

TOPICKS

Gaining Perspective

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS TOPICKS	03
RESEARCH	04
DESIGN CONCEPTS AND ITERATIONS	08
PRELIMINARY PROTOTYPES	11
FINAL DESIGN	21

SOLUTION STATEMENT

Topicks is a service that presents you with the most relevant daily news topics, and their supporting viewpoints. Topicks gives you the whole story by providing the viewpoints that normally go unseen.

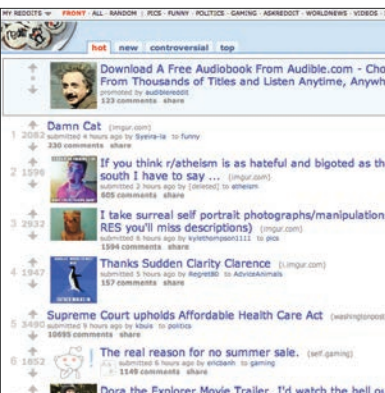
AUDIENCE

This is a tool for people who want to understand the many sides of a story, because by understanding others' viewpoints, we can better form our own.

RESEARCH FINDINGS SUMMARY

From our research, we discovered a number of things about how news is presented to the public and the way people consume it.

1. People get their news in different ways.
 - » Ritual Readers engage with the news regularly, generally reading the same sources at the same time each day. For example, one interviewee read BBC online every morning with his breakfast.
 - » Opinion Seekers look for what others are saying about topics. They want to know what others think the implications of an event will be. One interviewee watches the news analysis for a number of sources, both the sources he thought were trustworthy and those he trusted less.
 - » Fact Checkers are more casual news consumers. They usually get their news of an event by word of mouth (either physically or through social networks), and look up the facts of that event. A few of the interviewees said when events were mentioned on Twitter or Facebook, they Google the event to get more facts about the event.
2. People engage with the news at different levels at different times.
 - » Sometimes people need a quick overview of an event. They may not have the time or interest in understanding the minutia of an event, but want to know what happened so that they can stay current.
 - » Sometimes people want to know the specifics of an event, and follow it as it changes over time, or as more details arise.
3. Tailored results are not good in the case of news. Trying to personalize news results skews what information is represented, so that people cannot get whole story.



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

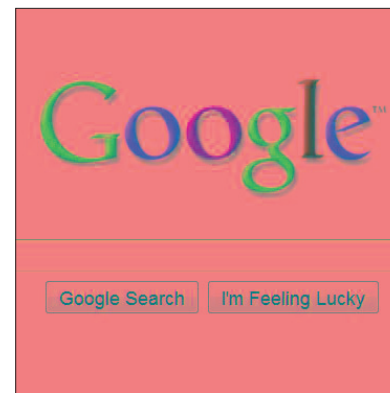
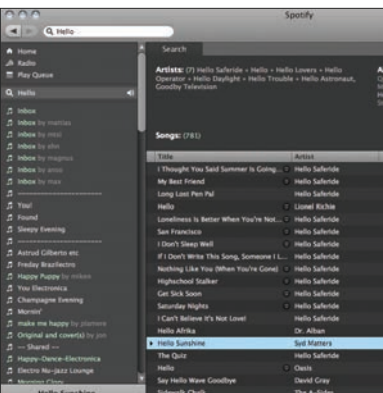
We first did a comparative analysis, to see what related products exist. We found a number of interesting products, but the following were popular among users:

REDDIT is a source where many people go to get their news. It is a user-aggregated source of information, but the content is organized is based on popularity/relevance, rather than a meaningful manner of organization. They are a self proclaimed “front page of the internet,” and this is largely accurate.

FLIPBOARD is a news-aggregation app that enables people to get their news by “subscribing” to a number of interest categories. The content is laid out rather beautifully, which makes for a more enjoyable experience.

THE DAILY BEAST is a manually curated news site to avoid information overload, the site is dedicated to breaking news and sharp commentary.

People use **PINTEREST** to make “boards,” or collections of various things, which they can either share with others or keep for themselves. Pinterest is a sort of bookmarking tool, where people can keep track of things in their own categories.



Music services give users the ability to put in a type of music or artist that they like and then **PANDORA** and **SPOTIFY** take what they have input and provide suggestions for other music to listen too. This product continues to learn what the user is listening too in order to give the best fitting suggestions to each individual.

NEWSPAPERS provide people with the ability of ritual and tradition in receiving their news each morning at their doorstep. Being non-electronic some find it more enjoyable to read the news in this manner. This is also a part of tradition in being the way that people have received their news for many decades.

SOCIAL MEDIA allows a different path for people to receive their news through what their peers are talking about. Using **TWITTER**, **FACEBOOK** or other sites an onlooker is getting their news through what is most talked about the postings from others. This use of social media as a news source can emphasize the idea of what others are talking about you yourself desire to know about.

People often use **GOOGLE** (or other search engines) to search for news that they have heard about through digital and in-person word-of-mouth.

INTERVIEWS

We also conducted a number of informal interviews. From this, we discovered a few insights that guided our decision-making throughout the project.

“Issues are so complex that reducing it to a 750 word article is misleading by its very nature.”

MALE INTERVIEWEE

“I have no way of reading short summaries of articles. And no way of seeing contrasting viewpoints.”

FEMALE INTERVIEWEE

“Finding news is too time consuming, there is such low payout for high (amount of) work.”

MALE INTERVIEWEE

“I work from 10-12 hours a day, I want to keep updated on the news and stories but I don’t have the time to be reading a whole article”

FEMALE INTERVIEWEE



HIGHLIGHTER

PROBLEM STATEMENT Our first concept, Highlighter, was meant to address the fact that it is difficult for people to engage with the news. We reasoned that it is both tedious and time consuming to sort through the plethora of information to find what is worth reading, as well as to digest what is being conveyed. The abundance of information makes it challenging to stay informed and be able to construct one's point of view.

GOALS Our goal was to improve the way people consume news, by piecing together the full story, including different perspectives, and showing impact of events and issues.

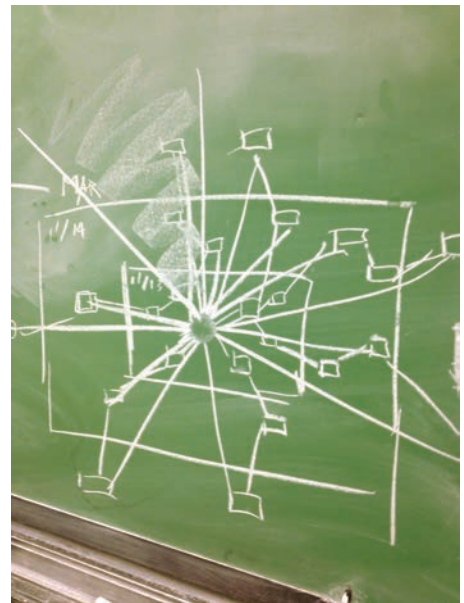
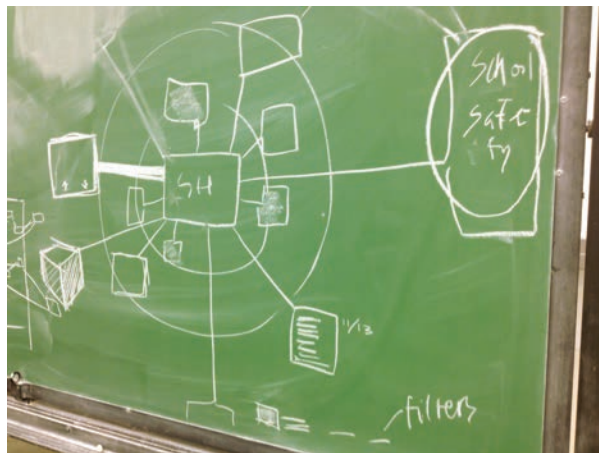
This product was meant to help people keep track of and organize the news they find important. Also, it could help people connect with others based on common highlights, and be able to explore what others have looked at and what interests they have in common, allowing people to continue learning about the news.

FEATURES Users can “highlight” segments of any news source they deem important, interesting, or relevant and organize this information based on “highlighted” reference points. Users are also able to make connections based on common interests.



IN

CONCEPT MODEL For our next iteration, we attempted to pick apart the anatomy of the news, visualizing its structure and how people move through it. Given the complexity of the system of news, visualizing the interrelatedness of events -- the categorization of related events into topics, and these events as related to time -- proved challenging.





PROBLEM STATEMENT For this iteration, that we called IN, our focus was on the many sides to a topic, and the many ways of looking at a story. We realized that the manner in which the news is currently presented to the public makes it difficult to see these sides. We aim to change that--to help people see the different perspectives of a news topic, and ultimately to gain the big picture view of an issue.

GOALS The goal of this design was to show how different issues connect with one another. For instance, the fact that gun control is also connected with mental health issues, school safety, and mass shootings.

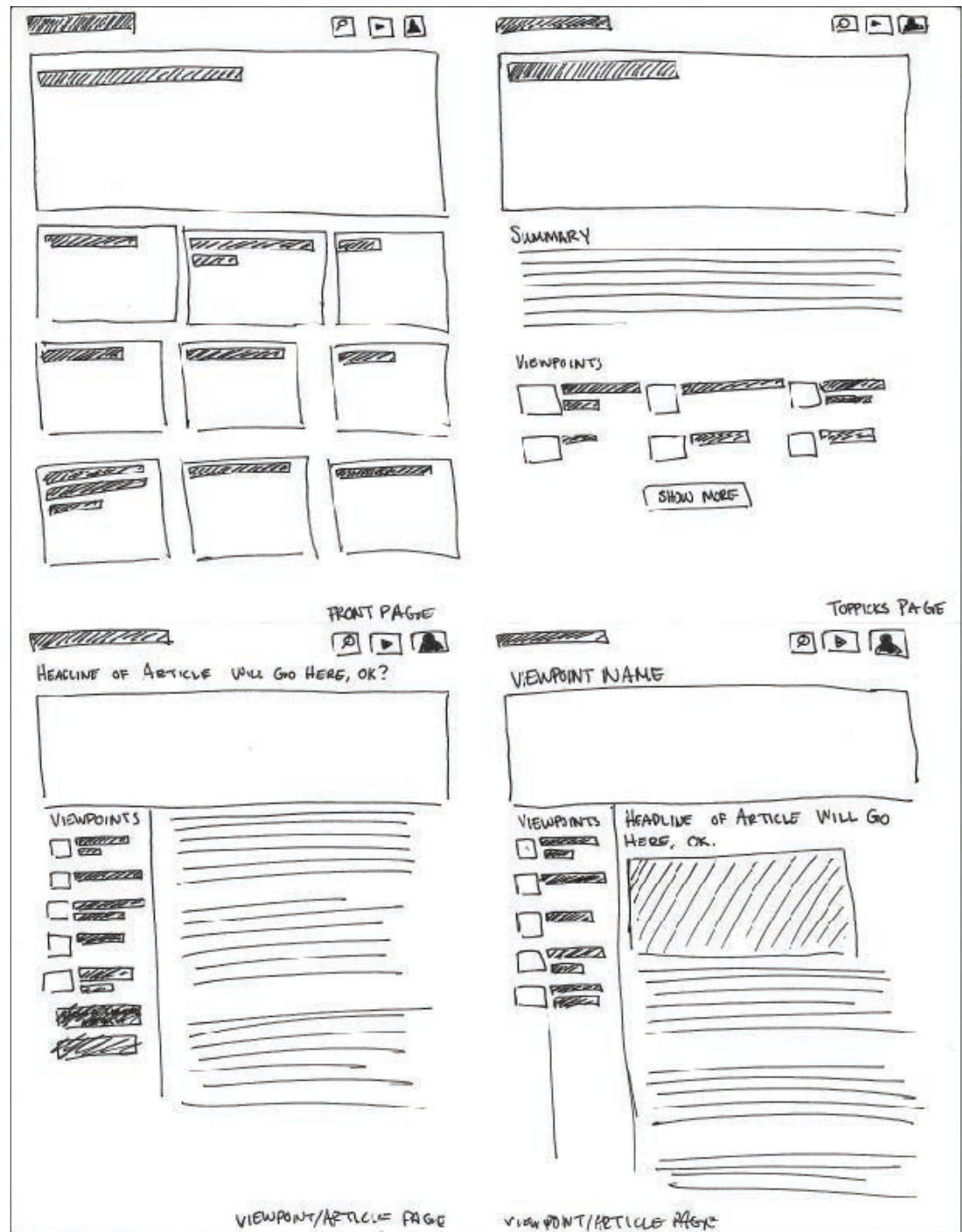
FEATURES This concept exists both as an embedded website toolbar for desktop/browser (like StumbleUpon), as well as a dedicated app for mobile. When using this product, users can navigate the different perspectives on a topic to get the whole story. This makes the news searchable by perspective rather than by source. After reading an article, users classify the article's perspective by marking its location on some kind of spectrum.

We were still developing the way this will be represented visually to users, but the mental model we had been using to talk about it is a matrix, where the x- and y-axes refer to who and what the article represents. Based off of user input, the system decides where an article exists on this matrix. Users can then choose the perspective of the next article they wish to read.

TASKS AND USERFLOW

1. Selecting Topic
2. Reading Summary
 - » Selecting Media Types
 - » Voting Article Viewpoint Relevancy
 - » Follow Topic
3. Reading Article
4. Switch Viewpoint

INITIAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES



INTERFACE DESIGN: VIEWPOINTS

1. This part of our service provides users to see a topic's various and different viewpoints. It constructs a larger picture of a subject by knowing the intricate differences amongst different sides.
 - a. We define viewpoints as the different voice being conveyed through a story. For example, if the topic was Gun Control parents and pro-gun control are two different viewpoints.
 - b. The “playlist” of viewpoints provided to a user are not predetermined and generated randomly, eliminating biased towards a certain viewpoint.
 - c. For quick navigation, we design the interaction for viewpoints to change on the horizontal axis. For touch devices, this is a simple swipe from the right to left and on click platforms, it's a click on the right of the article. The article, images, and viewpoint header will update accordingly.
 - d. Also we want to ensure that all the articles in the database are relevant to the viewpoint. To do this, we establish a voting system where users are asked to agree or disagree if the article is relevant to the viewpoint.

INTERFACE DESIGN: GENERAL THOUGHTS

1. Ten topics best represented the spectrum of existing trending news. The topics that make it to the front page of various new sessions are presented as well as trending topics that may not frequently appear on the front page. As the user scrolls down on the front page, we also include an archive of previously trending topics.
2. There is a navigation bar at the top that is present for every page. From this navigation bar a user can search for different topics or viewpoints, switch media types, access their history, and profile. The history contains a list of articles the user read and attributes such as the topic and viewpoint.
3. Clarify the voting scheme for articles by asking user to vote if the article is relevant to the topic. If the article we present isn't related to the topic, we want to filter it out of our system.
4. Revisit how users access viewpoints. In our current iteration, the system generates a predetermined playlist of viewpoints, but we are considering enabling users to proactively choose viewpoints.

RECONSIDERING OUR GOALS

Reconsidering who our target market was for our product, we realized that our desired user was one who was looking for a source to get the whole picture to develop their own viewpoint. Many of these people we found had relied on sources not due to their perspectives but it was a source that they had chosen as to have news be conveniently reported to them. However we realized what they were missing and it is our goal to provide this convenient access to the news while giving all sides of the story.

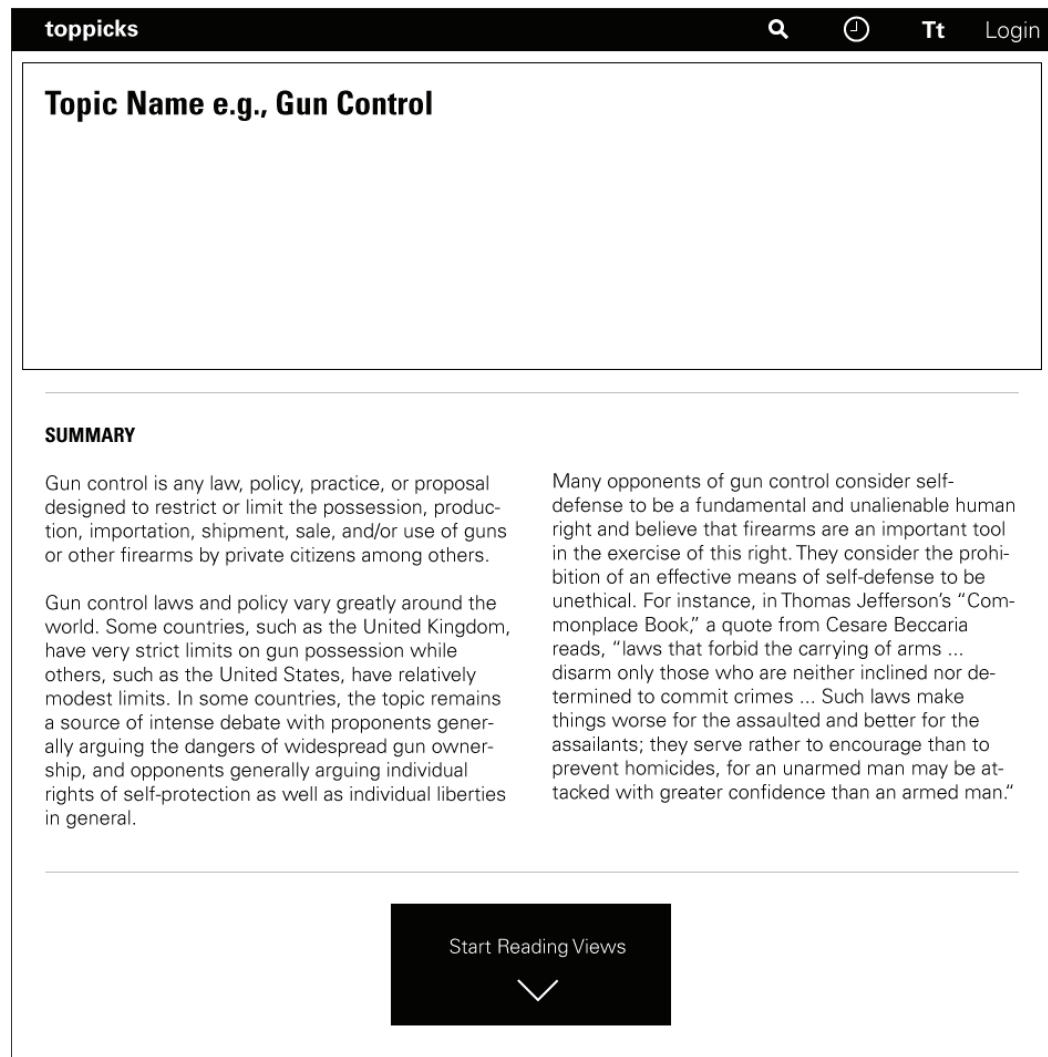
FINAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES

Web homepage wireframes



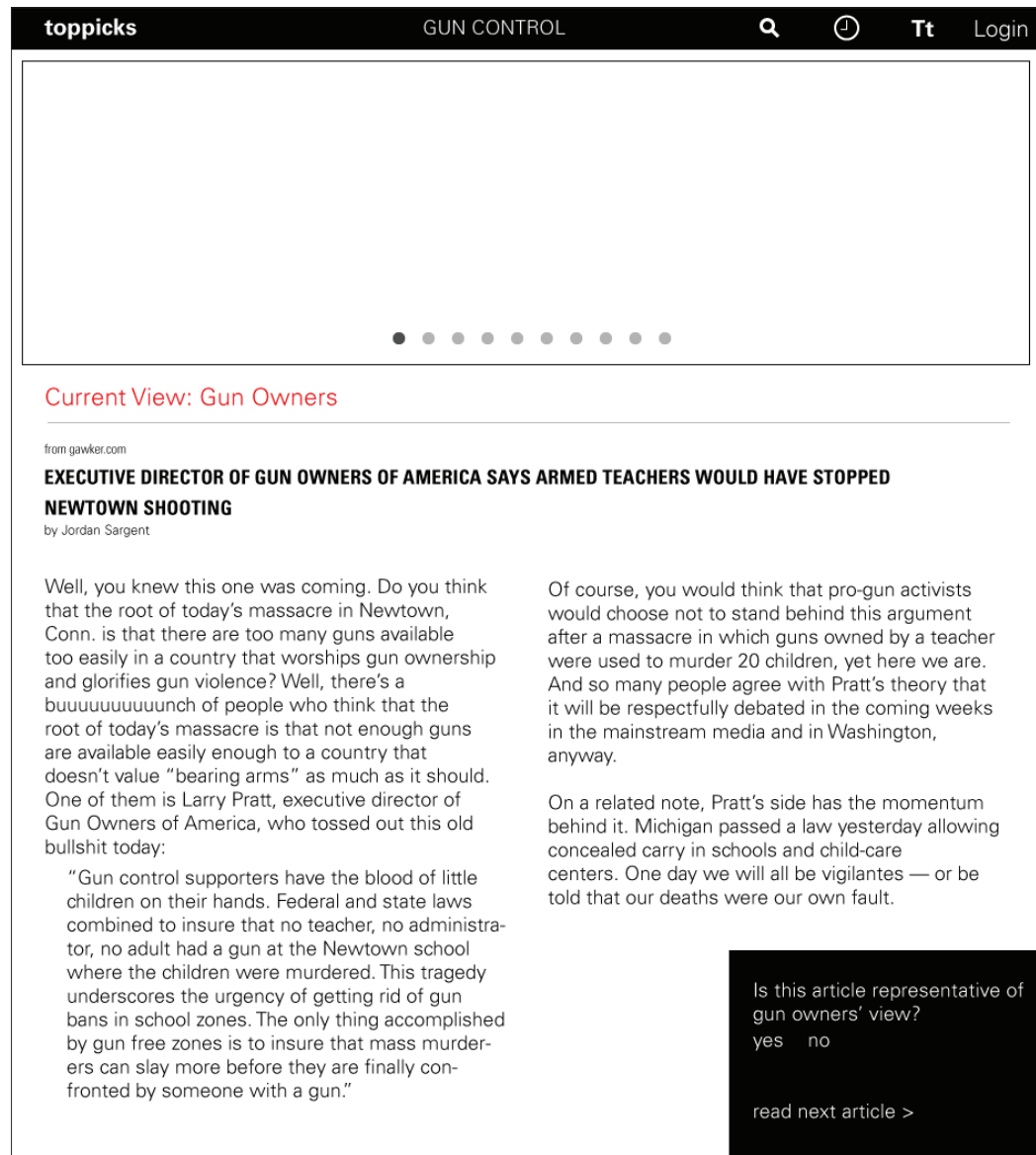
FINAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES

Web summary page wireframes



FINAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES

Web article page wireframes



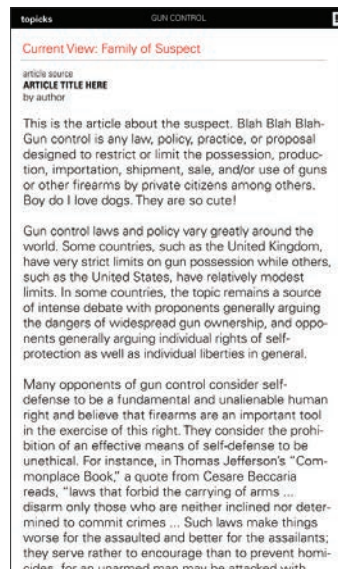
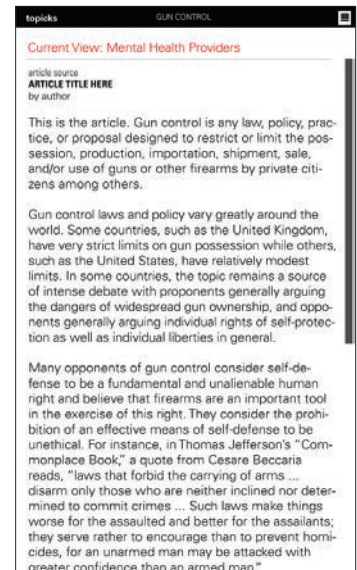
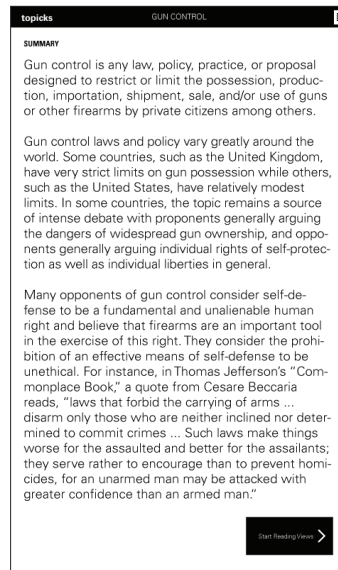
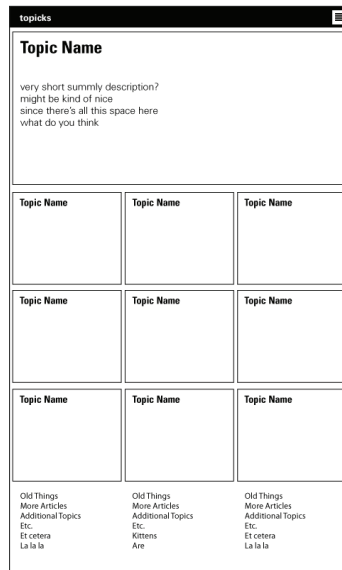
FINAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES

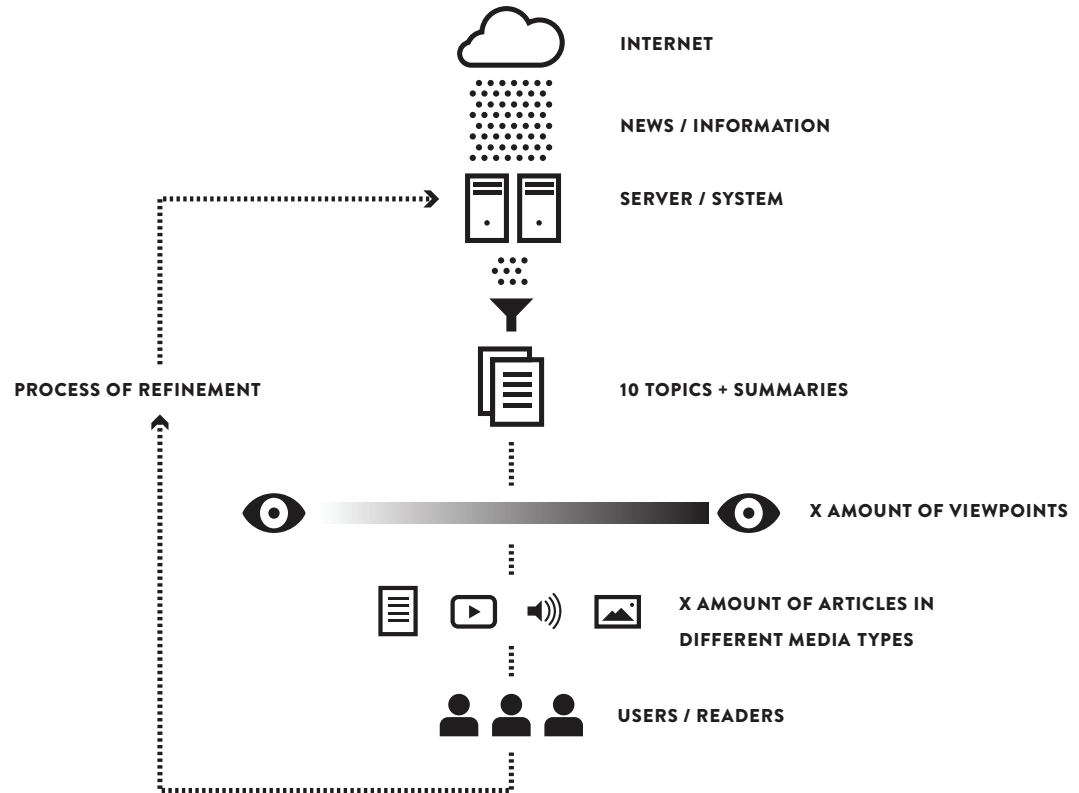
Tablet wireframes



FINAL VISUALS AND WIREFRAMES

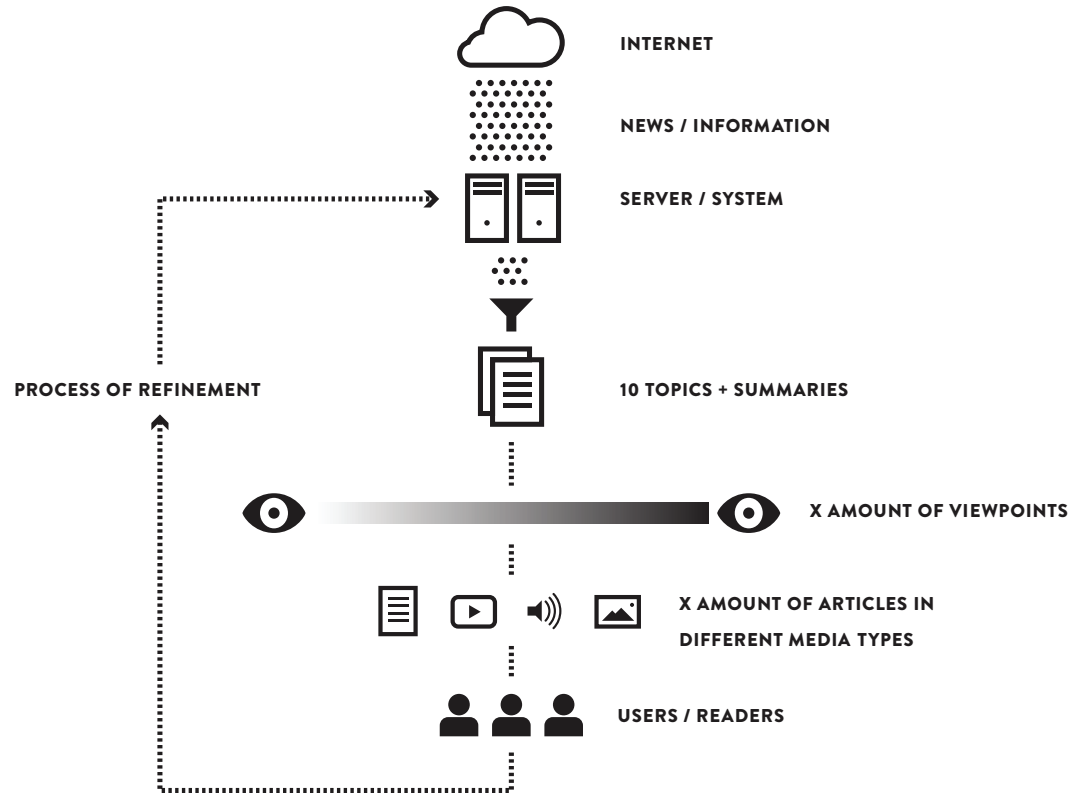
Mobile phone wireframes



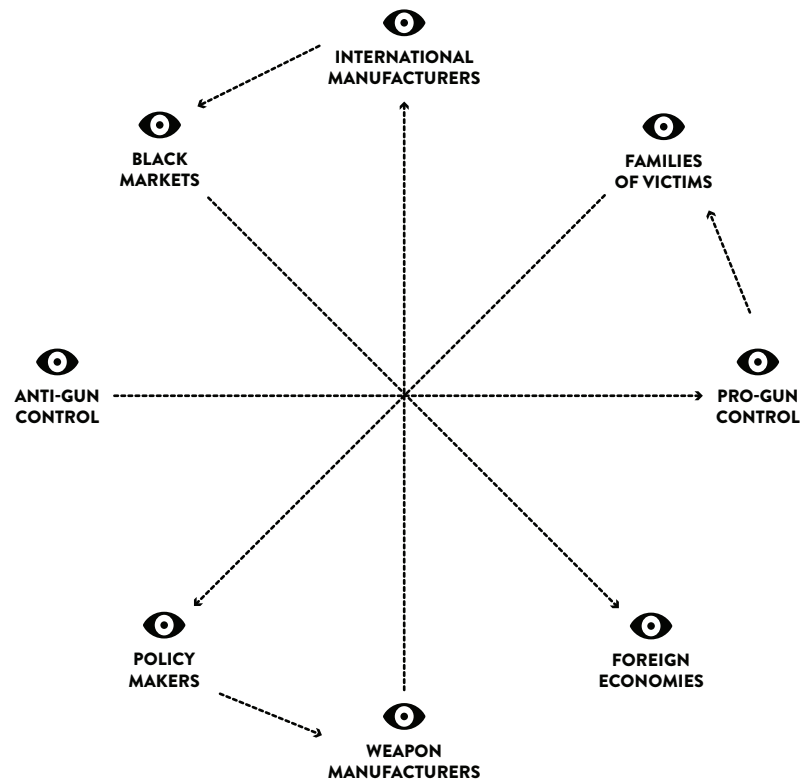


SYSTEM AND USER FLOW

- Step 1. Our system scours the internet and filters down the content to the top 10 trending topics. Our system starts out by scouring the internet and collecting news articles to determine the top ten topics.
- Step 2. **HOME PAGE: TOP 10 TOPICS** We define trending to be the most talked-about topics: what news is being reported by major news sources, and also what is being tweeted about, shared on Facebook, and written about in blog posts, etc.
- Step 3. **TOPIC SUMMARY PAGE** So after you choose a topic, you're presented with a summary, generated by machine learning, to get a basic understanding of that topic. This summary page also serves as an easy entry point to articles.



- Step 4. **ARTICLES/VIEWPOINTS** (At this point, user can change media type) With a simple swipe to the left, you can move between these viewpoints to get an understanding of the many sides to a story. Within the viewpoints, Topics not only provides you with written articles, but also allows you to switch between media types.
- Step 5. **VOTING** helps narrow down to most relevant content. After reading a viewpoint, users can vote to verify whether the source was useful for understanding that perspective. And if they if they want to stay updated on a topic they can save it to their “favorites.”



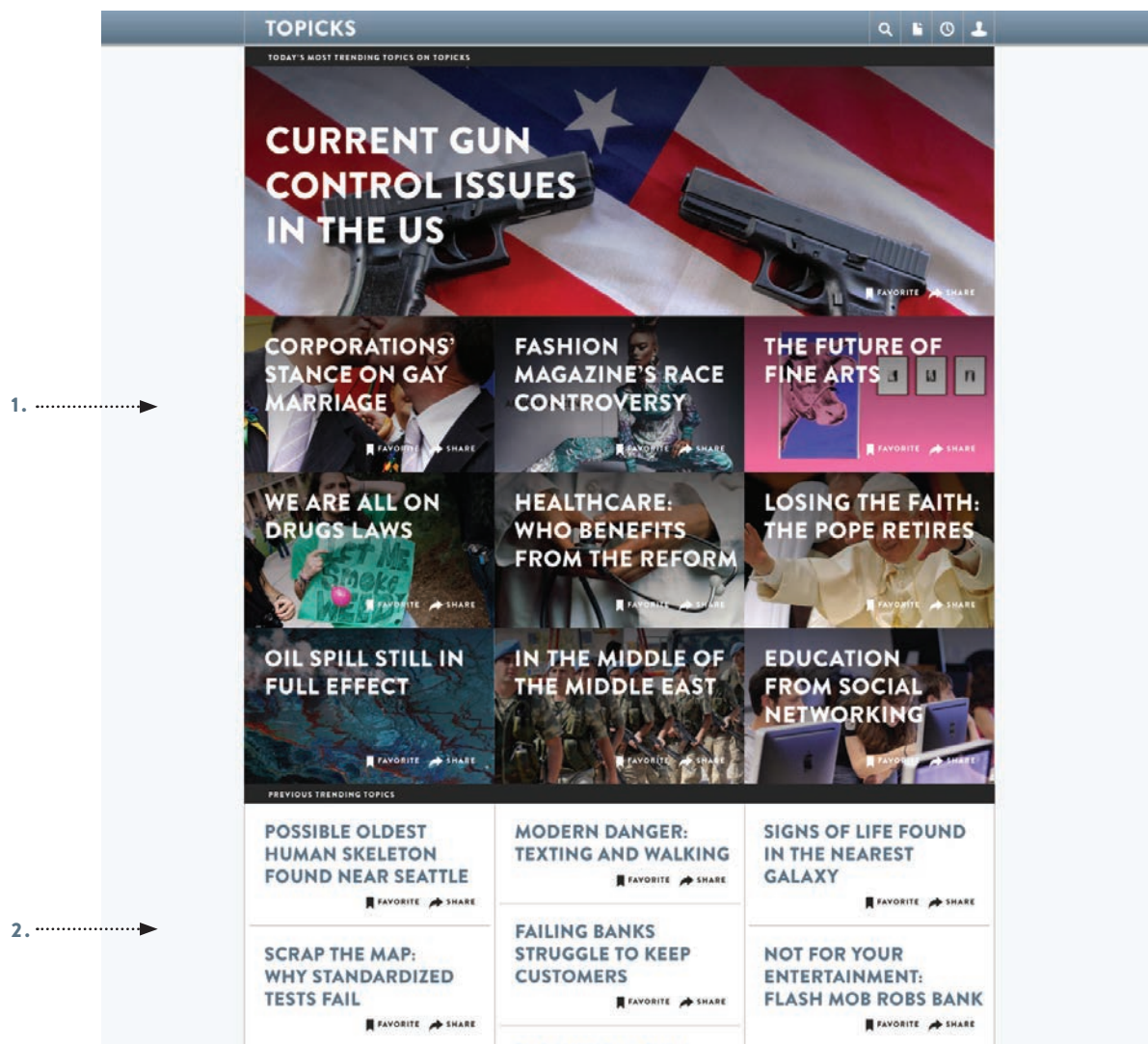
SYSTEM AND USER FLOW

To continue to provide users with an unbiased system Topicks has different users enter each topic from a different viewpoint. By having this they are able to read/ listen or watch all of the same content however no one viewpoint is emphasized or given hierarchy over others.

FINAL MOCKUPS

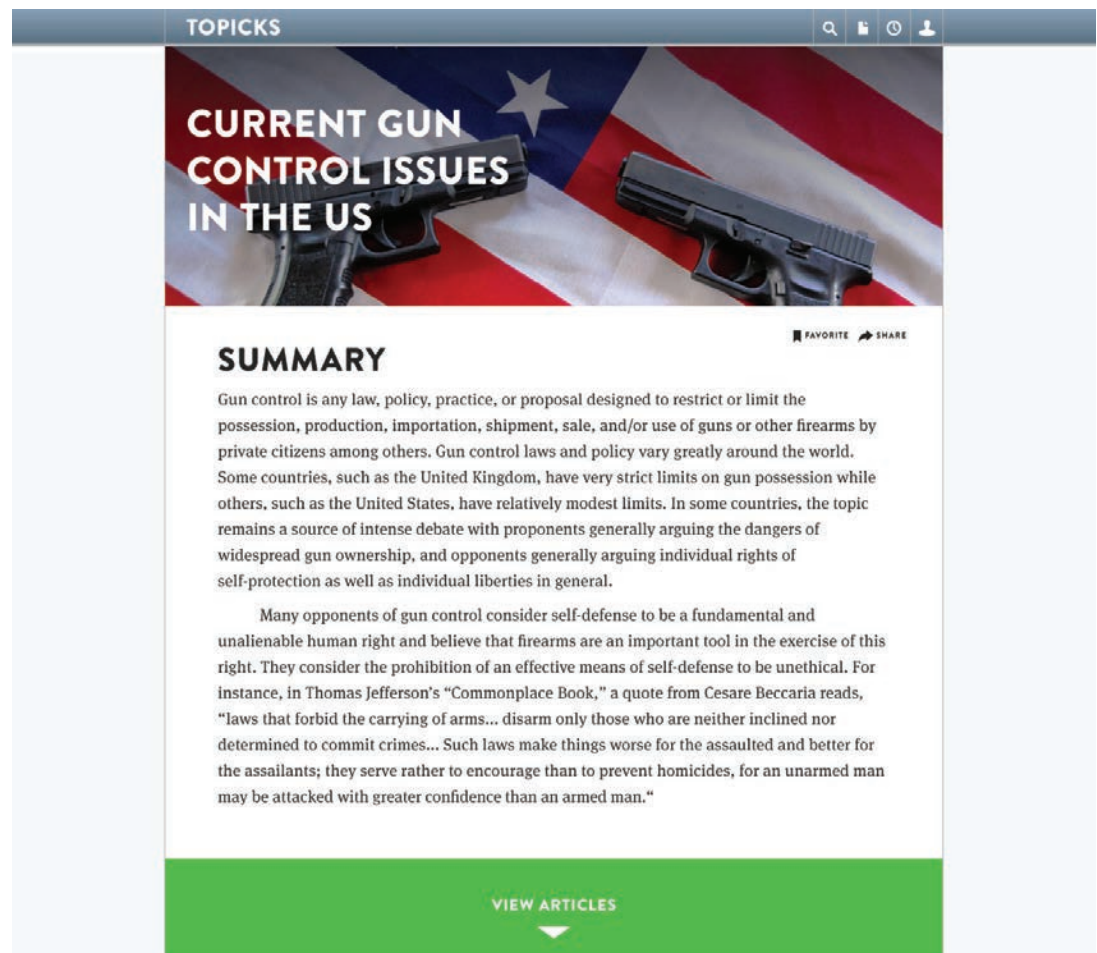
Final web interface design showcasing the homepage

1. Top ten trending topics
2. Previous trending topics



FINAL MOCKUPS

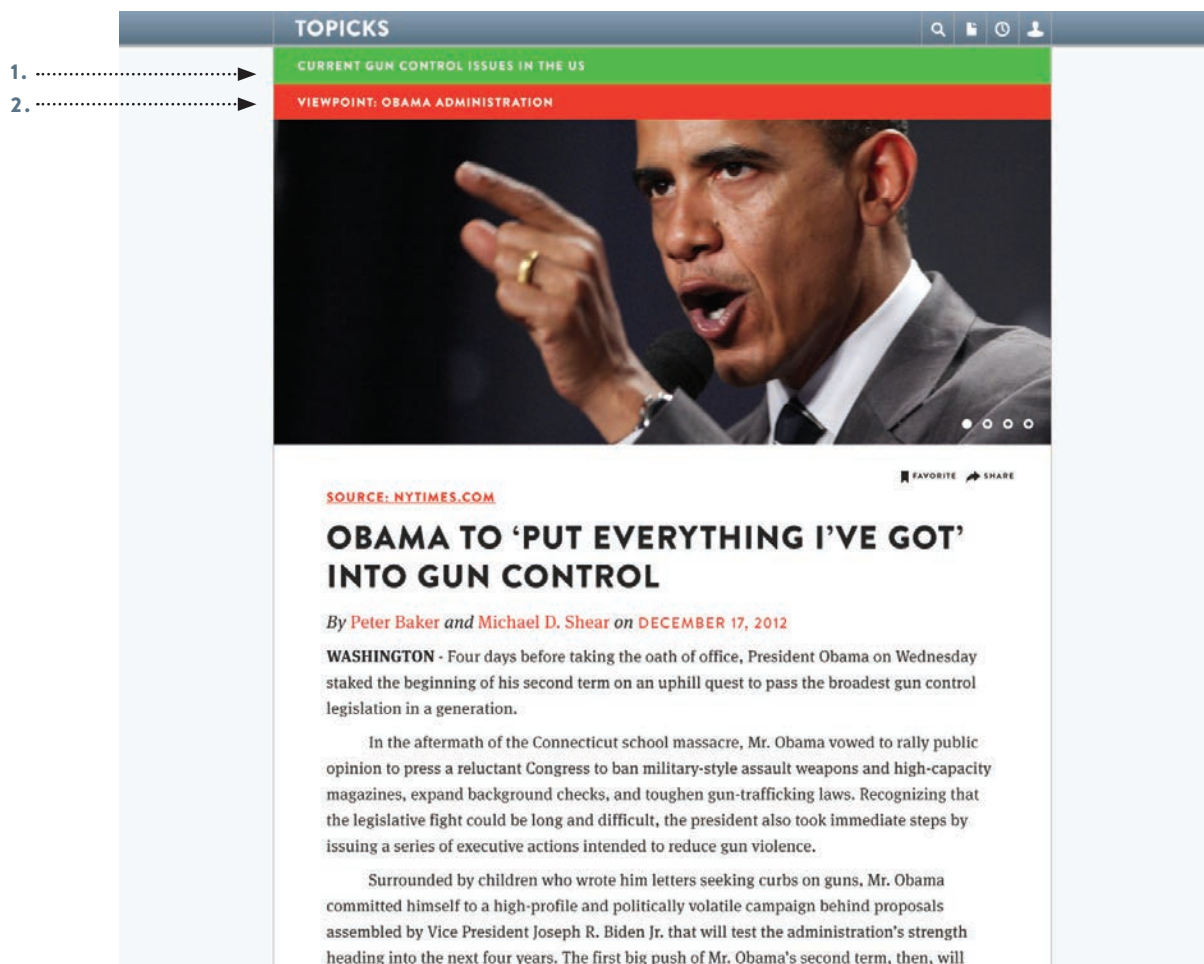
Final web interface design showcasing the summary page



FINAL MOCKUPS

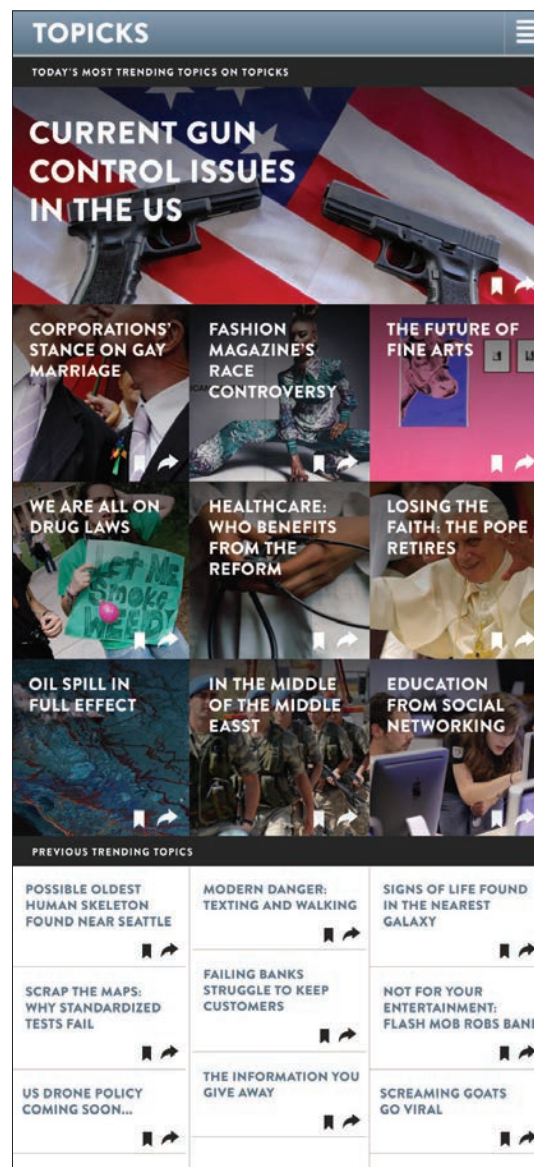
Final web interface design showcasing the summary page

1. Active topic
2. Active viewpoint



FINAL MOCKUPS

Final tablet interface design showcasing home screen



FINAL MOCKUPS

Final tablet interface design showcasing the summary screens and article screens

1. Article voting prompt

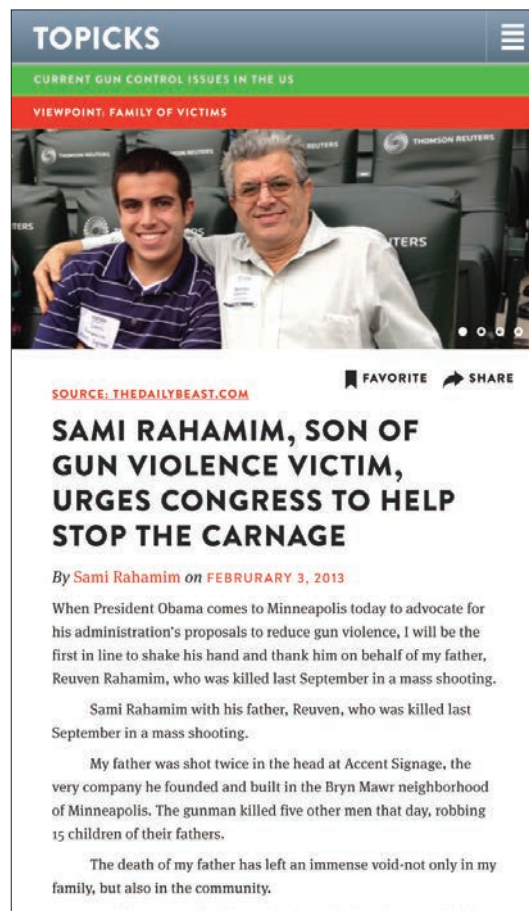


1.>



FINAL MOCKUPS

Final mobile interface design showcasing article pages



INTERVIEWS

People have trusted sources where they get most to all of their news related information. We can't change how sources form and provide information so we need to be able to provide all the sides to piece together the whole story.

"I read what is provided to me on my email home page."

MALE INTERVIEWEE

"I work 10-12 hours a day, so trying to find unbiased sources just takes too long for me."

MALE INTERVIEWEE

GOALS DEFINED

- » Unbiased source
- » Aggregating outside sources to bring in different viewpoints
- » Feasible for people to get the whole story



STORYBOARDING

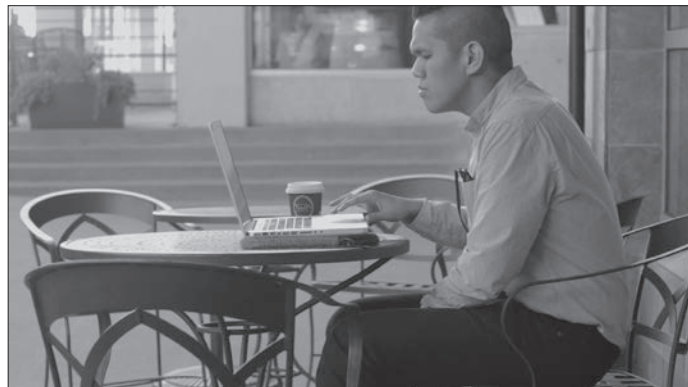
Our initial storyboard focused on an individual's story of how they would access our application throughout their day. We realized that a majority of people don't spend their entire day reading the news, so for our final storyboard we focused on highlighting key features of our interface through multiple people and their perspectives. The key features we wanted to showcase include trending topics.

FILMING

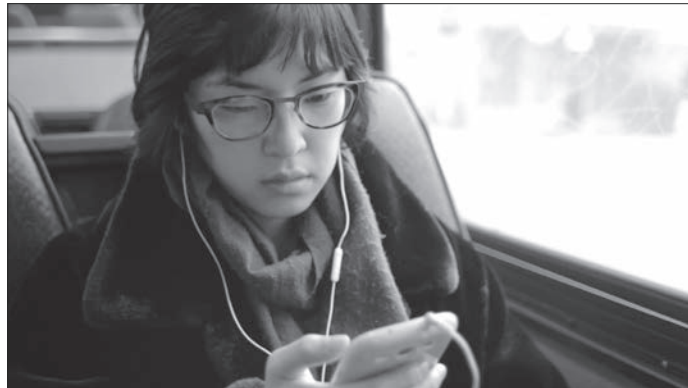
By highlighting key features of our interface on multiple platforms in our film, we wanted we wanted to show people using our product in their daily routines to help them better understand the broader circumstances surrounding topics in the news.



1. **JOLIE STARTING HER DAY WITH BREAKFAST** Within this scene we wanted to be able to show the process of reading and the ritual aspect that our system has when reading the topics.



2. **AARON AT THE COFFEE SHOP** In this scene we wanted to focus on the website interface and the feasibility of choosing a topic and moving from the summary to the first viewpoint.



3. **SHELBY BUSING TO WORK** In this scene, we wanted to show the fluidity of switching to different topics as well as the different media types that our application supports - portraying that our system is for people to use anywhere they desire.



4. **CARLY IN THE PARK** We wanted to close with showing how the voting system allows users to verify the relevance of the article to the viewpoint.

LOCATIONS Downtown Tully's in Seattle, Paccar, Apartment in Greenwood, Bus Stop on the Ave/43rd.

EQUIPMENT Canon 60D, 50mm f/1.8, 28mm f/1.8, Monopod, and Slider.

EDITING Final Cut Pro X.

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