BBC Micro

Experience Design

Interactive Objects
and Environments

PREFACE

This book documents the process behind a five-week project that aimed to solve a core business problem through digital intervention while maintaining branding and value.

By taking a design-driven approach in utilizing technology, the goal was to prove competencies in applying these tools in the context of business to bridge the innovation gap.

Our team started off by selecting a competition brief.

THE
SET-UP

"But – above all this year is about skills – and making things. Because being a maker matters. Learning to play – to create, to experiment with ideas - can ignite a spark, a passion, that stays with you forever."

Tony Hall
BBC Director-General

BBC

BBC:

A British Broadcasting Corporation with a long history, it is the world's oldest and larger broadcaster. They provide a range of television, radio, and online services and are most prominently known for news reporting as well as producing original content.

BUSINESS PROBLEM:

Although they create content across their many channels for all demographics, engagement is lower amongst the 15 - 24 year olds. This is an industry-wide shift; millennials are turning away from traditional broadcasting in favour of online media.
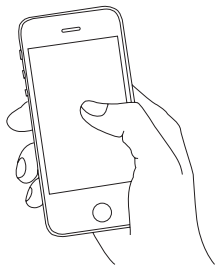
TARGET AUDIENCE

Youths

1 5 - 2 4

This demographic drifts away from the BBC
because of more innovative channels like YouTube
or Buzzfeed, which can be accessed on the go and
provides endless entertainment. Various types of
new content are always available in easy to digest,
absorbable formats.

SMALL INSIGHTS

15
min

Members of the Bored In Line Network, they are the smartphone users waiting in line updating their Facebook statuses and reading Twitter to kill mere seconds of time.
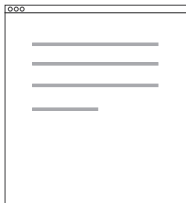
They prefer consuming Snackable Content, short-form data that is quick and easy to engage with. Primarily visual, it takes minimal effort but is as informative and entertaining as long-form content.

Each morning they go through the Loop, checking in to apps within 15 minutes of waking up to get up to speed with any updates since they last checked their phone before going to bed.
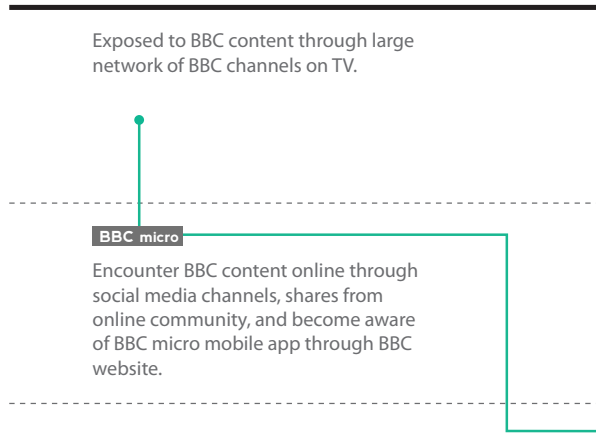
PRE
SERVICE

The Framing

TV
INTERACTIVE TV

DESKTOP/WEB

MOBILE

Exposed to BBC content through large
network of BBC channels on TV.

BBC micro

Encounter BBC content online through
social media channels, shares from
online community, and become aware
of BBC micro mobile app through BBC
website.

DURING

POST
SERVICE

BBC micro

Creating awareness of current
events presented on TV.

Re-enaging target audience with
BBC content.

BBC micro

Encounter BBC content online through
social media channels, shares from online
community, and become aware of BBC
micro mobile app through BBC website.

BBC micro

Explorer BBC micro where the delivered
content is relevant to the audience's interests.
Through the app the audience can discover
information that should matter and affect them
at a time that's convenient for them.

AWARENESS

Initial impression of BBC content made through word of mouth, formal and casual sources on the internet, and various public spaces.

word of mouth
online
formal: guardian, ny times, aljazeera

casual: tumblr, reddit, whatsapp, twitter, fb, youtube, elite daily, buzzfeed

skytrain TU

the tyee, vancouver observer

CONSIDERATION

Interest towards BBC content is influenced and sustained by the length, relevance and quality of the content as well as the time it is pre-

is it credible
interesting/enter-taining
relevant
popular
time

INITIAL USE   ONGOING   PURCHASE

Engaging in content
depends on the goals
of the bored in line
audience.

Regular engagement
is dependent on the
audience's feelings
towards the content
and aesthetics of the
application.

Continuous delivery
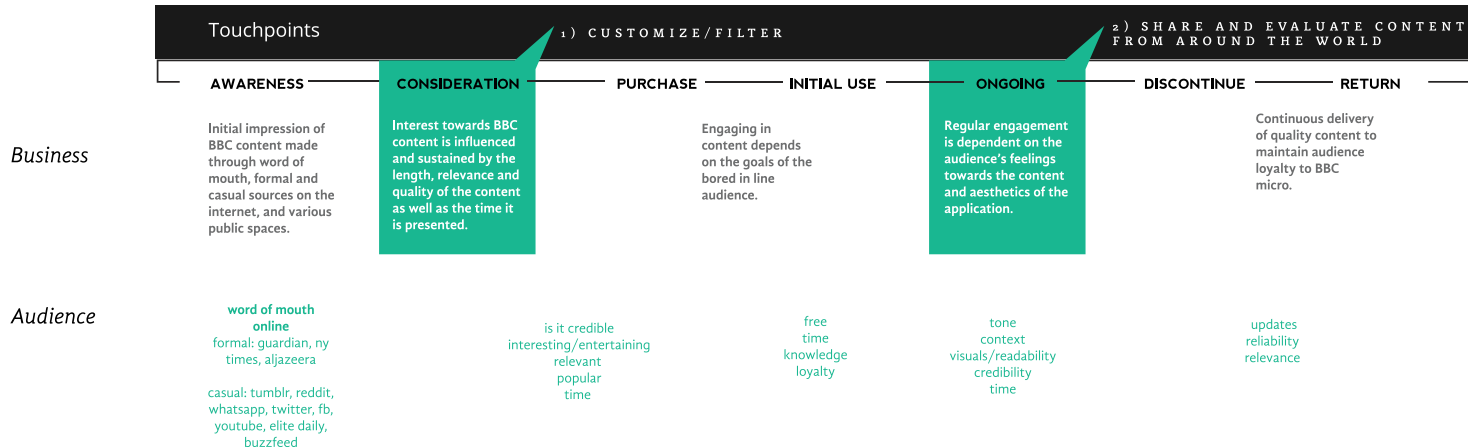of quality content to
maintain audience
loyalty to BBC micro.

free   tone
time   context
knowledge   visuals/readability
loyalty   credibility
                           time

updates
reliability
relevance

offensive content
change
prerequsites to initial
use
better alternatives
new interest/pur-

Touchpoints

1) CUSTOMIZE/FILTER

2) SHARE AND EVALUATE CONTENT FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	PURCHASE	INITIAL USE	ONGOING	DISCONTINUE	RETURN

Business

AWARENESS
Initial impression of BBC content made through word of mouth, formal and casual sources on the internet, and various public spaces.

CONSIDERATION
Interest towards BBC content is influenced and sustained by the length, relevance and quality of the content as well as the time it is presented.

INITIAL USE
Engaging in content depends on the goals of the bored in line audience.

ONGOING
Regular engagement is dependent on the audience's feelings towards the content and aesthetics of the application.

RETURN
Continuous delivery of quality content to maintain audience loyalty to BBC micro.

Audience

AWARENESS
word of mouth
online
formal: guardian, ny times, aljazeera

casual: tumblr, reddit, whatsapp, twitter, fb, youtube, elite daily, buzzfeed

PURCHASE
is it credible
interesting/entertaining
relevant
popular
time

INITIAL USE
free
time
knowledge
loyalty

ONGOING
tone
context
visuals/readability
credibility
time

RETURN
updates
reliability
relevance

BBC's existing
mobile experiences

Entrance	Browsing/Setup	Read Articles	Updates	Sharing	Post experience

■ Pain points

■ Solutions

Beginning
page full of
information.
Many headlines
lengthy articles.

List if irrelevant articles
for readers.
Many items to
choose from.
Long lists if items.

Unknown lengths to article.
No save for later function
Unknown relevance
to reader.

Unknown
update times.
No notifications
on updates.

Limited, unexciting
share function.
No comment section.
No dialogue.

Lengthy articles.
No rewards for return.
No reminders of app
other than
breaking news updates.

Provide youth
oriented content

Create
customized feed

Comment section
available

Create quick headline viewing

Create save-for-later function

Instant share button

Notification updates,
Chance of instant read though

Choice to selected update times

BBC MICRO

Redefining how your daily news is delivered, this mobile application provides a new way to connect with the content on BBC's multiple platforms. You receive customized, bite-sized content twice a day through interactive notifications.

WHY?

Customizing the type of content and summarizing articles into short reads reduces the cognitive overload, and specifically works into youth usage patterns related to media consumption.

"In 2003 there were 2.03 television sets per UK household but by 2012, this had reduced to 1.83 sets. But the growth of portable devices and online viewing has seen an increase in the total number of hours watched."

Less TVs owned[
(TV Licensing TeleScope Report 2013)

The Proposal

"In the UK,mobile video view mostly unaffected traditional TV viewing, or increased it."

TV viewing patterns
(Nielsen Mobile Consumer Report 2013)

"Almost nine in ten (88%) of 16-24s own a smartphone, compared to 14% among those aged 65+."

% of Mobile Users in UK
(Ofcom 2014)

C O N S I D E R

This can ease users back into engaging with BBC content in a low stakes manner, without affecting other BBC services and the other demographics that make up their audience. BBC Micro bridges the gap by providing filler content that leads back to consuming content through the radio, online services, or traditional broadcasting.

Precedents
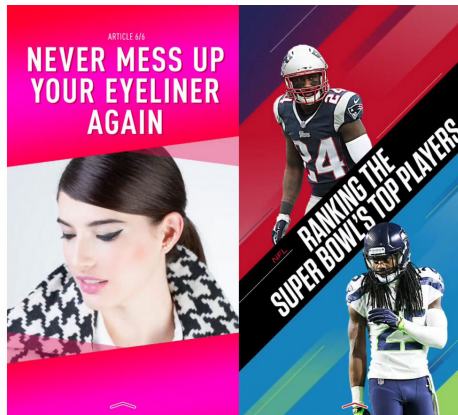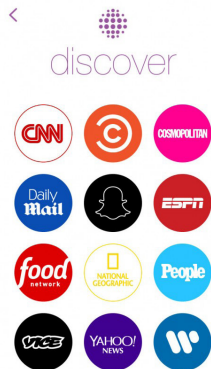
Visual, snappy updates.

Summarized content with background context.

FACEBOOK PAPER
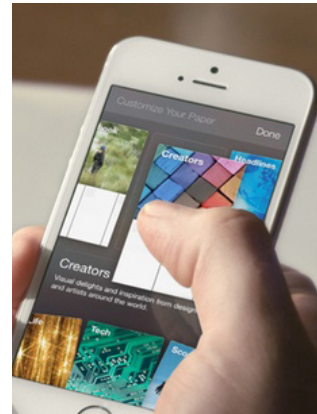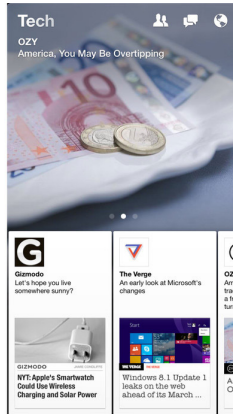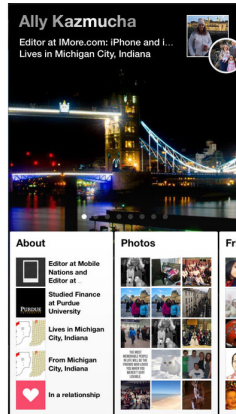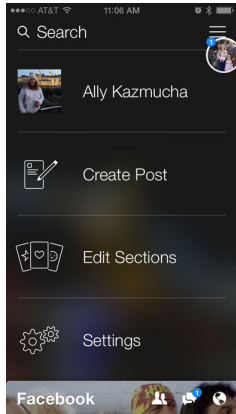
Half screens and gestures.

THE
ATTEMPT

THE GOAL

"Engage today's 'always on' youth with the BBC's Multi-channel Content."

BBC Micro was designed to fit into existing behavior patterns by having the content delivered directly to youth, rather than making them search for it.

Pulling from interesting, relevant articles from BBC generated content, the app summarizes and packages content into a notification that is easily accessed or dismissed, acting as an overlay that does not distract from on-going activities.

NOTIFICATIONS afford browsing with deck, but with a pinch, can display two posts as a time with only headlines.

COMMENTS are accessed by swiping right on the triangle icon that also acts as a reading marker.
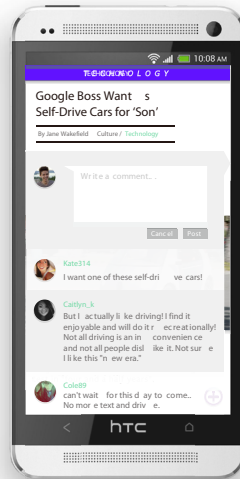
The GRADIENT colour-codes and corresponds to the specific news cycle that has been updated to clarify when in your day you are receiving the news. The gradient is from BBC Taster. We wanted to brand out from it because it well fits our target audience.

The Microinteractions
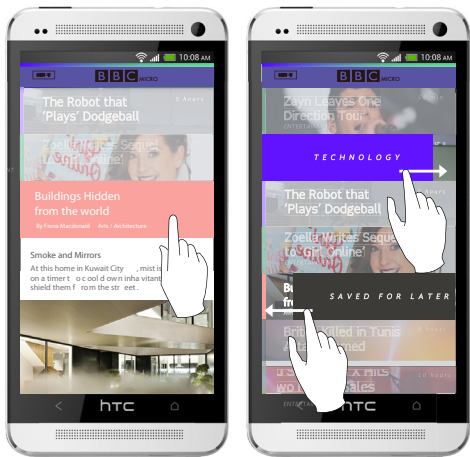
Allows reading by tapping to expand articles, with the opportunity to share via the floating action button. By swiping right on an article, you can view all articles under that category; left swiping saves the article for reading later.
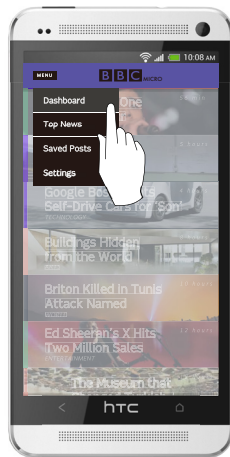
Allows you to access the Top News posts across all categories, Saved For Later articles that are cached for offline reading, and settings, where you can change the times and categories of your Micro update.

THE
COMPLICATION

REFRAME

Rather than examine this sector through other broadcasting companies, we studied the experience design of social media as an emerging form of journalism in order to reconsider how we could design the service of delivering content.

The competition brief design focused more on the target audience and how we could deliver the content to them, resulting in a design that was much more functional and feature-based than delightful or memorable.

RECONSIDER

Upon scrutinizing our concept, we realized that the application and notification felt too disparate. Our team decided to refine our design by specifically focusing on the 18 - 24 year olds, a more solid market share that we felt would allow us to enhance the in-app reading experience with cleaner aesthetics and develop a feel more aligned with the branding of BBC.

R E A D D R E S S I N G   T O U C H P O I N T S

With only two weeks to complete our competition submission, our team rushed the process and upon analysing our concept again, realized that the notification and application felt too disparate.
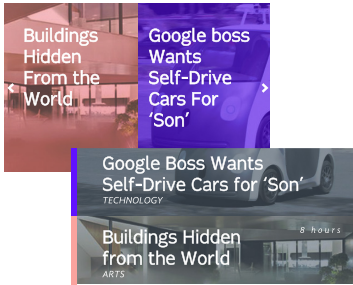
Content:

Having the same articles show up in your notification and customised feed could get repetitive and eventually develop into a pain point that ends in discontinued usage.
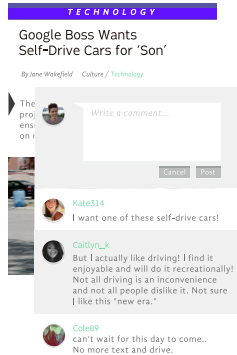
Comments:

While the ability to express yourself in a social environment is important to the target audience, the comments were not obviously accessible and incompatible with both BBC and the medium.
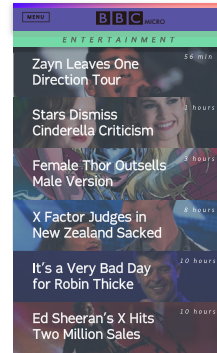
Competition Brief:

In order to fit with the branding and target audience of the brief, our design was much more youthful, colourful, and busy than desired for a mobile app experience.

Our team decided to refine and question the entire concept of BBC Micro in order to implement design-driven aspects to the interface to ensure it was a consistent, holistic experience.
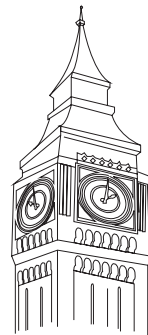
Jumping Fences:

Introduces a new channel that
fits into the 'loop' by creating
interaction and maintaining a
dialogue.
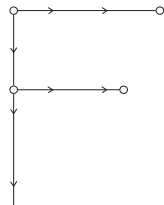
Smart Recombining:

Microtrends:
- F-Shaped Patterns +
- Snackable Content +
- List-Based Articles

Transformational Metaphor:

Big Ben as bell, clock, and
tower; Layering and blocking
in grid.

THE
EXECUTION

"We need a common
understanding of design and
the role it plays to realize
that what we take for granted
about design has not always
been the case."

Visually, it was vital that BBC Micro made reading easier, maintained a certain level of professionalism, but still looked inviting and personable.

This was achieved through using bright, punchy colours that would draw the eye throughout content posts to heighten readability. Gradients and flat colours were used to contrast the drop shadows indicating actionable buttons, and kept the design from becoming overwhelmingly busy.
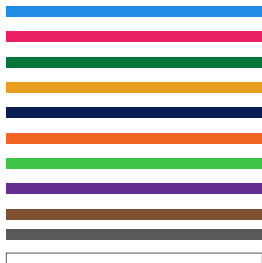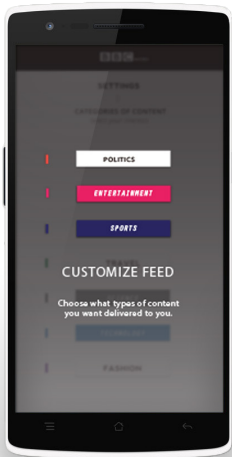
Colour pallet

Gradient &
Dropshadow

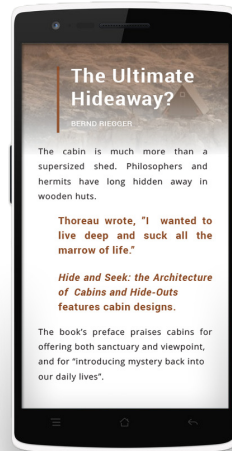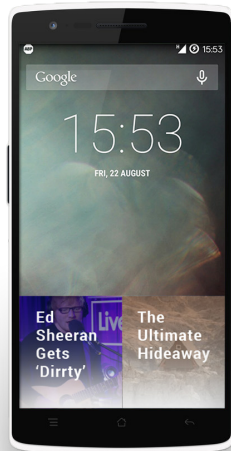Roboto Regular
Roboto Bold
***Roboto Bold Italic***

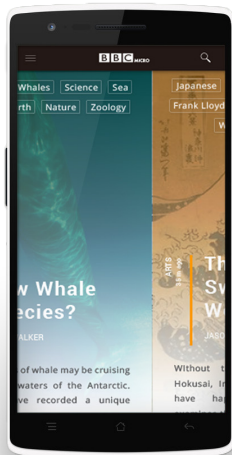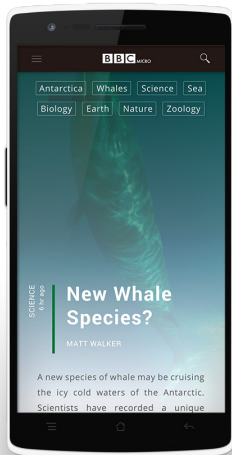Open sans regular

Fonts

Visual Branding

ONBOARDING

As so many of the functions are gesture based, onboarding was required to explain basic navigation, customization, and some hidden features.

NOTIFICATION

Compared to the in-app reading experience, your notifications are one pagers that can be browsed with deck or just headlines through a tap, pinch and a swipe.
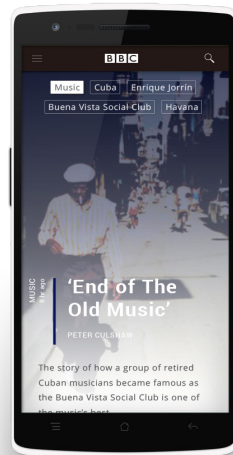
FEED

Opens to display either the current trending posts, or your customized feed. Browse by swiping left to right, savestates will remember where you left off in an article. Pulling down will refresh the feed.
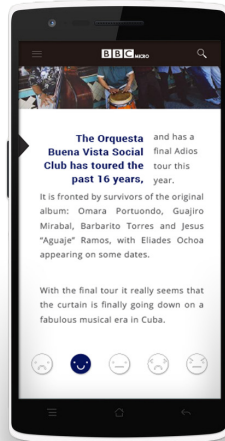
TAGS

Each post is tagged with keywords that are displayed at the top. Tapping one will fill your feed with posts containing that keyword. You can also search for specific topics.
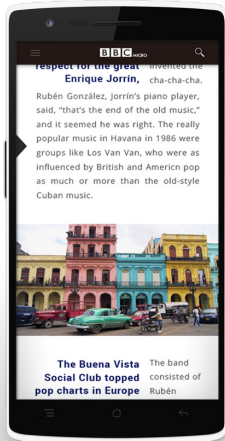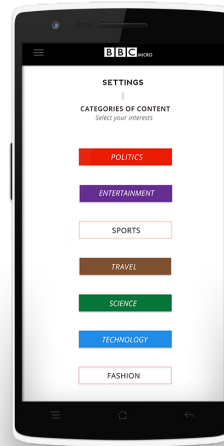
MARKER

By swiping right on the reading marker, you can access sharing and archiving functions.

RESPONSE

You can quickly show your response by choosing an emotion or three.

CUSTOMIZATION

The ability to pick the categories for your content, the times of your update, and whether your notification displays your customized articles or the current trending posts.

DESIGN RATIONALE

The new option of deciding what content is displayed in your notification and feed reduces repetition. The reading experience is also differentiated by only showing the main points in the notification, with further details available in the app.

We noticed that comments were not something that the BBC allowed on their websites, and were unlikely to be utilized by this target audience on a mobile for such summarized articles. It is much more fitting to allow quick and easy responses through emoticons.

THE
SCORE

DESIREABLE:

BBC Micro reduces the cognitive overhead in trying to find the type of content you want from across BBC's many channels by delivering customized, summarized posts straight to you, allowing the user to consume exactly the type of content they want, quickly and easily, exactly when they want it.

FEASIBLE:

By creating a separate mobile application, existing BBC channels and audiences are not disturbed. BBC Micro leverages the ubiquitous technology amongst the target audience, and utilizes existing BBC content.

VIABLE:

BBC Micro is designed to fit into BBC's existing information hierarchy and further augment it by syncing across BBCiD for a customized website homepage and shared archives.

MEASURABILITY:

Metrics can be obtained through analyzing what posts are being archived, to understand what types of content is more desirable. Responses and page views can be translated into data concerning how many users are engaging with their content, and how much content they consume.

THE TAKE AWAY

BBC's competition brief asked for an idea that would lead 15 - 24 year olds back to engaging with their content. They desired an omni-channel approach that moved beyond the single screen of an app or webpage.

This project required our team to inject delight and memorability through design-driven approaches grounded in the sector, focusing on touchpoints connected to a specific person, at a specific time and place.

We delivered BBC Micro. A mobile app that fits seamlessly into your lifestyle, and reduces the friction in trying to consume content. Value is created as customers become used to engaging with this content, eventually returning to channels such as radio, television, and online portals to consume more of it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

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