

DESIGN PROBLEM RESPONSE

UX
GROUP



Gujie Dai s3801333

7

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

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 **Critika/Criti**.

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.

PROJECT BRIEF

Existing digital review platforms have become homogenous and overwhelming. The project entails creating a straight-forward and exciting platform to review movies, tv shows and games in order to create a more streamlined experience for users.

This platform is aimed at young people who are avid about getting their information online, and while we're eager to create the best solution possible, there are a number of restrictions on us.

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.

PROBLEM?

PROBLEM

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The problem we've encountered is that most review platforms are so saturated with information that they have become overwhelming, while encouraging little interaction within the community. This includes most platforms having one-sided discussions that lead to a lack of audience engagement. These platforms often include unnecessary information such as plots, theory and news, deviating from their original purpose of providing quality reviews, and as a result, the majority of review platforms follow similar layouts and have the same issues:

- Poor optimisation for desktop
- Intentionally placed ads that confuses viewers
- Clutter and unnecessary features
- Lack of audience engagement.

We are striving to create an online review platform that creates a sense of community and is driven by user interaction. We believe that review websites can be more meaningful when there is a wide scope of people giving their opinion and contributing to discussions. When users are able to share diverse opinions and engage in meaningful conversation.

Possible solutions for our problem include:

- Discussion or forum feature that allows users to interact with other user reviews
- Anti-spoiler system, allowing users to filter out reviews that include spoilers
- Reward system for review writers to encourage user interaction, including community-awarded 'badges' and featured reviews
- Improved audio/visual experience and micro interactions.

There are however constraints on our project. The major one is the time and scope given to engage in research and design the prototypes. It is possible that some elements of our solution may need to be abandoned. Card picking would be the optimal solution were this to occur. Limited technical support may be another restriction as there is a small team of four people.

Our original brief involved the question of how to produce a review platform that is simple, clear and appealing. Through analysing the problem in front of us and reframing the question, our solution still fits within the context of the original question.

RESEARCH

Technology/Platform

Most review platforms exist as websites, with some providing reviews both on the web and through an app – all need an internet connection to be accessed. A few platforms exist as YouTube channels, providing reviews in video format. Some of the common features between platforms are:

- More focused on ranking than reviews
- Review sites often include news – is this necessary?
- Movies tab is clunky to use, does not immediately provide information desired
- Follow mobile-first scrolling format
- Review platforms often have a similar page format. Usually starts with a summary/description. Big video player of the trailer almost acts as a photo cover.

Audience spectrum

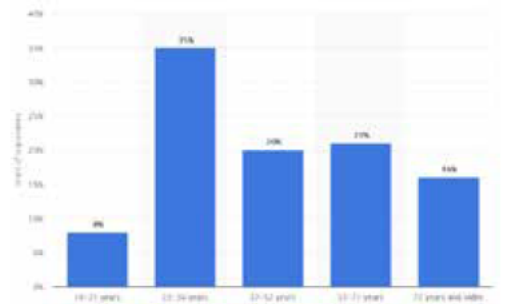
The dominant internet users are individuals aged in the early 20s to late 30s. Among this age group, we are catering towards people who:

Love films/games

Are willing to take participate in discussions

Are searching for information about films/games as entertainment.

Percentage of worldwide offline population as of February 2020, by age group



Existing products

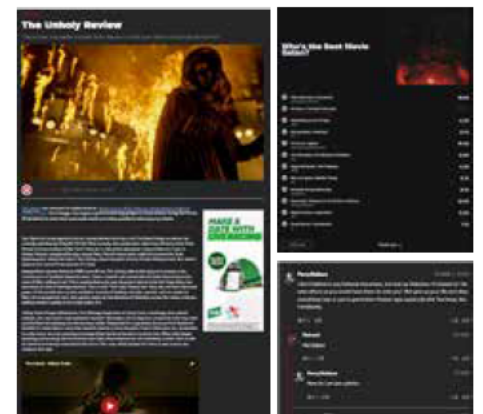
1. Rotten Tomatoes

- Icon changes for different scores – good visual communication
- User and critic reviews lead to more diverse ratings, but can also cause confusion.



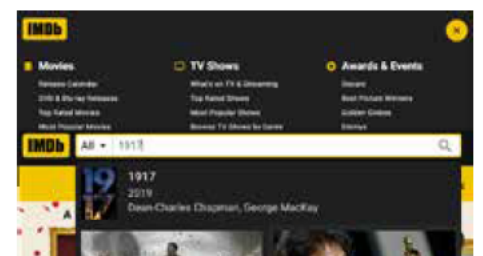
2. IGN

- Homepage is simple but not visually engaging
- Professional critics write review articles; the content is in-depth, provides a lot of information
- Poll at the end of each article – improves engagement
- Comments included on articles, which enables and encourages conversation
- Heavy news focus.



3. IMDb

- Detailed drop menu, showing the available services
- Customizable watch list, encourages users to sign in
- Search bar is quick and sorts information incredibly well.



RESEARCH

4. Douban Films

- Cast and their other works are listed in photo gallery style.
- Search function allows users to find movies based on artists
- Annual film list, presenting popular films in that year in a semi-narrative way.



5. Steam

- Visualisation of ratings based on a timeline provides insights into how players' opinions change over time.
- In-depth user reviews, displaying hours in a game. A clear summary of user scores, number of reviews, etc.
- Differentiates all reviews with recent ones to indicate changes and updates to the game.

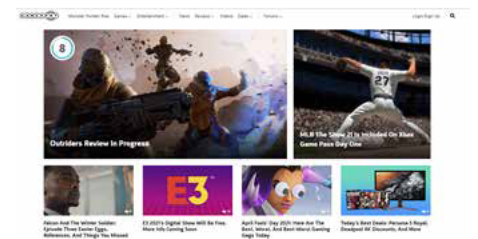


6. Gamespot

- Easy to digest layout and straight-forward
- Reader discussion is also present in the article.

7. Metacritic

- Synopsis included beside review score
- Viewers can browse by which platform a game is on
- On-screen live comments provide a lot more engagement than comments below the video.



Insights

Review platforms often fail to create an engaging experience, littering the site with news, plot and other features unrelated to the review itself. They often feel like magazines or newspapers adapted to the web, lacking the interactivity that makes the internet an incredible place. Layouts are often functional over engaging, cramming content onto the page with no thought as to how the user interacts with it. Our challenge as such, is to utilise everything digital technologies and the web have to offer, to craft a more engaging and enriching review experience.

Typical review platforms' layouts:



Try to remediate from newspaper to web:



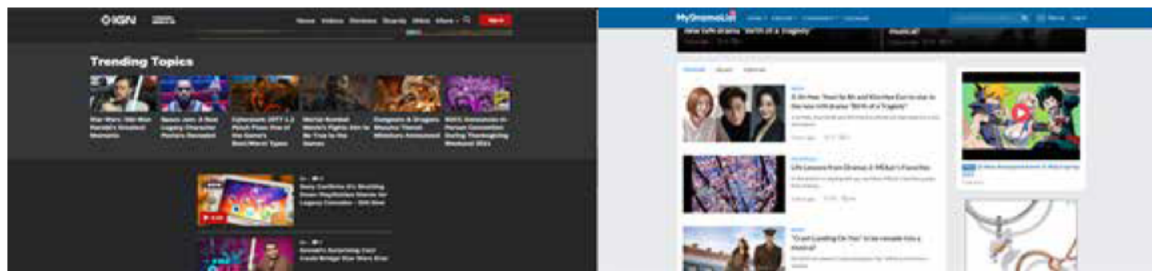
SOLUTIONS

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Based on our research, we propose a more streamlined review platform with a heavy emphasis on community interaction. The details of our solution may change based on user surveys and interviews that will be conducted in early stages of development.

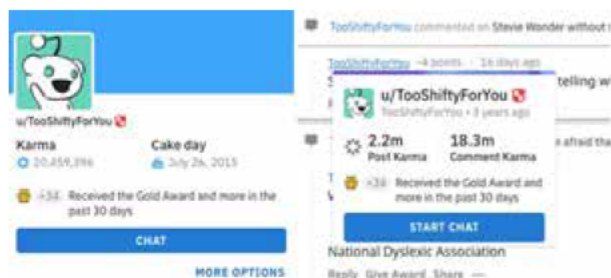
Review-only Platform

As the title suggests, this platform will focus heavily on reviews. While it will have some other engaging features, reviews will always be the priority. Our research suggests that most popular review platforms stray away from review content, often including unrelated articles and excessive information.



Community Reviewed

We propose a solution in which reviews can be submitted by anyone who has watched/played the relevant titles. Each user can participate in a review by making their own or judging others, while each comment will be put into a post under the intended titles. Other users may rate the review by giving it likes or dislikes, and we're considering how to best implement a commenting/discussion function.



Overall the layout will be inspired by forum sites like reddit. In a sense, this website would be a social media for reviewers, with users able to follow and look at each other's reviews from their user page.

SOLUTIONS

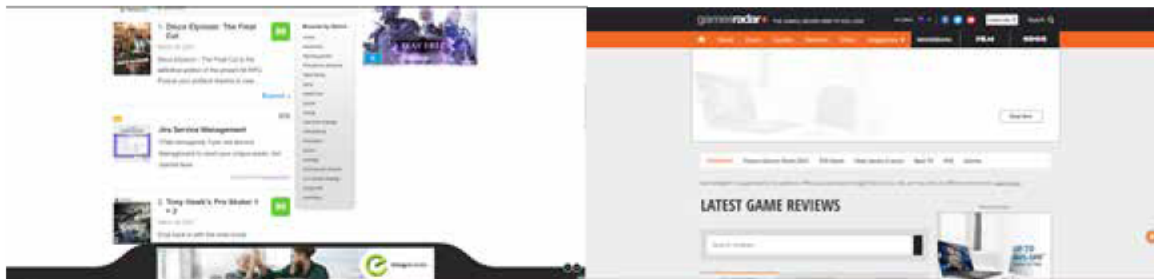
Another system we are taking into consideration is the “badge of honor” for the most contributing users. An example of this will be reddit’s karma system. Users would be able to get ‘karma’ if their post gets a highly positive rating. The more karma points they get the higher they will be regarded in the community. We imagine this system would be very helpful to filter reviews while encouraging user contribution. A report function would be implemented to flag offensive reviews for moderator consideration.

Discussion Forum

A community based platform has to include a space for discussion. This space is useful for users who are looking for recommendations and opinions, and would also be useful for discussing theories and news. The discussion forum is important to keeping the community alive, making the website more engaging and encouraging users to contribute.

De-cluttered Prototype

We found most of the platforms we reviewed look cluttered. Many of the review thumbnails are combined with ads, with some ads even taking up half of the main page, pushing core content down.



Though we understand that ads are important to a website’s perseverance, their layout often confuses the user. Whether confusing layout is intentional or not, it is a turn-off to some users including us, and as such, we plan on creating a visual-focused interface for the main page.

Ultimately, our solutions have to cater towards audience needs, which is why a test prototype is needed. Based on surveys and interviews, we will create low and high fidelity prototypes for user testing, with the goal of making the user feel engaged and encouraged to contribute to the website. We aim to create an efficient and intuitive interface that users should immediately understand how to interact with. The colour and interface design should attract the user’s eyes to important features, and should ads be placed in the pages, they should not interfere with core content.

ACCESS

MEASURING SUCCESS

Although constant referral to the brief is important, it is not enough in determining success. Success can be interpreted differently for everyone and can not simply be verified internally. Therefore, it is essential that we properly define success and partake in usability testing to see if users' experiences align with our definitions.

Think Aloud Protocol

The think aloud protocol entails recording the thoughts and expectations of users while they are using the prototype. Then, evaluating the results to see if our goals have been achieved and the brief has been met. It is most important to question if the audience themselves believe it is successful. We can receive qualitative feedback from the audience instead of relying on the opinions of our team only. Valuable questions that can be asked or have answered through the process is whether it feels engaging and comfortable to use, whether users want to contribute. We can also use the information we gather to conclude if our prototype is demonstrative of insights gained from surveys and interviews. Our conclusions from this test may be validated with usability metrics.

Usability Metrics

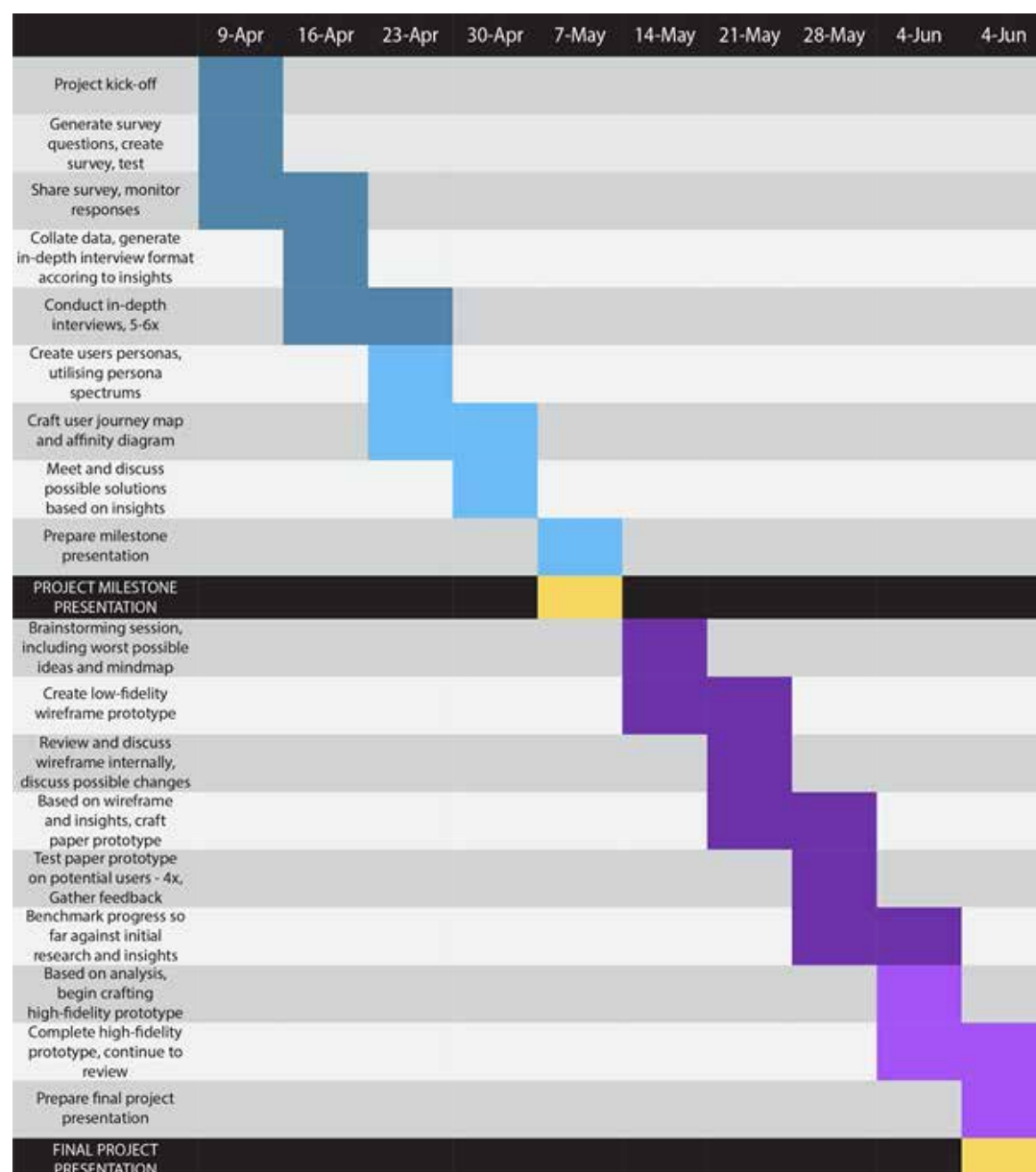
Usability metrics involves using quantifiable standards of measurements to establish if a goal has been achieved. There will be at least one usability metric for effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction.

1. Effectiveness refers to the precision it takes for users to complete specific tasks and the completion rate
2. Efficiency assesses resources applied in relation to the precision it takes for users to achieve goals. It can be measured using the overall relative efficiency, that is, the ratio of the time taken by the users to accomplish a task against the total time by all users.
3. Satisfaction can be defined by ease and likeability of use. A measure of this may be a questionnaire such as the task level satisfaction which asks people to rate the difficulty of a task after a task attempt to see the overall perspective of users. Another option is test level satisfaction which is given after a test session to evaluate the comfortability of the prototype.

We believe that by meeting these usability metrics, we will have designed a solution that is accurate to user needs and wants. It can't be fun and engaging if it's not effective, efficient or satisfactory.

Overall, our project can only be successful if users are willing to use the product and that can only be known before release through usability testing.

TIMELINE



BIBLIOGRAPHY

GamesRadar+ n.d., gamesradar, viewed 4 April 2021, <<https://www.gamesradar.com/au/>>.

IMDb - Movies, TV and Celebrities 2008, IMDb.

Justin Mifsud 2018, *Usability Metrics - A Guide To Quantify The Usability Of Any System* - *Usability Geek*, Usability Geek.

Laksana, J 2020, *What is Reddit karma, and how do people benefit from having more of it?* - Quora, www.quora.com, viewed 4 April 2021, <<https://www.quora.com/What-is-Reddit-karma-and-how-do-people-benefit-from-having-more-of-it>>.

Metacritic - Movie Reviews, TV Reviews, Game Reviews, and Music Reviews 2019, Metacritic.com, Metacritic.

Organize, Discuss, Discover Asian Dramas & Movies - *MyDramaList* n.d., mydramalist.com.

reddit 2019, reddit.

Rotten Tomatoes: Movies | TV Shows | Movie Trailers | Reviews 2008, Rotten Tomatoes.

Steam Store Page 2021, Steam.

Video Game News, Reviews, and Walkthroughs - *IGN* n.d., www.ign.com.

Video Games Reviews & News - *GameSpot* 2019, GameSpot, GameSpot.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

It is striking how much ideation and research a UX designer need to do before get hands on detailed design. A good UX design really takes a lot of effort; and differs from an artwork, it's almost only can be a teamwork, nobody can do UX alone. That makes collaboration extremely important; more people can bring more insights, also can cause inefficiency. So more communication counts; being positive, relaxing but conscientious also matters.