Movie/Music Recommendations:

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Introduction

Streaming services tend to offer a large number of options to appeal to as many users as possible, because of this, most content is seen as "filler content" that users will seldom explore because they are unsure if they will fit their likes or preferences. The abundance of streaming options within different streaming services can cause users to allocate large amounts of time searching for compelling content, or seeking recommendations from secondary sources, sometimes with no success as the user moves on to other activities.
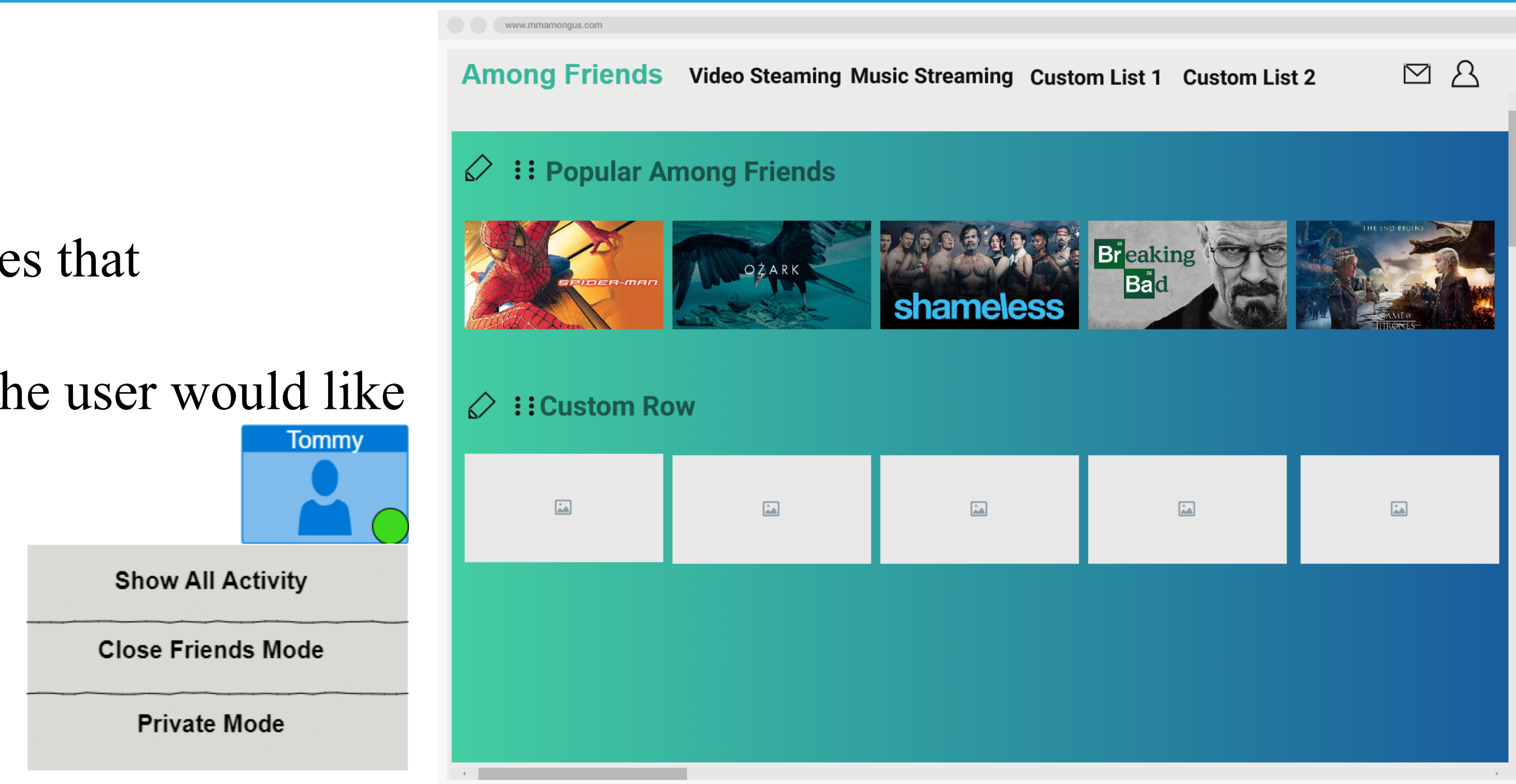
The content that most users stream is found from top streaming lists, which rank the top streamed media in a particular service as a whole. Or, through automated recommendations that are served by algorithms that detect patterns from various users. The problem with this recommendations approach is that media is less likely to be relevant or compelling to the user receiving them. In a research study we conducted, we found that users are much more likely to engage with media content recommended by their friends and family as well as more likely to enjoy that content.

Our service idea is intended to deliver to the user personalized streaming recommendations sourced from their friends and families either through direct recommendations or by sharing their streaming activity.

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Design Alternative 1

Row and customized homepage-based layout:
- Sections are divided by friends, and each section has titles that you can scroll through
- Sections can be customized and ordered in any fashion the user would like
- Drop menu to navigate through genres faster
- Account has privacy modes for sharing
    - Show all activity (everyone can see)
    - Close friends (custom list)
    - Private mode (no one can see)

Design Alternative 2

Newsfeed inspired layout:
- Discussions threads delivered based on relevant connections or direct recommendations.
- Share a movie with a friend or family member
- Sharing can be made directly, or through groups created within the application

Design Alternative 3

Card/Grid View inspired layout:
- Card-based layout
- Long continuous scroll, where different actions are available.
- Left and right swipe gestures
- Seeing a small clip or trailer to reinforce user decision to swipe left or right.
- Streams can be searched, and the results are displayed as cards.
- Sharing a recommendation to someone is as easy as sharing a card, the receiving user sees a notification about being "matched".

Card View   Swipe Right (Detail Screen)   Swipe Left (Next card)

Conclusion and Future Work

These design alternatives are meant to reduce or eliminate the time users spend browsing by presenting personalized media streaming recommendations that they will find compelling and enjoyable.

Our next steps would be to first plan out the other side of recommendations, that being how users send recommendations (the interface/experience associated with that). From there, we would identify the design alternative that we believe will be the most appropriate to serve our users. That could be one of these design alternatives, or a mix of different concepts between these alternatives.
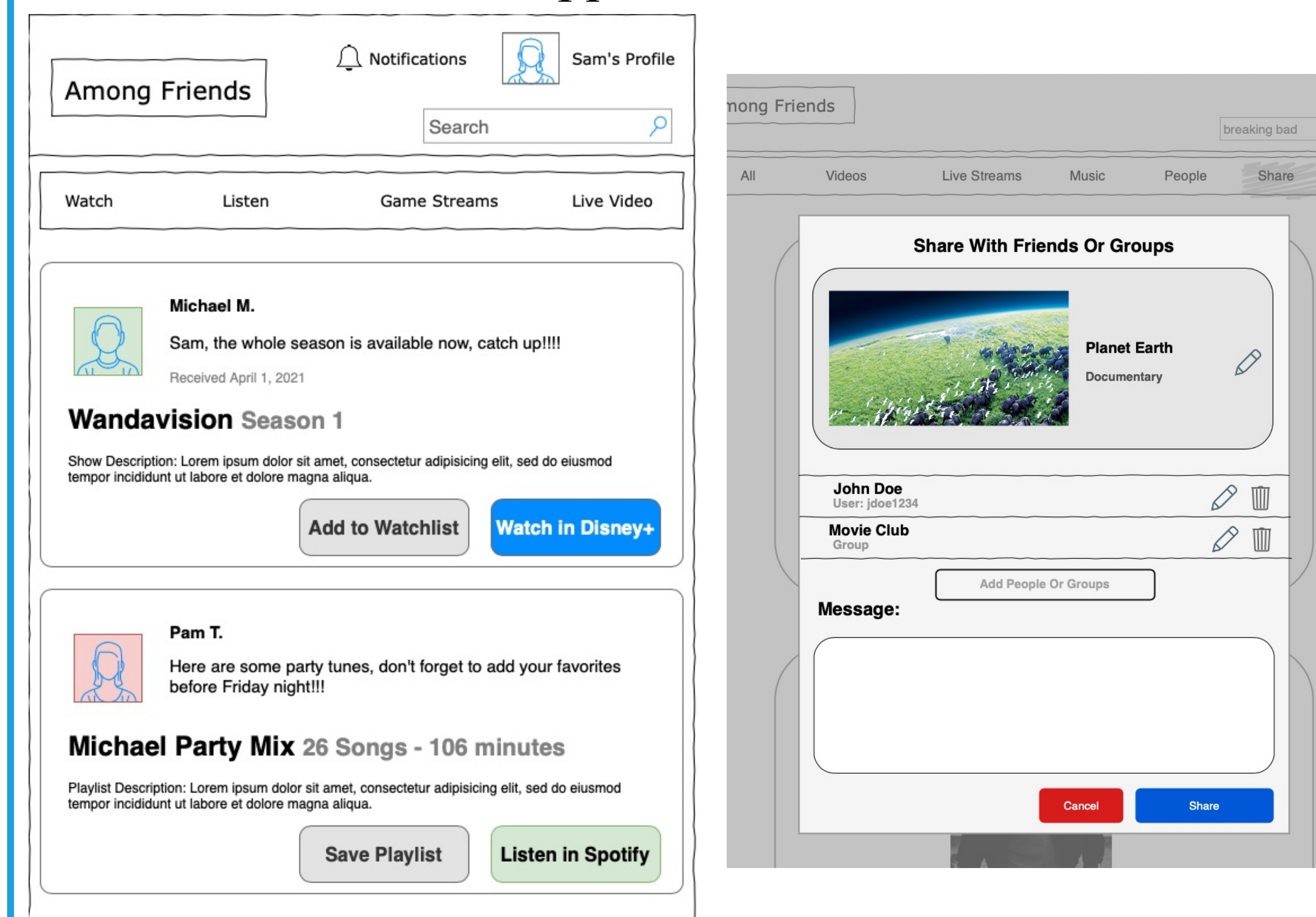
Our investigation results will help us select the best design alternative to align with our project goals. We plan to prototype our design through the software draw.io (might be subject to change), to test the main functionalities and features. We will evaluate these designs on how effective they are at accomplishing our key features; for example, an important feature described in one of our user scenarios is how users can receive curated recommendations that friends and family have selected, we can say that a prototype serves this feature well if it can receive a notification, display the recommendation, and offer the user the opportunity to explore more information, save the recommendation to a streaming list, or open the recommended stream in the appropriate streaming service immediately.

The design for this user experience should be simple, clear, and intuitive. And we will examine our prototypes for these qualities as we design our user interface and experience.