

Wanderlust

MEDIUM-FI PROTOTYPING

October 31, 2014
CS147

Gabe Poon
Kat Gregory
Leigh Hagestad
Yang (Odette) Du

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION OVERVIEW

We've all been there: waiting in line, on the bus, in the bathroom. You're effectively stuck, and you have only your phone as a source of entertaining yourself. You've thumbed through your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and news feeds. You've checked your email. You've consumed every morsel of fresh data your phone is able to serve up, but you're still stuck, and now, bored. What if I told you that you could learn two minutes' worth of information about Samurais? Renaissance Fashion? Natural Selection? Escargot? What if there was an application that allowed you to pick the fields you're interested in learning more about and would provide a newsfeed of blurbs on those topics? Wonderlust is a mobile application that gathers knowledge that interests you in bite-sized chunks to satisfy your craving for fresh information and intellectual curiosity at the same time. In just a few words, you could get basic familiarity with any number of ideas or areas - enough to cover the gist of the topic and enable you to follow a link to learn more. You could recover those lost minutes in a way that was fun, interesting, productive, and painless.

TASKS

[Simple: Browse]

In our most simple task, users browse the home page for interesting articles. The focus is on spinning the wheel to select an interesting topic, and once a topic is selected, articles relating to the topic are populated along the bottom of the screen. Users can then slide the images to find an article they want to read. There is also a shuffle button in the center of the wheel, which will give users a list of random articles on a button press. As users are viewing an article, they have the option to hit the star button to save the article to favorites. This task was unchanged.

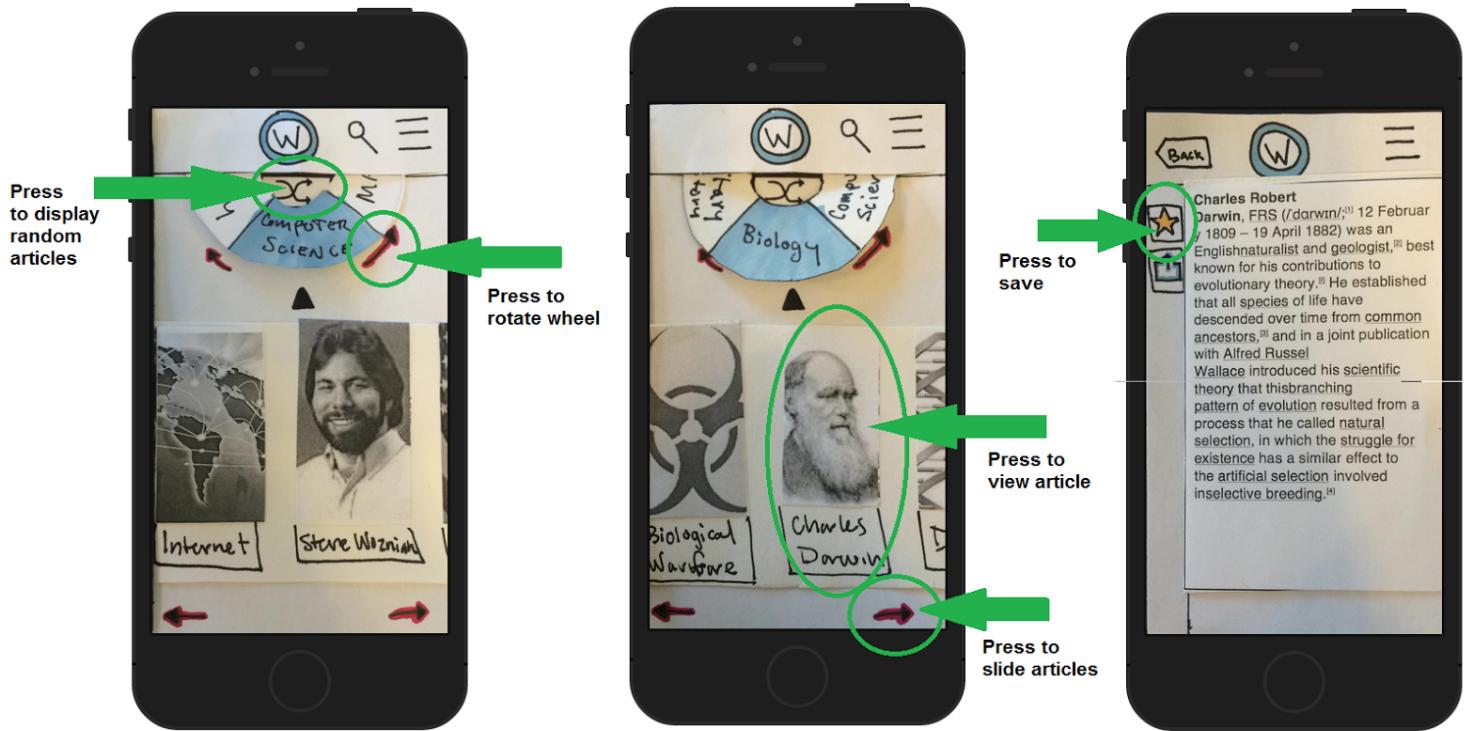


Figure 1: Browsing for an article, and saving

[Moderate: Retrieve]

Our moderate task is to retrieve favorited articles. In order to access favorited articles, users hit the button on the right side of the top bar to see a drop-down menu. The menu includes a link to the “Favorites” page that displays saved articles, which can be organized by topic or by time saved depending on the selected setting. Based on the LoFi prototype results, we added a search button (magnifying glass) to allow users to search through the list of saved articles, which makes the task easier when users have a specific article in mind.

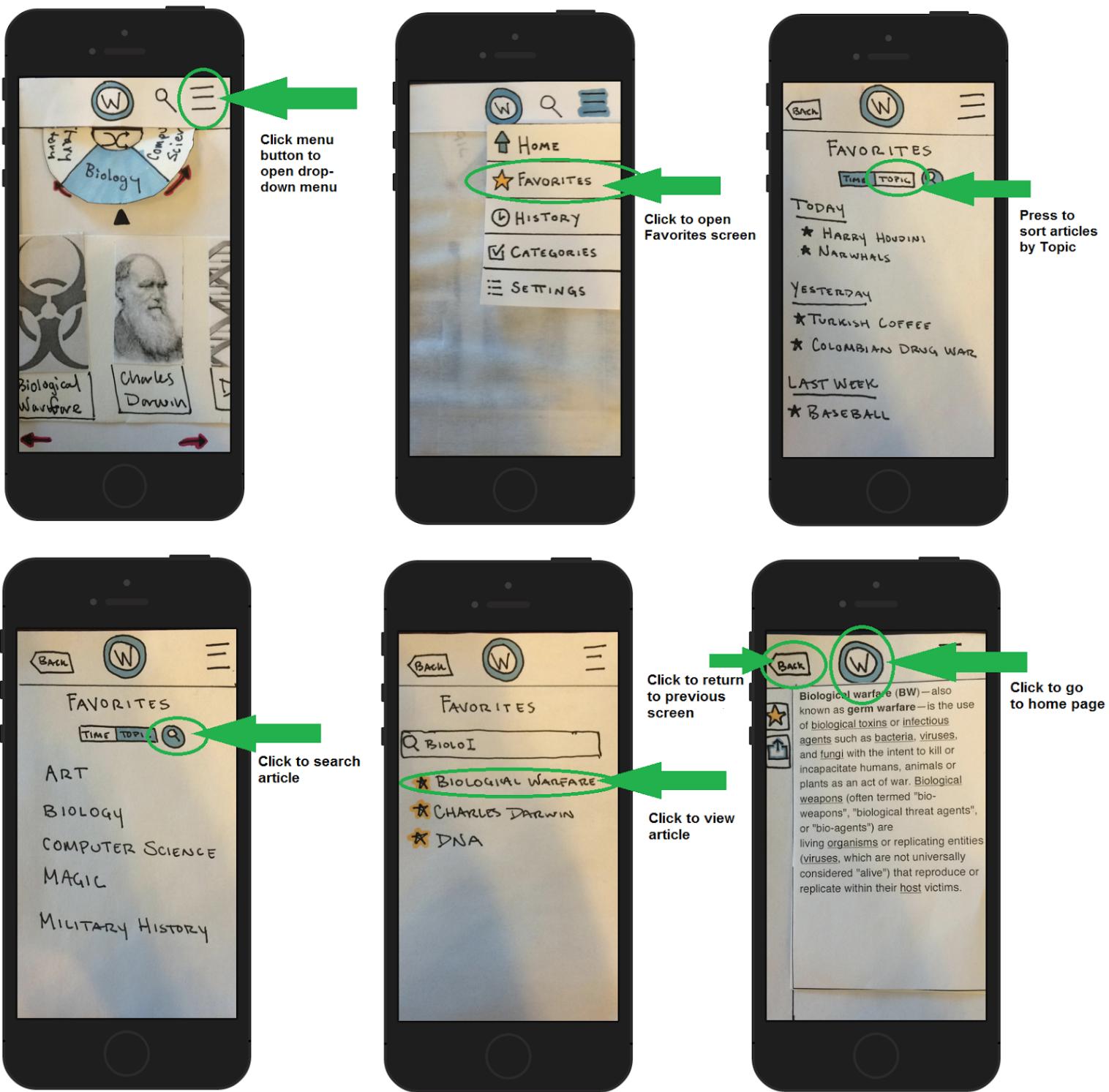


Figure 2: Navigating to Favorites screen, which allows sorting by time saved, by topic, and searching for article. Notice the 'Back' and 'Home' buttons are always present outside 'Home'.

[Complex: Discover]

The complex task is to discover articles from a category not already on the wheel. There are now two methods of accomplishing this task due to the difficulties we observed in user testing. In the first method, consistent with the LoFi prototype, users click the top-right menu button to access the “Categories” page (renamed from “Topic Preferences”). Users can add a new topic via a drop-down menu or search (newly added). Adding a new topic brings them immediately to the home page with the new topic on the wheel. We created a second method based on feedback: searching on the home page. Users can now click the magnifying glass on the top bar of the home page to directly search for articles relating to a topic. Unlike the first method, this does not add a category to the wheel, and is intended to address temporary interests.

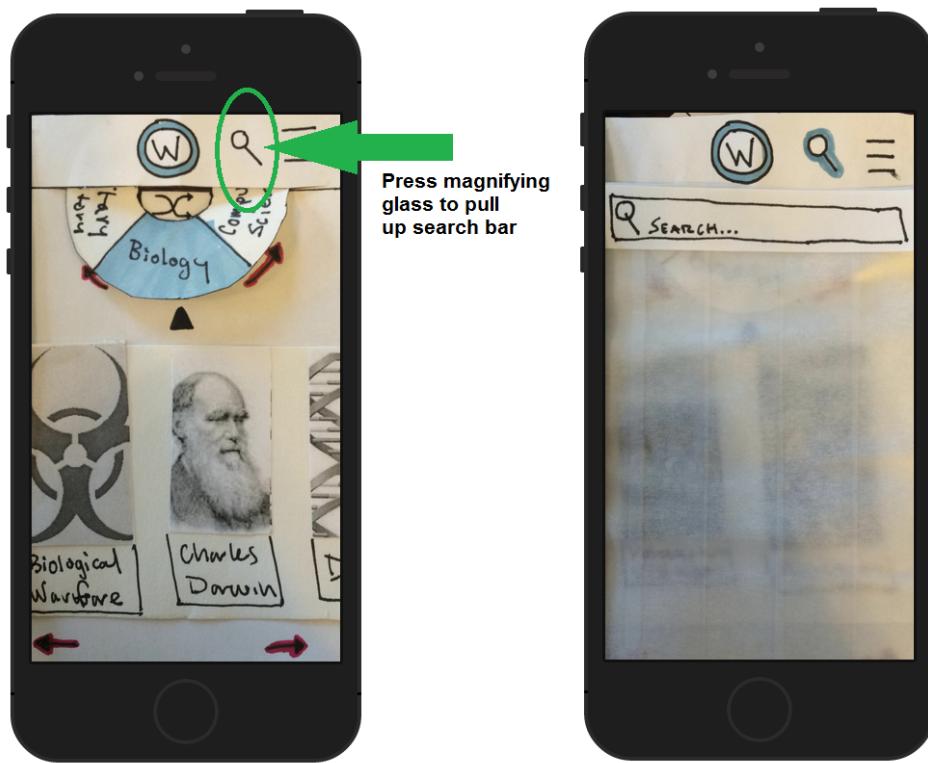


Figure 3: Discover articles without permanently adding to wheel (new method)



Figure 4: Discover articles by permanently adding Category to wheel (old method)

REVISED INTERFACE DESIGN

[Search]

To the difficulty low-fi testing interviewees experienced with the Discover task, our revised interface now incorporates **search functionality** (see Figure 3). The home screen and individual story screens feature a magnifying glass icon directly to the left of the “more” icon in the top bar. A tap on this icon blurs out the current page and opens a search bar directly below the top bar. A search from here brings up relevant categories and individual stories with relevant titles or content. This also addresses a different interviewee concern highlighted by the study, which was the ability to view stories in a category without permanently adding that category to the wheel.

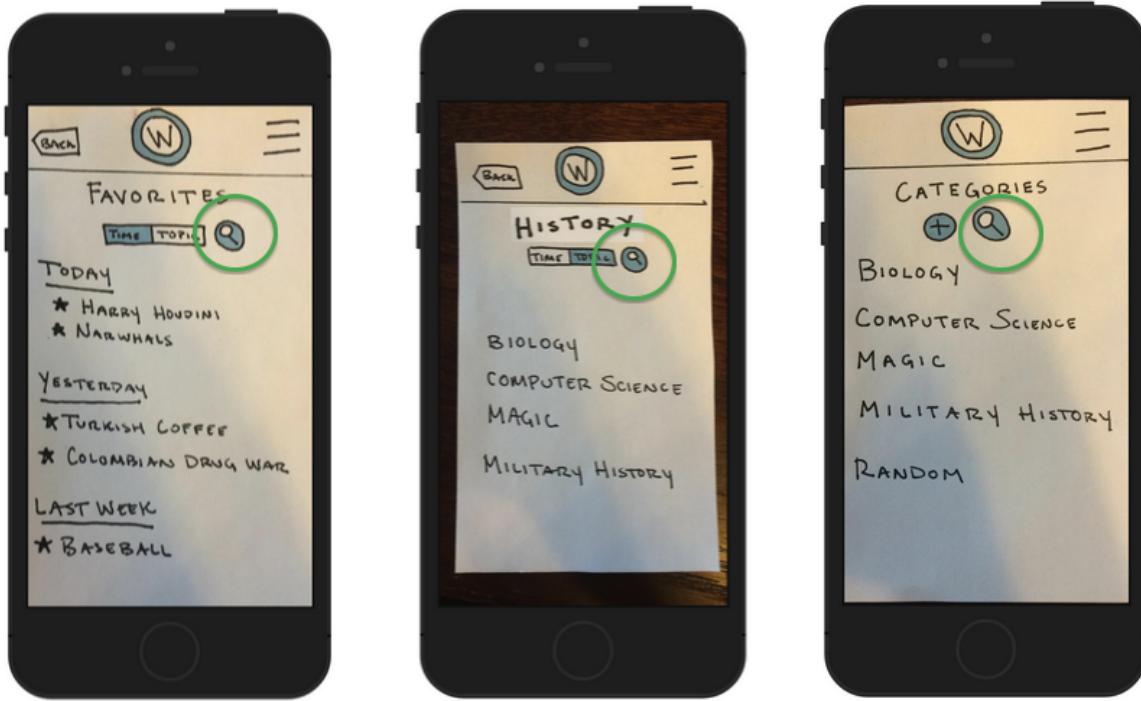


Figure 5: Search icon within Favorites, History, and Categories

A different search icon on the Favorites, History, and Categories pages will browse for, respectively, relevant favorited stories, relevant visited stories, and relevant categories (see Figure 5).

[Navigation]

During low-fi testing, we noted interviewees’ instincts about app navigation. Our revised interface accommodates several schemas that we had not previously thought about. First, we added a **History page** to enable customers to quickly return to previously viewed stories (see figure 6). Story pages are passively added as customers click on them, as opposed to the stories under Favorites, which customers actively selected to save for future reference.

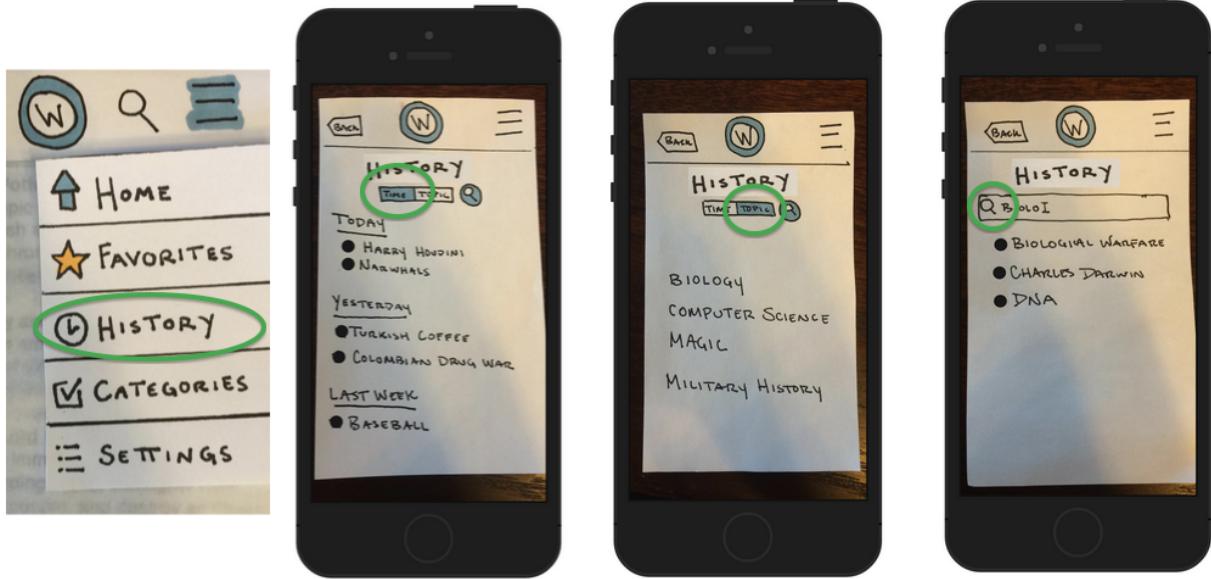


Figure 6: History page (from menu; by time, topic, and search)

Second, the **W icon** on the top bar is now a shortcut to the home page. This eliminates the need to press the back button multiple times to return to the wheel screen after following links to access multiple stories. To facilitate consistency across the different screens and enable the W shortcut from any page, we moved the titles of screens like Favorites, History, and Categories from the top bar to the top of the content (see Figure 7).

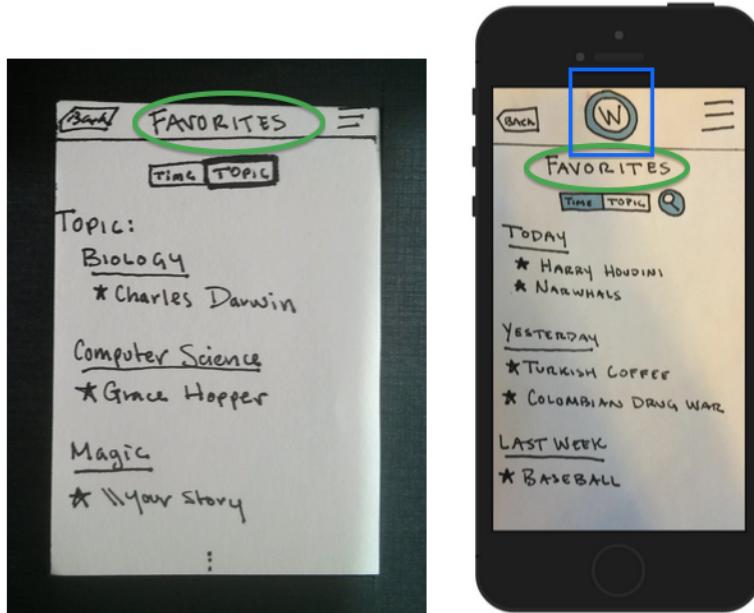


Figure 7: Previous placement of “Favorites” title (left); Revised placement and W icon (right)

Third, we noted that interviewees assumed clicking a category on the Categories page would access to story stream for that topic. We incorporated this schema by **linking the category names** to the main screen with the corresponding topic selected on the wheel (see Figure 8).

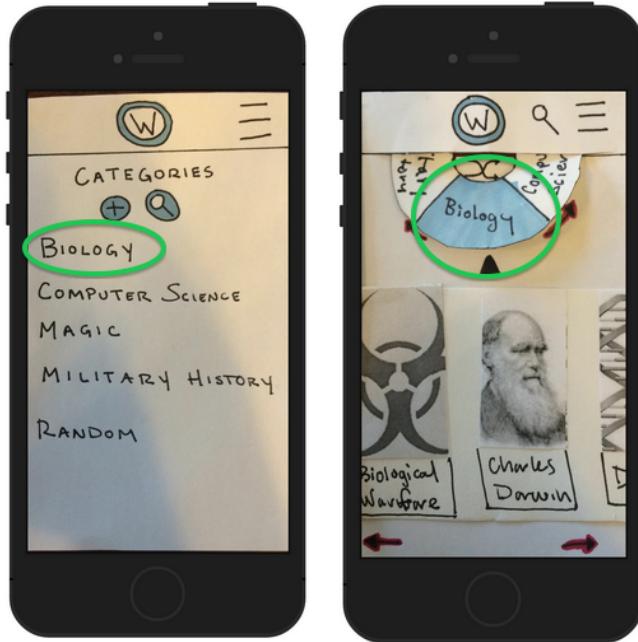


Figure 8: Tapping “Biology” from the category page links directly to the Biology story stream

Finally, we streamlined navigation to individual saved stories and history when viewing by category. When the “topic” view is selected, the first page lists each category. Selecting a category links to a separate page listing all of the stories under that category. This eliminates the need to potentially scroll through all saved stories to access one in the last category as in our low-fi interface (see Figure 9).

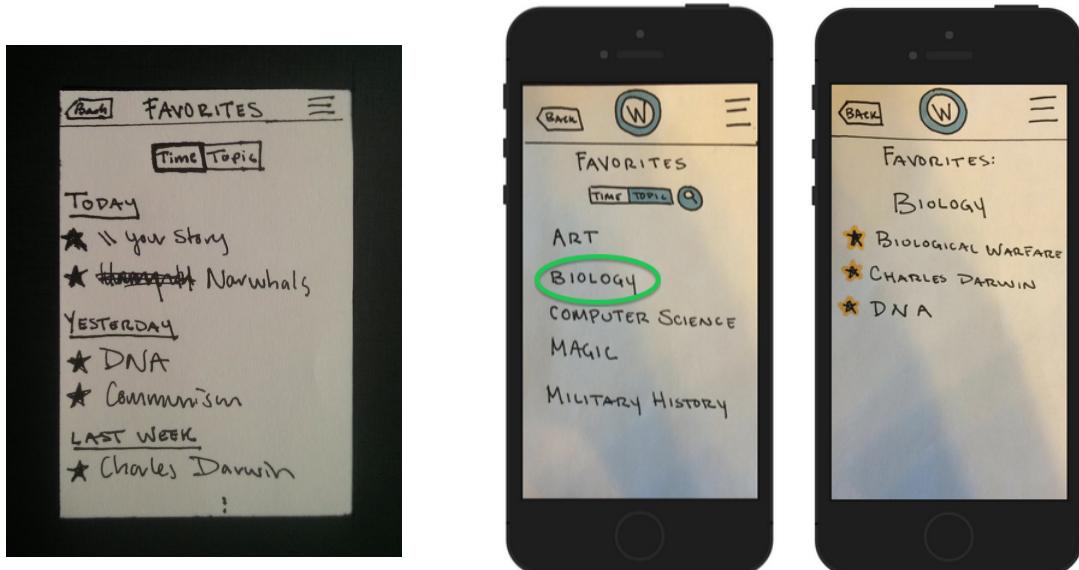


Figure 9: Previous topic view interface (left); Revised interface (right)

[Naming]

To further address interviewee difficulty in the third Discovery task, we renamed “Topic Preferences” to “**Categories**,” a label that was suggested by several of the interviewees.

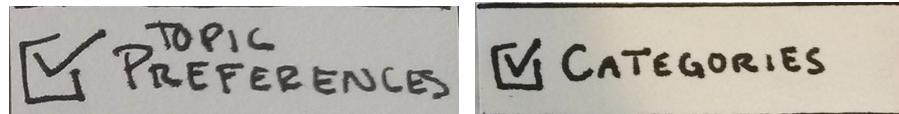


Figure 10: Previous menu button (left); Revised menu button (right)

[Cosmetic]

Our last revisions were cosmetic in nature. We replaced the Facebook “F” icon on the sidebar for the story to a general iOS **share icon** to demonstrate that sharing stories is supported over email as well as social media. On the home screen wheel, our new interface uses color to **highlight the selected topic** (see Figure 11). During testing, interviewees were not sure how to exit the shuffle stream because when shuffle was selected, the wheel still looked like a specific topic was selected. Shading will address this confusion and highlight that tapping the shuffle button again returns to a normal feed.



Figure 11: Selected story feed (Shuffle on left, Military History on right) highlighted on wheel

PROTOTYPE OVERVIEW

[Tools]

We used the Marvel prototyping app, which was available online for free, to create the Medium-Fi prototype. Screens from the LoFi prototype were modified (on paper), and we uploaded pictures onto the Marvel environment to add interactive buttons that link screens.

Link to prototype: <https://marvelapp.com/4j5f8b>

Link to README:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bP2jW9Z5dzZh-XoyN2GzgKRdGXl6Z6OUQauhinTmtnQ/edit
?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bP2jW9Z5dzZh-XoyN2GzgKRdGXl6Z6OUQauhinTmtnQ/edit?usp=sharing)

[Positives]

The most significant contribution is that the response time of the app is much faster than using the paper prototype, and there are no errors in page switching once all links were completed, which gives users a much better feel of the flow of the UI. Collaboration on creating the prototype was also simpler because different members of the group could simultaneously work on different aspects of the app (e.g. creating hotspots, sketching screens) to speed up the process.

[Limitations]

The limitation to the number of topics and articles from the LoFi prototype still exists here simply because we cannot hard-code an unlimited number of topics and articles. There are lists of topics and articles on some screens that are not linked as a result, and the list of articles per category is finite (ideally we would have an infinite scroll). We feel that the content is sufficient to provide testers a good understanding of the app. The ‘Settings’ page was also left out because this is a non-critical part of the prototype. There is also no updating possible to any of the lists (e.g. Favorites, Categories) besides the ones already hard coded in. This is again due to the limitations in number of screens we are capable of creating. We have an example of adding a new category, Art, through the Categories screen to demonstrate the functionality (Wizard of Oz technique), but the wheel is not updated after the addition.

The wheel and sliding articles at the bottom of the screen (in theory) relies on swipes, but it was unclear that Marvel supported these advanced gestures for our purposes. In order to ‘hack’ this feature, arrow keys were added for the wheel and the sliding images for swipes would have occurred on the target (iOS) platform. This is a tradeoff between functionality and design because our goal was to have a minimalist design, but navigating between articles and categories is a critical function for Wonderlust.