



Final report and reflections

UX Group 7

The Challenge

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Let's begin.

The Problem

recap....



Review sites are one and the same. Littered with poorly-optimised features and lacking focus, they fail at the single purpose they were built for: facilitating and centralising reviews.

That's why we're making **CritiQ**.

No tacked on news features, no abandoned, unfinished pages, just a fun, community-driven review platform for young film, TV and games lovers around the world.

We are confined to a small team of 4 designers and a time span of 9-10 weeks. Some technical requirements include access to quality computers, design software such as Figma and Adobe XD and survey creation technology like Google Forms.

Initial Findings

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To build on our initial understanding of the review platform space, we engaged in three research stages: desktop research, a survey answered by 50+ potential users and eight in-depth interviews. These presented a number of key findings that confirmed several of our initial suspicions while also presenting us with new challenges to overcome:

- 1 Regardless of whether or not they feel existing review platforms are fun or engaging, people find them useful
- 2 A lot of people who use review sites just want to be observers. For one reason or another, they don't want to engage with it.
- 3 Most people prefer community reviews over critic reviews.
- 4 On average, people prefer to see aggregate ratings before watching or playing, and in-depth reviews and discussion afterwards.
- 5 Reviews are prone to spoilers, and not knowing if a review has spoilers can turn a user off reading/watching it.

Initial Findings



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- 6 Many people don't write reviews because they feel they have nothing to add. They can be swayed if they feel they have strong opinions or have something important to say.
- 7 People are interested in online communities for movies, TV and games, especially if they can find like-minded people to talk with.
- 8 Friends and family are often a preferred source for recommendations and reviews due to inherent trust.
- 9 People want a simple, easy to understand platform that is visual and has community involvement.
- 10 The success of a review platform is highly dependent on the content it provides.

Features



These insights are at the heart of our solution, and have informed design decisions since the earliest prototype. Our choice of style, the inclusion and exclusion of certain features and overall site experience are built on our understanding of what users need and want. We can see this represented in the following features:

Our Notable Unique Features...

1

Anti Spoiler Switch

No more killjoys!



2

Award System

A little stamp of approval, given by the community and moderators



Normal Medal



Special Badges



3

Clean and Straightforward Design

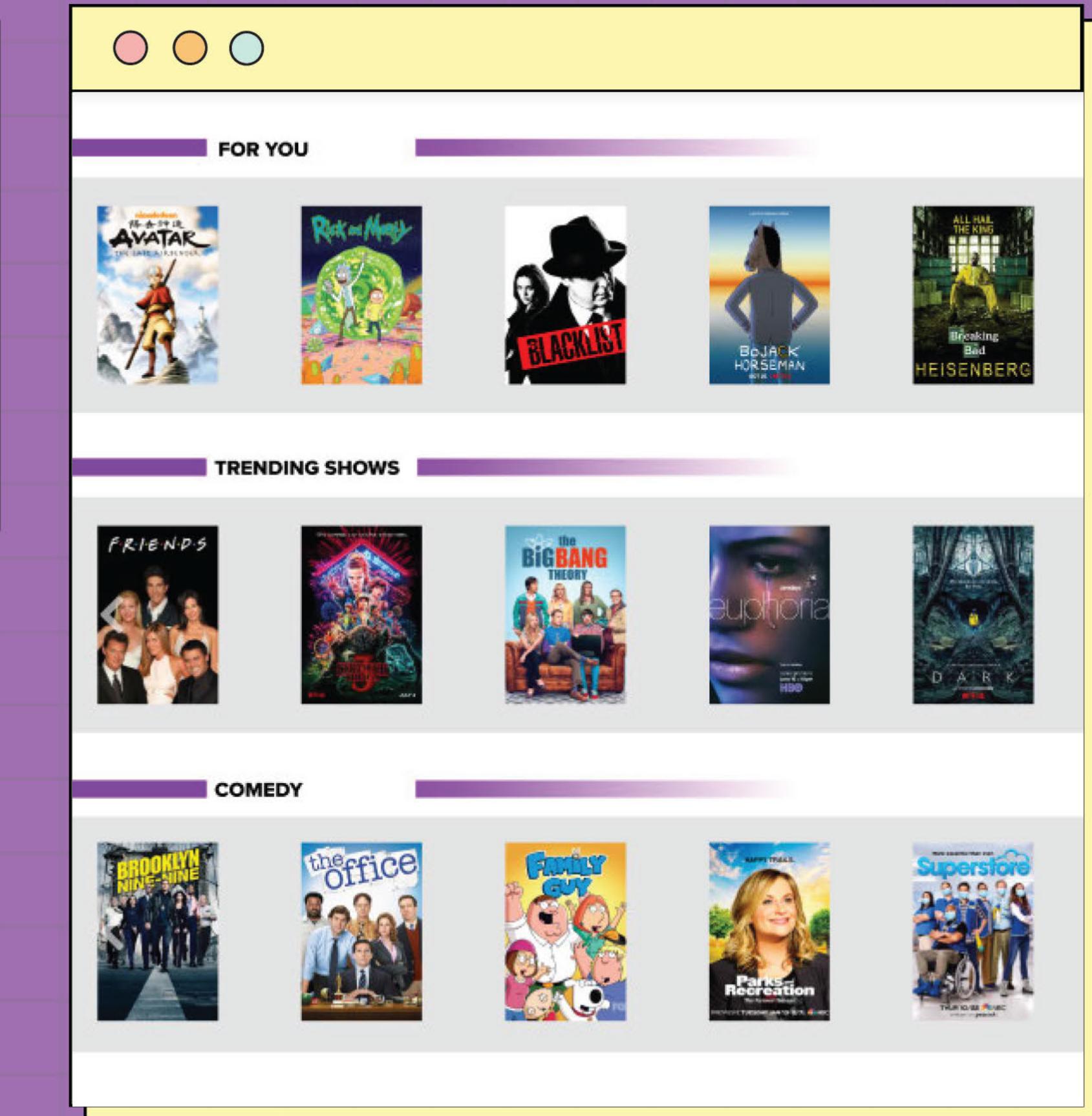
No more distractions or confusing layouts.

In-depth Features



1

Review platforms are meant to provide reviews, and don't need to be jammed full of other features to keep users engaged. As such, we've purposely excluded features common in existing platforms that we feel are unnecessary, namely news, in the hopes of creating a more streamlined and focused experience.



In-depth Features

O O O O

2

A lot of users don't want to write reviews, but that doesn't mean they should be excluded from engaging with the site in a more meaningful way. Our solution encourages interaction at smaller levels, namely through the ability to interact with other users' reviews (upvote/downvote, award, comment).

How are you feeling?

bug_girl

"Midsommar," the creepy new film from "Hereditary" director Ari Aster, is proof positive that not all scary stuff happens under the cover of darkness. Sometimes daylight can illuminate the true horror of a situation in even more terrifying ways.

In the wake of a family tragedy American grad student Dani (Florence Pugh) finds out about her aloof boyfriend's Christian (Jack Reynor) secret holiday, a trip to Sweden. Christian has one foot outside the relationship but half-heartedly asks her along. "I invited Dani to come to Sweden," he tells his friends, "just to not make it weird. She's not actually coming."

But she does go with Jack and fellow anthropology students Josh (William Jackson Harper), a PhD student gathering info for his thesis, and wannabe-playboy Mark (Will Poulter) to a midnight sun celebration in the remote hometown of school mate Pelle (Vilhelm Blomgren). "It's sort of a crazy festival," Pelle says. "It only happens every ninety years. Lots of pageantry, special ceremonies and dressing up."

823 votes

share | report | award

What are your thoughts?

COMMENT

Johnny_Joe says:

Awesome review, and totally agree. I really wish they had gone more down the line of Hereditary though. As good as this movie is I still don't think it quite meets the same level of complexity and suspense. Still great though.

reply | report | award

In-depth Features

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3

The vast majority of users trust community reviews over critic reviews, and we're happy to oblige. Our prototype focuses solely on the views, opinions and beliefs of its community members.



How are you feeling?

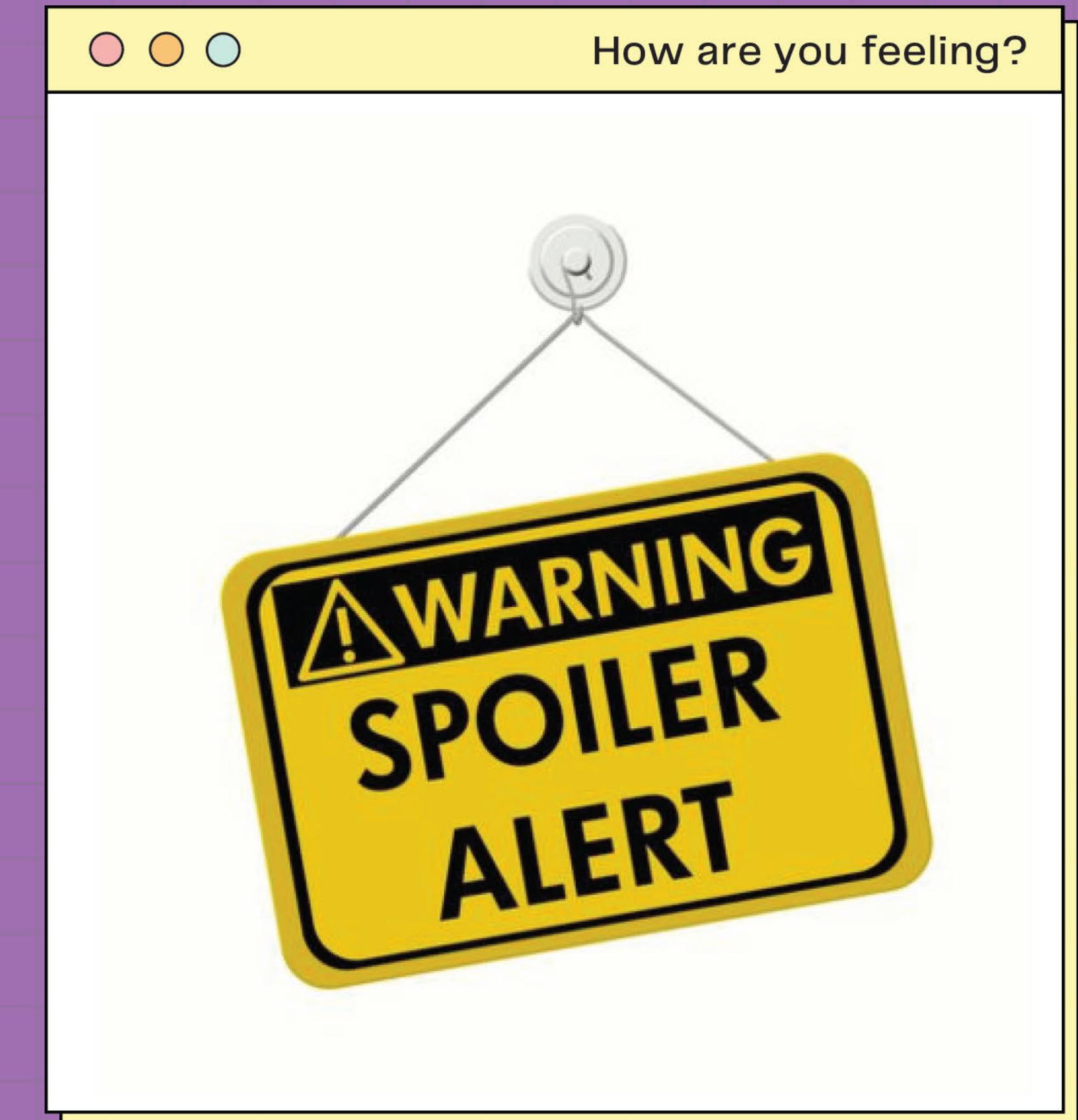


In-depth Features



4

Media review pages are structured to appeal to users both pre and post media experience. Users can see aggregate scores immediately, with ample opportunity to dive deeper into in-depth reviews and discussion at their leisure.



In-depth Features



5

No one wants to read a review only to have the ending or twist spoiled. As such, all written reviews are required to indicate if they contain spoilers, and users are able to filter out spoiler-ridden reviews with a simple toggle.

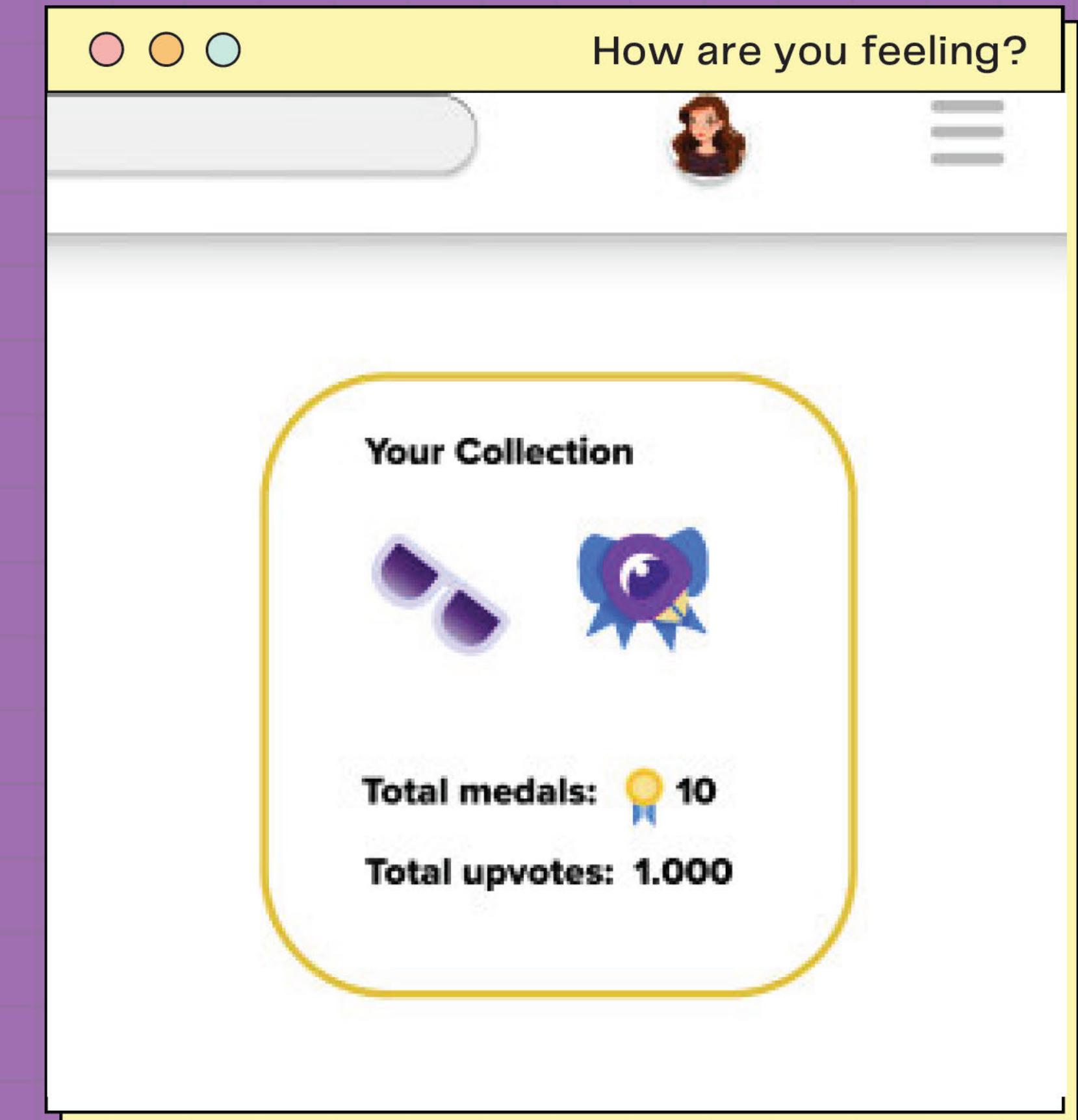
The screenshot shows a movie review page for the film "Midsommar" (2019). At the top, there's a yellow header bar with three colored dots (pink, orange, blue) and the text "How are you feeling?". Below the header, the movie title "(2019)" is displayed. To the right of the title is a "Spoiler is off" label next to a purple toggle switch. Underneath the title, it says "Psychological, Cult, Sweden" and "not available on your netflix" with a link "(change region)>>". The main content area contains a partial plot summary: "matized after her sister Terri kills herself and their parents by filling their dent strains Dani's relationship with her emotionally distant boyfriend, in Hughes. She later learns that Christian and his friends Mark and Josh send Pelle to attend a midsummer celebration at Pelle's ancestral...". At the bottom of the page, the credits are listed: "Director: Ari Aste", "Writer: Ari Aste", and "Notable Cast: Florence Pugh, Jack Reynor".

In-depth Features



6

Our solution places emphasis on the fact that no matter who you are, your voice and opinion is just as important as the next person's. Users are rewarded for posting reviews and commenting on other reviews through a points and awards system, with community members able to upvote and hand out awards as they see fit. These elements of gamification encourage more reserved users to get in on the discussion through the promise of rewards.



In-depth Features



7

Users want to be a part of a community, and want to speak to like minded people. As such, our solution includes a social media-esque element that allows users to create a profile, personalise their experience and engage regularly with other users.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a yellow header bar containing three colored circles (pink, orange, blue) and the text "How are you feeling?". Below the header is a search bar with the placeholder "What are you thinking?". The main content area displays two user posts:

Johnny_Joe says:  Awesome review, and totally agree. I really liked this movie as it was quite meh.
[reply](#) | [report](#) | [award](#)

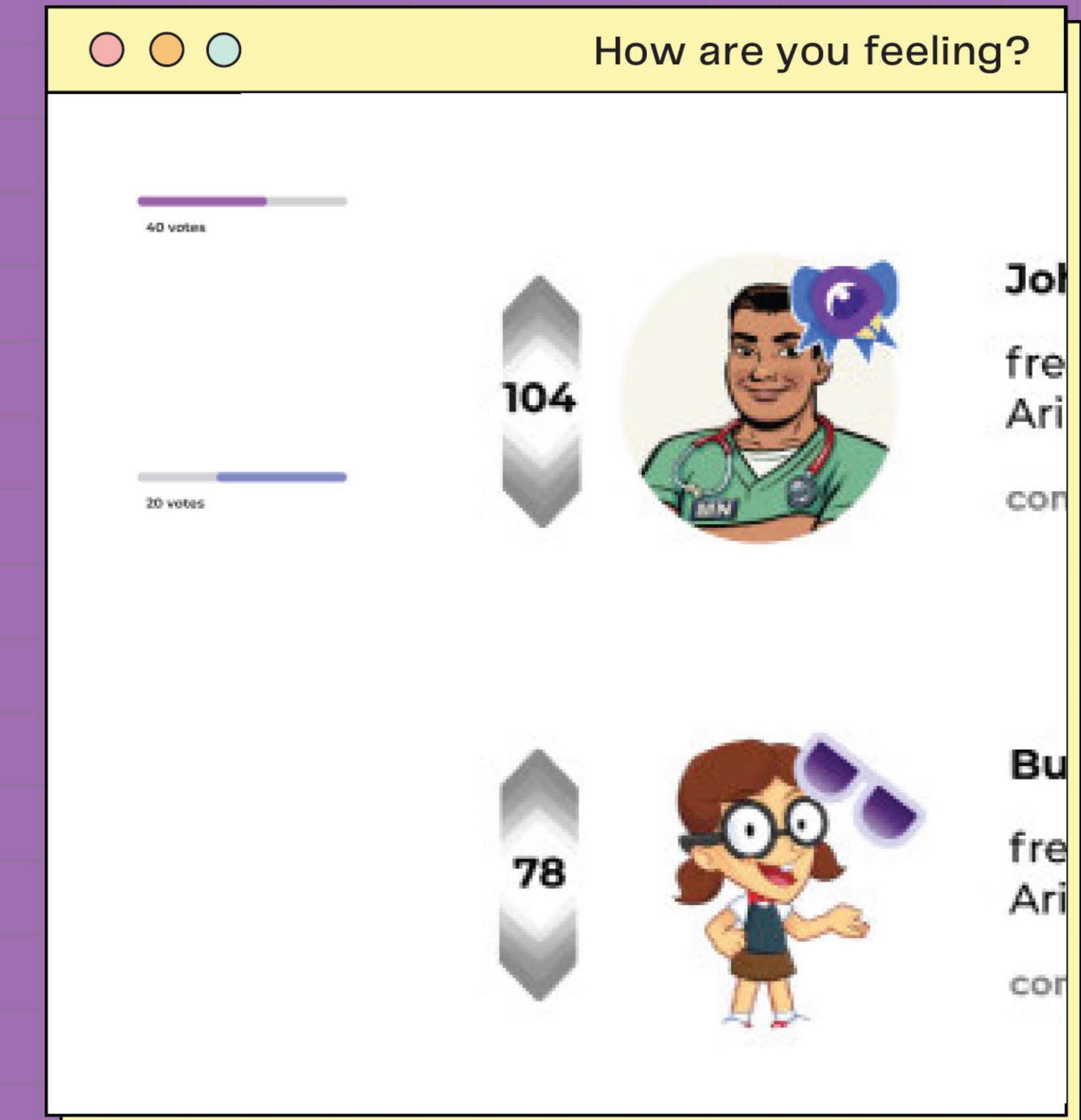
Princess says:  freaking amazing blablablab the sus
Aster will not dissapoint . Noticed that
[comment](#) | [report](#) | [award](#)

In-depth Features



8

When it comes to reviews, trust is a vital component. Our platform's use of upvote/downvote and award components, as well as its purpose of creating a deep sense of community, allows users to know how other community members feel about independent reviews, raising the expertly constructed, well-balanced and trustworthy reviews above the rest



In-depth Features



9

A review platform has a singular purpose: to provide quality, trustworthy reviews. Any features that don't support this are just fluff. Our solution cuts out unnecessary stuff to make the experience more focused while adapting styles and elements from popular platforms such as Netflix, Reddit and Imdb to create an immediate sense of familiarity.

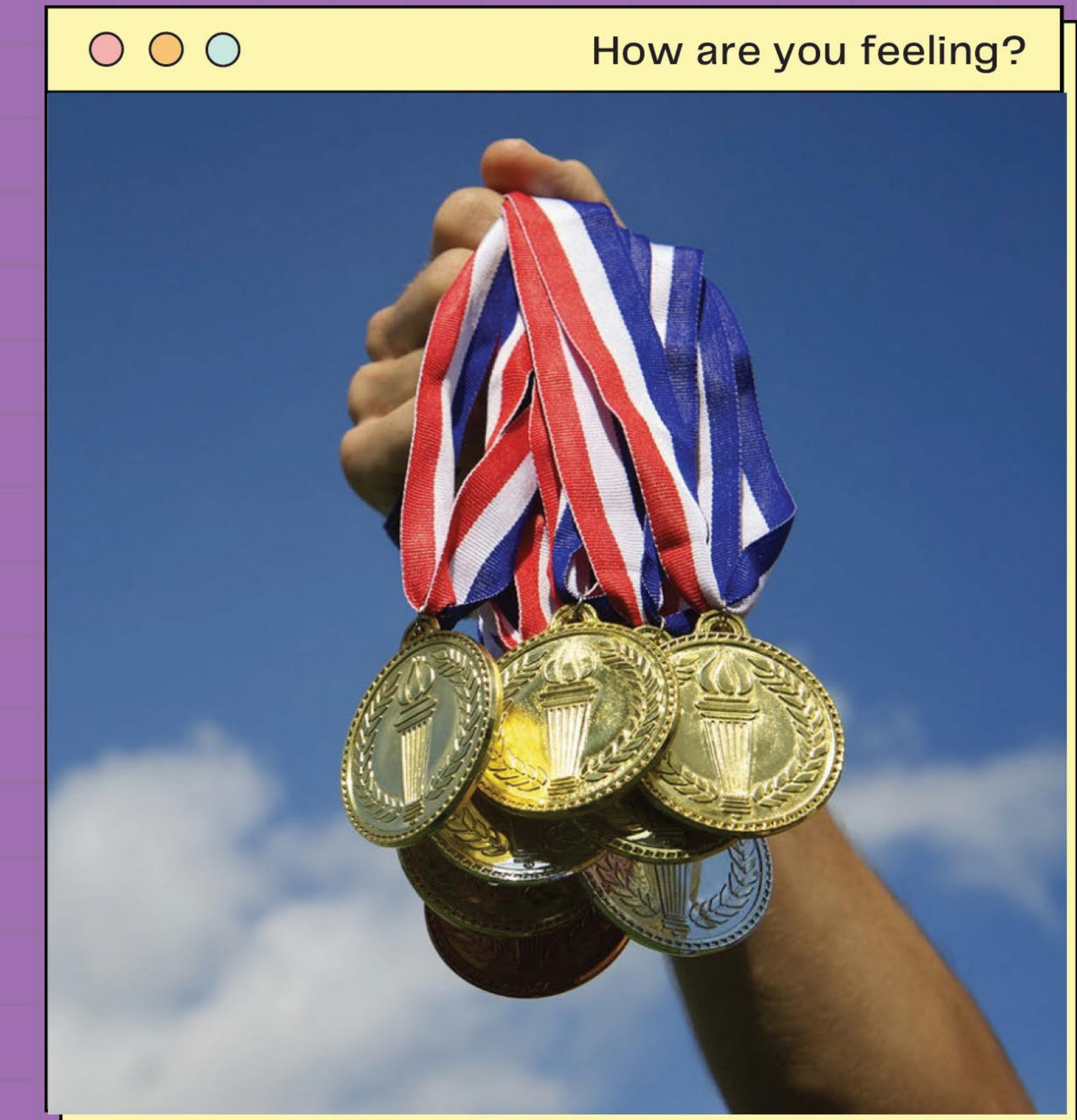


In-depth Features



10

Users expect great content, and they expect a lot of it. By encouraging and rewarding users for posting reviews and engaging in discussion on other reviews, we construct an ecosystem that is constantly creating and curating its own content, with little need for administrative intervention.



Key Activities

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Let's begin.

User Task Flow



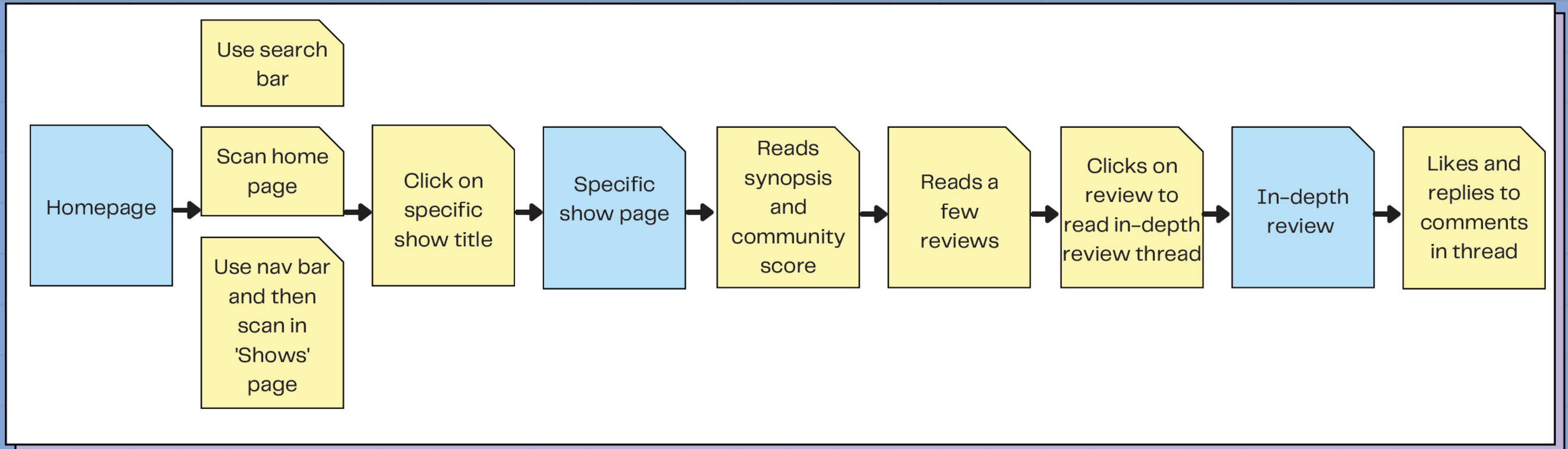
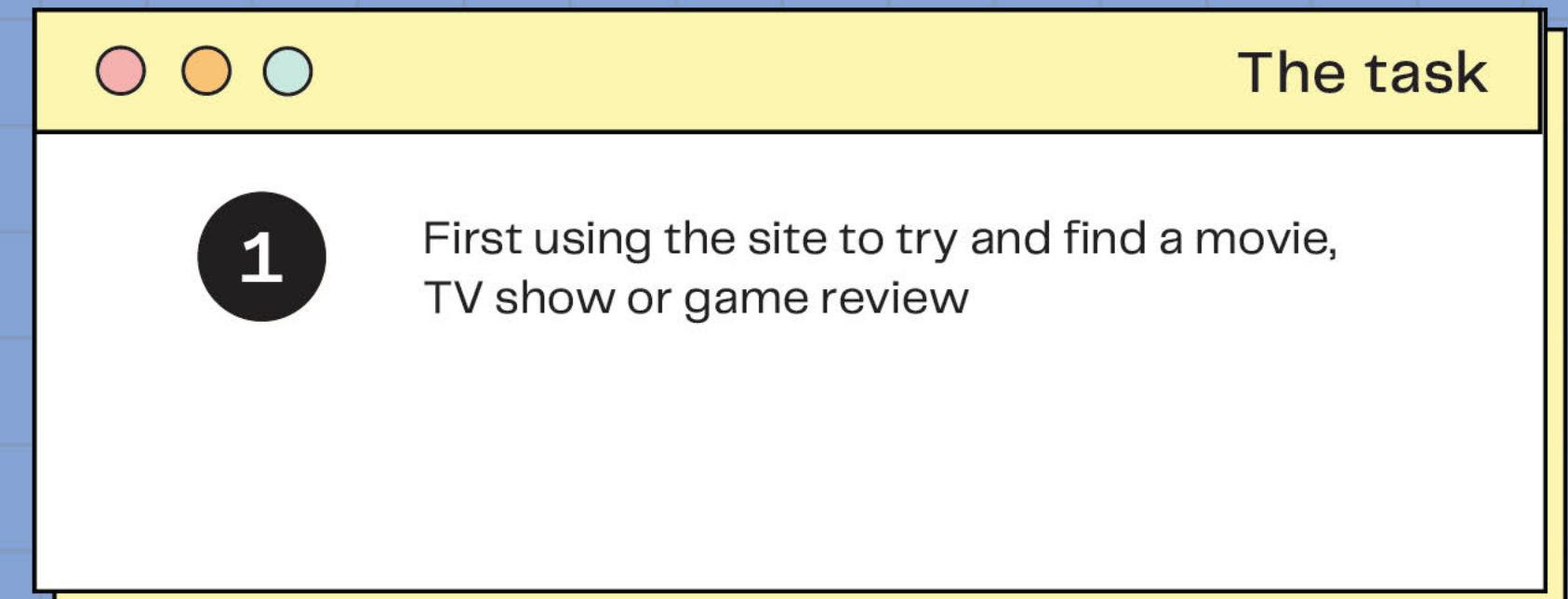
Visual diagrams on the next slide...

With all research, analysis and ideation activities completed, we set about developing three user task flows that would form the basis of our low-fidelity prototype and testing. These were simple journeys we'd expect users to take when interacting with the platform at different stages of their experience, these being:

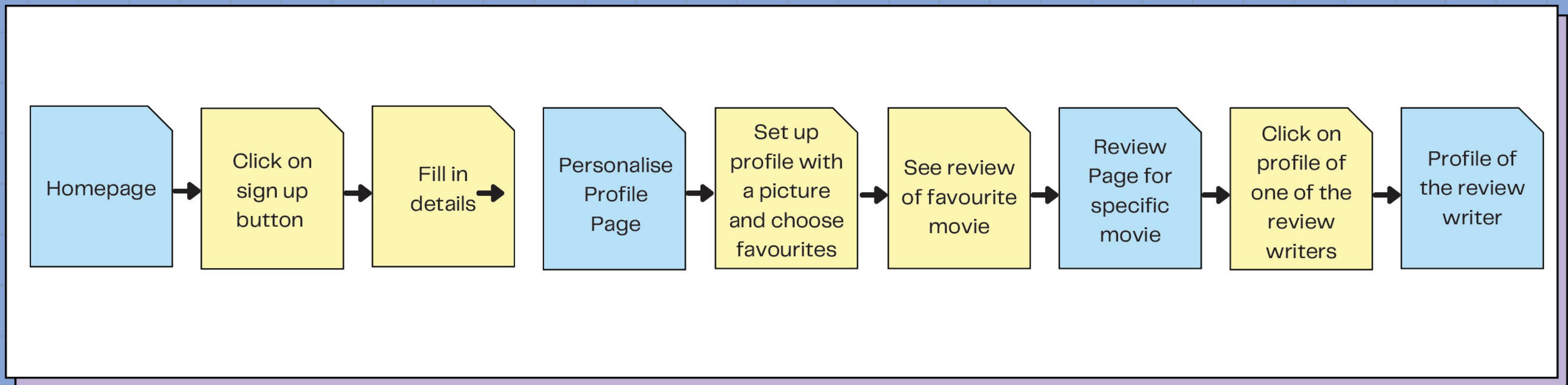
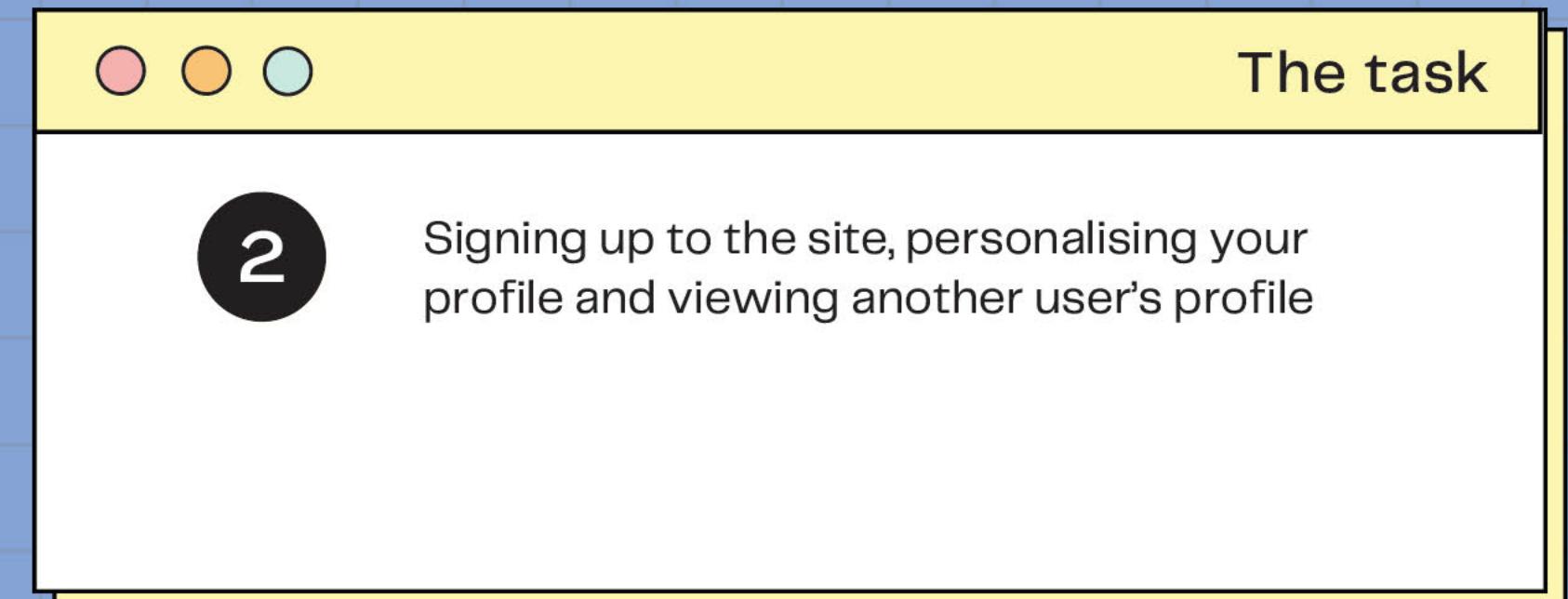
1. First using the site to try and find a movie, TV show or game review
2. Signing up to the site, personalising your profile and viewing another user's profile
3. Writing a review and interacting with other users in the comments

We felt these three tasks best encapsulated the purpose of the platform as a whole, and would have users interacting with the most important features. Knowing that we would test potential users with these tasks, low-fidelity prototype development centred around the pages that related to them.

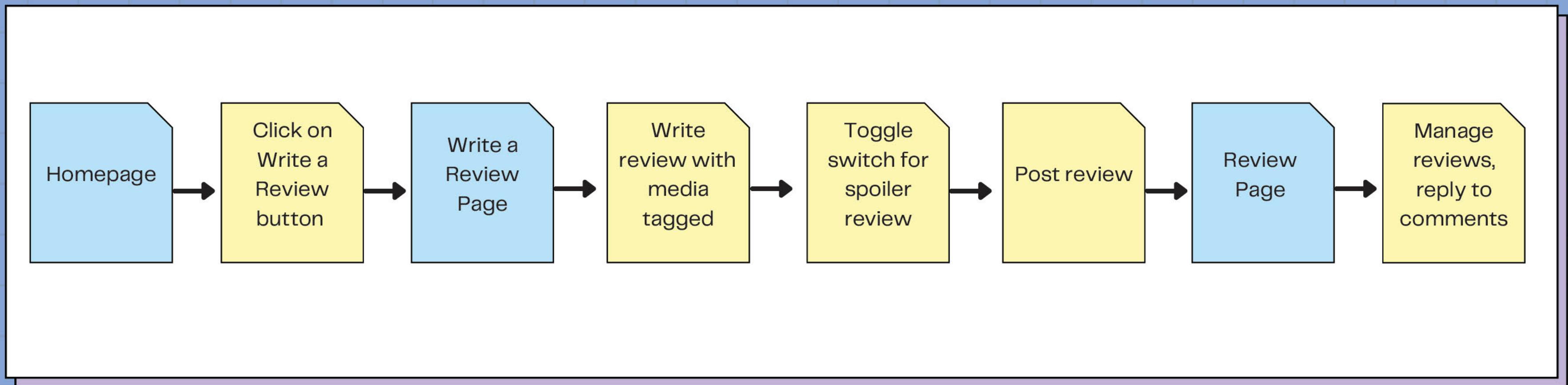
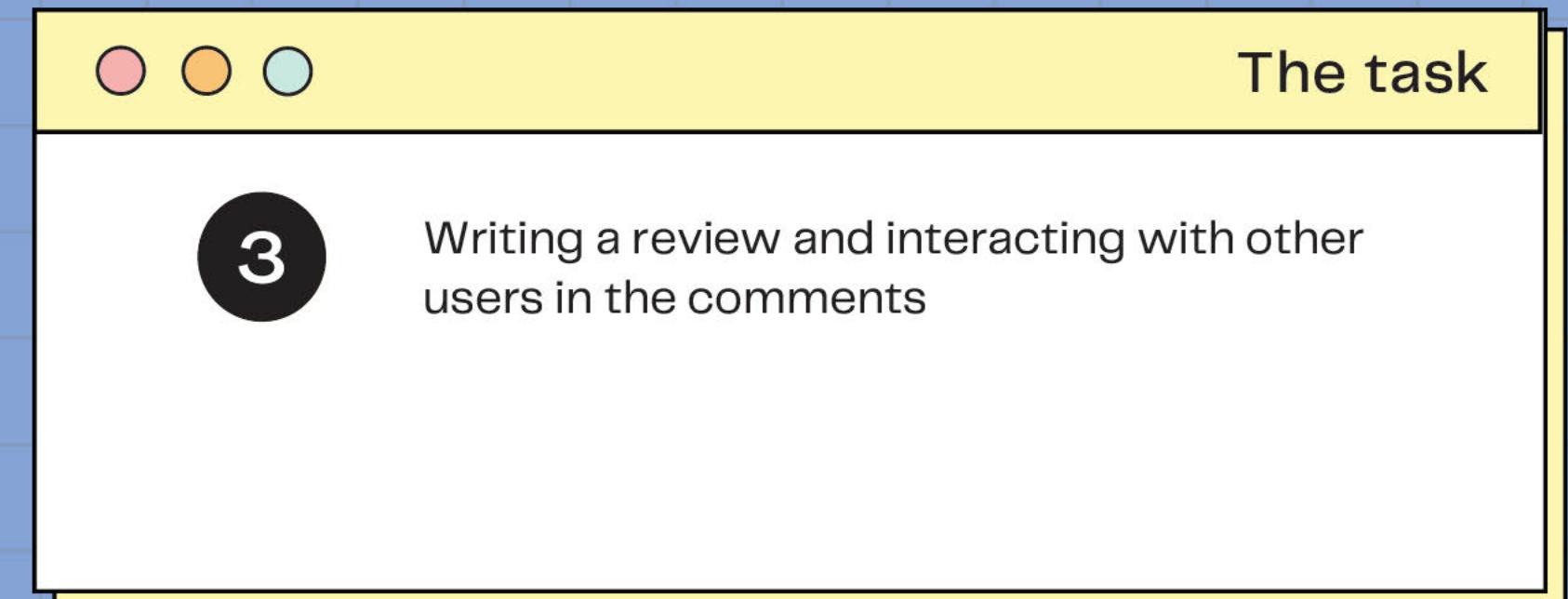
User Task Flow



User Task Flow



User Task Flow



Low Fidelity Prototype

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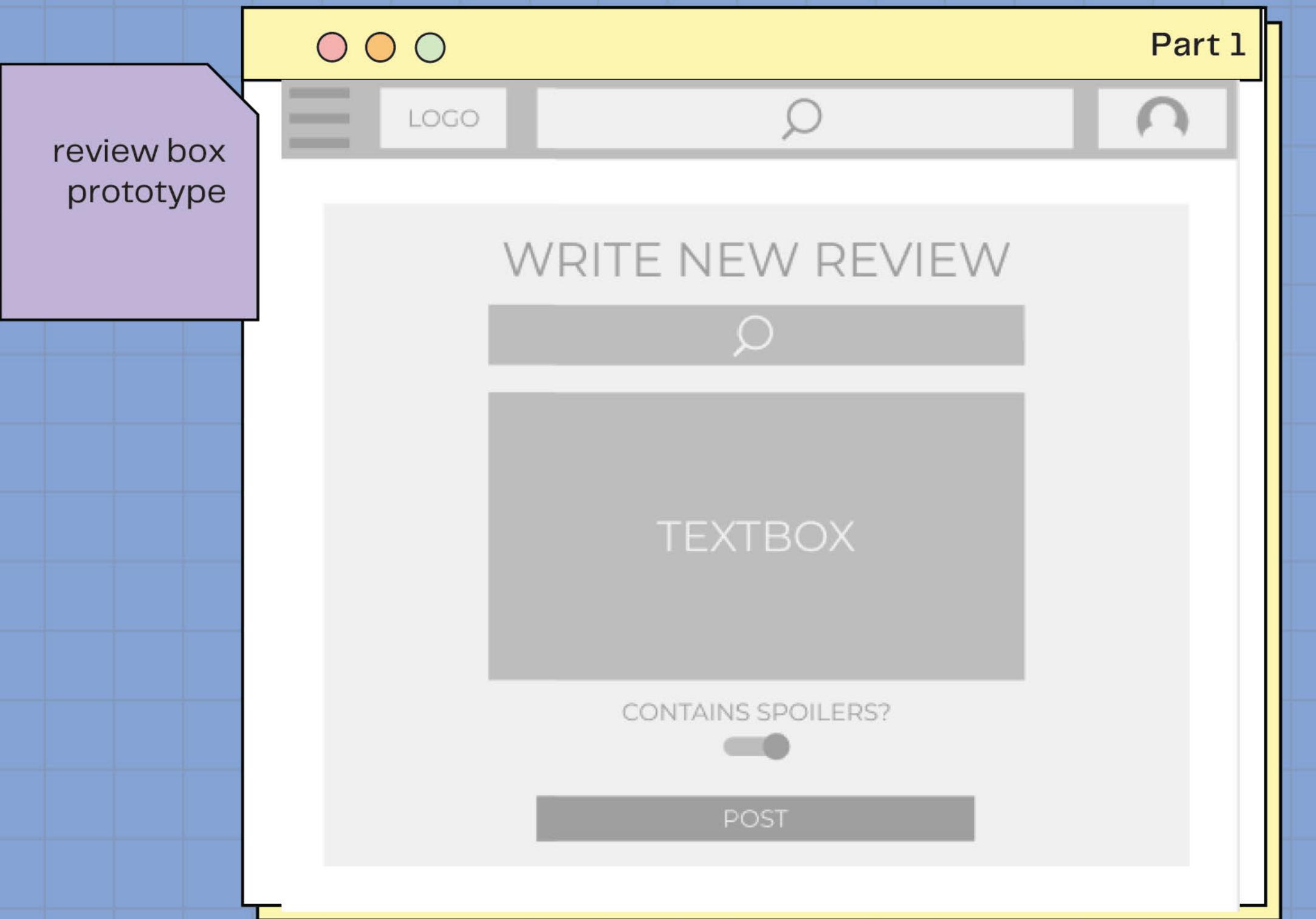
homepage prototype

Part 1

The low-fidelity prototype was our first real look at how the site would feel and flow. Crafted in Figma, it was a bare-bones and visually simple prototype with limited interactivity, however, it allowed us to test core design concepts such as page layout, site flow and new features without having to commit unnecessary development time.

Low Fidelity Prototype

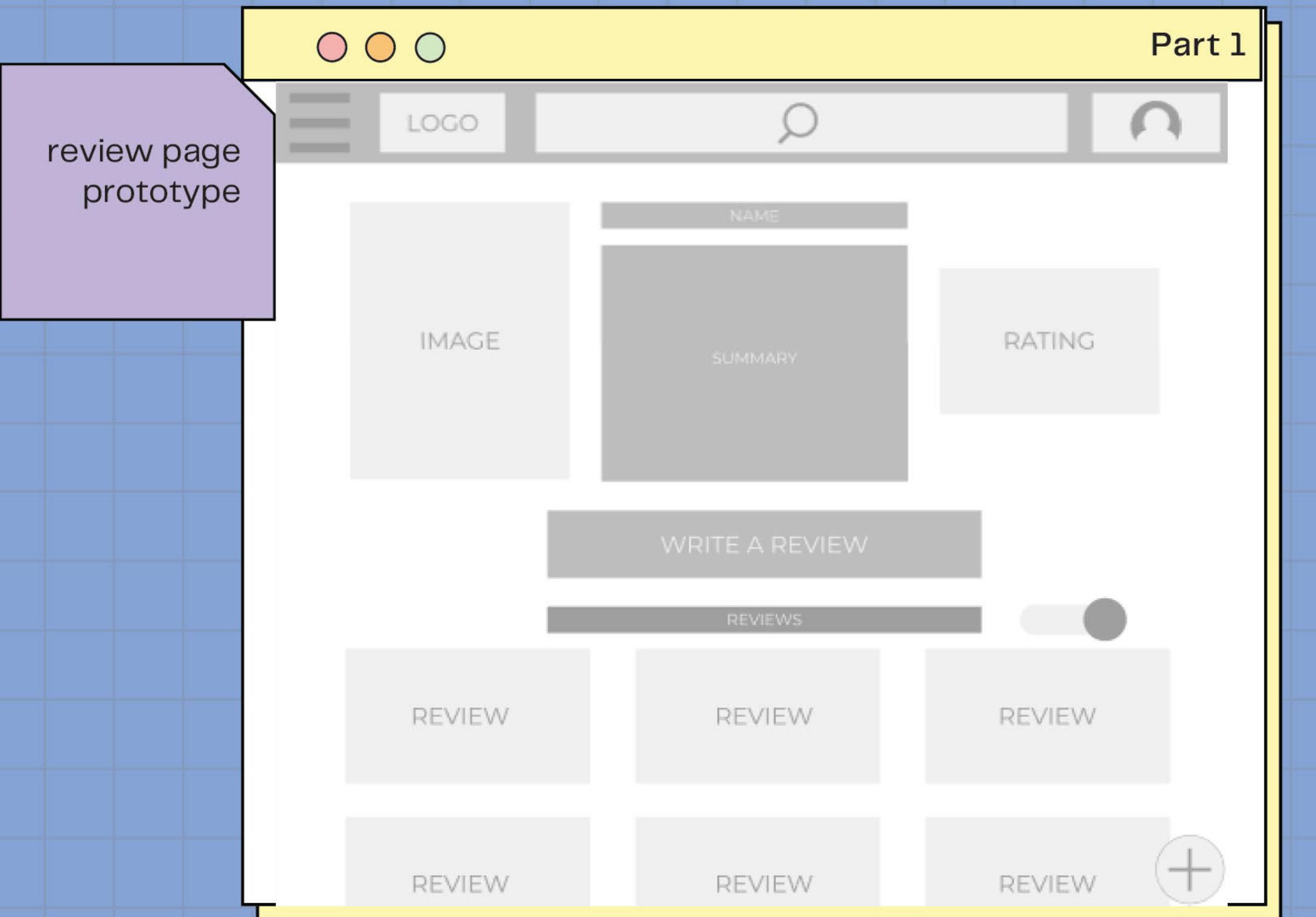
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Low Fidelity Prototype

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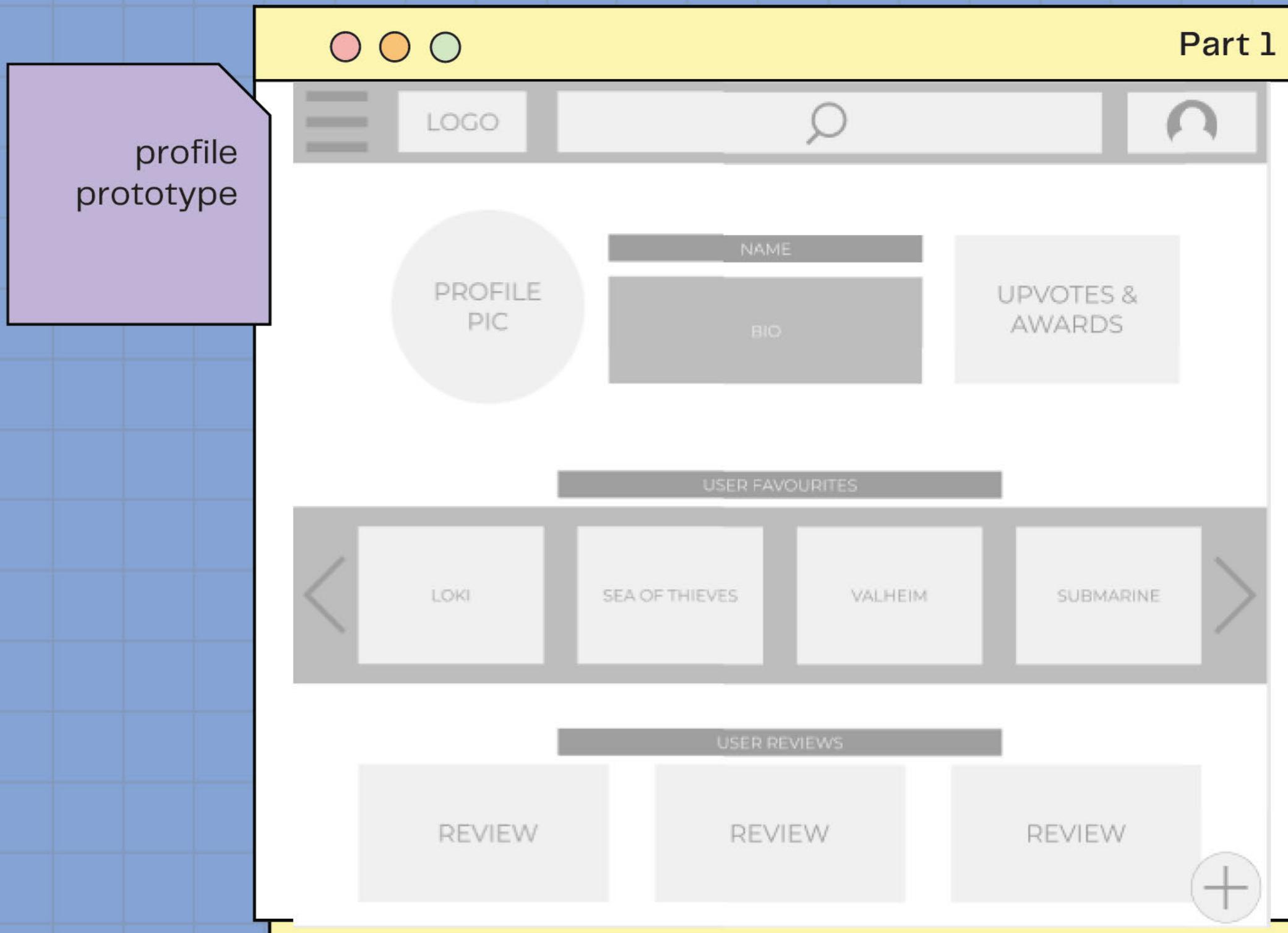
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Low Fidelity Prototype

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A low-fidelity prototype of a user profile page. The top navigation bar is yellow with three circular icons. Below it is a grey header bar with a logo, a search icon, and a user profile icon. The main content area has a white background. On the left is a large circular "PROFILE PIC". To its right are two rectangular boxes: one labeled "NAME" and another labeled "BIO". Further right is a box labeled "UPVOTES & AWARDS". Below these are sections for "USER FAVOURITES" and "USER REVIEWS". The "USER FAVOURITES" section contains four items: "LOKI", "SEA OF THIEVES", "VALHEIM", and "SUBMARINE", with navigation arrows on either side. The "USER REVIEWS" section shows three review cards, each with a "REVIEW" button. A small "+" button is at the bottom right.

profile
prototype

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Prototype Testing

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Our low-fidelity prototype was tested with four individuals of varying ages and cohorts, with users running through pre-established task flows to navigate through and interact with the platform. Interviews were conducted in person, with the user interacting on the prototype through a provided laptop. Users were encouraged to talk freely about their decisions (think-aloud protocol), why they were choosing to click certain buttons and features they didn't like or ones they expected to be there but were missing.

Once all tasks had been completed, users were encouraged to give feedback on the site as a whole and thanked for their time. All interviews were audio and screen-recorded with the user's consent to allow for future analysis and revisiting.



Testing Insights

Low-fidelity prototype testing provided an abundance of valuable insights, with all four interviewees looking at and interacting with the prototype from a different angle and offering different perspectives. In reviewing interviews, we were careful to take into consideration a number of bias that likely impacted how users interacted with the prototype, these being:



Task flows meant some avenues of site navigation were better suited to the task than others (eg. in finding a specific review, using a search bar was vastly more useful than navigating through our hamburger menu).



The lack of colour differentiation and use of icons meant some elements were confused with others (eg. users being confused as to whether they award comments through the top right or bottom right boxes)



Users often weren't aware something was able to be interacted with due to simplistic layout/design (eg. users weren't aware they could click on a review summary to read the full review).

Testing Insights

In understanding these biases, we were able to separate useful insights from ones that would lead us down paths of unnecessary change. The following insights stood out as the most important for us, and relevant changes can be seen in the final product:



Users predominantly navigated to the homepage through the CritiQ logo, however all expected to be able to do so through the hamburger menu too. This has now been added.



Users were not using the 'plus' symbol to write reviews, likely from it not being clear in its function. One user also commented that having it always float in the bottom right of the screen meant its indicated purpose could change based on what page you were on (eg. on a user review page, it could be confused as a 'write a comment' button). In response, the icon has been changed to a pencil, and its location on the page is fixed.



While users loved the spoiler toggle, at times its function wasn't clearly labelled. This has since been amended.

Testing Insights

In understanding these biases, we were able to separate useful insights from ones that would lead us down paths of unnecessary change. The following insights stood out as the most important for us, and relevant changes can be seen in the final product:



Media review page was cluttered, with users feeling it presented too much information immediately. Now, the page only displays summary information and scores, with in-depth reviews further down the page.



Review summaries require a call to action to encourage users to read the full review and get more involved in the platform and its community. Summaries now have such a prompt.

Style Guide

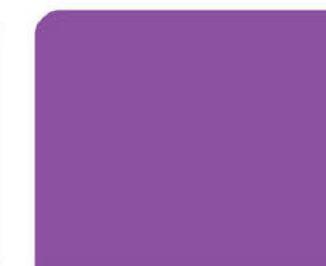


Part 1

Colours



Primary
#4694E0



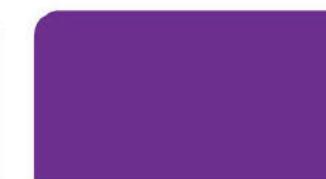
Primary
#A72FE0



Primary
#EOC93B



Accent
#355B94



Accent
#6C1894



Accent
#000000

Buttons



PRIMARY



SECONDARY

Typeface

Aa

Proxima Nova
Bold 48px

Aa

Montserrat
Regular 14px

Title

LOREM IPSUM

Body Text

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum zzril delenit augue duis dolore te feugait nulla facilisi.



We wanted a colour scheme that was distinctive so purple was chosen because of its rarity, and blue and yellow were chosen to compliment it. We thought this was also unique in comparison to already existing review sites.

We intended to make an approachable and fun website, therefore roundness in our design was a clear choice because round shapes are more friendly and endearing (the bouba effect). This influence can be seen in our buttons and type face.

Style Guide



Part 2

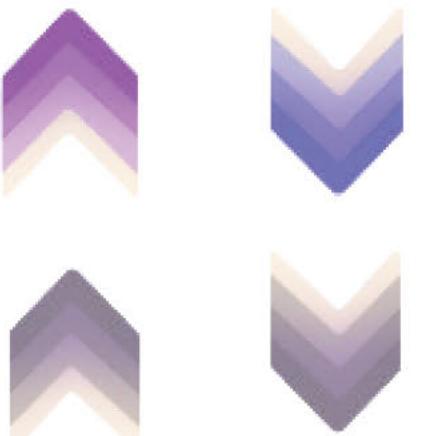


BACK

9.000 votes

20 votes

POST!



Spoiler is on



Spoiler is off!



Medals

Level 3 badge



Level 2 badge



Basic medal



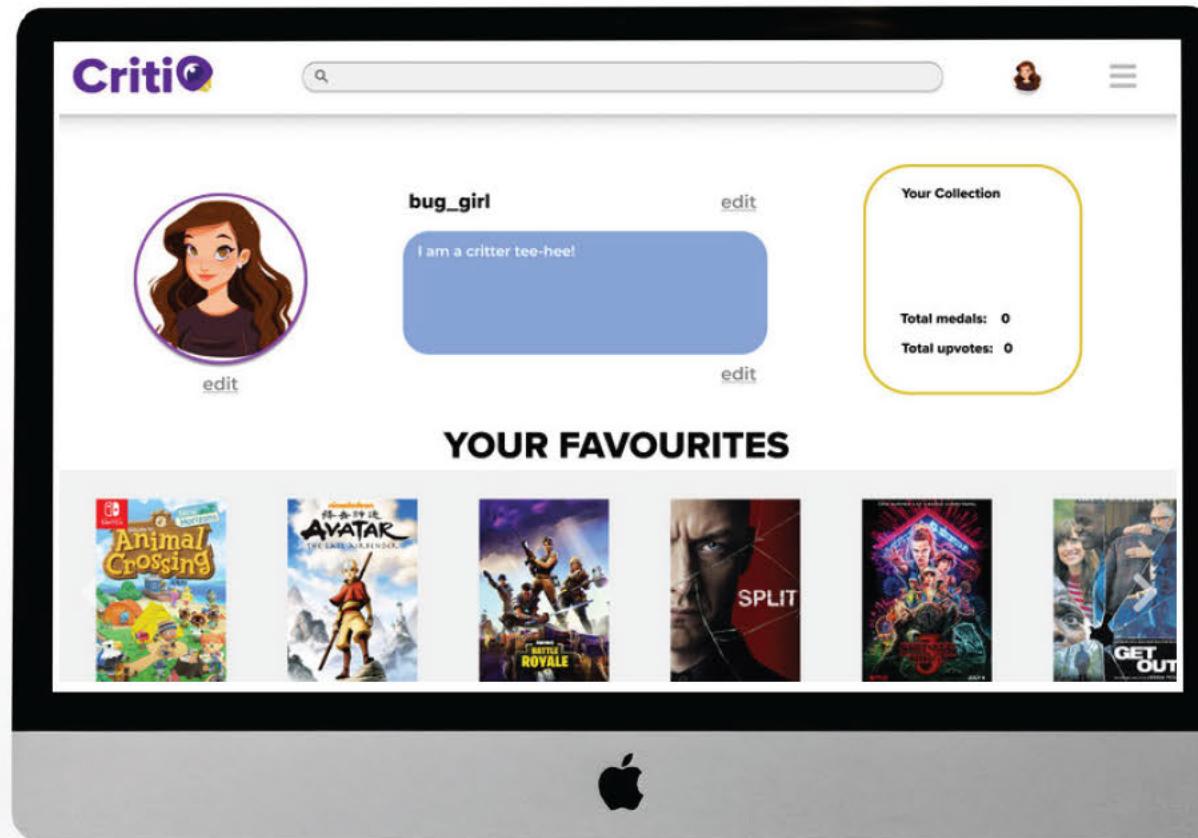
Our decision to name the project CritiQ derives from the word 'critique' since this is what we encourage people to do and sounds like 'critic', which is what the website allows everyone to be.

And since CritiQ sounds like critter we based our branding off of this. The mascot is a caterpillar.

As you can see, our colour scheme can be seen throughout the design of these assets. Round corners are also prominent.

High Fidelity Prototype

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Pitch



We like movies, games and TV shows. We like watching them. We like playing them. And above all, we like talking about them.

We talk about what we did and didn't like. We talk about our favourite performances, best moments and most mind-boggling scenes. And we talk about what they mean to us, how they move us.

That's why we've made **CritiQ**.

Because we don't care about what celebrity did what, or what career critics think of our favourite films. We care about what you think, and we want you to tell us, in as easy, and enjoyable a way possible.

No tacked-on news, no uptight critics. Just a fun, community-driven review platform for all your favourite TV, movies and games.

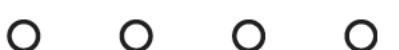
Critters Team,

Final Product

o o o o

[Link Here](#)

Challenges and Reflection



Let's begin.

Challenges



Time Restraints

With an incredibly tight timeline to complete the project, we were forced to divert time and resources away from certain activities in order to complete the project.

Our team had approximately 6 weeks to research and develop design solutions, and another 6 weeks to make the low-fi and high-fi prototype. Our website is unlike any ordinary app which often has fewer pages and interactions per page. As a result, the website has fewer micro-interaction



COVID-19

While this doesn't affect personal work to much extent, it has continually been an issue in making collaborative decisions. This situation often slows the process and lacks a 'human element'.

The other side of COVID-19 has been the effect on mental health. With lockdown returning in Melbourne in the later stages of prototyping, group mental wellbeing was undeniably negatively impacted, resulting in lower motivation and efficiency.



Lack of Experience

As a team with little experience in UX, there were setbacks and difficulties that stemmed from a lack of knowledge. Examples include:

- Asking survey questions with unintentional bias
- Low-fidelity prototype lacking item clarity in some cases

Team Reflection

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Improvements we could make:

- With the challenge of time constraints, we had to be selective about the level of detail in our final prototype. Therefore, given the opportunity, we would have liked to add additional interactions and decorations. This may include having a review page for every movie, show or game that was featured on the home pages or more small animations such as an effect when hovering over elements.
- Although we followed our timeline well, there is still room for greater time management so that the work load is not too different per week.
- These areas of improvement coincide with our hope that we could do more external testing such as interviews if time would allow it. This would ensure that we could have further understanding of the functionality and consensus of the project.

Overall,

While it was a challenging project undertaken in difficult circumstances, we're proud of the finished product, and of the enormous effort that went into getting it this far.

Personal Reflection

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My Role

Throughout this project, I'm mainly responsible for user interviewing, task flow, visual design, and high-fidelity prototype. However, almost all parts of this project are teamwork, it is unimaginable to do all the works by oneself, for instance, the parts I'm responsible for depending on previous parts.

Throughout the Process

User research and developing insights from these interviews and surveys and putting them into a task flow is the part I enjoyed most. This part might be the core of UX, understanding users and finding out their needs, and eventually put their behavior into a logical task flow. Another reason is that this part is so pragmatic and case-based, which means different projects would have a completely different process, though using similar UX methods. For the UX methods, I'm surprised there are so many out there, and all of them are so well developed. It makes choosing methods wisely so important, and one method might work fine in one project but not so well in another. For instance, due to limited time, we decide to do a user task flow rather than a wireframe flow. We also were developing a task flow and low-fi wireframe at the same time, it would be unwise and inefficient to make a wireframe flow.

What I learned

After the research part and organizing our insights from that, I reckon you can even just stop here as a UX researcher, and hand the rest to UI/ Graphics designer. It is amazing that the core part of UX is done and we haven't touched on any visual part. It's almost like a sociology/ psychology discipline.

If we would have time for future work, it might be good to put more time on prototype testing and visual design. To test core functions work for users; and to improve UI design, make it more consistent, add some micro-interactions.

For future design work, there are some helpful points I can take away from this process. One is to stay open, especially for the early stage. And listen to what users say and what they really care about, user research sometimes can provide insights that you never think about. More iterations help if you have the time, and a high-fidelity prototype is definitely not an end.

**That's a
wrap!**

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