

Gi et lite

vink



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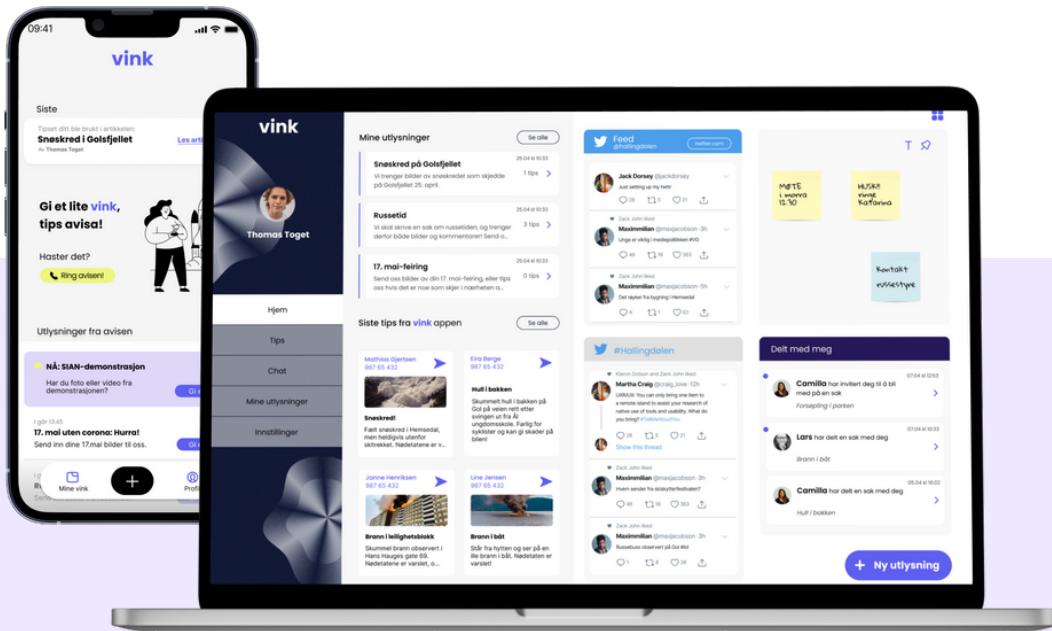


# INTRODUCTION

Local newspapers are predominantly read by the older generation, leaving a gap for young readers. Bridging this gap could increase the value of newspapers and create a more collaborative local environment. A great way to solve this is by actively sending and receiving tips. However, as of today, few young readers submit tips. We have designed a tool that connects readers and journalists by providing a channel of communication, bridging that gap. We believe this would benefit both readers and the news industry, innovating the everyday practice for newsrooms and journalists.

This project report was written for the course MIX250, as a part of the study program Media- and interaction design at the University of Bergen in the spring of 2022.

## Our solution: Gi et lite **vink!**



### Vink-app for readers

[Figma link](#)

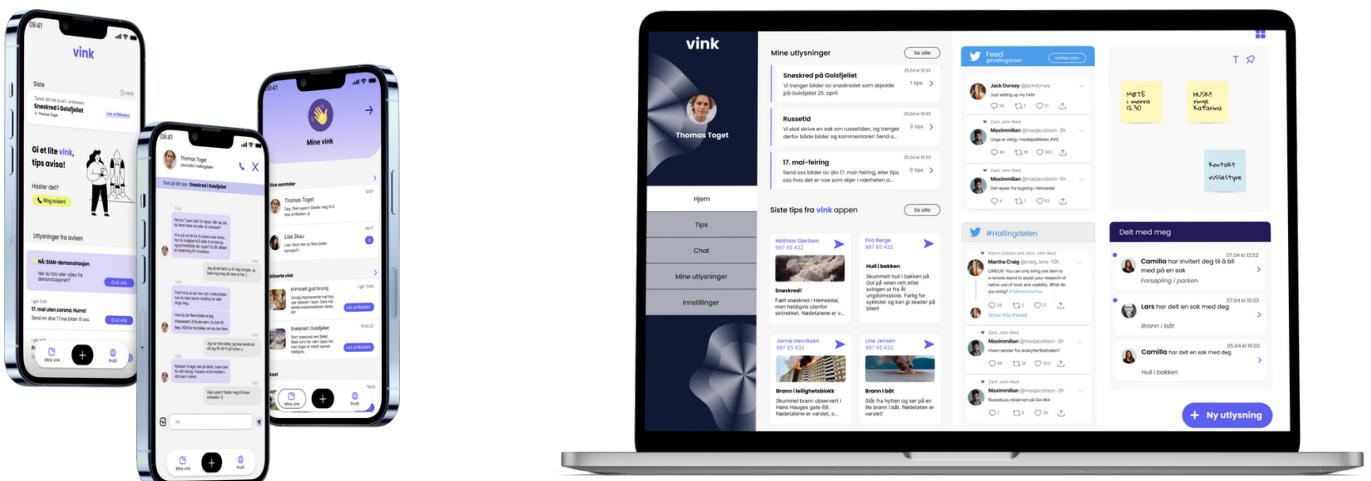
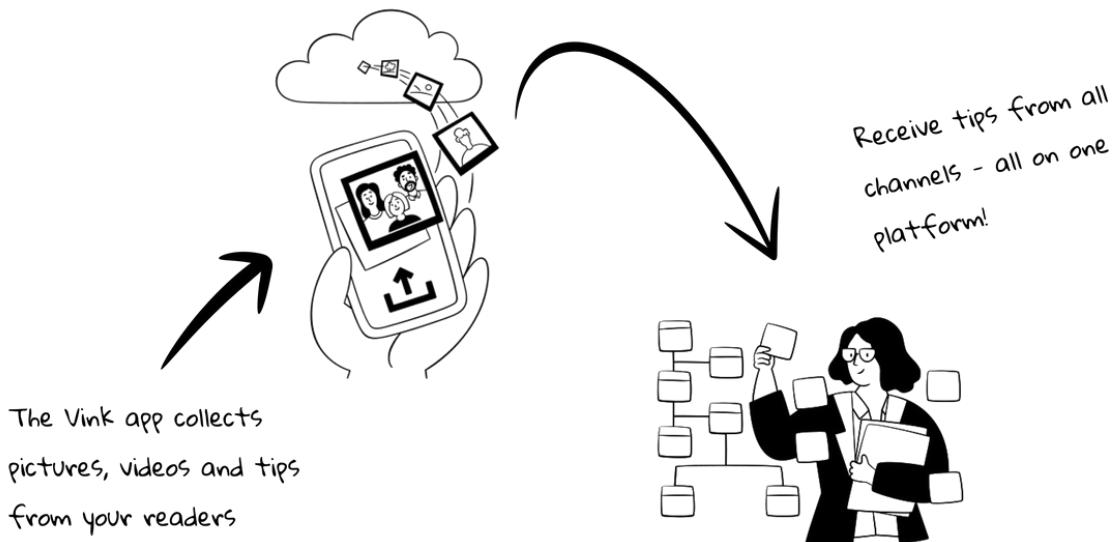
### Vink for journalists:

[Figma link](#)

# Let us introduce you to Vink!

Vink is the new tool for journalists that will change the way journalists communicate and connect with their readers! Working on a new case? Reach out to your audience by submitting queries and let the readers know exactly what kind of tips is wanted.

Readers can easily submit tips, images and videos in the app. The submission will then appear in the journalists Vink-platform – where all leads and incoming information is gathered for easy access!



Video Demo - **Vink-app for readers:**  
[Youtube link](#)

Video demo - **Vink for journalists:**  
[Youtube link](#)

# Partner

Future Solutions AS is a consulting company that helps customers strengthen their competitiveness through future-oriented collaborations, improvement work and competence transfers (Future Solutions, n.d.). Since 2019, Future Solutions has developed an app called *Tipps*. *Tipps* aims to simplify the process of submitting tips to a newspaper and gives rewards in return to its users. It also aims to increase journalists incoming tips, images and videos from the community. Our main contact throughout the project was the project manager in Future Solutions, Christen Hermansen.

## Tipps' three main functions

1. Submit tips
2. Collect rewards
3. User profile

## Tipps' clients

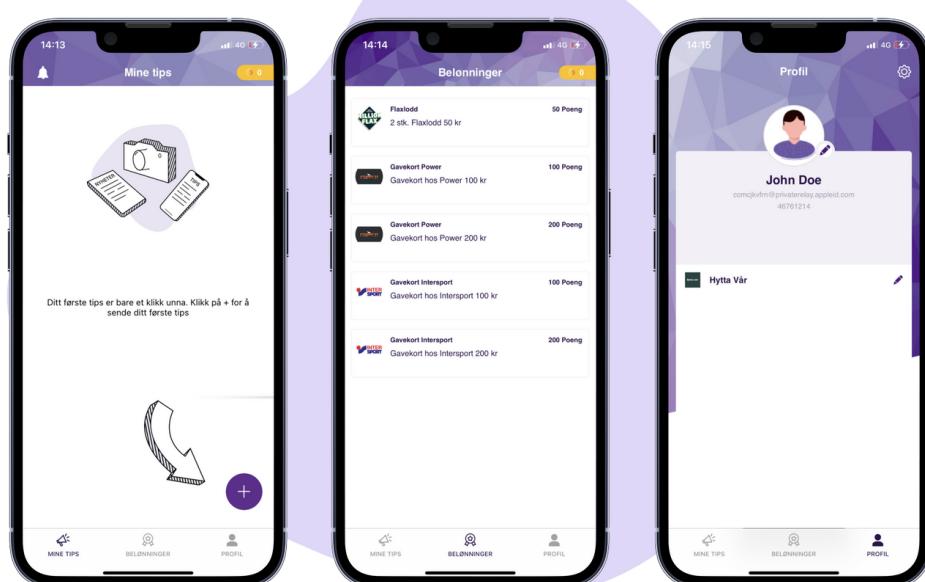
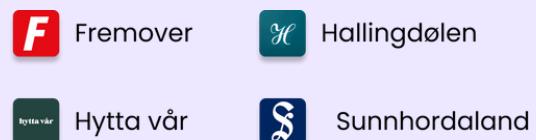


Figure 1: Users of today's *Tipps* can submit pictures, videos, comments and suggestions to their local newspaper and receive rewards.

# The Challenge

Future Solutions gave us the challenge to:

**Increase the number of Tipps-users,  
by increasing the value and attraction of Tipps**

## RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Together with Future Solutions we discussed their vision for Tipps and gained a deeper understanding of the concept and the app. Before starting the Design Sprint, we needed to know more about our potential users. We conducted qualitative interviews with our two user groups; journalists who use Tipps and readers under the age of 40 who pay for news subscriptions.

### Our participants

None of the young readers had any previous knowledge of Tipps. Our interview questions focused on their thoughts and experiences with tipping newspapers in general. From the journalists' perspective, our main objective was to find out how they manage tips in their daily work, using the Tipps app.

After we created the first prototype, we conducted a second round of interviews with two other journalists. These journalists worked in newspapers that do not use Tipps, because we wanted to learn more about how they manage tips in general.

## Journalists who use Tipps

- **Journalist 1 (J1)**  
Journalist from Sunnhordland
- **Journalist 2 (J2)**  
Journalist from Fremover
- **Journalist 3 (J3)**  
Editor from Hallingdølen

## Readers under the age of 40

- **Full-time employee (26)**  
who subscribes to Bergens Tidende
- **Student (23)**  
who subscribes to Bergen Tidende
- **Student (23)**  
who subscribes to E24

# Main findings



### Journalists who use Tipps

- Receive tips from social media, email or calls in addition to Tipps
- Often get tips from people they know in their local communities
- Hectic work environment and time pressure
- Always verifies the information by contacting the submitters
- Wish to reach younger audience in news stories
- Tipps adds to all the other work tools they use daily

### Readers under the age of 40

- None had ever submitted a tip to a newspaper before
- Consider accidents and other sensational stories as important enough
- Unsure of what type of content newspapers want
- They would prefer to call, send an email or use social media
- All participants were motivated only by money
- They think it is important to contact a credible journalist



From this point and on, we use the term *readers* to describe our general user group; readers under the age of 40.

# Personas

- We receive tips from several different channels. Regardless, we need to contact and talk to the sender in order to use the tip.
- People sending tips are often readers from 40 and upwards. We use the Tipps app to try to reach younger readers.
- We want readers to feel more connected to the paper, and want them to contribute.
- We believe that reaching a younger audience is about writing relevant content for them, but also going out meeting and talking to them.
- A solution like Tipps is making it easier to communicate with a younger audience, but it isn't reaching its potential; not enough people are using it, and they don't seem motivated by our rewards.

Hello! My name is Frøy and I'm a journalist in the local newspaper "Marsteinen". I'm pretty busy...



**Journalist**

Hey! I'm Jo, I'm 25 and I'm doing a degree in gender studies right now! In my spare time I like swimming



**Reader**

- I read different papers online, on different platforms.
- I prioritize paying for one subscription to one paper to find news that interest me.
- I'm not super loyal to my local newspaper.
- I think the reason a lot of young people don't pay for a subscription is because of their economy and that they are content with the free content.
- I've never tipped a paper, and don't know what I'd even tip about.
- I don't see a need to tip unless I'd want to make a change of some sort, or if it would have a large significance.
- I don't see the need for an app in order to tip.
- I think anonymity is important.

# DESIGN SPRINT

To create and design a solution we used the Google Design Sprint, originally an intensive five-day design process used to solve complex problems (Knapp, 2016). We ran our sprint digitally on Zoom over three days, using Miro as our digital whiteboard. Hermansen was the decider in our sprint, which gave him the final word in important decisions.

## 1st Sprint day

We started the sprint by exploring challenges together with Hermansen. As part of the sprint preparation, we mapped the current process of submitting tips in the Tipps-app, based on insights from the interviews.

### How Might We's

These insights were then used to create How Might We-questions, to help define the problems and create possible solutions, in addition to deciding which part of our map to target.

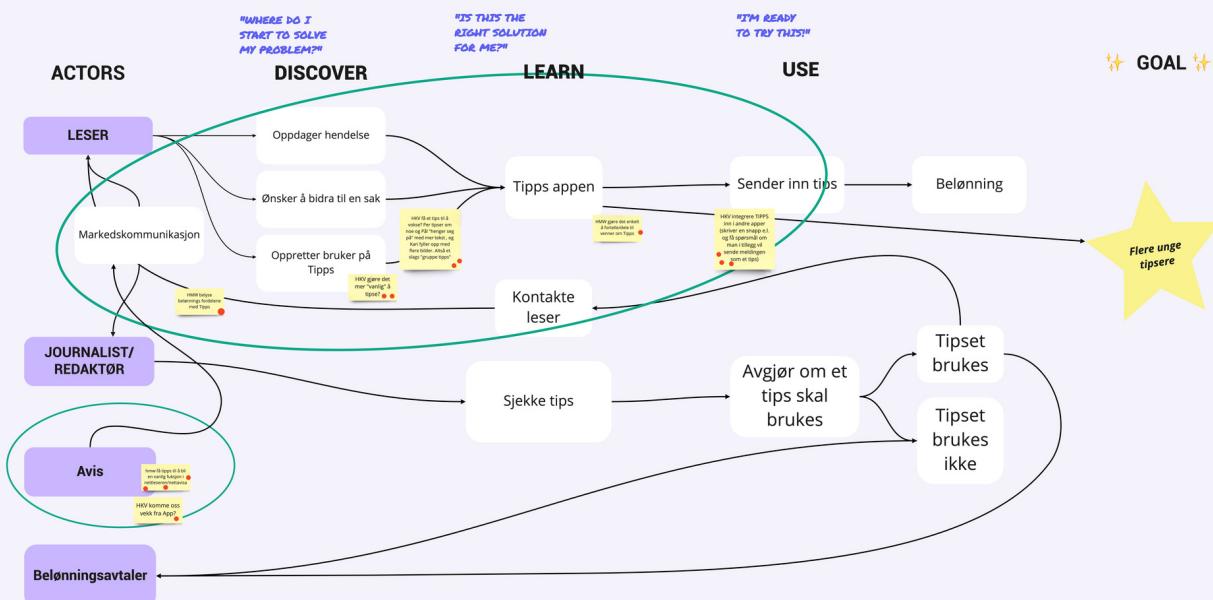


Figure 2: Our map and target of the Tipps-App

## Two-year goal

The two-year goal exercise is meant to help us be optimistic and think about what our product will look like in an ideal world. We formulated our first goal as follows;

**"In two years, sending tips to a newspaper will be just as intuitive as messaging a friend about something you have seen or experienced."**

## Sprint questions

Sprint questions help provide a focus for the sprint. We ended up with the following questions:

- **Can we...** lower the threshold for what young people consider tip-worthy?
- **Can we...** get young people as loyal to the newspaper as the elderly?
- **Can we...** build a solution more efficient and intuitive than the Tipps app?

## 2nd and 3rd Sprint day

The focus of the second day was exploring potential solutions and gathering ideas. The process consisted of creative methods like Lightning demos, Crazy 8 and Doodling. At the end of day two, every participant sketched their own proposed conceptual solution.

The goal of the third day was to define and determine what we wanted to include in the prototype. We made user flows based on the winning solution and voted for the one with the most important features that we wanted to include in the storyboard and prototype.



Figure 3: Final user flow from the Design Sprint.

# FIRST PROTOTYPE

We prototyped a new version of the existing Tipps-app, by creating a web browser solution and an updated interface with new features.

Our first prototype included a reward system where users could earn points and coupons as an incentive to submit more tips. The users would see published news articles with content submitted from other Tipps users. We also added social and personalized features to customize their journey and encourage activity.

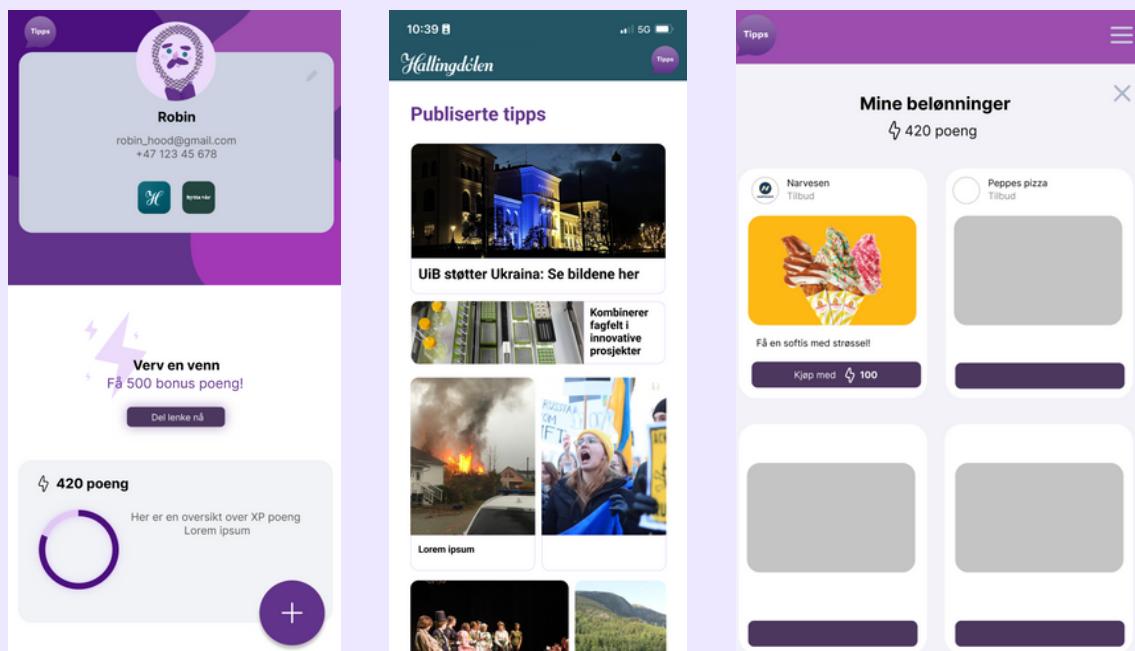


Figure 4: Profile, published news with tips from the app and rewards page from our first prototype

# User testing: Round 1

We conducted five user tests with potential users. They were given the same tasks to complete and gave us a walkthrough by thinking aloud. The user tests left us with two main takeaways that became pivotal in the final prototype.

## Utility issues

We found that the prototype's main functions did not have the effect we designed for. The user test feedback resembled the initial insight from the pre-sprint interviews. In fact, by using Tipps as the foundation for building new features, we were building on a concept that already had some deeper issues concerning utility.

*"There is no point in recruiting friends (...) it is not like I am going to hang out on Tipps"*

## A different approach

The prototype relied too much on the users' own initiative to reach out and figure out what kind of tips the newspaper would value. We realized that we needed a different approach. The readers' main issue with tipping newspapers was not how to submit the tip itself, but rather knowing what to submit.

*"I don't think it is easier to download an app than sending an email or call"*

*"I don't even know what to tip about (...) I have never sent a tip to a newspaper"*

# THE TURNING POINT

After analysing the feedback on the first prototype, we started reassessing our main focus and ran an iteration sprint. We needed to ask ourselves what did and did not work? What are the opportunities moving forward?

We learned from the user tests that the prototype had poor utility even though it appeared user-friendly and functional. The user test results pushed us to innovate and discover new opportunities by bridging the gap between readers and journalists.

This iteration sprint was a turning point; we created a new long-term goal, sprint questions and sketched a new prototype. We needed to create a solution that would bridge the gap between readers and journalists. Therefore, journalists became our primary user group, and readers our secondary.

## Sprint questions 2.0

**2.1**

**Can we...**

make sure that it would be easier for journalists to find cases/sources than the other way around?

**2.2**

**Can we...**

ensure that the users consider submitting tips as something productive and rewarding?

**2.3**

**Can we...**

guarantee that tips from young readers will lead to an increase in newspaper subscribers?

## Long term goal 2.0

*"In two years, there is a solution that makes it easy for journalists to collaborate with readers that have information about what is happening around them, and makes the readers feel that their tips are useful."*

# The 2nd prototype: New features

For the second version of the prototype, we expanded it into two different parts; one for journalists and one for readers. We named our new solution Vink - "Gi et lite vink". These are some of the new features we implemented:

## Queries

Journalists have hectic work schedules, making it difficult to handle urgent matters especially if it requires long-distance travel. This is where the concept of journalists sending out queries comes to play. The idea is that journalists post queries regarding specific matters where information, photos or videos are needed.

In turn, the readers receive a query that makes it clear which information is relevant and worth sharing. This will potentially give them more confidence in tipping the newspaper.

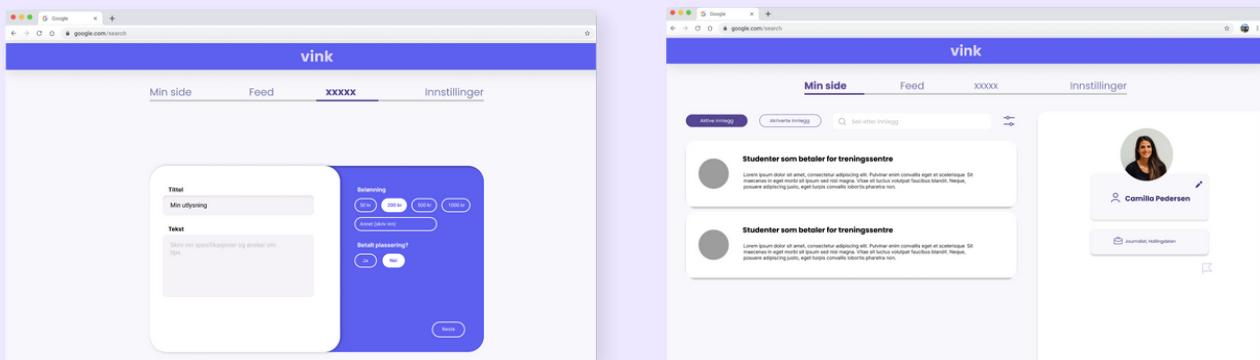


Figure 5: Journalists can post queries.

## Money

We wanted to highlight the profitable advantages of using Vink instead of sending tips through email, social media, etc. If the tip submitted through Vink is published, the user will be rewarded with money.



Figure 6: Header from the readers' feed page.

## Browser

The queries appear in the online newspaper feed. The user will have the option of submitting a tip without logging in or creating a user profile.

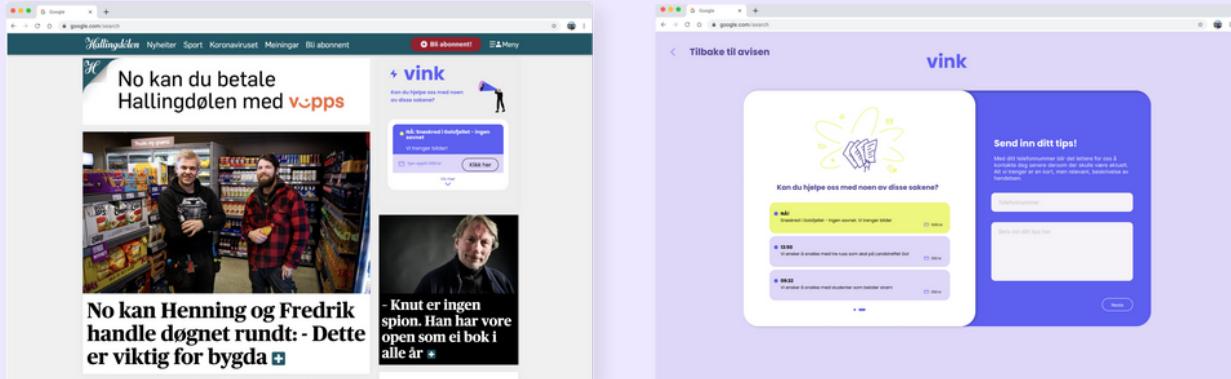


Figure 7: Queries presented in newspapers and the submitting form.

## User testing: Round 2

We conducted new user tests with five readers and five journalists. This time we chose to include both new and previous participants from the project.

We found that the adjustments had a big impact on the user test results. Both the journalists and the readers found the prototype effective, intuitive and understood the concept, but there were also some issues concerning usability that we needed to improve. The most important takeaways were:

## Journalists

*"A useful source for information about the general public to represent in local newspapers"*

*"I do miss a button that makes it easy to send out queries"*

*"It looks like a forum"*

*"We only reward video and images, not sources"*

*"I don't need any instruction to use this, it makes sense"*

*"We need more information about the tippers"*



## Readers

*"This was easy, and I like that I can earn some money"*

*"Why do I need to log in? Registering an account feels unnecessary".*



*"It's a nice and easy way for people to represent their cases in local newspapers and then maybe even more people will read it"*

*"I would prefer to tip anonymously, or at least have the option if the newspaper decides to use it"*

# FINAL PROTOTYPE

The feedback from the second round of user tests provided valuable insights and helped us adjust and refine our final prototype. We knew from our research that journalists receive tips from multiple channels, which is time-consuming. We realised that we needed to shift the focus away from the readers and towards the journalists, which is why we expanded Vink into a platform for journalists and kept the app for readers.

We aimed to make it easier for journalists to manage tips by gathering all incoming tips, media, information and communication on one platform. The Vink app is designed for the readers and is an important part of the solution because it gathers tips, but also works as a communication tool that supports the collaboration between readers and the journalists.

Our final prototype included easily accessible contact information about the submitters. We added functionalities that will make it easier for journalists to collaborate.

## Journalists

### Vink - All your information in one platform!



Figure 8:  
A profile picture is  
attached at the bottom  
left corner to let other  
colleagues know who is  
working on the tip.

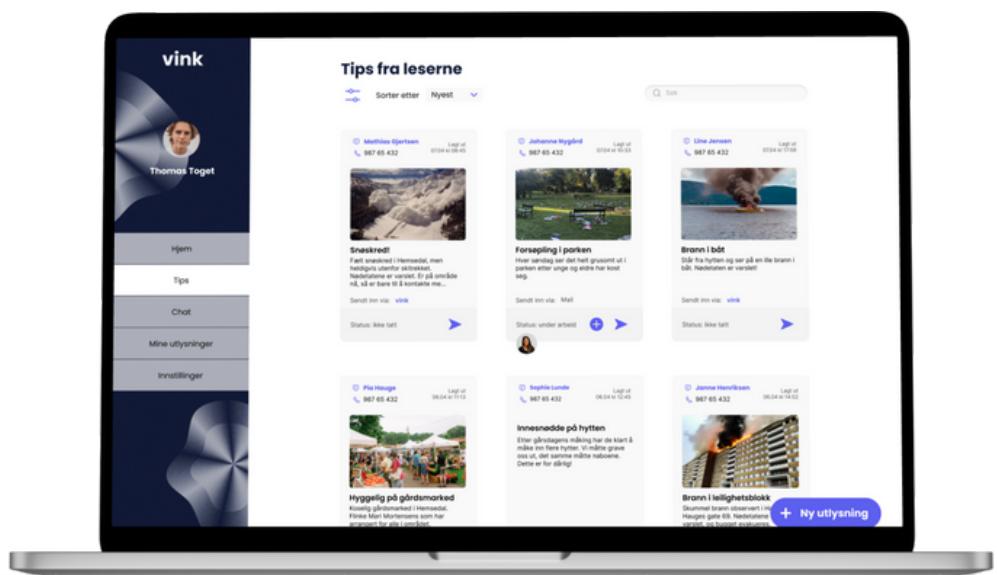


Figure 9:  
Submitted tips from different channels are all collected. The filter  
function ensures that tips will be manageable in high numbers.

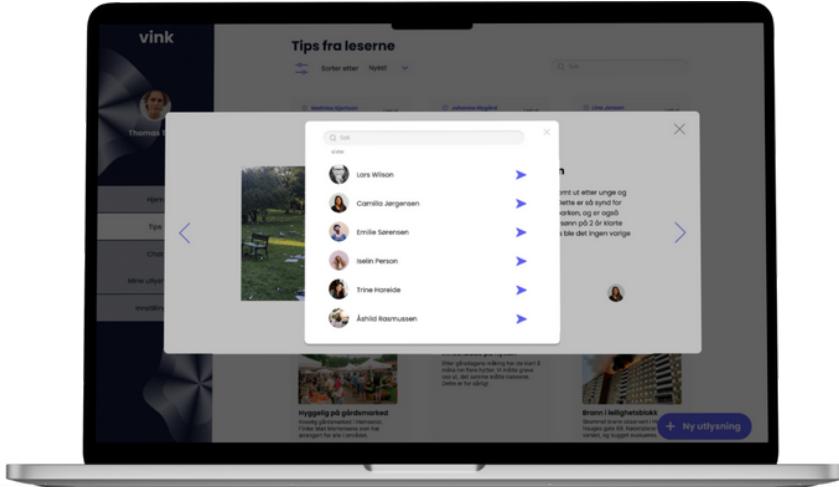


Figure 10: Send a case to a colleague.

**Journalists often cooperate and need input from their colleagues when working on a case. Vink makes it easy to collaborate by sending and sharing submitted tips to your colleagues.**

Need to validate your source? Or get more photos?

Send a message directly to the tipper in the app!

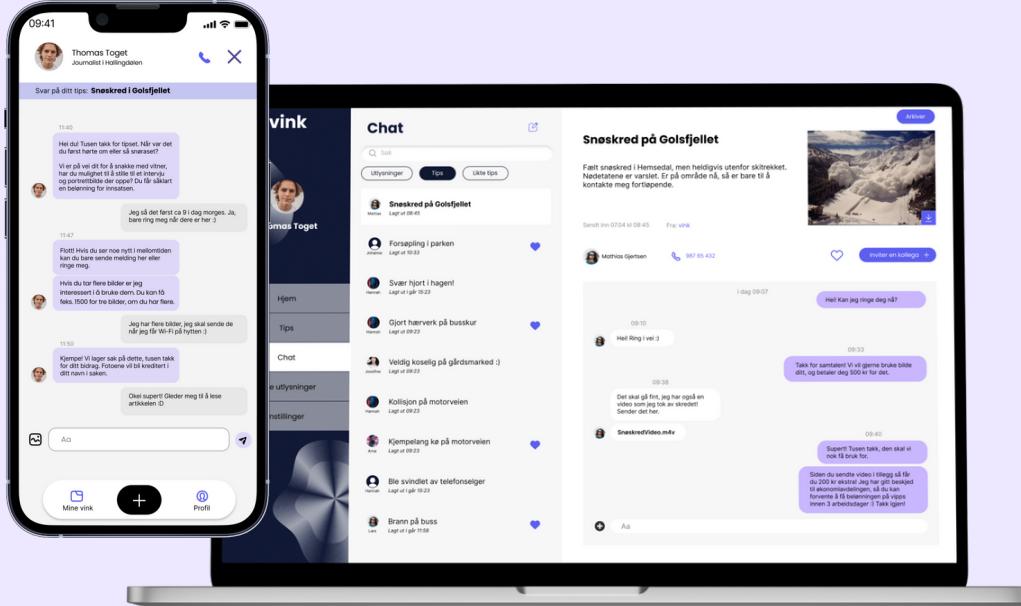


Figure 11: All communication goes through Vink.

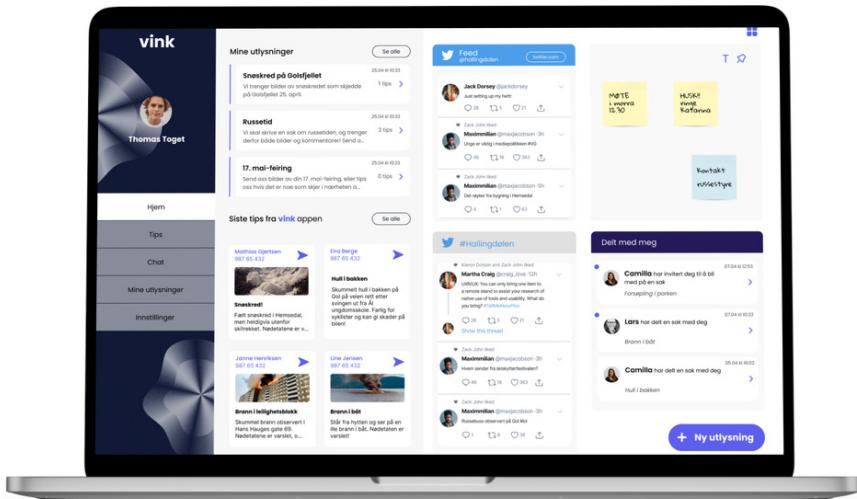


Figure 12: The journalists' home page and feed.

**The home page is an overview of the most recent submitted tips, and a live feed from twitter or other social platforms.**

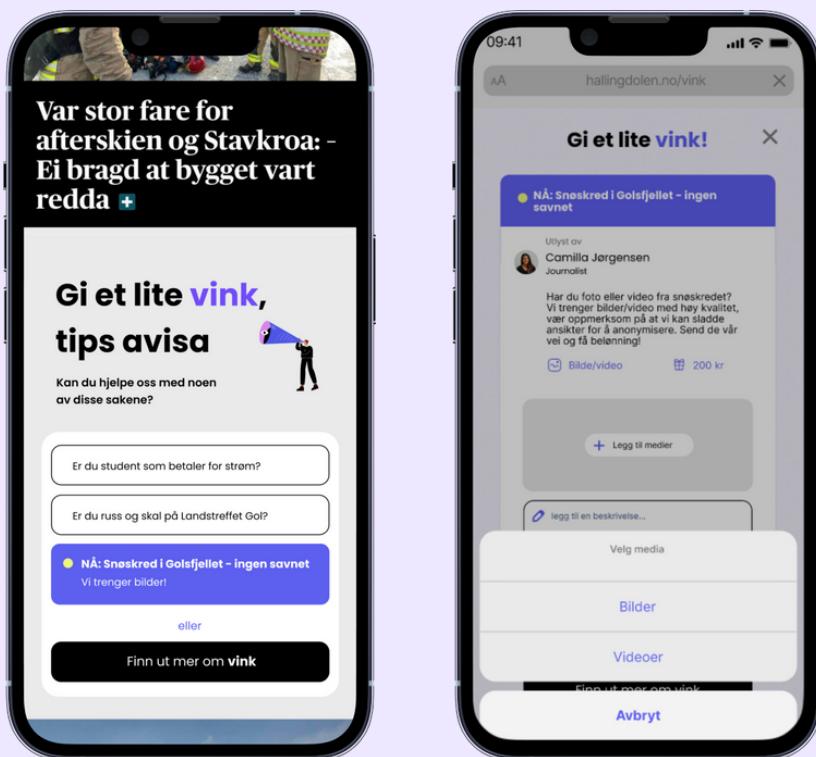
**The purple query-button is a floating action button and is available at all times, except in the chat.**

## Readers

### The Vink app: Tipping made easy

In our research, we saw that not all participants were open to downloading an app in order to submit a tip. Therefore, we kept the option of submitting tips in response to specific queries, without having to download the app or create a user profile. In the app, the reader gets an overview of queries from their newspaper of choice.

Readers can tip or call the newspaper in-app. Our main focus is letting the reader know at all times what type of information is relevant and wanted by the journalists. We want the readers to feel confident that the tips, video or images they provide is valuable.



Discover the relevant topics from the Vink queries in the newspaper!

Readers can tip directly from the online newspaper without an account, or download the Vink app to see more queries and save their drafts.

Figure 13: Discover Vink in your newspaper.

The homepage shows the newest queries.

Vink makes it easy to submit tips whenever the reader want, or save drafts for later.

All accounts are verified in the sign up process, which makes it possible for Vink to ensure anonymity if the reader prefers it.

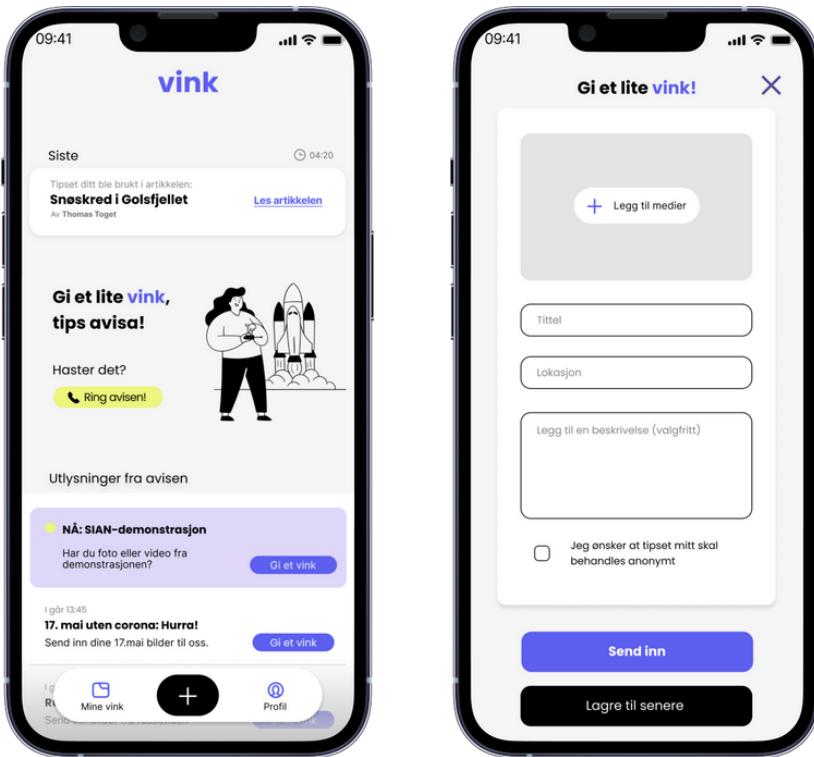


Figure 14: The home page and tips-form.

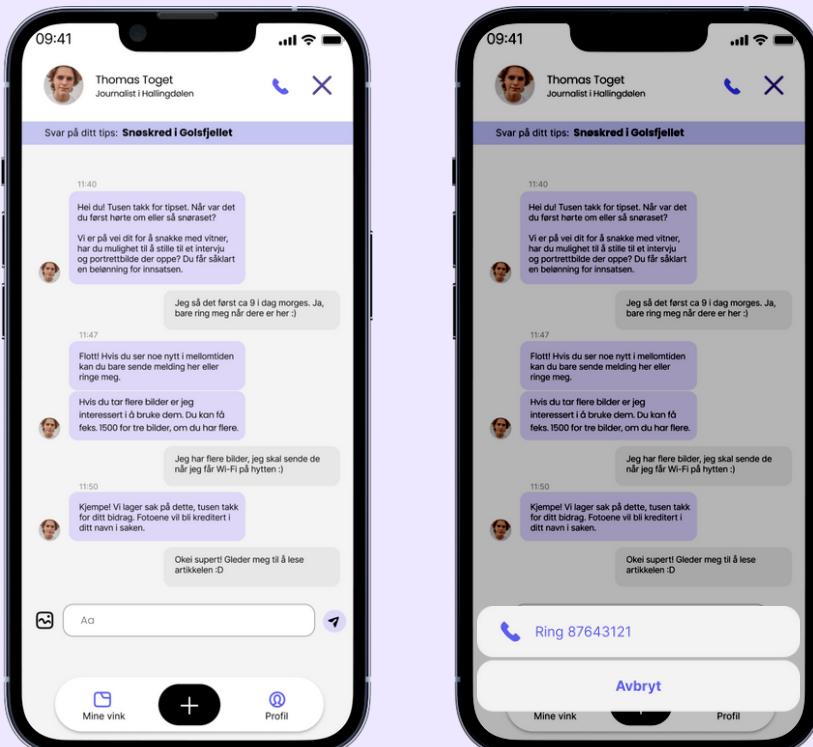


Figure 15: Chat with a journalist or call.

Readers value the trust and relationship established when communicating with a journalist.

Vink provides the journalist's names, profile picture and contact information.

# LEARNINGS

## 1. Working with clients

When it comes to working with clients, communication is key. After Future Solutions presented the challenge, we started the research process at once. In hindsight, we should have stepped back and looked at what other deeper issues there might be. After gaining a deeper understanding of the users, we learned that we had been too focused on the given information. This shaped our perception of what the issues were, and not what they *actually* were. Luckily, we are confident that we found the root of the problem through user research and testing. We learned to trust our own expertise, while still considering and including our partner.

## 2. Remote Design Sprint works – but it is challenging!

We feel confident running a Design Sprint, but it is challenging when working remotely. Our users had busy work schedules and we needed to be flexible if the journalists were called to report. This caused some delays in our Design Sprint. Remote Sprints might require more planning in order for things to run smoothly, but it was executed in a structured manner and gave us great results. Running the Sprint digitally proved to be an advantage for our busy participants, because they could jump back in easily if they had to leave for a short period of time.

## 3. Trust the process

We have made huge changes along the process of this project. It is important as designers to pay attention to failures and not just where things work out as planned. We experienced this especially after the first round of user testing and learned how important failure is to make big improvements. Failure in testing is successful learning!

## 4. A potential weakness in the insight work

Future Solutions work with local newspapers, but our participants live in bigger cities and pay for top newspapers, like Bergens Tidende and E24. If we had interviewed people who subscribe to smaller local newspapers, our data could potentially be more specific to the user needs in these communities. However, we feel confident that the insights gathered from both expert and reader interviews were sufficient and useful for this project.

# Next steps

Future Solutions were satisfied with our work during the internship. Hermansen plan to present our prototype to all the newspapers that use Tipps. If we had the opportunity to continue our work on this project, we would consider exploring some of these issues further:

## Money

All of our readers were intrigued by the possibility of cashback rewards. This would be interesting to pursue further if we had the opportunity, because we know it has potential. However, it is complicated as it involves the financial department in the newsroom. This also proved to be a difficult because some newspapers do not pay for tips at all.

## Verification tag

Readers who use Vink frequently could become verified Vink users by the newspapers. The journalists could verify users they trust and contribute with valuable information and tips. This could potentially make readers more loyal to the paper and change the way young readers engage in local news.

## Leader view

Vink could offer editors a *leader view*, which would provide more insight of what projects journalists are working on or have completed, as well as the option to assign tips and cases to them. This would make the editor a moderator with more options and features that support them in their daily work.

## Test test test!

Run more iterations and user tests to create further adjustments.

**We have learned a lot while working on this project.  
Our collaboration with Future Solutions has been both  
educational and fun. We wish to thank everyone  
involved, especially Hermansen for believing in our ideas.**

**And remember, if you see something; gi et lite vink!**



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