



Queering Twitter

Understanding UX Solutions For Cyber-Hate
& Harassment Within QPOC Communities

2020 UX Thesis

Cydney Phan



which was a wooden structure at the beginning is now entirely built of stone and brick.

Originally, a vaulted and fireproofed segment of the Basilica, gets its name from the (Latin) and means: study outside market.

Originally, the "Basilica" was a market building and later the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great.

- Basilica of San Marco
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Salute
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Vittoria
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Ghiara
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Spina
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Strada
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Vigna Nuova
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Vigna Vecchia
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Vigna Nuova
- Basilica of Santa Maria della Vigna Vecchia



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Thesis Statement

How might UX help mitigate harmful experiences with cyber-hate & harassment amongst QPOC Twitter users?



Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis study is to explore the interaction models of queer people of color and how they interact with social media. Specific examination of QPOC within tech spaces will hopefully uncover any unmet needs that is still unfulfilled by tech and design efforts as technology is often design for the majority rather than the minority. Going through the phases of academic research, narrative research, evaluating current models, establishing potential solutions and validation testing, this study hopes to answer the overall thesis statement of: how might UX help better promote safety & further mitigate harmful cyber-hate in social media usage amongst queer & gender non-conforming communities?

Abstract

With the rise of social media, Twitter and Instagram are emerging as popular platforms to foster community among repressed or isolated queer people of color. However, online harassment and cyber-hate are growing alongside queer representation on social media, leaving platforms unable to accommodate for the rise in hate speech. These large platforms have unsuccessfully relied solely on computer algorithms to decipher hate words and to actively ban them from users' online conversations, only fueling new, hateful slang and hashtags that will successfully bypass the algorithms. This inability to protect queer safety has produced complacency and acceptance of social media harassment.

Within this project, I explore cyber-hate and harassment on Twitter, using user experience (UX) processes to provide design solutions to mitigate these harmful interactions—specifically through word filtering and muting functionalities. I hypothesize that if a user inputs a word to mute (ex: “cats”) and the platform automatically generates a word cloud that means the same thing (ex: “feline”, “kitty”, “🐱”, etc.); this will reduce user frustrations with having to mute 50+ words, phrases, hashtags, emoji, syntaxes, and word combinations that will ultimately mean the same thing from their seen comments, direct messages, posts, and feed on social media. Throughout my process I will be evaluating the efficacy of my design solutions through usability testing, narrative interviews, and feedback driven redesigns in order to provide meaningful design solutions for the QPOC community.



Introduction

Going into my senior year of undergrad, I knew I wanted to base my thesis on identity politics with a focus on queer and gender non-conforming (GNC) experiences. Being a cis female, there are struggles within the queer and GNC community that I will never be able to fully understand. My lack of awareness ultimately drove my desire to centralize my thesis on bettering my allyship and to formulate a more formalized understanding of LGBTQ+ pain points– which are often overlooked by the tech industry.

Utilizing UX design and research practices to tackle my subject matter, I hope to empathetically connect with queer people of color (QPOC) to effectively provide design solutions that will benefit the greater LGBTQ+ community. As the LGBTQ+ is a vulnerable community, there needs to be a greater placed sensitivity to providing authentic and realistic narratives to help propel design decisions– to design *with* not *for* the community.

Mentors

Subject Matter Experts (SME)

The role of my SME will play a large role within my initial research and endeavors to better understanding the problem. Within the first phase of my design process, I will be heavily relying on my SME to help guide my research and attempts to network with the local LGBTQ+ groups both on campus and off. Once in the conceptualization and design phases of the project, the SME will be essential in centralizing my process and aligning me to the problem and the needs of the LGBTQ+ community.

Design Matter Experts (DME)

My DME will be overlooking my entire UX process from research to design and project strategy. All of my DME will help streamline my UX methodologies and offer guidance on industry practices within the user-centered design framework. As I will be working on redesigning Twitter, with a strong brand identity, it will be key for my UX mentors to align my designs to Twitter's UX and brand guidelines.

Subject Matter Experts



Jacob McWilliams

Director of Women & Gender Center, University of Colorado – Denver

Expertise: Queer Theory
Pronouns: He/Him/His



Kyla Hines

Assistant Director of LGBTQ Resource Center, Metro State University

Expertise: Queer Theory
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

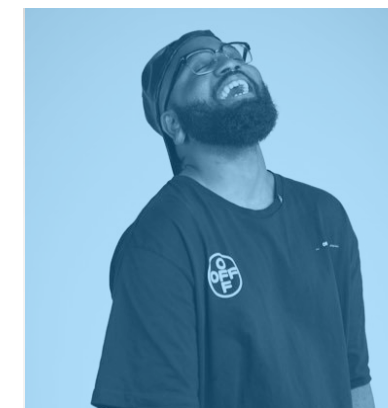
Design Matter Experts



Alison Colby

Associate Director of Product Design, Wayfair

Expertise: UX Design
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers



Timothy Bardlavens

Product Design Manager, Facebook

Expertise: UX Strategy
Pronouns: He/Him/His



Derek Lawson

UX Designer, Deloitte

Expertise: UX Design
Pronouns: He/Him/His

Project Calendar

The purpose of this thesis study is to explore the interaction models of queer people of color and how they interact with social media. Specific examination of QPOC within tech spaces will hopefully uncover any unmet needs that is still unfulfilled by tech and design

Phase 1: Defining the Problem & Research

This phase consisted of 5 weeks of interviews, scholarly research and gathering narratives across various subjects spanning from tech, queer experiences and harassment speech. I went into the research plan without a concept and hoped to gather enough materials to propel my UX efforts.

Phase 2: Conceptualization

I spent a total of 3 weeks creating low-fidelities and prototypes from the information given to me in phase 1. This phase was extremely heavy in determining information architecture and how to determine the middle point between too much and too little information. I also hosted some minimal usability testing on paper screens to validate for concept feasibility.

Phase 3: Synthesization

The final stage consisted of 4 weeks that hammered upon validation and the gauge of success of the proposed final screens. I heavily tested upon working prototypes for language comprehension and efficacy. Final ideation and product visuals had to be completed by the final week of this phase.

Phase 1:

Defining The Problem & Research

Jan 20 – Feb 21

Leading Thoughts

1. How do we better understand the problem & the users?
2. What intrinsic needs do the users have to feel safe in queer spaces?
3. How do these needs change to aspects of community building?
4. What tools do I need to better cater to these problems?

Primary Tasks

Compiling Research Personas User Journey Maps

Phase 2:

Conceptualization

Feb 24 – Mar 13

Leading Thoughts

1. How do I deliver breakthrough solutions that fulfill our users' needs?
2. How do I support innovation alongside the users' intrinsic needs & wants?

Primary Tasks

Niche Usability Testing Wireframing Prototyping

Phase 3:

Synthesization

Apr 06 – May 01

Leading Thoughts

1. Do final designs accurately represent user's needs?
2. Do readers looking at my research need context to understand it? If so, how much & in which way?
3. What areas of refinement that can be foreseen or predicted to hammer out within the final design sessions?

Primary Tasks

Validation Testing Finalizing Designs



Research

As my initial thesis statement at the beginning of my project inquiry was more board and under-defined, I really had to focus on what areas of potential directions I should focus my scholastic research on. My research strategy to get a better understanding of my subject matter and what innovative integration would be the most meaningful.

I narrowed my research to target three specific topics within academia: narratives of queer individuals and how community is built in those communities, policies and accountability currently upheld by various social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr), and experiences of harassment and hate.



fig 2.1 A visual demonstration of my research touch-points.

Initial Research

As I was trying to cast a net as wide as possible to gauge where I could direct my efforts, I had a lot of cherry picked information ranging from avatar fluidity in video-games, to understanding social theory behind troll culture, and the implications of regulations among queer sex workers on Instagram.

To help further guide my research as I start imposing more personal inquiries, I had to quickly distill all the gathered information and filter out anything that was irrelevant. My most impactful findings comprise of:

1. Previously collected HCI data on marginalized communities are often overly generalized & demonstrate data violence due to questions not being intersectional enough— resulting in design solutions that miss hidden communities within an already marginalized population.
2. There needs to be intense focus on survey etiquette especially when dealing with private and flexible means of gender & sexual identities.
3. Establishing online communities through collective identities (e.g. #GirlsLikeUs & #Queerantime) is incredibly important within the LGBTQ+ to spread accurate information and positivity.



● **85%**

of surveyed participants experienced the most hate online

● **78%**

of social media users observed any form of online harassment in another's post

● **41.3%**

of surveyed participants witnessed either gender or sexuality based hate

Source: Celik, Serkan. "Experiences of Internet Users regarding Cyberhate." Information Technology & People 32, no. 6 (2019): 1446-1471.



Zi Rivera

Primary Social Media Role:

Social Listener

Age: 24

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Gender Identity: Trans-Masc.

Bio:

Uses social media primarily to stay in touch with friends and family. Casually subscribes to a QTPOC activist pages on Twitter and will occasionally check the comment section if specific post has piqued their interest.

Completely accepted that cyberhate experiences are to be expected when using social media.

Goal:

- Not needing to feel that they have to have “thicker skin” when encountering hate speech or harassment on social media sites.

Frustration:

- Has reported posts due to transphobic language and has not felt any action taking place– similar content would continue to appear on feed/ explore page.

Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

twitter

facebook

Research

Narrative Interviews

Gathering my interview participants, I wanted to provide a wide variety of experiences as possible by networking with individuals that identify with intersectional communities. My interviewees ranged between various gender, racial and sexual identities, but all identified within their early 20’s and currently studying at the University of Colorado – Denver.

The intent of the conversational interviews is to build trust between me and the participants while curating information and perspectives that I normally wouldn’t be able to gather from scholastic research alone. Throughout the interview, the goal was to touch upon the following topics:

- Examples of any experienced or observed harassment & how that made the interviewee feel.
- What platform was the most problematic & the overall perception of how it has supported their marginalized users.
- What the interviewee would change about social media if anything was possible [with harassment & user safety].

fig 2.2 A generative persona derived from responses within the narrative interviews.

Surveys

Working alongside a data analyst and copy professional, we collaborated upon 11 questions that would encourage complex quantitative and qualitative responses. With my previous research detailing proper LGBTQ+ survey etiquette, we strategized on questions that would provide my research with as much anecdotal evidence as possible within a short and succinct study. With a total of 17 respondents, the overall goal was to understand the basic identity of our participants, and their individual experiences with the retrospective social media platforms. This was also an opportunity for me to start collecting a hate-speech database— allowing me to further discern the types of modern lexicon that's being used for harassment.

From the survey, I was able to identify that:

- On a scale form 0 to 10, participants felt that social media **DID NOT** protect them from harassment (avg score of 3)
- 89% of participants had quit or suspended their social media usage within the past 2 years for mental health reasons
- New hashtags like: #Unicorn, #AttackHelicopter, #SignsYoSonIsGay, & 🏳️‍🚫 have all been used to spread hate

Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity? (Check all that apply)
3. What is your gender identity? (Check all that apply)
4. What is your sexual identity? (Check all that apply)
5. How many hours a week in total do you think you spend on social media?
6. What is your most used social media platform?
7. How well do you think your favorite social media platform protects you from harassment and/or hate speech?
(on scale 0-10, 0 being none, 10 being the best)
8. Can you please describe your experience with harassment on social media that pertains to your gender or sexual identity? (NA for if this does not apply)
9. What ways would you like social media to better protect you from harassment and/ or hate speech?
(NA for if this does not apply)
10. Have you deleted or reduced your social media usage at anytime within the past 2 years? If so, can you explain why?
11. What words or tags have you seen being used on social media that was harmful to your gender or sexual identity? (list as many as you can, separated by commas)

“

I've had random troll messages: 'this makes me want to kill myself,' on me describing my experience as a queer-of-color nonbinary femme, and one 'I'm going to shove a potato up your [REDACTED]' in response to my tweeting about the all-women Ghostbusters reboot.

– A survey participant describing their most harmful experience with hate on Twitter

”

“

I've gotten to the point that I have to say: 'don't be too soft about it, it's going to happen again [harassment]'. On Twitter, you can mute words but it's not effective because other people are going to use other words to still point out the same message.

– A queer interviewee expressing her frustrations with hate on Twitter & justifying having to accept online bullying

”

fig 2.3

A concept exploration that's evaluating what type of information is most important to the user and how it display in a hierarchy.

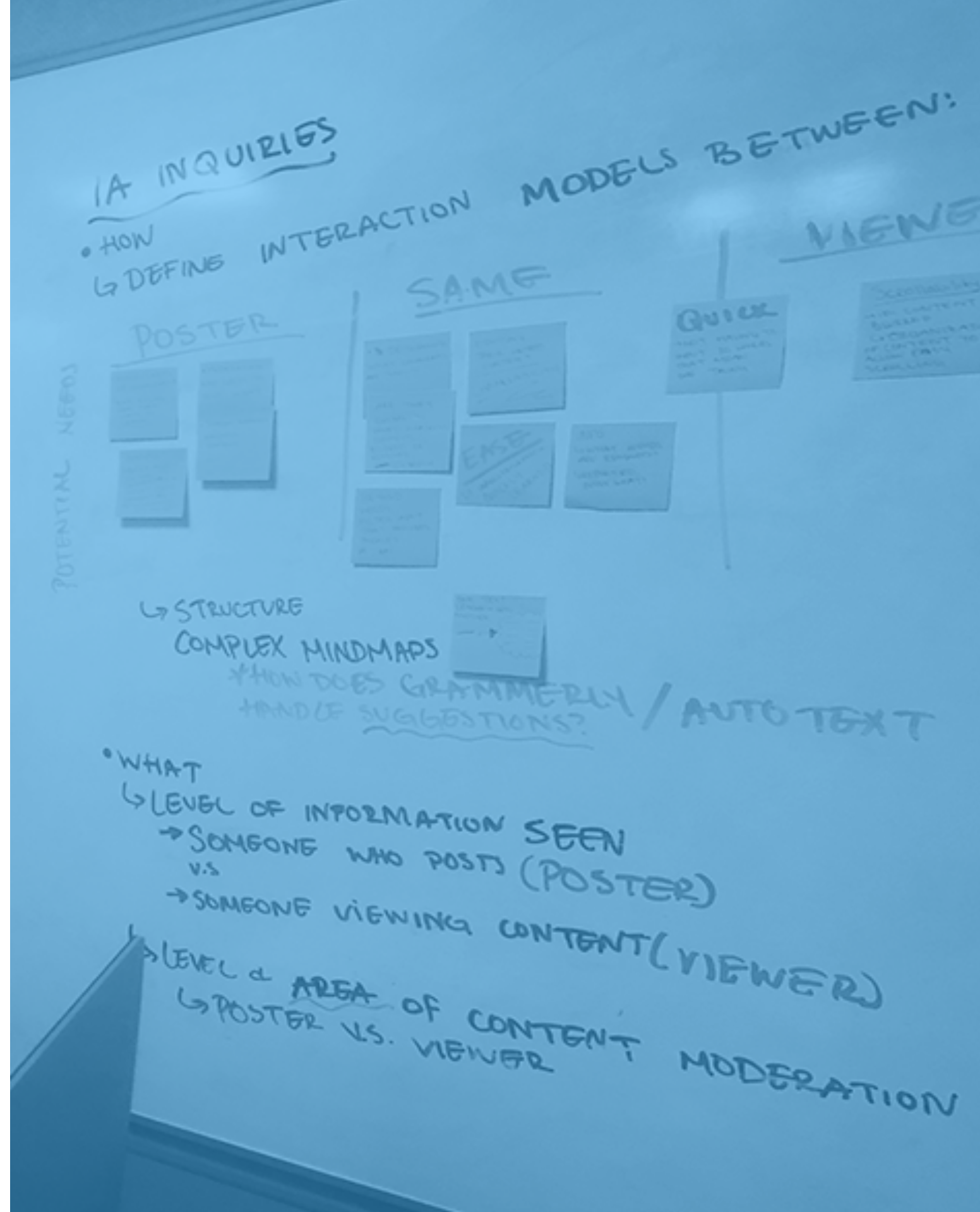
Putting It All Together

Within my entire five weeks of the research phase, it certainly felt like I was running in circles trying to find a problem to solve but was only presented with a massive social/ political dilemma with no tangible resolution.

However, after really running through the traditional research strategies to understand the needs and why current systems weren't working, it became evidently clear that social media's efforts in providing "muting" options seemed to be underperforming to meet user demands. My decision to choose Twitter over previous considerations (Instagram, Facebook, or Youtube) only made sense as Twitter is solely text based and is the perfect platform to innovate upon a "word muting" design. Response from both interviews, surveys, and even doing diary studies online, all vehemently expressed that simply "muting" a word isn't doing enough!

Twitter specifically has been critiqued in ignoring the different variations that could come from a simple word entry with their muting function. Frustrations with having to enter in a singular word (ex: apple) would need to be transformed into multiple variants (ex: apples, an apple, the apple) to only be minimally effective.

Uncovering this pitfall within the current user journey map of Twitter, really pushed me to question the complexity behind language learning algorithms and what that means for hate culture within QPOC storytelling efforts.



The Idea To Design & Validate:

What if there was an algorithm that creates a “word cloud” of 25+ suggested words to auto-mute based off the users’ muted word input?

Evaluating Concepts

With an idea formulating, I needed to refine how an algorithm backed mute filter would look and function within a complex information architecture. Starting off by evaluating current muting functions within Instagram and Twitter, I immediately saw how beneficial a suggested mute filter would be in their system as well as mapping out what current hierarchies are in place.

After creating a task flow for the current user model, I examined what is the most essential function within the “main”, “add word” & “edit word” page. This allowed me to remain as true to my initial ideas as much as possible without being too features focused, while still attempting to predict what pitfalls a user might experience throughout my design solutions.

To figure out how information was to be laid out within the pages of both my essential and potential feature, I transitioned into sketching out functionalities and the hierarchy of necessary interactions. Establishing all these levels of interactions and determining their importance to the user was quintessential in forcing me to understand the degree to which all these functions might affect the users.

IA STRUCTURE

POTENTIAL FEATURES

WORD

- USER BLOCKING AS WORD (?)
- SEARCH ON MAIN
- EACH WORD HAS OWN EDITABLE PAGE
- SYNTAX CLARIFICATION
↳ "SENTENCE" → "PHRASE"?
- WHEN WERE - WHY THESE SUGGESTIONS?
- TURN ON/OFF ON WORDS
↳ INSTEAD OF FULLY DELETING
↳ SLEEP (?)
- SEVERITY SCALE FOR ADDED WORD(S)
- TOPIC BLOCKING EX: "POLITICS" "ANTI-VAX"
- SEE COMMONLY BLOCKED WORDS
- FILTER USING EMOJIS

BLOCK

- REPORT USER ON MAIN
- AUTO-BLOCK USERS WHO REPEATEDLY USE MUTED WORDS
- LIMITED USER VIEW
↳ SEE POST EVERY OTHER TIME
- WHY
↳ ATTACH KEYWORDS/TAG TO BLOCKED USER
↳ EX: "TRANSPARE"

WORD FILTERING

MAIN	ADD	EDIT
editing → ADD ✖ → DELETE ✖ → EDIT ✖	WORD INPUT	EDIT WORD SUGGESTIONS & CONTROL SETTINGS
"MOKE INFO" ↳ CONTENT PROVIDER	TARGET WORDS LIKE "TARGET" EDIT ADD ALL VIEW MORE	
	CONTROLLING WORD FILTERING	
	DURATION * DATES * PERIOD	WHERE/WHAT * IN SEARCH * POSTS * NOTIFICATIONS
	SYNTAX EDIT	FEEL WHO: * UNKNOWN * "PL YOU BELIEVE" * PL FOLLOWING YOU

Evaluating Concepts

fig 3.1
Mind map figuring out the basic features displayed on the "main", "add" & "edit" page. Also explores additional functions that the user may want to see.

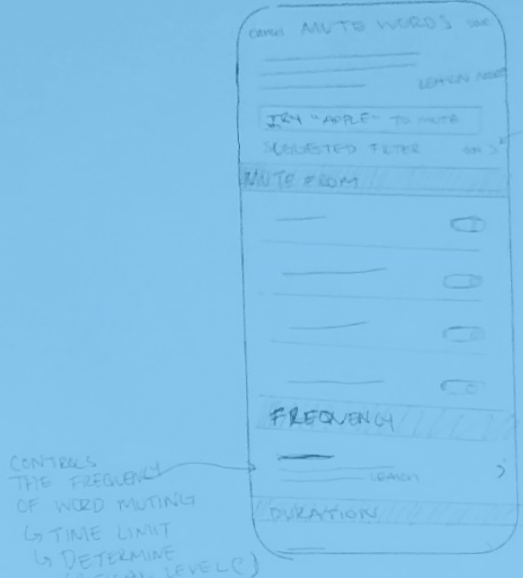
Wireframes

Designing for Functionality

Jumping off from having a conclusive user flow chart, and concept sketches, I transitioned into creating mockups and wireframes of the essential functionality.

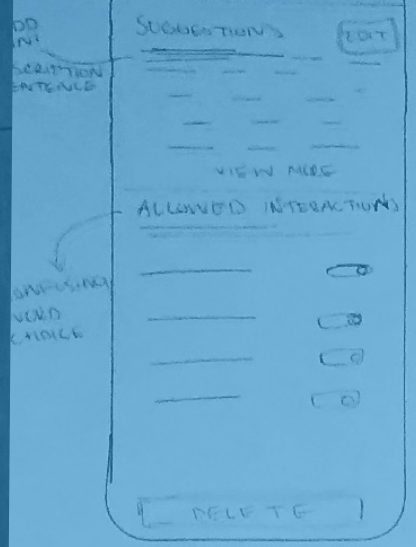
Throughout my ideation on wireframes, I was continuously rearranging elements and trying to establish how to logically display 25+ word suggestions within a page yet not overwhelm users. Encompassing a larger discussion as to relevancy- how can I describe the feature without it being too political or vague, how can I ensure I'm offering safety for the users, will users want or need to see all the information & control options?

To help answer my questions, I created multiple subsets of prototype flows to better pinpoint success and struggles upon usability testing. Focusing solely on how I can most simply convey the suggested muting feature, I hope to test the validity of my thesis proposal as a whole through qualitative observations.

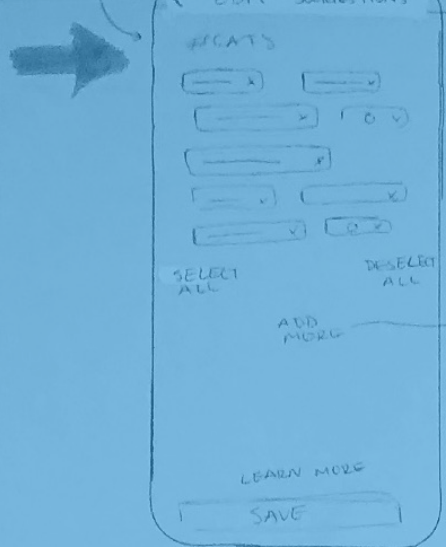


CAN EDIT SUGGESTED FILTER w/ MUTE FROM - MOST REPORTED SUGGESTIONS

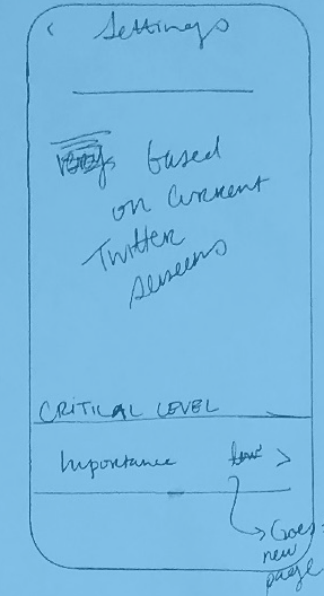
CONTROLS THE FREQUENCY OF WORD MUTING
↳ TIME LIMIT
↳ DETERMINE CRITICAL LEVEL(C)



DISAPPEARING WORD CHOICE

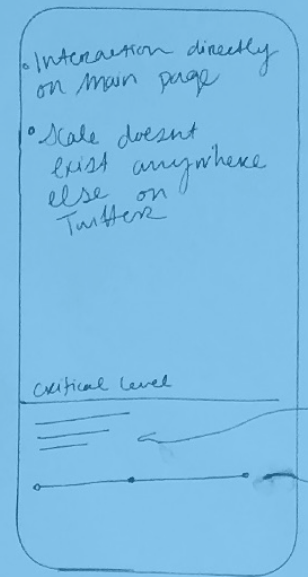


USER CONTROL FOR HOW MUCH INFORMATION PRESENTED



Pages based on current Twitter Screens

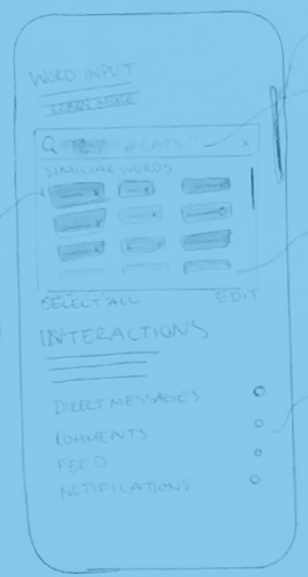
↳ Goes to new page



Interaction directly on main page
Scale doesn't exist anywhere else on Twitter

dynamic text scale

D PAGE



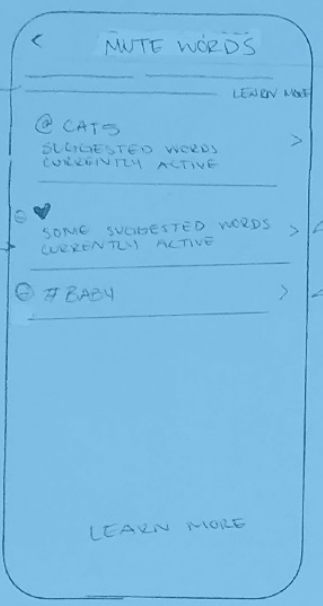
WOULD HAVING 2 SCROLL BARS NEAR EACH OTHER CONFUSING?
DIRECTIVE COMMAND

DISAPPEARING SUGGESTIONS

CONTROLLING WHERE MUTED WORDS SHOULD/SHOULDN'T SHOW UP

COLORS WORDS INDICATING CATEGORY TYPE
↳ HOW / WHERE TO PUT CATEGORY INDICATION

MAIN PAGE



STYLE SIMILAR TO INSTAGRAM

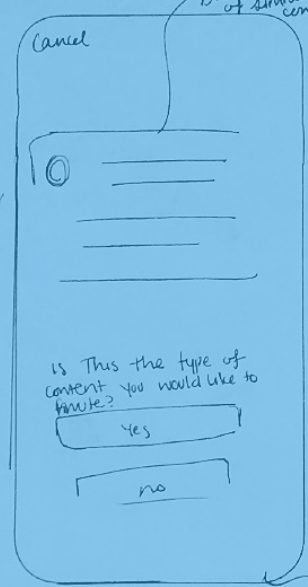
HOW MUCH INITIAL TEXT DOES USER NEED TO UNDERSTAND FUNCTION?

WHAT OTHER INFO NEEDS TO BE PLACED HERE

QUICK BLURB SUGGESTING ACTIVE IF SUGGESTED WORDS NOT ON

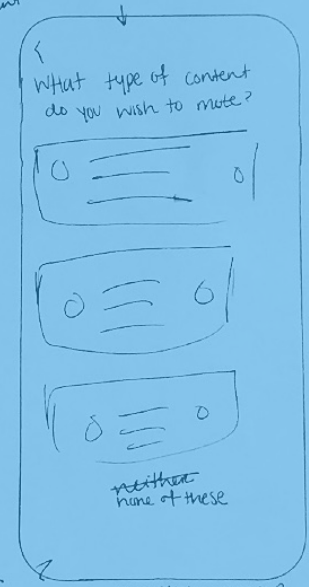
*MINIMAL FUNCTION
↳ WHAT ELSE NEEDS TO BE PLACED HERE?

EDIT PAGE - Syntax

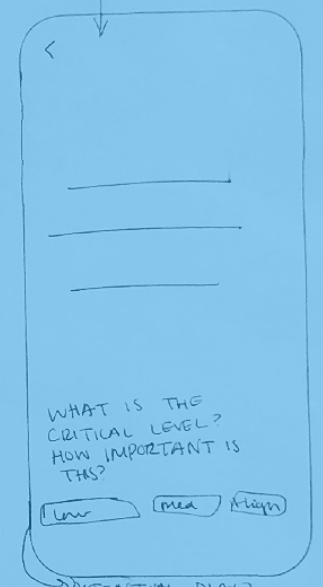


Blurred photo of similar content

Multiple choice



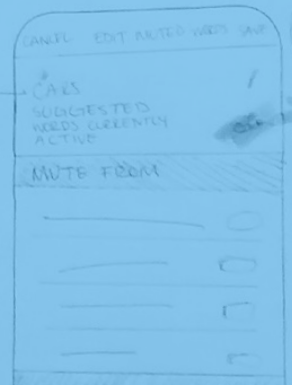
Determining what content is needed for relating action needed



POTENTIAL PRIVACY concerns

POTENTIAL DIAL?

EDIT PAGE



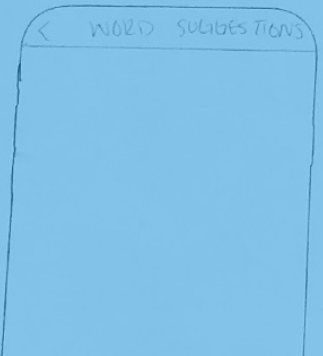
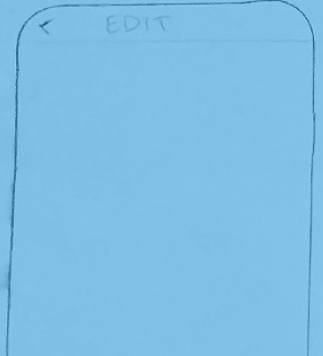
TEXT EDITABLE (NOT EDITABLE ON APP)

SUGGESTED WORDS HAS OWN DEDICATED PAGE

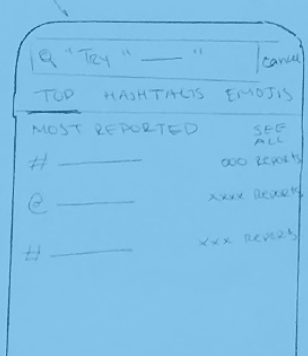
↳ HOW MUCH OF THIS IS SEEN ON THE

TWITTER STYLE
SHOULD WORD STILL BE EDITABLE?

EDIT PAGE - INSTAGRAM STYLE



SIMILAR TO INSTAGRAM'S SEARCH FEATURE

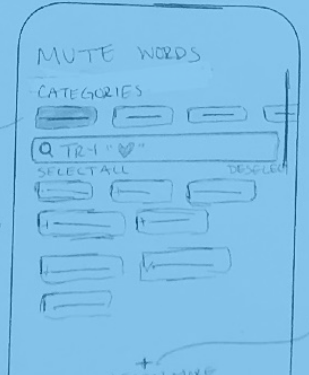


ADD PAGE

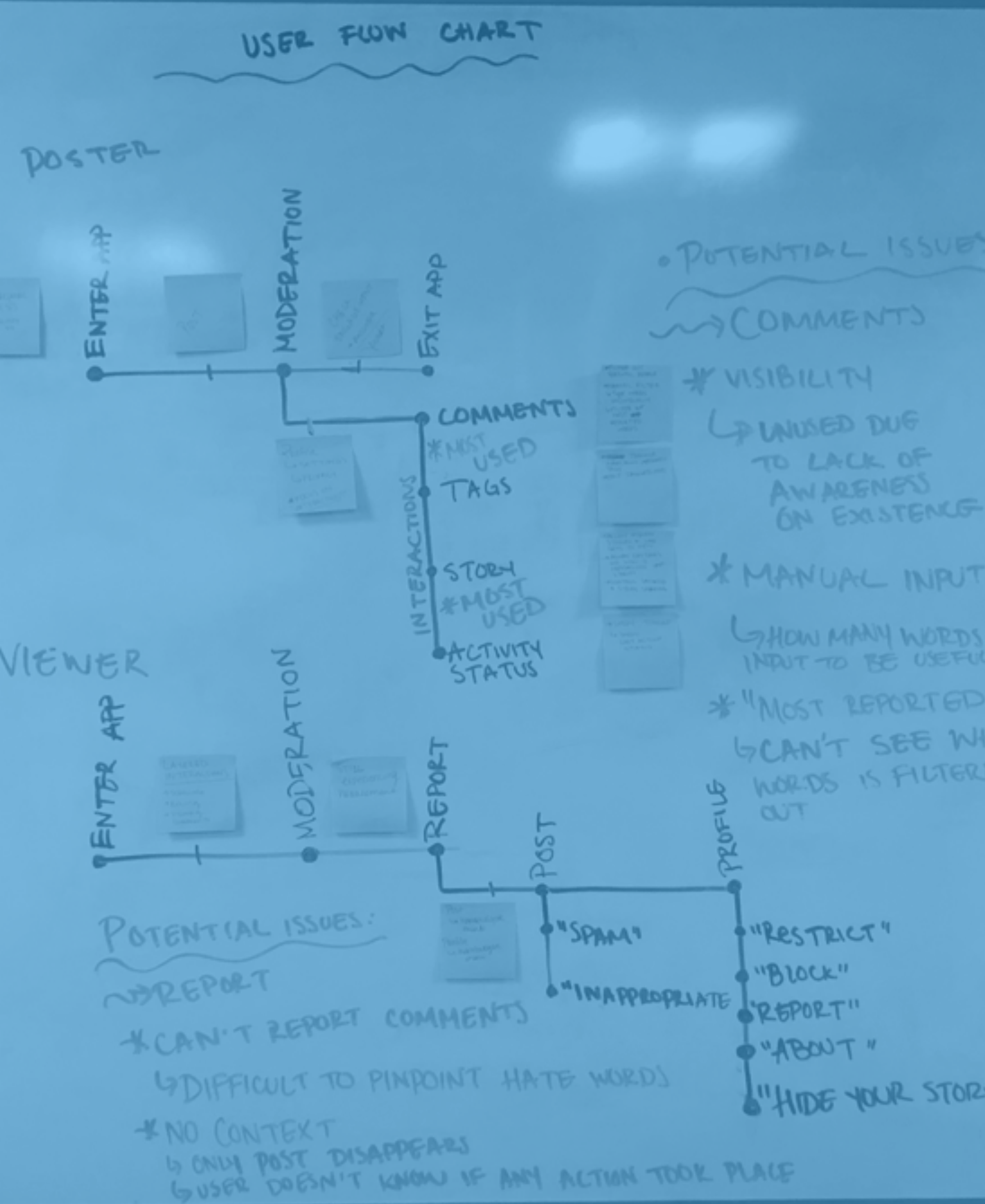
FURTHER DEFINING WORD TYPES
↳ BLURRED OUT COLORS UNTIL CLICKED

↳ CATEGORY POTENTIAL TYPES
↳ INTOLERANCE
↳ VIOLENCE
↳ ANTI-LGBT
↳ SLURS
↳ JOKES

*CAN POTENTIALLY BE TRIGGERING
↳ TRIGGERED INTO



POTENTIAL TO ENDLESS SCROLL
↳ REVEAL MORE CONTENT



Evaluating Concepts

◀ fig 3.2

A breakdown of the current user flow chart for harassment mediation for experiences with posting & interacting with a post. Also highlights potential pain points in the current flow.

Initial Usability Testing

Testing for Basic Understanding

Pulling together my initial product testers, I wanted to focus solely on getting feedback from those whom identify as queer and of color. With a small subset of four testers, I engaged my usability testers with two activity sets to validate if my designs were valuable and coherent.

Test 1: Experience Prototyping

Testing with low-fidelities, I task my testers with a prompt and intro, then observe the testers' interaction as they run through the screens. Feedback and critique are asked for each design with a final evaluative assessment on their overall experience and whether the tested feature is valuable to their specific social media usage.

Test 2: Paper Prototyping

As the final activity, I gave my testers print out versions of the prototype screens. The testers are provided with colored dots and pens, to mark areas of the interface where they felt were the most useful or confusing. The purpose of this was to allow my testers to manually copy edit any text that didn't make sense while also creating a "heat map" with the color-coded dot stickers- visually indicating areas of success or struggles.

fig 3.3

A user tester completing the paper prototype activity and dotting areas of the design that makes the most sense.



Concluding Usability Testing

Testing for Usage Among All Users

After changing the prototype design based on the initial testing results (small copy edits, & hierarchy with suggested words), I expanded my user testing base to a wider demographic, regardless of sexual, gender or racial identity. Being able to test for all users will hopefully allow me to determine if the designs will have salience with every Twitter user, which ultimately is the goal of such a large platform like Twitter.

Testing a total of 10 users, I ran through the same experience prototyping model that was performed in the initial testing. I gave the testers the same prompt and task as I did with my smaller tester group and observed the interaction model. During testing, I ask my participants to narrate their actions and thoughts while prototyping. Concluding each test session, I ask the participants to describe their experience, how applicable are the designs and if they will find use for the feature.

Overall, the testers found that the screens were immensely useful and would help alleviate their struggles with Twitter. A few of my testers elaborated how they wished this feature currently existed because of the current social-political climate of when this project was conducted in the spring of 2020.

Yes, I don't want to see content like this.

No, this is appropriate.

When you mute words, you won't get any new notifications for Tweets that include them or see Tweets with those words in your timeline. [Learn More](#)

Edit Add

Muting Status

Pause

Putting your muted words on pause, won't remove it from your Twitter timeline, but it will save your setting preferences for when you do turn it on again.

Delete Word

"mustached cat", 2014, acrylic ink + biro on paper
#mustachecat

None of these

Cancel Delete

Muted Words

Alphabetical Frequency

- #cats + 234 reports Suggested filter ON Forever Pause
- cat calls Suggested filter ON Forever Pause
- @cats_of_twitter Suggested filter ON Forever Pause
- #feline Suggested filter ON Forever Pause
- @RealGrumpyCat Suggested filter ON 24h Pause
- stray cats Suggested filter OFF Forever Pause
- Suggested filter ON Forever Pause
- Suggested filter OFF Forever Pause

When you mute words, you won't get any new notifications for Tweets that include them or see Tweets with those words in your timeline. [Learn More](#)

Cancel Delete

Cancel **Edit Muted Words** Save

#cats

You can mute one word, phrase, @username, or hashtag at a time.

Muting Recommendations

Suggested Filter Topic

If enabled, Twitter will suggest relevant hashtags, emoji combinations, and phrases - reducing the need for muting multiple words that mean the same thing.

Furry Creatures Feline #babycat

@catsofinstagram

Show More

Mute From

Comments

Direct Messages

Notifications

Feed

From people you don't follow

From anyone

Mute Timing

Duration Forever >

Mute Importance

Critical Level High >

Muting Status

Pause

Putting your muted words on pause, won't remove it from your Twitter timeline, but it will save your setting preferences for when you do turn it on again.

Delete Word

< **Mute Importance**

Low

You won't see the most extreme use case of your muted word. Usually this means content that has been reported the most.

Medium

You will only see about half of content with your muted word. Only the safest content will be shown on your Twitter feed.

High

You won't see your muted word at all on your Twitter feed.

< **Muted Words**

Alphabetical Frequency

- #cats + 234 reports Suggested filter ON Forever >
- cat calls Suggested filter ON Forever >
- @cats_of_twitter Suggested filter ON Forever >
- #feline Suggested filter ON Forever >
- @RealGrumpyCat Suggested filter ON 24h >
- stray cats Suggested filter OFF Forever >
- Suggested filter ON Forever >
- Suggested filter OFF Forever >

When you mute words, you won't get any new notifications for Tweets that include them or see Tweets with those words in your timeline. [Learn More](#)

Edit Add

Cancel

Is this the type of content you would wish to mute?

Yes, I don't want to see content like this.

No, this is appropriate.

Cat: Meow.
Me: you have an hour until dinner.
Cat: meow
Me: It's barely after 4.
Cat: meow.
Me: we just had a time change.
Technically it's only like 3pm according to your bio clock.

What is the critical level of this example (wording)?

“ I have been chosen, today is a good day #cat ”

Cancel

Is this the type of content you would wish to mute?

Cancel

Syntax Clarification

What type of content would you like to mute? (Text explanation as to why syntax clarification matters & why it would benefit user. Is there an easier way to understand "syntax")

I just looked into the soul of my mean cat from across the room and said "you're a terrible person"

Cancel **Edit Muted Words** Save

#cats

You can mute one word, phrase, @username, or hashtag at a time.

Muting Recommendations

Suggested Filter Topic

If enabled, Twitter will suggest relevant hashtags, emoji combinations, and phrases - reducing the need for muting multiple words that mean the same thing.

Furry Creatures Feline #babycat

@catsofinstagram

Show More

< **Mute Importance**

Low

You won't see the most extreme use case of your muted word. Usually this means content that has been reported the most.

Medium

You will only see about half of content with your muted word. Only the safest content will be shown on your Twitter feed.

High

You won't see your muted word at all on your Twitter feed.



Muted Words

cat calls
#cats
@cats_of_twitter
#staine
@RealGumpyCat
stray cats

Suggested filter ON

Helpful

Cancel

Muting Recommendations

#cats

Edit Muted Words

Cancel

Muted Words

cat calls
#cats
@cats_of_twitter
#staine
@RealGumpyCat
stray cats

Suggested filter ON

Helpful

Cancel

Mute From

From anyone

From people you don't follow

Duration

Mute Importance

Critical Level

Muting Status

Pause

Delete Word

Muted Words

cat calls
#cats
@cats_of_twitter
#staine
@RealGumpyCat
stray cats

Suggested filter ON

Helpful

Cancel

Feed

Notifications

Direct Messages

Comments

Mute From

From anyone

From people you don't follow

Duration

Mute Importance

Critical Level

Muting Status

Pause

Delete Word



Final Design Solutions

With the usability testings finished, I was ready to start implementing feedback that I received. The largest task for this final phase, is to create designs that mimicked the current UI style of Twitter and making sure that any element I choose is consistent with Twitter's.

Compared to designing wireframes, the focus of the high fidelities shifted to uniform button and text elements while also maintaining high contrast assets to comply with accessibility guidelines. Because my wireframes were already designed to match IOS guidelines and contain similar elements to Twitter, the process of transitioning from low to high fidelity was relatively low effort. Small adjustments were made to consider more accurate typography settings and color usage.

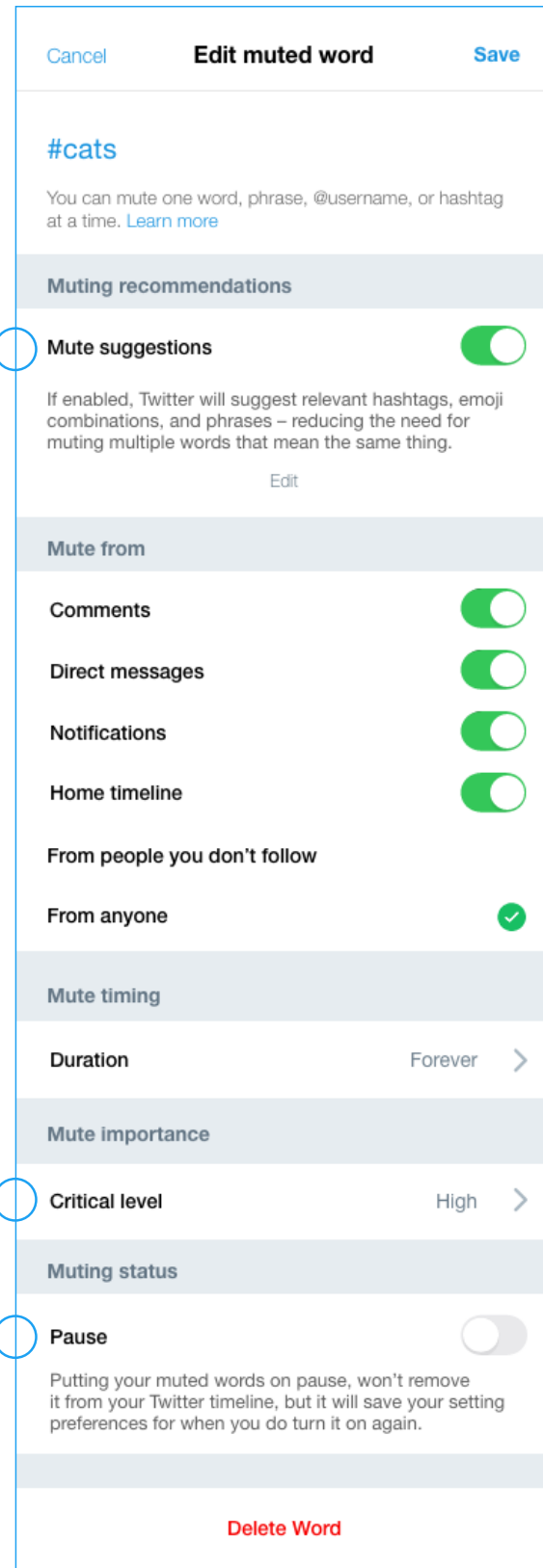
I started my conceptualization phase, hoping to validate three different set of designs, and through various stages of user testing I was, fortunately, able to narrow it down to one defined and coherent interaction model. The final product is a combination of five screens with small iterations between them to show nuisances from selected and unselected artifacts.

Final Design Solutions
High Fidelity Screens

Mute suggestions allow users to automatically mute a word cloud of relevant recommendations. For full control, users can view what words are being muted or manually add/delete words themselves.

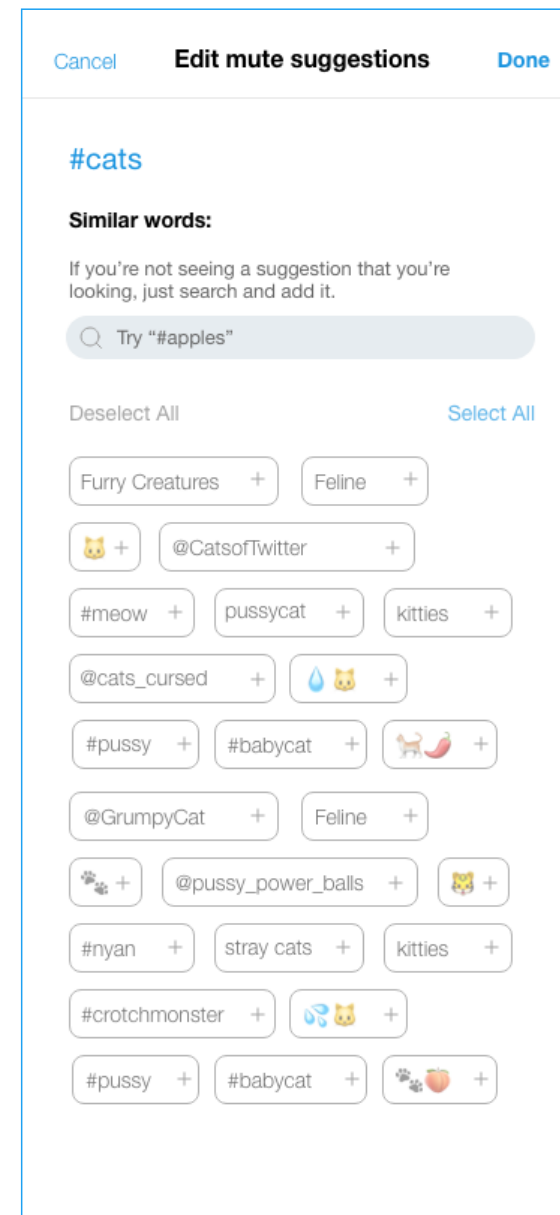
Determining how critical a word is and how much/little a word can appear on the user's feed, takes into account the users' mental health as well as having control over their echochamber.

Instead of deleting a word completely, users can simply pause & un-pause a word at will— negating the frustrations of having to re-personalize the settings of a previously added word.



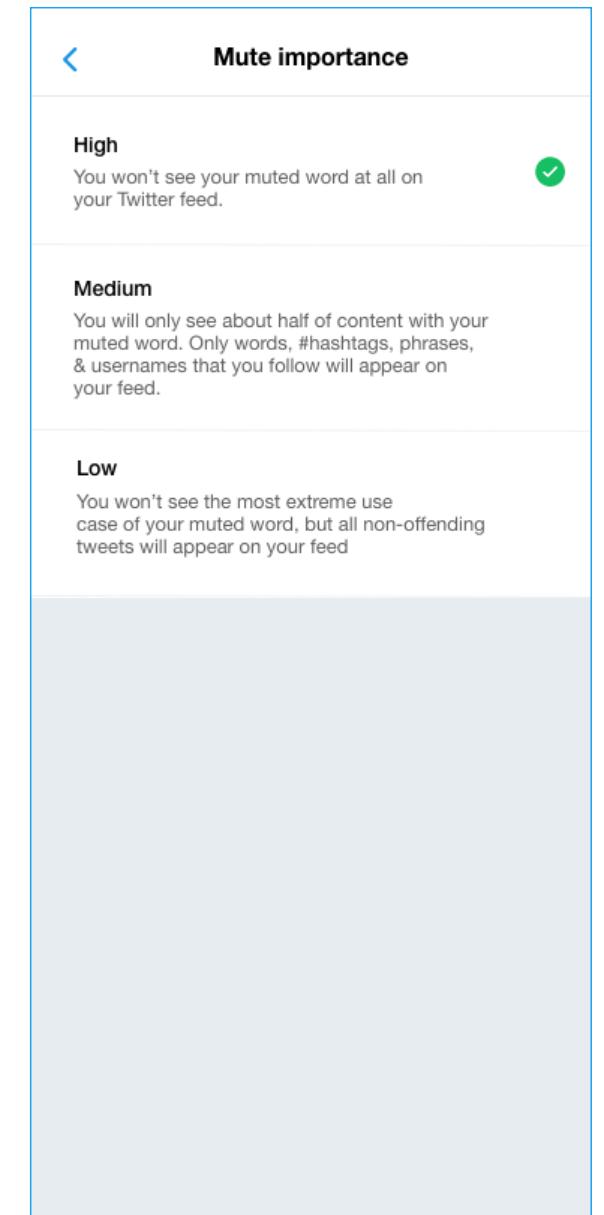
1. Add Mute Word

The edit page appears when a user adds a new muted word or edits an existing word.



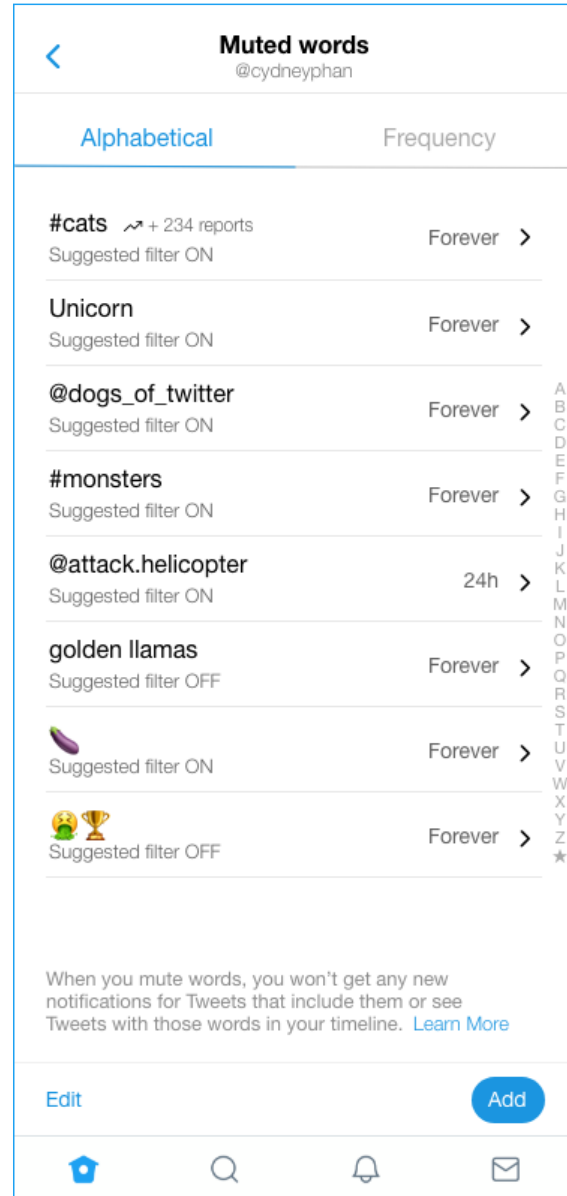
2. Edit Mute Suggestions

Users are able to edit their mute suggestions by searching for specific things. The top suggestions are determined by the most relevant & most reported.



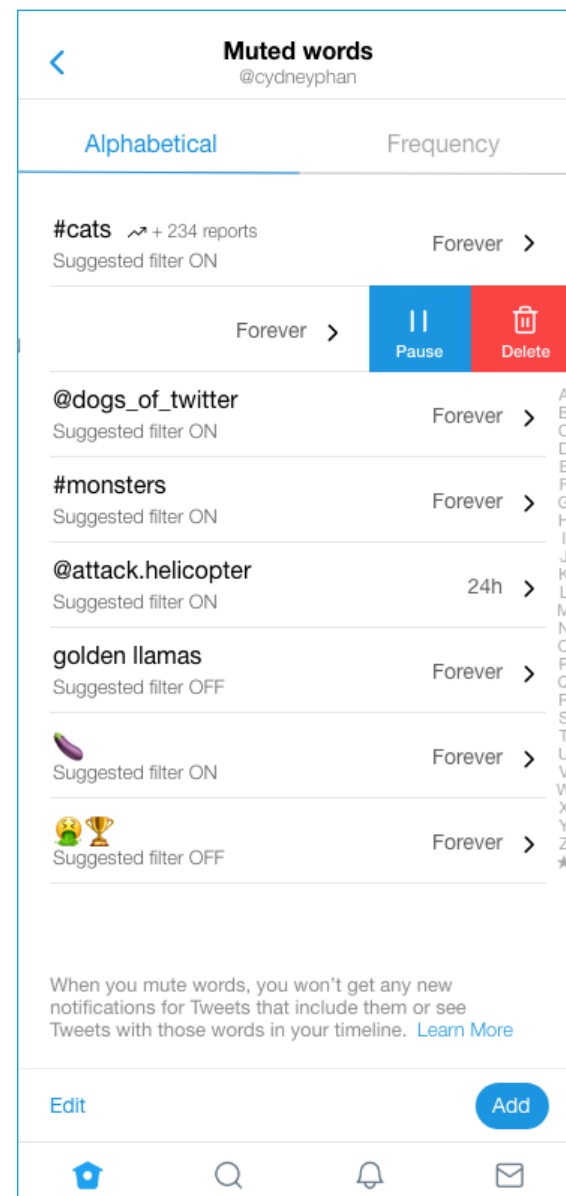
3. Mute Importance

To give users the control on how a muted word appears on their feed, they have the option to categorize that mute word as high, medium or low. All added words will be automatically categorized as high unless it's been manually edited.



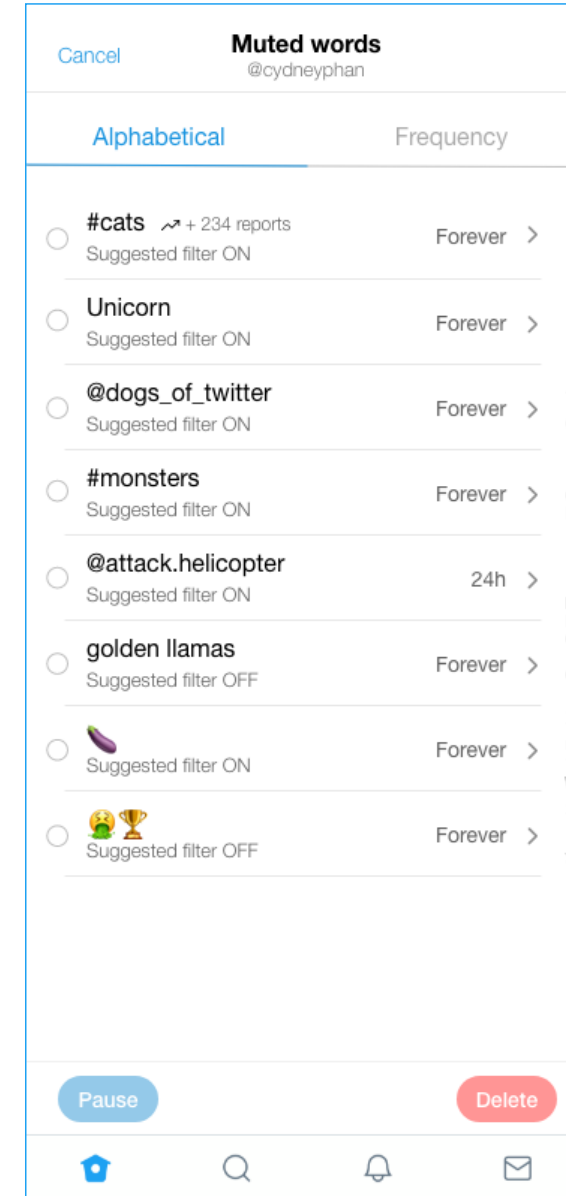
4. Main Mute Words

The main page with a list of user added muted words can be filtered by alphabetical or the level of frequency it appears on the user's feed.



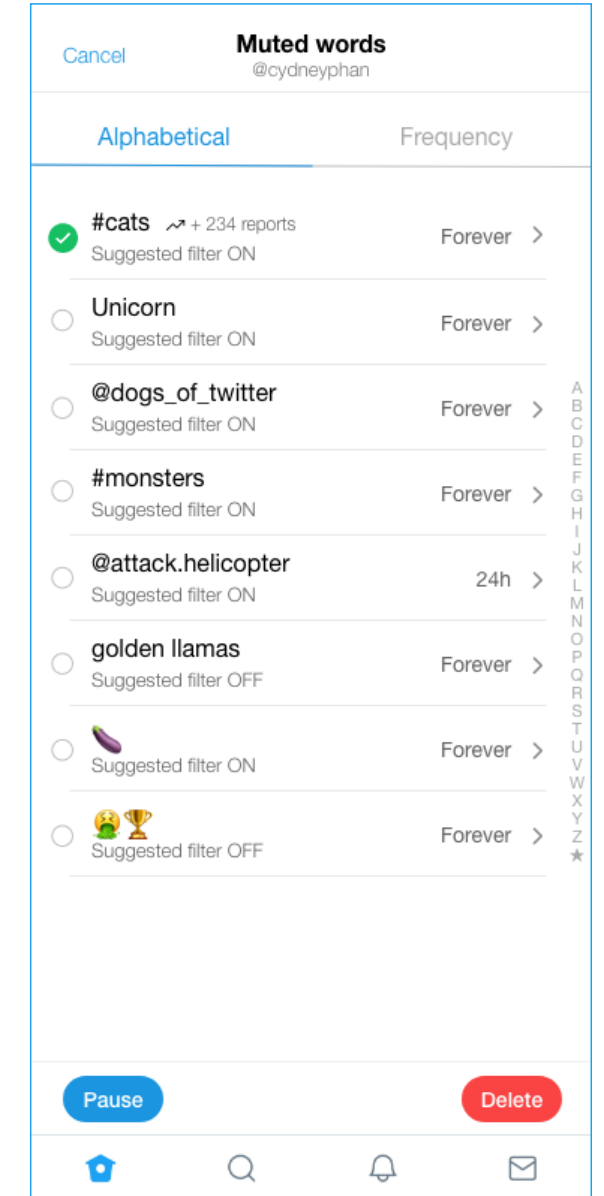
5. Main Edit Muted Words Side Swipe

To easily pause or delete the muted word within the main page, the user can easily side swipe to instantly access the editing options.



6. Main Edit Muted Words

Another option of editing muted words that align with current functionality within Twitter is directly pressing the "edit" button at the bottom on the screen.



7. Main Edit Muted Words w/ Selection

Options to pause and delete can be visually seen at the bottom of the screen, providing contrast with one another to reduce confusion between the two buttons.



Conclusion

Project Retrospective

This entire UX project was incredibly taxing and it tested my ability to strategize and project manage to a degree that I haven't experienced before either through school or my previous work experiences. Completing this complex project by myself forced me to be decisive and confident in the design selections that I've made. Every decision had to be precise and deliberate or else risk being irrelevant and misaligned with the QPOC community to which I was designing for.

Moving forward, there is still so much to this project that could be explored. I only focused on the information architecture within the mute words settings page, but the need for designing what the feed would look like to accommodate for syntax clarification— would it look like an interactive ad or is it a popup screen, what kind of questions will be asked to be useful and safe for both the users and the algorithm? What if the user needs to see any muted messages or comments? Where will that exist?

Those questions were brought up during both usability testings and design critiques, and unfortunately I wasn't able to build out the entire UX system to complete the experience. However, that means there's just simply more space to innovate and improve on this UX design proposal for the future of healthy social media usage among queer people of color.



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I'm passionate about ethical design practices and am constantly learning methods and new ideas to better create meaningful applications through the modes of UX research & design. Heavily basing my UX strategy on user focused methodologies and experiences, I create a more seamless human/ technological digital integration by getting to the root of essential human problems and providing effective solutions through research based design solutions. I find the opportunity to encourage change immensely rewarding!

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Thank you

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