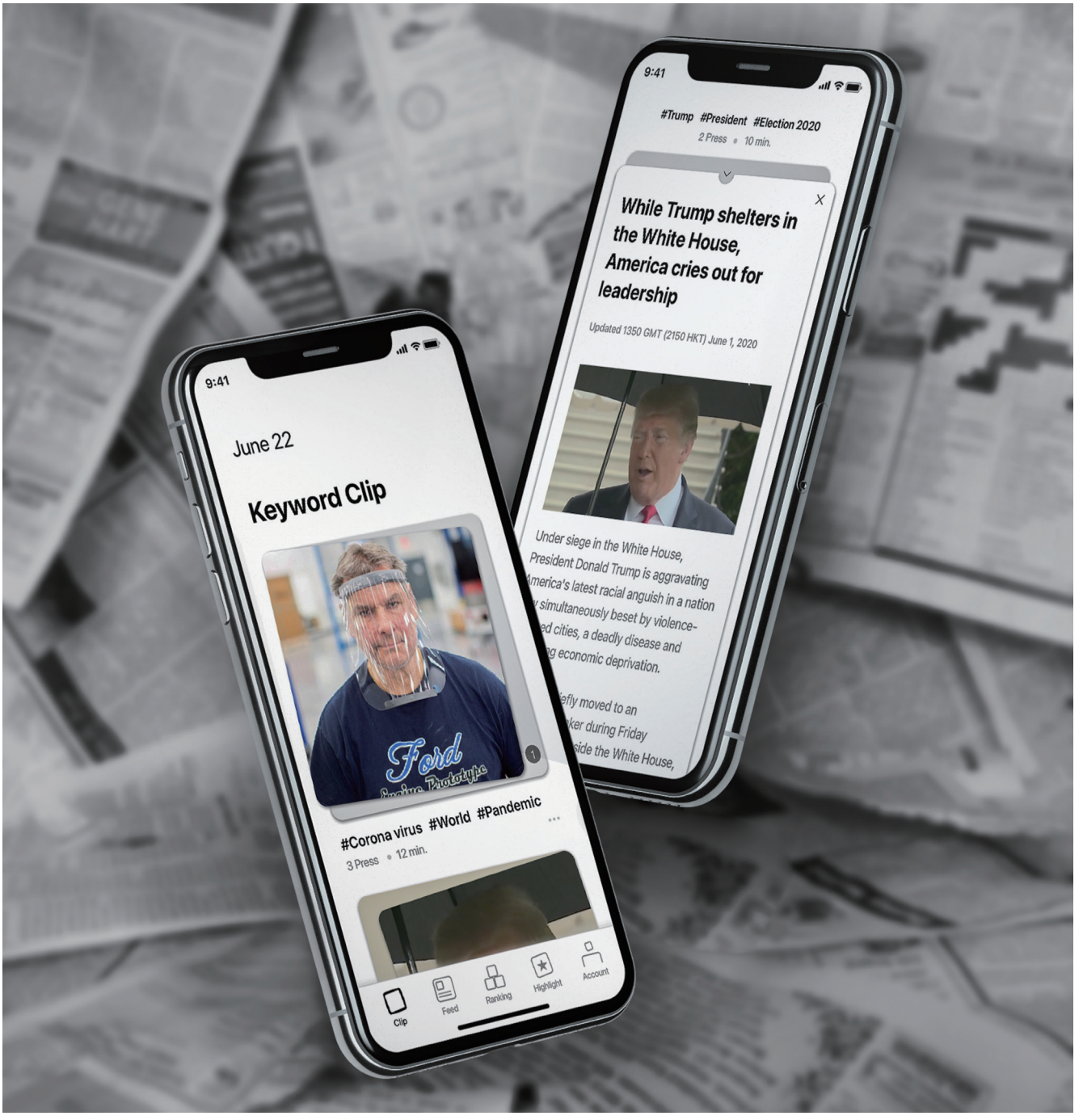
UnSlant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June 22
Keyword Clip
#Corona virus #World #Pandemic
3 Press • 12 min.
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#Trump #President #Election 2020
2 Press • 10 min.
While Trump shelters in the White House, America cries out for leadership
Updated 1350 GMT (2150 HKT) June 1, 2020
Under siege in the White House,
President Donald Trump is aggravating
America's latest racial anguish in a nation
simultaneously beset by violence-
ed cities, a deadly disease and
economic deprivation.

UnSlant

Byeongkuk's Letter

My long and long undergraduate life ended at last. During taking the senior courses - Creative Design I & II, I proceeded with an independent project with a professor. Sustaining the project freely without other colleagues gives an oppressive feeling which becomes a kind of both burdens and good motivation. I felt that I finally did it right once as a student by graduation courses and Design Show exhibition.

I hope my chronicle - graduation work story - relieves someone’s frustration and anxiety who is in a similar situation.

UnSlant

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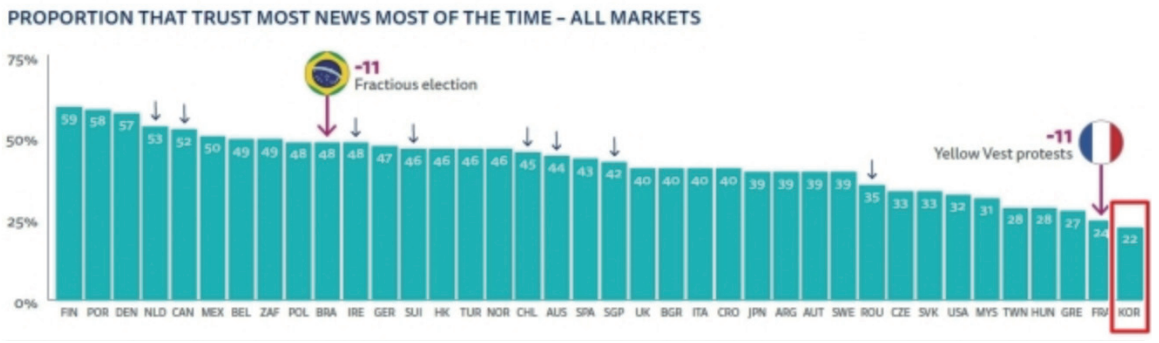
The verb "*slant*" means that having or being influenced by a subjective point of view, bias, or personal feelings.

UnSlant is a paid news reader app that fosters people to get a balanced viewpoint.

Prologue

I want to start my chronicle with my personal experience that you can sympathize with. When I get older, my friends or people who I met in society checked my preference of political party by asking directly or throwing political ridicule/joke away. This political preference is quite polarized, so people were split by their preferences. The action of asking my political preference is a kind of ritual or censorship step to accept as a member of a group. I did not like political issues and had no interest in that issue. When people knew my status, they persuaded me by talking “why the other party is wrong”, not “my party is working well for nation”. They are accustomed to being furious and hate the opposite stance. It was an interesting but upsetting moment because friends or even family members could not talk about policy or domestic situations because of conflict. I think the ultimate goal of politics is to make good decision-making for the nation, but why politicians and supporters blame other views and rights? I found that one big reason is the press which publish extreme views rather than fact or constructive suggestion. Of course, political stance may be different but blaming others is not the solution for better future.

Unfortunately, this situation links to the news samely. When readers see bad quality article, people call the journalist Giregi, a combination word of trash and journalist in Korean. The press and journalists rather write provocative and fake news than article with quality journalism. The word Giregi shows prevailed image of low trust journalism. As you can see in the chart below, Korea has the lowest news trust among 38 nations. It is the reality that how the public recognize journalism.



Korea, the lowest news trust among 38 nations

Research was proceeded by Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in 2019. In 2020, Korea is also the lowest news trust nation among 40 nations.

Background

From my own experiences of daily life, i set some problem points of journalism. These are what we can find easily because they are environments and phenomenon we can see easily. These points can be good starting points to narrow down what i solve.

Environment

Rise of online news media

With the development of the internet, people can read news whenever and wherever they want. News readers can read the hard copies on the internet in real-time. The individual press made their own websites and news portal homepage handles with various articles at once.

Algorithms for personal taste

Nowadays, most online services customize content based on individuals' choices and taste with deep learning and artificial intelligence. Without putting effort on search, users can access contents that they interest in.

The credibility of the press is dwindling Phenomenon

Compared with traditional newspapers, online news can be written and exposed fast and easily. In this situation, fake news and provocative articles - have not checked the fact or slanted viewpoint yet - are consumed by readers. So, the credibility of the press is dwindling.

Filter bubble

Because of personalized algorithms, readers become separated easily from information that disagrees with their viewpoints, effectively isolating them in their own cultural or ideological bubbles. This problem, filter bubble, accelerates the slanted view of news readers.

Byeongkuk Kwak

Desk Research

To understand the systemic reasons of the previous environment and phenomenon, desk research proceeded. The points of this research are (1) the problem of the news system, (2) good cases of news-related services, and (3) the real voices of people in the news field via interview.

Research #1 *The problem of the news system*

Referenced documents or articles said that the news industry could not follow the development of technology. Readers can get more interesting information such as video or new media content, so they do not need to access news legacy.

As portal websites dominate news platforms, the profit structure of legacy news changed from selling paper news to click rate from news portal website. Legacy news companies had to repeat to make short and provocative content for their profit. The more press induces readers, the more profits are brought by advertisement. In this situation, readers have to be interrupted by lots of advertisement banners and images in the article. This profit structure of the news system hinders news quality and user experience simultaneously.

Charge Type	Hard Paywall	Metered Paywall	Premium	Patron/Subscription
Press	WSJ MEDIAPART	The New York Times wp	POLITICO	The Guardian PROPUBLICA
Strength	Specialization Speed/Quality	Common Themes Various platform service	Law Tech	Quality Journalism Truth with readers
Price	High Price	Low Price	Very High	Up to users

Online profit structure of legacy news

Based on individual strength and customer strategies, legacy news companies charge the value of news in various ways. There are hard paywall, metered paywall, premium, patron, and subscription.

Service	M	HUFFPOST	PUBLY
Properties	Good UX for writing High quality contents Clap - incentive function	Community playground Closed blogger contents	Subscription Funding system to publish

Service	BOOK JOURNALISM	.face	NEW NEEK
Properties	Publishing contents as book With experts	Minority contents Patron, subscription	News letter contents For 20s Summarized and fun news

Other new media services targeting various needs

These example companies have their own properties different from existing legacy news. Medium and Huffpost focused on community interacting with other users. The others were operated by patron and subscription. Each service offers information the users want in various types such as series of posts, books, videos, and summarized newsletters.

Research #2 *Good cases of news-related services*

Then, how about other foreign news press which applies the charging system? In the case of legacy news, they prove the value of their news and get proper money as paywall, membership, patron, and subscription system. Other new media use subscription and membership models. Especially, Medium gives a wonderful interface to write and read articles and earn money with a closed and rich content platform.

Interview

Three times of interviews proceeded to get the real voice of related people. Interviewees are journalist, 20s student who compares several articles, and digital literacy expert. The journalist said that extreme view of article is frequently utilized to make lots of money. It linked to the reader's pain point that it is quite hard to distinguish whether the content is fact or polarized opinion. Lastly, digital literacy expert mentioned that persistent situation makes hard to recover quality journalism.

Insights

During the desk research and interview, low trust of news is strongly related to the profit structure of press. Their click rate is amount of influence, so it correlates with advertisement profit. It reinforces journalists to write polarized or provocative articles to induce readers.

In terms of readers, they are exposed to polarized news article by themselves or not. Internet environment recommends what they like and people instinctively want to read what they more agree with. If they do not have opportunity to read other viewpoints, quality journalism is useless though journalists write good articles.

Goals

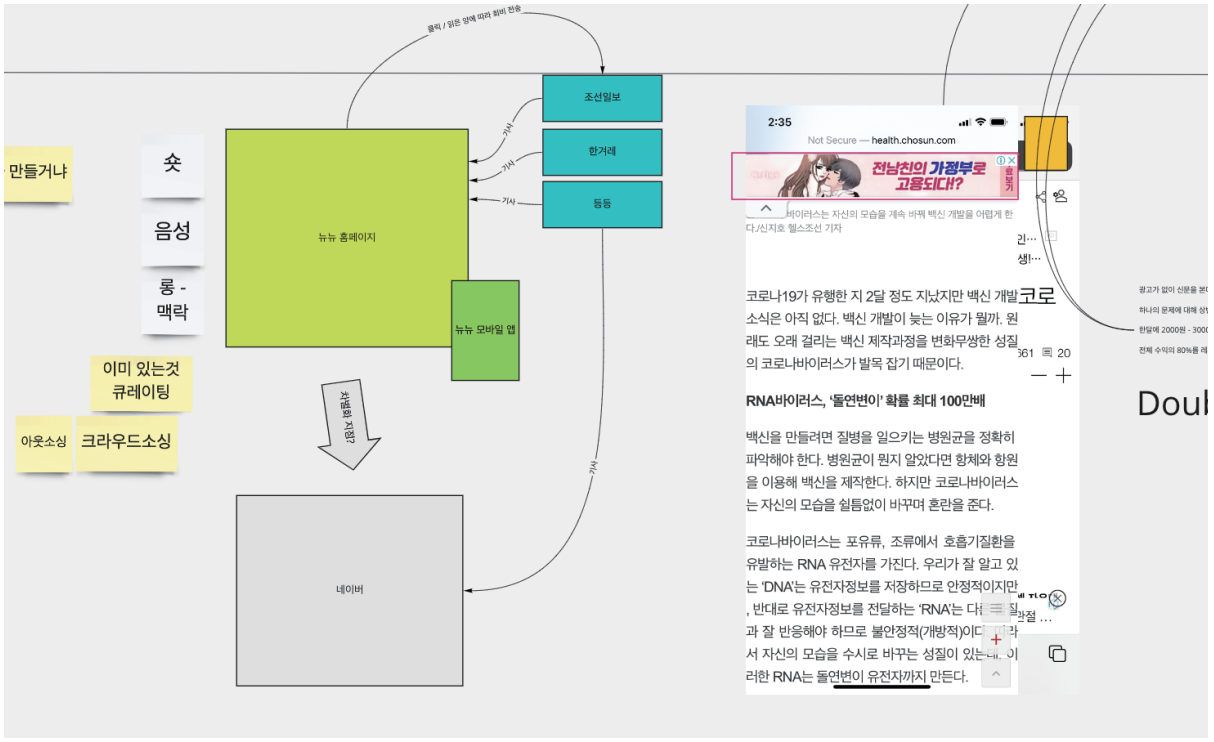
So, the service concept focuses on how to decrease extreme views and polarization of news. This service will target both readers and journalists as double-sided market. New charging system, clean reading interface, meaningful interaction between them are key points of this service. Also, this service has to think about digital literacy for change the recognition and consuming culture for better journalism.

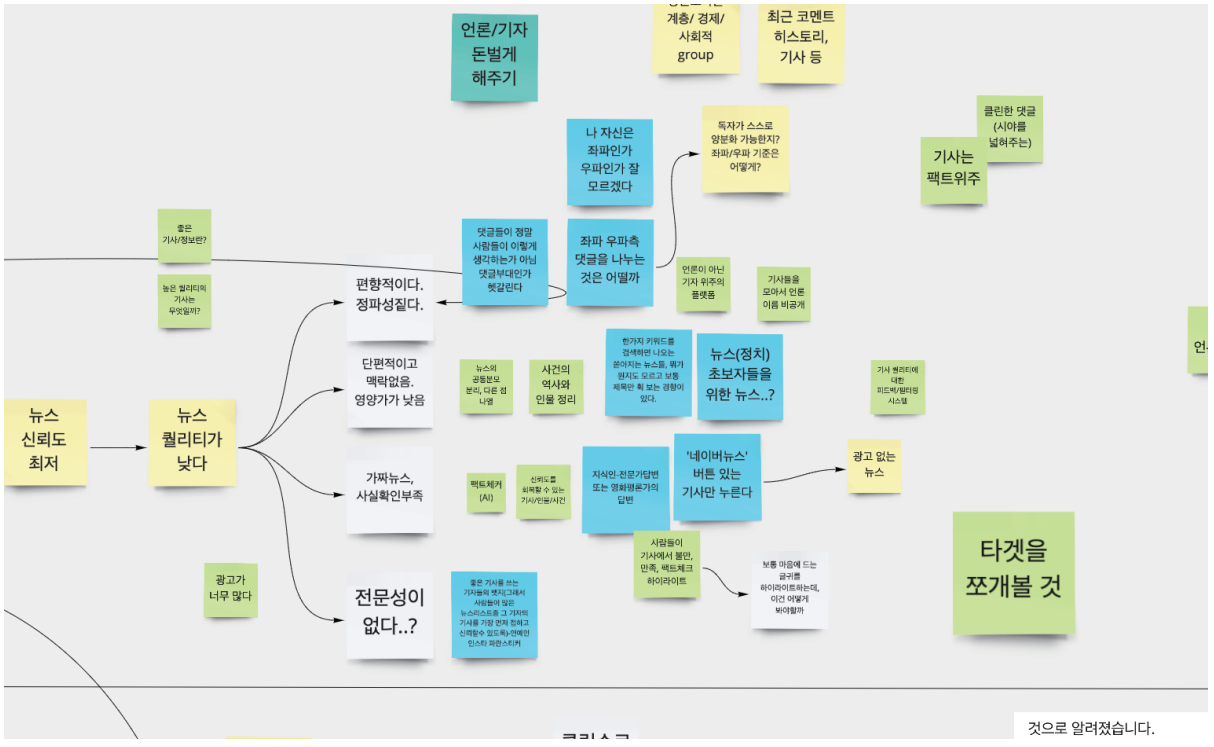
Ideation

At that time, I was a kind of desk research addicted. Whenever i searched something, new problem or solutions that other already tried appeared. This repetition makes me go deeper and wider. I persisted desk reasearch only. Professor mentioned that “We are a designer and we cannot research all day long. Please stop searching and why don’t you converge what you have found and ideate something?”

From this step, I tried to narrow down my problem scope (It’s really important) and ideate possible solutions. Also, I considered service design blueprint and business model which makes my system reasonable and solves core problem, monetary circumstance of news industry.

During repeating ideation, I thought that we have set polarized view before reading the articles. That moment is when we see the name of press. From this point, the direction of service started to clarify.





것으로 알려졌습니다.

Go back and forth between problem and solution space

During the Ideation period, I repeated set problem and solution several times. Professor mentioned that it is a key process of designing something. It was really helpful. I also want to say thank you to my colleagues Ilhee and Seongbeom to give their idea.

Direction

To achieve this, I set my challenge as preventing extreme views or polarization of news. And my core target users are people who want to try to get balanced sight from articles and have a willingness to pay for quality content.

Features

The first one is communication between readers and journalists/editors. By highlighting like Medium, readers and journalists can communicate with each other. The second idea is sorting/curating replies and give different viewpoints after showing related facts. To prevent a lopsided view of the event, clearly arranged will be given and users can only see the sorted results. The last idea is a blind system. By using anonymity, users can read articles without political views and stances. It will be helpful to get quality and insights of news well.

After that, I started to write service documentation and draw business models and service design blueprint. During this stage, I could also look around byproducts such as user data or interactions of my service.

Service Documentation

Description

과도한 정파성, 확인되지 않은 사실, 복제된 글들이 남발하는 뉴스 생태계.
특정 주제에 대한 뉴스들의 저자(언론 및 기자)를 익명으로 설정해,
사용자로 하여금 편견없이 뉴스를 소비하고 다양한 스펙트럼의 시선을 조회함으로써
공통된 사실을 추론하게 하고 이를 기반으로 현 상황에 대한 판단을 내리도록 한다.

Values

#퀄리티_저널리즘 #디지털_리터러시

#편향과_갈등_해소 #뉴스_신뢰_회복

Features

편견을 없애는 익명의 언론/기자.
사용자들은 뉴스를 끝까지 내려보기 전에 언론 및 기자의 이름을 알 수 없다. 기사의 끝부분에서 사용자들은 그 정보를 직접 확인할 수 있다. 이 기능은 계정 설정에서 해제 및 특정 언론 선택/제외가 가능하다.

뉴스의 절과 다양성이 보장되는 콘텐츠 스펙트럼 관리. 사용자가 설정한 언론 이외의 뉴스들은 소비자의 편향을 막고 다양한 시선을 제공하기 위해 스펙트럼을 아우르는 뉴스가 선별되어 제공된다. 또한, 출처, 내용, 단순 복제 뉴스들은 필터링을 통해 제거된다.

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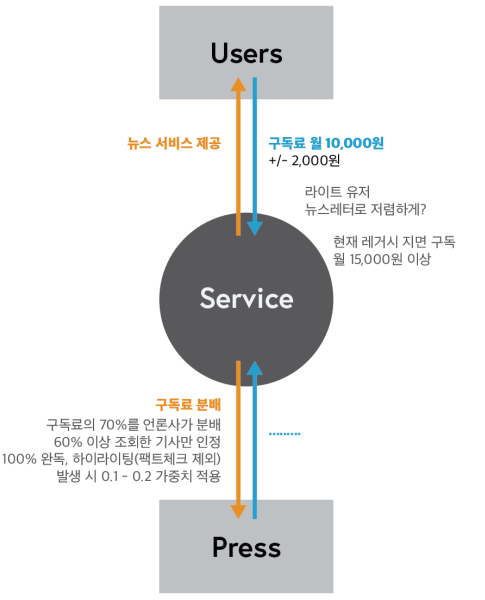
여론과 소통의 창구, 하이라이트.
기사를 읽는 도중, 마음에 드는 구절, 기사의 포인트, 언론/기자에게 후속 보도 요청을 하고 싶다면 하이라이트 기능을 사용해 표시할 수 있다. 기사를 읽는 도중 Top highlight를 조회할 수 있으며, 이는 하이라이트 피드에서 모아서 볼 수 있다.

이슈와 관련된 자료 함께 제공. 이슈와 관련된 데이터, 법, 정책 문서, 외신의 내용들은 사용자들이 의문점을 해결하고 객관적 판단을 내리는 데 도움을 줄 수 있는 자료들이다. 언론의 손을 거치지 않은 자료들을 정리하여 해당 이슈 뉴스들과 함께 스와이프하여 볼 수 있도록 배치한다.

이슈 별로 스크롤, 터치, 앤 스와이프.
특정 이슈와 관련된 뉴스들이 한꺼번에 모여있어서 일일이 찾아보지 않고 옆으로 스와이프만 하면 같은 주제의 다른 뉴스를 바로 볼 수 있다.

Business Model

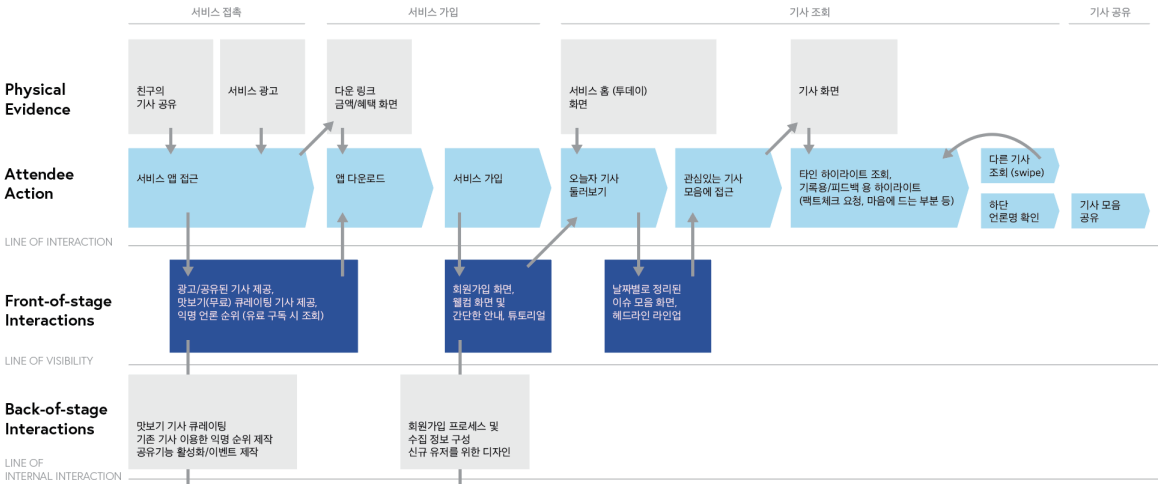


추가 수익 아이디어

서비스에서 얻은 소비자 데이터 판매
(데이터 가격 정보 필요)

모바일 기반 웹 플랫폼 제공

Service Design Blueprint



Clarify service documentation, business model and service blueprint

In this step, I wrote service descriptions in simple sentences, values, and features. This was a good step to adjust and set the direction of service. With this information, I could easily imagine a business model and a service blueprint with an understanding of the relationship between service, readers, and press/journalist.

Prototype

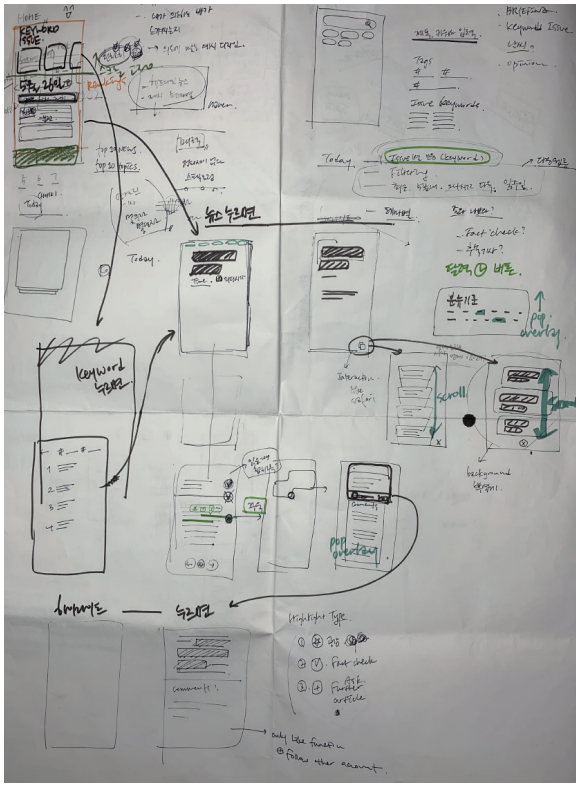
Based on the insight and direction, I made low fidelity prototype of the application idea by drawing. And then it moved to the service “Adobe XD" and developed to "Framer” to add simple animation and interaction. With this high-fidelity prototype, I could communicate effectively with expected target users to check whether service functions are feasible.

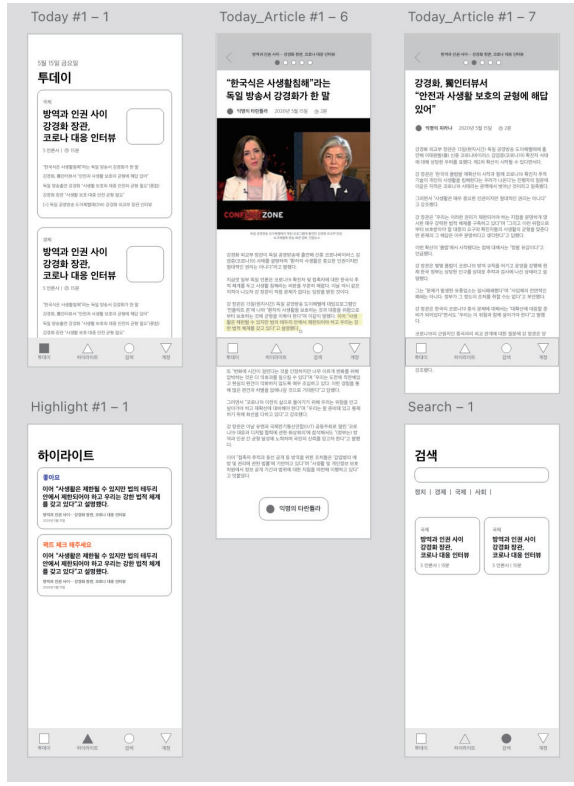
Validation

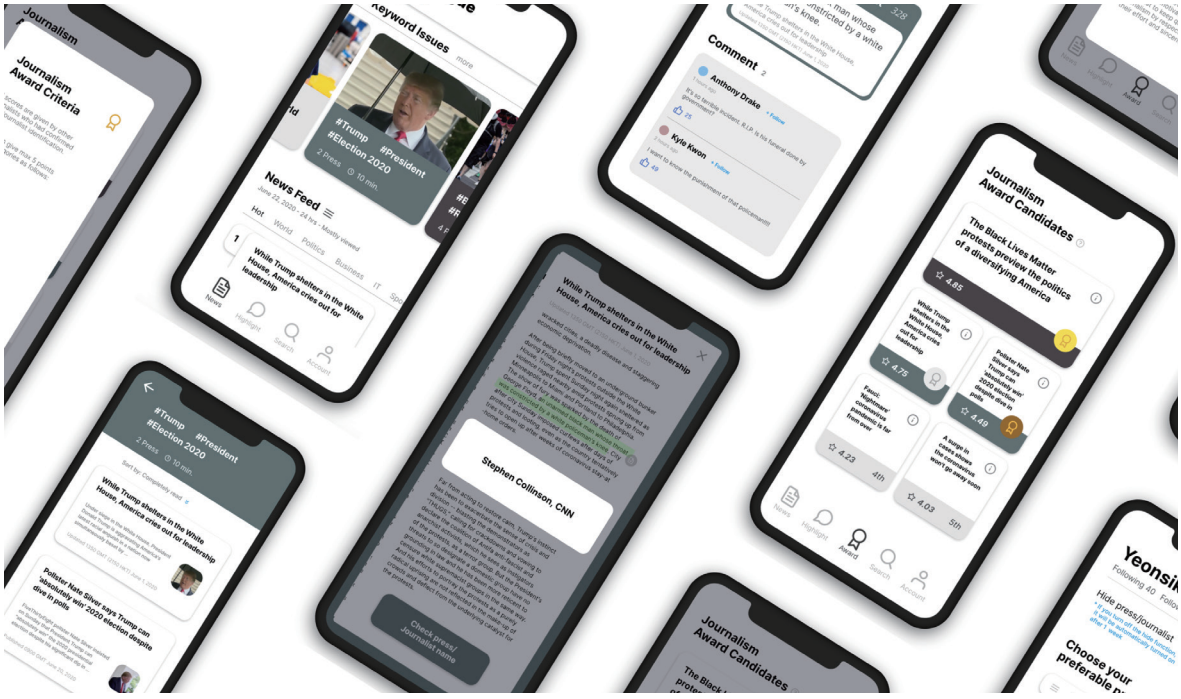
I interviewed 3 experts and 2 target users to get some feedbacks. Experts pointed users’ paint points because my service is not contents generator and making money comes from satisfying pain points critically. In the case of target users, they said that the service needs a more powerful value to charge money. They were interested in this concept, but charging money needs a more meaningful vision or message.

Visual motif

In the case of service visual concept, I reference Medium and Apple News a lot in terms of color and UX/UI. Medium is famous writing and reading content application that has a clear and attractive user interface. Also, Its calm and tranquil atmosphere and distinct font are perfect for users who want to read lots of letters.







Prototype development from low to high fidelity

When I tried to draw my service, it was quite hard and vast. Professor advised me to draw it on the paper and revise it several times before using software such as Adobe XD. During these activities, I could relieve my anxiety about progress. I hope someone tries to draw it on paper first, rather than on the computer.

Outcome

During Creative Design II course, I developed visual components and set a more clear direction for this service. This is my outcome which is displayed during the graduation exhibition.

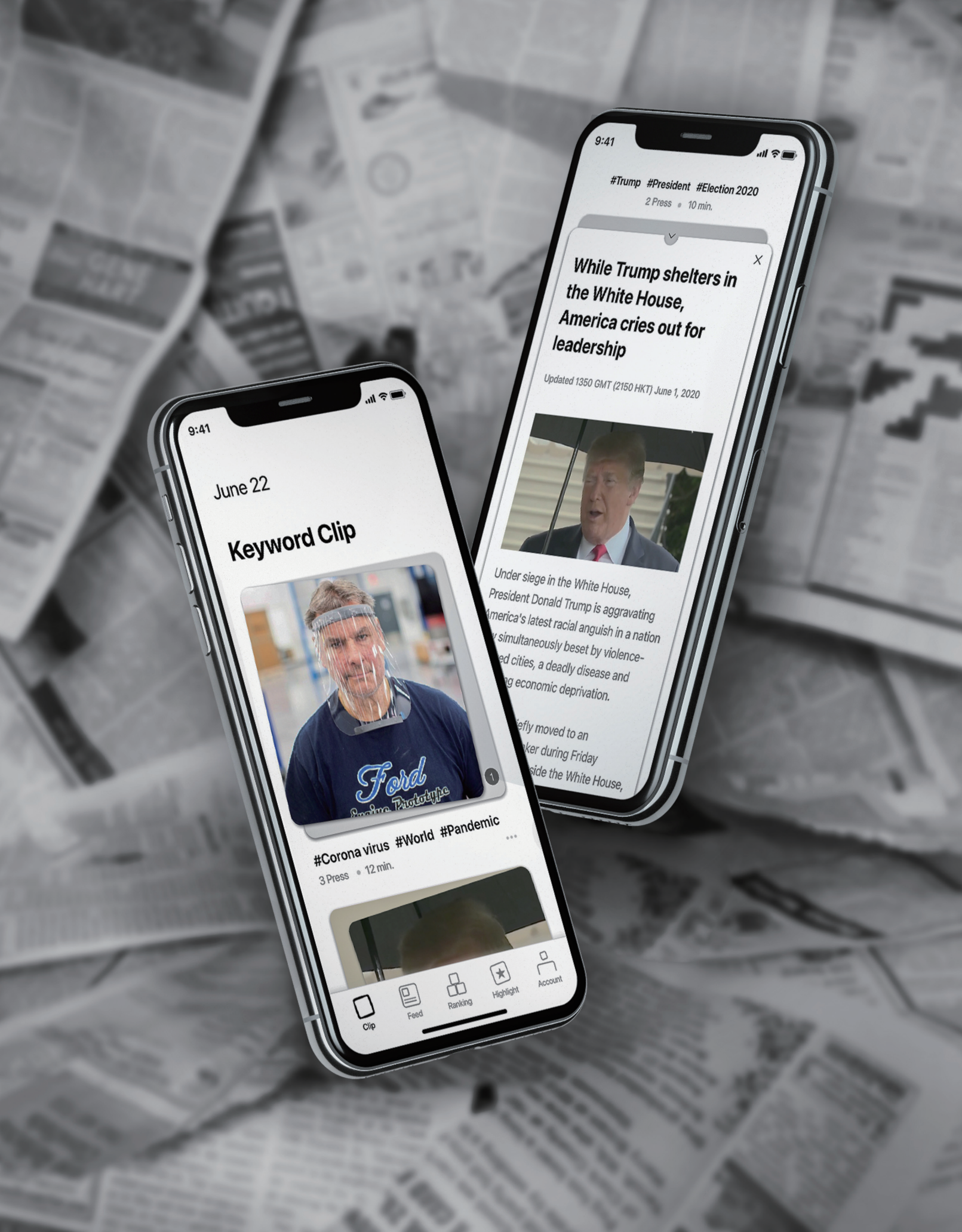
UnSlant: A paid news reader app that fosters balanced viewpoint

UnSlant helps news readers gain a balanced view on the current issues by showing news articles without the name of the press and the reporter and allowing you to explore different viewpoints on the similar topics. The press takes a profit by the amount of sentences which have been read. That profit derives from subscription fee by news readers. This service directs that both readers and journalist feel value of quality journalism simultaneously.

Main features

1. Anonymity of press

Anonymizing news media and journalists prevents you from consuming the news with a bias. Readers have an option to check it out once they've finished reading one. At the bottom section of article, you can see the button 'Check the press & journalist'.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June 22
Keyword Clip
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3 Press • 12 min.
Clip
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Ranking
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#Trump #President #Election 2020
2 Press • 10 min.
While Trump shelters in the White House, America cries out for leadership
Updated 1350 GMT (2150 HKT) June 1, 2020
Under siege in the White House,
President Donald Trump is aggravating
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simultaneously beset by violence-
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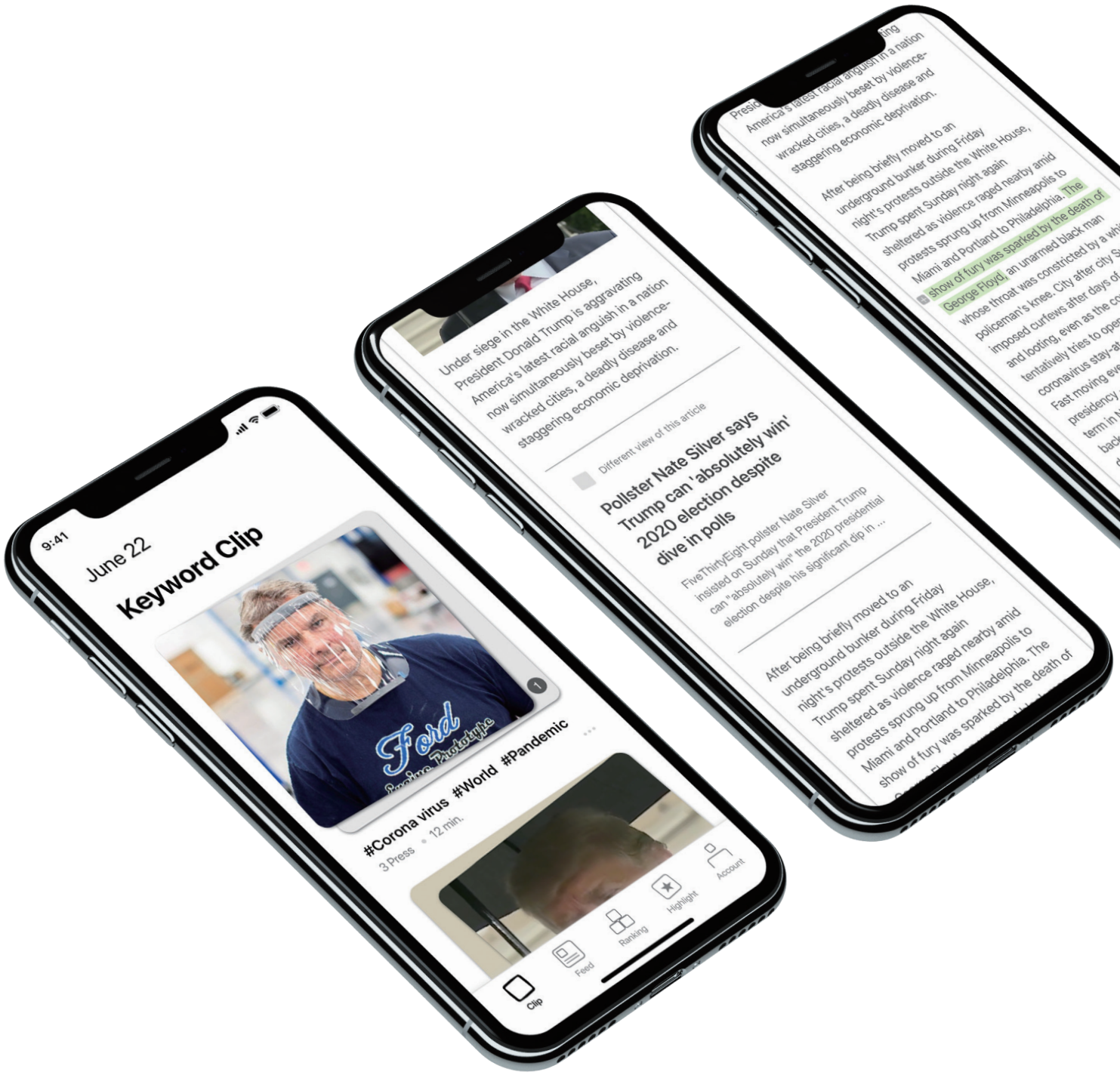
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Keyword Clip
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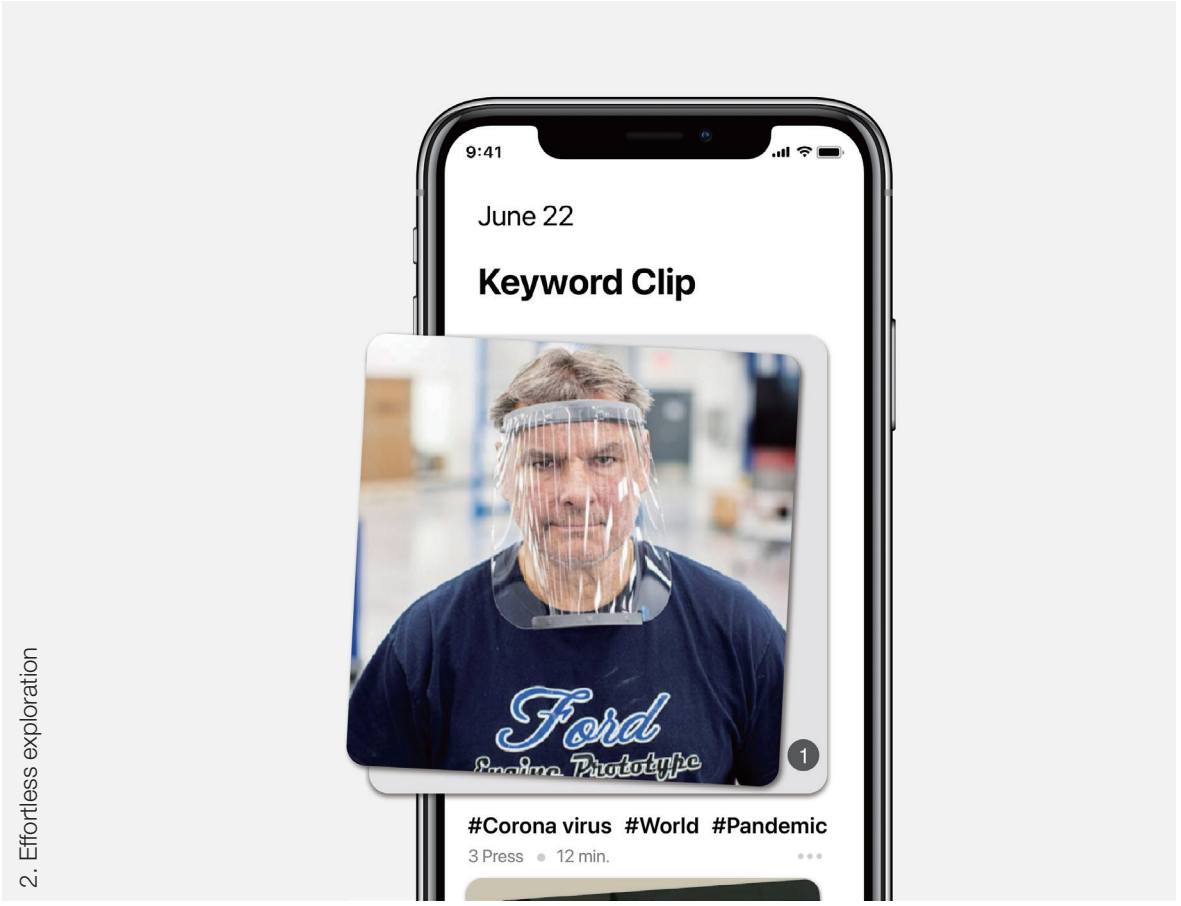
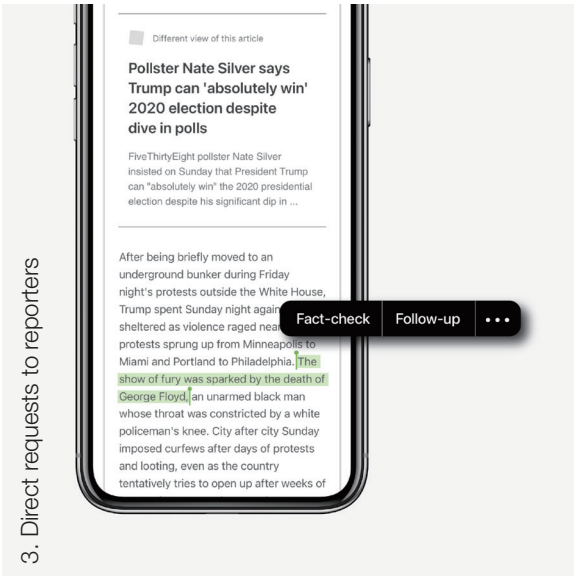
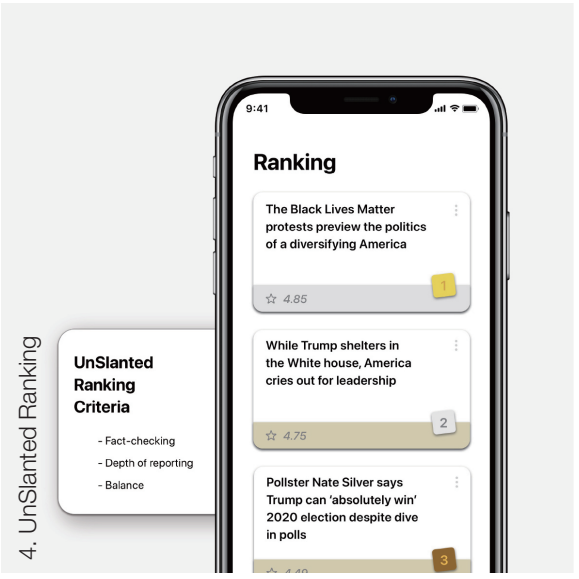
Under siege in the White House, President Donald Trump is aggravating America's latest racial anguish in a nation now simultaneously beset by violence-wracked cities, a deadly disease and staggering economic deprivation.
Different view of this article
Pollster Nate Silver says Trump can 'absolutely win' 2020 election despite dive in polls
FiveThirtyEight pollster Nate Silver insisted on Sunday that President Trump can "absolutely win" the 2020 presidential election despite his significant dip in ...
After being briefly moved to an underground bunker during Friday night's protests outside the White House, Trump spent Sunday night again sheltered as violence raged nearby amid protests sprung up from Minneapolis to Miami and Portland to Philadelphia. The show of fury was sparked by the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man whose throat was constricted by a white policeman's knee. City after city Sunda imposed curfews after days of prote and looting, even as the country tentatively tries to open up a coronavirus stay-at-hom Fast moving events le presidency -- and term in Nove backdrop dead

Anonymity of press

Before reading an article or getting information, we can not avoid seeing the name of the press and journalists. UnSlant erases all names of them and curates related articles at once. So, readers can read it without prejudice derived by its name.







Ideas based on good news culture and sustainability

Actually, reading the opposite viewpoint is not that easy and fun thing. So, UnSlant service handles easy, fun, and kind interaction and communication for not only decreasing polarization but also enjoying news culture with monetary sustainability.

2. Effortless exploration

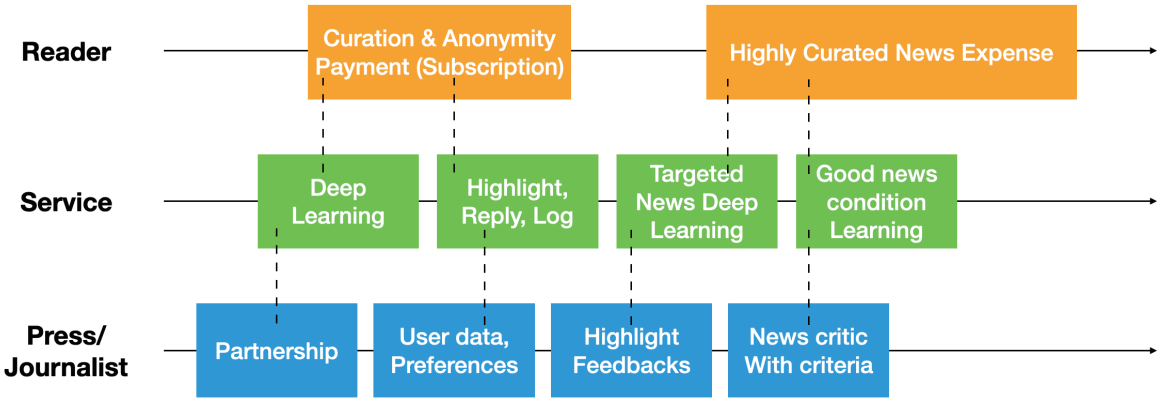
UnSlant visually slants a group of article if readers have not explores the various viewpoints about an issue, which nudges you to explore other articles with differing views.

3. Direct requests to reporters

The readers can request fact-check on a specific part of an article or follow-up for an interesting article. It can be a micro-communication between readers and journalists for better news content.

4. UnSlanted Ranking

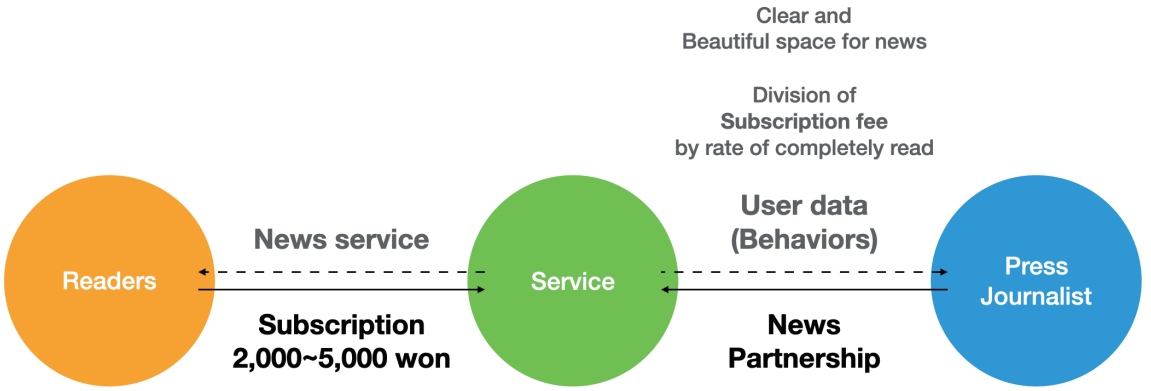
In interview, expert journalist mentioned that they admit good quality news even its political view is opposite. So, UnSlant made article ranking system based on the ratings by professional reporters in terms of fact-checking, depth of reporting and balance in the hope to spark the interest of the press and news consumers on these criteria. In long-term perspective, it can be a way to enhance digital literacy of all users - what is the good news.



Simple service blueprint of UnSlant

UnSlant handles relationships with both readers and press/journalists as we target a double-sided market. The service makes partnerships with press/journalists to get their news articles regularly. Then, the service will give user data, preferences, and news ranking critics for better news quality. In terms of readers, they can get curated & anonymized news keyword clips with the clear interface by paid subscription.

UnSlant



Business model of UnSlant

Based on the service blueprint, I could set the price to specific material and interaction between two markets. First, the service gets a subscription fee based on 2 target interviewees. The gathered subscription fee will divide into service operation fees and partnership payments. This partnership payment is also allocated to each press that we contracted by the length of the article that users have read.

Key direction

One thing this service takes precaution is there is no ultimate unslanted view. The slanted view is also a subjective one. So the service should direct readers to explore various viewpoints fast without prejudice, rather than measures the user's political view and just gives the opposite viewpoint.

Benefit

With these visions and features, UnSlant can give benefits in short-term and long-term perspectives. When readers use this service, they can easily browse different viewpoints with a clear interface. In the case of the press, they earn their money by the length that users have read. Also, they can get user data and detailed feedback from users directly. When these benefits go longer and people start to lay stress on the quality of news, users' digital literacy will enhance, and trust in the news will recover.

Market Properties: Double-sided market	Short-term	Long-term
Target User: Reader For people who want to try get balanced sight by looking around news without extreme view	**No ads & Clean layout** **Browse different view of news in short time**	**Digital Literacy** **Decrease conflict and extreme views**
Press Press that want to gather more own press subscribers and recover trust of their own news	**Get user flow data** **Get detail in interaction with readers (Highlight)**	**Increase of news trust** **Direct quality Journalism**

Benefit of UnSlant for double-sided market

Reflection

UnSlant project was quite hard for me though it is an interesting and timely topic. The more I go deeper into the project, the more detailed things come up such as system details, criteria to decide, and so on.

First, the service system is still not sophisticated. In the case of a slanted keyword clip, the amount of news card or meaning of slanted degree did not set. Also, those points can be another good information to the user. There are many components that I did not use.

The second thing is whether this service is realistic like subscription fee, business model, and ranking system criteria. All things are still conceptual and hypotheses of me and professor based on research and interview. So, testing this concept will be a good chance to learn more about service design.

I'm really happy to come so far. I feel really great about having completed this project successfully even if it is not perfect.

UnSlant booth in Design Show UNIST 2020

I prepared a descriptive poster, a card, a short video, and newspapers that the name of the press and journalists are blind in. It was my first chance to display individual work.

Epilogue

“Problem and solution can be made, changed, and set by your viewpoint and frame”

How do you come up with your graduation exhibition topic?

I had deeply thought about the graduation exhibition topic. As you know, I don’t want to deal with a plain topic, but it must be a soluble problem. I have interested in problems of behavioral tendencies in a lifetime of people. At that time, fake news and provocative replies were on the rise, so I set those timely problems as my topic. Of course, it was scary and some people worried that I cannot find the answer to that problem. Now, I got my own answer though it is not a perfect and reasonable answer. I have learned that I may be able to find out own solution to another complex problem as I have changed the frame to see the problem during this project. If you want to try a complex topic, do not worry and just believe this possibility and yourself. In my case, I even narrowed down my problem scope right after the mid-term period. As I did, you can do it! And do not forget that you have proficient professors and classmates on your side.

What you have learned from this project?

Luckily, I had a chance to meet an interviewee who tried a similar service. Because of related experiences, she gave me keen feedbacks. The most memorable one was that my design is still a concept. In undergraduate courses, we had not that many opportunities to prove our concepts, and projects often finished in the concept proposal stage. So, we cannot check the usefulness of our design and hypothesis. Her hearty advice opened my eyes to the real meaning of design work which is testing my concept to real users with a high fidelity prototype though it is not fully working. Although my concept misses the hypothesis, the fact itself may give a good learning point to me. So, I recommend you try a validation test with users if you have more time after the exhibition.

Byeongkuk Kwak

"Do not worry and believe yourself. Enjoy it!"

What was the most proud moment during the project?
During several interviews, all of the interviewees showed big sympathy and gave me word of support. It meant a lot to me. I really appreciated their participation and cheers once again.

What made you feel a sense of frustration during this project?
In the research steps, I was really anxious that I might not solve this problem and there is an insoluble reason. The short course period and hard problem made me nervous a lot. Because of my anxiety, I regret that I did not enjoy my project though I had taken a step forward. Whenever I felt this, my instructor Seungho Park-Lee aroused me "enjoy your project". It was great advice to me to go ahead with the project. So, I hope you guys do not forget that the one who enjoys is the best.

Do you have any advice for students for the next exhibition?
I put a lot of time into Design show works more than my individual exhibition work. Of course, I enjoyed Design show works, but it connected to leave regret about my exhibition quality. I hope you guys find a balance between Design show work and personal booth work. Your time and energy are finite. Check the priority of works!

Last words?
As all responsibility and decision-making were up to me, I do not want to regret or resent someone by the result of my work. So, I really tried to become a designer of this work who can describe all reasons and processes of the project by me. Though it is not perfect - it is a natural result, I hope that your result also includes your own viewpoint and message. Then, your graduation work becomes proud work to yourself. Lastly, I really feel gratitude to professor Seungho Park-Lee for heartfully supporting my reckless challenge for a year. Thank you so much!

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* All other visual contents were created by Byeongkuk Kwak, the author of this issue.