

# Social / Ethical Implications

Answer the following questions. In your answers, please distinguish which implications follow your *conceptual* design and which follow from your *UI* design.

**1. Did you make cultural or other assumptions about your users that affect how they interact with Fritter?**

One biggest assumption about Fritter users, which follows from the UI design, is that they are people who understand English. Even if users manage to post freets in other languages, all the means of navigation on Fritter are in English and Fritter does not provide any means to change the language to adapt to the User's needs.

However, one other assumption which I believe will probably make Fritter more user-friendly is that each new user has no background about what Fritter is and how to use it, which also follows from the UI design. Thus, for most new actions that the user can take, there is a hint that either signals the effect of an action, describe what the action is about or the importance of that action. For instance, when a user creates an account, one of the messages they see points them to a section that allows them to follow other users as well as see what they post as well as informing the user of the importance of following other users.

**2. Would an effective use of design heuristics to maximize engagement with Fritter be manipulative?**

Based on my UI design, I do not think the design heuristics I made effective use of can be manipulative. Fritter is a platform that allows users to connect with other users they are drawn to by their content, interact with the content, as well as allow users to also post their own content. As these are among some of the main features of Fritter, from my understanding, design heuristics help make an application as easy to use as possible, making the main features easily accessible to users, and allowing users to perform actions with the least amount of effort possible. From this discussion, I do not think design heuristics are manipulative in any way as they basically help make achieve the goal of the application easily.

**3. How would you adjust your design if your only goal were to: get children addicted to Fritter? or make it hard for older people to use Fritter? or stop fake**

**news spreading? or prevent harassment? How, if at all, do your answers to these questions inform how you would actually design Fritter?**

Get children addicted to Fritter:

One way to achieve this would be to implement one of the prominent features that attract children which is adding a game on the first page they see as well as giving incentives like game tokens depending on how much progress you make in the game. This would mean children would spend more time on Fritter to acquire the game tokens. This is, however, more of a conceptual and UI design as the game has to be addictive and engaging for the children as well as visually appealing.

Make it harder for older people to use Fritter

Most older people do not have the best eyesight hence require either other people to read out messages/instructions to them or at least content with bigger font. One simple way to make Fritter hard to use for older people is by changing the UI design to reduce the overall font size of the application to make it harder for them to read.

Stop fake news from spreading

One feature I implemented on Fritter, which is more of a UI design is adding a **Discover** page for every logged-in user. This allows users to see freets from people they do not follow by their popularity, that is, the number of upvotes and refreets. One heuristic that can help to determine content most users are engaging with is by the number of upvoted and refreets hence fake news, which normally spreads faster will most certainly be at the top of the Discover page. One way to reduce the spread of fake news would be to basically remove the Discover page such that no user will ever see content from people they do not follow, thus reducing the chances of them coming across that fake content.

Prevent harassment

One form of social media harassment that Fritter might be exposed to is impersonation. From the conceptual design of user authentication, users

can only create accounts by username. This means any user can create an account in any other person's name and start posting content that may incriminate the actual person with the name. Since there are no other means to determine who is an actual owner of an account if a user is impersonated, it is not possible to find out who might have done it. To prevent this, the conceptual design of the authentication system may need to be changed to verify users when creating an account such that if there is a supposed case of harassment, it may be easy to track using the person's details.

How to actually design Fritter.

The answers above have exposed several concerns with our current design of Fritter. To actually design Fritter, the best way would be to structure every action in any concept in such a way that it is possible to maintain accountability, prioritizing the safety, security, and privacy of general Fritter users and making an assessment of how each of these actions affects different age groups. With these conceptual designs in place, it can then help to design a UI that supports these actions providing all necessary levels of security for users.

**4. You have the option to allow users to see which other users have upvoted a Freet. What forms of engagement between users (positive or negative) would be encouraged by allowing this?**

Allowing users to see who upvoted a Freet can result in negative forms of engagement between users. For instance, if a user sees that some popular user they follow has upvoted a freet, they might be prompted to do the same. If all the users that follow the popular user end up upvoting the freet that the popular user upvoted, the freet will end up gaining more popularity, and based on the UI design I made to add a Discover page which displays freets from users that someone does not follow according to their popularity, this freet will appear at the top of most users' Discover pages. As a result, the user who posted the freet is likely going to get more followers.

This does not seem like a bad interaction because the user luckily got some publicity because a popular user upvoted their freet. However, negative forms of engagement may result when other users (popular) start making new users pay

them so that they like their freets to create this chain that may end up making the new users gain more followers. This may result in peer pressure amongst new users/teenagers as everyone might end up trying to get as many followers as possible by simply getting popular users to upvote their freets even if these popular users do not feel like they endorse the content of the fret. This would result in diluting the overall purpose of upvoting which is endorsing freets that a user is drawn to.

**5. In A3, we asked about stakeholders who aren't your immediate users. Identify a design choice you faced that would benefit or harm such a stakeholder, and explain how.**

Fritter has upvoting and refreeting concepts which basically allows users to engage with other freets. One of the UI design decisions I have made is to allow users to "Discover" other users they are currently not following. This is made possible by allowing users to view content by other users according to its popularity as a way to let users know of what most users are engaging with, that is, upvoting and refreeting.

Fritter allows any user to post anything they want and this may include things to do with politics. If a user posts something about a political party which may end up attracting more users to upvote or refreet it, this will show up at the top of all the Discover pages for all the users who do not follow the author. These users may also engage with this fret, refreeting it to their followers such that it gets popular. For a political party not associated with Fritter, it may benefit positively or negatively from this publicity. The benefits may be positive if the fret attracts more people to the party's cause and negative if the fret exposes or spreads wrong information about the party. Thus a political party with no ties to Fritter may end up getting unintended public attention.

**6. What are the accessibility implications of your design for people with different abilities?**

One of the main accessibility concerns of Fritter, which is more of a UI design implication, is that it is not easily accessible on mobile devices. The layout is pretty much accessible for the 'typical user' - a person assumed to have access to a mouse, keyboard, touch screen and can interact with any application like most users without any difficulty. On mobile devices, however, the layout is not

made in such a way that it can be viewed and interacted with on smaller screens. Some of the components are not even shown on mobile view, thus giving the best experience only to desktop users on any user on a bigger screen.

After generating reports for several pages using Lighthouse in Chrome dev tools, some of the things I noticed are that some buttons do not have accessible names and some form elements do not have labels, which I believe implies that users who are physically impaired or with a disability who rely on screen readers may never know what some components in the application do and where to find them.

Some users prefer to navigate through a website by using the tab key and moving from one element to the next. One challenge I noticed is that the tab key does not let users reach other components or buttons which means the design is only accessible to users who have both a mouse and a keyboard.

**7. One of the heuristics is to “speak the user’s language.” In retrospect, assuming you followed this, can you identify what kind of user you had in mind?**

As a UI design implication, the users I had in mind are people who have no idea about programming/web development. For instance, when a user tries to perform an action that they are unauthorized to do, the server might send a 401 status code to indicate this. If this is displayed to the user, the user with no web development experience might **NEVER** understand what went wrong. Thus, the UI is designed in such a way that it tells the users in simple English about what went wrong so that they may be able to fix it.

One common thing that I have seen is the challenge to get new users to engage with content. On a user’s timeline, the content they are displayed with depends on who the user engages with. For instance, displaying freets from the people that the user follows. If the user, however, is not following anyone, this page might not display anything. One quick fix might be to display a simple message saying “No freets”. In as much as this tells the user that nothing is displayed because there are no freets, it does not tell the user how to get freets to be displayed on that page. Thus, informing users that they have no content to display on the home page how to get see content on these timelines, for instance, is part of “speaking the user’s language”