

Name: Oscar Costa
Student ID: 25859366
Email: oscar.costa@student.uts.edu.au
Subject: 40007 iOS Innovation Studio
Group Members: Oscar Costa, Slim Torbey, and Maximus Cham

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Checkpoint 1: Group 7 ~ IOS Checkpoint 1.pdf

Checkpoint 2: Group 7 - Checkpoint 2 Solution Design and Development.pdf

Checkpoint 3: <https://github.com/oscarcosta-git/Unplugged>

My Prompt Journal: Oscar Costa - My Prompt Journal

Final Presentation: Group 7 - Unplugged Final Presentation.pdf

Portfolio

Introduction

Group 7, which collaborated with Oscar Costa, Slim Torbey, and Maximus Cham wanted to develop a digital solution aimed at helping teens and young adults to manage screen time and foster healthier digital habits. Our project which I named “Unplugged”, was designed to address the growing concern of phone addiction among younger generations by focusing on the behaviours and motivations behind excessive device use.

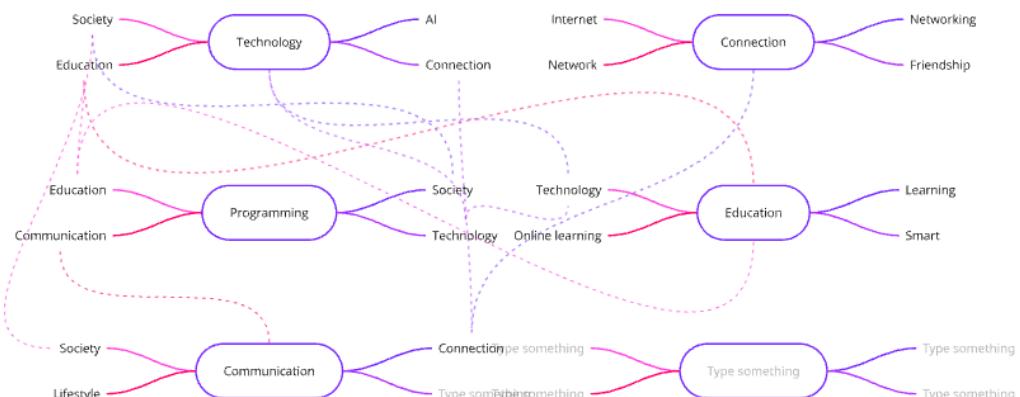
My primary responsibilities throughout the project were centred around design and development however helped in all areas of the project. I contributed significantly to the UI design, where I produced early concept sketches, user flows, and high-fidelity prototypes that prioritise usability and engagement for our target audience. I was also heavily involved in the coding and technical development of the semi-functional prototype using Swift.

During the code phase, I carried out the majority of the implementation work, as there was limited contribution from Maximus, which has been communicated to the tutors. As a result, I took the lead on the integrating design decisions with functional components to ensure we delivered a working prototype that aligned with the original vision.

Big Idea Identification

At the beginning of the project, we collaborated on mapping activities to explore broad societal issues and potential areas of focus. We brainstormed several initial ideas and grouped them using 3 to 4 key words that captured recurring themes. Through this process, we identified key terms such as Technology, Society, Connection, and Communication, and began to see strong connections across our collective input.

As a team, we then refined and linked each idea to others to determine which themes were the most meaningful. This lead to us picking two central focus areas: Technology and Society. After discussing we choose to focus on Society, agreeing that the social impacts of technology felt the most important to our interest and had the greatest potential for meaningful intervention.



From there, we made our Essential Question:

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This question acted as a foundation for further exploration and ideation. I personally contributed several key discussion points during this stage, including questions such as:

- How does technology shape human behaviour?
 - How has technology improved connection between members of society?
 - Why is privacy important in the digital world?
 - What are the effects of social media on mental health and well-being?

Using our essential question as the centrepiece of a mind map, we worked as a team to generate a range of potential challenge statements. These included:

- Create a solution to reduce the negative impact of social media on mental health.
- Teach individuals how algorithms shape preferences.
- Bring awareness to how technology influences human decision-making and social interactions.
- Help people develop healthier relationships with technology in their daily lives.

After going through each option, we collectively selected the final challenge statement: "Help people develop healthier relationships with technology in their daily lives."

This statement aligned with our essential question and allowed us to focus on an issue that was both timely and personally relevant particularly among young people navigating the digital landscape.

Research & Team Challenge Statement

After the initial challenge question was decided, "Help people develop healthier relationships with technology in their daily lives", we then began to generate as many guiding questions as possible. These questions helped shape our research direction and identify the key issues that would need to be addressed.

Some of the questions that I developed were:

- What are the benefits of adopting a healthier relationship with technology?
- Who benefits from building healthier technology habits?
- What strategies have been effective in reducing screen time among young people?
- How can people balance the use of technology with other activities?
- Should schools teach the healthy use of technology?
- What if someone finds it hard to disconnect from technology?

From the research we led us to focus on a certain target group of teens and young adults, as they were the ones that were being most affected by unhealthy relationships with technology. Key findings that I found based on guiding questions were:

- Adolescents and young adults (ages 12 to 30) are the most vulnerable to the negative effects of excessive screen use.
- A survey by The New Britain Project revealed that nearly 75% of Generation Z believe social media platforms need stronger regulations to protect youth from harm.
- In the UK, 50% of 10-year-olds already own a smartphone, pointing to early and prolonged exposure to digital devices.
- Mental health suffers due to increased stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy caused by constant comparison.
- Sleep quality is diminished due to prolonged exposure to blue light and late-night usage.
- Social relationships weaken as in-person interactions are replaced by virtual ones.

The research that was conducted highlights the digital dependency starts early and escalates over time if left untreated. On the other hand, adopting healthier screen time habits has numerous benefits such as improved sleep quality, mental health and emotional

regulation. Better sleep, overall restfullness, aswell as stronger relationships through more meaningful in person interactions.

Based on findings and discussions, we refined our challenge statement to focus specifically on the demographic most at risk, so we refined our statement to “Help teens and young adults create healthier screen time habits to reduce digital dependency and promote well-being.”

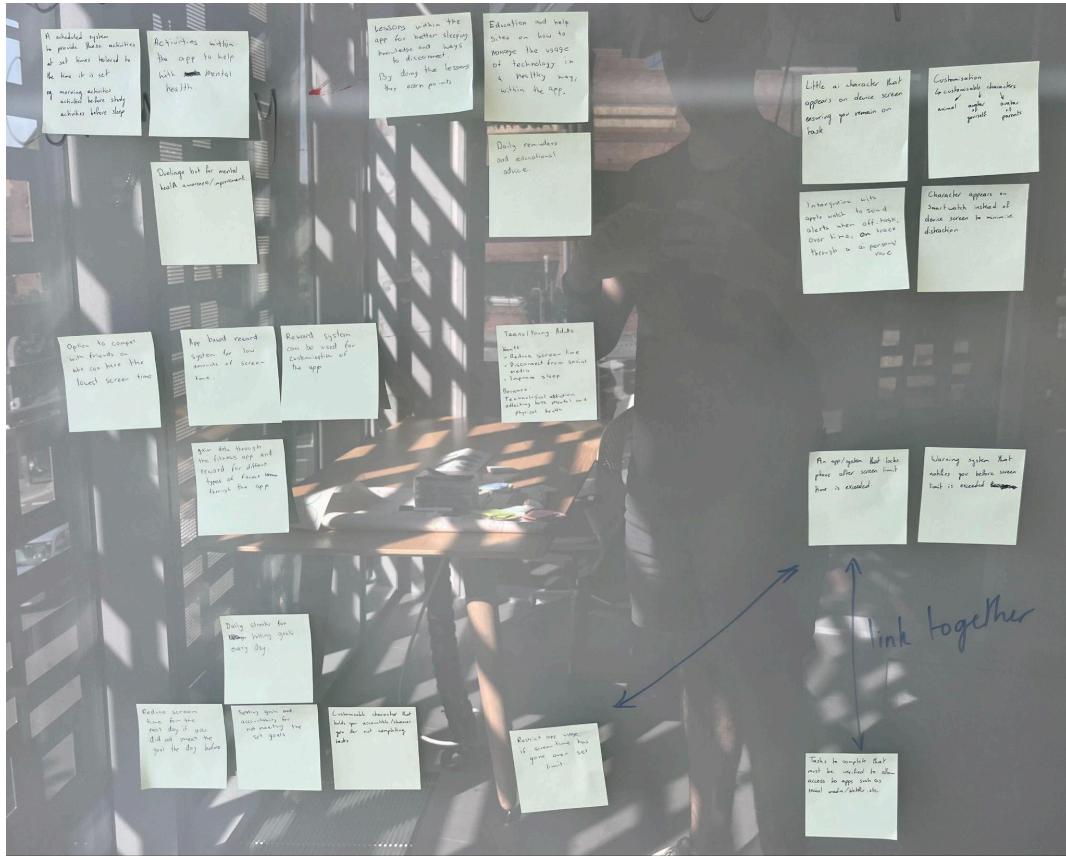
Solution Concept

To address the growing issue of digital dependency between teens and young adults, Myself and Slim came up with the idea of a mobile application designed to help users build healthier relationships with technology through self-awareness, goal setting, and community engagement. I came up with the app name of Unplugged, stemming from the idea that the application is focused on disconnecting from technology.

The application was designed to have both restrictive features that enforce set limits however also have motivational elements that encourage positive behaviours by users. This mix helps users feel more supported rather than punished and allowing them to gradually reduce screen time over time.

Key Features:

- Customisable Experience – Users can set screen time goals, choose which apps to track, and control the frequency of reminders.
- App Lock & Restrictions – When a user exceeds their limit, the app temporarily locks selected apps to reduce distractions.
- Screen Time Reminders – Notifications alert users when they approach or exceed their daily screen time goal.
- Reward System – Users earn rewards (points, badges, or real-world incentives) for successfully sticking to their screen time limits.
- Progress Tracking – Users can monitor their progress over time to see improvements in their digital habits.
- Groups and community events - Users are given the community tab where they can join groups with friends to reach a target where they would then be rewarded with points if successful. They could also join events where points may be doubled, lesser screen time access, etc. This is done to make the process much more enjoyable instead of it feeling like a challenge.
- Smart Nudges reduce screen time with subtle interventions. The screen dims or turns grayscale when limits are exceeded, apps delay opening for 5–10 seconds, and custom reminders prompt mindful usage, encouraging healthier habits without strict restrictions.



Ideas that I contributed:

- Daily advice and educational advice.
- App based reward system for meeting goals and lower amounts of screen time.
- Reduced total screen time availability based if previous days were met.
- Restrict app usage if screen time has gone over the limit.
- Setting goals and accountability for not meeting goals.
- Daily streaks for hitting goals each day.
- Integration with Apple Watch to send alerts when off task, over time, or on track.

The app design and overall concept development were carried out primarily by Oscar and Slim, with limited involvement from Maximus a pattern that continued throughout the remainder of the project.

App Concept Design

The Unplugged app was designed to be focused on usability, personalisation and engagement, ensuring that teens and young adults feel like the interface is clean and user-friendly as well as they can control on how they reduce their screen time.

The Dashboard provides a real-time overview of the user's daily progress:

- A central Success Score summarises their screen time performance.
- Clear statistics display total screen time, time used per app, and remaining daily allowance.
- Visual cues such as colour-coded progress bars and alerts make it easy for users to assess their current status at a glance.

The Settings page allows users to fully customise their experience, promoting a tailored approach to digital wellbeing:

- Set screen time limits for individual apps.
- Choose reminder frequency (e.g. 5 mins, 10 mins, hourly).
- Select notification style (push, in-app, or both).
- Define which apps to track or restrict.
- Adjust general preferences like language, theme (dark/light mode), and notification types.
- Enable or disable Smart Nudges, such as screen dimming or time-delays for app launches.

The Progress & Insights page delivers a detailed look into user behaviour over time:

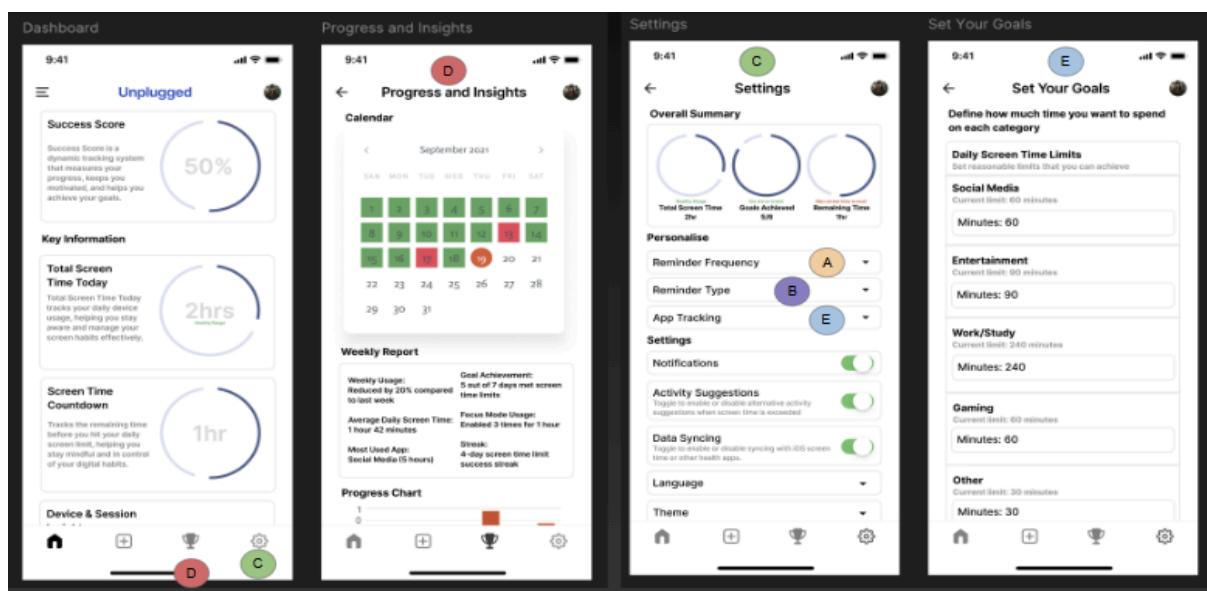
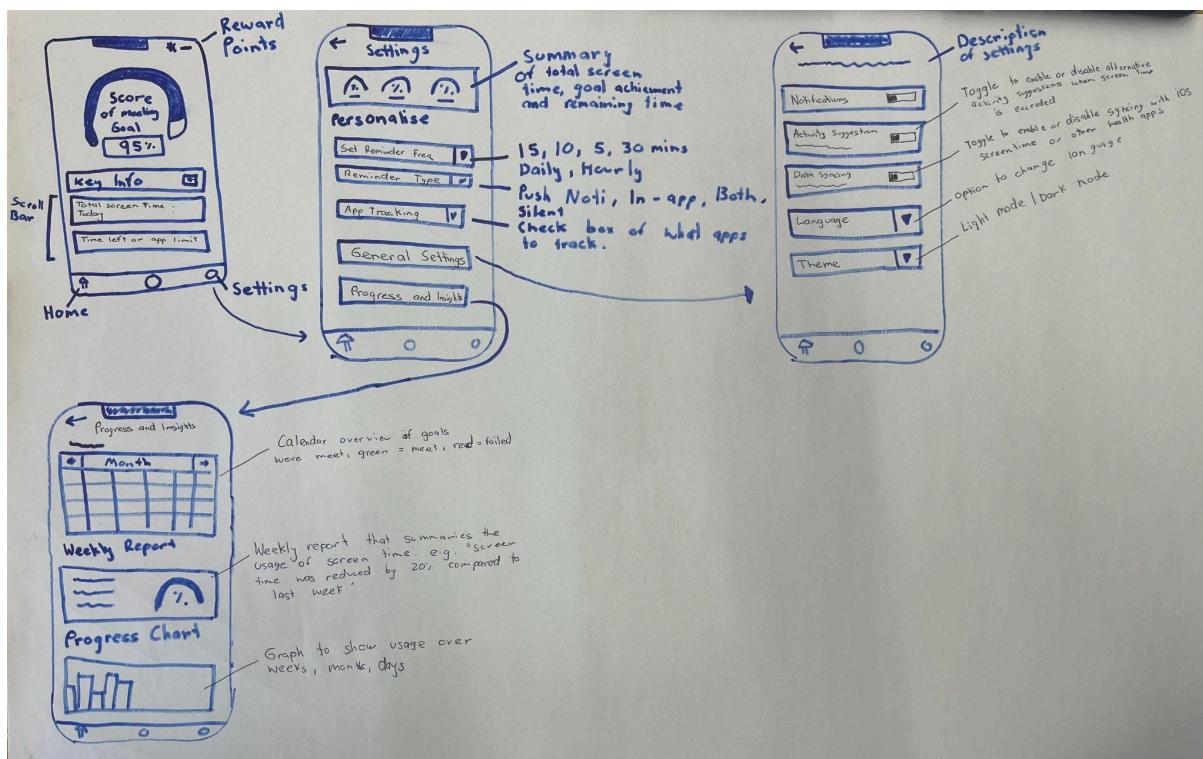
- A calendar highlights daily goal achievements with red (missed) or green (met) indicators.
- Weekly reports summarise reductions in screen time and identify patterns.
- A progress chart displays trends over days, weeks, or months, making long-term improvement visible and motivating.

Upon first launch:

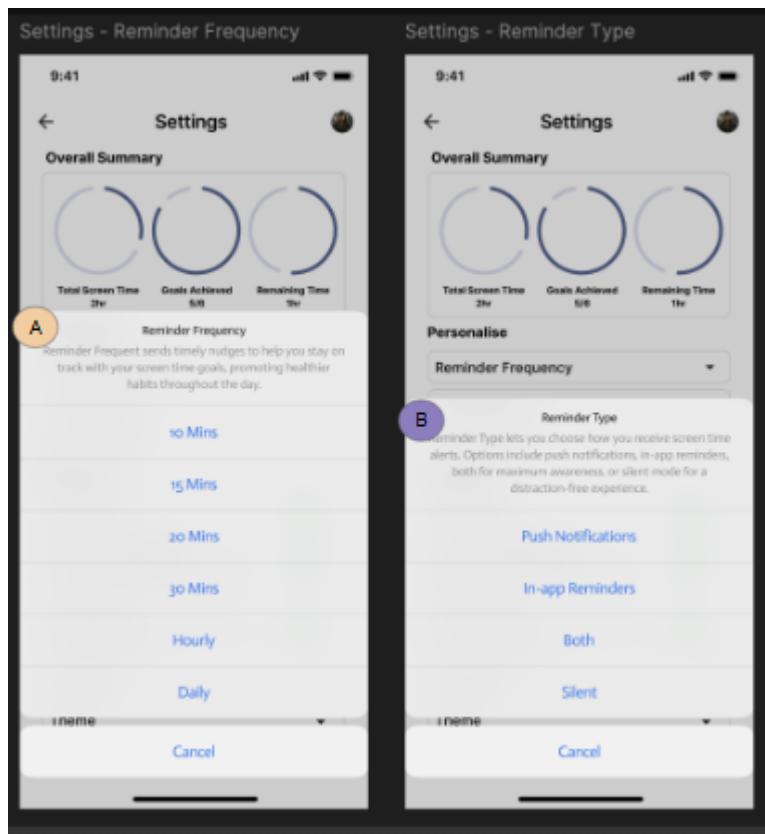
- Users land on the Dashboard to view current stats.
- They move to Settings to customise their screen time goals, reminder styles, and tracking options.
- As they use the app daily, they monitor their behaviour via Progress & Insights.

User Story 1 (Oscar Costa)

1. Every day... Jordan, a 19-year-old college student, starts their day by scrolling through social media and continues using their phone constantly throughout the day, feeling frustrated by how much time is wasted.
 2. Then one day... Jordan realises they spent six hours on their phone the previous day, mostly on social media and gaming apps. They feel guilty but struggle to reduce their usage manually.
 3. Because of that... Jordan downloads Unplugged, an app that lets them customise their experience: Set reminders at specific intervals, Track only certain apps (social media & gaming), Enable motivational nudges to encourage healthier habits.
 4. Ever since then... Jordan reduces social media use by 40%, feels more present, and spends more time on hobbies and studying. Thanks to Unplugged, they've built better screen habits without feeling restricted.
- As a user, I want to be able to customise my app experience, such as setting the frequency of reminders and selecting which apps to track, so I can tailor the app to my needs.

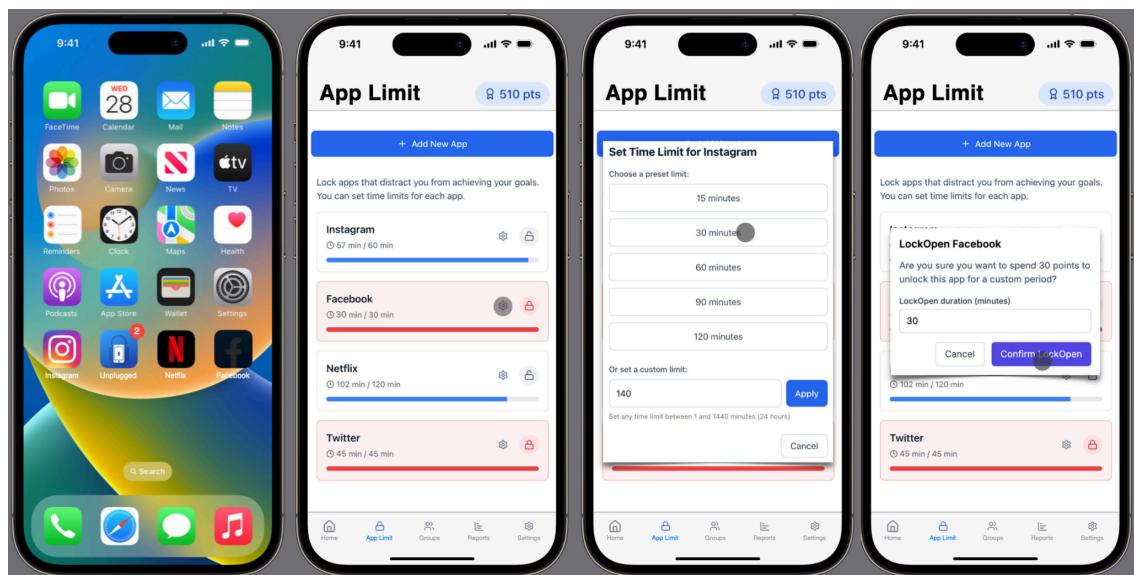


Users can progress through the different screens through the button bar at the bottom of the screen (Home, Add, Progress and Insights, Settings). Users will start on the dashboard and then progress to settings to set up time requirements as well as other key settings for the functionality of the app. Within settings, they will progress down the options starting with Reminder Frequency, Reminder Type and App Tracking, and then general settings.



User Story 2 (Slim Torbey)

1. Every day... Alex, an 18-year-old student, spends hours on social media, struggling to focus on homework and sleep on time. Even when they try to cut back, they instinctively open apps out of habit.
2. Then one day... Alex realises their grades and sleep suffer due to endless scrolling. They try app timers but easily override them, making it hard to stay accountable.
3. Because of that... Alex downloads Unplugged, which helps by locking social media apps during study and bedtime. Setting schedules for when apps can be accessed. Using timed unlocks to prevent impulsive scrolling.
4. Ever since then... With distractions reduced, Alex studies more effectively, sleeps better, and feels more in control of their screen time.





Users can receive notifications about the apps that will be locked, including some warning notifications before they are locked. They can also receive notifications encouraging them to get off their phones and complete some tasks for the day, such as studying.

Once a user's app is locked after the screen time limit has been reached, the app's icon will fade and shift to a greyscale colour to make the app unappealing to the user. In our app, the user can see the list of apps that are being tracked, set the screen time limit for each app, and after an app has been locked, they can spend their earned points to unlock the app for a limited amount of time if it is necessary to use the app.

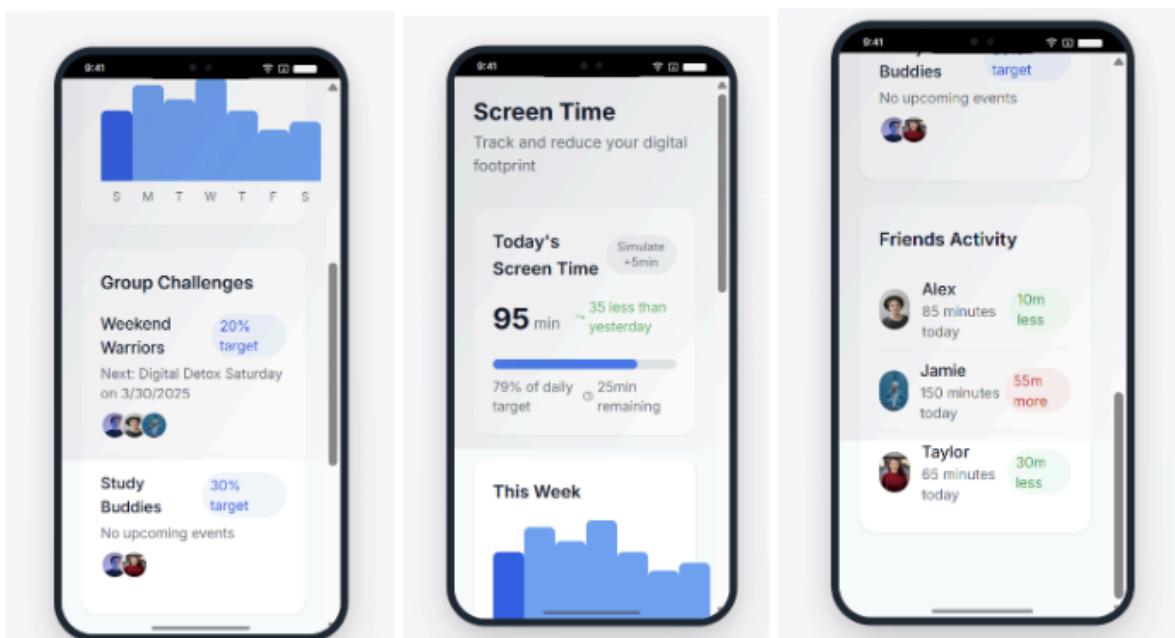
User Story 3 (Maximus Cham)

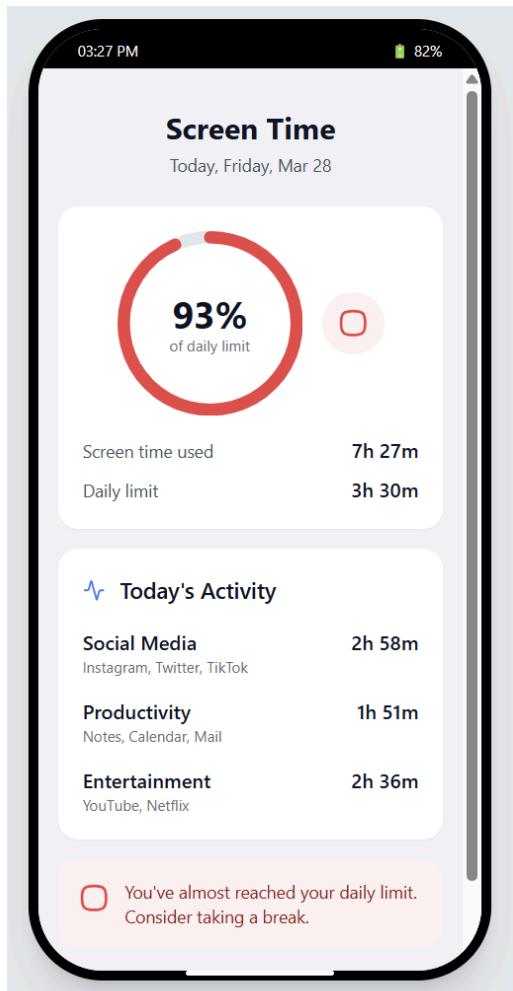
As a user, I want a reminder application that tracks application usage so i could recognise which application is the most poisonous.

The application keeps track of application usage in Hours and Minutes, this shows users which application is the most toxic for them and which to cut down time on.

As a user, I want a fun application with groups and events so that it wouldn't feel like a challenge

The community tab allows users to interact with each other, they can join groups to target a single milestone together or join in on events to earn points. This allows users to enjoy the application and treat it as a game instead of it being a dreadful application which challenges their addiction.





Tools used within the design process was Figma, with the focus of consistent and user-friendly designs throughout the whole application.

Semi-Functional Prototype

The semi functional prototype of Unplugged was developed using Swift in Xcode, designed to simulate core user flows and demonstrate the essential functionality of the app. While not fully operational, the prototype demonstrates major features and the intended user experience, including:

- Home Dashboard: Helpful Tip, Displays simulated screen time data, success score, total screen time today, screen time count time and device and session insights.
- Settings: Customisation of reminder types and app tracking settings.
- Progress and Insights: Shows visual progress reports, including trend charts and calendar tracking.
- App Add: Tracking of apps within the app to limit screen time aswell as total points, unlocking apps, and adding apps.

Some app functionalities are currently limited due to Apple's API restrictions and the costs associated with accessing specific device-level data, such as real-time app usage tracking or deep system-level app control. These limitations prevented the implementation of full

background tracking and locking mechanisms. However, placeholders were added to simulate data to show the functionality of the app.

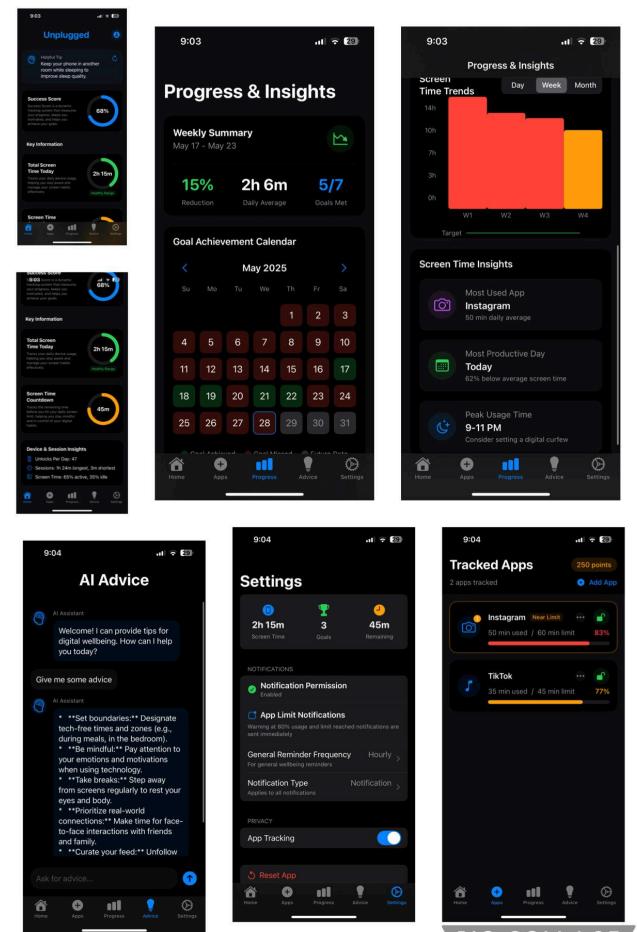
A folder containing the Swift project files, including assets, can be found at the following link:

<https://github.com/oscarcosta-git/Unplugged>

The Unplugged app icon, was designed by me which features a teal background with a white outline of a smartphone and a disconnected power plug forming a “U”. It symbolises taking a break from screens and promoting healthier digital habits.

Throughout the development of the app I encountered issues due to Apple API limitations, particularly around the accurate tracking of real-time screen time and app usage. This presented a setback in delivering the application to the level of functionality we had originally envisioned. However, I continued developing the application using dummy data to simulate user interactions and maintain the integrity of the app's core features and design.

I developed 4/5 pages within the application being: Home, Progress, Advice, Settings as well as redesigned the Apps page to fit in with the overall theme.



Summary of Contributions

For this project, I focused mostly on the design and development of our app Unplugged. I came up with the name and worked closely with Slim to shape the app's concept. I created designs, including early sketches and high-fidelity mockups using Figma.

I did most of the coding, building four out of five main pages of the app in Swift – Home, Progress, Advice, and Settings – and also updated the Apps page to match the overall look of the app. I also designed the app icon.

There were some issues along the way, especially with Apple's API, which limited how we could track screen time properly. Because of that, I used dummy data to show how the app would work.

I helped out across different parts of the project but mainly handled the design and code. Since Maximus wasn't very involved during development, I took on extra work to make sure we stayed on track.

Reflection

Introduction

At first, our team wasn't sure what direction to take, so we started with big idea brainstorming. We grouped our ideas under key themes like Technology, Society, Connection, and Communication, which helped us find common ground. From there, we narrowed our focus to two main areas: Technology and Society. After some discussion, we chose to explore Society, as we were most interested in the social impacts of technology. This led to our initial challenge question: "Help people develop healthier relationships with technology in their daily lives." From this, we formed our Essential Question: "How does technology shape human behaviour?"

We were particularly interested in screen time addiction, especially in younger people, and decided to build a tool that supports healthier digital habits. From there, we came up with Unplugged an app to help reduce screen time using custom goals, reminders, and rewards. Our aim was to create a semi-functional prototype that showed our core values: personalisation, accountability, and community support. While there were some challenges, we made solid progress and the final product captures many of our original ideas.

Your Contributions in Context

My role in this project was primarily focused on the design and development of the app. I led the creation of four of the five screens in Swift: the Home, Progress, Advice and Settings pages. These pages are some of the core functionality of Unplugged, from the home page to the settings that allow users to customise their experience. I also redesigned the "Apps" page after Slim created the core to match the overall theme and user experience of the app. All development was done within Xcode using Swift, however some aspects of it required the use of dummy data due to API limitations.

During the initial phase of the app development I helped bring ideas to light and mapping out

how we wanted the app to function. I played a role in identifying recurring themes like Technology and Society, and I suggested several guiding questions that helped us explore how technology affects human behaviour. My input helped the team work together towards our final challenge statement: "Help teens and young adults create healthier screen time habits to reduce digital dependency and promote well-being."

For the design, I created several design prototypes including the early sketches, and high-fidelity prototypes which were made within Figma which can be seen in the portfolio. I also created the app icon, which symbolises disconnection from digital devices.

Aside from technical contributions, I helped shape the original concept alongside Slim, which included coming up with the original idea, refining the app's purpose and brainstorming core features like point system, app locking, AI integration, useful tips as well as progress and insights page. When Maximus had limited availability, I stepped into maintain progress and ensure the prototype remained functional and cohesive. Overall, my work played a major role in bringing our idea to life, even within the limits we faced.

Learning Journey & Skill Development

Throughout the process, I experienced significant personal and professional growth by adopting new tools, methods and mindsets. One of the most impactful shifts was moving from a technical or functional approach to making sure the design was focused on human centred design. At the start I mainly saw development as writing code and building interfaces, however the class lead me to think more critically about why people design applications in a certain way and how they impact users' real lives.

I came into the project with previous coding experience, but I had never worked with Swift or Xcode before. Learning Swift presented a lot of learning experiences, I picked up essential skills such as using models, functions as well as key UI skills to integrate SwiftUI components. Over time, I was able to confidently build four of the five app pages, with the assistance of AI for some of the harder aspects which greatly improved my understanding of mobile front end development.

I also gained hands on experience through Figma, which was my first time using the application. Which was essential for the prototyping of the designs quickly. Learning how to use design components, and pre-configured UI options by Apple development.

Aside from the tools, this project helped me learn how to approach problem solving. In previous experiences, I often worked independently with a strong focus on functionality. This project challenged me to consider not just what the app does, but how and why users interact with it. I had to think through what the steps that users would take when they first tapped on the app which changed the way I designed and coded the project.

Working closely with my team also helped me understand the value of collaboration. I was able to align my development work with the overall design and direction of the project, ensuring a seamless user experience. This collaborative environment pushed me to grow as both a developer and a designer, and it's a mindset I plan to carry forward in future projects.

Key Challenges & How You Addressed Them

Through the project I encountered several challenges that tested both my technical skills and project management approach. One of the major challenges was learning Swift from scratch. While I did have prior coding experience, adapting to SwiftUI's syntax and logic especially regarding UI elements was challenging at the start. At times I initially considered simplifying or removing the feature, but instead chose to learn through trial and error using documentation, tutorials, and AI assistance to overcome these hurdles. At times I struggled to implement features such as the development of app tracking, which required the integration of the use of Apple API, however we came to the realisation that due to Apple limitations it was not completely possible to do within the short time we had which if we focused on it would limit the quality that we could produce. I decided to work on smaller core features that directly supported our goal of helping young people build healthier screen time habits. This helped us stay on track and ensured we produced a prototype that was functional to a semi-functional prototype.

These moments of challenge taught me the importance of staying focused, being realistic about timelines, and embracing challenges as learning opportunities.

Impact of Collaboration

Working as a team had both its ups and downs for me, allowing me to see both the positive sides and the negative sides of working as a team, including the benefits and challenges. In the early stages our collective brainstorming and mapping out the app brought together various ideas from everyone, that helped form the foundation of Unplugged. I valued everyone's ideas and viewpoints, especially when it came to figuring out our final challenge statement and pinpoint what user needs were. However there was a dramatic change during the coding phase of the project due to limited contribution from Maximus which was made transparent to our tutors. I had to take the lead in integrating design decisions with the functional components of our prototype.

This led to me needing to bridge the gap between creative ideas and practical execution. While the ideas that everyone brought to the table were valued I had to make decisions on what we pushed to the development phase to make sure we stayed on track and aligned with our goals. It pushed me to take more responsibility and taught me the importance of staying on top of the project and clear communication with the team. This experience showed me that collaboration doesn't mean equal input from all members.

AI-engagement

AI was used throughout the project both in the planning and development phases of our project, and it became an important part of my work. In the early stages I used AI to assist with ideas, draft potential problem statements and assist with research that was then backed

up with factual research. This helped our team frame the challenge in a clearer way and explore different ideas that we may have not thought of on our own. For example I used AI to help offer different ideas that helped form key functions of the application.

During the development AI became more crucial. As I had prior coding experience but no background in Swift, I relied on tools like ChatGPT to explain unfamiliar concepts, provide code examples and help fix bugs in real time. I often used it when implementing more complex features like tracking screen time or structuring navigation between different app pages. It helped me break down large tasks into manageable steps and troubleshoot efficiently.

However, there were some limitations. AI didn't always give responses that were specific to SwiftUI, and some suggestions required tweaking or further research to fully work. I also found that overly relying on AI could slow me down if I didn't first try to solve the problem on my own. Over time, I learned to use AI as a support tool most helpful when I already had a clear goal and needed help getting there.

Future Directions & Personal Action Plan

If I had another sprint I would focus on refining the tracking feature to better work with Apple, especially the way it records and visualises screen time. This was one of the more challenging parts of the development and while I made progress there still room for improvement in terms of accuracy and user experience. I would also like to spend more time in testing the app with real users to gather feedback and make it more user friendly and work together.

From this project, I'll take with me a greater understanding of user focused design and how to build with purpose, not just to have a function to have a function. I've gained confidence working with SwiftUI which I had no experience with before. Most importantly, I've learnt how to take initiative, manage uneven workloads, and adapt to different team dynamics all of which are vital in professional environments.

Conclusion

The most important takeaway from this project was to design with the user in mind, not just building for functionality. This shift in thinking from coding as a purely technical task to understanding how digital products shape real work behaviour has changed the view that I have for a developer. It's no longer just about writing clean code, but also about creating solutions that are meaningful and usable. This experience has made me more thoughtful and intentional in my approach, and I'll carry that mindset into future work, knowing that good design is just as important as good code.