Ideation Techniques

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What is Ideation?

The third phase in the design thinking process is ideation. Ideation is the process of generating a wide range of ideas related to a topic or specific problem. The goal of ideation is not to generate only the best ideas that will 100% solve your problems. Here, it is **quantity over quality.** Only by exploring every angle (possible and impossible) without judgment can a designer get closer to the answer.

Researchers use many ideation techniques, both group- and individual-focused, in their sessions. For our purposes, we will examine 4 examples:

Mind Map: User writes problem statement/topic in the middle of a piece of paper and then writes any connected solution/idea surrounding the topic and continues to branch off each new idea. The user then connects their ideas with lines to follow the thought process. Evaluate the map for useful ideas to form a solution.

Sketch: Express solutions in the form of rough sketches.

Pessimist vs Optimist: Facilitate a conversation between a participant with a pessimistic point of view and a participant with an optimistic point of view to get to the root of the problem you are solving.

Braindump: 3-10 minute period where the participant writes anything that comes to mind regarding the topic on individual post-it notes. You can arrange the post-its afterward to find connections or identify standout ideas.

The Plan

To see these techniques in action, we will apply them to the POV statements we created previously for three apps:



goodreads

Online reading tracker



PATREON

Subscription-based content service



ŌURA

App that connects to a smart ring that records and analyzes the user's biometrics

App 1: Goodreads POV Statement 1



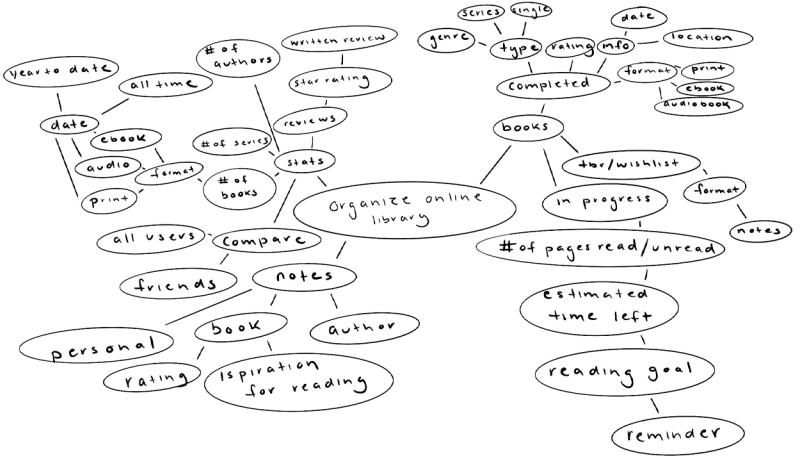
Users who are avid readers need an efficient system to organize their books and notes *because* it will allow them to easily recall what they have read, since a large library can feel overwhelming to review.

Techniques:

Mind Map

Sketch

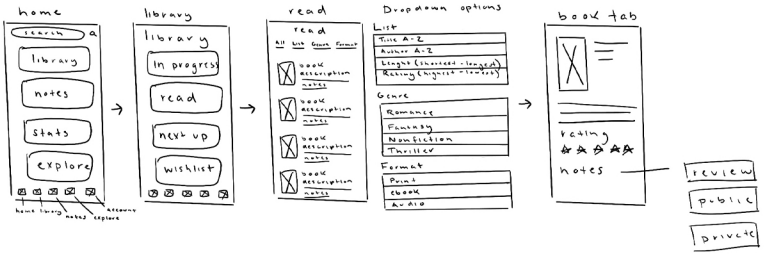
App 1: Goodreads Mind Map

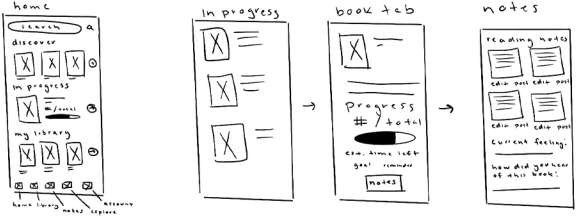


Method

When I started my mind map, I decided to focus on organizing an online library and all the elements that would go into it. The goal was to narrow down the priorities for creating an efficient system for users.

App 1: Goodreads Sketch





Method

When sketching out solutions for an efficient organization system on Goodreads, I focused on creating wireframes to mimic the user journey. In the sketches, I created various dropdown menu options to personalize navigation through the user's library.

App 1: Goodreads POV Statement 1 Analysis

To ideate solutions for an efficient organization system for a user's Goodreads library, I found the sketch technique most useful. As a visual thinker, seeing how different graphic elements worked together and visualizing the user journey was beneficial.

From this exercise, I think the ideas worth pursuing are detailed specifications and order options on each app list. Even if there are more steps, the user can easily search through their library.

App 1: Goodreads POV Statement 2



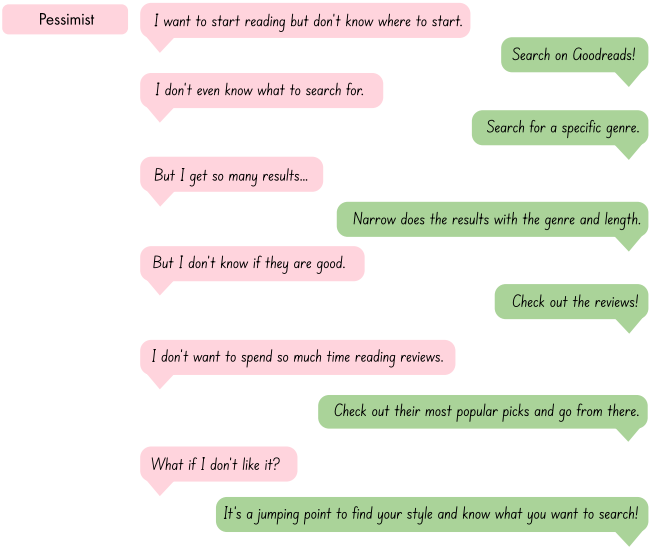
Users trying to get into reading need a comprehensive search engine *because* the number of options can be overwhelming and confusing, leading them to not choose a book to read.

Techniques:

Pessimist vs Optimist

Braindump

App 1: Goodreads Pessimist vs Optimist



Method

For the exercise of conducting a conversation between the pessimistic user (new reader) and the optimistic user (avid reader), I focused on the frustration and overwhelming feeling a new user could feel when searching on Goodreads. The optimist user then acted as my solution creator.

App 1: Goodreads Braindump



Method

For this braindump, I set a 5-minute timer and thought about the key parts of a search engine for an app like Goodreads. I wrote down every thought that came to mind, and once I reflected, it became clear what the user priorities were for this goal.

App 1: Goodreads POV Statement 2 Analysis

The goal of these ideation sessions was to focus on the UX of Goodreads' search engine from the perspective of a new reader. Both techniques were useful; however, the pessimist vs. optimist was the most beneficial. I was able to write from the perspective of a new reader (pessimist) and an avid reader (optimist) and create a conversation that outlines the hesitations a new reader would likely face.

The highlights from both exercises worth pursuing are the ability to search by genre, rating, and popularity. These options narrow the search for more personalized results and help avoid overwhelming the user.

App 2: Patreon POV Statement 1



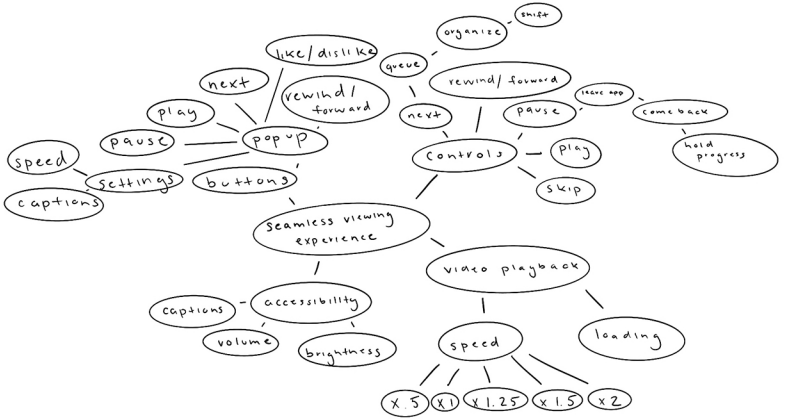
Users viewing content need accurate, real-time ways to control the way they view content *because* a seamless viewing experience makes the platform more enjoyable to use.

Techniques:

Mind Map

Braindump

App 2: Patreon Mind Map



Method

The central idea for this mind map was a seamless viewing experience. I put myself in the user's shoes and tried to write down every aspect of the streaming experience and the elements that specifically hinder it when they don't work as expected.

App 2: Patreon Braindump



Method

Like the mind map's overarching topic, in this 5-minute braindump, I documented every thought that came to mind while thinking about the viewing experience.

App 2: Patreon POV Statement 1 Analysis

This POV statement stems from the user's control over their viewing experience. In this scenario, the mind map was the most useful technique for me. I focused on a seamless viewing experience and broke it down into video playback, accessibility, buttons, and controls, then branched off for each topic. However, all ideas from this session traced back to control. In both techniques, I found that controls such as play/pause, rewind/forward, etc. were the most important to prioritize for a user's viewing experience and should be pursued in an app redesign.

App 2: Patreon POV Statement 2



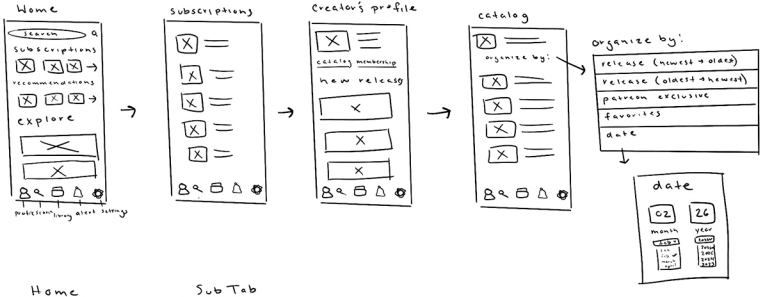
Users searching for a specific piece of content need an efficient way to sort the media *because* the longer it takes to find it, the more likely they are to give up and move on.

Techniques:

Sketch

Pessimist vs Optimist

App 2: Patreon Sketch



Method

For this sketching exercise, I created various layouts that could potentially improve Patreon's navigation. I focused on how the app's navigation and search capabilities can be optimized for a more specific, personalized experience.

App 2: Patreon Pessimist vs Optimist



Method

In this conversation between a pessimist (a user trying to find a specific video) and an optimist (the solution), I wanted to simulate a situation where the user wants a specific video but cannot remember the name and doesn't have time to scroll through many videos.

App 2: Patreon POV Statement 2 Analysis

To ideate solutions that help users find the content they are looking for, the pessimist vs. optimist technique was most helpful. By role-playing a conversation where a user struggles to complete their goal, I uncovered modifications Patreon could make to its navigation. The conversation helped me break down the issue and identify the specific actions a user could take to find a specific piece of content.

Both techniques were helpful. The ideas worth pursuing are the developed scoped search bar allowing the user to break up content by date, name, exclusivity, and favorites. The sketching helped visualize how this search could be displayed on the individual creator's page, either as a drop-down or as categories on the creator's homepage.

App 3: Oura POV Statement 1



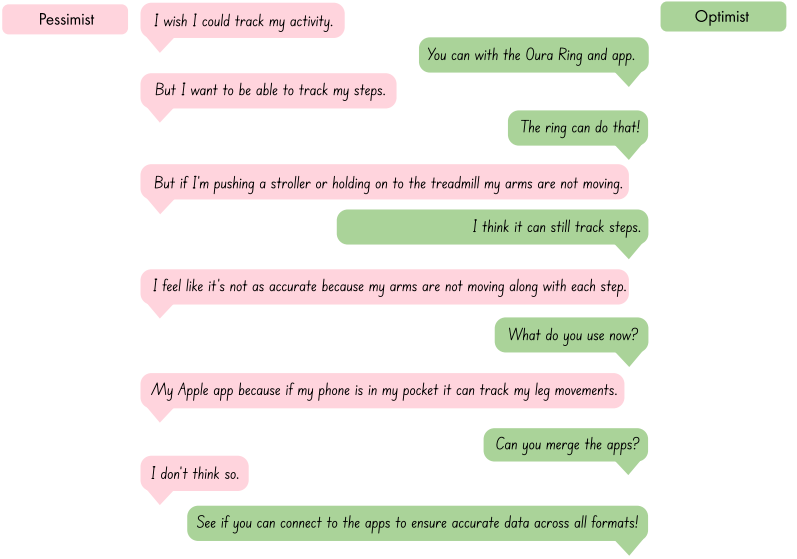
Users who use an activity tracker need adaptable software to accurately measure movement *because* each user has different abilities and circumstances.

Techniques:

Pessimist vs Optimist

Braindump

App 3: Oura Pessimist vs Optimist



Method

In this pessimist vs. optimist conversation, the topic is the debate over the accuracy of the activity tracker when a person can't move their arms, since it relies on ring movement.

App 3: Oura Braindump



Method

For this 5-minute braindump, the goal was to ideate terms related to diversity of movement and abilities. This included thinking about software updates and creating a new form of technology to connect to the app.

App 3: Oura POV Statement 1 Analysis

This POV statement focuses on adaptable technology to ensure every user receives accurate activity-tracking information. In this scenario, the braindump was the most useful technique. This makes sense, as the topic is diversity and the braindump focuses on creating a wide range of terms to connect later.

After reviewing the ideation results, the idea worth pursuing is app connectivity. By making the app easier to connect, users can work with existing tools in whatever way they need.

App 3: Oura POV Statement 2



Users who rely on biometric tracking need an accessible, personalized experience *because* the analysis can shape the health choices they make.

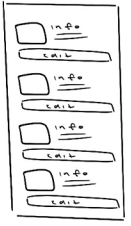
Techniques:

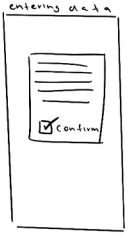
Sketch

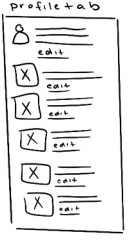
Mind Map

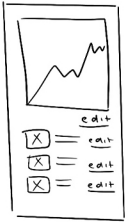
App 3: Oura Sketch







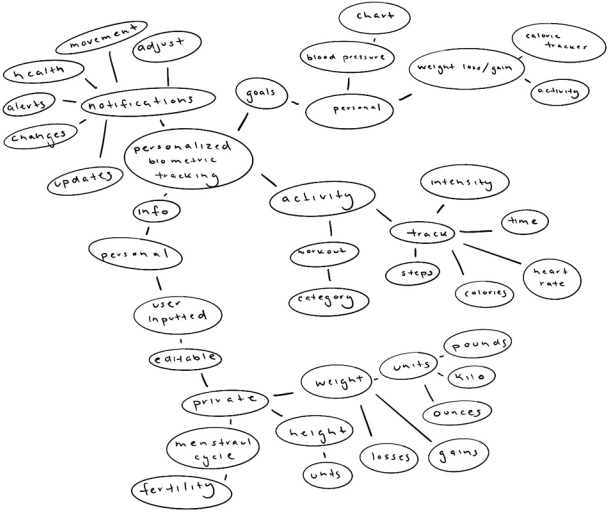




Method

When sketching ideas for this POV statement, I focused on the personalized experience. As I sketched, I realized the biggest tool would be editing. The app should be interactive; as it is technology, it is bound to make mistakes. Giving users more editing control creates a more accurate experience.

App 3: Oura Mind Map



Method

The central topic in this mind map is the personalized experience. I started thinking about the various app elements that work together to create the user's profile. Each branch represents a topic that a potential user will want to prioritize when using Oura.

App 3: Oura POV Statement 2 Analysis

When ideating solutions for the POV statement about an accurate, personalized experience, the mind map was most useful. The elements of this accurate experience aren't all visual; they're a mental wellness journey with Oura that supports users' individual goals and motivates them.

The key ideas worth pursuing from these exercises were user edit capabilities and personalized notifications.