

Design Decisions

User Testing Feedback

Summarize the feedback from user testing, noting what you found most surprising/interesting about the feedback

Note each step that you asked the participant to take in its own paragraph with a heading. There should be no more than 8 steps that the user takes. Then, write one paragraph summarizing your reflection about what was surprising. Each paragraph should be no more than 3 sentences.

1. User Creates an account. I saw that the user was confused when they landed on the home page as it was empty, despite having a welcome message. After a while, the user clicked on the **Let's go** which took them to the **Discover** page where they can find the freets from popular users whom they can follow

2. User Creates a Freet. I saw that soon after creating a freet, the user kept on looking at the home page to see what happened to the newly created freet. The user was surprised to see their freet in their feed and they thought that the feed only contained content from users they follow.

3. User Likes a Freet. This is one of the actions that the user quickly figured out. However the user was curious whether they have to reload the page to see if their like was recorded or not. Thus, the user liked, disliked and liked again and was impressed to see the changes taking effect after every click.

4. User Modifies a Freet. The user, from the feedback they gave, did not know the implications of modifying a freet on its refreets and likes. I noticed the user was a bit surprised when they saw a pop up asking them to confirm whether they want to continue editing the freet, which also confirms that they are willing to have all the likes and refreets reset. The user cancelled the update after that confirmation message, changed the freet content and then made the update again.

5. User Follows another User. Interestingly, the user followed the user with the most popular freet after navigating to the Discover page. I loved the transfer of knowledge that happened when they hovered on the name of the user in the freet card as this is what normally happens on other platforms. They actually got to navigate to the user's profile by clicking on the user name in the freet card.

6. User Changes Account to Private. The user struggled a bit to perform this action as they did not really know where to get the option to change the account to private. The user hovered once or twice on their name in the navigation bar before clicking it to display the profile menu

with the settings option. It is from here that the user quickly knew to navigate to settings -> privacy and then toggling the private switch.

7. User Reviews Follow Request from another User. I sent a follow request to the user after they had changed their account to private and asked them to review the request (accept or decline). The user navigated to the home page and clicked on the notification bell icon as it indicated that there was a one notification. The user seemed impressed with how their attention was quickly drawn to the notification icon once they got the notification

- One of the surprising things I noticed was that the user never got to interact with the Follow Suggestions feature which I expected them to, at least around the time they created the account. The idea was to make it easy for the user to find connections but I guess the main source of connections was the discover page.
- One striking discovery was that the user never got to use the search bar to search any other user. The user commented that this was not really something they ever thought of using since the home page gave them access to the features they wanted that time, that is, most popular freets and being able to follow their authors.
- I created an account from which I sent the follow request to the user during testing. I liked the freet that the user posted without telling the user. I was impressed with how the users attention was again directed towards the notification bell icon which they clicked to see the notification. The user's comment, "...so this is how I know who liked my posts..." showed me how the initial purpose of the notifications was being fulfilled.

Sketches and Finished Frontend

1. The Navigation Bar

The navigation bar on Fritter is the most important feature that I carefully thought about while coming up with my sketches. It exposes some of the most important features that make Fritter what it is. The navigation bar is carefully designed such that no matter what the user does, where the user scrolls or page they open, they can always have access to it. It is however not displayed on the register and login pages as the main focus is to get users authenticated and have the navigation bar offer them the best experience.

The application name

It may seem trivial but this acts as a means to always know which application they are currently interacting with without having to try and infer from the content as users interact with several platforms at the same time. This also allows the user to navigate back to their home page by clicking on it without having to navigate through the browser history with the back button or having to explicitly type the URL for the home page every time.

The search bar

This is also one of the most important features that I believe users need the quickest and easiest access to. Users can think of searching any other user anytime while doing several things on the application. This allows the users to quickly perform their searches any time with a single click. This search bar is also carefully designed to give the users the best experience while searching through Fritter through the use of search suggestions as explained later.

The profile menu

This gives an authenticated user quick access to important actions mainly associated with their account. The menu is activated when the user clicks on their name next to a user profile icon. It offers the user an option to navigate to their profile, view the settings page, and sign out. Users may want to perform these actions any time, and they have been carefully grouped together; they mainly affect the user's account/profile.

The notification icon

This serves as a means to alert authenticated users of the recent engagements by other users with their content. This allows users to easily have access to updates about likes they are receiving, refreets, new followers, follow requests, and whether follow requests have been accepted or not.

The create freet button

Fritter is made what it is through users posting and sharing content. Users cannot only engage with Fritter more through freets. Users follow other users as a way to subscribe to their content - freets, and refreets. This is why creating freets is one of the most important actions that authenticated users need to have immediate access to, the same way they have immediate access to searching other users.

Login and Sign up buttons

These will be displayed while the user is not yet authenticated. Fritter allows users to browse through freets without being authenticated. Having these two actions readily available allows users to either create an account or log in any time as the idea is to make room for maximum engagement as quickly as possible.

Alternatives Considered

One of the things I considered was not adding the create fret button in the navigation bar since the user can as well post a fret from the top of the home page. However, the downside with this is that it forces the user to perform at least two clicks from where they are for them to start creating a fret. Having the create fret button readily available makes it so much easier for users to post frets with little effort.

I also considered creating an application icon with the letter 'F' and displaying it instead of the application name. This is a great idea but I ended up not considering it since Fritter is a new application with several other platforms that have a name that starts with an 'F' that are well established already. This means that users will not have to struggle to distinguish whether Fritter is another application from just an 'F' icon.

2. Fret Action Icons

In coming up with my sketches, after drawing inspirations from several platforms, I realized that users normally interact with content through the use of icons, and their state of interaction with that content is shown by how the icon is displayed. This is why in displaying frets, I indicated each action the user can take with an icon that means the same thing on several other platforms, that is, a heart icon for liking, a retweet icon for refreting, a trash icon for deleting a fret and an edit icon for modifying a fret. This helps users to transfer the knowledge they have about engaging with content from other platforms they normally use.

One of the great designs for these icons is the ability for users to see what each icon represents and the action they are about to take. This helps in removing the assumption that the users have knowledge of what the icon represents, thus offering some textual feedback while the user is about to trigger the action represented by the icon to accompany each icon. Though this was planned while coming up with the sketches, it was however implemented while working on the UI design.

Alternatives Considered

One of the alternatives I considered was to instead use buttons with text, for instance, a button labeled 'Like' for liking a fret. In as much as this works the same way icons work, this however does not make the UI more appealing. When a user likes a fret, the

icon changes from a boring gray to a vibrant orange which adds a nice contrast to the user's page, not obstructed by some labels. As stated in the above discussion, this alternative was not hard to discard as the convention across most platforms uses icons for such actions. As much as being unique is great, it may render the application not user-friendly by not providing some common functionalities.

3. Popular Users

One of the features I decided to add to my Fritter while coming up with my sketches is the ability for users to be able to get suggestions for the most popular users on Fritter. These users are displayed on all the pages (except the settings, register, and login pages). This is a means for users to always know and have quick access to the profiles of the popular users on Fritter. This list of users is accessible at the top of every page and will not disappear with user scrolling to allow users to access it from any section of the page.

Criteria for displaying popular users to different user groups

For authenticated users, these are displayed as **Follow Suggestions**. This is because these are the people that are most popular on Fritter since they have more followers, thus, other users might also not have to manually search for popular users in case they want to learn from their content or follow them as well. However, this list will not display any popular users that the current user already follows.

For unauthenticated users, these are displayed as just **Popular Users**. This is because, when users are not authenticated, they can only see freets posted by all the users on the home page. For a new user wanting to learn about Fritter before creating an account, they might want to know who the popular users are and what kind of content they post. This may then help them have an informed decision about what Fritter is and the kind of posts that can attract more people.

Criteria for selecting popular users

Fritter offers an option for users to make their accounts private, such that, despite their freets being accessible to the general public, only their followers can view their refreets, likes, followers, and following which I call private information of a user. One of the implications of making an account private is that the user will not show up as a suggestion for any user despite having so many followers. This is in such a way that users can always maintain their private status without drawing attention to their profiles.

Alternatives Considered

One other alternative I considered was to use more metrics in determining who the popular users are such as likes and refreets. However, I ended up not creating one metric which depends on the number of followers, likes, and refreets as the last two became useful in composing the Discover Page to be talked about later. I also considered adding this list of popular users within the general flow of the page, for instance at the top. As this feature encourages users to connect with other users, this is just as important as posting freets since posting freets is meaningless without an audience. This means, making this list stick to the top of the page outside of the general page flow, which I ended up doing, ensures that it gets the same level of significance as posting freets, which is made possible by the **Create Freet** button always accessible in the navigation bar as explained earlier.

4. Notifications

One of the main features I got to add while implementing my UI design is notifications. On Fritter, users can engage with other users' content by upvoting and refreeting. Users can also follow other users and send follow requests to other users with private accounts who can either accept or decline the requests at their own discretion. When a user sends a follow request to another user, from my earlier implementation in previous versions of Fritter, the recipient received notifications about these requests on their notifications page. This displayed me with a chance to expand this idea as follows:

Freet notifications

Some users may never know how other users are engaging with their content unless they constantly monitor their freets to see how other users are engaging with them. Users may also need to know which users have engaged with their freets and when. This is why every time a user's freets are liked and refreeted, the user will get notifications about it which will always stay in the user's notifications as a means to show the history of how other users have engaged with this user's content.

Followers notifications

Users with private accounts already receive notifications about follow requests from other users. This showed me an opportunity to also display notifications when other users follow the user in the case that the user does not have a private account.

The users who would have sent follow requests to other users do not have any way to know when their follow requests are accepted unless they remember to go to the profile of the person they have sent the follow request to check the status of the request. This presents an opportunity to update the user of the status of the request only when it has been accepted.

These notifications serve an important role in making Fritter more interactive and users to be able to get certain answers when they need them without having to perform several clicks, for instance, knowing if a request is accepted or not and knowing which users have liked or refreeted a fret.

Alternatives Considered

One other consideration was to also give users notifications when users they follow engage with other freets, for instance, send a notification to userA who follows userB when userB likes another fret. The reason why I ended up not considering this implementation is that it defeats the essence of the notification system in my Fritter as their main purpose is to inform the user of how other users are engaging with their content and connecting with them. It would not be a great user experience when a user

wants to find out which users upvoted their freet and have to filter through several other notifications of things that are not important. The other reason why I quickly discarded this idea is that the user already gets some form of notification about how the people they follow engage with other content as they see their freets and refreets on their timeline.

5. Discover Page

Earlier, I talked about why the Popular Users feature was implemented on Fritter. However, this falls short when enthusiastic users want to know the trending content of Fritter. This is because popular users do not necessarily have trending content. This led me to decide to add a **Discover Page** that allows users to see freets from users they do not follow who do not have private accounts sorted according to their popularity, that is, the total number of likes and refreets.

The reason why I do not display freets from users with private accounts follows from the discussion on Popular Users. This is basically an implication of making accounts private as the users with private accounts are not given the same privilege and publicity and other users without public accounts. This also ensures that these users stay off the public scene since they have decided to make their accounts private.

The Discover Page plays one other important role besides keeping track of the most popular content that other users can see which is acting as a means of discovery for new users. The design of Fritter ensures that on the feed, the user only sees freets and freets from themselves and the users they follow. Thus, after creating an account, this page will be empty which is why the user gets a message that implicitly prompts them to navigate to the Discover page for them to quickly follow their first user with the content they feel attracted to. This also acts as a means for users to know where to find what as some of the functionalities on Fritter may not be too apparent.

Alternatives Considered

My initial idea was to display both the freets and refreets from the users that another user follows together with the popular freets on the same page sorted either by their popularity or the date they are modified. However, this violates the concept established in earlier versions of Fritter which I still feel is important, that is, on the user's feed, it is more ideal to present them with the most recent content as they are

likely to have seen the other content. One other reason why I disregarded this implementation is that the fact that a user follows other users implies that they are prioritizing their content as following is more like subscribing to another user's content. Hence displaying these popular freets together with the 'subscription freets and refreets' defeats the purpose of following other users.

6. Search suggestions

'Search Suggestions' is one of the features I added while implementing my frontend as an accelerator. This is implemented in such a way that the user does not need to remember the full username of a user they may want to search for. A portion of the username will be matched across all the usernames, presenting the user with a list of suggestions to select from. This also helps users to avoid frustration when they constantly search for certain users who may not exist because search suggestions allow users to know before submitting the search whether a user with the given username exists or not.

One amazing thing about the 'Search Suggestions' feature is that it allows users to continue typing and respond with suggestions as the user has stopped typing, and in the process, display a cool animation to the user to indicate that there is an ongoing process, which in this case is typing.

Alternatives Considered

One alternative that I considered, which may seem trivial, is getting queries as the user types every letter. This would be nice as the user can immediately get feedback after every single letter they type. However, the biggest downside with this is that if the user is in an area with a poor internet connection, the search suggestions may not be updated consistently, for instance, the user may have entered 'muf' as a search query and quickly change it to 'maf'. With a poor internet connection, the user may end up getting suggestions from 'muf' instead of 'maf' since there was a lag between the current query and the suggestions response being returned to the user. This is the reason why I implemented this feature in such a way that the user gets the suggestions when they take a pause in entering their search query.

7. Feedback from user testing

- One of the feedback I got from user testing was the confusion that my user had when they first created an account. Initially, I had two tabs - **Latest** and **Discover** - that the user can toggle between to display freets and refreets from the users they follow as well as most popular freets from users they do not follow. The user, however, did not know which one was the feed as they thought Latest displayed all the recent freets from any user. I thus fixed this ambiguity by renaming it to **Feed** which is consistent with the name from other platforms.
- One thing that the user suggested was that it would have been nice to get live notifications when users engage with their freets instead of having to reload the page to see the notification updates. This would be a nice addition to add (which I plan to work on as an extra after the assignment) to allow interaction and reactivity to take place live.
- One other concern that the user raised during testing was to do with how I am displaying both freets and refreets on the feed. The user gave an example of a situation whereby a user follows more than 500 users who in turn follow one popular person. The user then raised a concern that this means there will be 500 freets displayed as refreets on the user's profile. The user suggested that it might be more appropriate to instead only display the refreet once and let the user view the list of users refreeting the freet instead of displaying all of them individually. This is a really good feedback which I however did not get to update in my implementation.