

Stage 1 - Project Description – shelf.

Description

Our project shelf. is designed as a social media platform that provides books for download while ensuring accessibility for all users. The social media aspect is intended to strengthen the feeling of being part of an active reading community, allowing users to see which books their friends are currently reading. Their progress will be displayed, and their comments will be visible. In this way, conversations and shared discoveries emerge, reinforcing the sense of community. A central feature is the reading circle, where friends can read the same book simultaneously and exchange comments directly within the text. This simulates the experience of a traditional book club in a more immediate and interactive way.

The downloadable books are presented in two categories: one for recommendations from friends and another for algorithm-based suggestions. These algorithmic recommendations are first reviewed and approved by selected individuals whose biographies are accessible within the app. Much like a curated bookstore, this process guarantees a high-quality selection that feels reliable and inspiring. Instead of focusing on quantity, shelf. creates an environment that motivates users to browse, discover, and read. In addition, books are not displayed with flashy or distracting covers but only with their title and a background color. In line with the motto “don’t judge the book by its cover,” this ensures that the focus remains on the content rather than the packaging, encouraging curiosity about the ideas within the book itself.

At its core, shelf. allows readers to document their own reading progress. Each book includes a clear progress tracker that motivates users while also giving friends insight into their current status. Furthermore, users can leave comments directly in the text. Whether for spontaneous thoughts, questions, or noteworthy impressions. Each book can also be rated and reviewed, helping others in their selection process. To guarantee accessibility, users can customize the display to meet their individual needs. In the settings, they can intuitively adjust font size and contrast strength to ensure comfortable reading. Personal profiles can also be customized with details such as name, age, or a playful cat-shaped avatar. Notification preferences are flexible as well. These features ensure that every user feels comfortable, respected, and represented on shelf.

Motivation

Although similar apps already exist, many are strongly modeled after marketplace-style layouts, often reminiscent of platforms like Amazon - functional, but hardly inspiring. From our personal experience, such designs do not encourage reading but instead reduce literature to a mere product. With shelf., we intentionally want to take a different approach: creating a digital environment that feels like a cozy bookstore. Through visual simplicity, curated selection, and interactive features, we aim to design a warm, welcoming atmosphere that inspires a love for reading. Our goal is to revive the joy of books in a digital space that feels personal, motivating, and inspiring.

Design

The design is intended to enhance the atmosphere of a bookstore by being simple and well-structured. The exact template will be presented next week...