

Symbiosis

John Vishwas Nelson

Introduction

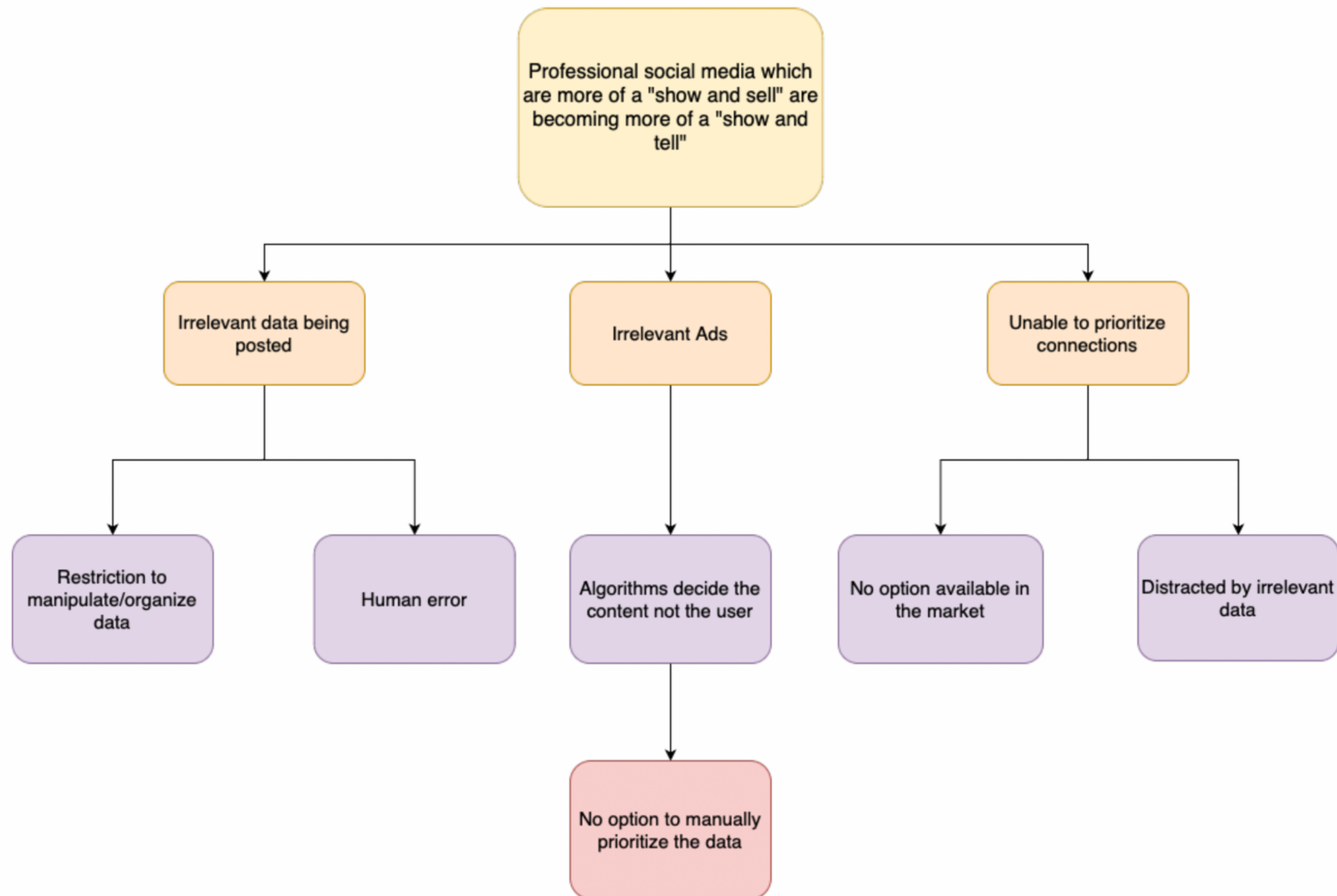
Connecting with professionals to increase efficiency is getting increasingly hard for individuals on mainstream social media platforms. Part of the problem lies in the high volume of ads that flood the opening screens and the lack of control that users have in filtering content and connects based on priority.

Goals For Symbiosis

- Enhance user experience while using a social media platform purely in the context of careers and professional development.
- Remove the noise caused by ads promoted by individual accounts.

Discovery

Briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss.



Personas

After conducting a contextual inquiry among users who make use of social media for furthering their career and connecting with other professionals, this persona was articulated.



Lockett, David
Software Architect

MS Computer Science
Texas A&M

27 | M
Single

Austin, TX

Personality Traits

Passionate
Social

Good conversationalist

Bio

After working for 5 years as a software developer, David has ideas to start his own business in the field of information technology. The first thing that he needs to begin this journey is a network of people who are qualified and knowledgeable in the field. The so called “professional” social media platforms have become a place where the sales pitch shadows the real skills and qualifications of professionals. This makes it difficult to target the more knowledgeable people in the industry. It would be helpful if he could find a platform which doesn’t have any third party marketing distractions and have a clear perspective of the professionals he is looking to connect with. He also is a big phone user, because this is convenient for David and he also doesn’t spend too much time browsing the web.

Frustrations

- Feels like LinkedIn is slowly turning into a corporate version of Instagram
- Unable to utilize any platform in order to build a network of likeminded professionals

Expertise

- Data Analysis
- Software Development
- Project Management & Planning
- Communication & Negotiation

Goals

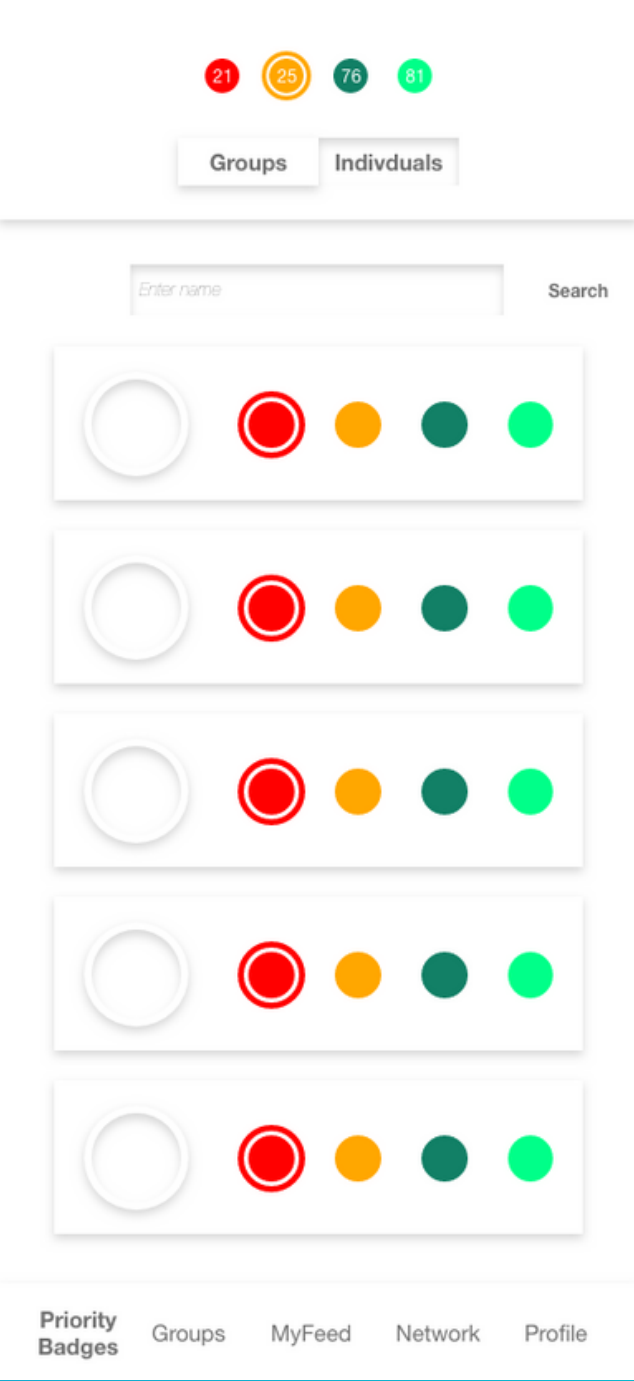
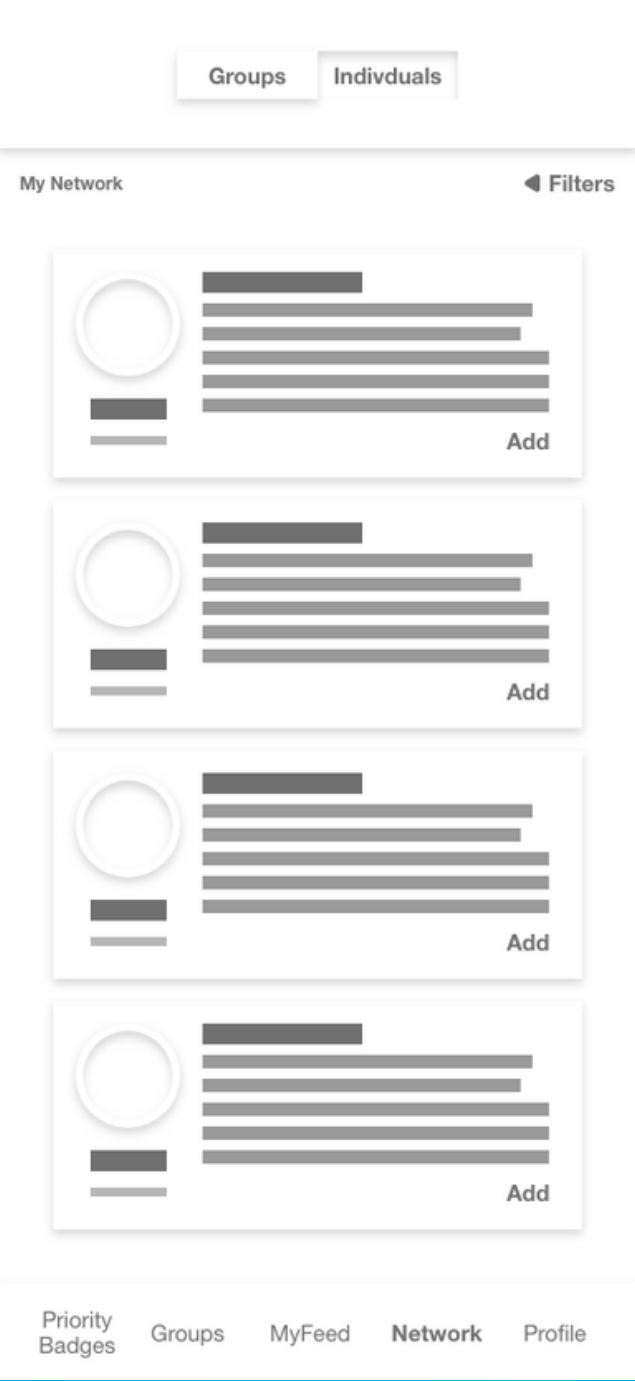
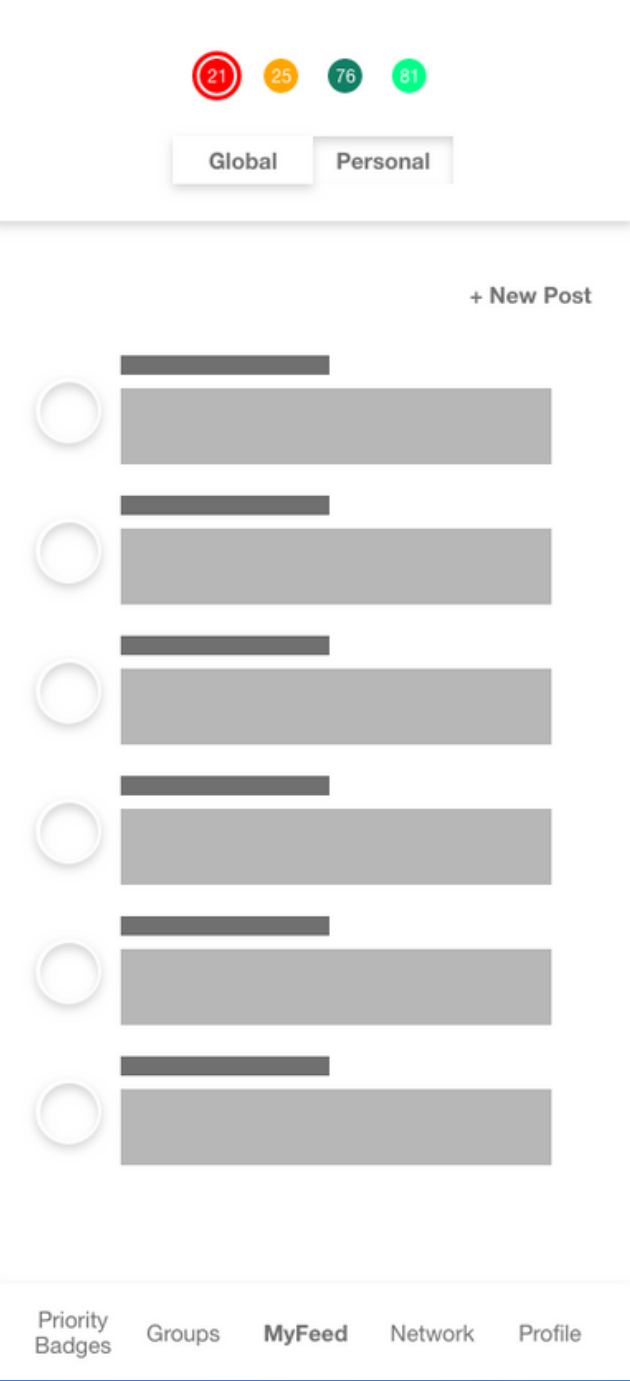
Needs to find a way to network with other likeminded professionals in order to help further his entrepreneurial ideas. Doesn’t want to be distracted with third party ads and such

Appealing Designs

- Minimalist designs
- Quick task completion
- Less distractions

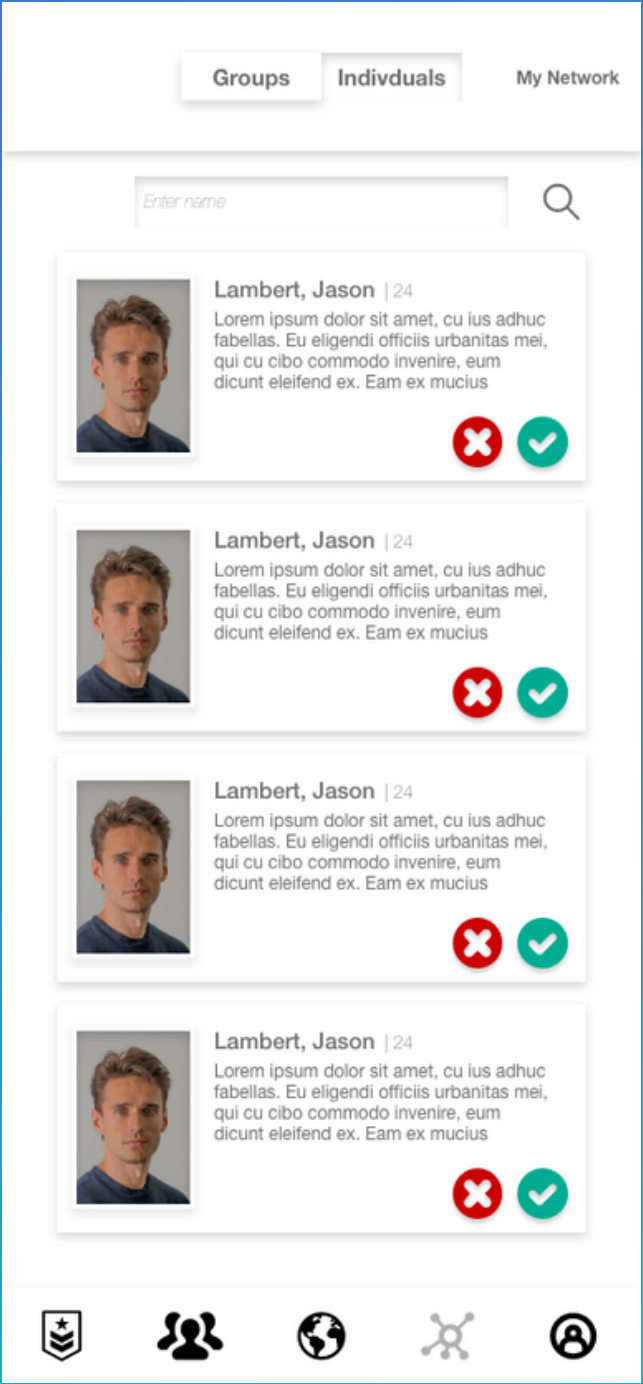
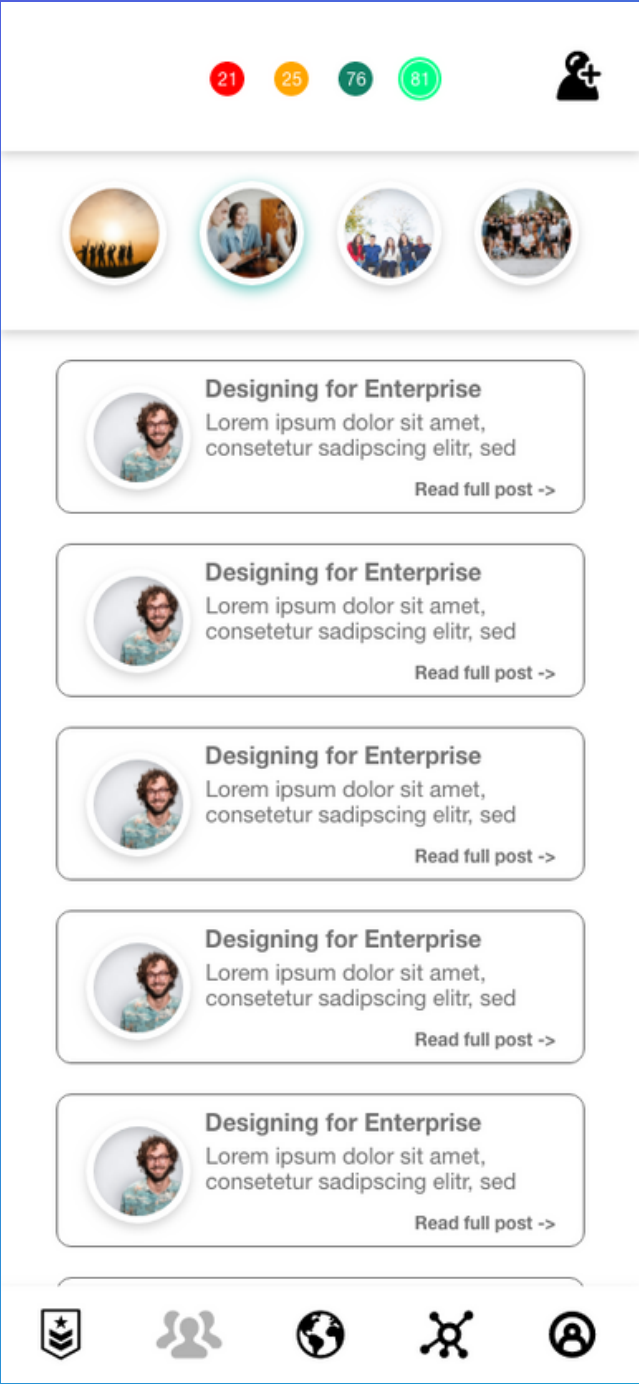
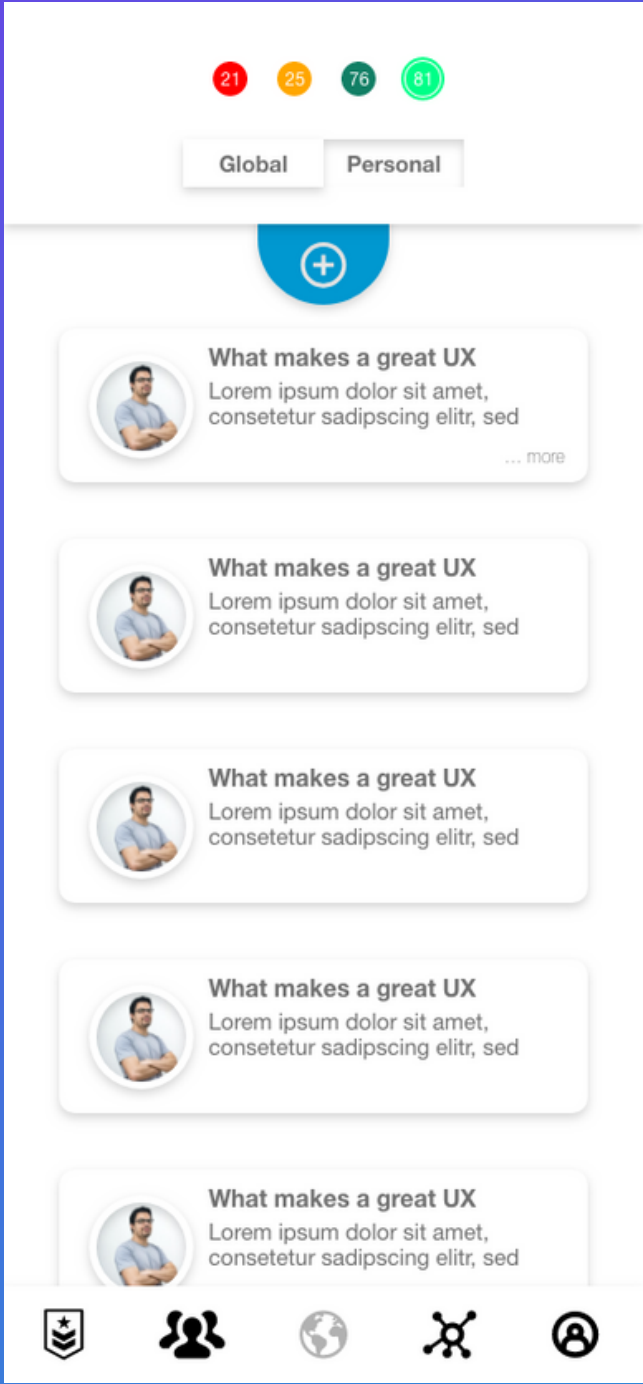
Lo-Fi

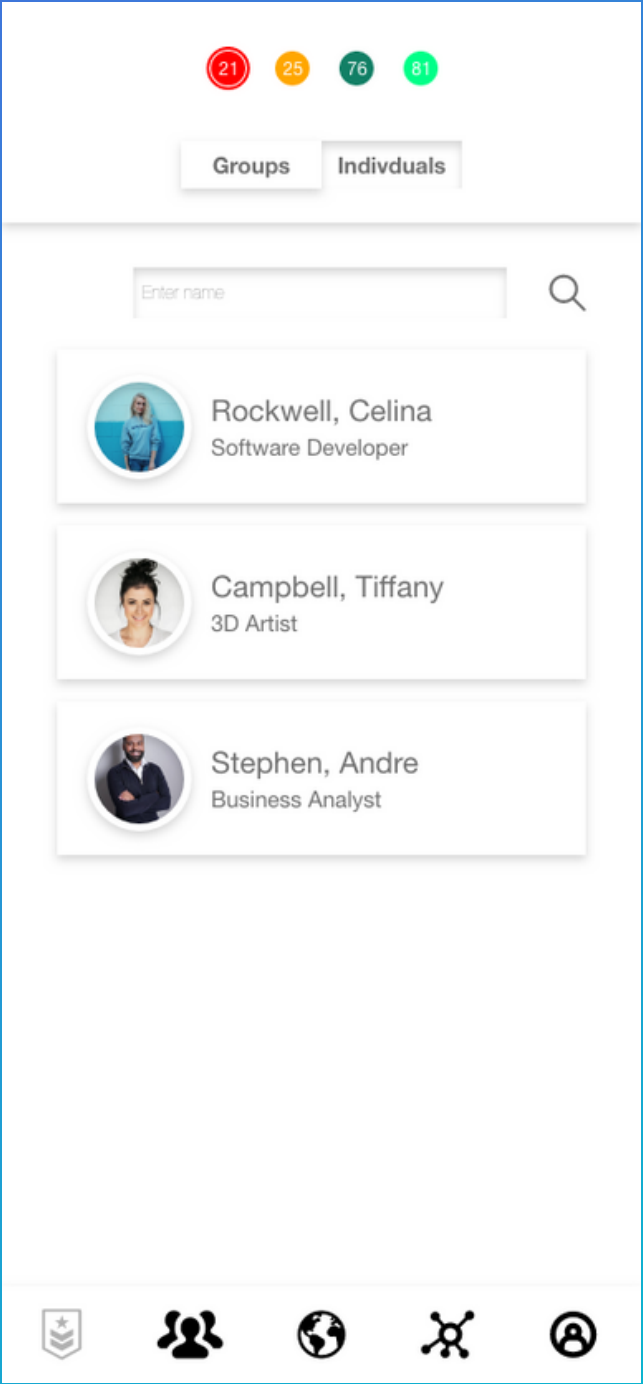
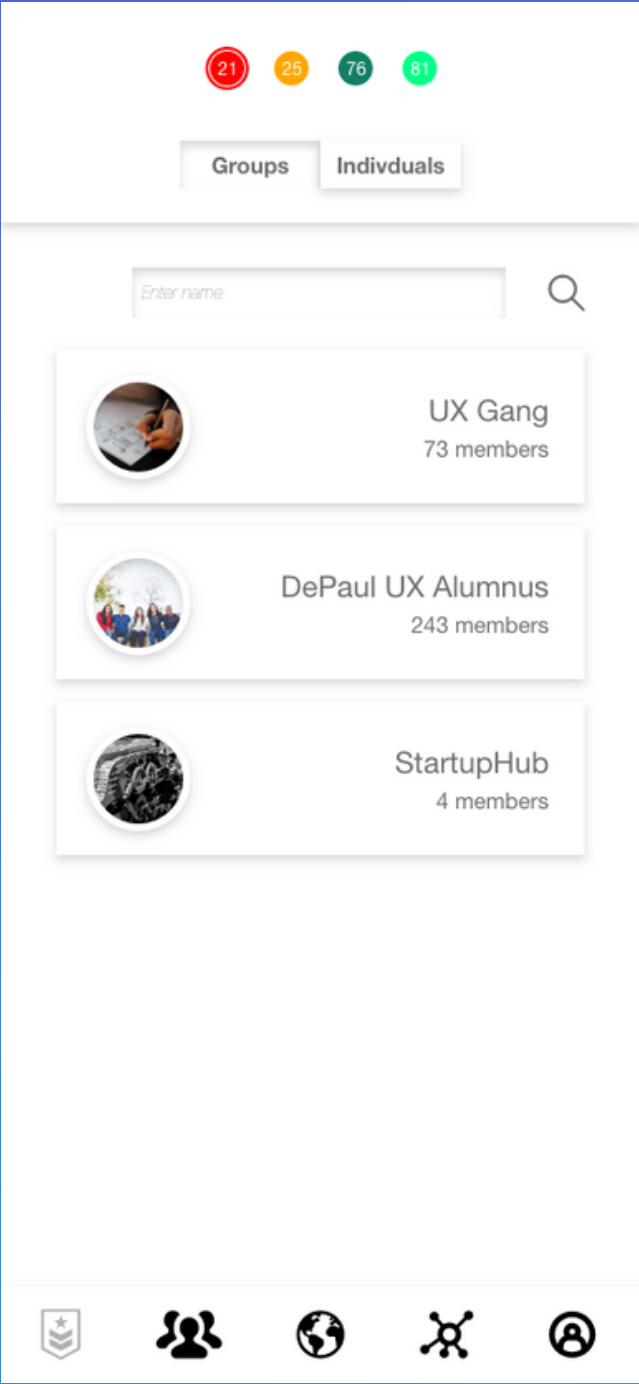
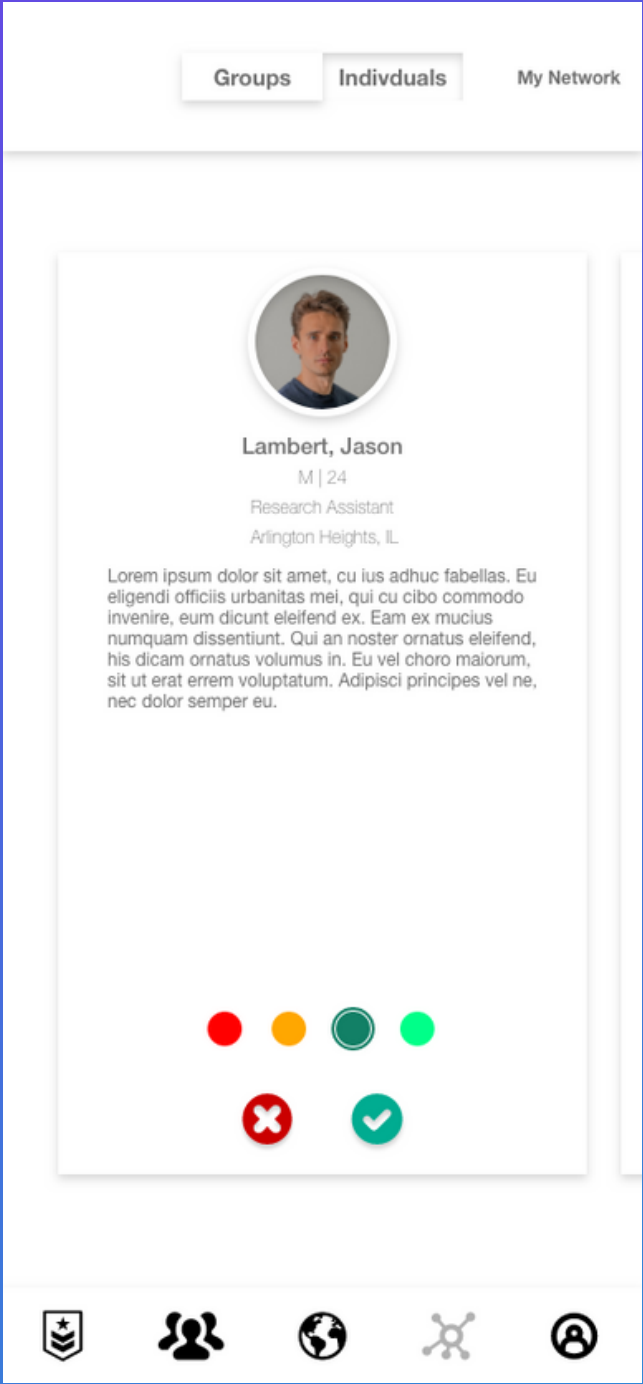
The lo-fi prototype was used to give an idea to participants of what the platform is trying to achieve. With a small group of 5 members who are active on the job market or trying to expand their network, the lo-fi screens were moved around the room according to the tasks that they were given to rapidly make notes and list changes that need to be made.



Mid-Fi

The mid-fi prototype succeeded in terms of helping users get a deeper understanding of how the platform is supposed to function. It was rather difficult to recruit participants to take the study because of the time that it took to complete our test. Even with shortening the script, it took roughly 30 minutes to collect information that was usable.





Usability Test Iteration

From the second usability test that was conducted, an interesting pattern developed. The analysis showed two different groups of users and the way they interacted with the prototype. A short post-test interview showed that some users are more detailed with the way they search for connections and the other group preferred to have a more hybrid method (a filtration process that lies in between automatic connection filtering and the manual color coding). The high-level findings are listed out below.

Lo-Fi Iteration Findings

Participants felt that there the process of filtering out beneficial connections is useful

- Participants find the scrolling between groups feature useful
- Participants would also like to scroll through connection requests
- Participants find the color-coding feature extremely helpful

Concerns:

The only problem with this stage is that participants were more critical of the aesthetics than the solution that was proposed which could indicate that there might have been a bias.

Mid-Fi Iteration Findings

User Type - 1

- 1 - Didn't have trouble finding the feed.
- 2 - Understood the color codes for priority levels. Likes the fact that he can scroll through connection requests.
- 3 - Went to the networking website and clicked on the buttons.
- 4 - Preferred to access the group feed inside the world feed.

Navigation: Found it helpful except for the fact that the navigation separated group feed and regular feed.

Understandability: Understood how the application works.

Does it solve the problem: Yes

Is the flow missing elements: Would like to have a more functional prototype to understand how it works.

User Type - 2

- 1 - Finds it useful to have the numbers on the priority to indicate unattended content.
- 2 - Understands the color codes for pinning priority badges.
- 3 - Easy to filter content based on the bios that are presented.
- 4 - Easy to open separate groups easily with the scrollable group list on the top.

Navigation: Easy to navigate.

Understandability: Easy to understand.

Does it solve the problem: Yes

Is the flow missing elements: Yes, the immediate change in priority badges.

Concerns

- Would find it useful if you can change the priority badges as soon as you see their priority badges.
- Not convincing until a hi-fi version of the prototype is tested.

Future Work

- In depth data analysis to confirm that the proposed solutions work and are independent of biases.
- Establishing a design system and developing a Hi-Fi prototype.

