genres or at least a range within a singular genre of movie or TV show. The user wouldn't be described as a movie or tv fanatic but rather a middle-ground viewer in terms of how much of a focus they put on entertainment. They make use of multiple streaming platforms but use Netflix as their primary platform. This aspect of their life fits in the realm of leisure or relaxation for the user. They occasionally utilize streaming in their free time. The application would be used after work or school in a casual setting such as the home typically at night or in a dark setting. They often struggle to find content on various platforms. They watch content primarily at home but sometimes on the go when they find time.

## Preparing and Interviewing User Participants

Once we established who our users might look like we were able to create a set of questions to help jumpstart our interviews. Although we established a set of questions, we did not strictly ask every question or ask them in a particular order. Rather we simply had a gently guided conversation with our participants allowing them to talk about specific while utilizing open-ended and closed-ended questions when needed.



In order to have an insightful interview we had one moderator who focused on having a conversation while there were two facilitators who made notes and asked the participant to clarify points or speak more deeply about comments that came up in the discussion. In total we interviewed five participants which will be used to establish our persona once mapped and synthesized to create an application according to their goals in context of their life.



## The Participants

The first participant is a full time computer science major who commutes to campus. On his days that he is on campus he spends the full day there from the morning till night with gaps of breaks throughout the day. He also balances his week with his job working at his family's car lot primarily working on their website. His focus is on his career but he balances his time to allow him to enjoy his free time whether that be relaxing on his own or playing soccer with friends. He often finds himself relaxing trying to get his mind off things by watching his favorite TV show The Office or other streaming content. When he does choose to watch content besides his favorite show it can be hard for him to decide what to watch among the pages of recommendations. At times he utilizes social media to learn of new content coming out. He primarily watches on his own in his office where he has a TV but occasionally he will watch a movie with his family. He enjoys discussing shows and movies with friends but finds it difficult to do so when it is for a show that none of his friends watch.

## The Participants Continued

The second participant is a freshman business major who often finds himself creating stories in his head. When he isn't creating stories he is either playing video games or talking with his friends. He is very socially motivated and loves when he can meet and talk with new people. His stories are inspired by the various anime that he watches online and would one day love to create a movie based on the characters he has drawn up in his head. He primarily watches anime but he also has a soft spot for super hero movies such as Spider-Man and finds himself streaming Spider-Man: Into the SpiderVerse multiple times a month. He primarily finds new content to watch from discussions with friends and makes use of a variety of platforms to stream content in his free time when he is not on campus. He also discovers content on his favorite streaming site, Vrv, as they recommend new content that matches his tastes. However, this is more difficult on other platforms as the recommendations do not work as well for delivering content he wants to watch especially given the difficulties of browsing by category.

The third participant is a civil engineering major. He loves technology and being able to be in control of what he is doing as to make sure he does not get distracted. He balances his time between relaxing and doing his school work when not on campus. His primary form of relaxation is playing video games and socializing with friends. He does

not stream content very often, usually only 30 minutes a day. When he does stream it is to watch the next episode within the series that he started. He enjoys discussing what he has been watching with friends. His biggest frustrations with streaming is his tendency to get distracted when watching and whenever content that he was intending to watch is no longer on the platform he uses.

The fourth participant is a computer engineering major. She spends a lot of her free time socializing with others whether that be in person with her sorority sisters or online via social media. When not balancing school work she finds herself spending time either out and about or in her house playing video games or relaxing with a TV show on in the background. She rarely finds herself sitting down to stream and watch content as she finds it hard to keep herself focused on what is on the screen. When she does watch content she usually discovers it from talking with friends and never browses by genre or recommendation lists. She does have access to a variety of streaming platforms to choose from if she has something in mind to watch or put on in the background.



The fifth participant is an interactive design major. He is a commuter student and works a job while in school. He has very limited free time and says he often neglects things to allow him to have more time to relax. He typically has one or two hours of free time a day and will spend this time playing video games or watching a movie. He loves finding new movies to watch and will watch most anything especially if critics give it good reviews. He has access to a variety of streaming platforms and also finds himself at the movie theater fairly frequently. If he can't find what he is wanting to watch on one of the platforms he has he will rent it on YouTube. He prefers to stream

content solo as to not get distracted but likes to discuss things he has watched with friends. When he is going to pick something to watch when he is by himself he typically spends about 30 seconds looking for something and if he cannot decide he gives up. When he is looking for something when viewing with someone else such as his girlfriend he often spends more time browsing for what to watch. He cares about reviews of movies but usually only looks after he has seen the movie to compare his thoughts with others on it. His biggest complaint with streaming is when he cannot find something interesting to watch.



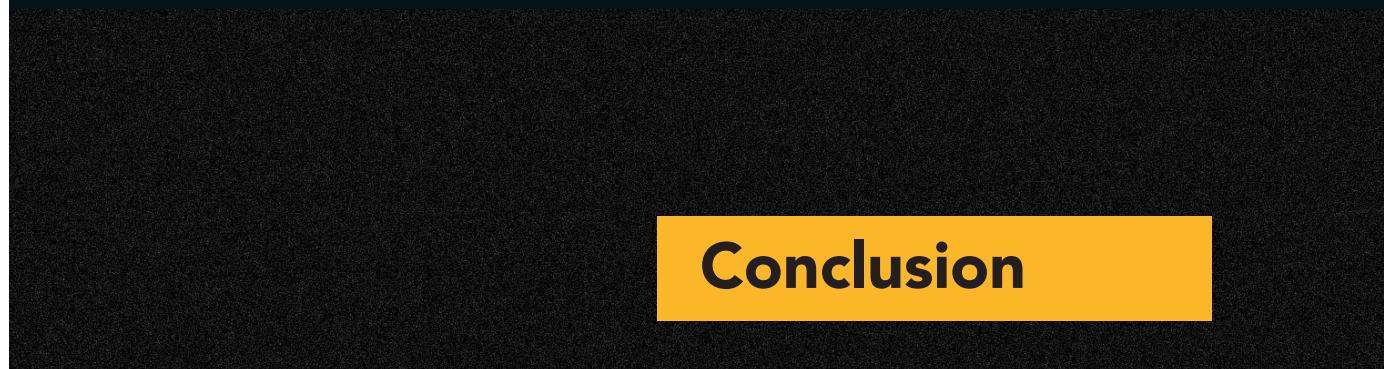
## Results

After completing the interviews we utilized affinity mapping to create discussion from each team member's viewpoint. Each team member wrote down important thoughts and details observed in the interviews on sticky notes before coming together to group them by similarities. This allowed us to each put forth our own unique observations while discovering key factors established by commonalities within our notes. We each placed our sticky notes on the wall and discussed with each other what we noticed others had written and where it lined up with our own thoughts. The main groupings that emerged covered activities, social importance, worklife balance, pain points within streaming, where the participants streamed, what services were used, and the settings the participants streamed in. These commonalities discovered between the participants determine what the goals of the users are and define areas that our application will help the user achieve.

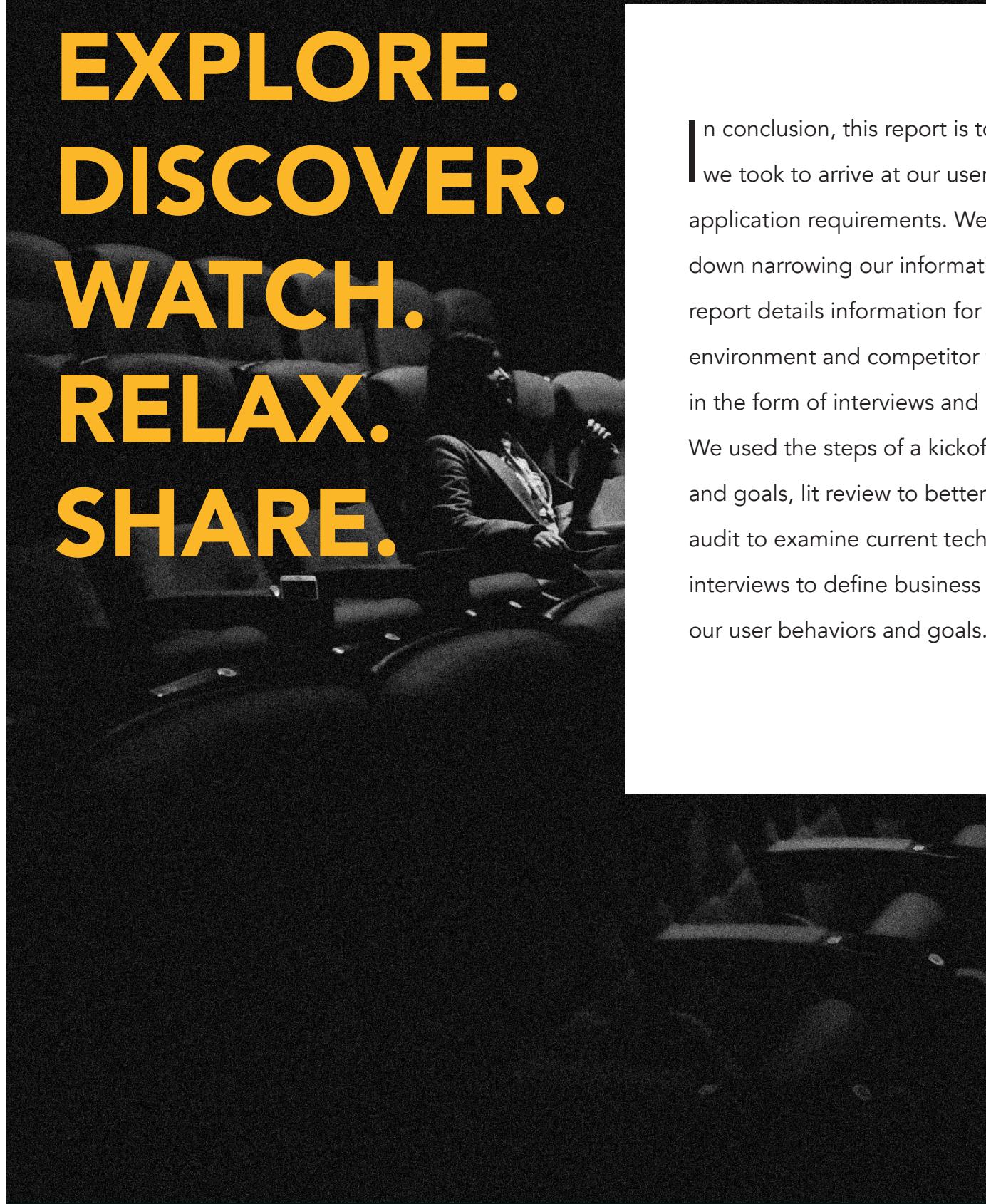


## Discovered User Goals

1. Make the most of their free time
2. Discover new movies and shows
3. Be entertained
4. Feel relaxed



**EXPLORE.  
DISCOVER.  
WATCH.  
RELAX.  
SHARE.**



In conclusion, this report is to demonstrate and explain the process we took to arrive at our user goals which are used to determine our application requirements. We started with a broad exploration moving down narrowing our information into a more focused result. This report details information for reference on the domain both in terms of environment and competitor technologies as well as user information in the form of interviews and synthesis into goals and behaviors. We used the steps of a kickoff meeting to define the business needs and goals, lit review to better understand the domain, competitive audit to examine current technologies and views, stakeholder interviews to define business views, and user interviews to understand our user behaviors and goals.

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