fave

App UX Study
Emerging Media Capstone
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Method

After the prototype was complete, two usability studies were conducted to test the app for user flow issues, feature preferences and branding concerns.

Study 1
The first study used the card sorting method to test what categories people would prefer in the app. The current categories include books, movies/tv shows, music, restaurants and travel. This study sought to find if these categories fit user needs best. Card sorting is a popular method in user experience that helps researchers organize information and understand user thought processes. In these studies, participants are tasked with sorting cards into groups

For this study, participants were asked to put cards into one of two pre-determined groups.

> Group 1: I do not have clear favorite items in this genre
> Group 2: I have clear favorite items in this genre

Each card could only be placed in one group. The cards included both categories that are already part of the prototype and some that are not yet included.

> Cards: Albums, Bars, Books, Cities, Concerts, Events, Hobbies, Magazines, Movies, Music Artists, Podcasts, Restaurants, Shopping, Songs, Things to Do, Websites

The card sorting study was created online through Optimal Workshop which allows users to create free online research studies. After the cards and groups were created, the link to the study was distributed to potential participants in an online forum focusing on surveys. Participants could only complete the study once and were completely anonymous.

Study 2
The second study took a closer look at the actual app and addresses bugs, user flow issues, app layout and branding. Once the basic components of the app that were required for testing were complete, the link to demo the prototype was made public. A Google Form was created that included 10 tasks and questions about the prototype. Participants were asked to open the link to the demo and explore the app as they completed the tasks and questions. For each task and question, participants had space to fill in their answer or make note of any struggles they experienced. The study required approximately 20 - 25 minutes for participants to complete.

The tasks and questions included:
1. Name John's top 3 favorite music albums
2. How many people are on the app's "Friends List"?
3. Add a new book to your Faves. Describe your experience below. Note: We are testing the basic process so not all functionalities are available in the demo and your added Fave will not appear in the app's list.
4. Select one of Robyn's Fave TV shows and try to watch one. Describe your experience below.
5. List the MAIN Fave categories.
6. Explain any difficulties you experienced with completing the above tasks.
7. What order do your prefer for ranking Faves?
   a. The list should begin at #1 and scroll to #10
   b. The list should begin at #10 and scroll to #1
8. What Fave categories would you add or remove from the app? If you would not or add or remove any categories, please note that in the response.
9. Are there additional functionalities you would like to see this app perform?
10. Do you like how the app looks? Please discuss how you feel about the color choice, layout and overall branding below.

Findings

The card sorting study revealed that participants had clear favorites in some categories but not others.
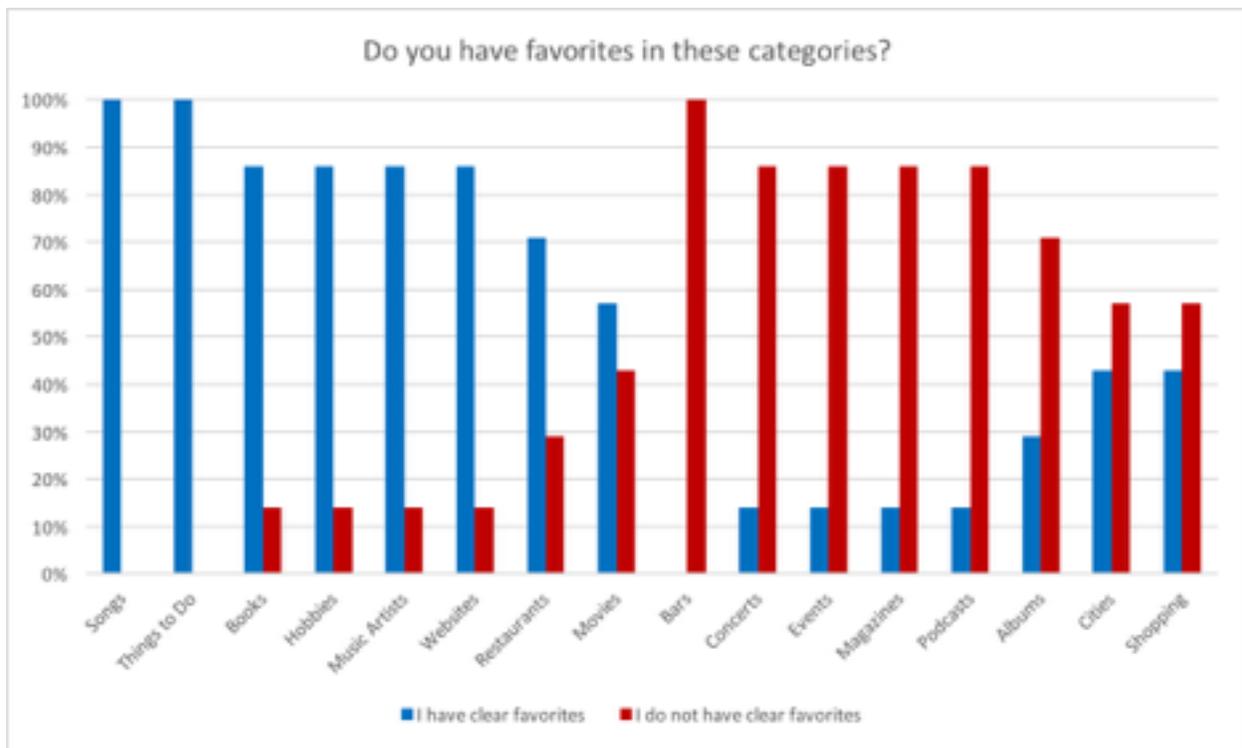
100% of the participants noted that they have clear favorite songs and things to do. These obvious favorites would make it easy for a user to rank and list their favorites in an app. On the other hand 100% of participants noted that they do not have clear favorite bars. This revelation is helpful in deciding what categories will be most useful in the app. Other categories that scored high with clear favorites were books, hobbies, music artists, restaurants and movies.

The second study focused on UX and app design. 80% of participants correctly navigated to an assigned profile page, find a sub list and identify the correct top items in the list.

Participants were split on how the Fave lists should be ordered.

What order should the rankings appear?

40%

60%

■ The list should begin at #1 and scrollto #10

■ The list should begin at #10 and scrollto #1
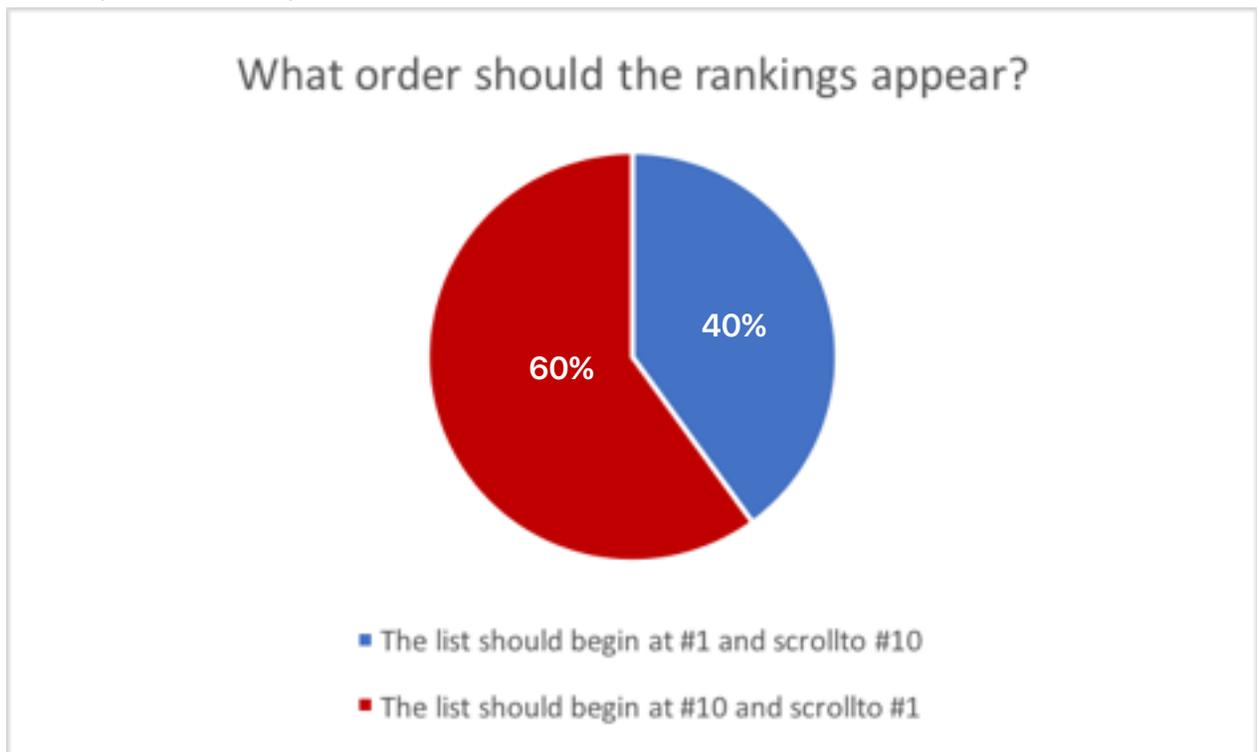
All participants explored the process to add a Fave and either had no issues or made comments about the process including:

> *Tester 2 [Explaining the "add a Fave" experience]*: "(1) locate book (2) add Fave (3) two weird things in the add process: (i) selecting rank manually and (ii) having to upload a cover image."

> *Tester 3 [Explaining the "add a Fave" experience]*: Seems okay but what happens to my other Faves when I add something? If I make a book #5, does it replace #5 or does it shuffle everything down? It would also be helpful to show the original list. Also (I imagine you know this) it should automatically search and provide information about the book (from Amazon or Good Reads or something).

All testers correctly recognized the main Fave categories. When asked if they would add or remove any categories from the app, a few participants responded as follows:

> *Tester 3*: "(1) adding custom categories might be nice if a little unwieldy. (2) Can I give preference to certain people's fav lists? (3) I wouldn't remove any categories (even if there are some I would not personally use)."

> *Tester 4:* "Recipes"

> *Tester 5:* "Add: Apparel, Accessories, Online Articles (?)"

Participants were asked if there were any additional functionalities they would add and most few the app did what they thought it needed to do for them.

> *Tester 1:* "It would be helpful to be able to add tags so people could find Faves through tag searches like other sites."

> *Tester 5:* "Do you get notifications if a Friend adds a Fave? Or somebody Faves one of your favorite stuff. "Friend A listed Game of Thrones as a Fave TV Show", something like that."

Finally participants were given an open response opportunity to share their thoughts about how the app looks.

> *Tester 1:* "The use of category icons is a bit inconsistent. I also didn't see the filter on the profile page right away. Maybe make that more obvious."

> *Tester 2:* "It's clunky. I wouldn't use this app."

> *Tester 3:* "It works, however, brand name in upper left corner appears to duplicate home button at lower left corner that is part of the navigation system; is there another purpose the logo can perform? benefit of less ambiguity and so feel of more useful use of screen real estate"

> *Tester 4:* "It looks fine, layout makes sense. I am not sure about the concept but it's well-executed."

Recommendations & Steps for Change

In the next iteration of the Fave app, it is recommended that designers and developers update the app to fit the following specifications:

- Add a settings option on the user's profile page to personalize the Fave rank order, order of categories, preferred Fave lists (this will allow users to see update from preferred people before others).

- Replace Travel category with Online category where users can share their favorite websites, apps, people to follow on social media and other experiences online.

- Determine key "Other" categories that potential users are interested in an extended card sorting study. Once these categories are finalized, use these as options for users to select from when creating a "custom" category that is not part of the main Faves.

- Add notifications that alert users when friends add one of their Faves.

- Add tag options to the Review Step in adding a Fave.

- Create clear method for moving Faves on a list when new items are added. Add a prompt after a user selects a rank that notifies them that the items will shift in their list. Show users their original list and their current request to add a Fave to confirm this change.