

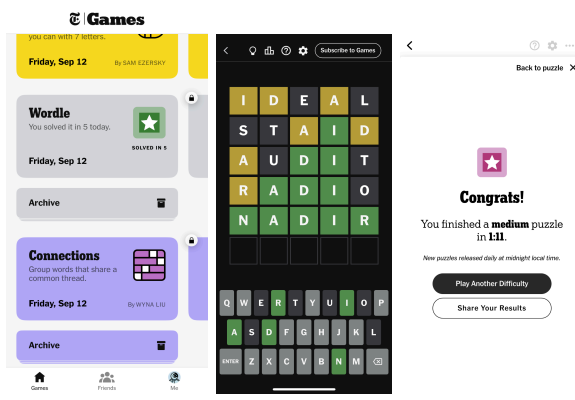
The World from a UXD Perspective Assignment (NYT Games App)

Assessment

NYT Games is an application created by the New York Times that holds all of its different games in one spot and allows users to create a profile so that they can play games daily, track their statistics, and play with friends. After using and analyzing the app, I've seen how it is an example of good UX because it is very easy to navigate for all users, has a simple and clear interface and icon signifiers, and also has many places for the user to figure out how to use the app or play one of the games within it. Additionally, the flow of the app is very seamless, and it doesn't seem to have any significant issues, bugs, or errors. The only facet that I feel they could improve on to make their navigation even easier would be the discoverability of the user's most frequently played games. Throughout my analysis, the main Norman's Principles I noticed while analyzing the NYT Games app are affordances/signifiers, constraints, and discoverability.

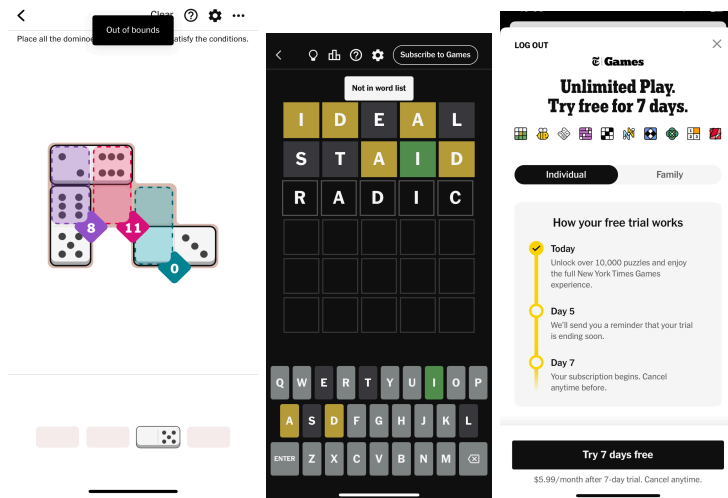
Affordances/Signifiers

There are many different affordances and signifiers within the NYT Games app as they're displayed throughout their games, home screen, profile, and friends page. I feel that NYT does them well and simply in a variety of ways. Firstly, all of their icon signifiers are clear to their corresponding affordance and are spread throughout the homepage and games. They do similarly with the game displays as well, having icons and colors unique to each game, making each one distinguishable to the user. Secondly, each of the games has its own different affordances and signifiers as well. For example, in Wordle (in the middle), each of the letters will either be green, yellow, or grey, which signifies to the user whether or not the letter is in the word or in the right spot in the word, and helps them to know which letters they can use and get closer to solving the word of the day. Additionally, each of the games has its own pop-up after you solve it, which either will show you your stats, prompt you to share with friends, prompt you to play another difficulty, or exit, showcasing all the different affordances the user has after completing a puzzle.



Constraints

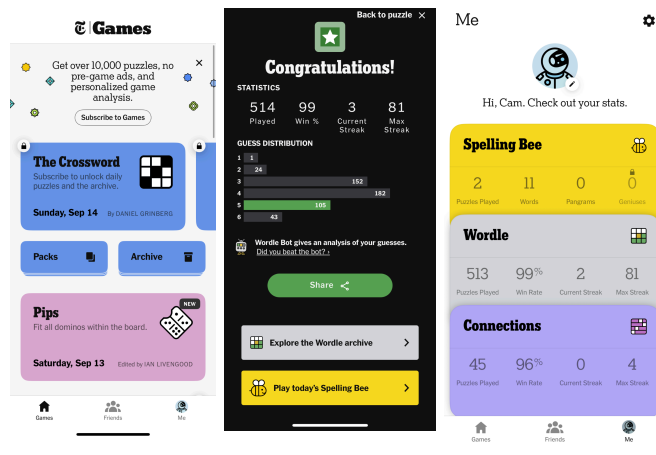
The main constraints in the app are through their subscription feature and rules and regulations in their games. With their subscription feature, it simply puts regular users behind a paywall and prompts them to purchase the subscription since it prevents them from accessing exclusive features like full game access, archived puzzles, their different bots, and playing their daily crossword. As for the games, the constraints tend to vary depending on the one that you're playing, but typically fall within the bracket of the user making some kind of error. For example, in Pips (on the left), the game gave me an 'Out of Bounds' prompt when I attempted to place the remaining domino vertically when the only space for it to fit is horizontal, which is more of a physical type of constraint. Similarly, in the second example in Wordle (in the middle), the game would not let me input the word and gave me the prompt 'Not in word list', letting me know that "radic" is not something that can be used, which leans more towards a logical constraint.



Discoverability

In terms of discoverability, I think that the app does it pretty well. The interface of the app overall is laid out simply enough for most people to be able to find everything that they need, and the signifiers are clear and often explicitly catered to the game or feature that they are representing. For information that users tend to seek, such as their stats, they make it very easy to view both after playing a game and even if you are not playing, because it's displayed both after you complete a puzzle for the corresponding game that you're playing and in your profile section. Another feature that I think is smart is that whenever the NYT comes out with new games, they push it up to the top and label it as new, so that it's noticeable to the user and prompts them to play it before going towards the games they normally play. One factor that I think would improve their discoverability would be if they were to implement a 'Frequently Played' section on the user's homepage and push that to the top, rather than The Crossword

(which is behind a paywall anyway), because it would make it easier for the user to come back to the games they play daily.



Redesign

For my redesign, I chose to touch on the suggestion I had made in the discoverability section about how they should put the user's most frequently played games towards the top of the screen because it would make the navigation for the user even easier than it already is. The picture below a rough mockup using Figma of what I would envision the design to be.

