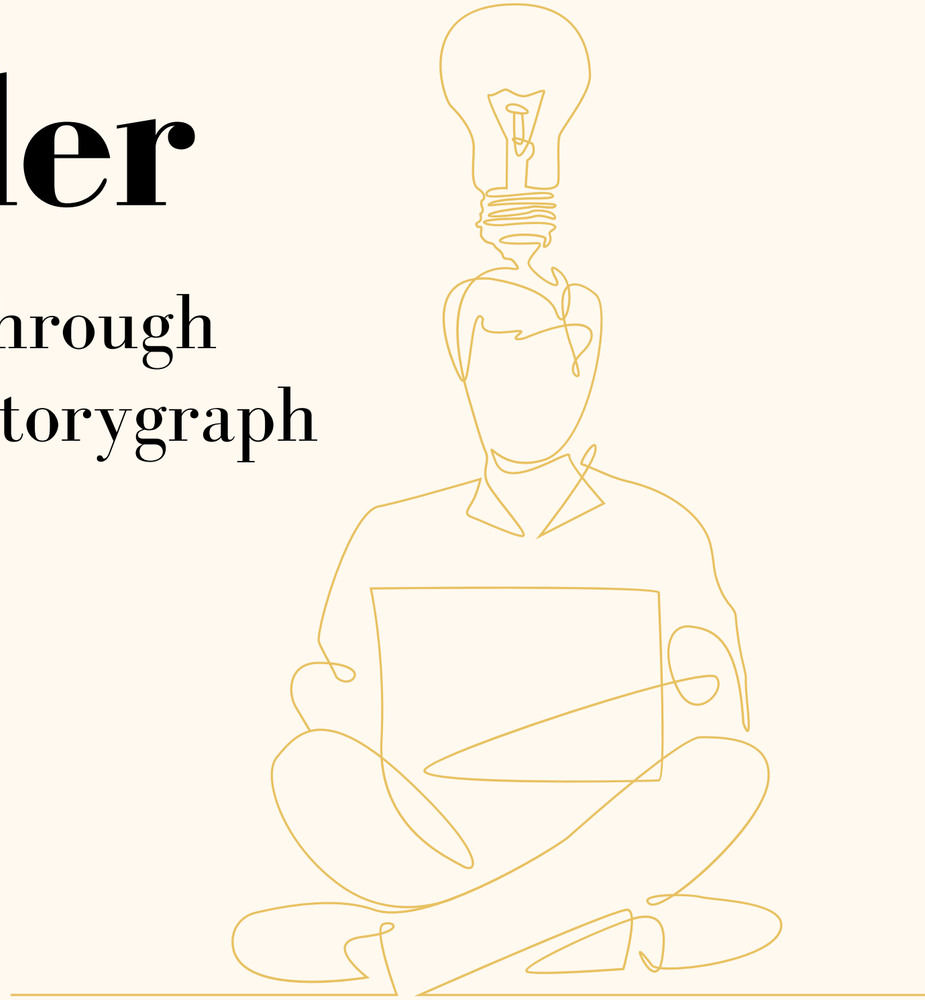
Helping the Reader

Methods to help solve problems identified through app reviews of Goodreads, Fable, and The Storygraph



Maeve C. Cox | October 2024

Methodology Overview

Goodreads

While addressing users concerns with Goodreads tracking features I found that mind mapping helped me organize users positive, negative, and suggestive points. Sketching was another way to get ideas out of my head.

Users also expressed frustrations and desires for stronger sense of community. SCAMPER helped me identify what to change for overall improvement and later created a prototype of the apps new layout.

Fable

Users explained they like the community that has been created on Fable but I used the Storyboard and Brain Dump methods to dig deeper into how to grow ways of connecting.

Users expressed that concerns with the apps ability to track the books they're reading the way they want to. I found completing SCAMPER method and applying the reverse thinking technique were the most productive methods for solving this concern.

The StoryGraph

While addressing users concerns with the StoryGraph's current importing tools I found that sketching simple but recognizable ideas to help readers who read physical copies of books. With the understanding that the current issues will be fixed and improved I created a storyboard for both physical and digital readers.

Users also expressed liking the reading data charts and graphs and some suggested new views and layouts. SCAMPER and Prototypes helped me explore new solutions further.

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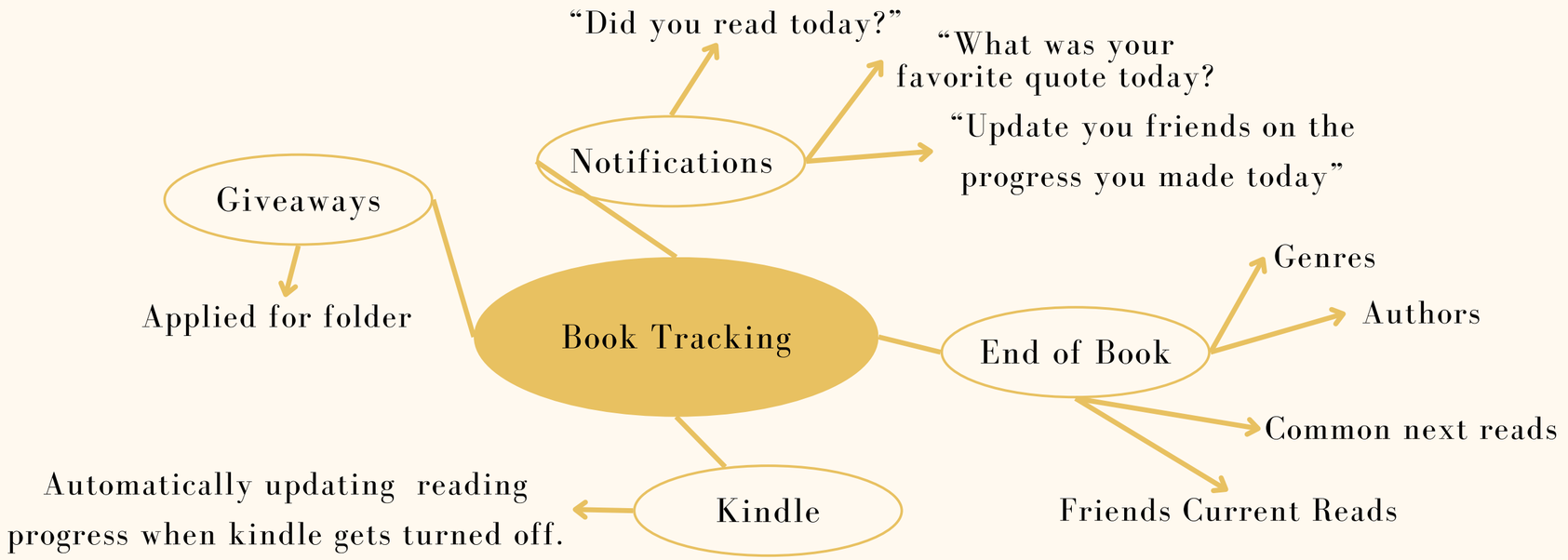
POV Statement #1

Users who looking for new books need to be able to accurately track and see books they've read because its difficult to remember all the books they've read and receive good recommendations.

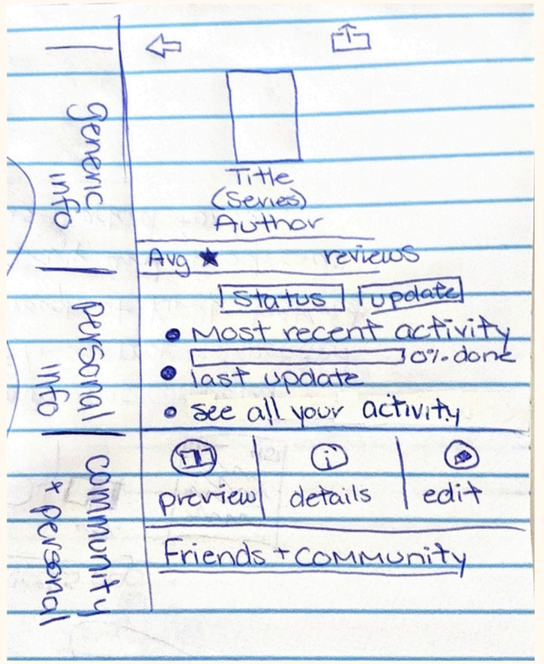
Ideation Methods

Mind Mapping



Sketch

New book profile view



POV Statement #2

Users who want to keep up to date with their friends reading habits need to be able to easily find the profiles and groups they've joined, on the app, because it's frustrating to be out of the loop in conversations.

Ideation Methods

SCAMPER

Combine: Discover + Search Tabs can be combined because they serve the same purpose. The search page features only genre folders which can be added to the top of the Discover tab. There is also a search bar and scanning option at the top of every existing tab. Friends, Groups and Giveaways = Community tab

Modify: The home page should feature a users primary uses for the app. Featuring an user's reading challenge (and friend's challenges), 8 (max) friends updates, 5 trending books blocks will do this.

Eliminate: User's should not have the ability to rate books they have not already indicated they've read. Progress update blocks should visually feature a friends rating rather than ask for another users.

Rearrange: The navigation bar should remain 5 tabs but new topics.

- Home, My Books, Discover, Community, My Profile

Prototype

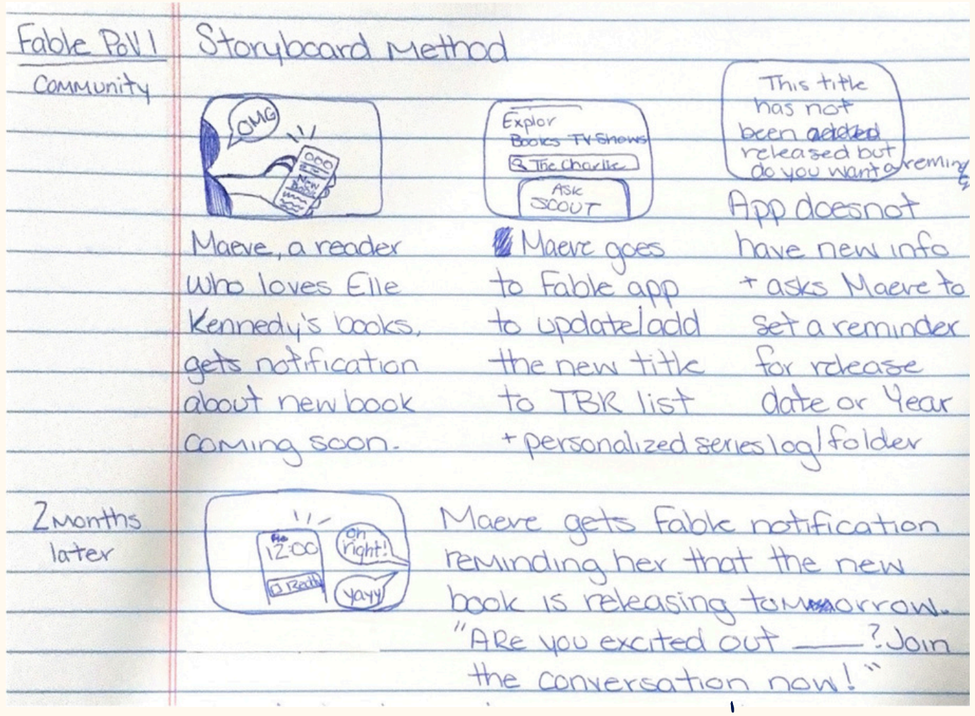
POV Statement #1

Users who enjoy talking about stories need an app with an engaged and inviting community because it can help people feel heard and understood.

Ideation Methods

Storyboard

Notifications for books that are announced to soon to be released. Excitement chats in the posts section.



Brain Dump

- Book and chapter specific clubs
- Locked annotations, reviews, and discussions based on logged reading progress
- Possible book reading order working with algorithm to get reader mentally prepared for new genre
- Season based exploring at the start of new year and season.
- Author based book clubs
- Users with similar AI generated reader summaries can opt into being in community together

POV Statement #2

Users who are motivated by lists and visual representations need the ability to adjust the how and when they track their progress because inaccurate data can be frustrating.

Ideation Methods

SCAMPER

Modify: When a user inputs start reading date. The search feature is slow to react to key words and does not allow for author filtered searches. Decreasing the size of the “Ask Scout” widget can encourage users to scroll down to discover all the features available in the Explore tab.

Put to other use: For books that are not purchasable in the app instead of having the price of the box in the profile have a “Find Book” button instead so users can easily purchase or loan the book a different way.

Eliminate: User’s should not have the ability to rate books they have not already read or ones that have not be published. This will help users comment in the community “Posts” section of book profiles.

Reverse Thinking

When a user finishes a book they enjoyed they look for books with similar genres and themes, not the same writing style so do not show books by the same author. If the user is interested in the author they can look them up on a different source.

Real Solution: Have author profiles with a list of series and stand alone books. The similar tab on each book profile should have filters by similar authors, genres, themes, tropes, etc. Businesses should want their users to use them as a one stop shop for all things under their umbrella product, in this case books.

THE STORYGRAPH

POV Statement #1

Users who wish to start using a new book tracking app need to be able to easily transfer data from different sites because manually inputing it can be time consuming and overall inconvenient.

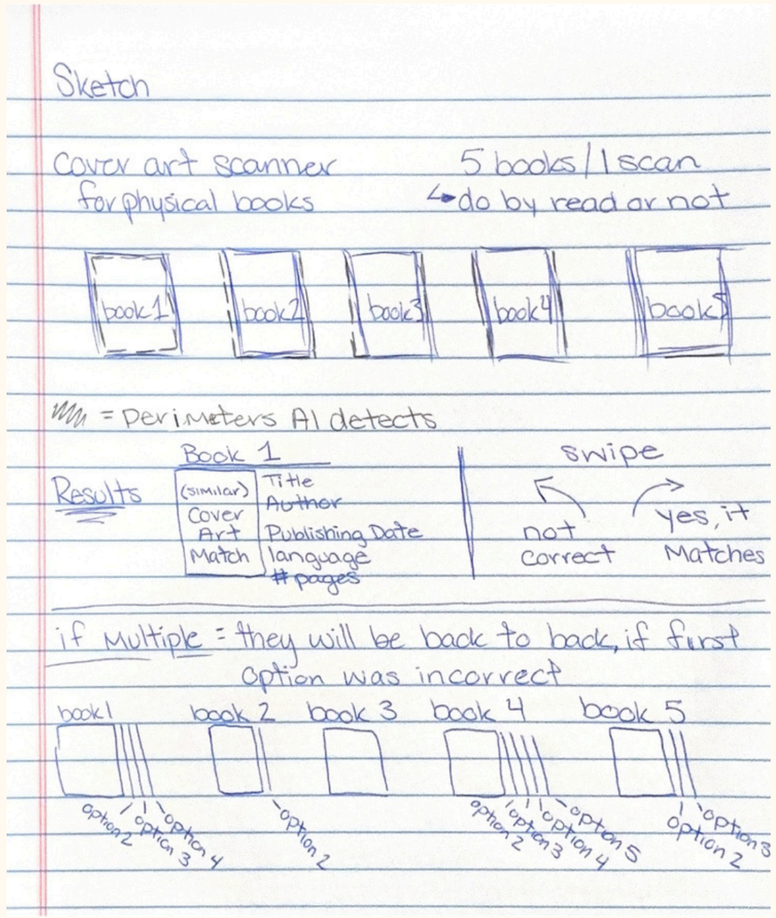
Ideation Methods

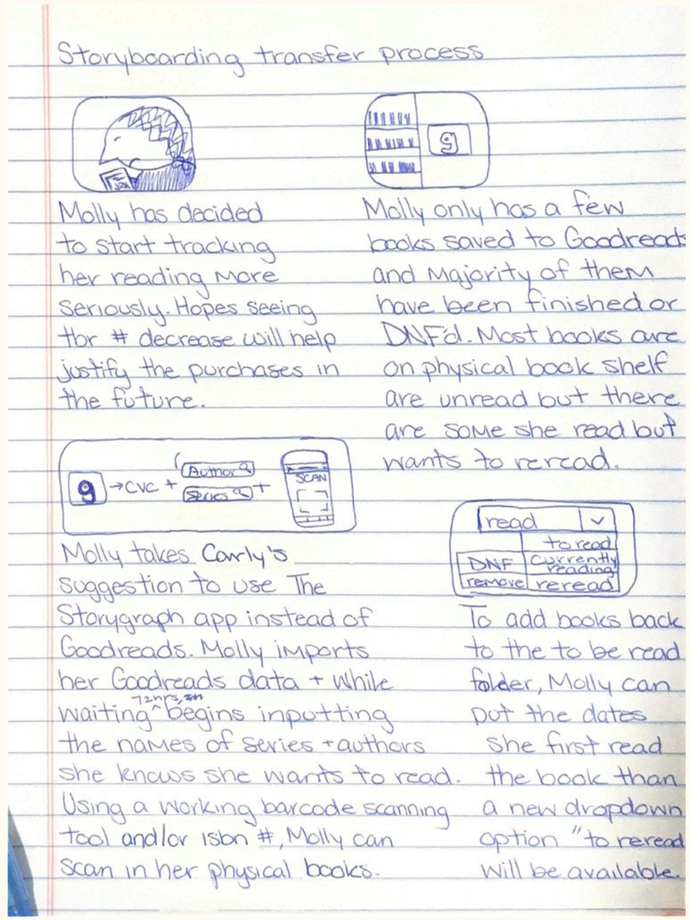
Sketch (on the left)

Detecting a books cover art to distinguish the title, author and edition of 5 physical books in one picture.

Storyboard (on the right)

The process a physical and digital reader would have to go through to use StoryGraph for the first time.





POV Statement #2

Users who enjoy tracking their reading progress need an app with accurate and readable graphs and charts because it could be the motivation they need to pick up their next book.

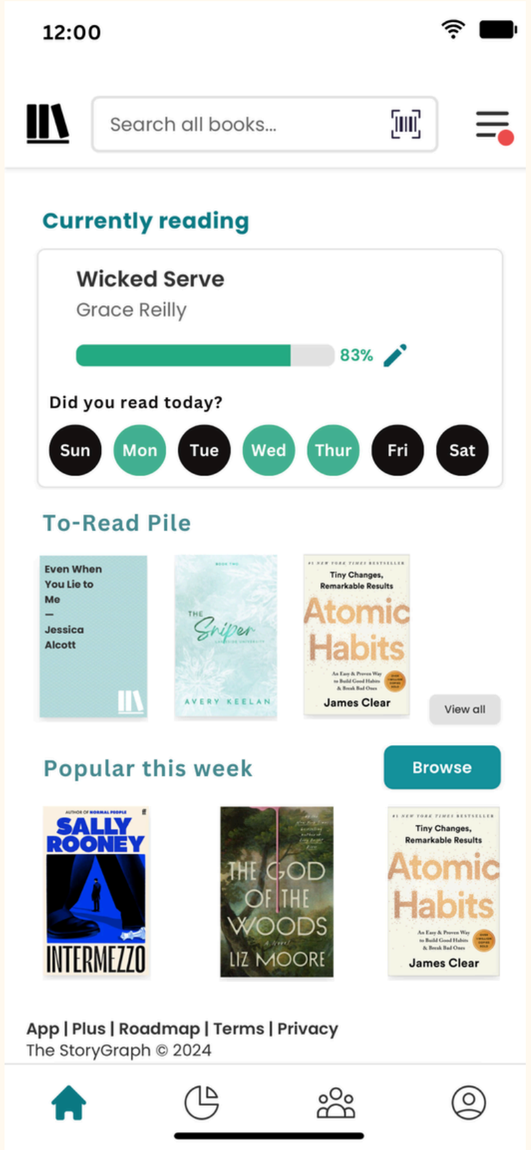
Ideation Methods

SCAMPER

Adapt: The challenges tab can include the daily habits and streaks breakdown that is not included on the homepage. The Currently Reading section of the homepage be condensed and have a “I read today button” for tracking. Additionally the app is visually appealing and can adapt/copy Fable’s reading habit widget.
Modify: The size of graphics, such as buttons, text, pie charts and graphs can be decreased. There is a lag to charts loading and pages changing so the hope is that graphic size is reduced, this will be improved.
Put to another use: If the size of the graphics were to stay the same the app could be used by children, those with accessibility issues, and older people who need simple views for success.

Prototype

Enabling users to visually see and interact with all important features on the home page.



INNOVATIONS BY MAEVE COX