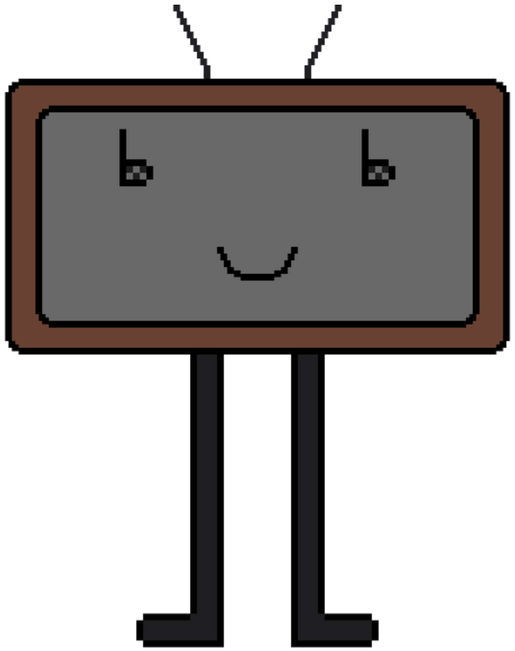

Design Project 1
BingeBuddies

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1. Introduction

Concept

Binge Buddies is an interactive platform designed to simplify the often frustrating process of deciding what to watch in a group setting. With the abundance of streaming platforms and content choices available today, users frequently struggle to reach a consensus, leading to wasted time and occasional disagreements. Binge Buddies addresses this issue by providing a structured decision-making process that enhances collaboration, whether the group is watching together in person or remotely.

Problem Statement

The difficulty of choosing what to watch is a common issue among groups of friends, families, or even online communities. This challenge stems from an overwhelming number of choices, differing personal preferences, and a lack of efficient decision-making tools. Without a structured system, discussions about what to watch can become lengthy and unproductive, often leading to frustration or even the decision to abandon the activity altogether. By integrating a collaborative selection method, Binge Buddies aims to eliminate these inefficiencies and make content consumption a seamless experience.

Target User Description

The primary target users for Binge Buddies are individuals who frequently watch content on streaming platforms and engage in group viewing sessions. This includes groups of friends who gather for movie nights, couples looking to find a mutually enjoyable show, families who want to watch together, and online communities that synchronize their viewing experiences. The platform is tailored to users who want to avoid unnecessary debates and instead rely on a fair, structured process to determine what to watch next.

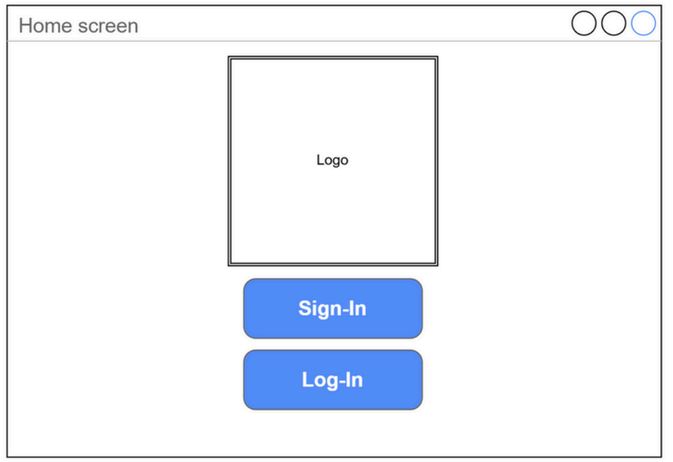
Solution Overview

Binge Buddies introduces an innovative approach to content selection through a voting system that allows users to quickly and fairly decide on what to watch. Users can start a vote, set filters based on preferences and available streaming platforms, and participate in a multi-round selection process. A "super dislike" veto option enables each user to eliminate one movie they strongly oppose. Additionally, the system incorporates AI-based recommendations to present the most relevant choices.

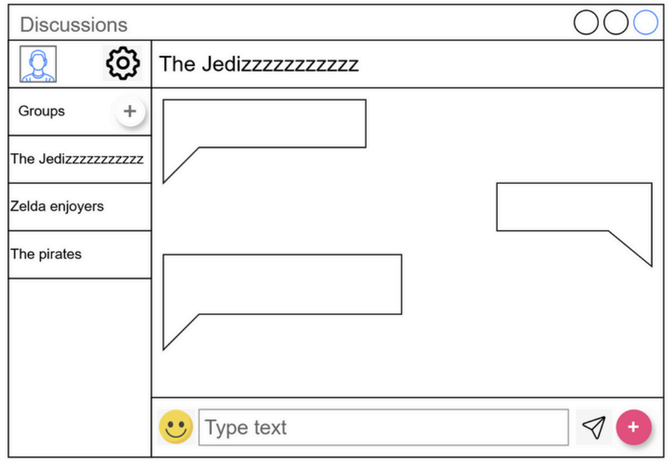
Other features such as a synchronized playback system, an interactive chat, a collaborative pause function, and an AI-powered wake-up detection system add to the seamless and engaging experience.

2. Scenario

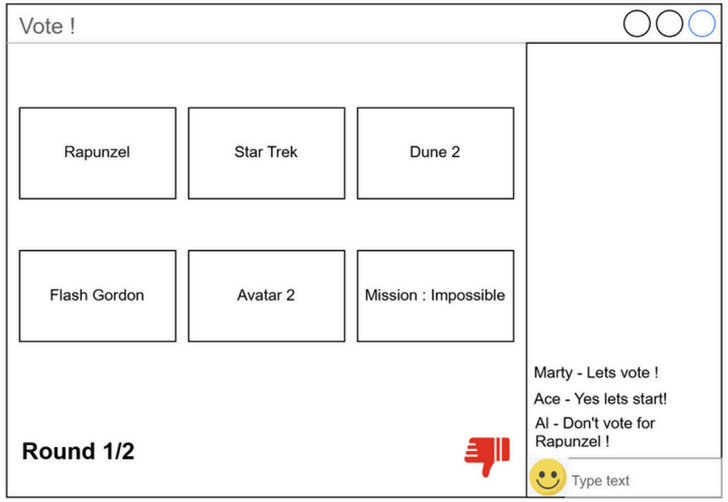
A typical use case for Binge Buddies involves a group of friends planning a movie night. They log into the platform and open their group chat, where one member initiates a vote. The initiator, acting as the host, selects the type of movie and filters out streaming platforms that not all members have access to. The system then suggests six movies based on group preferences and AI-generated recommendations.



Home screen to Sign in or Log in

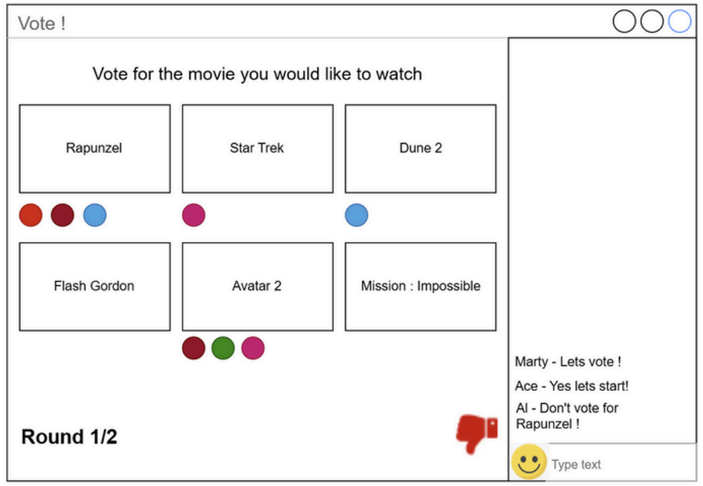


Example of a group chat



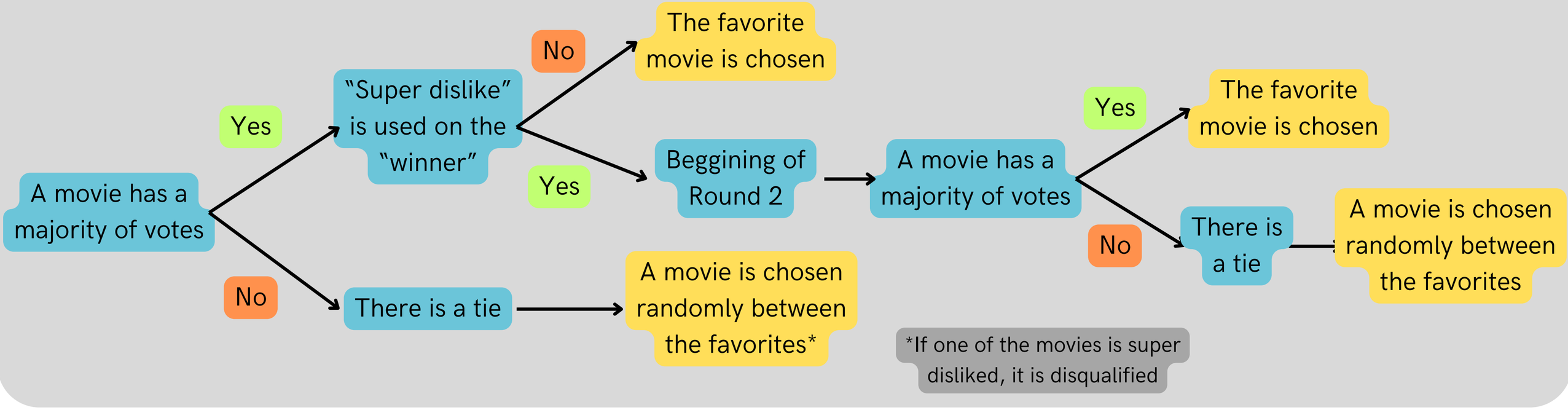
Round 1 of voting before votes

Each participant votes for the movies they are open to watch, and the system processes the results. If a movie receives a majority of votes, it is immediately selected. If someone uses their "super dislike", a second round of voting will start, it will work the same as the first round, except that people cannot use a super dislike in that one and the most popular movies from the first round are carried over and new options introduced. If there is a tie, the system will randomly choose between the tied movies to avoid wasting time.

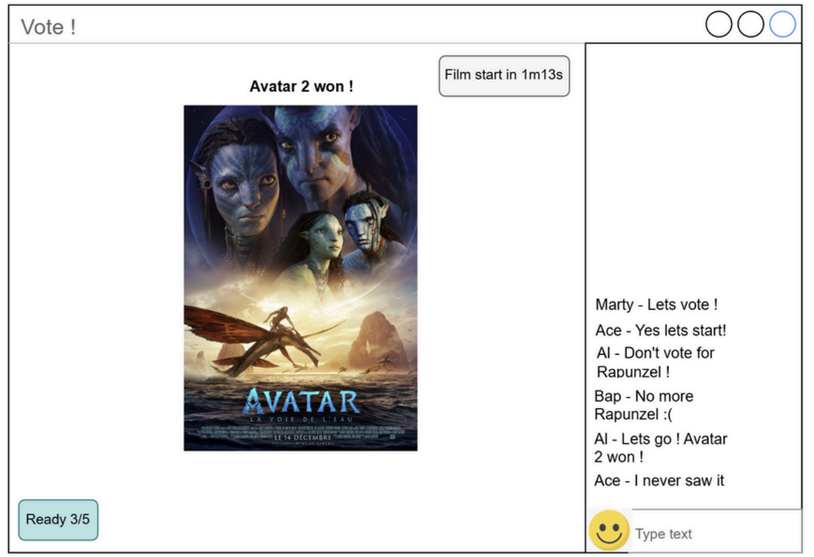


Round 1 of voting after votes

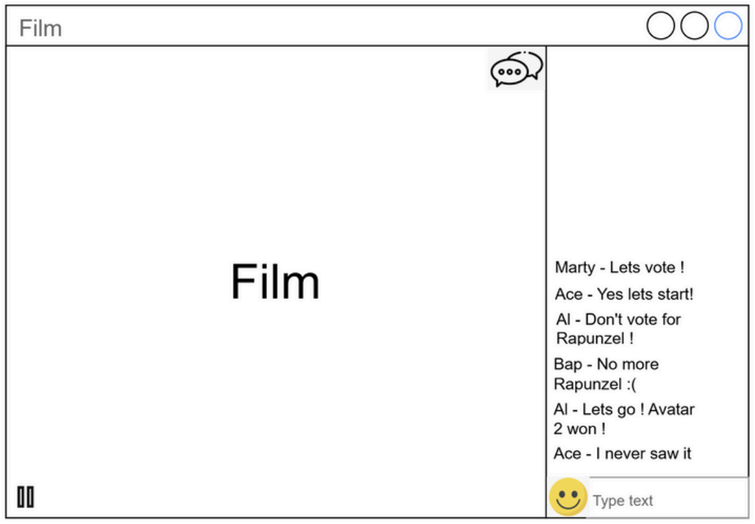
Voting process:



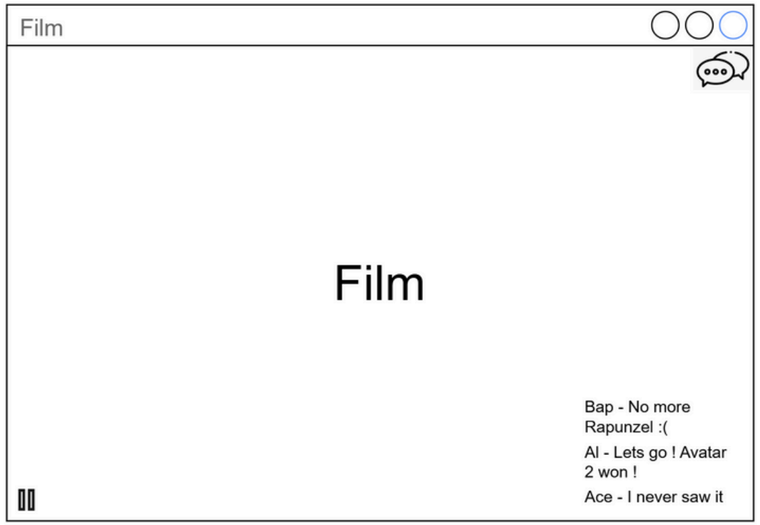
Once a final selection is made, all members must confirm they are ready before the movie begins. During the movie, users can choose to engage in the group chat, which displays messages as short pop-ups when the chat is minimized. If a participant pauses the movie, playback stops for everyone, and a mini-game is launched to keep the waiting members entertained. Additionally, the wake-up feature detects if someone dozes off and allows others to trigger an alert to wake them up, ensuring everyone remains engaged throughout the session.



Waiting for the groupmembers to be ready after a movie won



Movie with the chat open



Movie with the chat closed and pop-ups

Movie paused with the mini game

3. Design Process

Initial Brainstorming

The project began with a brainstorming session, where we explored various ideas related to group entertainment and decision-making. Initial concepts included an alarm app, a music synchronization tool, and an interactive game. However, we ultimately decided to focus on a movie selection tool, as it addressed a prevalent issue that many users face.

User Research and Interviews

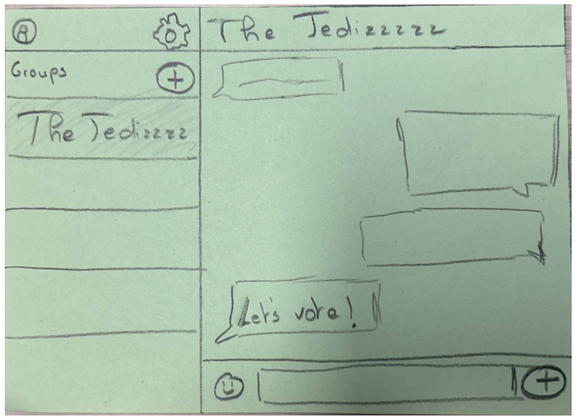
To better understand user needs, we conducted interviews with individuals who frequently watch movies in group settings. Participants highlighted common frustrations, including the overwhelming number of choices available, disagreements on preferences, and the lack of structured decision-making tools. While some users enjoyed AI-based recommendations, most were not interested in rating or commenting on movies, leading we to remove this feature from the design.

Early Sketches and Paper Prototype

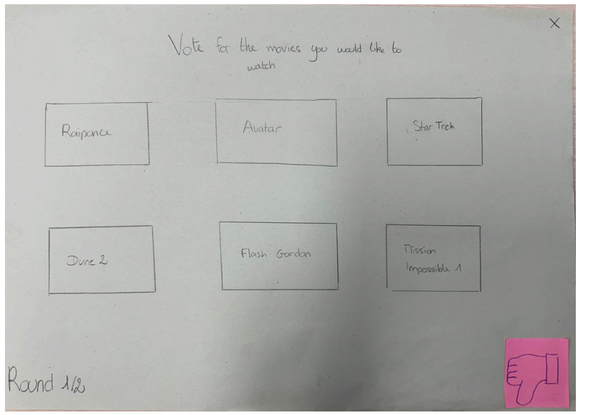
The first iterations of the design were sketched out to visualize different aspects of the user experience. We created a paper prototype that outlined key features such as the group chat, movie selection process, voting mechanism, and playback controls.

This prototype was tested with potential users to gather feedback and refine the concept before moving to a high-fidelity prototype.

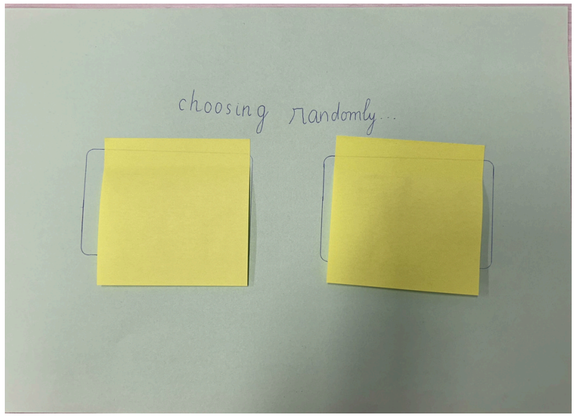
Low fidelity prototype:



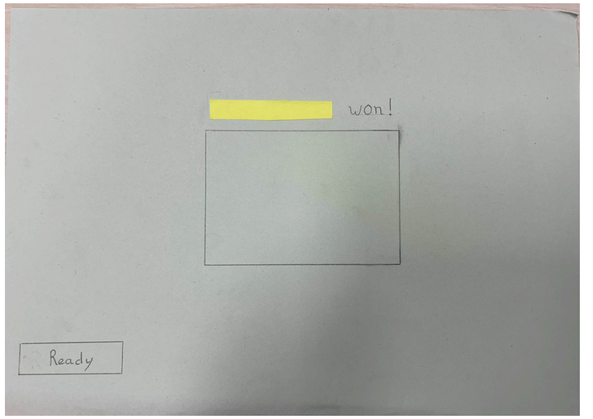
Example of a group chat



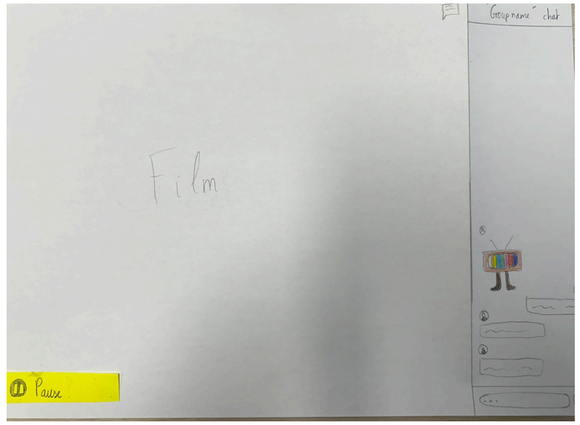
Round 1 of voting



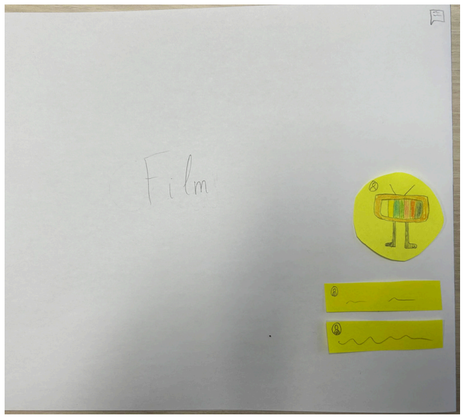
Random choice between 2 movies



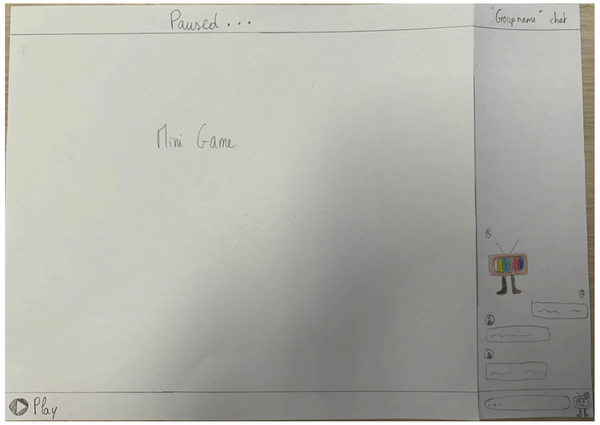
Waiting for the groupmembers to be ready after a movie won



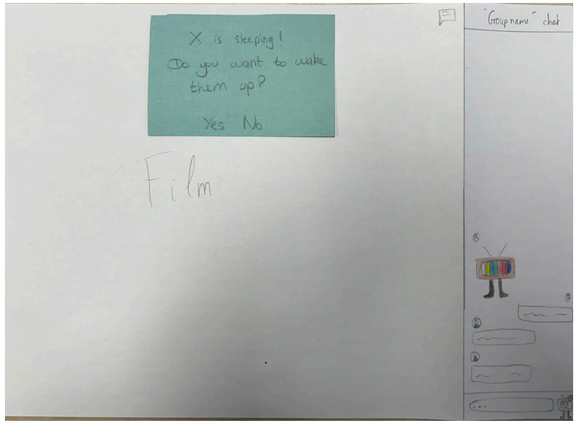
Movie with the chat



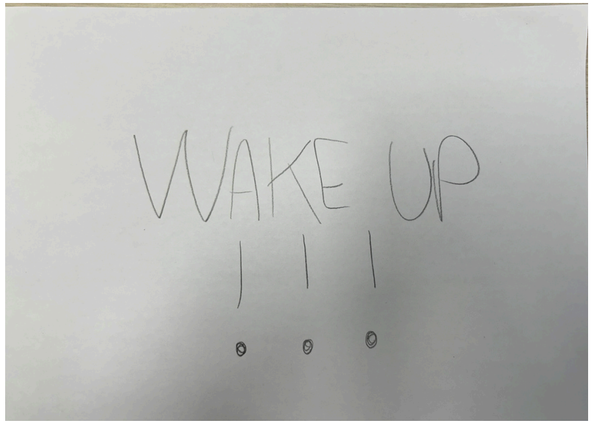
Movie without the chat but with pop-ups



Movie paused with a mini game



Pop-up due to someone sleeping



“Wake up” screen

User Feedback and Iterations

Based on user feedback, several improvements were made to the design. Users requested a clearer distinction that the platform was intended for computers rather than TVs. Clearer indicators were implemented to show that only the host could select filters. Additional features, such as confirmation buttons before voting and chat limitations to prevent distractions, were also introduced.

High-Fidelity Prototype

Using Draw.io, we developed a functional, high-fidelity prototype with interactive elements. This prototype allowed users to click on buttons, navigate between screens, and experience the core functionalities of Binge Buddies. Testing the prototype with friends helped refine the design, ensuring an intuitive and engaging user experience.

4. Discussion

Theoretical and Critical Reflections

The Binge Buddies platform effectively addresses the problem of decision fatigue when choosing what to watch in a group setting. By incorporating structured decision-making and real-time collaboration features, the platform enhances the viewing experience and reduces frustration.

The project highlights the importance of user-centric design, as iterative feedback played a crucial role in refining the system.

However, some challenges remain. The AI recommendation system, while helpful, may not always align with user expectations. Additionally, integrating external streaming platforms poses technical and legal hurdles. Future iterations could explore deeper integration with streaming services or expand to mobile platforms to increase accessibility.

Future Work and Suggested Evaluation

To further improve Binge Buddies, larger-scale user testing should be conducted to assess usability and engagement. Future updates could introduce additional customization options, such as personalized recommendation settings or expanded game features during pauses. Evaluations should focus on measuring time saved in movie selection, user satisfaction, and the effectiveness of collaborative features. Data collection through surveys and analytics will be essential in refining the platform based on real-world usage.

5. Work Distribution

Throughout the project, all team members actively participated in every aspect of development, from brainstorming and user research to prototyping and presentation. The collaborative approach ensured that each stage of the project was thoroughly discussed and refined through collective input, resulting in a well-rounded and thoughtfully designed platform. We always chose to use collaborative platforms so that everyone could participate, like the choice of using Draw.io so that everyone could work on the high fidelity prototype together at the same time.