How to *Maximize* the impact of content design

Jonathon Colman
Senior Design Manager, Intercom

How to *Maximize* the impact of content design

@jcolman

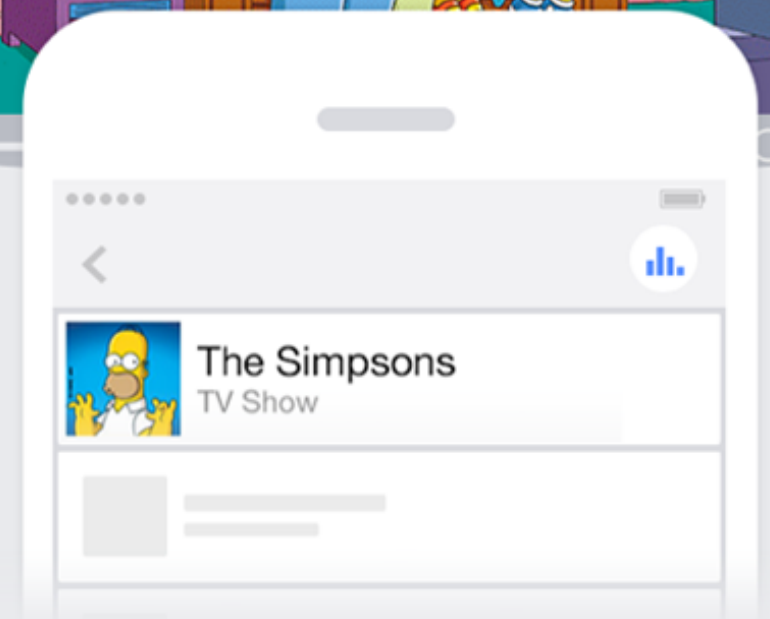How to *Maximize* the impact of content design

go.inter.com/**max**

A product of
Failure

Identify TV And Music Instantly
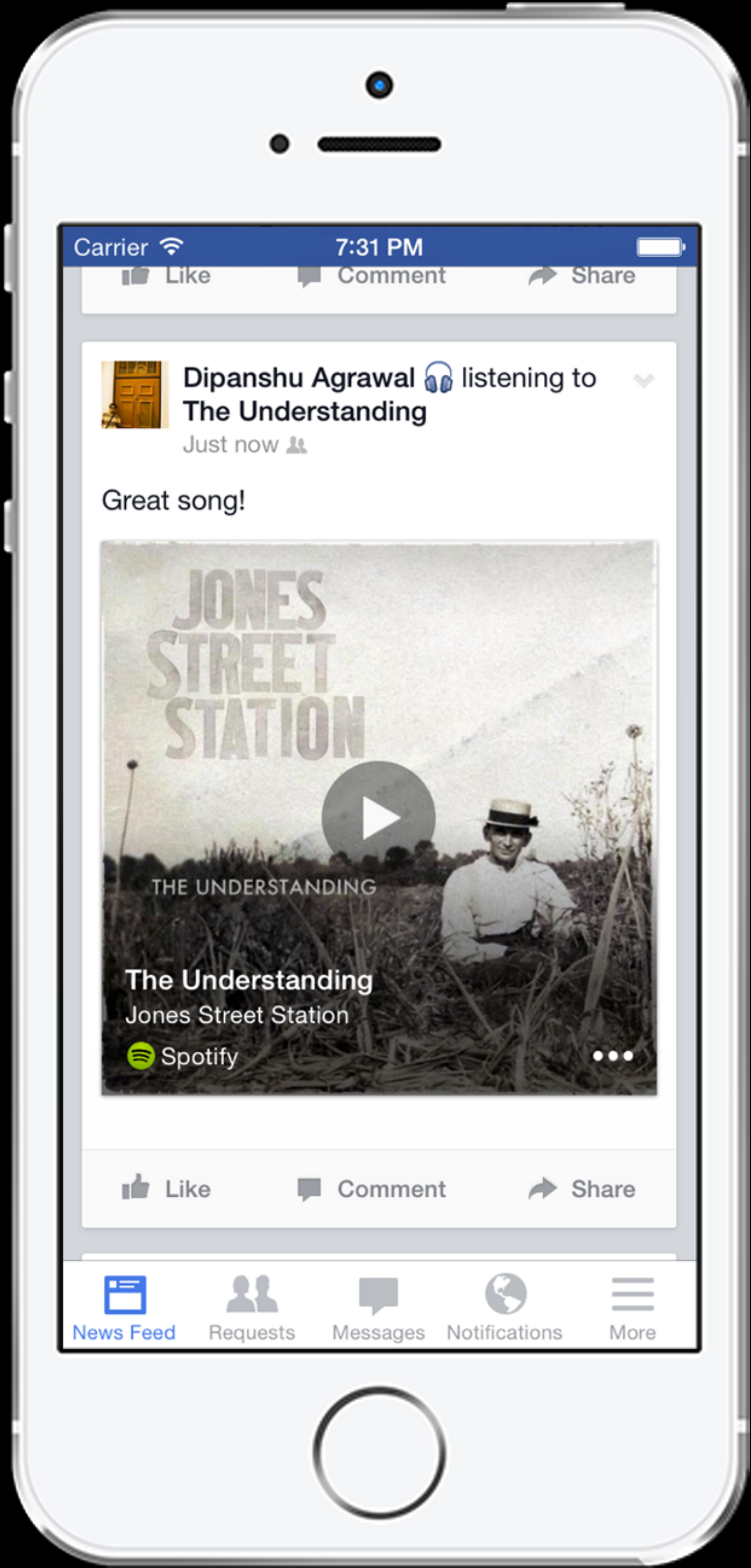
Use your microphone and music apps to identify the currently playing TV show or song whenever you begin to post.

Learn More

The Simpsons
TV Show

How It Works

When this icon is moving, we're trying to identify what you're watching or listening to. Tap the icon to turn it off or on.

What We Identify

We identify TV and music. We can't identify background noise or conversation. Sounds are only used to find a match and are never stored.

Your Privacy

You're in control — if we find a match, you choose whether to share it or not.
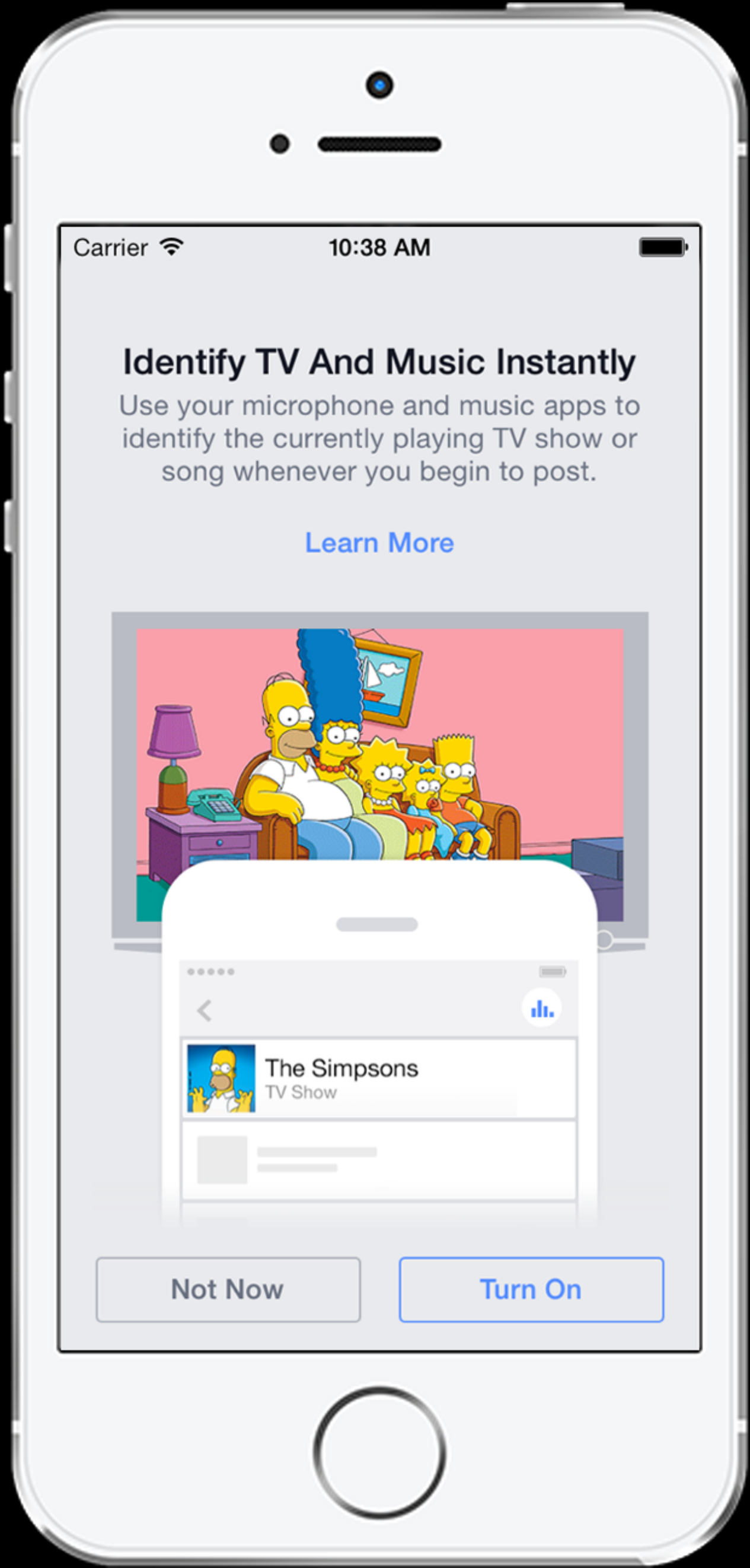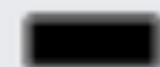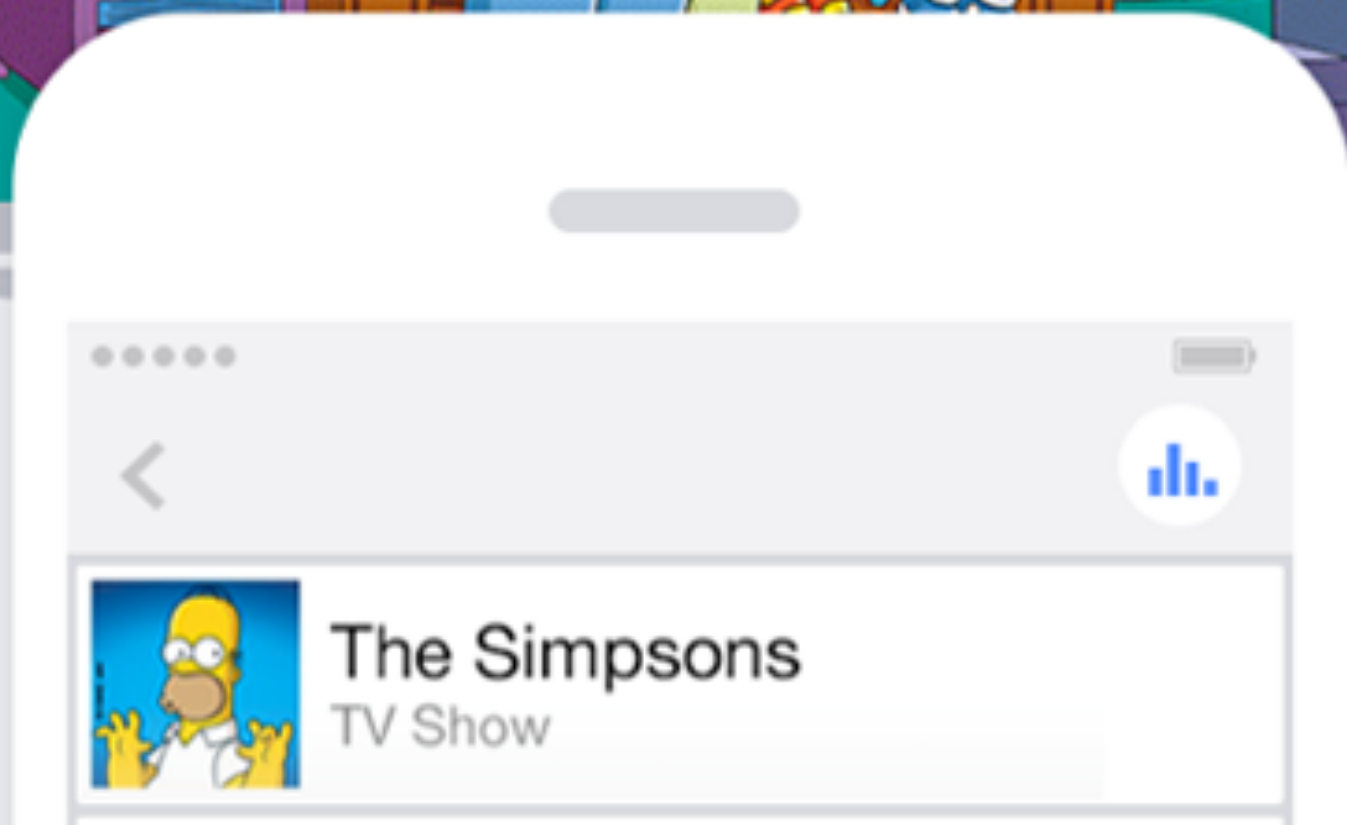
What went wrong

Identify TV And Music Instantly

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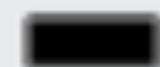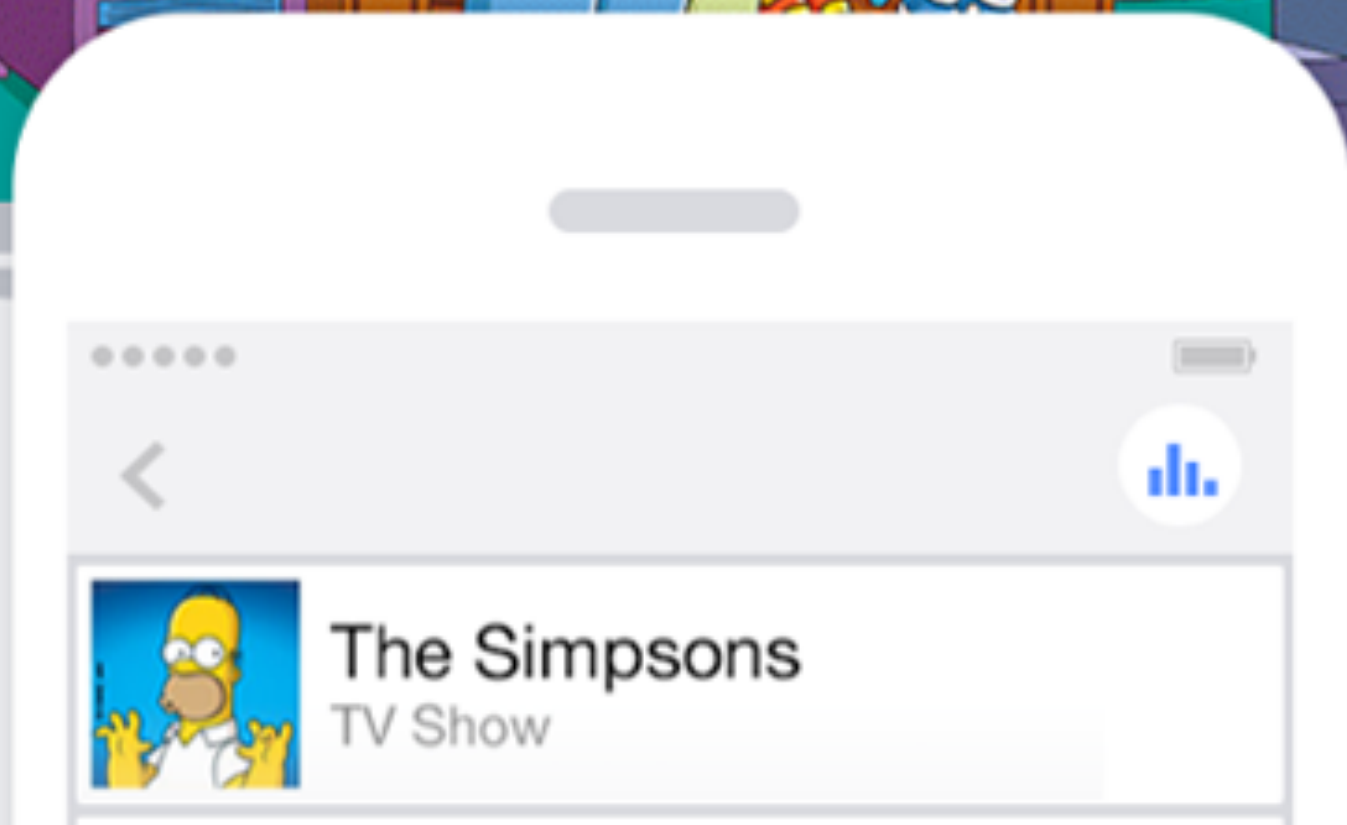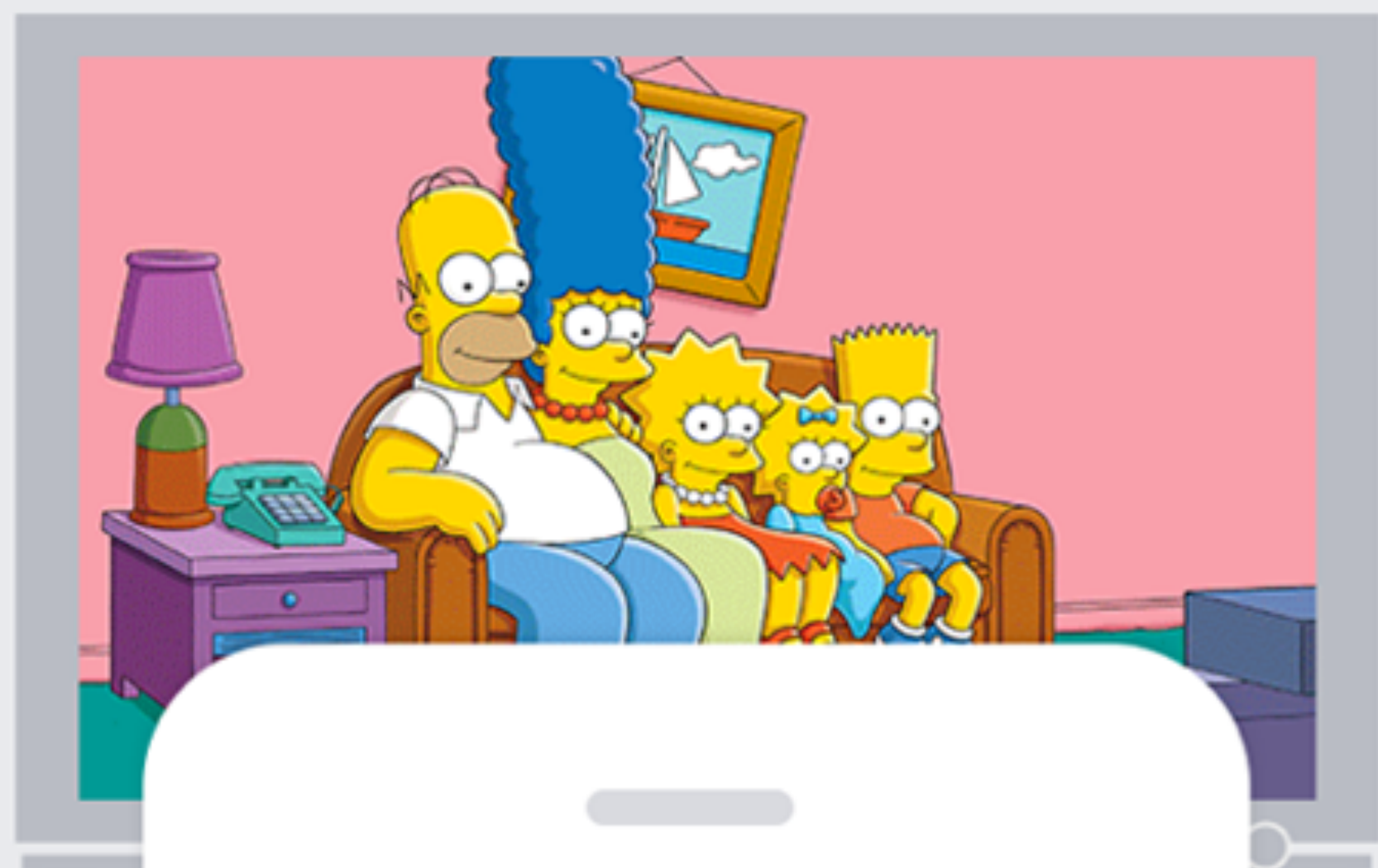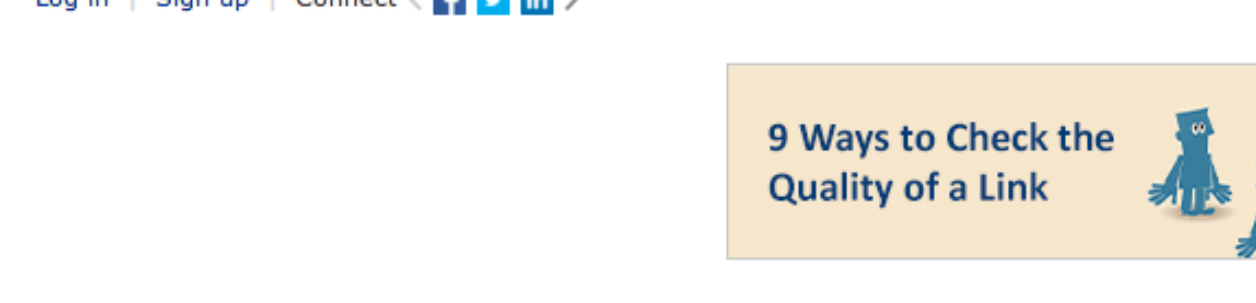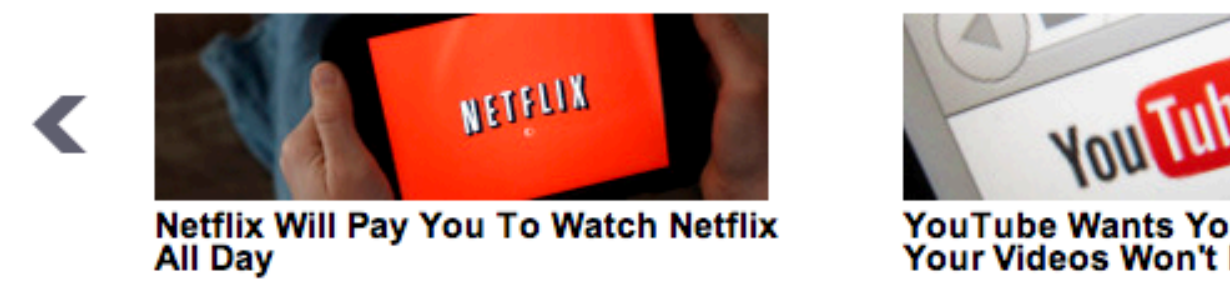You're in control — if we find a match, you choose whether to share it or not.

What happened

Like 297k   Follow

FRONT PAGE | BUSINESS | SMALL BIZ | MEDIA | SCIENCE | GRE

Tech • TEDWeekends • Women in Tech • Girls In STEM • Screen Sense • Tech The Halls

Netflix Will Pay You To Watch Netflix All Day

YouTube Wants Yo Your Videos Won't

Facebook Can Now Listen To Everything You Listen To

The Huffington Post | By Tyler McCarthy
Posted: 05/21/2014 3:51 pm EDT | Updated: 05/21/2014 5:00 pm EDT
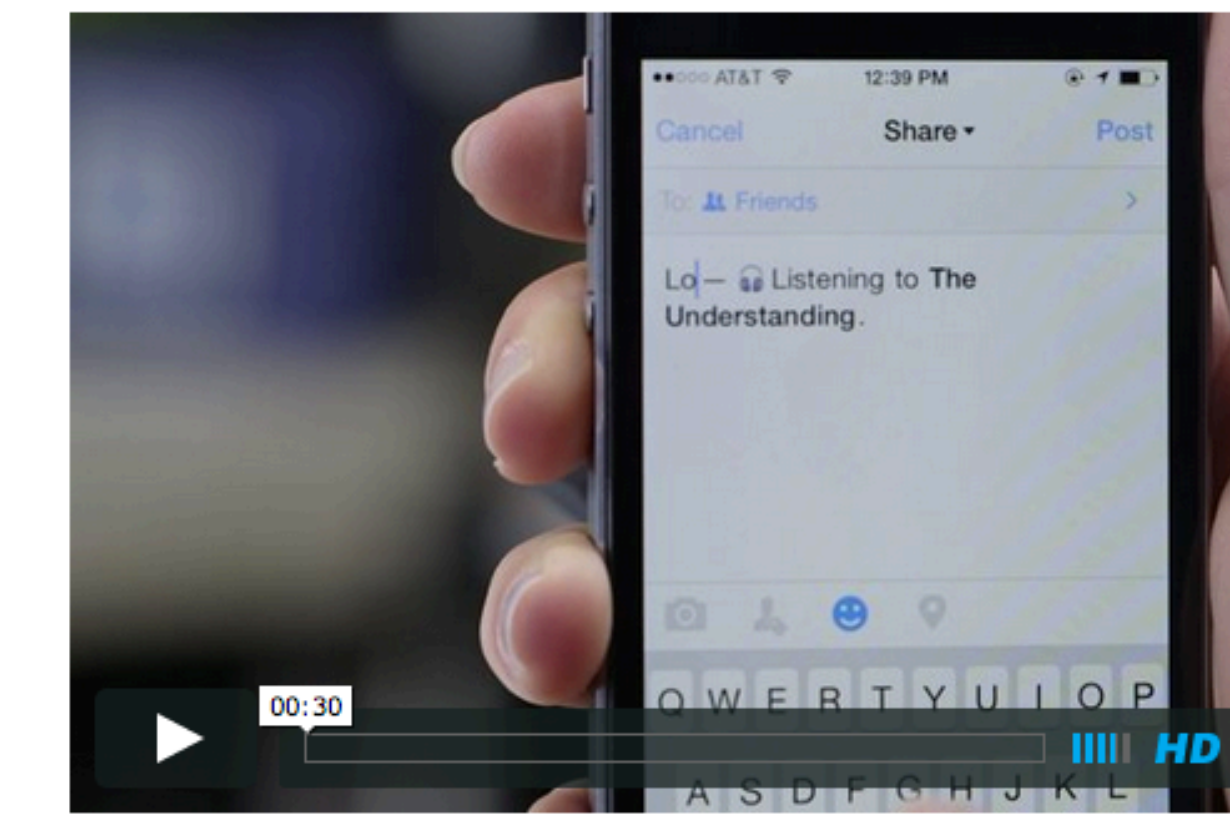
2.3k | 1028 | 116 | 95 | 10 | 13

Like | Share | Tweet | LinkedIn | Email | Comment

Facebook has unveiled a new feature that lets people share what they'r listening to without having to type or speak a single word.

On Wednesday, May 21, the site announced a new opt-in audio recogr that will be incorporated into its mobile app in the coming weeks. The person's smartphone microphone to listen for what songs, TV shows o user is currently hearing. The feature will listen for familiar audio -- ki Shazam -- and then give users the option to share what it finds as a sta

The new feature is an extension of the site's feelings and activities fur turned on the feature, a small icon will appear on the screen when you update. You can then opt to share or ignore what the feature picks up.

Forbes

New Posts +13   Most Popular

COVER STORY
America's Richest Families

Brazil Has Faked Th Injuries At The 2014 Cup

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9 Ways to Check the Quality of a Link

Kashmir Hill
Forbes Staff

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Welcome to The Not-So Private Parts where technology & privacy collide
full bio →

TECH   5/22/2014 @ 7:35PM | 283,018 views

Facebook War You're Doing

+ Comment Now   + Follow Comments

Facebook had two big annou company's wildly divergent t announcement is that the cor initially share only with their public, the previous default. plans to break out the old "p remind people of how they're using an extinct creature as messaging, but simply an ico Meanwhile, Facebook's secor comfortable they think their happening in their lives. Fac smartphone app that can tur around them to identify song in allowing Facebook to micr little tag to their status updat Thrones as they sound off on sex on TV these days.

29
COMMENTS

16 CALLED-OUT

+ Follow Comments

Privacy Checkup

We just wanted to make sure you're s Follow these three steps and we can privacy is up to date and everything is

Facebook's animal of choice to represent privacy

"The aim was to remove ever

CONFERENCES AND MORE

---

naked security by SOPHOS

PRODUCTS ▸   FREE TOOLS ▸   FREE SOPHOS HOME ▸

Have you listened to our podcast? Listen now

Facebook wants to listen in on your TV and music

22 MAY 2014   12

Android, Facebook, iOS, Privacy

◂ Previous: SourceForge's turn to reset passwords – thi...   Next: Buzzkill: FBI director says he was joking about hi... ▸

by Lisa Vaas

Say, you don't mind if Facebook sticks one of your earbuds into its data-mining cranium, do you?

As Facebook said in a message posted Thursday, over the next few weeks, it's introducing an optional music, TV and movies recognition feature in the US for Android and iOS gadgets – or what the praiseworthy Register calls "fondleslabs."

The feature will be off by default. If a user gives it permission to slurp up sound, it will tap into the mic on a mobile device and eavesdrop on whatever's playing in the background.

Facebook.

Facebook: Do not to release your new app feature that listens to users' conversations

Facebook just announced a new feature to its app, which will let it listen to our conversations and surroundings through our own phones' microphone. Talk about a Big Brother move.

Facebook says the feature will be used for harmless things, like identifying the song or TV show playing in the background, but by using the phone's microphone every time you write a status update, it has the ability to listen to everything.

Not only is this move just downright creepy, **it's also a massive threat to our privacy.** The feature is opt-in, but many won't even read the warnings. If we act now, we can stop Facebook in its tracks before it has a chance to release the feature.

Tell Facebook not to release its creepy and dangerous new app feature that listens to users' surroundings and conversations.

Sign the petition

TO: Facebook.

Facebook: Respect our privacy and do not release your new app feature that listens to users' conversations.

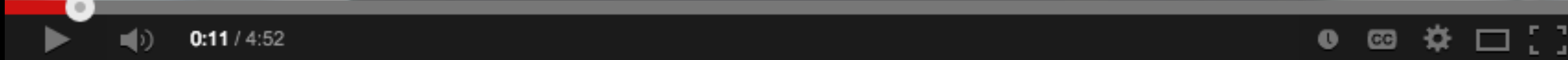**615,006 signatures**   134,994 SIGNATURES UNTIL 750K

Full Name

Email Address

Postal/ZIP Code

Country
United States

SIGN THE PETITION

0:11 / 4:52

DELETE YOUR FACEBOOK

Matthias

Subscribe 209,031

1,308,473

👍 18,322 👎 1,385

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Click to tweet: http://ctt.ec/R18PL
Please share! Help spread the word! #deletefacebook

0:40 / 2:03
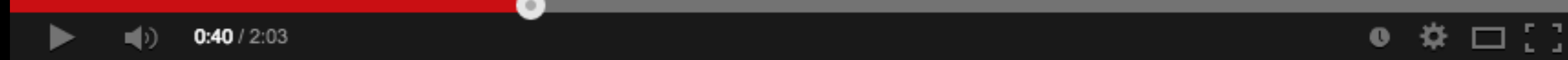
Facebook's Most Invasive App Yet

Jimmy Kimmel Live ☑

▶ Subscribe   4,343,222

165,309

👍 1,755   👎 28

👍 Like   👎

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Published on May 23, 2014

Facebook has a new feature that uses the microphone in your
smartphone to listen in on the TV shows and movies you're
watching and the music you're listening to - then it posts that

But why?
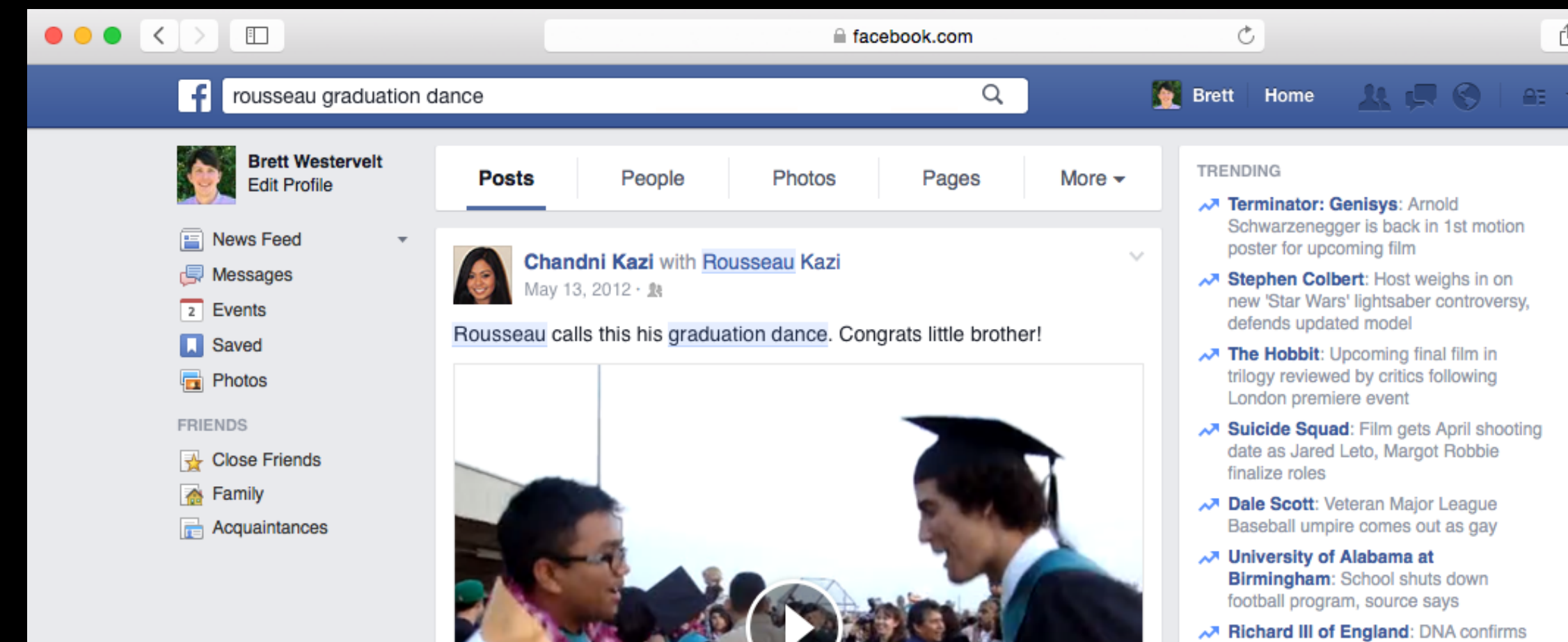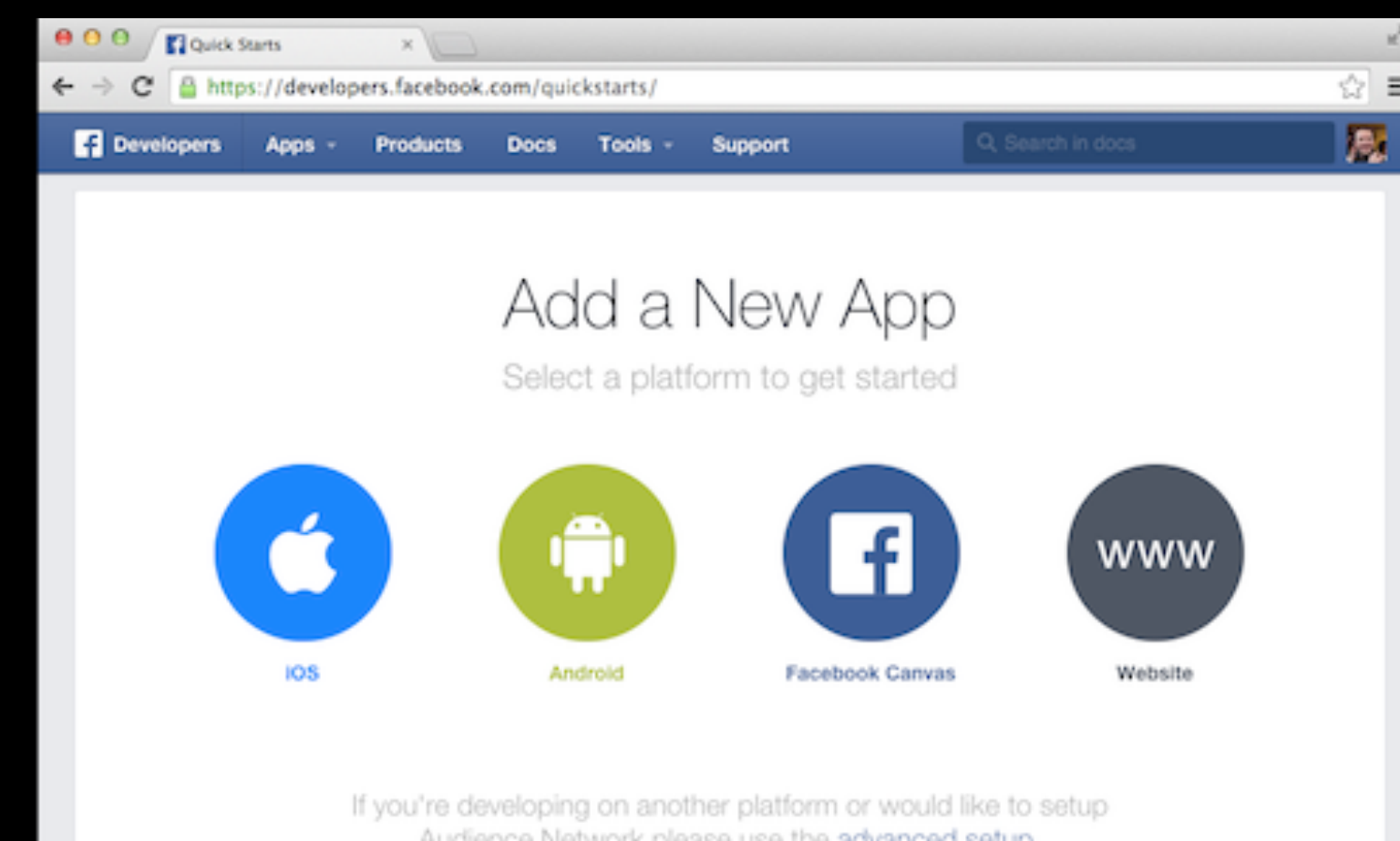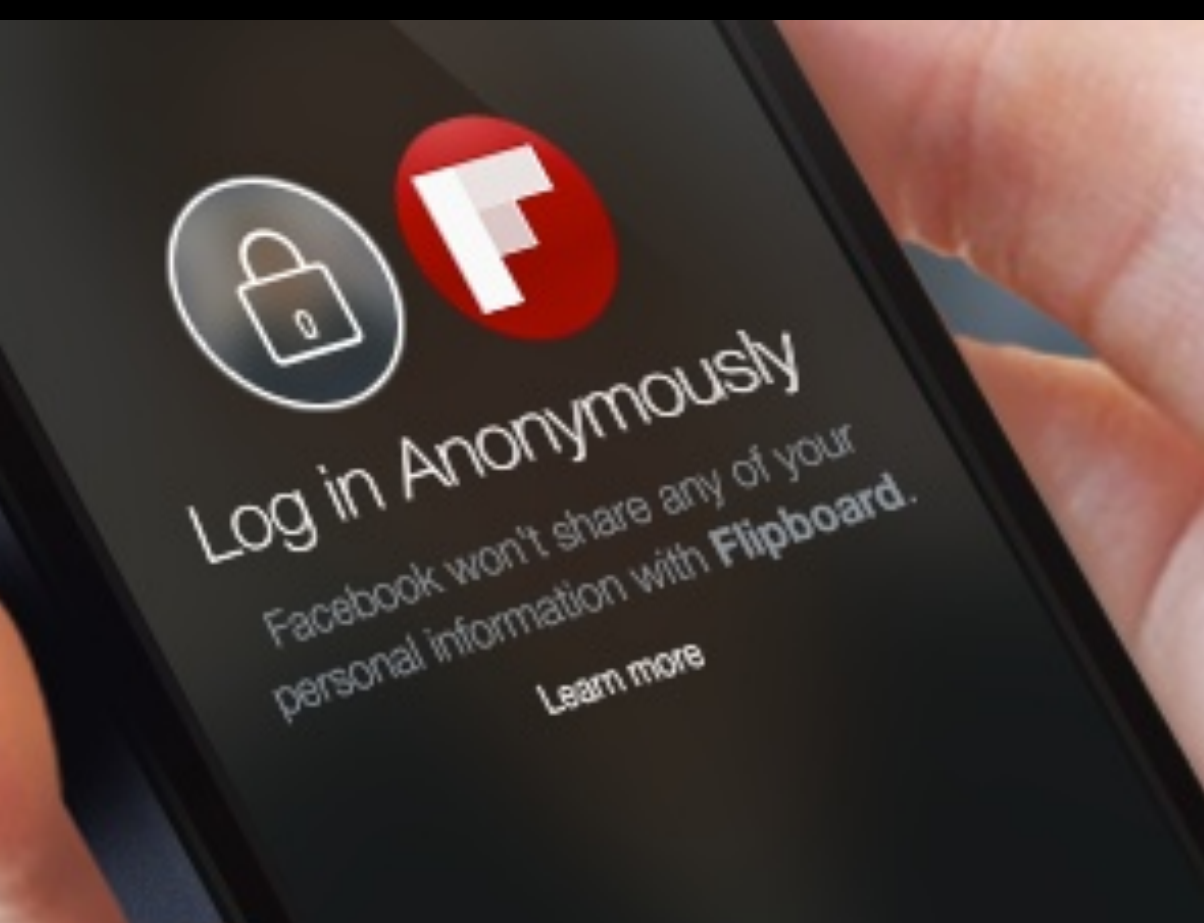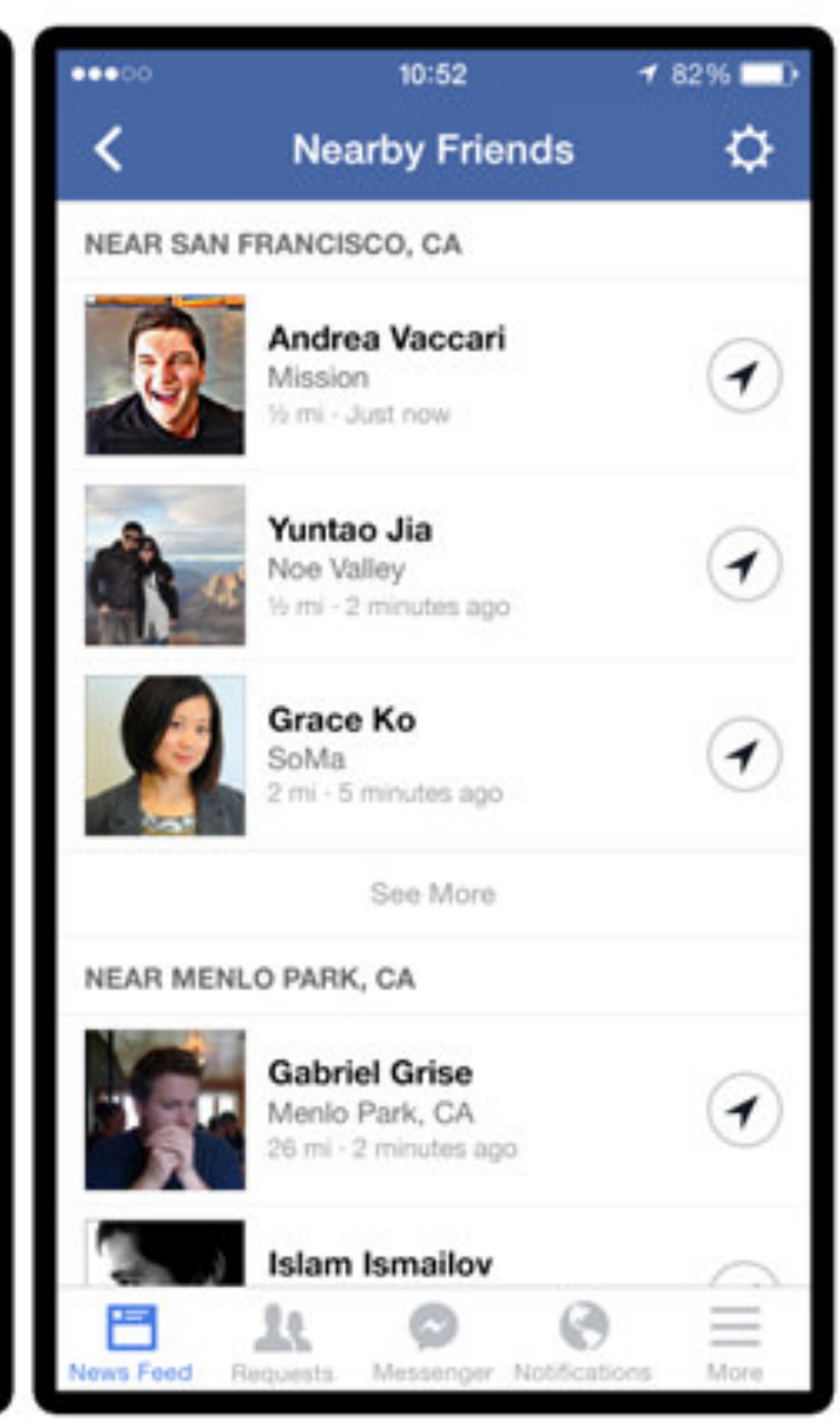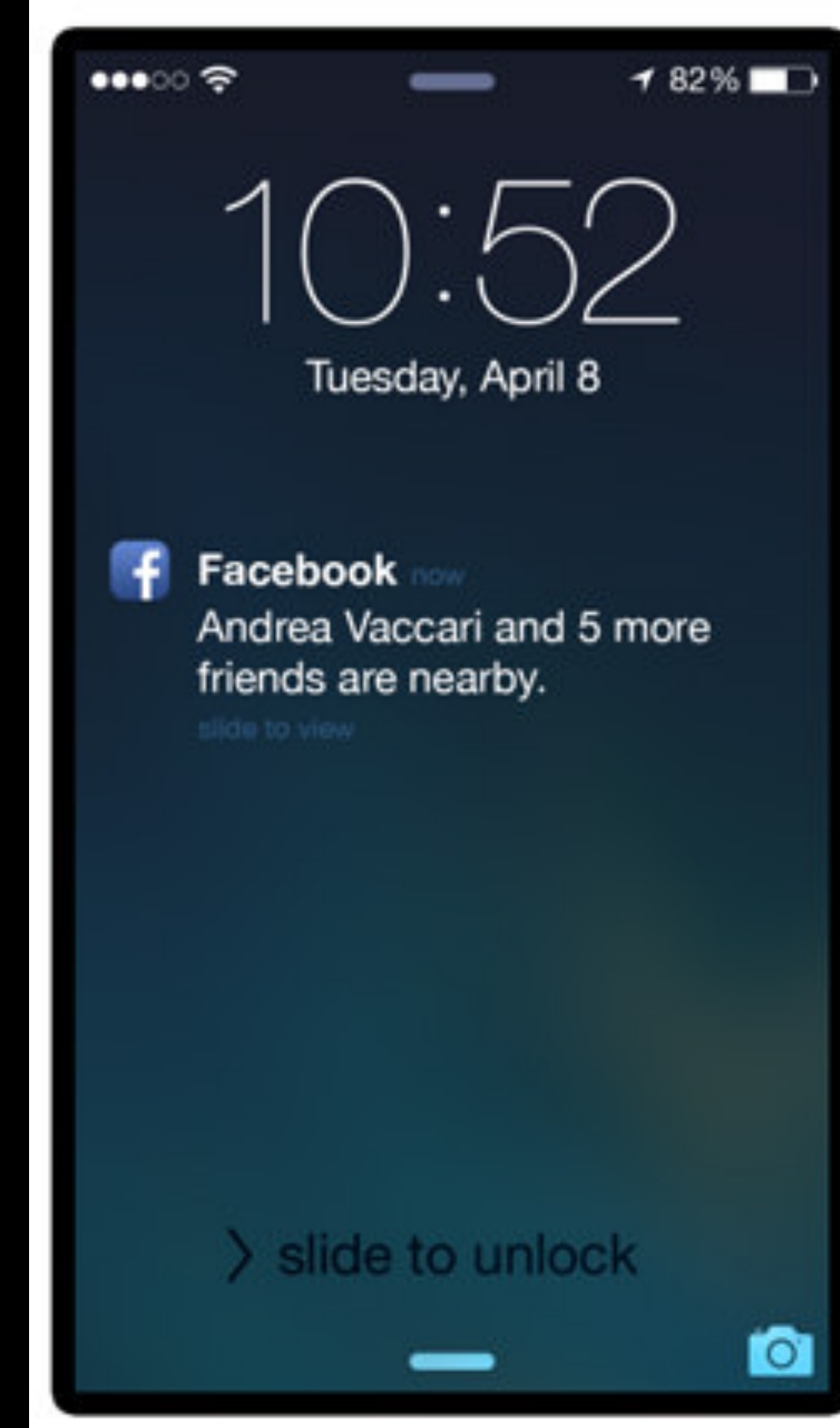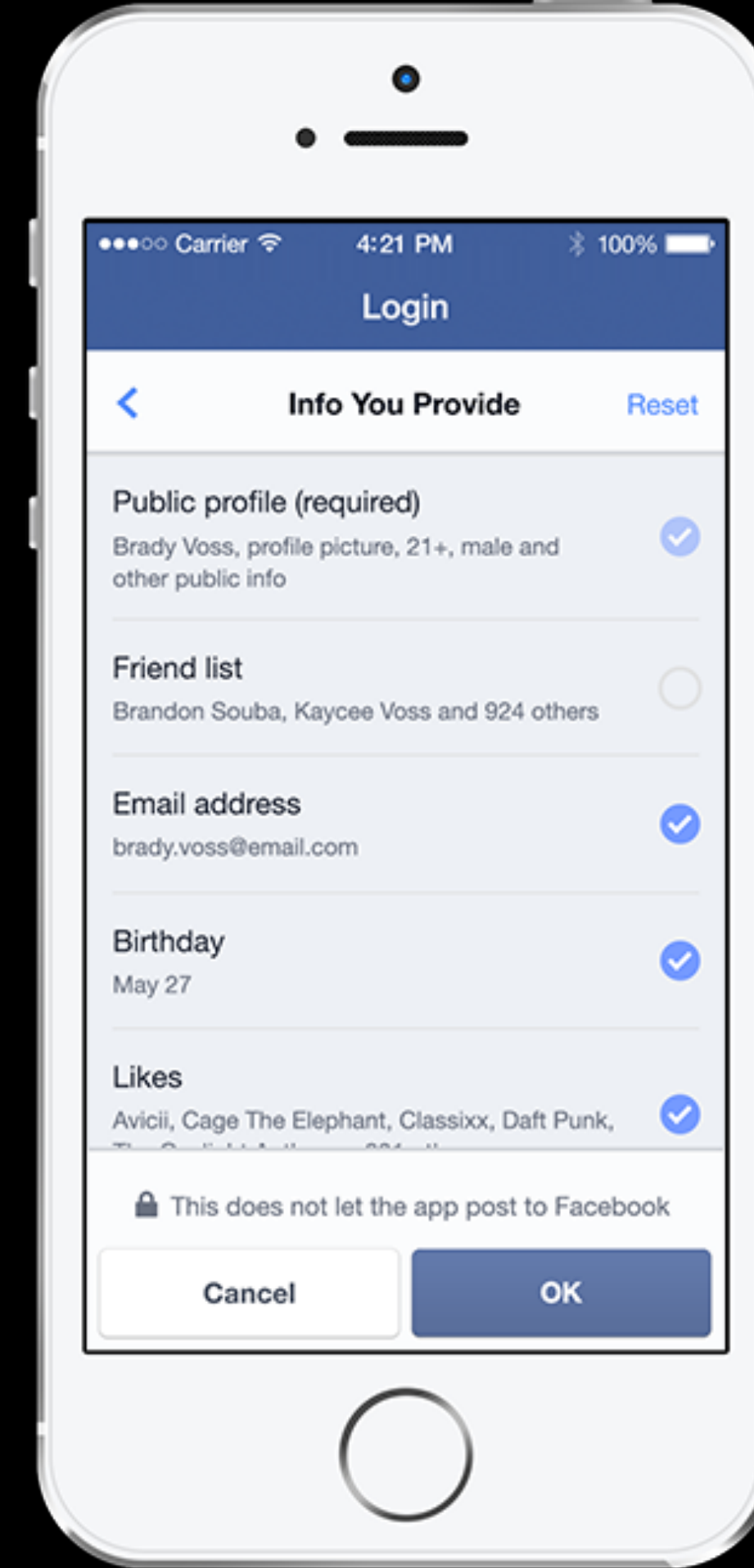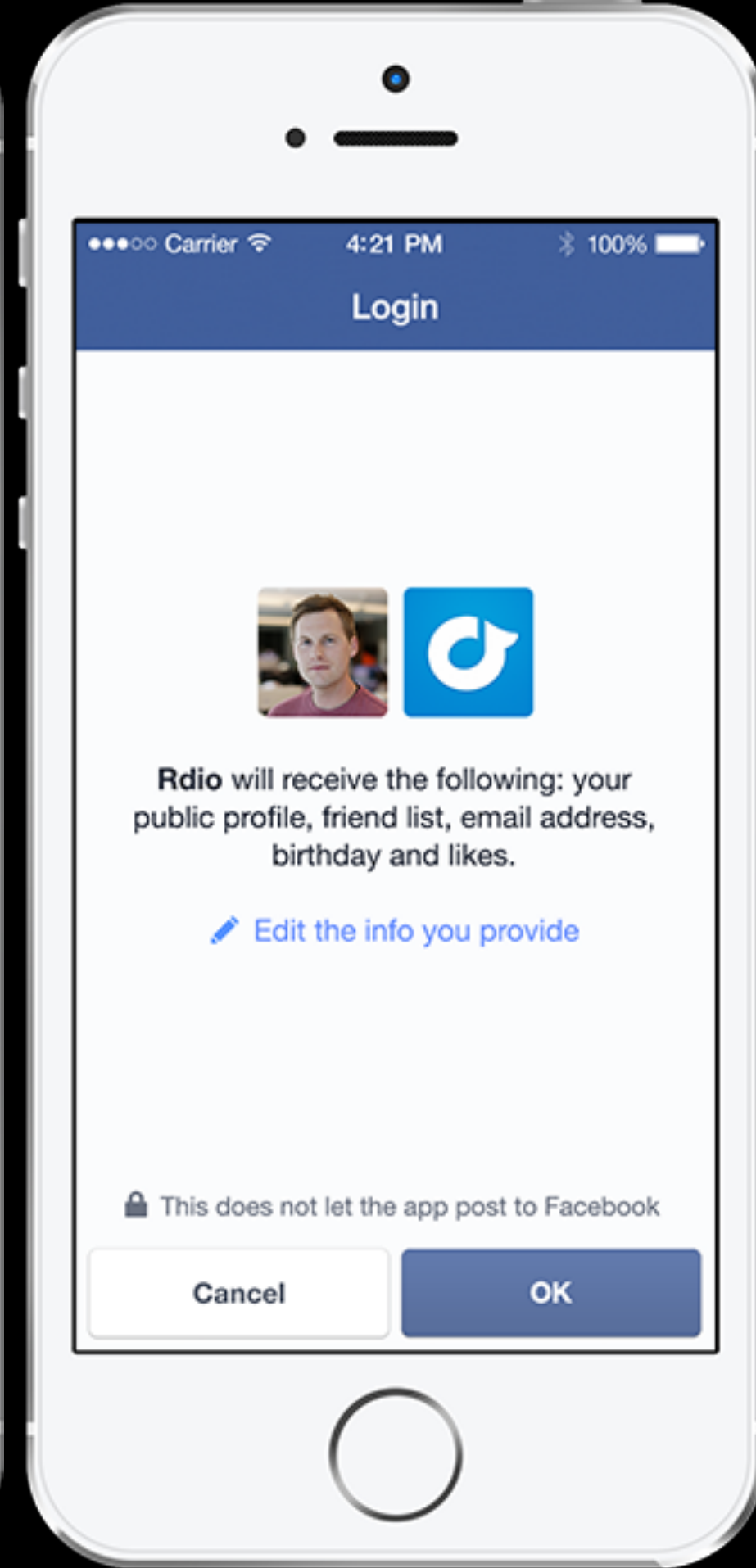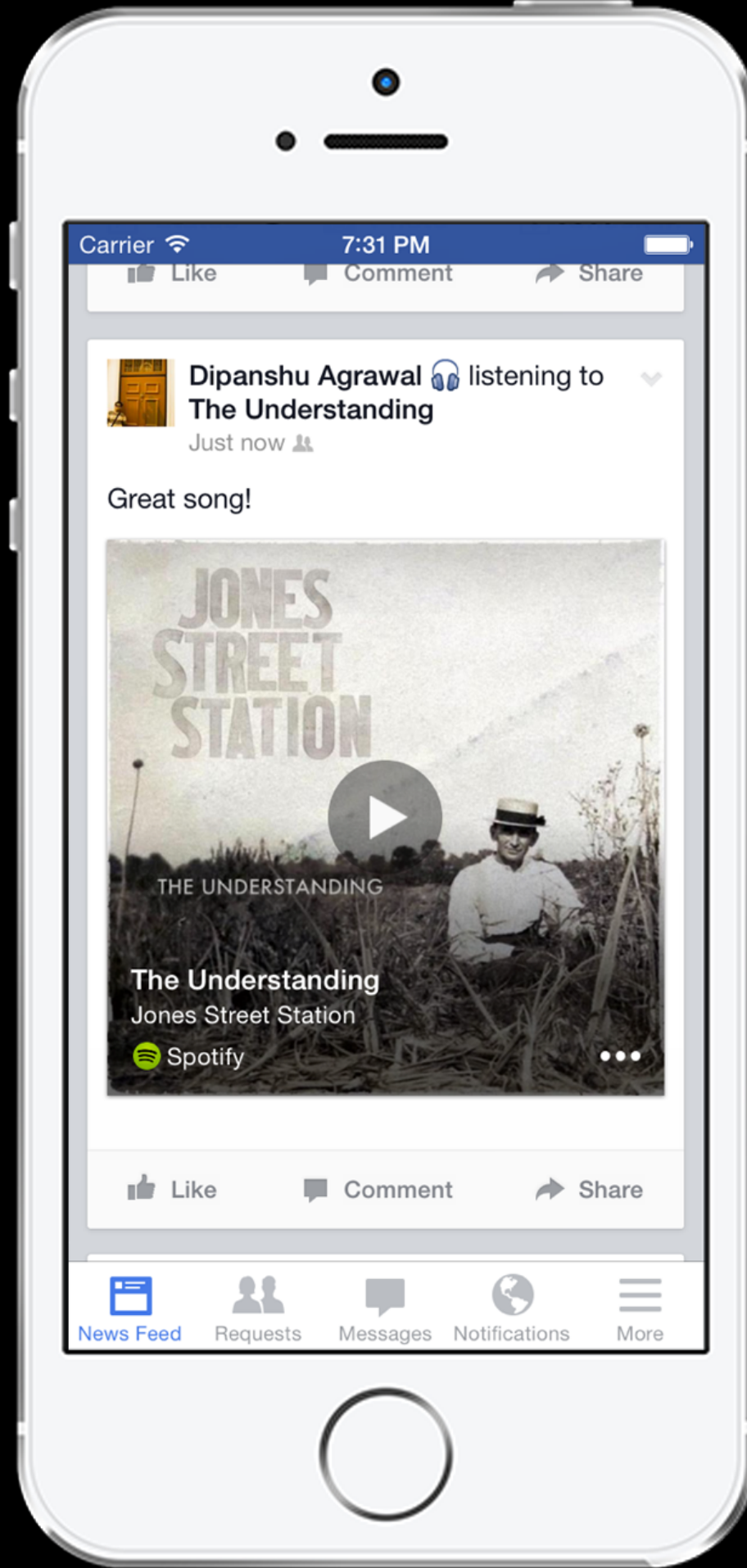
MOVE FAST AND BREAK THINGS

Eight core Problems

1

No focus

2

Less context

3

Role confusion

4

Less depth of work

5

Less opportunity for product impact

6
Unclear career paths

8

Burnout

1 No focus

2 Less context

3 Role confusion

4 Less depth of work

5 Less opportunity for product impact

6 Unclear career paths

7 Less pay than your peers

8 Burnout
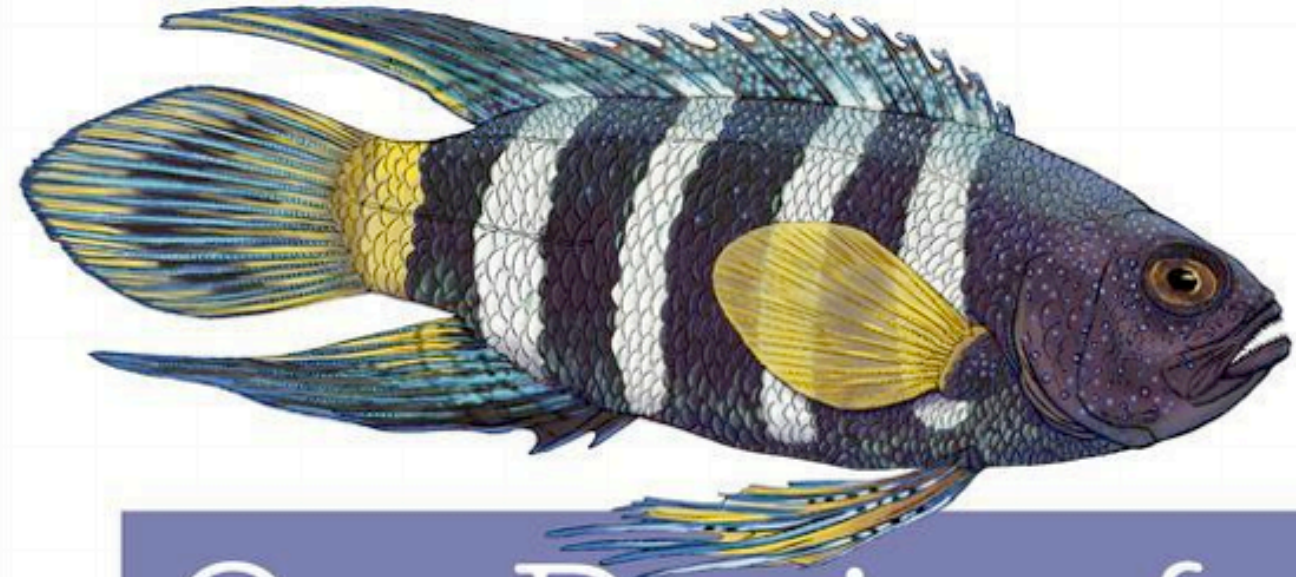
The qualities of effective design organizations:

Foundation	Output	Management
1. Shared sense of purpose	5. Support the entire journey	9. Treat team members as people, not resources
2. Focused, empowered leadership	6. Deliver at all levels of scale	10. Diversity of perspective and background
3. Authentic user empathy	7. Establish and uphold standards of quality	11. Foster a collaborative environment
4. Understand, articulate, and create value	8. Value delivery over perfection	12. Manage operations effectively

How we Maximized the impact of content design

DesignOps is everything that supports high quality crafts, methods, and processes.

DAVE MALOUF
IXDA, DESIGN OPS SUMMIT

Start with
the problem

Refocusing content design to maximize impact

Jonathon Colman, Senior Design Manager
25 January 2019

TL;DR

Starting in FY20-Q1, content designers will be:

- Allocated to support no more than 2 product teams each quarter (and usually just 1).
- Canceling all one-off/ad hoc support mechanisms for other products and teams. We'll revisit this over time and aim for broader support in the future. For now, content designers will attend product design crits to catch the biggest problems and opportunities.
- Accountable for practicing "[full-stack content design](#)" that focuses on systems as well as the surfaces of the products we work on—and all the fundamentals at every level. This is the same accountability that product designers have.

If we make these changes, I believe that content designers will have more focus, improved collaboration, be less at risk for burnout, and drive far greater impact.

- **Dedicate each content designer to just 1 project or team each quarter.** These projects should be matched to our highest company priorities, be co-located in the same office as the content designer, and have the best potential for content design impact. Having this focus will allow content designers to work deeply within a product, crafting both the system design and strategy all the way up to the words on the surface. It will increase their impact and improve the quality of their work while reducing stress and burnout. It will also help their immediate partners see that they're dedicated and committed to the team's product and goals rather than just an outsider without accountability. This will result in stronger relationships, better collaboration, and more influence, all of which mean better products for our customers.

Determine our priorities

Teams	Company priority rank
Team A	5
Team B	2
Team C	6
Team D	1
Team E	4
Team F	3

Teams	Company priority rank	Content design opportunity rank
Team A	5	4
Team B	2	5
Team C	6	1
Team D	1	2
Team E	4	6
Team F	3	3

Teams	Company priority rank	Content design opportunity rank	Do they want content design?
Team A	5	4	Yes
Team B	2	5	No
Team C	6	1	Yes
Team D	1	2	Yes
Team E	4	6	No
Team F	3	3	Yes

Teams	Company priority rank	Content design opportunity rank	Do they want content design?	Is the team in the same office?
Team A	5	4	Yes	Yes
Team B	2	5	No	Yes
Team C	6	1	Yes	No
Team D	1	2	Yes	Yes
Team E	4	6	No	No
Team F	3	3	Yes	No

Teams	Company priority rank	Content design opportunity rank	Do they want content design?	Is the team in the same office?
Team A	5	4	Yes	Yes
Team B	2	5	No	Yes
Team C	6	1	Yes	No
Team D	1	2	Yes	Yes
Team E	4	6	No	No
Team F	3	3	Yes	No

- **Cancel all office hours programs and one-off/ad hoc support.**
  These efforts distract content designers from their key priorities, which means that they end up driving less significant impact on them. These consulting efforts often don't get solved with an email or a quick conversation, so they stack up and contribute to stress/burnout. Content designers will attend product design crits for the team(s) they support to offer feedback, but beyond that, they won't offer any other catch-all support for teams that don't fall into their priorities.
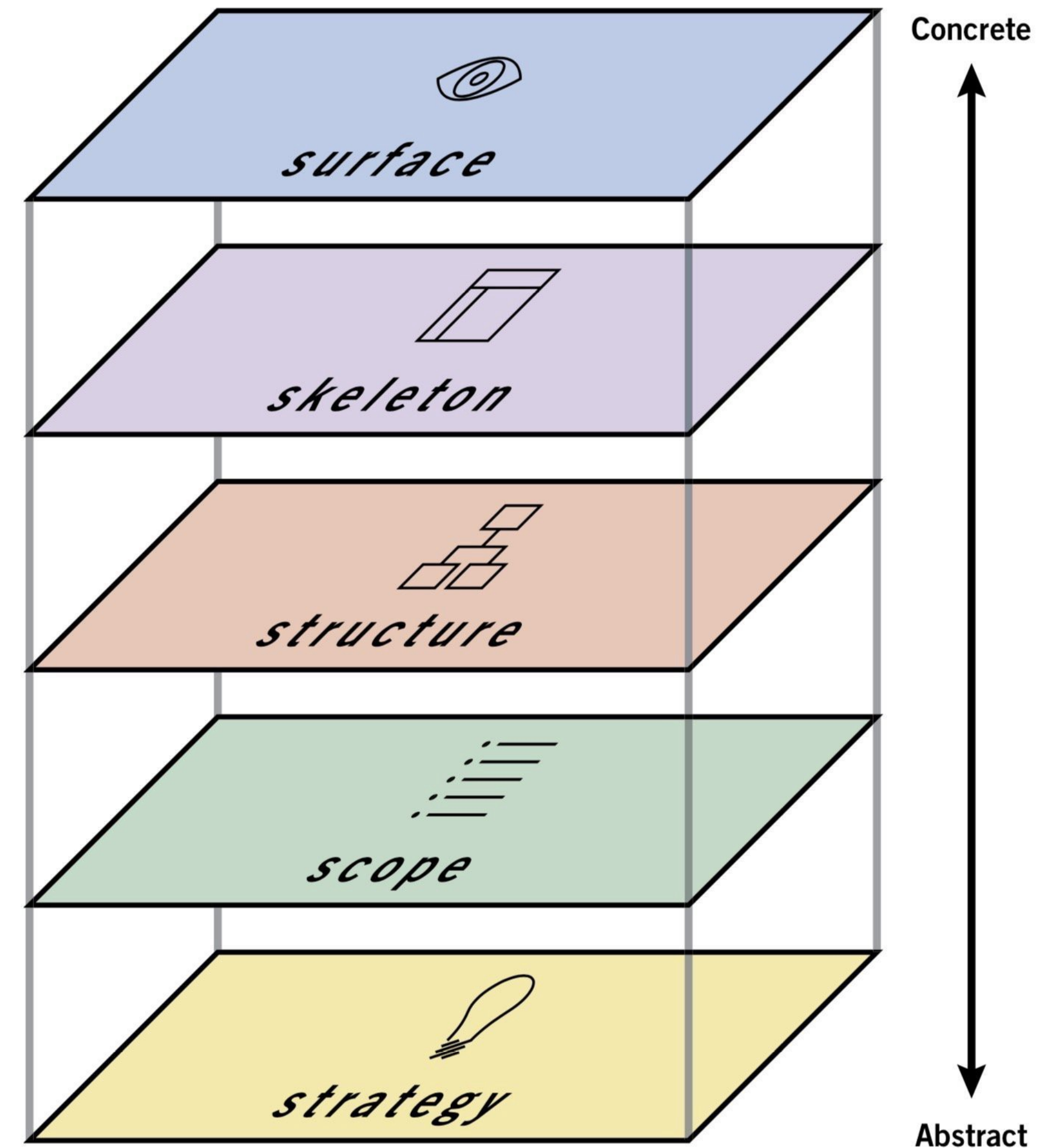
Redefine our expectations

Web as software interface

Visual Design: graphic treatment of interface elements (the "look" in "look-and-feel")

Interface Design: as in traditional HCI: design of interface elements to facilitate user interaction with functionality

Information Design: in the Tuftean sense: designing the presentation of information to facilitate understanding

Interaction Design: development of application flows to facilitate user tasks, defining how the user interacts with site functionality

Functional Specifications: "feature set": detailed descriptions of functionality the site must include in order to meet user needs

User Needs: externally derived goals for the site; identified through user research, ethno/techno/psychographics, etc.

Site Objectives: business, creative, or other internally derived goals for the site

task-oriented
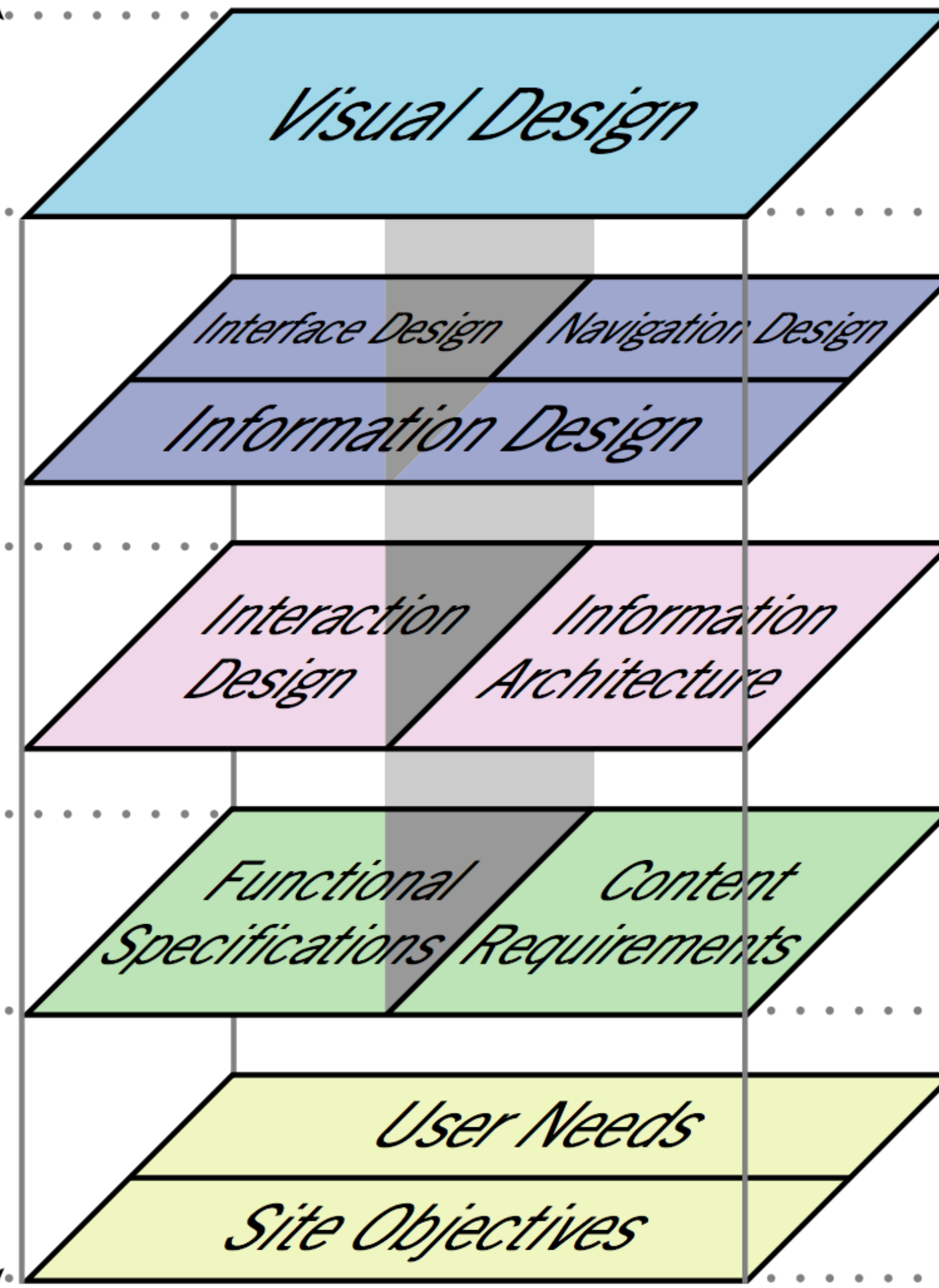
Web as hypertext system

Visual Design: visual treatment of text, graphic page elements and navigational components

Navigation Design: design of interface elements to facilitate the user's movement through the information architecture

Information Design: in the Tuftean sense: designing the presentation of information to facilitate understanding

Information Architecture: structural design of the information space to facilitate intuitive access to content

Content Requirements: definition of content elements required in the site in order to meet user needs

User Needs: externally derived goals for the site; identified through user research, ethno/techno/psychographics, etc.

**Site Objectives:** business, creative, or other internally derived goals for the site

information-oriented

Visual Design

Interface Design | Navigation Design

Information Design

Interaction Design | Information Architecture

Functional Specifications | Content Requirements

User Needs

Site Objectives

time

Abstract　　　　　　　　　Conception

Doing the right things

Doing things right

Discover
Research Phase

Define
Synthesis Phase

Develop
Ideation Phase

Deliver
Implementation Phase

Diverging

Converging

Diverging

Converging

A

Don't know
Could be

Do know
Should be

B

Rip the brief

Define research
areas and methods

Conduct
Primary
Research

Conduct
Secondary
Research

Build Themes & Clusters

Find Insights

Deduce Opportunity Areas

Form HMW Questions

Ideate

Evaluate 1st ideas

Set ideas,
a Design Vision
& Hypotheses

Set ideas,
a Design Vision
& Hypotheses

Prototype, Test & Analyse

Learn, iterate & Repeat

Build, iterate & Repeat

Release & Out

Question,
Challenge,
Client Brief

Unstructured
Research
Findings

Final Brief,
HMW-Question,
Strategy

First Ideas and visions,
Potential solutions,
Hypothetical answers

Answers,
Product,
Solution

Clarify accountability

Drive
Drive
Mo

Product and content designer levels at Intercom

Overall, all designers at Intercom are accountable for:
Creating market impact with teams by shipping high-quality design quickly

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How to use this:

1. Review what we expect for your level and the one above yours

2. Consider how your practice aligns with these expectations, then create a copy of this doc, and highlight the boxes that best represent your work

3. Discuss with your manager to create a growth plan together

4. Assess your performance in growth areas regularly

Related resources:

- [Having impact as a designer](#)
  This clarifies how designers create impact at Intercom

- See related levels docs for [product and content design managers](#) as well as [product managers](#) at Intercom

1. Products and teams

How you understand, envision, and influence products and their strategy with teams to create market impact.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level *In addition to Associate*	Senior *In addition to Mid-Level*	Principal *In addition to Senior*	Senior Principal *In addition to Principal*
1.1 Building product knowledge	• Learn your product area • Apply Jobs to be Done • Know competitors, their solutions, and our gaps	• Know your product area • Demonstrate proven knowledge of jobs, how competitors solve them, and where gaps exist	• Develop deep domain knowledge of your product area and how to solve its problems • Create modern, simpler, and better solutions	Look beyond your domain to engage with Intercom's wider product set	Be recognized as an expert in the broad domain of customer communications inside/outside of Intercom
1.2 Influencing product vision and strategy	• Understand the vision for your product • Understand our company vision and strategy and the winning strategy for your program	• Show your work towards your product vision in alignment with your team • Frame your work to relate back to the long-term goals of the product	• Refine and improve the long-term direction of how your product evolves • Help us understand the product, the future vision, and how we'll achieve it	Propose and execute company-level product strategy to resolve questions about the future of our products	Define, influence, and build support for long-term product strategy that situates our future in the context of emerging tech and company growth
1.3 Working with partners across functions	• Build relationships with peers across disciplines • Learn how different disciplines work together to build products	• Earn partners' trust to drive effective relationships • Build high-quality products with your team and improve on them	• Influence partners and their approach, strategy, and processes • Drive the team's excellence in execution	Shape critical efforts and define new processes that lead to better, more strongly aligned product outcomes	Propose new design-led efforts and gain alignment for them to change how customers think about us and our products

3. Behaviors

How you work with others in ways that help teams move faster, better, together.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level *In addition to Associate*	Senior *In addition to Mid-Level*	Principal *In addition to Senior*	Senior Principal *In addition to Principal*
3.1 Living our core values and principles	Learn to apply what we value and R&D/design principles to your work	Apply our core values and R&D/design principles to all of your work consistently	Identify opportunities to challenge and refine our R&D/design principles	Consistently evolve our R&D/design principles by actively questioning them	Actively model our core values for others and influence their evolution
3.2 Communicating about design	• Communicate, present, & share work in progress • Collect feedback and address it openly • Frame problems, pros & cons, and questions	• Communicate all work clearly and concisely • Collect, process, and respond to feedback • Develop strong opinions, weakly held	• Anticipate feedback to address it proactively • Develop opinions and persuade others to align with them	Improve how we communicate by defining processes, standards, best practices, and new ways of showing work	Communicate to company leadership and outwards to our industry and the world
3.3 Collaborating to learn & grow	• Collaborate and reach out to others • Seek and provide constructive feedback • Look for opportunities to learn and improve	• Help others: be generous with time and feedback • Hold teammates to a high standard	• Be a leader, setting examples for others and teaching them • Actively share feedback and comment on others' work to help them grow	Mentor and invest in other designers to help them grow in their careers at Intercom	Create environments of collaboration, mentorship, and opportunities for everyone
3.4 Recruiting and interviewing	• Build connections outside of Intercom • Join the professional design community • Go to design events	• Refer candidates to our Recruiting team • Actively engage with the design community	• Screen and interview candidates in on-sites • Know how to assess what we're looking for • Make interviews great	Find, help recruit, onboard, and mentor new designers	Improve how we recruit and build a positive reputation for Intercom as being a great place for designers to work

4. Results

How you move fast to create impact in your daily work and grow our team with more great people like you.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level *In addition to Associate*	Senior *In addition to Mid-Level*	Principal *In addition to Senior*	Senior Principal *In addition to Principal*
4.1 Focusing on <u>goals, not tasks</u>	• <u>Learn how</u> to set cycle, weekly and daily goals • Contribute at standups	• Obsessively maintain all regular personal goals • <u>Prioritize your efforts</u>, make explicit trade offs	• Maintain goals and improve our processes • <u>Contribute to planning</u> to keep the team honest	Help teams and individuals set and hit ambitious roadmap and cycle goals	Improve our <u>6-week cycle goals</u>, <u>roadmaps</u>, <u>how we work</u>, and other processes
4.2 Moving things forward quickly	• Work with others to get unstuck • Know and prioritize what's most important	• Work autonomously and quickly • Don't wait for permission	• Always bias towards progress, not just action • Draw together work, resolving dependencies	• Coordinate product work to drive progress • Program manage design for multi-team work	Unstick our toughest problems, resolving conflicts and overlap
4.3 Being efficient	• Own your time • Know what the most important thing is • Focus, avoid distractions	• Be organized; don't rely on others for notes or follow-up • Flag delays, issues early	• Make your team more productive • <u>Run meetings with owners, agendas, action items, and followups</u>	Make the design team more efficient by optimizing our design and collaboration processes	Make all teams more efficient by continually optimizing how we work and deliver, both in design and with others
4.4 Maximizing opportunities	• Question experiences, leaving design in a better state than you found it • Design in the context of broader workflows	• Don't stop at your design; improve related work • Pay down design debt to keep systems healthy	• Avoid local maxima, think broadly to improve our products and systems • Build a big-picture vision, avoid quick-fix solutions	Work on the company's highest-priority projects to identify and drive outcomes	Identify new, high-impact design initiatives

2. Execution

How you explore problems, design innovative solutions quickly, create impact in new problem spaces, and push our craft forward.

Competencies	Associate	Mid-Level *In addition to Associate*	Senior *In addition to Mid-Level*	Principal *In addition to Senior*	Senior Principal *In addition to Principal*
2.1 Defining problems	• Understand the problem • Start all design work with a problem statement, goal, and context	State clear problems based on research and data, align the team on them	• Practice first principles thinking to define problems • Write Intermissions	Practice first principles thinking to identify new opportunities	Apply first principles thinking to the entire problem space
2.2 Designing systems	• Know the fundamentals of system design • Talk with colleagues affected by your work	• Design our systems, not just elements or pages • Start solving related problems in our products	• Evolve our products to be better and simpler • Own/fix complex design and technical debt	Improve core areas of Intercom where system design debt piles up	Define the future architecture of Intercom's products
2.3 Exploring and converging on solutions	• Explore different ways to solve problems • Identify pros & cons, questions, implications	• Explore concepts, narrow to the best solution • Use the best formats and fidelities for your work	• Explore and refine quickly without losing effort • Solve at low fidelity, then polish for delivery	Deliver superior design while inspiring, teaching, and speeding up others	Overdeliver superior design, level up others, and always push the work further
2.4 Shipping design	• Get design work shipped • Own what the team ships	• Get great design work shipped quickly • Balance perfect and done	• Drive how your team improves shipping • Make smart trade offs	Proactively join high-impact efforts to quickly create momentum and deliver	Evolve the collaboration between Design and Engineering at Intercom
2.5 Using our design system	• Learn how to use our design system • Design with components	Use our design system proficiently and consistently	Know, use, and expand our design system to improve it instead of deviating from it	Build collaborations between product and the Design System team	Define, evolve, drive how R&D programs/teams work with our design system
2.6 Creating high-quality interaction and UI design	• Review About Face to understand IxD • Learn Gestalt Principles • Deliver UI that follows our fundamentals	• Optimize for coherent task completion • Choose logical UI patterns • Deliver polished visual design and transitions	• Create simple, elegant solutions to complex interaction problems • Raise the design bar with beautiful, modern UI	• Master interaction design and help/train others • Raise the design bar by creating innovative UI	• Invent the future of interaction design • Raise the design bar by upleveling others in their skills, tooling, & practice

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Equal pay

1 One team at a time,
no more office hours

2 Full-stack content design

3 Clear expectations and
accountability

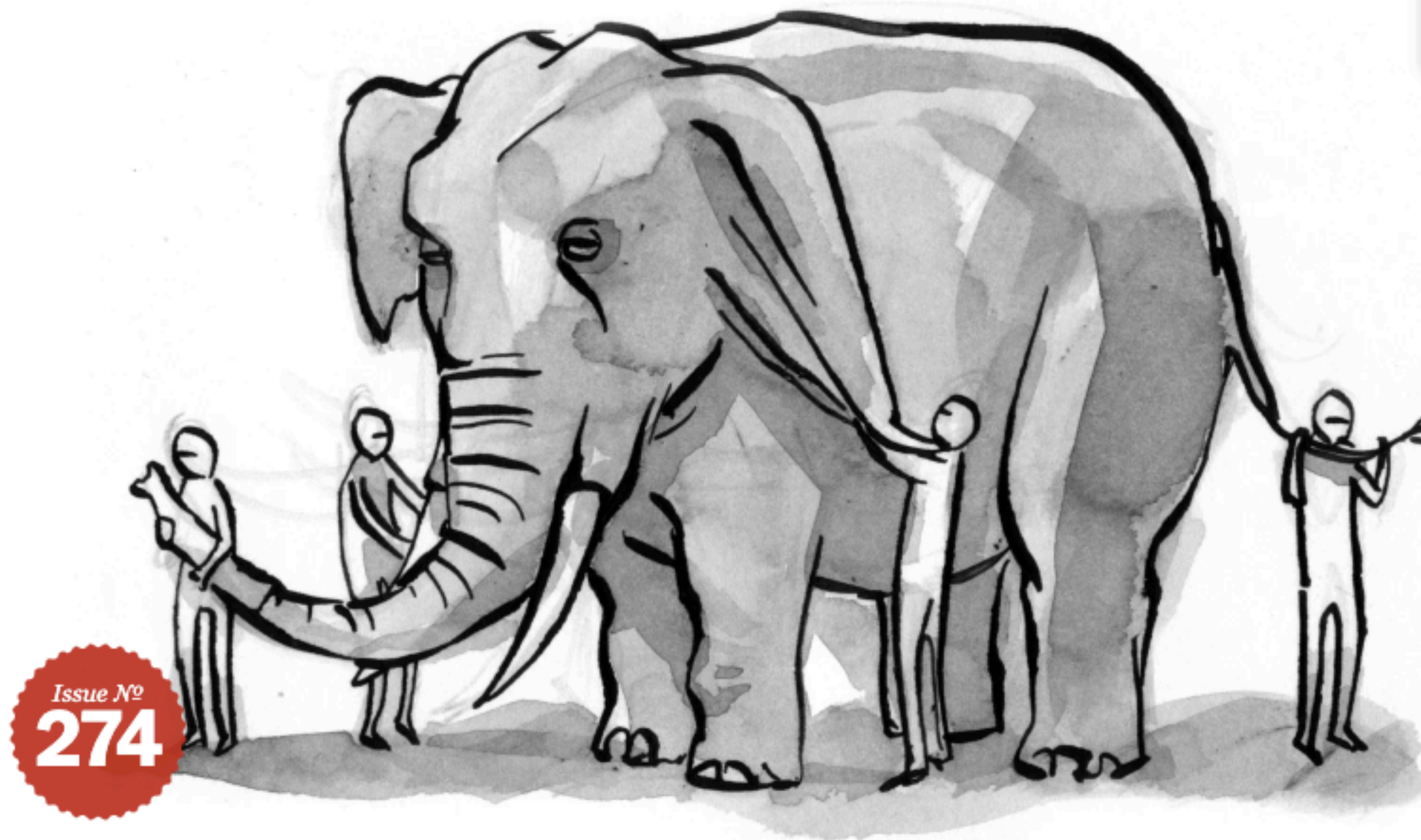**4** Equal pay across design

What about the *Tradeoffs?*

A LIST APART

Issue № 274

The Discipline of Content Strategy

by **Kristina Halvorson** · December 16, 2008

Coda
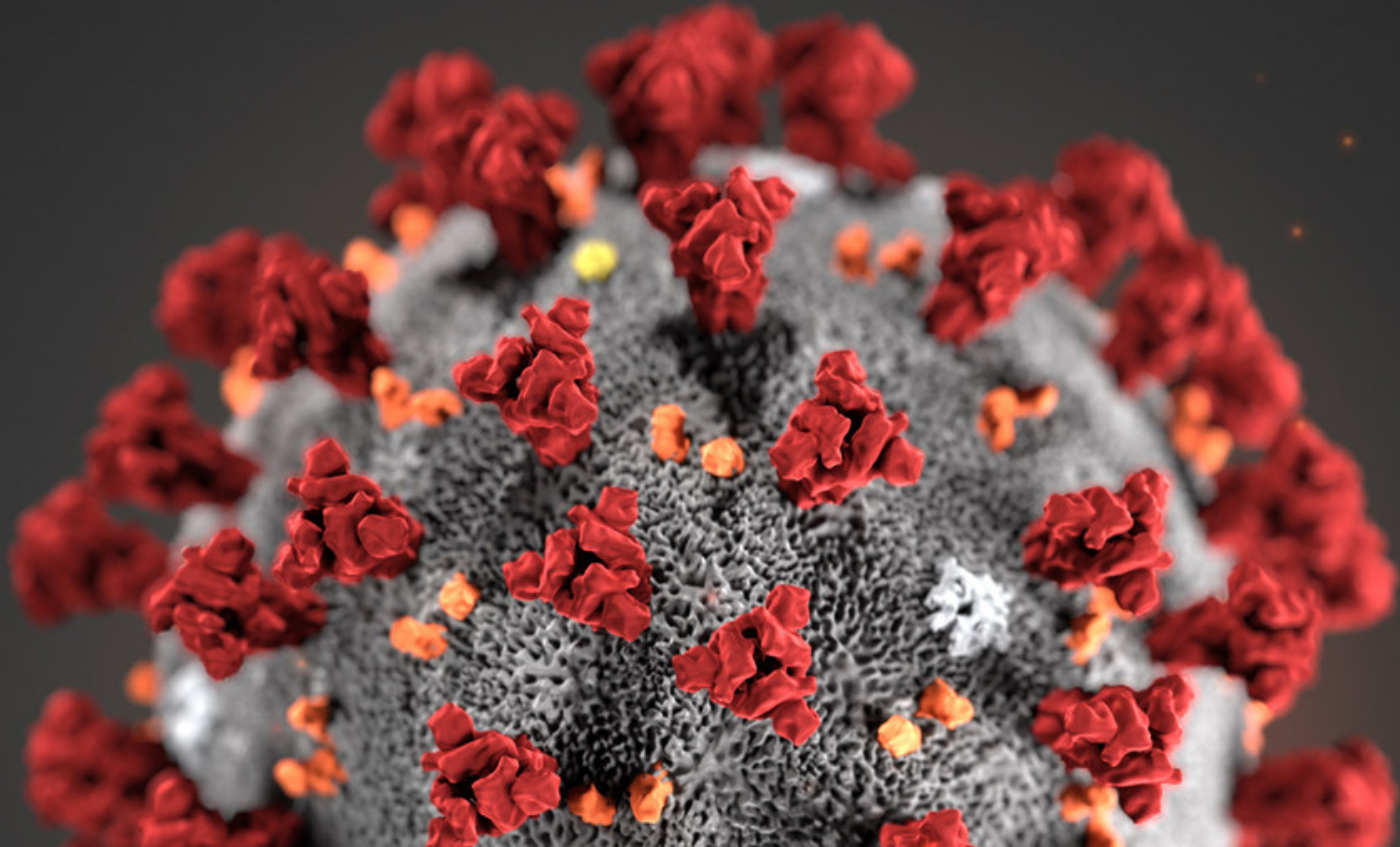
BI PRIME

Intercom, a $1.3 billion messaging startup backed by Mark Zuckerberg and Jack Dorsey, laid off 39 employees and is relocating 47 roles to Dublin

Rosalie Chan   May 20, 2020, 11:57 PM