# Communities

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Image Credit: Google

Pinterest is a social media platform that allows users to get inspired by aesthetic content and organize their ideas. The platform is essentially an electronic scrapbook. As a Pinterest user, I realized that the social media platform limits users to few social interactions—liking, commenting, and re-sharing a post. I wanted to know if there were other unique ways for Pinterest to allow for more user-to-user interaction on its platform.

## The People Problem

For the preliminary steps of my case study, I needed to figure out what the people problem was. I wanted to do this by identifying how Pinterest users interact with each other.

I conducted user interviews asking the following questions:

• Why do you use Pinterest?

• Could you show me how you use Pinterest?

- Explain/describe what your experience on Pinterest is like.

- What do you like about Pinterest?

- How do you execute your goals through Pinterest?

- How do you interact with other Pinterest users?

- Could you show me how you interact with other users?

- How do you feel about current Pinterest user-to-user interactions?

- What can be improved to enhance your user-to-user interaction experience?

- Do you have any suggestions or comments?

I found that users are loyal to Pinterest, even though it is missing some features they wished it had. In addition to this, the general consensus was that **Pinterest lacks a space for users to collaborate and bring ideas together.** More specifically, they thought that the existing collaboration feature was **not intuitive** and **hard to find.**

Using the information from each user interview, I constructed an affinity diagram to organize the data I collected.



With all of this information, I formed an expanded people problem:

When I am on Pinterest, I want to collaborate with other users, so that I can be part of a community with those who have shared interests. I can't do that well because:

1. Pinterest does not have collaborative functions available.

2. Pinterest does not have community forums.

3. There are no user interaction functions.

4. Users do not go out of their ways to interact with other users.

# Market Research

Following the user research, I decided to look into what other social media platforms had that Pinterest didn't. I was looking for a good way for Pinterest users to interact with each other and form a community together. I compared Pinterest to Instagram and Snapchat.

**Instagram**

Instagram has a relatively new feature which allows Instagram users to interact with people they do not know, but have shared interests. In the discover section of Instagram, there a navigation bar at the top that is separated by popular topics based on posts you follow or have viewed before. For example, next to For You on my Instagram account, the following navigations are shown: Beauty, Humor, TV & Movies, Style, etc. Within those tabs, you can see which users are interested in the same topics as you and you are also able to interact with other users by viewing their videos and photos, liking and commenting on their media content, and reusing hashtags to become a part of the community.

**Snapchat**

Snapchat has a feature which allows users to interact with people they do not know through location tracking. On the Snapchat map, you are able to click on the location you are in and view Snapchat stories of those who have public accounts and have posted a video or photo of what they are doing in the area. For example, if I want to see what's going on in Collegetown when I am in Ithaca, I can click on Ithaca on the map and view stories of those who are in that location. This feature allows Snapchat users to interact with other by viewing stories and replying to their stories. The shared"interest"for this feature would be the location of users.

**Overall**

In conclusion to this market research, both social media platforms have benefitted with the supplementary features of the app. Given their success and wide spread use of these functions, I believe that Pinterest would benefit from having a feature that follows the same principles as Instagram and Snapchat. It would allow Pinterest to compete with other social media platforms that allow for community engagement at the same level.

After the market study, I was finally able to construct a more concrete people problem:

**People want to collaborate on Pinterest, but they have a hard time because there's no way to interact with users about shared interests.**

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## Brainstorming

For the next part of my study, I synthesized the user interviews into 3 main issues.

1. Communities pages are available on other social media platforms, but not on Pinterest.

2. Users will use community feature if it is available.

3. Implementation of a collaboration space is needed.

Using this information and the final people problem I created, I brainstormed possible solutions for Pinterest with the help of my friends Daniel and Colton.
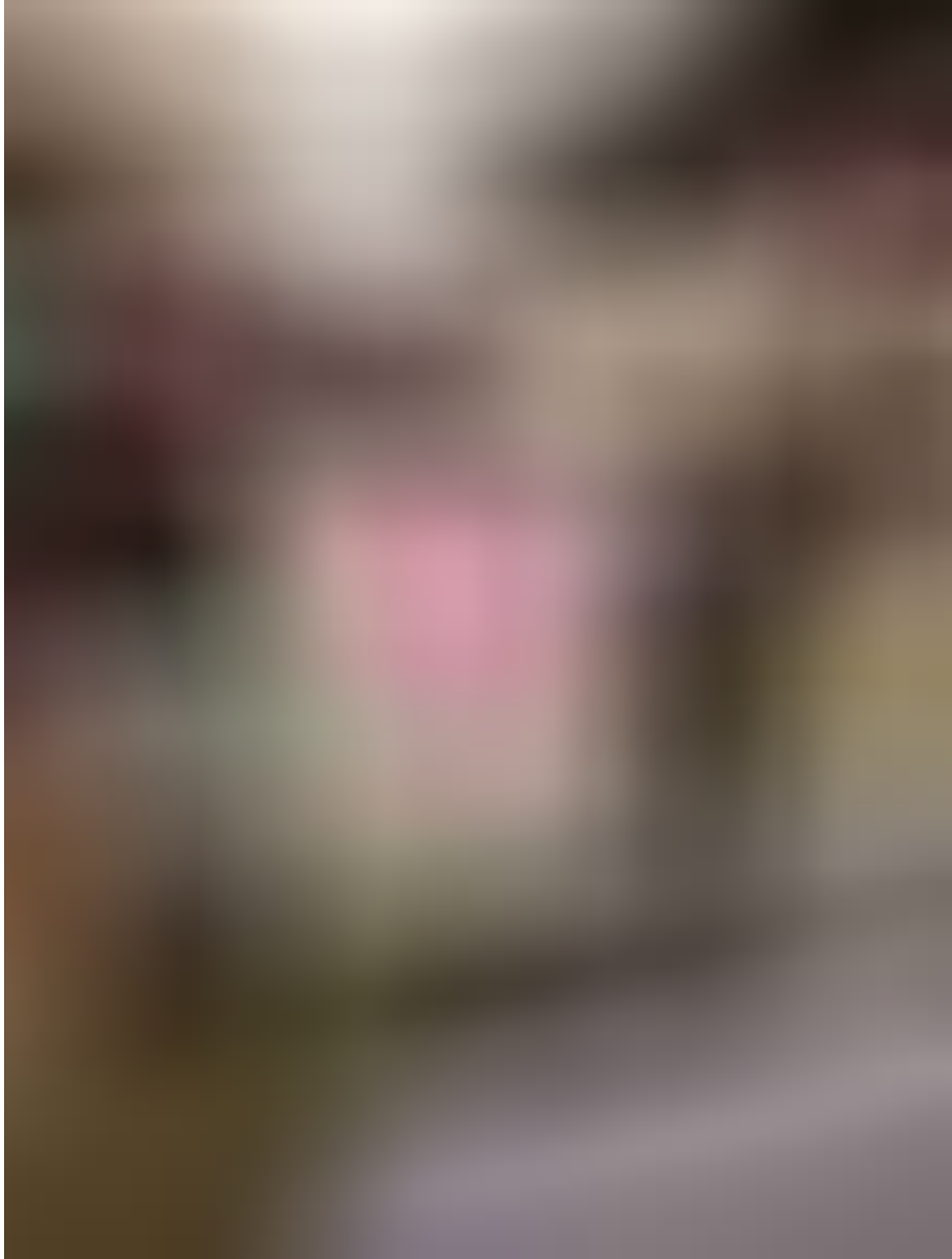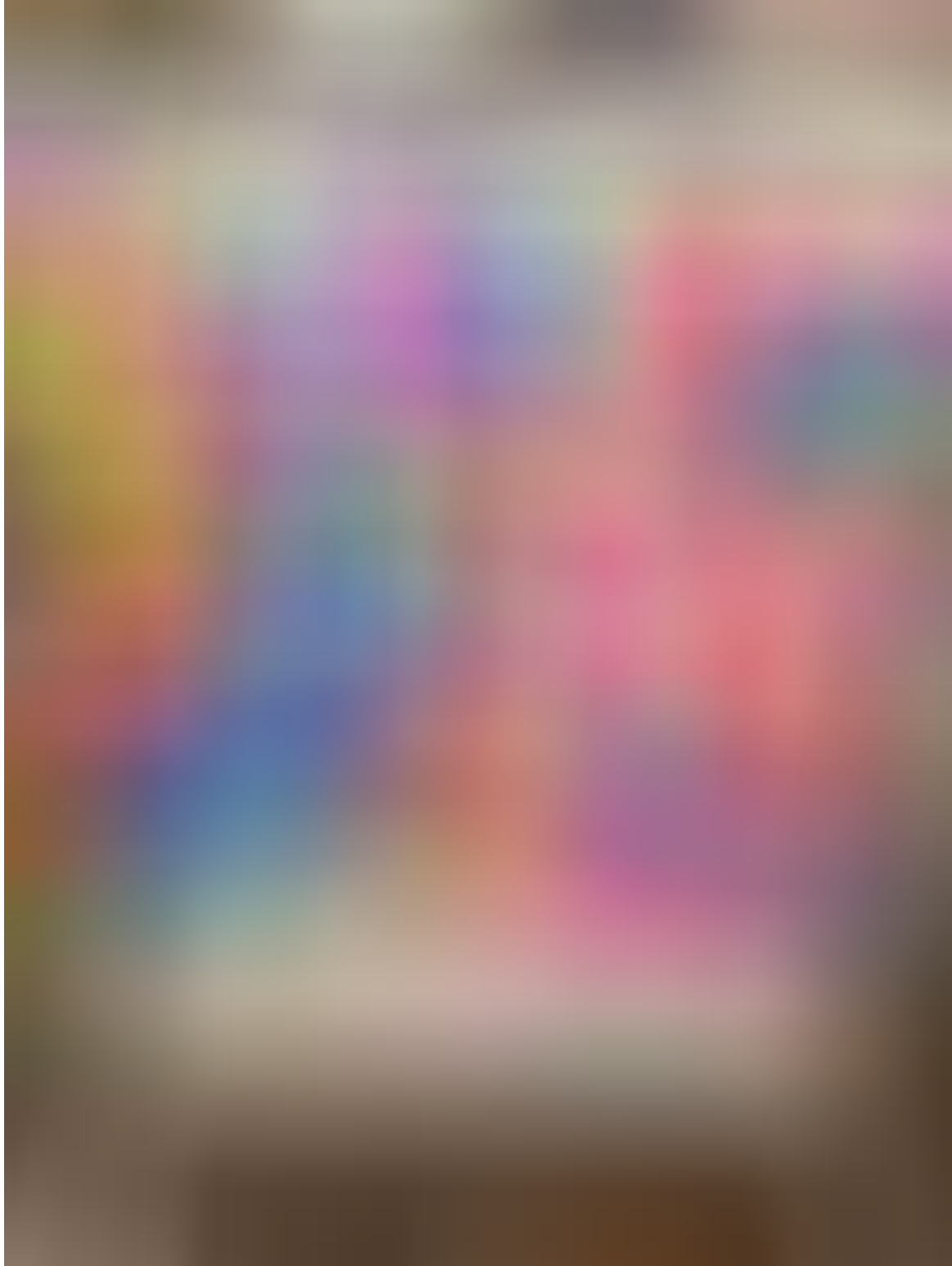
Features I decided to implement:

1. Create community forums for those with shared interests

2. Allow users to form boards together

3. Merge board options

## Feature Requirements

The feature would add an extra section to the home page that will expand to a full list of available community boards. The specifications of the feature include:

1. Multiple community pages

2. Suggested community pages based on user search input and pins

3. Horizontal scroll

4. View more option that expands the the list shown with a full list of available community pages

# Prototyping

Before the prototyping process, I constructed an information hierarchy that shows the flow of each interaction.

Black ink represents current Pinterest features.

Red ink represents my new feature.
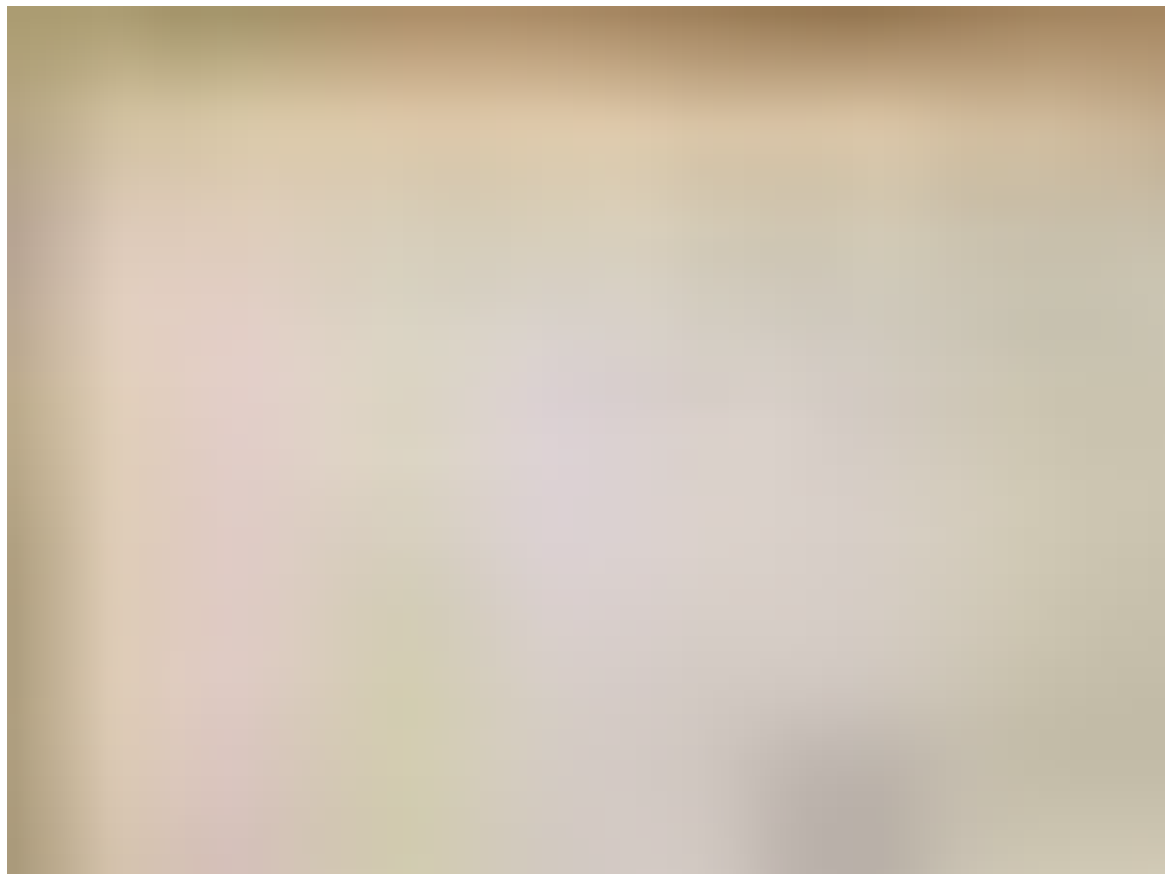


### Low-Fidelity Prototype

For my low-fidelity prototype, I created the "suggested communities" feature at the top of the screen underneath the search bar for easy access. The feature has a horizontal scroll, so you can see more suggested communities—which is generated by an algorithm that determines what you may be interested in based on search history and likes. At the end of the scroll, users will see a "view more" button to see a full list of communities

available on Pinterest. Once on the full list, users can add a new commu-
nity or join an existing community. Within each community, users are
able to create threads and add media content to share with the members
of the community they joined.



This prototype was inspired by the Facebook and Instagram community
features.

You can see that both social media platforms have a horizontal scroll underneath the search bar, so that the feature stands out and the users can easily navigate through the existing tabs presented. The tabs are generated by an algorithm that recognizes your interests based on search history, likes, and posts shared.

## Mid-Fidelity Prototype

For my mid-fidelity prototype, I recreated my low-fidelity prototype to mimic the iOS interface using Sketch.



For the first iteration of the medium fidelity, the entry point is to scroll through suggested communities and pressing "View More" to see a full list of available community pages before selecting the one they want to join. Once the entire list pops up, the user will click on a community(inthis scenario: Puppy Lovers) to add content to the page.

For the second iteration, the entry point is the same. All of the screens are the same, until the Puppy Lovers page. I created a new way for the users to access the controls to add content or add a new thread on the

community page. By having this option available to users, the users can decided which feature is best for them.

For the third iteration, the entry point is the same, except this time the task is to create a new community. Once the user is on the"ViewMore" page, the user can press on the plus button and choose to create new page. Once they have chosen to create a new page, the user will be presented with a pop-up form to fill out the details of the new page. The ending point for this iteration provides good feedback to the user because this starts the interaction of adding a new page. It shows that users are able to create a page that users haven't seen on the full list of community pages.

**Testing My Mid-Fidelity Prototype**

To summarize the user testing and my findings, the users overall love that there is a feature that will allow Pinterest users to interact with each other. One of the few changes that the users suggested was to use the plus button as the entry point to create a new community page, add new content, and add new thread. This new entry point would maintain the existing Pinterest aesthetic while incorporating a new feature. Another important suggestion the users have made was being able to access community pages outside of the "View All" page. By only viewing the communities they have joined, users would be able to access the page easier and would not have to scroll through the entire "View All" page to access the community they are a part of.

**Iterations from User Testing Feedback**

The following iterations were created based on the mid-fidelity prototype feedback I received.

Iteration 1

Iteration 2



**Note: The second line of the iteration is to show users that after adding a new community page, they can see their new community added to the "View All" page as well for other users to join.**

Iteration 3

Using the 3 iterations above, I was able to combine them to create the Final Flow.



I decided to move forward with the final flow as my main feature. It solves my people problem, where users can interact with others since there will be a space for them to interact with each other. There is no point of implementing other features if a community space is not created for them in the first place. However, this only solves the greater part of my people problem. Rather than forgetting about the other flows, I will integrate them into the main flow as "sub-flows" or "sub-tasks" to create the entire interaction/experience that Pinterest users want. This solution allows the entire people problem to be solved.

## User Testing: Invision Prototype

The user testing on Invision was effective because I got to see how the users would interact with the app, based on the tasks they were given. After user testing, I reviewed my prototypes once more to see if I could even continue with the design process. This review helped me realize that I have only shown iterations of users interacting with the app. To improve my prototype, I will include an exploration of how users would interact with each other on the community feature I have decided to implement on Pinterest.

**Iterations Based on Invision Prototype Feedback**



This iteration shows how users can comment on others' threads. I thought this was an appropriate iteration to create because it shows one of the ways a user can interact with other users on this new feature. This

iteration shows a fuller picture of how my people problem would be solved.



This iteration shows how people can invite others to a community. I based the invitation page off of the share content page Pinterest already has for familiarity. Users can invite people to a community through other social media platforms and can share to other people on Pinterest. This iteration is appropriate because it is an additional way for users to inter-act with each other on Pinterest, in addition to creating communities.

This iteration shows an alternative way to present a thread on the community page. I added thread content in my feature because Pinterest does not have this currently, and I thought it would be a good way for community page members to converse publicly and share ideas/help each other out. Because Pinterest is an image/media content based platform, I thought it would be nice to show an iteration of how a thread may look if a picture was used in the place of my old thread content iteration.

## Concluding Thought for Future Iterations

I found out that I could make some interaction design improvements for my feature. One of improvement to the feature would be including another navigation menu on the bottom bar that leads to the list of community pages. This way, the users won't have to scroll to the end at the top of the home page to reach the full list of community pages. Another design improvement to the feature would be to replace the thread content with an image the user can attach as the main idea of the thread. By doing this, this maintains Pinterest's image/media content oriented feed and provides familiarity to the users.

There are 3 issues that I believe could be solved with improved visual design.

1. New content added to a feed

2. Notify user when action is completed

3. Differentiate which content is image/media content or a thread

Overall, Pinterest is lacking features that would enhance the user experience of the platform. With a community feature, users would be able to meet new people and be able to use Pinterest as platform for planning and collaboration—making Pinterest a distinguishable social media platform.