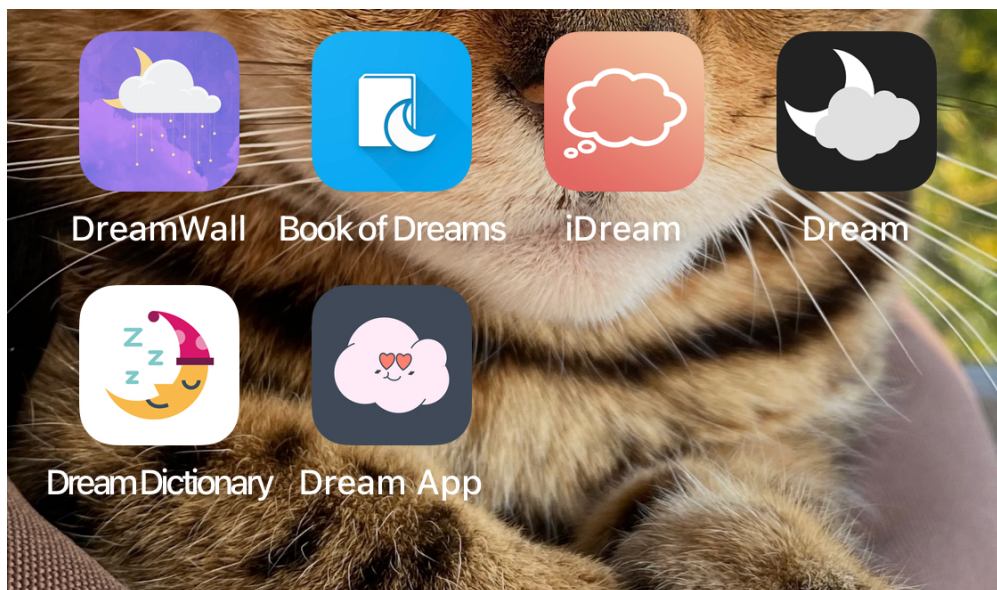Summary of Dream App Research

I reviewed six iOS Dream apps:

- DreamWall
- Book of Dreams
- iDream
- Dream (Ultimate Dream Journal)
- Dream Dictionary
- Dream App

Dream Journals
Some apps offer only dream interpretation via a dream dictionary of keywords, or in the case of Dream App, the opportunity to have a 1 to 1 interactive chat with a 'dream expert'. Most apps also offer the opportunity to record dreams, usually by typing in a description, sometimes with user generated tags or AI identified keywords, which do not appear to be not context sensitive. I tested all the apps I reviewed with the same dream – I am trying to run away from something, but my legs don't work properly, and I can only move very slowly. All the apps I tested picked up the key word running but also identified work as a keyword, misinterpreting it as a noun rather than a verb. When possible, I also tested each app by searching for dream interpretations for the keyword cat.

Dream Interpretation

Several of the apps I looked at seemed to use a similar source for the interpretation of dreams. These tend to be based upon superstition, there is no scientific evidence that for example dreaming of running means I am trying to avoid an issue, dreaming of a cat is not a supernatural warning of bad luck to come.

An article from the Psychology Today website entitled Do dreams really mean anything by Dr David B Feldman Ph.D suggests that dreams are simply our unconscious mind processing

the events of the day or even just randomly firing brain circuitry, which we may try to make sense of when we wake by finding a narrative thread.

Whilst there may not be any scientific evidence to link dreams with specific meaning, there is considerable interest in dream analysis and dream journaling. Many users have written positive reviews stating that they like being able to record and review their dreams.

It may be that there is a gap in the market for an app that does not claim to interpret dreams but allows the user to identify patterns and correlations by recording the type and content of dreams alongside other factors such as minor or major life events, mental health and wellbeing, physical health, diet, exercise, location, hormones, pregnancy, and sleep quality.

As well as recording the details of the dream, it may be desirable for users to quickly quantify these factors using either rating scales, tags or icons.

Funding/Profit generation
Most apps used pop up or half page advertising to generate revenue, only one charged a subscription, which included access to an 'expert' for one-to-one dream analysis. In all cases found the adverts distracting and intrusive. It would be useful to find out if people would prefer to pay for the app with a one off payment, optional in-app payments to unlock extra features, a regular subscription or a free app funded by advertisers.

Key strengths that could be carried forward in our project
Some allowed users to create their own tags. Some provided libraries of symbols that could be used to quickly categorise/tag dream content for easy searching/pattern recognition. The option to share dreams with selected contacts or publicly or keep them private and password protected. The option to backup or export as one user complained of losing a whole year's worth of dreams after an update.

Weaknesses that could be improved upon/eliminated in our project
Poor translations/interpretations/lacking context/inappropriate/offensive/alarming language are not acceptable – is it necessary/desirable to provide 'meaning/interpretation'? The ability to voice record dreams (either into a voice note or speech to text conversion) may also be a desirable feature.

User interface
I found some apps more attractive in terms of colour themes and layout, but this is subjective. It is harder to qualitatively assess the visual appeal as it will differ from person to person, however it is possible to objectively compare and quantify use of screen space and font size – in some cases the app content was very small and the layout overcrowded or dominated by adverts.
One app attracted angry reviews by requiring a lot of personal information/time invested typing/waiting while the dream was 'analysed' before requesting payment to see the results. Some tried to appear 'friendly' using cartoon-like graphics, however this may appeal to some users while putting off others. Further research is needed to establish what colours/fonts/layout target user(s) finds visually attractive/appealing/comfortable.

Suggestions for further research

Target Market identification

User requirements/expectations/preferences surrounding:

- Dream recording and dream interpretation
- Self-analysis/pattern identification
- Profit generation
- User Interface/graphics
- Use of device hardware – microphone/accelerometer to record sleep behaviour/time sleep

Name:	Book of Dreams
Developer:	Tihomir Radev
Notable review comments	Racist language found in dream interpretation – developer responded with apology
Notable Features	Works offline
Strengths	Works offline
Weaknesses	Dream interpretations appear to be translated, possibly from Russian, interpretations are quite alarming/inappropriately aggressive/potentially upsetting/offensive Very small text, most of screen dominated by adverts, very basic layout Does not have dream recording functionality

Name:	Dream App – Interpret dreams
Developer:	DreamApp Ltd
Notable review comments	Many reviews claim the app is a scam as it is not possible to receive a free dream interpretation – credit card details must be entered before you can sign up for a free 7 day trial. Lots of personal details taken including details of dream, before you are asked to subscribe.
Notable Features	Subscription service, claims not to be like other dream apps, option to chat 1:1 with a 'dream expert' 'Manga' style graphics Claims to be the 9th most popular lifestyle app and #1 dream app - unsubstantiated
Strengths	Standard of English grammar in Dream interpretations is better than in many other apps which feel 'translated'. Searchable Dream Symbols

Weaknesses	User is not aware they will need to pay and may waste a lot of time typing in personal details without getting an interpretation – this is evidenced in the negative reviews I used the phrase 'my legs didn't work" the keyword work was identified and taken out of context in the interpretation.

Name:	DreamWall Dream Journal iDream
Developer:	Erdinc Bakir
Notable review comments	Too many adverts
Notable Features	• Shared Public Dream Wall • Dream Analysis (keywords from brief text input) • Dream Diary • Keyword Search
Strengths	Attractive, appealing, cohesive graphics
Weaknesses	Provides only very basic analysis of keywords, misinterpretation of keywords

Name:	Book of Dreams
Developer:	Lost Ego Studios Limited
Notable review comments	Interpretations based on superstition not psychology Lost a year's worth of dreams
Notable Features	Icons to tag dream mood/feelings Stock images linked to keywords
Strengths	Cohesive/consistent colour scheme
Weaknesses	Mostly negative dream interpretations/ based only upon keyword matches

Name:	Dream Dictionary and Meaning
Developer:	Emre Cakir
Notable review comments	Inaccurate search results – all listings containing search term also returned
Notable Features	Recent Dreams List (recent searches), Liked Dreams (tagged searches) Keyword lookup only
Strengths	Better standard of English, for example similar but less violent interpretation of keyword 'cat'
Weaknesses	Stock image may not match keyword (see screenshots) Full screen pop up adverts that can't be immediately dismissed

Name:	Dream Journal Ultimate

Developer:	Dream labs LLC
Notable review comments	This app makes it easy to track and share dreams, Users/reviewers appear to like the social aspect of sharing dreams/reading the dreams of others, as there are requests for more social features
Notable Features	Not a dream interpreter, just a journal – dreams can be kept private within a PIN secured area or tagged and shared with others if an account is created.
Strengths	Simple interface, daily reminder can be set to record dreams, shared dreams can be tagged with user defined tags.
Weaknesses	Limited features, no option to attribute meaning/seek interpretation