

Turning UX Problems Into Possible Solutions

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Ideation is an important part of the UX design process because it allows designers to explore many possible solutions before deciding which direction to pursue. Instead of immediately choosing the first solution that comes to mind, ideation techniques encourage designers to think creatively and consider a problem from different perspectives.

For this assignment, I returned to the six Point of View (POV) statements I created in Module 5 after analyzing user reviews of Pinterest, Goodreads, and TikTok. My original research identified problems involving advertisements, organization, rating systems, saved content, and technical issues. I used two ideation techniques for each POV statement to explore different ways these problems could potentially be addressed.

Pinterest

POV 1: Excessive Advertisements

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.

For this method, I brainstormed possible ways Pinterest could reduce the impact advertisements have on users without completely removing ads from the platform. I focused on generating as many ideas as possible before deciding which ones were realistic or worth pursuing.

Ideas Generated

- Allow users to choose how frequently ads appear in their feed
- Group advertisements together instead of placing them between individual Pins
- Clearly label advertisements so they are easier to distinguish from regular content
- Create an “Inspiration Mode” that temporarily reduces advertisements
- Allow users to hide advertisements that are irrelevant to them
- Give users more control over the types of advertisements they see
- Prevent advertisements from appearing between Pins from the same search
- Offer an optional ad-free subscription
- Show ads after a certain amount of scrolling rather than constantly throughout the feed
- Allow users to quickly dismiss an advertisement without disrupting their browsing

Ideation Technique 2: SCAMPER

For my second technique, I used SCAMPER to look at Pinterest's current advertising experience from several different perspectives. SCAMPER uses prompts including substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate, and reverse or rearrange.

Substitute: Substitute some traditional advertisements with sponsored Pins that better match what the user is currently searching for.

Combine: Combine multiple advertisements into one sponsored section rather than scattering them throughout the feed.

Adapt: Adapt the number and type of ads based on what the user is doing, such as showing fewer advertisements while they are actively searching for inspiration.

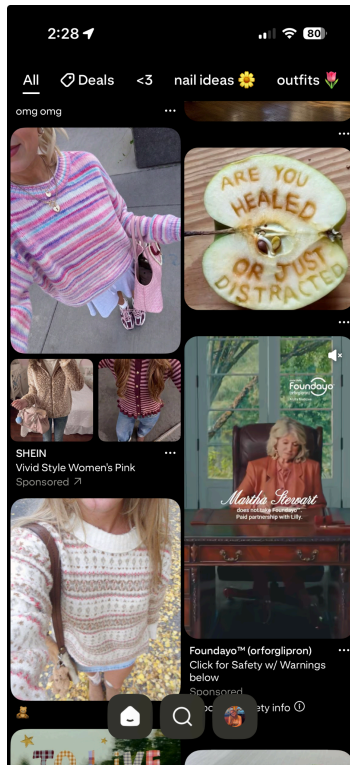
Modify: Modify advertisements so they are more visually distinct from regular Pins.

Put to Another Use: Use ad preference data to give users more control over the types of sponsored content they see.

Eliminate: Eliminate some advertisements to create longer periods of uninterrupted browsing.

Reverse/Rearrange: Instead of inserting advertisements throughout the feed, place sponsored content in specific sections users can intentionally browse.

Idea Worth Pursuing



The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is an “Inspiration Mode” that temporarily reduces the number of advertisements shown while a user is actively searching or browsing for ideas. This could allow Pinterest to continue using advertisements while giving users more control over when those advertisements interrupt their experience.

POV 2: Organization and Interface Changes

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.

Ideation Technique 1: Mind Mapping

For this method, I used mind mapping to break the problem of organizing saved content into smaller areas. I started with Pinterest board organization as the main problem and then considered different features that could make saved content easier to organize and find.

Ideas Generated

- Allow users to automatically sort Pins by date, topic, or recent activity
- Add a search bar within individual Pinterest boards
- Allow users to create folders within boards for more specific organization
- Give users the option to customize how their boards are displayed
- Add filters that allow users to quickly find older saved Pins
- Allow users to select and move multiple Pins at once
- Give users the option to keep familiar layouts when Pinterest updates its interface
- Add an undo option when Pins are accidentally moved or reorganized
- Allow users to pin their most-used boards to the top of their profile
- Create an automatic organization feature that suggests sections based on the content users save

Ideation Technique 2: Crazy 8s

For my second technique, I used Crazy 8s to quickly generate eight different solutions to the organization problem. The purpose of this technique was to think of several possibilities in a short amount of time instead of focusing too much on one solution.

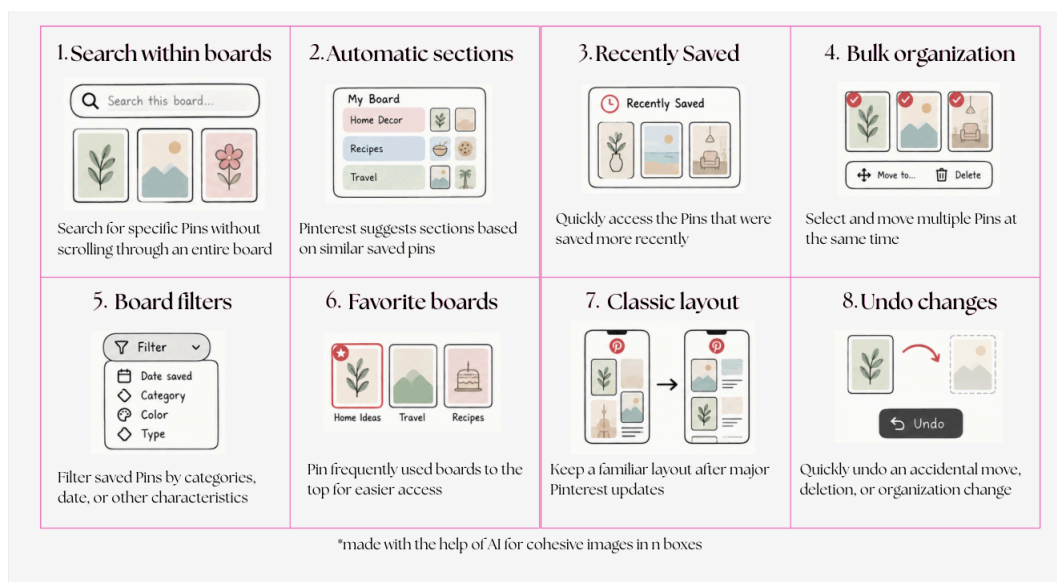
Eight Ideas

1. *Search Within Boards:* Add a search bar that allows users to search for specific Pins within a board.
2. *Automatic Sections:* Pinterest could automatically suggest sections based on similarities between saved Pins.
3. *Recently Saved:* Add a section that automatically displays the user's most recently saved Pins.
4. *Bulk Organization:* Allow users to select multiple Pins and move them into another board or section at once.
5. *Board Filters:* Let users filter saved content by date, category, color, or other characteristics.
6. *Favorite Boards:* Allow users to favorite or pin their most-used boards so they always appear first.

7. *Classic Layout Option:* Give longtime users the option to continue using a familiar layout after major interface updates.
8. *Undo Changes:* Add an undo button when users accidentally move, delete, or reorganize saved content.

Idea Worth Pursuing

The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is a search feature within individual Pinterest boards. Users who save hundreds of Pins may remember what they saved without remembering exactly where it is located. A search feature could make it easier to find older content without scrolling through an entire board and would add functionality without completely changing the interface.



Goodreads

POV 1: Organizing Reading Lists

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.

Ideation Technique 1: Reverse Brainstorming

For this technique, I used reverse brainstorming by first thinking about ways Goodreads could make organizing reading lists even more difficult. After identifying these problems, I reversed each one to generate possible solutions that could make the experience easier for users.

Reverse Problems → Possible Solutions

- *Make users add every book individually* → allow users to select multiple books and add them to a shelf at once
- *Add more steps to the shelving process* → create a one-click option for adding books to commonly used shelves
- *Make users search for every book separately* → allow users to select multiple books directly from search results
- *Make users manually organize every book* → suggest shelves automatically based on genre, author, or reading status
- *Make it difficult to move books between shelves* → add a drag-and-drop feature for moving books
- *Remove sorting options* → allow users to sort shelves by title, author, rating, date added, or reading status
- *Make large shelves harder to navigate* → add filters and a search bar within individual shelves
- *Require users to organize books immediately* → create an “organize later” area where users can temporarily save books before deciding which shelf they belong on

Ideation Technique 2: Brainwriting

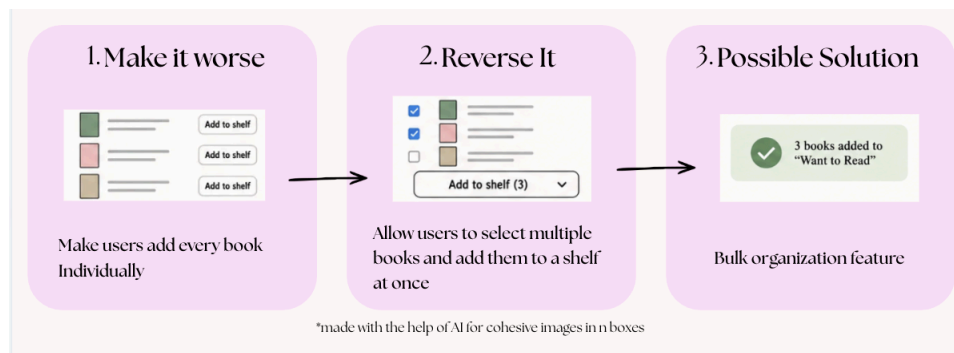
For my second technique, I used brainwriting to generate several possible solutions to the problem individually before comparing and expanding on the ideas. Unlike traditional brainstorming, brainwriting focuses on writing ideas down first, which can make it easier to explore multiple possibilities before choosing one direction.

Ideas Generated

- Add a bulk-select tool that allows users to organize multiple books at once
- Allow users to create custom tags in addition to shelves
- Automatically recommend shelves based on a book's genre
- Add an “Organize Later” section for books that have not been categorized yet
- Allow users to drag and drop books between shelves
- Create smart shelves that automatically group books based on selected criteria
- Allow users to search within their own shelves
- Add filters for genre, author, rating, and reading status
- Allow users to duplicate an existing shelf structure for a new reading challenge or year
- Suggest organization options based on how the user has categorized similar books in the past

Idea Worth Pursuing

The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is a bulk-select organization feature. Goodreads users with large reading lists could select several books at once and move them to a shelf, add a tag, or change their reading status. This could reduce the amount of time spent organizing books individually while keeping users in control of how their reading lists are organized.



POV 2: Rating Books More Accurately

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.

Ideation Technique 1: Worst Possible Idea

For this technique, I intentionally generated ideas that would make the Goodreads rating experience worse or more difficult. Thinking about unrealistic or frustrating solutions helped me identify what users actually need from a rating system and inspired more practical solutions.

Worst Ideas --> Better Solutions

- Only allow users to rate books as good or bad --> give users more rating options instead of fewer
- Remove star ratings completely --> keep the familiar star system while making it more flexible
- Require users to write a full review before leaving a rating --> allow users to express their opinion quickly without requiring written feedback
- Allow only 1-, 3-, or 5-star ratings --> add more precise rating choices
- Make users answer several questions before rating a book --> keep the rating process simple and quick
- Automatically choose a rating for the user --> let users remain completely in control of their ratings
- Make ratings permanent once submitted --> allow users to change their rating if their opinion changes
- Hide a user's previous ratings --> make past ratings easy to access so users can compare books

Ideation Technique 2: Analogies

For my second technique, I looked at other familiar rating systems and considered how similar ideas could be applied to Goodreads. Using analogies helped me think beyond

Goodreads' current whole-star system and consider different ways users could express more detailed opinions.

Ideas Generated

Half-star ratings: Similar to rating systems that allow decimals, Goodreads could allow ratings such as 3.5 or 4.5 stars

10-point scale: Users could rate books from 1–10 for more precise ratings

Percentage rating: Users could give a book a score such as 85%

Reaction labels: Ratings could include options such as “Loved It,” “Liked It,” “It Was Okay,” or “Not for Me”

Category ratings: Users could separately rate elements such as characters, plot, writing, romance, or pacing

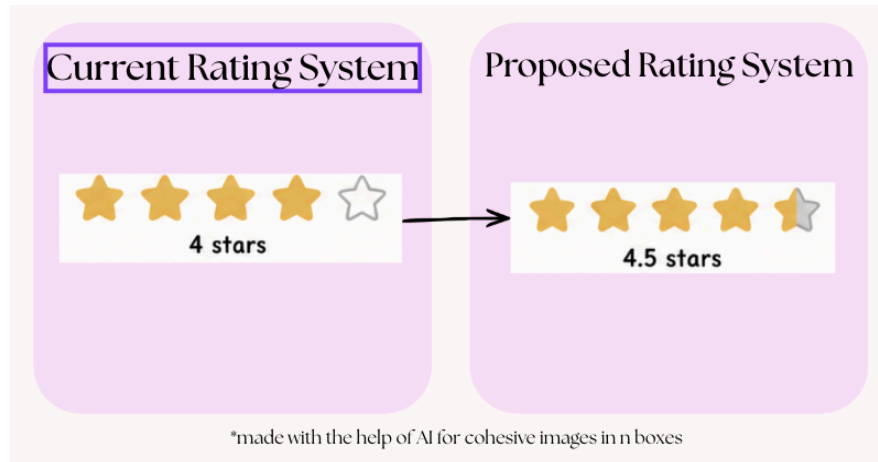
Slider rating: Users could move a slider between 1 and 5 rather than choosing only whole stars

Favorite designation: Users could add a heart or “favorite” label in addition to their numerical rating

Mood/reaction tags: Users could add reactions such as emotional, funny, surprising, or slow-paced alongside their rating

Idea Worth Pursuing

The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is half-star ratings. This would keep the rating system Goodreads users are already familiar with while giving them more flexibility when their opinion falls between two whole-star ratings. It would also directly address the user feedback from my original research asking for a more accurate way to rate books.



TikTok

POV 1: Organizing Saved Videos

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.

Ideation Technique 1: How Might We & Rapid Ideation

For this technique, I turned the POV statement into a How Might We question and used it to quickly generate possible solutions. I focused on generating different ways users could find and organize saved videos without worrying about whether every idea would become a final feature.

How Might We Question: How might we make it easier for TikTok users to find and organize videos they have previously saved?

Ideas Generated

- Add a search bar specifically for saved videos
- Allow users to search for keywords within their collections
- Automatically categorize saved videos based on their content
- Allow users to create folders within collections
- Add filters for creator, date saved, topic, and video length
- Allow users to sort videos by newest or oldest
- Suggest collections when a user saves a video
- Allow users to add custom tags to saved videos
- Create a “Recently Saved” section
- Allow users to favorite certain collections so they appear first
- Add an option to select and move multiple saved videos at once
- Let users search for a creator within their saved content

Ideation Technique 2: Storyboarding

For my second technique, I used storyboarding to imagine the steps a user would take when trying to find a TikTok they had previously saved. This helped me consider the problem from the user's perspective and visualize how a new search feature could simplify the experience.

Storyboard

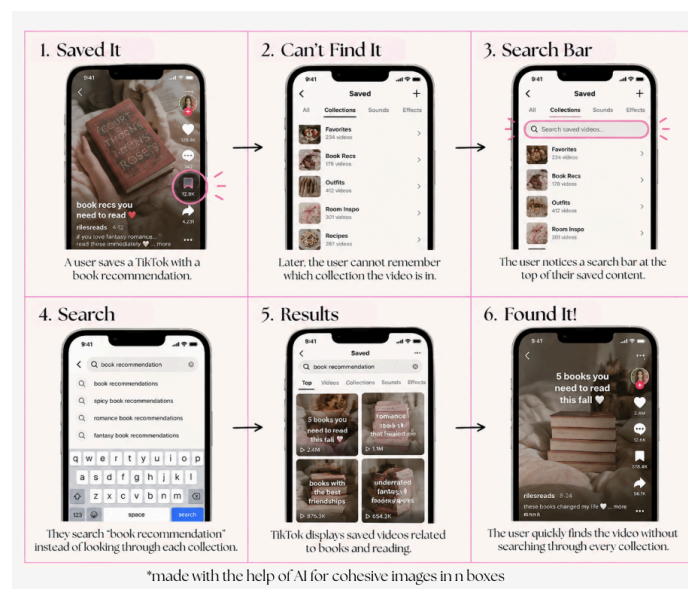
- 1. The Problem:* A user remembers saving a TikTok with a book recommendation several months ago but cannot remember which collection it is in
- 2. Current Experience:* The user opens their saved videos and begins scrolling through several different collections trying to find it
- 3. New Feature:* The user sees a search bar at the top of their saved content
- 4. Search:* They type “book recommendation” into the search bar
- 5. Results:* TikTok searches the user's saved videos and displays videos related to books and reading

6. *Success:* The user quickly finds the video they were looking for without searching through every collection

Idea Worth Pursuing

The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is a search bar for saved videos and collections. This directly addresses the difficulty users experience when trying to find older saved content and would not require users to completely change the way they currently organize their videos. It could also include filters to narrow results by creator, date, or collection.

This idea connects directly to my original research because one of the reviews I analyzed specifically suggested adding a search bar for saved collections, while another suggested better organization within collection.



POV 2: Maintaining Connections

TikTok users who regularly interact with friends and creators need a reliable way to stay connected because technical issues and account restrictions can unexpectedly interrupt those connections.

Ideation Technique 1: Assumption Busting

For this technique, I identified assumptions about how users currently stay connected on TikTok and challenged each one. Questioning these assumptions helped me consider features that could make connections more reliable when users experience technical problems or account restrictions.

Assumptions --> New Ideas

- Users will always have access to their account --> give users a way to recover their connections after regaining account access
- Following someone is enough to maintain a connection --> allow users to mark certain accounts as favorite or priority connections
- Users will know when an account becomes unavailable --> clearly notify users when an account they follow is temporarily unavailable rather than making it appear to have disappeared
- Technical problems will resolve themselves --> give users clear status updates when a connection is affected by a technical issue
- Users remember the usernames of everyone they follow --> provide an accessible history of recently followed or frequently interacted-with accounts
- All account restrictions are permanent --> clearly distinguish between temporary restrictions, technical errors, and permanent account removals
- Users understand why they lost access to someone --> provide clearer feedback explaining what happened when a connection is interrupted
- There is no need to restore connections --> create a recovery feature that helps users restore previous connections after an account issue is resolved

Ideation Technique 2: What If?

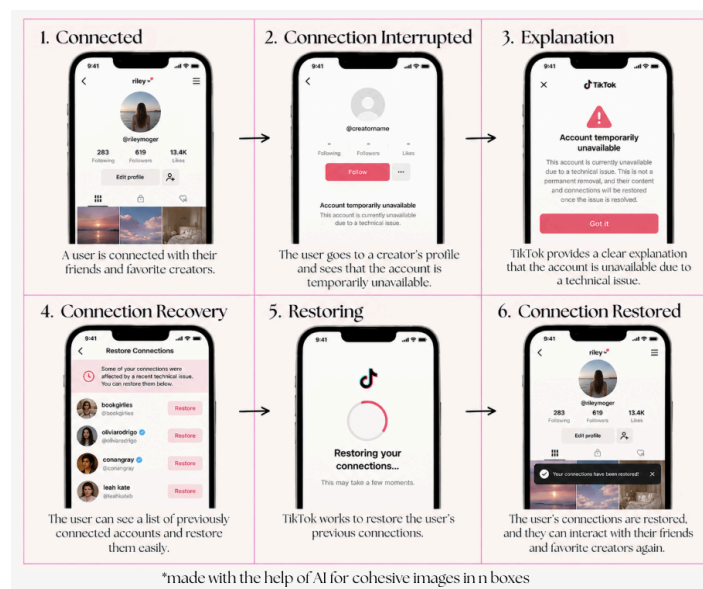
For my second technique, I used “What If?” questions to imagine ways TikTok could handle interrupted connections differently. This allowed me to explore possibilities beyond the platform's current design.

What If? Ideas

- What if TikTok automatically restored connections that were lost because of a technical error?
- What if users could see a list of accounts they recently interacted with?
- What if users received an explanation when an account they followed suddenly became unavailable?
- What if users could favorite important creators or friends so they were easier to find again?
- What if TikTok created a temporary connection history when an account was restricted?
- What if users could receive an alert when a temporarily unavailable account became active again?
- What if TikTok showed whether an interrupted connection was caused by a technical problem or an account restriction?
- What if users could recover their previous following list after resolving an account issue?

Idea Worth Pursuing

The idea I would be most interested in pursuing is a connection recovery feature. If users lose connections because of a technical issue or temporary account restriction, TikTok could keep a record of their previous connections and make it easier to restore them once the issue is resolved. Clear feedback about why a connection was interrupted could also prevent users from being confused about what happened.



Final Findings and Reflection

After using different ideation techniques for all six POV statements, I found that some methods worked better for certain problems than others. Using multiple techniques also showed me how differently one problem can be approached depending on the method being used. Instead of immediately choosing the first solution that came to mind, the techniques encouraged me to generate more possibilities before deciding which ideas were worth pursuing. This reflects the purpose of ideation in UX, which is to generate a broad range of ideas before evaluating and narrowing them down. Nielsen Norman Group explains that ideation focuses on quantity rather than immediately determining the quality of each idea, giving designers a larger pool of potential solutions to explore.

Most Useful Technique

The technique I found most useful was storyboarding. Creating a sequence showing a user's problem, interaction with a possible solution, and final outcome made it easier for me to imagine how a feature would actually work instead of only describing it. This was especially helpful for the TikTok saved-video problem because I could visualize how a user might go from struggling to find an old video to using a search feature and finding it quickly. Storyboards are commonly used in UX to visualize experiences in chronological panels and can help designers understand how users may interact with a feature.

I also found Crazy 8s useful because it forced me to consider several possible solutions rather than spending too much time developing my first idea. The Interaction Design Foundation describes Crazy 8s as a technique in which eight ideas are rapidly sketched in eight panels, encouraging designers to focus on generating ideas quickly rather than perfecting them.

Ideas Worth Pursuing

Several ideas from the exercises stood out as solutions I would want to explore further. For Pinterest, an Inspiration Mode could reduce interruptions from advertisements while users

are actively searching for ideas, while a search-within-boards feature could make large collections easier to navigate. For Goodreads, bulk organization could reduce the amount of time users spend adding books individually, while half-star ratings could give readers a more accurate way to express their opinions. For TikTok, a saved-video search feature could make older content easier to find, while a connection recovery feature could help users restore connections interrupted by technical issues.

Although these ideas would still need to be prototyped and tested with users before being implemented, ideation helped narrow a much larger group of possibilities into concepts that directly address the needs identified in the original POV statements.

Research/Sources

Understanding Ideation Techniques

Ideation is the process of generating a broad range of possible solutions to a design problem before evaluating which ideas should move forward. Rather than immediately focusing on feasibility, ideation encourages designers to explore different possibilities and avoid becoming attached to the first solution they develop. Nielsen Norman Group notes that ideation should emphasize generating a large quantity of ideas before evaluating them.

Different ideation techniques provide structure for approaching problems in different ways. Brainstorming encourages rapid idea generation, while methods such as mind mapping help designers visualize relationships between ideas. Crazy 8s encourages rapid sketching, and SCAMPER uses prompts such as Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Rearrange to reconsider an existing product or experience. Storyboarding provides another approach by visually showing a user's experience through a sequence of events.

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