

Case study: Nyx Musician App

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Project overview



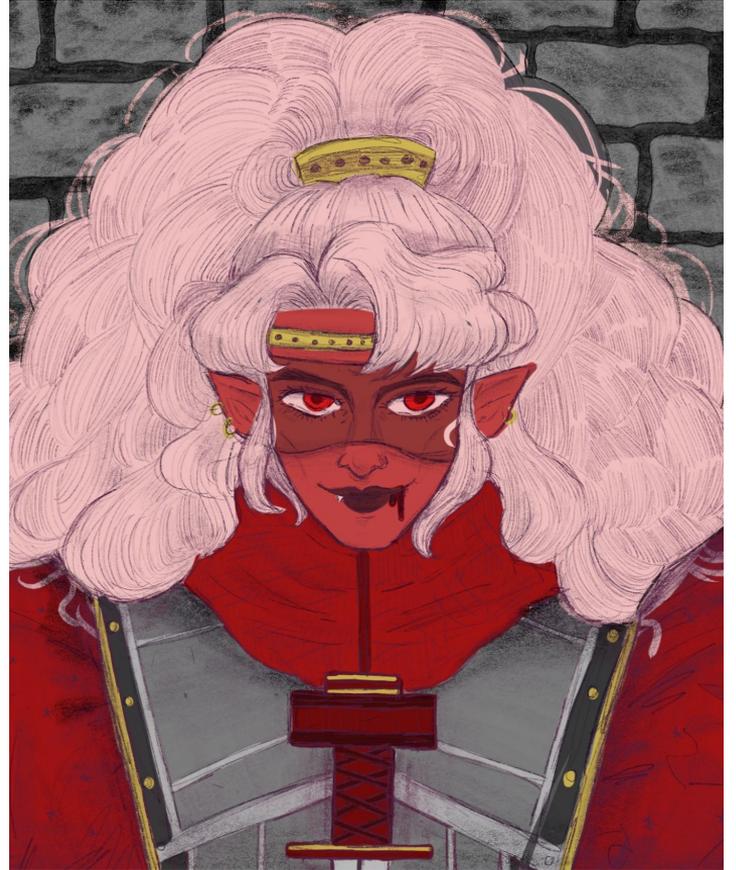
The product: Nyx Musician App

The product is an app for the trendy musician Nyx, including their music, livestreams, tour blogs, and so forth. Users would be the existing fanbase as well as any new fans interested in the artist.



Project duration: Five Months

May - September 2022



Finished concept art of the Musician, "Nyx".

Project overview



The problem:

Create an app for the trendy musician Nyx that reflects their style of music and content, while also being accessible and functional for all users.



The goal:

Create an app that oozes of personality like their competitors Magdalena Bay and Glass Animals, while making an app that is straightforward and accessible to users of most backgrounds and abilities.

Project overview



My Role:

Multiple Roles: Lead UX designer, UX researcher, Character Designer, Writer and Editor.



Responsibilities:

User research, wireframing, prototyping, and so forth.

Creating the Musician

'Nyx': Concept Art

- Character sketches
- Similar Musicians Research
- Final Character Designs
- Color Palette and Music

Initial Concept Art and Ideas:

When I was drawing the initial sketches for Nyx, I knew that I wanted something that was trending in online social media spaces like TikTok, Spotify, Youtube, and so on.

It was from this research that I saw a focus in hyper-femininity being a trend in both fashion and music. People are more interested in fantasy than ever. It was from this research that I decided to reference artists like David Bowie, Harry Styles, and Grimes to create some base sketches. I wanted this artist to be a male performing artist that harked back to the hair band days with a modern twist.





Final Concept Art

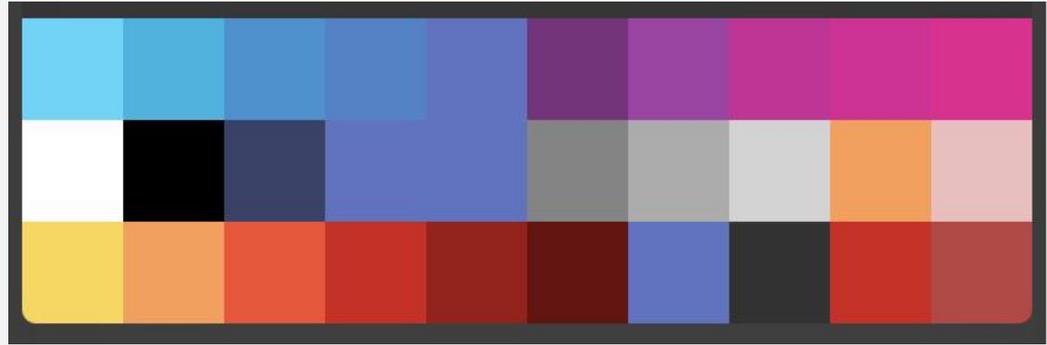
The final sketches were a combination of David Bowie's fashion sense with a similar art style akin to Ayama Kojima, a character designer known for her work in the Castlevania games. Her art embodies the concept of a hyper-fem man and the female-gaze. All art above has been finished to be used for the prototype of the Nyx App.

Other Elements Considered:

Along with character design and the kind of audience Nyx would attract, I also did research on color palettes, typography, and the music genre Nyx would cater to.

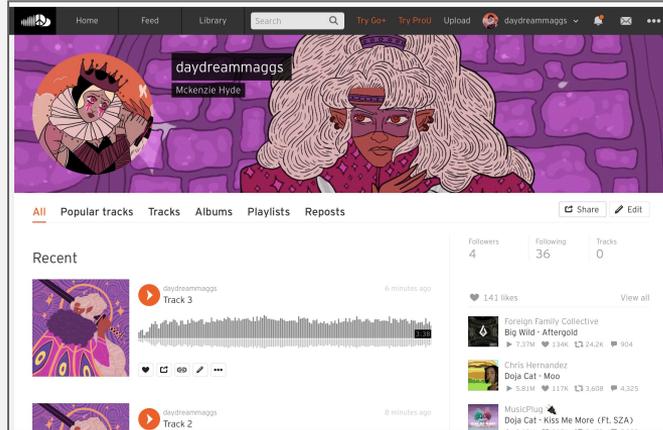
Part of the process was to also create adaptive music throughout the app. When the app is finished, the user would be able to feel fully immersed in the vision of the artist, inspired by the artists' Magdalena Bay and Porter Robinson. Examples tracks are linked to the right on Soundcloud.

The typography was also important to create. It needed to feel similar to fonts used in early blogs of the internet, while still setting itself apart from them.



Adaptive Music Examples:

https://soundcloud.com/maggie-hyde-9795278?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing



Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: Summary



Music flows through my genes, being the daughter of two classically trained pianists. So I started where I knew best; interviewing my family about issues they have had with music apps, and what they would like to see replicated.

From there, I took those initial informal interviews, and built on them with asking friends and my partner, then researching online forums of the same nature.

It was from this research that I was able to create a list of common concerns, plusses, and added features that would set my app apart from the rest on the market.

User research: pain points

1

Unreliable downloaded content

Similar music-focused apps on the marketplace have unreliable downloaded content, that will randomly delete at unexpected intervals. My app will give the user control over this aspect.

2

Similar apps not available abroad

Competitors app's are not available abroad, so it makes it difficult for fans in other countries to support their favorite artist. App will need to be available in multiple countries and translations available.

3

Difficult to find the issues and complaints page

Competitors apps make it incredibly difficult to reach anyone for questions or concerns relating to the app. This app will need to make it much easier to find this section in app.

4

Icons are too small or inconvenient while at job

Very few apps have settings that are compatible for driving or other similar positions, and it's difficult to find this setting. App must make this easier for users.

Persona: Justin Case

Problem statement:

Justin Case is a night shift pilot who needs reliable offline content for entertainment because they fly/travel often in lives/places without wifi/4G. If the app downloads new content or deletes per user request, then Justin can trust the app to be a reliable source of entertainment in the sky.



Justin Case [he/him]

Age: 35

Education: Associate Degree

Hometown: Portland, Oregon

Family: Partner

Occupation: Pilot

“Being stranded in the sky without any music is a nightmare. It would be nice to have a reliable app that always has something to do offline.”

Goals

- Justin would like an app where it would be possible to automatically download new content when available.
- He would also like the app to include new content regularly. Otherwise has no interest to keep using app.
- Would like to be able to like and dislike content.

Frustrations

- “Similar music apps will delete downloaded content when updating without a notification”
- “My apps won’t recognize downloaded content”
- “A lot of apps lag and take too much space on my phone.”

Justin is a pilot who regularly works night shifts at his airline. Due to the long hours, delays, and layovers, he uses his phone quite a bit downloading music, tv shows, and games. Because of this, he would like an app that would regularly download content automatically. He dislikes when apps take too much space on phone. Justin has a particular fascination with VH1 from the late 80s and the Myspace, and likes to follow similar movements online.

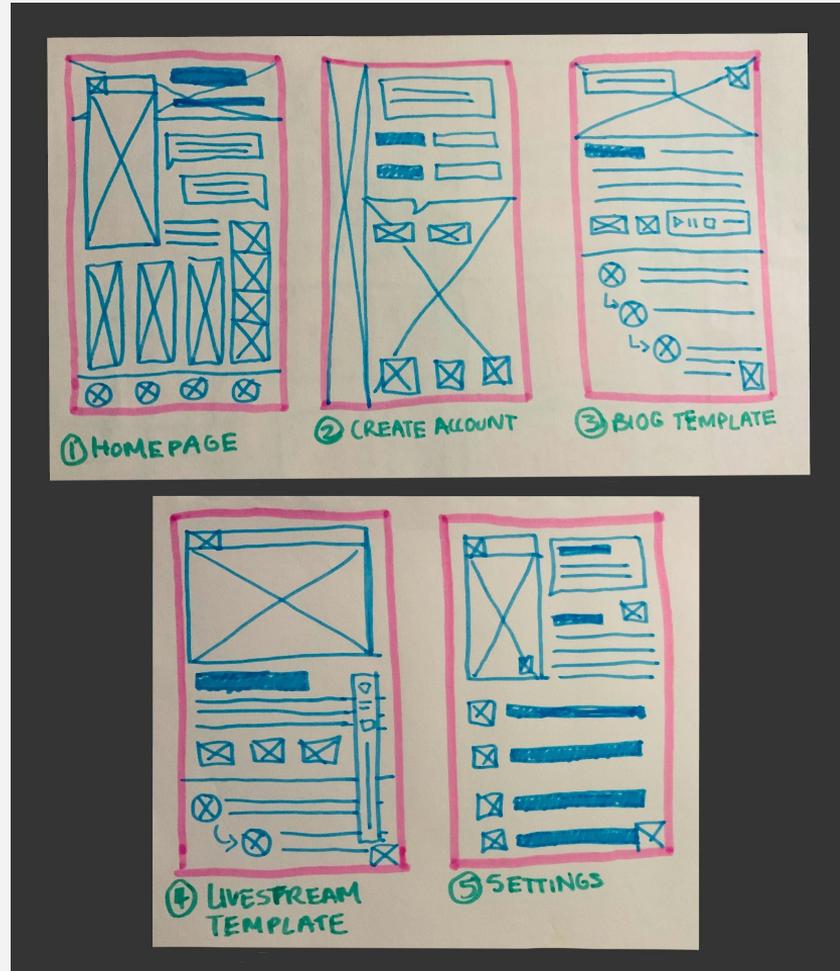
User journey map

To the right is Justin Time's User Journey. I wanted to mostly focus on the lack of offline content, as it is a common issue with media-focused apps. Major apps were criticized in the initial research for this issue, so I used their responses to inform the User Journey. Details about Justin's career were fact-checked by my partner who is a full-time commercial pilot. I used this User Journey to empathize with my future user's concerns about the app, but also be able to set my limitations. In the initial phase of my app, I was wanting to include far too many features. This process helped me understand my limitations, and which features were the most necessary to work on in my prototype.

Persona: Justin Time Goal: App automatically downloads content for offline use during layovers and work hours. App manages itself with little intervention.					
ACTION	Prepare for Work	Fly (work) to location	Layover	Fly (work) back to home	Relax at home
TASK LIST	A. Check phone as they wake up for messages and news. B. Put on uniform, pack suitcase. C. Drive to work, listen to music and podcasts.	A. Go through the airport to airplane location. B. Take off from location. C. Listen to media on phone and watch movies.	A. Check for updates relating to weather at location and plane. B. Take a short nap.	A. Take off from location. B. Continue listening to media on phone and watch movies.	A. Submit paperwork relating to flight. B. Check for location flying to next day, weather, and look for content to download.
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Fatigued from odd sleep schedule. Rushed to get ready and go to work.	Preoccupied on making sure plane is ready by filling out paperwork, fueling, and feeling the plane. Focused when flying, bored with lack of content.	Focused on making sure weather and plane is alright. Concerned with finding a good wifi signal to redownload content.	Content while flying, angry as content has not loaded correctly on phone and is left without adequate entertainment again.	Fatigued from another long work day. Tired and wants to destress, but need to do chores and get ready for next day.
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	App gives push notifications about any updates and what content was downloaded/ removed. Notification would include a vibration for those hard of hearing, and be in a simple sans serif font for those with dyslexia or other similar impairments.	App would have the ability to draft comments to blog posts that would post later with wifi/4G. App would also readily have new streams, music, and articles ready to listen to and read.	If there is a slow connection, app will revert to a simpler design and request changes in content downloaded/deleted from user for ease of mind.	User would be content with previous changes. Make sure app is optimized for flying with the ability to switch to a simplified media player.	App can be silenced for push notifications so that user can destress and relax.

Paper wireframes

At this stage of the project, I was focused on how the features of the app (home button, music player, clickable buttons) would work in tandem with visuals that I had begun designing. I tend to think in imagery and fluidity, not shapes and rigid lines, so it was quite the challenge to change my approach to the process. Many sketches were completed to create a paper wireframe that was balancing the line between fun and practical design. Something that would be rather appropriate for a trendy musician.

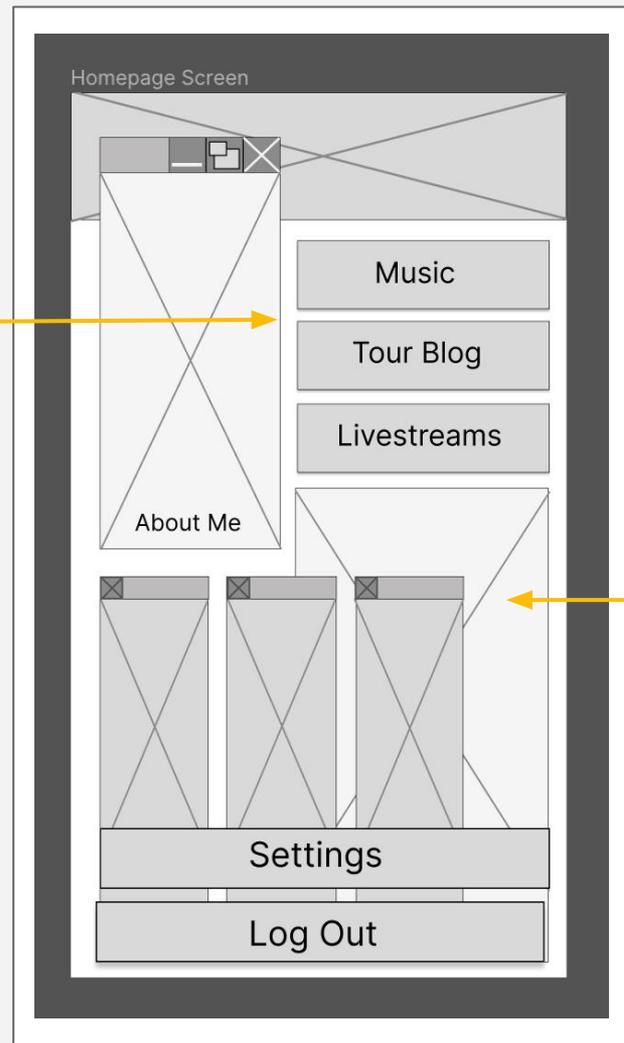


Digital wireframes

As of the previous step of paper wireframes, translating the paper wireframes to Figma was a learning curve. I used the school prompt to play with the features and then refined them to creating a wireframe that was direct and fun.

The screen to the right is the homepage, and the first screen that I tackled of many to come. I wanted the homepage screen to emulate the style of the 2000s internet, but shrunk down to the size of a phone screen.

The buttons to all major pages users will use is in the center of the screen.

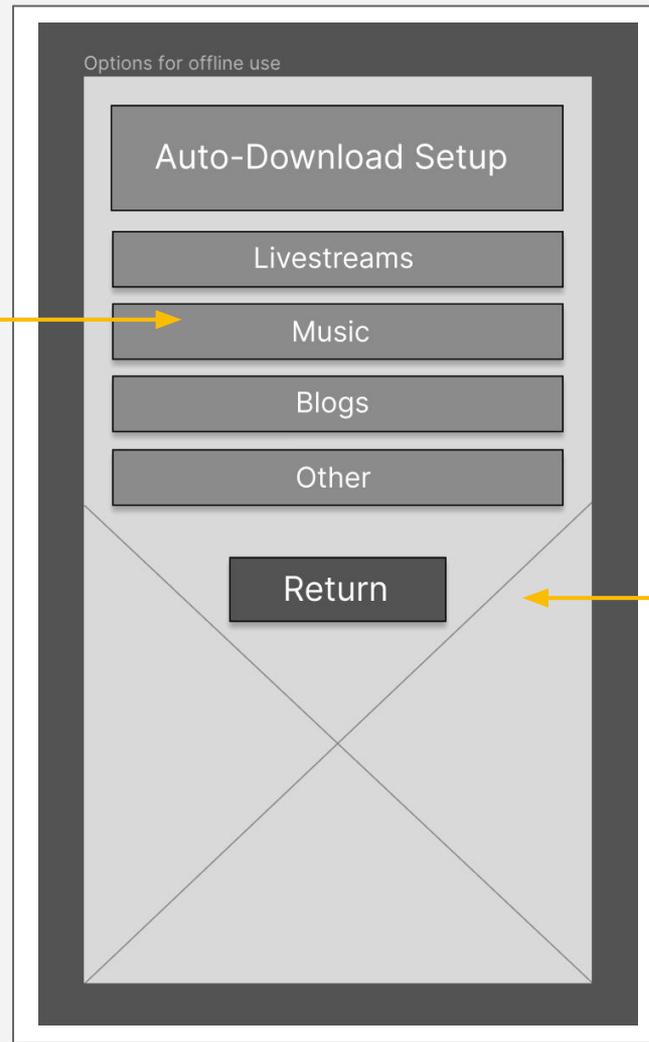


The lower "pages" will be joke ads that will take users to games, merch, and so forth. Users can close out the ads, and will open new ones in the process.

Digital wireframes

Creating the Settings page was also crucial to the app's prototype, however simple. Auto-Download settings was one of the central goals to solve in the development process, so I created this page in line with the needs of potential users who would like to use the app offline. I will wait for user feedback to make any changes as necessary, but for the moment, the screen will be kept simple.

Users can select each part of the app and customize it to their own preferences.



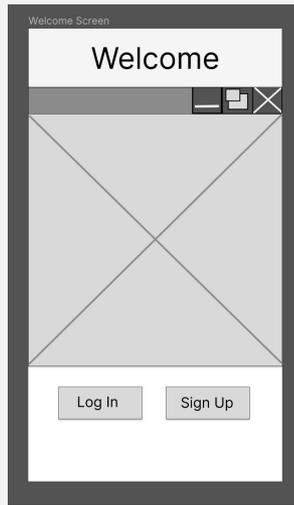
User can return quickly once done deciding what to do with the preferences.

Complete Sign Up/Log In Process

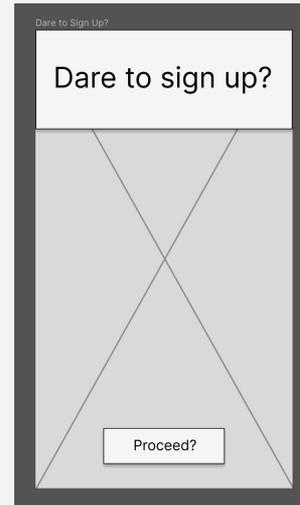
Sign-Up/Log-In:

1. Welcome
2. Proceed
3. Sign-Up Details
4. Return
4. Log-In
5. Home

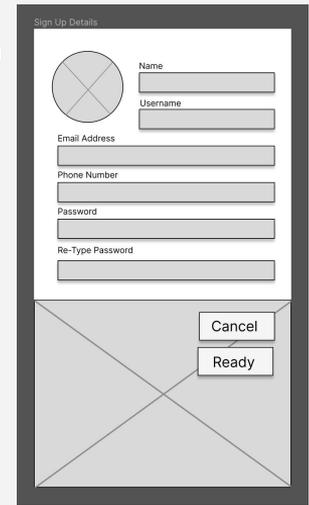
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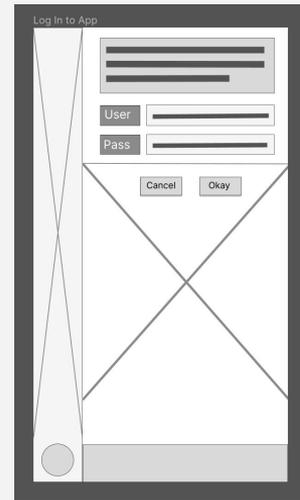
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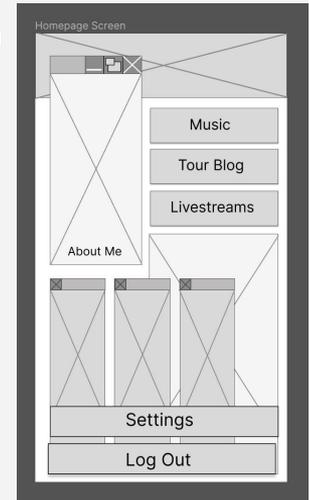
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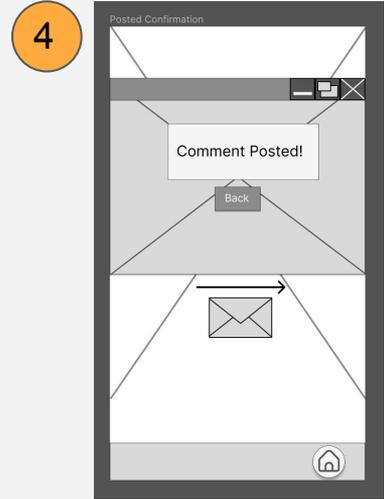
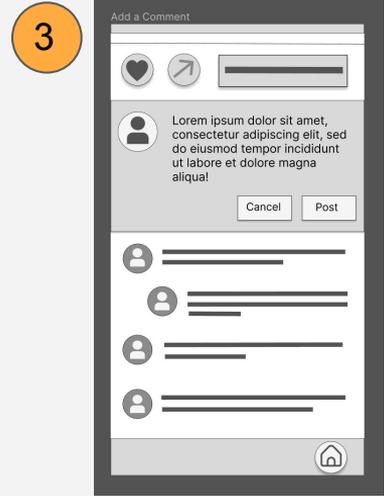
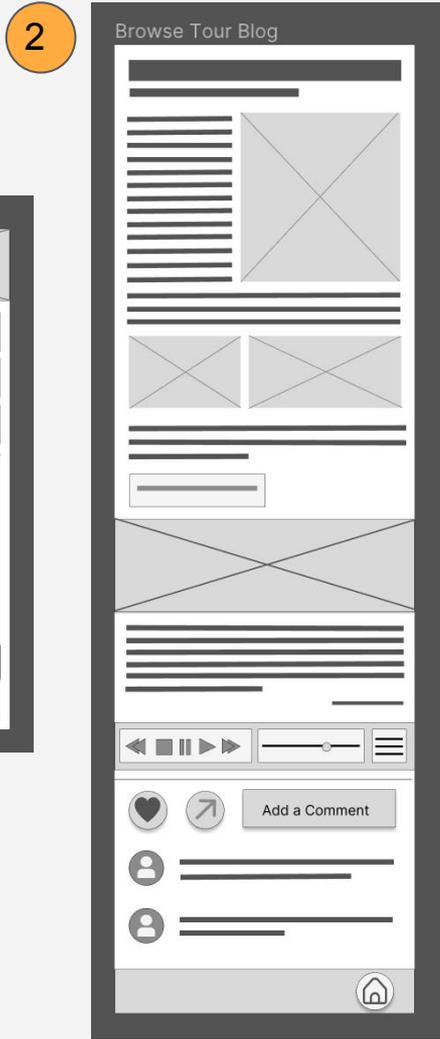
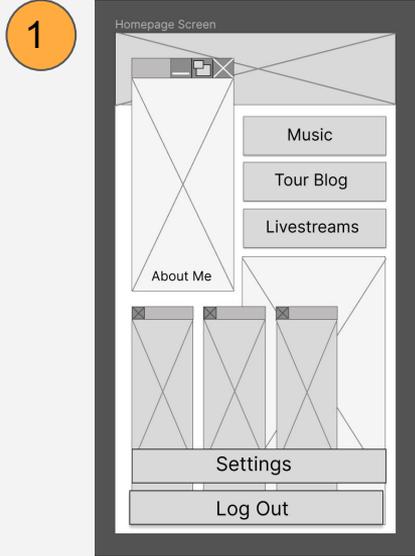
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Post a Comment Process

Add a Comment:

1. Home
2. Tour Blog
3. Add a Comment
4. Posted
5. Return
6. Home



Music and Livestreams Pages

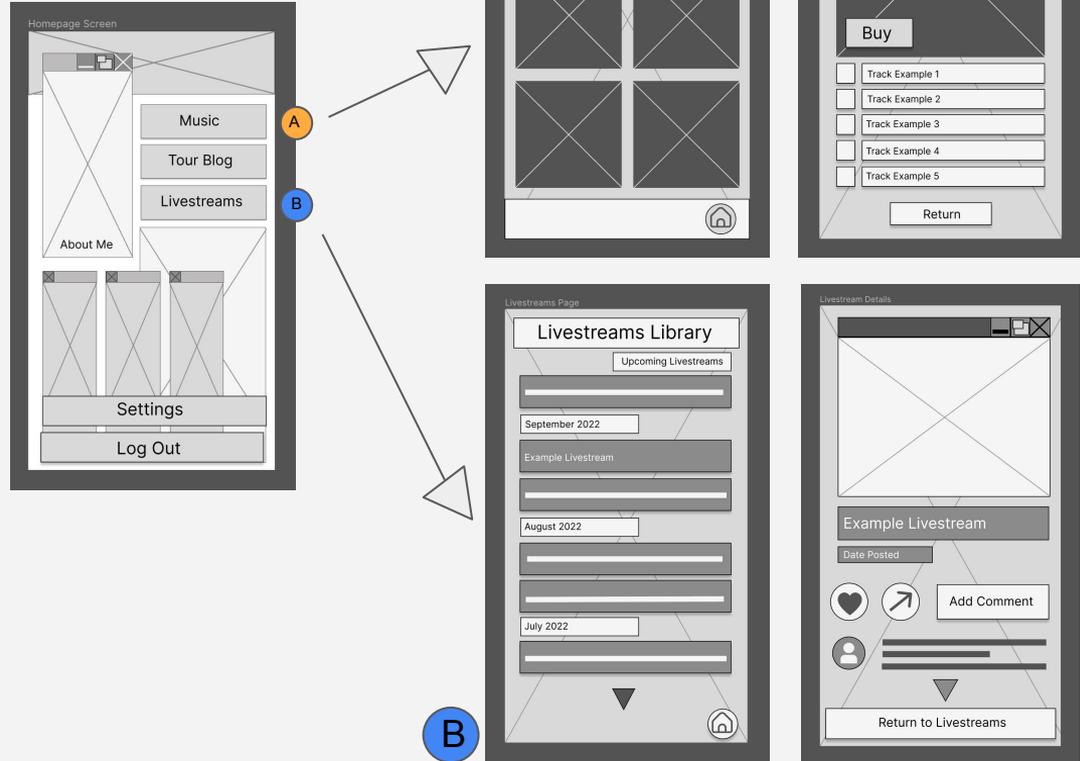
Browse Pages:

A Route

1. Home
2. Music
3. Album
4. Music
5. Home

B Route

6. Livestreams
7. Specific Livestream
8. Livestreams
9. Home



Low-fidelity prototype

Link to low-fidelity prototype:

<https://www.figma.com/file/zVMEqJq29nrdK8t1n1o1P/Nyx-Musician-App?node-id=0%3A1>

User Flow:

Sign-Up/Log-In: Welcome>Proceed>Sign-Up

Details>Return>Log-In>Home

Add a Comment:

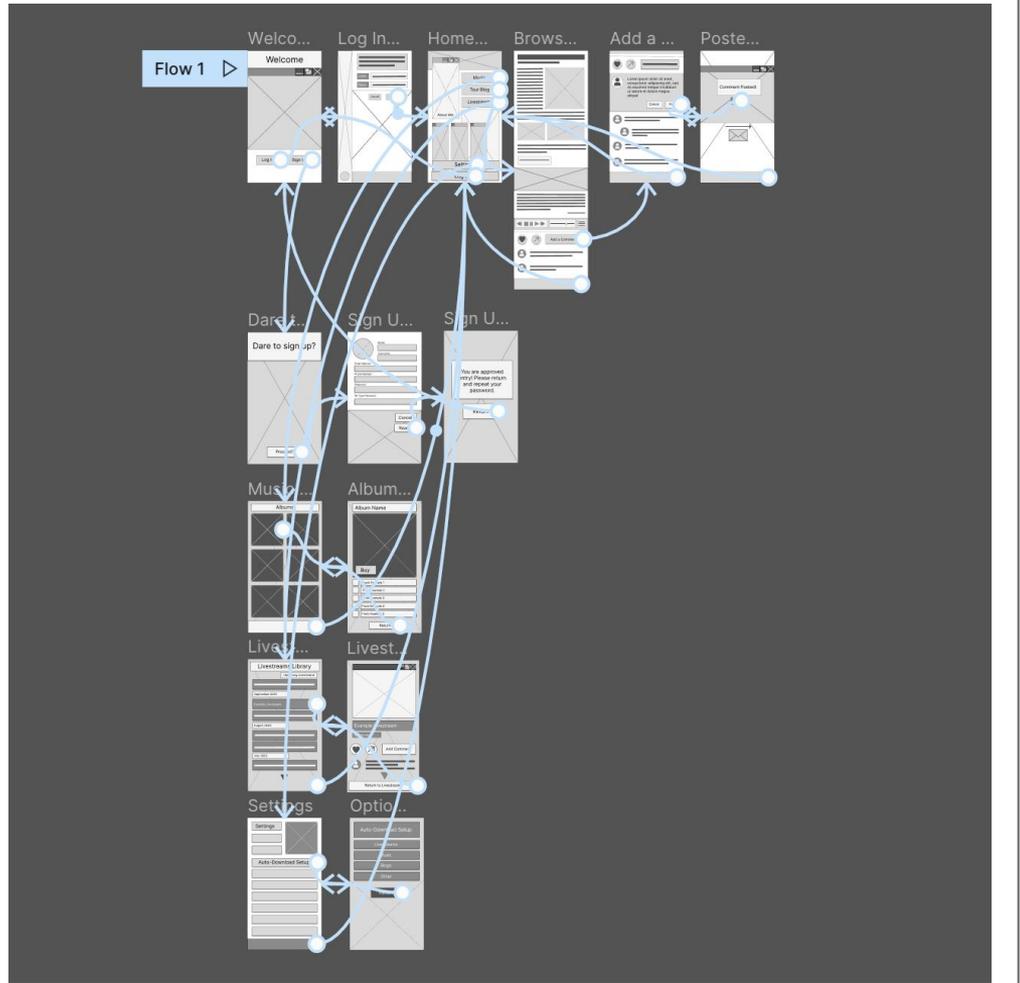
Home>Tour Blog>Add a
Comment>Posted>Return>Home

Browse Pages:

Home>Music>Album>Music>Home>Livestreams>S
pecific Livestream>Livestreams>Home

Settings:

Home>Settings> Auto-Download
Settings>Settings>Home



Usability study: findings

Throughout the process of designing this app, I conducted two usability studies. The first study was to test the navigation of the app, and what adjustments to make before adding the art, media, and all of the above. The second usability study was used to see what needed to be refined in the high-fidelity prototype.

Round 1 findings

- 1 Users struggled with the login and logout process.
- 2 Users were unsure when to scroll on pages.
- 3 Users wanted the auto-download settings page expanded upon.

Round 2 findings

- 1 Users were concerned about the lack of accessibility considerations
- 2 Users found the art style to be far too varied, and want consistency.

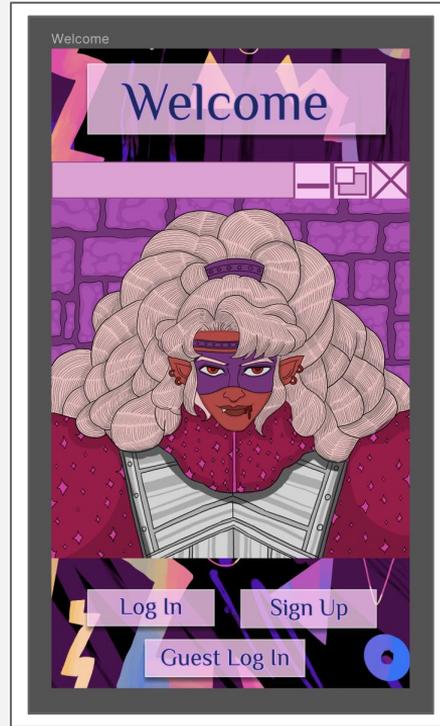
Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

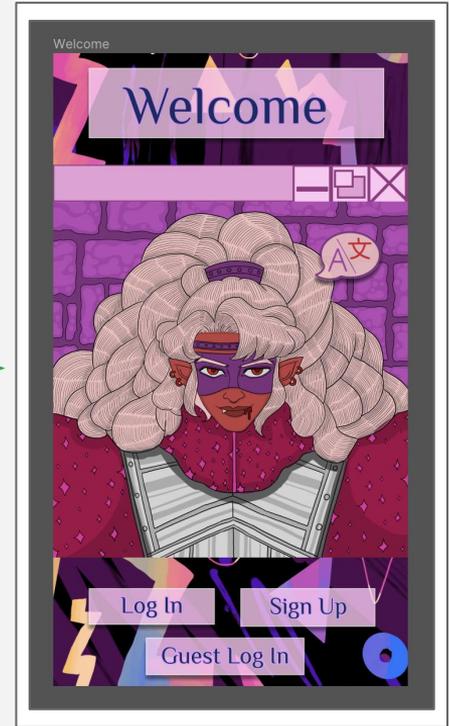
Mockups

Test users in the second study expressed concern over the usability of the app, especially from the accessibility point of view. The app now features the ability to change preferred language, as well as the ability to listen to articles for the visually impaired. These small changes should make the process of proceeding through the app easier for more users in the future.

Before usability study 2



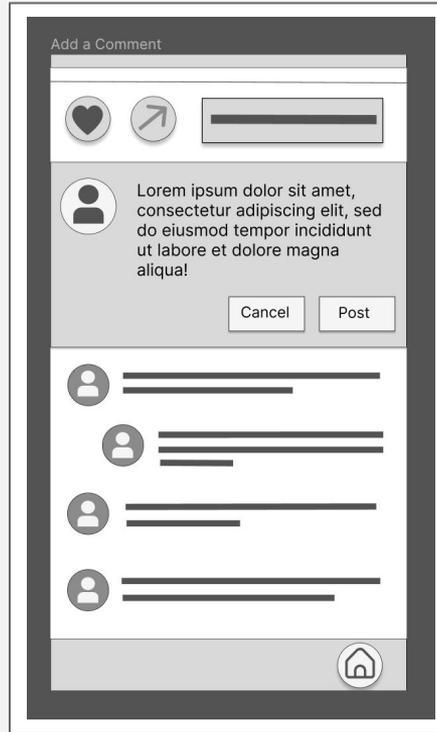
After usability study 2



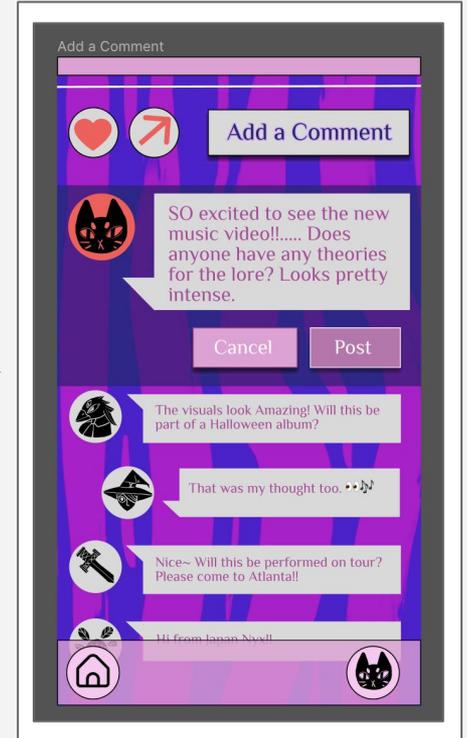
Mockups

A lot of the process when creating the high fi prototype was to create all of the art and refine the designs of the prototype. This can include the bright 80s disco wallpaper to the personalized icons for users, and making sure the comments and important buttons still stayed the focus on the page. It was quite the balancing act! However, this process breathed life into the otherwise grey and vague low-fi prototype.

Before usability study



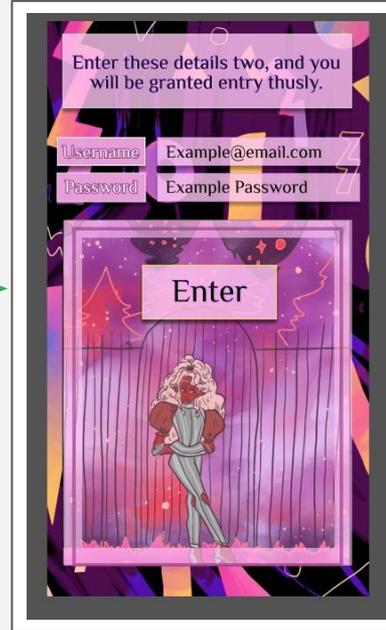
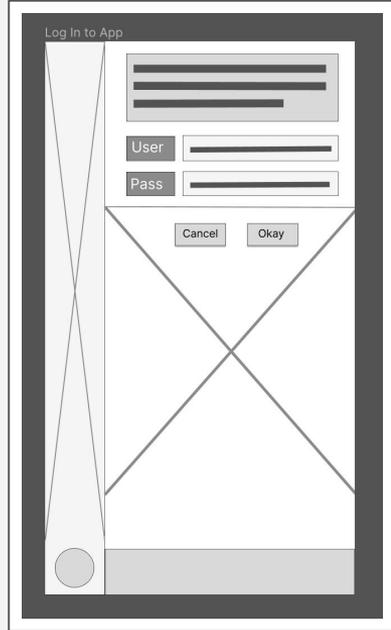
After usability study



Mockups

The sign up screen was the most difficult screen to design throughout the process. The initial low-fi prototype was too complicated, and used too much dead space. When creating the first iteration of the high-fi prototype I tried to fix that, but then the page was too cluttered. The art wasn't quite right either. The final prototype is on the far right, using a gif in the background and using dead space to an advantage by simplifying the layout.

Before usability study

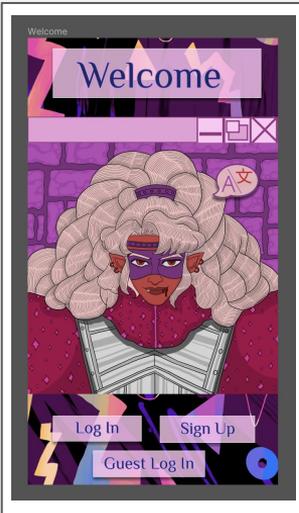


After usability study



Mockups

Welcome



Sign In



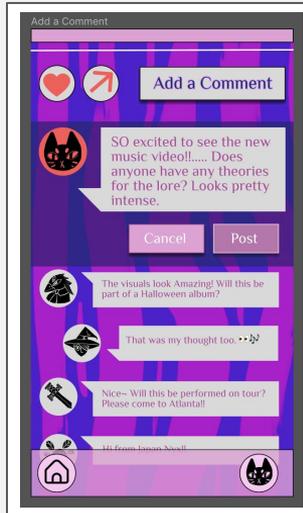
Homepage



Tour Blog



Add comment



Confirmation



As seen through the prototype, the 80s was constantly referenced in a way that feels fresh and new, from the colors to the kitsch patterns to the design of the character. I also wanted the blog to look as if the artist designed it himself. So I wanted it to not appear as polished, reminiscent of early internet web pages and blogs on Tumblr and MySpace.

I made sure to maximize on color and patterns as well, fitting in with the artist's main demographic: Gen Z. Maximalism is the focus of interior design, fashion, and make-up trends online. I want Nyx to feel keyed in to the trends, and be an inspiration on how art will proceed forward in the 2020s.

Accessibility considerations

1

Instead of relying on text to speech, each tour blog article includes a recording of the article for visually impaired.

2

I myself am red green colorblind, so I wanted to increase the saturation and color to make everything pop without creating vibrating borders. Often low saturation/ minimalist palettes can be hard on the eyes for colorblind users.

3

The app, as requested from the start, has options to translate both the articles, a subtitles on streams, but also comments for those who speak/read/understand english as a second language.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

The app is a fun and creative way for the musician Nyx to interact and share their work with their fans, irregardless of borders or wireless connectivity.

“ A lot of apps nowadays are so minimalistic and cold. I like the creativity in the design, how the app flows from screen to screen. It never fails to surprise me!”



What I learned:

Being primarily designer before this project, I learned how much data and analytics goes into understanding the users. From personas to user research studies, there is a lot of work that goes on beyond what a test user sees after the high-fidelity prototype. It's a very fulfilling process.

Next steps

1

Flesh out the app further, working with music composers, video editors, and engineers to make this project even more polished.

2

Conduct another usability study with different users to see if user needs have been addressed since the second usability study.

3

Finalize the rest of the low-fidelity prototype into a high fidelity prototype, including the music, art, and livestreams that accompany the various pages.

Let's connect!



Thank you for reviewing my project for the indie musician Nyx! If you would like to contact me regarding this project or others of a similar caliber, you can reach me through the details below.

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