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UNDERSTANDING USER NEEDS THROUGH APP REVIEWS

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PRINCIPLES OF
USER EXP DESIGN

2026



INTRODUCTION

For this assignment, I chose to look at three apps that I am familiar with: Pinterest, Goodreads and TikTok. Although each app serves a different purpose, they all rely on creating an experience that keeps users engaged and encourages them to return.

I wanted to look beyond the overall ratings and understand what users actually enjoy about these apps, what frustrates them and what they think could be improved. I examined App Store reviews and organized the feedback into three categories: positive, negative and suggestive.

Using this feedback, I developed Point of View (POV) statements to identify the needs of different users and understand the problems behind their experiences. Rather than immediately coming up with solutions, I focused on defining the problems from the users' perspectives.



PINTEREST

4.8 / 5 (5.8M RATINGS)



Pinterest is a visual discovery app that allows users to find inspiration for things like fashion, recipes, home decor and creative projects. Users can save images and ideas to boards, making it easier to organize content based on their interests. I chose Pinterest because it is an app I am familiar with, and I wanted to see how other users feel about its organization, navigation and overall experience.

POSITIVE REVIEWS

1. Creative Inspiration (@literallydontbestupid):

The reviewer enjoys using Pinterest for inspiration across different interests, including food, art and DIY projects. They also appreciate having the ability to share their own content and grow their following.

2. Easy Organization (@littyBittyMeow)

A longtime user appreciates being able to save and organize ideas into boards. They particularly enjoyed how simple and easy to navigate the app used to be.

3. Discovering New Content (@leonajune)

The reviewer enjoys discovering different types of content, connecting with other users and finding relatable posts.

NEGATIVE REVIEWS

1. Excessive Advertisements (@ShadyRain)

The reviewer is frustrated by the number of advertisements appearing in their feed. They feel that advertisements have started to take away from Pinterest's original purpose of providing creative inspiration.

2. Frequent Interface Changes (@viOliiin girl)

The reviewer is frustrated by frequent changes to Pinterest's layout and navigation. They feel that updates to familiar buttons and interactions make the app more difficult to use.

3. Technical Issues (@BAWLING33333)

The reviewer experiences glitches when uploading content. Their posts sometimes disappear, forcing them to repeatedly upload the same content.

SUGGESTIVE REVIEWS

1. Better Board Organization (@viOliiin girl)

The reviewer suggests that sections within Pinterest boards should automatically rearrange based on recent activity rather than requiring users to organize them manually.

2. More Control Over the Feed (@literallydontbestupid)

The reviewer suggests that Pinterest should stop automatically refreshing the home feed whenever the app opens. They explain that this can cause interesting posts to disappear before they have a chance to save them.

3. More Customization (@Puddlesprout)

The reviewer suggests adding an option to turn off the rainbow effect that appears when zooming in on Pins, as they find the visual effect distracting

POV STATEMENT 1:

Frequent Pinterest users need a way to discover creative content without constant interruptions because excessive advertisements make it difficult to find the inspiration they originally came to the app for.

POV STATEMENT 2:

Longtime Pinterest users need a consistent and easy way to organize their saved content because frequent interface changes make familiar tasks more complicated and frustrating.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

After reading through Pinterest's reviews, I noticed that many users still enjoy the app but are frustrated by changes that affect their experience. Advertisements, frequent updates and difficulty organizing content were some of the main issues mentioned.

What stood out to me was that the underlying problem wasn't necessarily the content itself, but how easily users could access and interact with it. These reviews helped me understand how important it is to consider the needs of existing users when making changes to an app.

PINTEREST REVIEWS

An Unlimited Vision Board



07/17/2025
literallydontbestupid

Pinterest has always been a must have tool for me, either by using it on desktop or on my phone. It's an amazing place to get ideas for food, DIY projects, art, crafts, and so so much more. I use it for inspiration for pretty much everything. I also love that there is a business account version where I can grow my following, post my content, and watch the interactions with my posts. Ultimately what I love about Pinterest the most is it becomes the space you create. However I do feel that there are a few things that can be updated and taken out. There are way too many ads now, practically my whole feed is purchasing options and advertisements. While I do like the option of when looking at certain pins that it gives you a link to visit their website, the shopping feed is not what Pinterest is. Neither are the constant ads that replace pins. Another thing that I think would increase interaction with pins is when you visit the app, the pins don't automatically refresh. I can't count the amount of times I have opened the app and seen a pin I'd like to save but can't get to because the feed refreshes automatically. The next thing I'd like to add is i constantly get emails about "violating community guidelines" for pins I've saved. Recipes, craft inspiration, character designs, and quotes. It's more so off-putting since it isn't any of the pins I've created, yet saving seemingly harmless pins is in violation.

Again with these updates. Disappointed.



09/20/2019
IttyBittyMeow

I used to use Pinterest in a daily basis several times a days and now I use it a couple of days out of the week if I feel like it sometimes. So for the first time in a few days I opened it again and couldn't use it. It basically said that if I wanted to save any new pins I couldn't do so until I updated the app. I still genuinely absolutely love this app and everything it's supposed to be used for but now these updates have made everything so much more difficult to use, it doesn't look nice and clean like it used to, a lot of things are almost kinda grainy looking now in my opinion, there are so many ads everywhere, and now I just had to update it without my choosing to do so. I had started using this app since basically the beginning but now even though I love everything it's for I'm getting frustrated with it. I'll continue to use it just because I've got so many things that I've saved and loved over the years but I'm getting extremely tired of these changes. I miss the way the old way it used to be. No ads, I could save things far easier (it would keep your last three boards you used at the top), it didn't feel like basically every other app out there as far as looks, and it made things so easy. I would very rarely have any bugs or anything to fix. I'm still giving it a 5 star review because it is something that I do still love, I just sincerely wish they would stop trying to add a bunch of unnecessary things to it and just keep it to how it was. Easy, fun, clean, and entertaining.

stop the annoying updates on random things please

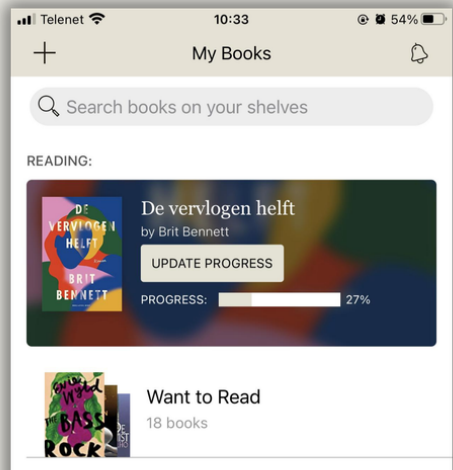


01/18/2024
vi0liiin girl

For one, the size and shape of the "pin" button changes every few weeks for no reason, and also the animation for when you click on a pin in the homescreen changed a few days ago and it was better before (now it like slides from the left of the screen whereas before it popped from the homescreen instead), as well as being able to move the image around your screen which made it so you could see around the "visual search" and other buttons in the corner that block that part of the image, and now you can't really do that??? also PLEASE stop turning off comments in created pins, I understand this might be for a safety reason or something but it is VERY annoying especially when a creator was trying to make a pin that users engage with BY COMMENTING ON IT?? and on MY pins they're often disabled for no apparent reason and then the pins get absolutely no interaction or views. One suggestion I have that is a small thing but is frustrating is when you have sections in a board they don't switch places by most recent, which idk I just would like it better than manually ordering them. Also I hate the feature where the names of your board are across the top of your screen constantly, never going away, I just don't like that the names of my boards are always visible from my home page (because some of them have goofy names that are embarrassing 🤔🤔). y'all just change things too often... but overall I love the app and have been using for many years so ❤️❤️

GOODREADS

4.8/5 STARS
(754,000 RATINGS)



Goodreads is a book-tracking app that allows readers to organize their books, create reading goals, write reviews and discover new books. I chose Goodreads because I enjoy reading and am currently creating my own digital reading journal. I wanted to see what users enjoy about the app and what challenges they experience when tracking and organizing their books.

POSITIVE REVIEWS

1. Book Tracking (@motheroftlc)

The reviewer appreciates being able to keep track of books they have read and books they want to read. They also enjoy the reading challenges and the ability to automatically track books through Kindle.

2. Book Recommendations (@AvalonWolf)

The reviewer enjoys Goodreads' large selection of books, personalized recommendations and ability to track different editions. They also appreciate how easy it is to discover other books in a series.

3. Reading Goals (@hdorman2310)

The reviewer enjoys keeping their reading goals, TBR list and completed books organized in one place. They also appreciate discovering new authors and reading other users' reviews.

NEGATIVE REVIEWS

1. Confusing Search Results (@Zallia)

The reviewer experiences difficulty finding specific books because the search function sometimes searches only their personal library. They also find it frustrating when similar titles appear before the exact book they are looking for.

2. Spoilers in Reviews (@CraftyMissy)

The reviewer is frustrated by book reviews that reveal important plot details or contain lengthy summaries. This makes it difficult to read other users' opinions without potentially spoiling a book.

3. Complicated Book Organization (@bookzNERD)

The reviewer finds it frustrating that adding books to shelves requires several steps. Organizing a large number of books becomes especially time consuming when they have to add each book individually.

SUGGESTIVE REVIEWS

1. More Accurate Rating Options (@soph1820)

The reviewer suggests allowing half-star ratings so readers can more accurately express their opinions about a book without having to write a full review.

2. Easier Shelf Organization (@bookzNERD)

The reviewer suggests allowing users to select multiple books and add them to a shelf at the same time rather than organizing each book individually.

3. Notes for Saved Books (@Rscheun)

The reviewer suggests adding the ability to include notes when saving books to their Want to Read list. This would help users remember who recommended a book or why they originally saved it.

POV STATEMENT 1:

Readers who track large numbers of books need a simpler way to organize their reading lists because adding books individually can become frustrating and time consuming.

POV STATEMENT 2:

Readers who regularly review and rate books need a way to express their opinions more accurately because the current whole star rating system doesn't always reflect how they actually feel about a book.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

After reading through Goodreads' reviews, I noticed that users really appreciate having their books, reading goals and recommendations organized in one place. However, some users become frustrated when simple tasks like searching for a book, organizing their shelves or leaving a rating are more complicated than they need to be.

Since I'm currently creating my own digital reading journal, I found these reviews particularly interesting. They helped me understand that having a lot of features doesn't necessarily mean an app is easy to use. Sometimes, the biggest frustrations come from the smaller tasks that users complete regularly.

GOODREADS REVIEWS

Love it but I've got some ideas



07/27/2023
bookzNERD

Don't get me wrong this app is helpful and I use it all the times but it can be pretty clunky sometimes. The featured booklists on your page are kinda tricky to find again and I wish there was a whole tab for them with like recently viewed lists and recommendations and things like that because when you accidentally leave an amazing list and can't find it it's the worst. The biggest issue I have is it's not the most new user friendly. I got this app and had so many books and shelves to create for my previous reads but it takes five clicks to add a book to a shelf. When I make a shelf it's because I realize I have lots of books similar and so scrolling through my reads and clicking five times for each is not fun at all and takes all day. I wish there was a select tool so you could add multiple books to a shelf at a time this would probably make this review five stars. Another little issue I have (and maybe I just can't figure it out) is Re reading. If I read a book multiple times why can't I count both towards my reading challenge? It won't be an accurate page count if it turns out that was just the one of the times I read the book that year. I feel like you should have multiple reading dates on your book info so it isn't just showing the last time you read it. If this is a feature and I just haven't found it then I apologize. Definitely needs a refresh I just looked at version history and it's mostly bug fixes! This app NEEDS something new

Great with room to grow.

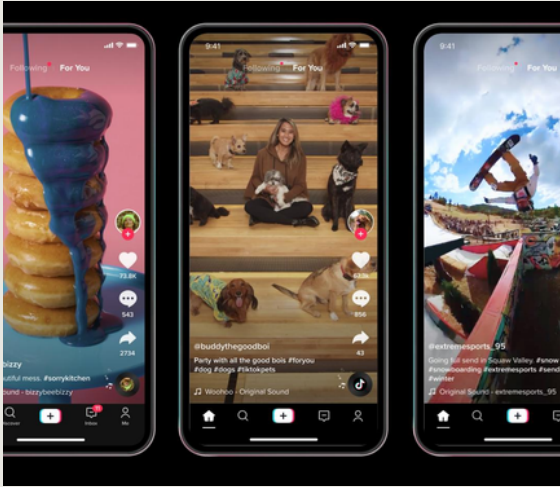


10/18/2025
Avalon Wolf

What I like: I love that this app seems to have every book you can think of and it also has multiple editions of each book if you like being able to log the specific book you read and/or see an accurate progress progression %. I also like that there are multiple book recommendation lists as well as algorithmic recommendations based on books you've read. You can even follow authors and get alerted when there are giveaways for their books and when there are new releases. I really find it useful that if the book is part of a series, the app lists the name of the book series along with the book# under the book title, and it's not only a reference, you can actually click on it and it takes you to a list with all the books from that series, which makes looking for more books in the series much easier than searching through all the books by that specific author. Room for growth: I would like to be able to rate books with half star increments, so it's a bummer that's not a feature. The recommendation lists have hundreds of books listed that I can't possibly look through in one sitting, so it would be nice if there was a way to bookmark where I left off on a list instead of having to try and scroll through it all again. And it would be helpful to have additional options in search criteria, e.g. searching for books by star ratings, or by number of ratings, etc. Also, features for book clubs and book discussions would be worth looking into for many people.

TIKTOK

4.7/5 STARS (18M RATINGS)



TikTok is a social media app that allows users to create, share and discover short-form videos. Users can interact with content through likes, comments, shares and saved collections. I chose TikTok because I use it frequently for both entertainment and content creation. I wanted to see how other users experience the app, especially when it comes to discovering content, organizing saved videos and interacting with creators.

POSITIVE REVIEWS

1. Connecting With Others (@Sadrian)

The reviewer enjoys meeting new people from around the world and building connections through TikTok. They also appreciate having a platform where they can create content and entertain others.

2. Entertainment and Learning (@Tyra2025)

The reviewer enjoys the variety of entertaining and informative videos available on TikTok. They appreciate being able to discover helpful information and creative content.

3. Creative Community (@jonEbedlam)

The reviewer enjoys being part of TikTok's community and interacting with other creators. They appreciate how positive feedback and support can encourage users to continue creating content.

NEGATIVE REVIEWS

1. Delayed Updates (@ Sadrian)

The reviewer is frustrated that new updates sometimes take several weeks to reach their account, even when other users already have access to them.

2. Technical Issues (@Makso4cik)

The reviewer experiences connection errors despite having a working internet connection. These issues prevent them from watching videos and messaging friends, resulting in the loss of a long-running streak.

3. Account Restrictions (@Mi\$\$\$3\$)

The reviewer describes repeatedly losing access to their account and being unable to send messages or maintain streaks. They are frustrated by the lack of clarity surrounding the restrictions.

SUGGESTIVE REVIEWS

1. Easier Collection Organization (@Dollie_Marie)

The reviewer suggests adding a search bar for saved collections because finding a specific collection becomes difficult when they have a large number of saved videos.

2. Better Organization for Saved Videos (@spicybOngwater4569)

The reviewer suggests allowing users to organize collections into smaller sections. They also recommend adding lists for saved TikTok Shop products to make them easier to find.

3. More Control Over Highlights (@Iana087)

The reviewer suggests allowing users to add videos directly from their camera roll to their profile highlights without having to post them publicly as stories first.

POV STATEMENT 1:

TikTok users who save large amounts of content need an easier way to organize and find their saved videos because searching through multiple collections can become frustrating and time consuming.

POV STATEMENT 2:

TikTok users who regularly interact with friends and creators need a reliable way to stay connected because technical issues and account restrictions can interrupt their conversations and prevent them from maintaining connections.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

After reading through TikTok's reviews, I noticed that users really enjoy the entertainment, creativity and sense of community the app provides. However, many users become frustrated when technical issues or difficulties organizing their content interfere with their experience.

Since I use TikTok for content creation, I found the reviews about saved collections particularly interesting. I save a lot of videos for inspiration, so I can understand how frustrating it can be when users have trouble finding something they previously saved. This exercise showed me how even smaller usability issues can have a significant impact on someone's overall experience with an app.

TIKTOK REVIEWS

‘Scrolling in view’



12/17/2021
jonEbedlam

So far, the highlight of this social media app has helped me understand what it really is all about to be part of a ‘Tok’ family participant. Being respectful & mindful of the other users posts are important for lots of reasons. To me, if you believe in their posts to be genuine, they’ll build more content based on good feedback from community input & support. I choose to not supply content of my own or build large follower-ship based on my experiences w/ career or other. I mainly enjoy watching others do exactly the same ? It’s a lot of fun. Although, as far as the app use settings are concerned (they must run you’ll a chunk of change in data, at least), having the ability to ‘scroll in’ to view I’ve found myself trying to do on several occasions. Whether or not the field being examined is ; location evidence in the landscape, a road sign, famous insignia or a feature, appealing marks of an attractive woman or person, list goes on, foods even. Then I wonder, maybe there’s a good reason they can’t or won’t ; Mobil device transfer pixel range always too fuzzy, or guidelines per video only allows ‘one’ viewing method, would contradict too much liability. These are just my hunches ? You have your reasons, I’m certain. Even if you did so decide, as a forum, to allow ‘scrolling in’ to be available on ‘Tok’ it seems to me it would be easier to have on a new select version or improved app... What’s there really to improve, right ? Keep up the good work.

my complaint



11/27/2025
Mi\$\$3\$

TikTok is overall a good platform, but I just wanted to come out here and say you’ve been in my account for no reason I’m of age to be on this platform and I see no reason to ban me I would ask for my account back politely by the next morning that I wake up, I should receive a email that says you have now got your account back there is no possible way for me to get streaks nor send or share any videos to anybody the only pro about this platform is I can watch many likable and relatable videos and scroll all day and make endless pretty TikTok’s all of the time I come on here to write a review about this devastating news that I’ve just got it seems every time I hit a certain amount of followers you decide to ban my account which is totally unfair. I see no reason for this to happen to me all the time. If you didn’t want me to have an account, I see no reason for you to to always be my account if it was a problem you should limit the amount of followers a person can receive in that case I don’t see why other people have millions of followers and there’s also underage kids here making multiple videos with more followers than me I would ask you to fix this or at least make a update where you can fix all of these tweaks and help me get my account back I’m not bashing this platform at all. I just see that there’s a mistake and I asked you to fix it please and thank you. You don’t make your mistakes bigger than what they are.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing App Store reviews for Pinterest, Goodreads and TikTok, I noticed that even though these apps serve different purposes, many users experience similar frustrations. Whether it's organizing saved content, navigating an app or dealing with technical issues, users want an experience that is simple and easy to use.

One thing that stood out to me was how differently people can experience the same app. While some users appreciate certain features, others find those same features confusing or difficult to use. By looking at positive, negative and suggestive reviews, I was able to better understand these different perspectives and identify the underlying problems behind users' frustrations.

Overall, this assignment helped me understand the importance of defining a problem before jumping into solutions. Creating POV statements allowed me to focus on what users actually need and why those needs matter. I learned that even small usability issues can have a major impact on someone's experience and that understanding the user's perspective is an important part of the design-thinking process.

CITATIONS

Goodreads. (n.d.). Goodreads: Book tracker & more [Mobile app]. Apple App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/goodreads-book-tracker-more/id355833469>

Pinterest, Inc. (n.d.). Pinterest [Mobile app]. Apple App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/pinterest/id429047995>

TikTok Ltd. (n.d.). TikTok – Videos, Shop & LIVE [Mobile app]. Apple App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tiktok-videos-shop-live/id835599320>