



Background

Initially, we decided to solve a problem that was the synthesis of our individual interests. We wanted to tackle the struggles of college students with non-traditional experience applying for internships or jobs, and provide a platform to help those students be as competitive as traditional applicants. After performing using interviews, while we did find out that our problem did indeed exist, we also, unfortunately discovered that many of the viable solutions to the problem could not be solved given the limitations of a software-based product, so we pivoted to a different problem. We decided to step back and try to examine the internship/job application as a whole and understand the ways in which a software product could ease the process for non-traditional applicants or any applicant in general. From this examination, we realized that the internship/job application process is highly specialized and varies widely on a multitude of factors, so we decided to approach the problem with a less professional focus, and that's what ultimately led us to the problem we have.

- As college students we are frequently encouraged to explore. This exploration leads us to get involved in a diverse range of experiences and learn more about ourselves.
- However, with all the various experiences we get, it can be hard to understand how everything is connected.
- We believe that college students not understanding their personal narrative is a problem.

Who We Are



Product Designer: Ethan Chee
Product Marketing Manager: Malak Hmimy
Product Manager: Andy Huang

Timeline of timeline

The ideation of this product began Winter 2019 and carried through with the rest of the project for approximately 15 weeks. As mentioned in our background, a large part of our process was finding common ground on issues we all cared about and wanted to solve. After we honed in on what we cared about, we set out to validate (or at least discover new facts) about our problem.

From doing researching (through various methods) and synthesizing insights, we were then able to propose a general solution in which we built both low-fidelity and high-fidelity mockups for. We finished up with usability testing and based how successful/unsuccessful we were based on KPIs that we defined throughout the quarter.

Design Process

Research Methodology

Aforementioned, but the first step to building any product is to clearly define the problem you are trying to solve and how solving it is going to make people's lives easier. We started off our research with a simple Google Survey, where we asked various open-ended questions to gauge people's interests, pains, gains -- among many other factors.

Do you feel discontent or uncertain with where you are in life? If so, why? If not, why not?

17 responses

no, idgaf honestly

i feel discontent since im not sure my major is the right one, but ive been in it too long

discontent - not in a bad way but that i have a lot of aspirations to complete and i'm working towards those goals at the moment

Yes, uncertain with what i want to do in the future and some of my values/values that i should look for in others

No...i'm very young and passionate about the activities i pursue. i'm fortunate enough to have a strong support group and can't wait to see what happens next.

yup, i'm not who i'd like to be. i feel like i should've been in a different place by now.

Yea. Maybe im gay but honestly not really sure but i dont think so. i think college has made me more open to different sexualities.

Uncertainty with my career path because of my interdisciplinary major

Yes, i do. i think most people do, especially in college. i am not sure if being in college is good for my health and i am not sure if there is i want to be. i often become uncertain and restless because of this. i've tried many clubs and types of classes but i haven't felt content or accepted yet and since i am almost half way through my college years, i can't help but feel like i am wasting my time.

What are methods you use to acquire knowledge in areas where you lack it?

17 responses

Usually just reading up articles or talking with friends who are knowledgeable in these areas.

Just keep doing it and learn on the way

School

none

classes, google, and mostly just talking to people

go to class in school! surf the internet! ask friends about their interests/hobbies!

Try and read short news articles more

Consulting with experts, using the internet

research, googling things that make me curious

Reading and going online

Online research, looking at people similar to me and their career paths

I try to take classes on it here or research it myself. If i know someone that has more knowledge i try to ask and learn from them if they are willing.

After making it this far, our initial thought about the problem was that people had a hard time finding relevant communities in their local environment, whether social or professional. Our next point of action was to conduct user interviews in which we focused more on this aspect and really try to figure out if this was the issue or if something else persisted.

Student 3:

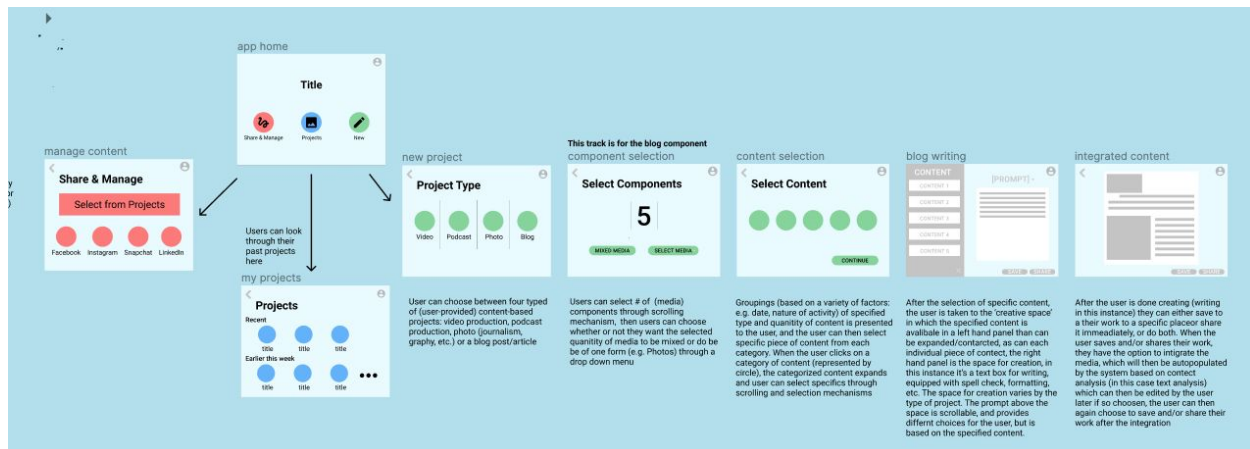
- Involvement:
 - Rally committee - freshman year
 - Undergraduate admissions, admitted student caller - freshman year
 - MUN at UCLA - freshman, sophomore year (helped out with competitions)
 - USAC facilities - all three year (student resources to office leadership to sustainability)
 - Four student representatives, TGIF grant making committee
 - IUSSC, first research cohort
 - Circle K International - three years
- Can accurately communicate value
 - Because very involved with what he does, though there are some on there that he can't efficiently market participation in
 - Career-wise:
 - Lines up with your career/post-graduate aspirations
- UCLA
 - Has not prepared him for student college
 - Bad at doing so
 - But his involvements have been very student initiative
 - Institution
 - Resources are out there, if you aren't actively trying to find them, then other people will use them
- Internships
 - Neutral
 - Not gotten very far
 - Recruiting more for internships
 - For those he's applied for, how confident?
 - Have faith in abilities to express stories/abilities and what he could offer to agencies
 - "I feel like I am competent enough to appointed to one of these positions"

In interviewing people ranging from career professionals, recruiters, and students, one of the biggest insights we synthesized was that people were much less concerned about finding communities around them so much as knowing how to **better communicate the value they bring** to the organizations they attempt to join. One interviewee pointed out that he had **"so many different experiences...it was hard to figure out how they came together to shape my identity."** This seemed to be the same trend as we interviewed more and more people -- this helped shaped our approach to our product as we moved forward in the quarter.

Our Solution: timeline

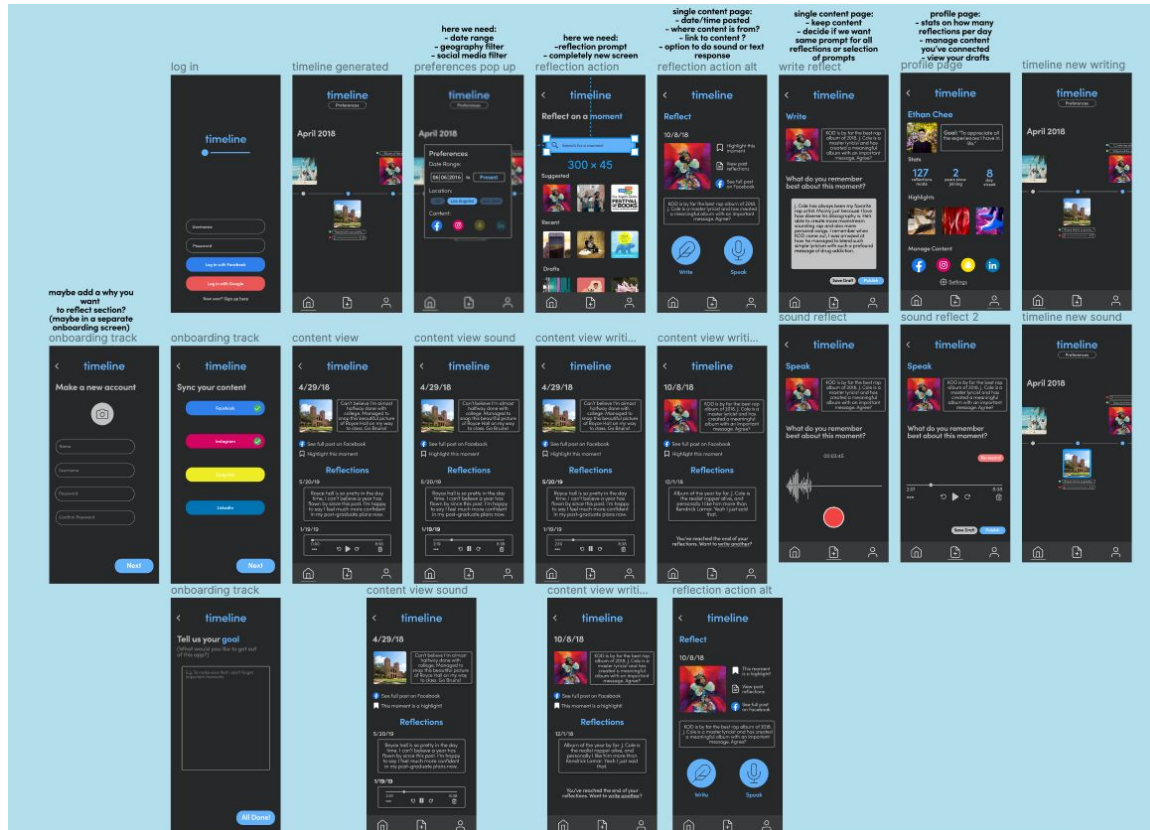
When we were coming up with our solution, we really wanted to focus on giving users the end control and freedom to express their experiences AND be concise and coherent enough to let others know exactly what they do. We started with a simple platform that gave users the ability to create a variety of "projects" -- they could be blogs, videos, podcasts, collages, to name a few. And these projects were all supported with share and export options to popular social media platforms, to ensure the potential for maximum attention can be met.

Low Fidelity Wireframe



Going through iterations and getting feedback from PM and PMM sides, PD was then tasked to focus on revamping the product from multiple projects to “reflections”, where end users have the ability to make a blog/video/photography post hybrid. We did this to make the product more focused and to really encourage users to take advantage of the opportunity to reflect and express. Though difficult to measure, we believe this would really work to solve the problem we set out to solve in our initial probing of issues to tackle.

High Fidelity Wireframe



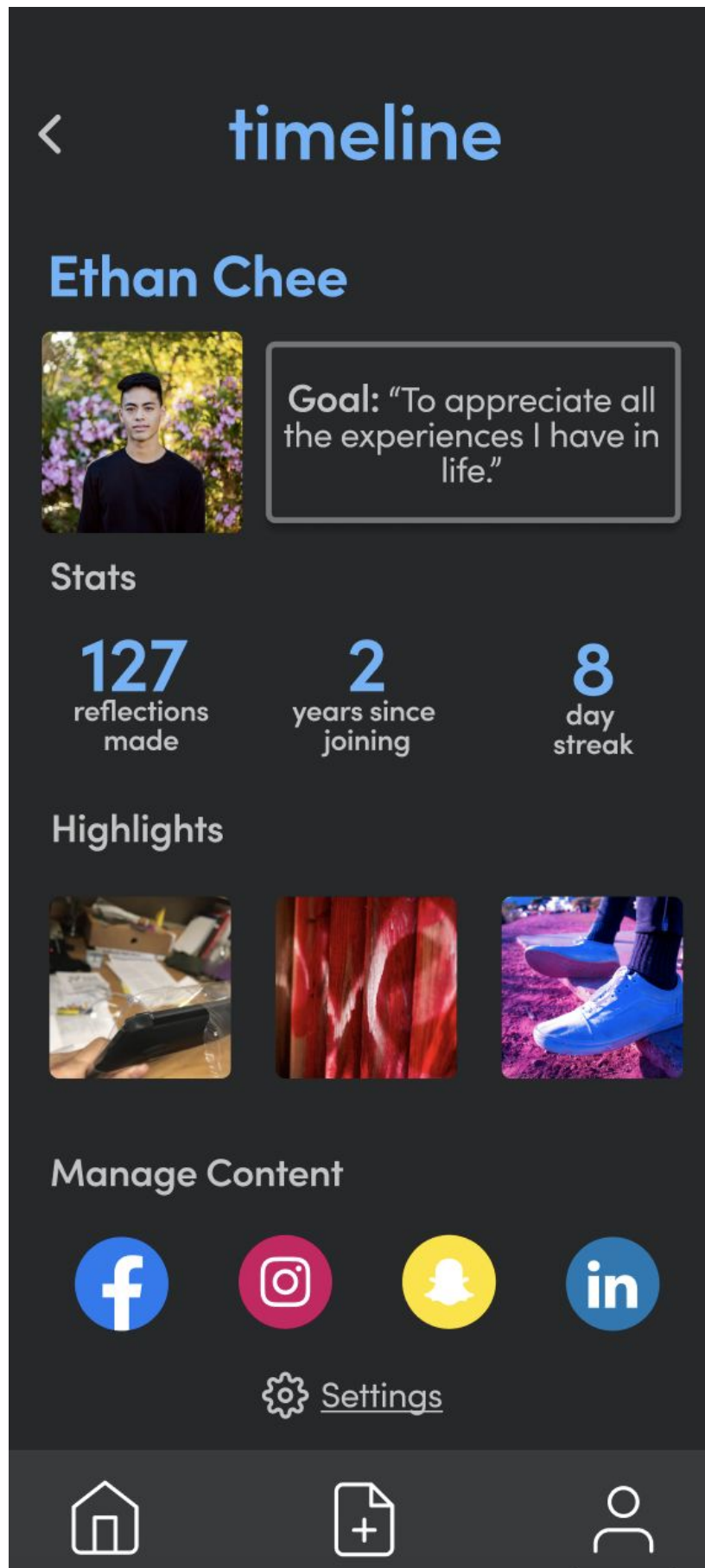


Exhibit 1

Here would be the assumed main page for timeline users. Notable features include:

1. Your immediate profile with a personal bio telling briefly who you are and what your aspirations may entail
2. Statistics to psychologically encourage interactions and continuity within the product -- things such as streaks are socially appealing and are maintained by users
3. An easy interface to manage your content on popular social media platforms
4. Easily able to transition back to main screen to start working on your next reflection

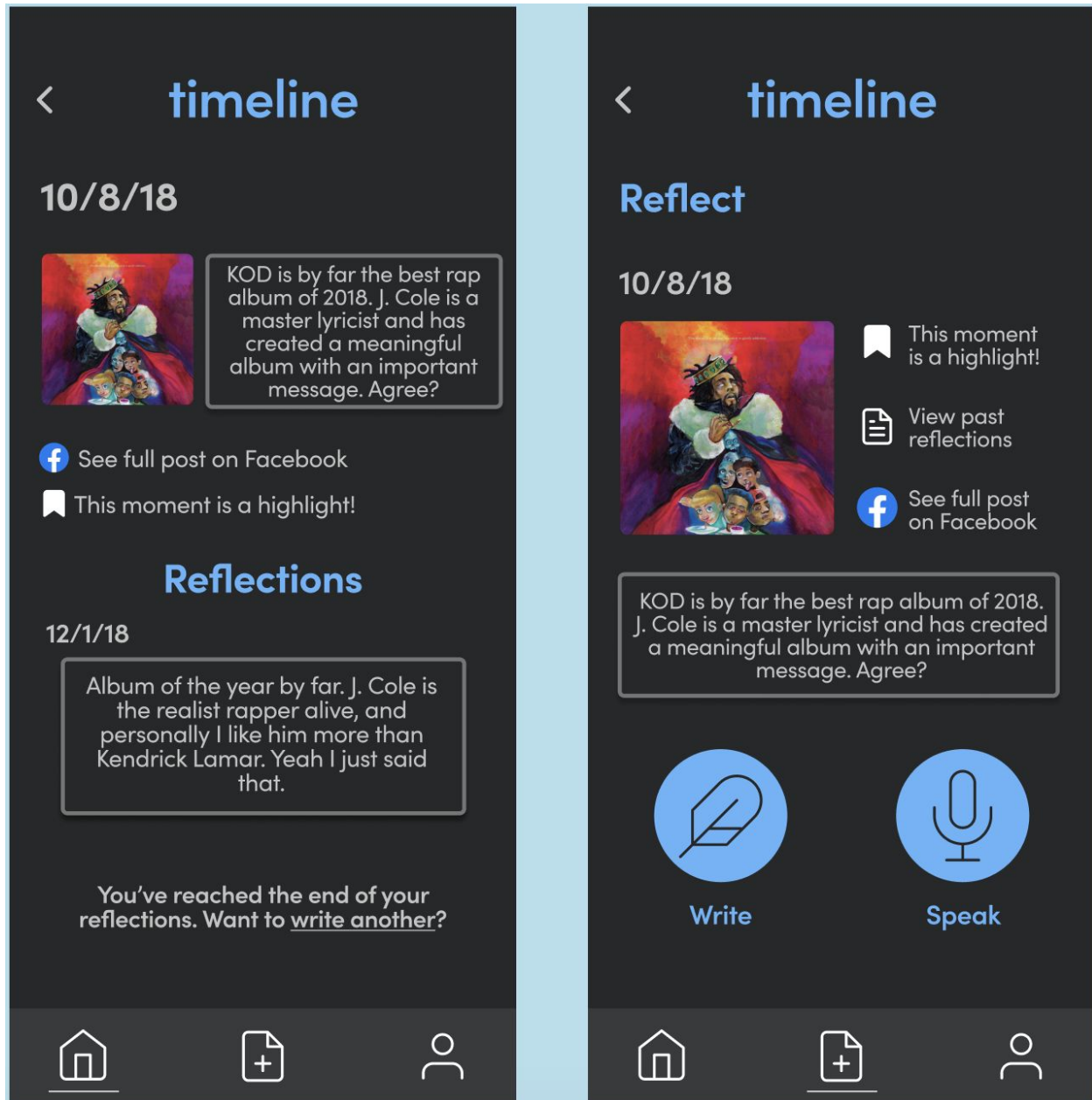


Exhibit 2

This is the screen that users should reach at the end of writing their reflection -- they either have the option of writing another one or adding additional supplements to their first reflection either through audio, visual, or more text. What this does is allow users to stop, pause, and think "Hmm, is there anything more I want to add to this?"

Key Takeaways

Lessons learned

Understanding, interpreting, and synthesizing user research, especially individual interviews, can be very tricky. Conducting user interviews on a volunteer basis, often means you might be interviewing people who are not exactly in line with your product's target audience. For example, say you want to interview a technical recruiter who predominantly hires new-grad software engineers, but you end up interviewing a technical recruiter hires experienced systems or production engineers. Do you take their responses as they are, or do you try to interpret their responses in a different light to compensate for the fact that they aren't the ideal interviewee and if so *how* do you interpret them differently? Finding the right answers to these questions proved to be a difficult balancing act that never had clear indications of success or failure.

Next Steps

The next few steps should definitely be more user testing and adjusting feature specifications based on those results. To some extent we effectively identified and validated the problem, but didn't have a concrete measure that ensured that our solution was *the best* way to solve the problem, so going forward, we should iteratively test and evaluate our solution until we reach the best possible solution given reasonable constraints. Some KPIs we could measure for:

- Number of daily active users (DAU): Give insight to general usability and retention
- Net Promoter Score (NPS): How willing users will promote our product
- Social Media Mentions: If users are actively exporting to other social media platforms

Beyond that, we might consider doing more user research do add functionality that builds on the existing features, but adds a professional flair to the product so that there's a guided transition for users who are using the product with the intention of applying their experiences with the product to their professional pursuits. Lastly, in the event that a product like this really does blow up, figuring out a viable business model that precisely monetizes key parts of the app would be crucial to the survival of the company intended to bear the overhead of this app.

Final Thoughts

As this school year comes to a close, the thought of ultimately finishing this capstone project has been immensely rewarding. Despite obstacles and often at times, lack of direction, we are incredibly proud as a team to finalize timeline and present it to the public. This has been the culmination of weeks of hard work, weeks of debate and struggle, and weeks of figuring out what exactly product is and how we can aim to get better. We hope that you enjoy our CSW and find our work and findings intriguing. Thank you!