AccuRate News App

A news verification app for people looking for accuracy and trustworthiness in their daily digest

UX/UI App Concept | Sept. 14 - 21

View Prototype

Overview | Brainstorm | Concept UX | Test & Refine | Reflection

01 – Overview

This app concept was my submission for a design challenge by the New York Times. Our goal was to create a news application that focused on the accuracy of news around the presidential elections. This app clarifies what is trustworthy by using iconography to convey the accuracy of news and was awarded an honourable mention during the competition.

Duration

1 week

September 14 - September 21

Roles

I worked as the UX designer on this project, guiding the testing and information architecture while my teammate was the UI designer responsible for the branding and colours.

The Challenge

Election news is accessible today in ways that were unimaginable even just a decade ago. With the rise of technology, sources, and outlets, it is becoming increasingly more challenging to know what political information is reliable, credible, and what or who should be trusted.

Your challenge is to design a user-centric mobile-first experience that increases trust and credibility in election content, in some way. Consider a visual or functional experience that confirms that news, polls, and outcomes are trustworthy to users.

Possible features might include:

A way to check if content originates from a trusted source

A reader portal for credible news and video

Visual cues to verify trustworthiness

A way to share trusted articles only

An algorithm promoting on veracity rather than popularity

02 – Brainstorm

Research

- We first began this project by taking a look at our target demographic for the app.
- We then followed up with a competitive analysis, examining other news apps currently on the market.

What we learned

- Our target demographic for this app would be users that were already accustomed to technology and who are accustomed to digesting information with mobile apps.
- Other news apps in the market do not have any methods to filter the quality of the articles being presented. This reduces the amount of trust that users have for the shown articles.
- The target demographic of our app overlaps with the target demographic of other news apps. This means that the amount of biases that they are exposed to via social media is something to be considered.

03 – Concept UX

Preliminary concepts

- We needed a form of verification for both users and the news companies creating the content.
- A section that focused on the polls for the presidential elections that also provided related articles that may influence swings in the polls

This was a low-fidelity wireframe, we chose to use the Fibonacci sequence for easier calculations

This is the polls section with a few related news articles hooked to polls changes

Initially this had 100 for a number of perspective the level of veracity of each article.

Other important functions

- A personalized feed for each user, retaining the capacity to filter articles with accuracy rate. This reduces the amount of bias received from articles with 'click-bait-y' titles.
- Articles could be flagged by users, allowing users on learning about accuracy and avoiding stories from the time of an election.
- Access to other types of news articles as limiting the app to election content will restrict the longevity of its usage to election periods.

Filtering by accuracy rate and an option to sort by most recent or featured seems to allow ease of accessibility.

A personal feed with a featured article section and a section for articles measurements depending popularity

A breadth of search topics that promotes the longevity of the app

04 – Prototype & Refine

Test and Refine

Identifying pain points from user research testing

After outlining our requirements for the low-fidelity wireframes, we then created the high-fidelity prototypes in order to perform user testing. The purpose of this testing before finalizing the app was to find any gaps in my reasoning and challenges with the app design. I asked a mentor to test the prototype of this app, instructing them to go through the main user flow and voice out their concerns.

Lack of branding and occasional UI inconsistencies

We received some feedback regarding some UI inconsistencies that we missed when prototyping. Although this may not be evident to the majority of people using the app, it is still important to maintain a set of branding guidelines.

Paradox with user verification

We initially made the requirement for the user verification level a reference from users who were already fully verified. This was unsustainable since you would need a reference to become fully verified. We quickly changed this so that anyone with the app can provide a reference as long as they reach the first verification level.

Grouping the preferences section and "Your Feed" section

We replaced the "your preferences" section in the home page with a curated articles related to the elections. Instead, we moved the preferences section with the "Your Feed" section, improving the overall user flow of the app.

05 – Reflection

Takeaway # 1

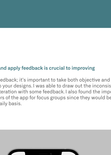
Placing importance on the user flow

After creating this app concept, I realized the importance of putting resources and time towards improving the user flow. Taking into account where they click in order to get to certain locations within the app is imperative to improving their experience.

Takeaway # 2

Knowing how to interpret and apply feedback is crucial to improving

Never be afraid to ask for feedback, it's important to take both objective and subjective feedback into account when improving your app. Although I had some hesitations associated with my initial iteration with some feedback, I also found the importance of targeting real, potential users of the app for focus groups since they would be the ones theoretically using it on a daily basis.



Credible and secure platform for news content

AccuRate

Thank you for reading! ✨