

It Matters - Product Requirements Document (Alpha)

1. Goals and Background Context

Goals

- Empower users by transforming news awareness into meaningful, constructive action.
- Combat feelings of powerlessness by providing a trusted, unbiased, and personalized news experience.
- Deliver context-rich news summaries that clearly explain the personal impact of world events.
- Establish a new standard for ethical AI in news by prioritizing user data ownership, privacy, and transparency.
- Build a sustainable business model based on delivering high-value, premium features to a core group of engaged users.

Background Context

In an overwhelming and often polarizing media environment, many individuals feel anxious and disconnected from the news, uncertain of its direct impact or how they can respond productively. "It Matters" addresses this by serving as a trusted filter and an action-oriented platform. By leveraging AI to analyze news for credibility and bias, and then personalizing its impact on a user's life, the app bridges the gap between information and understanding. It further empowers users by providing vetted, non-destructive action paths, allowing them to engage with causes they care about in a meaningful way.

2. Requirements

Functional Requirements (FR)

- **FR1: Secure User Accounts & Onboarding:** Build the complete system for a user to sign up, log in, manage their account, and delete their account. The sign-up process must include a clear explanation of the app's data privacy policy.
 - **FR1.1:** The system shall offer a 'Demo Mode' that allows non-authenticated users to experience the personalization feature using a pre-defined persona.
- **FR2: Multi-Faceted Credibility Analysis:** The system shall analyze and display both the 'News Value and Reliability' and the 'Media Bias' of a source, using a multi-point scale to provide clear context about the source's viewpoint and factual reporting.
- **FR3: Personalized News Summary:** Develop the core feature that takes a news article, processes it via AI, and presents it to the user in a structured format.

- **FR3.1:** The personalization engine must use a hybrid approach, prioritizing direct impacts (based on user profile) and thematic relevance for broader topics to generate the "what this means for you" statement.
- **FR4: Integrated Action Paths:** Display a list of relevant, vetted actions a user can take in response to a news article.
 - **FR4.1:** The system will use a hybrid model, querying its internal database first, then partner APIs, and caching new results. It will include a spectrum of engagement from micro to macro actions and provide specific "how-to" guidance.
- **FR5: "Act!" Feature:** Create a system that allows a user to commit to an action and be reminded about it later, tracking their real-world engagement.
- **FR6: Favorites Feature:** Give users the ability to save articles and actions so they can easily find them later.
- **FR7: Profile Dashboard:** Build a dedicated screen that shows a user their engagement statistics and "Portfolio of Positive Impact" over time.
- **FR8: Content Detox Mode:** Implement a user-facing setting that filters out news from topics the user wishes to temporarily avoid.
- **FR9: Tiered Membership Logic:** The system must be able to recognize different user tiers ('explore', 'engaged', etc.) and limit access to features or content accordingly.
- **FR10: "Deep Dive" Report:** Create a feature where a user can pay a small fee to get a comprehensive, downloadable report on a single news story.
- **FR11:** The system shall include mechanisms for collecting user feedback, including exit and CSAT surveys.

Non-Functional Requirements (NFR)

- **NFR1:** The system must enforce strict separation of PII and behavioral data, using device-level encrypted storage for PII and AES-256 encryption for all data at rest and in transit.
- **NFR2:** The system must generate and load article summaries in under 2 seconds on average.
- **NFR3:** Core application screens must render within 1.5 seconds on average.
- **NFR4:** The system shall be designed to maintain a target uptime of 99.95%.
- **NFR5:** The core news summary and action path delivery APIs must be architected to handle a load of 10,000 concurrent requests.
- **NFR6:** The user interface shall be designed to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards.
- **NFR7:** The system must include system-imposed limits on user activity to prevent service abuse.

- **NFR8:** A "cache-first" principle will be applied to all AI-driven features to lower costs and improve performance.
- **NFR9:** The system must track feature engagement to provide analytics for data-driven product decisions.

3. User Interface Design Goals

- **Overall UX Vision:** The experience should be clean, clear, professional, and calming, projecting trustworthiness and prioritizing clarity over "gamified" elements.
- **Key Interaction Paradigms:** Utilize **Progressive Disclosure** to avoid overwhelming users and use **wizard-style** flows for complex data entry (like onboarding).
- **Core Screens:** Login/Signup, Main News Feed, Article Summary View, "Act!" View, Profile/Dashboard (for activity review and impact visualization), and Settings.
- **Accessibility:** WCAG 2.1 Level AA is a mandatory standard.
- **Branding:** Minimal, modern, and professional with a calm, accessible color palette and a "dark mode" option.
- **Target Device:** Web Responsive, designed with a mobile-first approach.

4. Technical Assumptions

- **Repository Structure:** A **Monorepo** structure is recommended to share code between the frontend and backend.
- **Service Architecture:** The architecture will be built on the **Google Firebase** platform, including **Cloud Functions for Firebase** and **Firebase Authentication**.
- **AI Service Abstraction:** The AI service layer will be abstracted to use **OpenRouter** as the primary provider and **OpenAI** as a secondary/fallback provider.
- **Database Choice:** A database with strong JSON support (e.g., PostgreSQL or Firebase's Firestore) is recommended.

5. Epics & Stories

Epic 1: Foundation & Core Content Experience

Goal: Establish the secure user foundation and deliver the core value proposition of analyzed, personalized news content.

- Story 1.1: Foundational User Authentication
As a user, I want to be able to sign up for a new account with my email and password and log in, so that I can have a secure, personal experience.
 - **ACs:** User can create an account (stored in Firebase Auth), log in, log out. A

corresponding user profile is created in the application database.

- Story 1.2: Onboarding Flow and Demo Mode
As a new user, I want a clear onboarding process that asks for my baseline profile, and as a prospective user, I want a demo mode to see the value before I sign up.
 - **ACs:** A mandatory onboarding wizard collects baseline profile data after first login. A "Demo Mode" is accessible from the landing page for non-authenticated users.
- Story 1.3: Core Article Analysis Service
As the system, I want to process a news article URL to generate credibility scores and a summary, and then cache the result, so that users receive fast, consistent analysis.
 - **ACs:** A backend endpoint accepts a URL, checks for a cached result first, and if not found, calls the AI provider to generate analysis and a structured summary, then stores the result in the cache.
- Story 1.4: Basic Article View
As a user, I want to see a list of articles and be able to click on one to view its basic analysis and summary, so that I can consume the core content.
 - **ACs:** A main feed displays articles. Clicking an article navigates to a view that renders the non-personalized summary and credibility scores.
- Story 1.5: Personalized Summary Integration
As a user, I want the article summary to include a 'What this means for you' section based on my profile, so that I can understand its direct relevance.
 - **ACs:** The analysis service is updated to accept a user profile, the AI prompt is modified to include this data, and the personalized impact statement is displayed in the Article View.
- Story 1.6: Favorites Feature
As a user, I want to be able to save or "favorite" an article, so that I can easily find and re-read it later.
 - **ACs:** A "Favorite" button exists on the article view. A "Favorites" section on the user's dashboard lists all saved articles.

Epic 2: Engagement & Action

Goal: Empower users by providing them with clear action paths, a system to track their commitments, and a personal dashboard to visualize their positive impact.

- Story 2.1 (Revised): Displaying Integrated Action Paths
As a user, after understanding an article's impact on me, I want to see a list of specific, direct actions I can take, so that I can easily and effectively respond.
 - **ACs:** An "Act!" section displays relevant actions. Each action links directly to a specific destination (e.g., a donation form, a petition page) and may include a

"how-to" guide.

- Story 2.2: The "Act!" Pledge System

As a user, I want to commit to an action I care about and be reminded to follow through, so that I can bridge the gap between intention and real-world action.

- **ACs:** A "Pledge" button records the action as "Pledged." A scheduled job sends a reminder, allowing the user to confirm completion or snooze.

- Story 2.3: The Profile Dashboard

As a user, I want a single place to see a summary of all my activity and the impact I'm having, so that I can feel a sense of accomplishment and stay motivated.

- **ACs:** A dashboard displays key stats ("Articles Read," "Actions Completed"), visualizes the user's "Portfolio of Positive Impact," and shows trends over time.

- Story 2.4: Content Detox Mode

As a user, I want the ability to temporarily mute stressful topics, so that I can stay informed without feeling overwhelmed and continue using the app long-term.

- **ACs:** A setting allows users to select topics to mute. The main news feed automatically filters out articles with those tags.

Epic 3: Monetization & Advanced Features

Goal: Introduce the initial monetization feature ("Deep Dive" Report), providing a clear path to revenue while delivering significant, optional value to our most engaged users.

- Story 3.1: The "Deep Dive" Report Micro-transaction

As a user, I want the option to purchase a comprehensive, downloadable report on a single news event, so that I can get the deepest possible understanding of a topic I care about.

- **ACs:** A button initiates a payment flow. Upon successful payment, a well-formatted PDF report containing the full summary, analysis, and related content is generated and made available for download.