

ETHICAL DESIGN:

Is It Possible?

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Kent State University Master of Science Program in User Experience

KSU
UXD

IN THIS TALK

Ethical design,
through the lens of
onboarding.

Onboarding principles,
patterns, and anti-
patterns.

Dark patterns and
ethical dilemmas.



ME

Trained as an aviation human factors researcher.

I've built small and large UX teams.

Teach at and lead the Kent State UX master's program.

Provide UX research and design consulting.

I'm also a Pixar plot device.

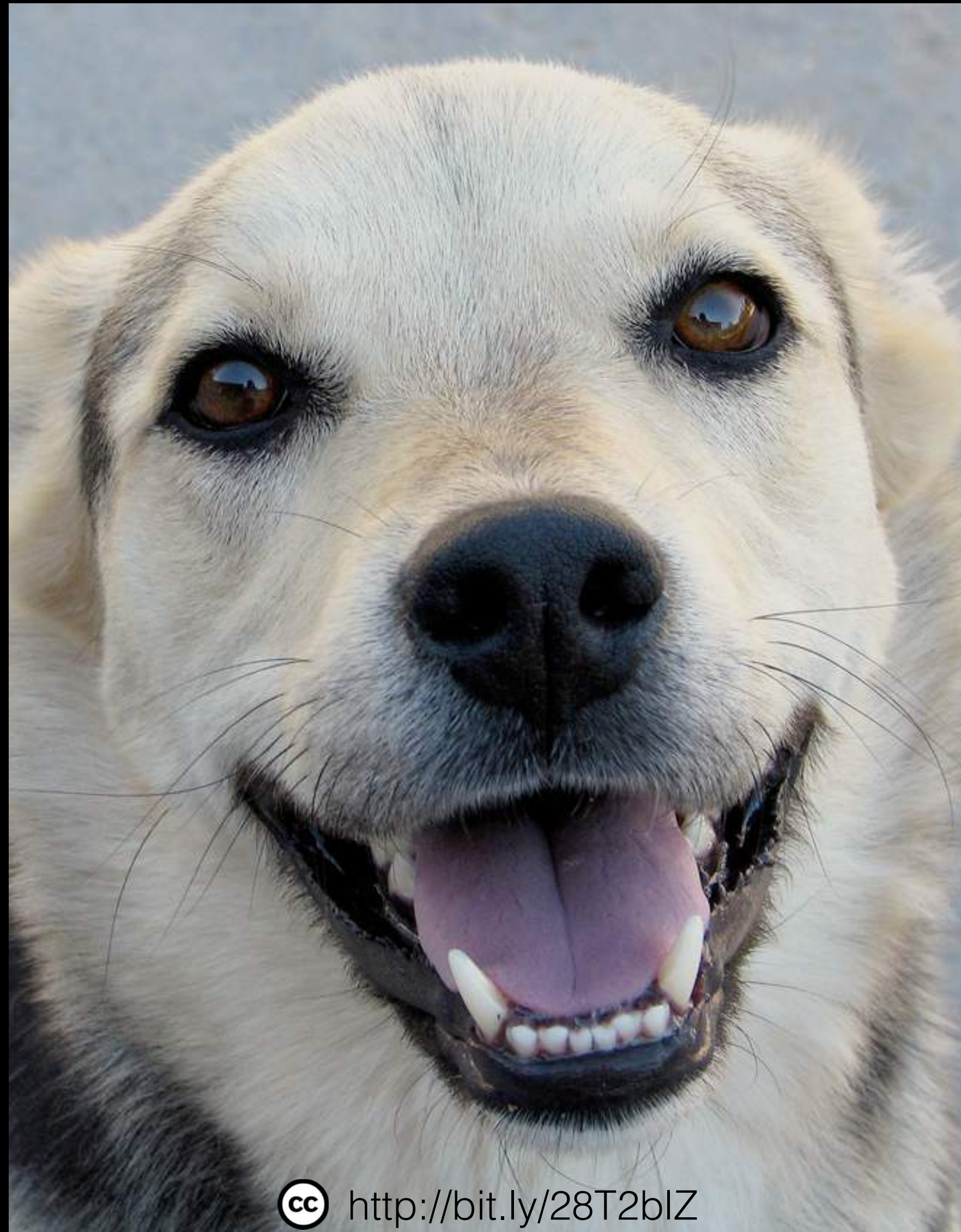


Designing The Onboarding Experience

The process of getting people to adopt your application
or service.

When you're onboarding the user, you're trying to get them to like and want your product.

In economic terms, you want them to derive value.



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© <http://bit.ly/28MV6Ep>

What is value?

The worth of a good or service as determined by people's preferences and the tradeoffs they choose to make, given their scarce resources.

- Investopedia.com

What is value really?

Something you derive a benefit from.



They're adorable. They also provide value.

The Importance Of Onboarding

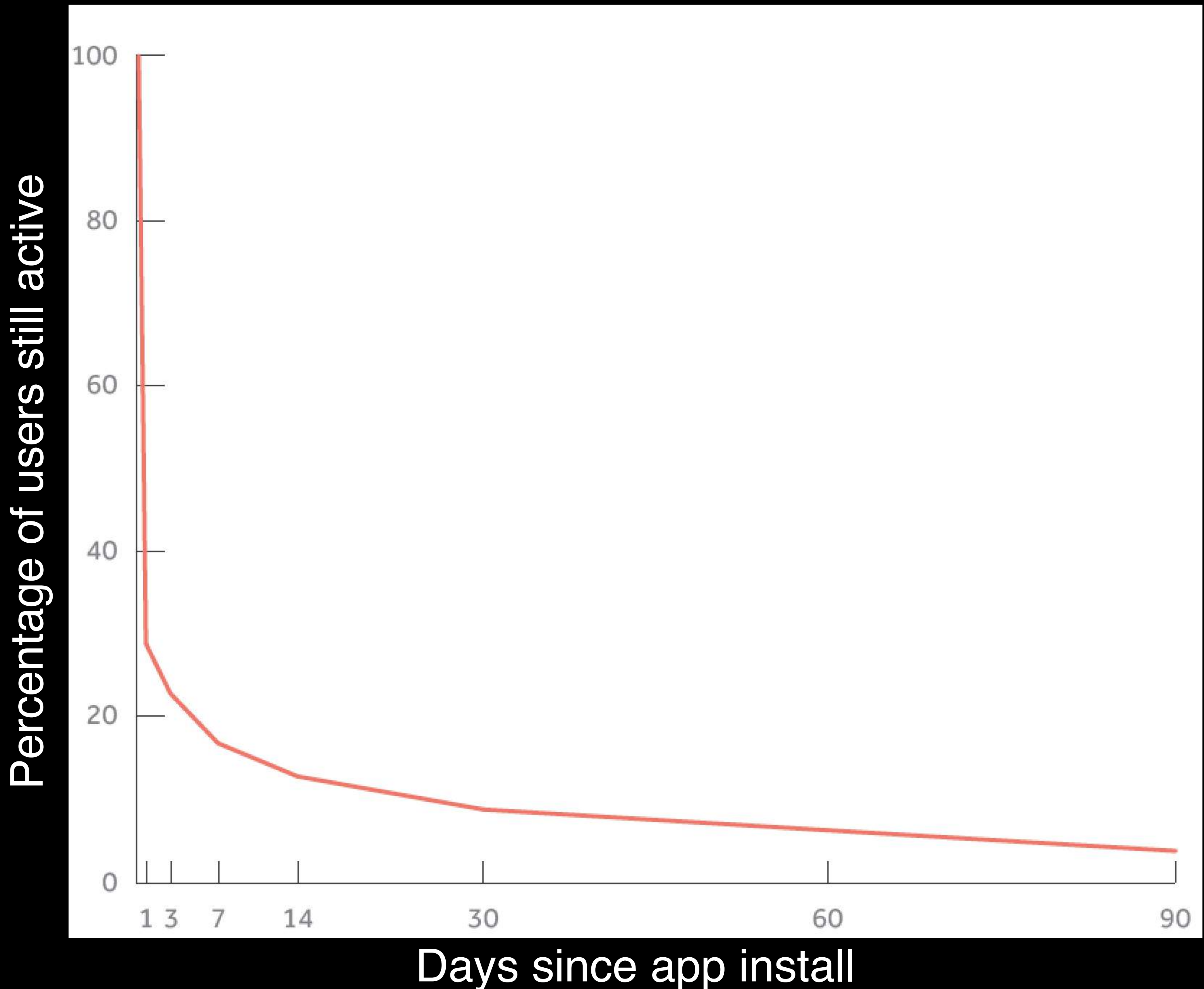


We all know onboarding
is important.

How important is it?

It's literally a matter of survival.

The average app loses 95% of its user base within a few months.



Users try out a lot of apps but decide which ones they want to stop using within the first 3-7 days.

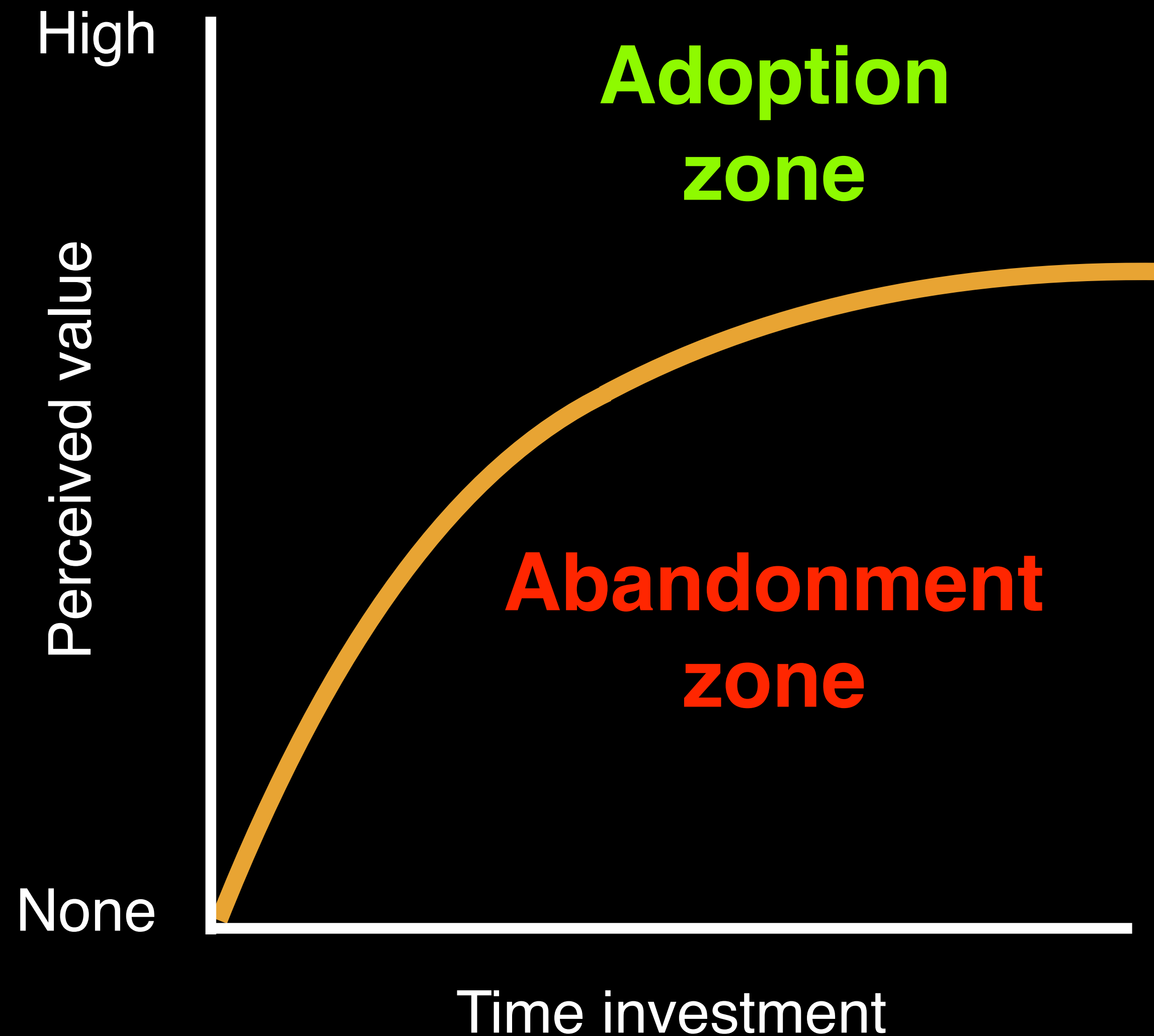
The key to success is to get the users hooked during that critical 3-7 day period.

- Ankit Jain

A Simple Adoption- Abandonment Model

Users are constantly
- and consciously -
assessing your
offering on two
dimensions:

Time investment
Perceived value



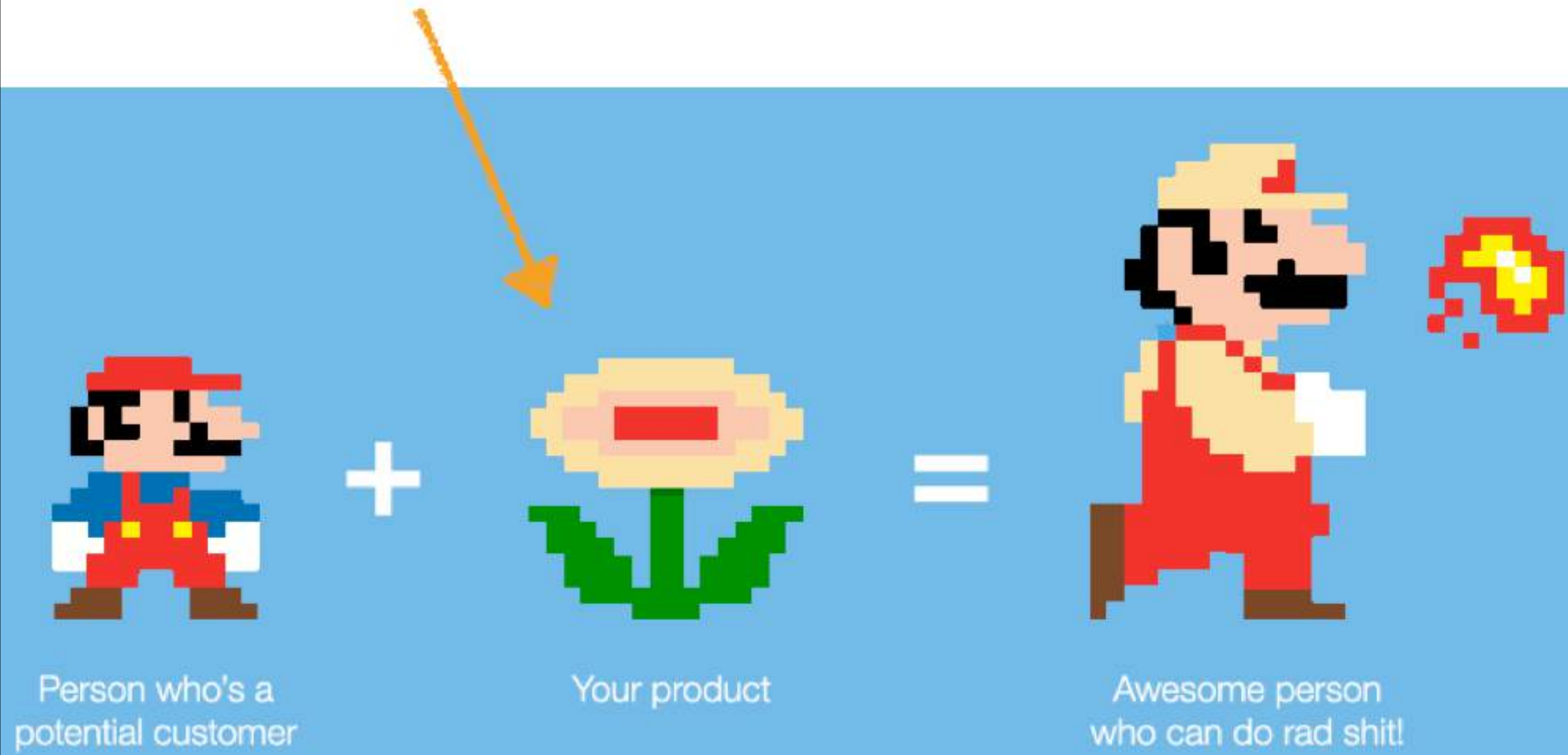
Deriving value is an aspirational activity.

We adopt new behaviors and tools because we hope it improves some aspect of our life.

People don't buy products; they buy better versions of themselves...are you listing the attributes of the flower or describing how awesome it is to throw fireballs?

- Sam Hulick

This isn't what your business makes



This is

If people feel like they're nearing better versions of themselves, they'll adopt your solution.

If that better version of themselves seems out of reach...they'll abandon it.



This is where onboarding plays a crucial role.

Some Common Onboarding Patterns

MODAL STEPPED TUTORIAL

Not many advantages. It's out of context. People won't really remember.

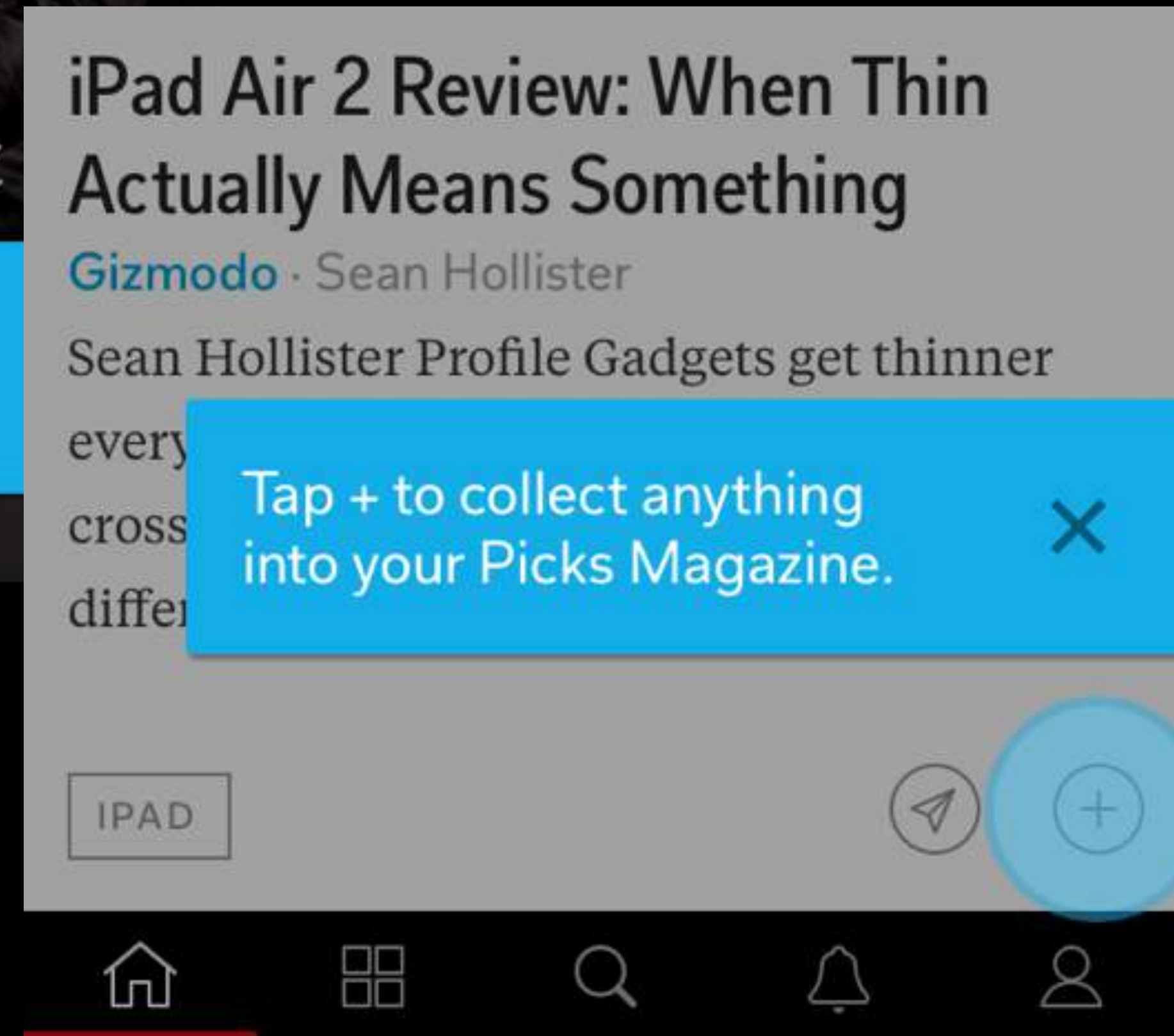
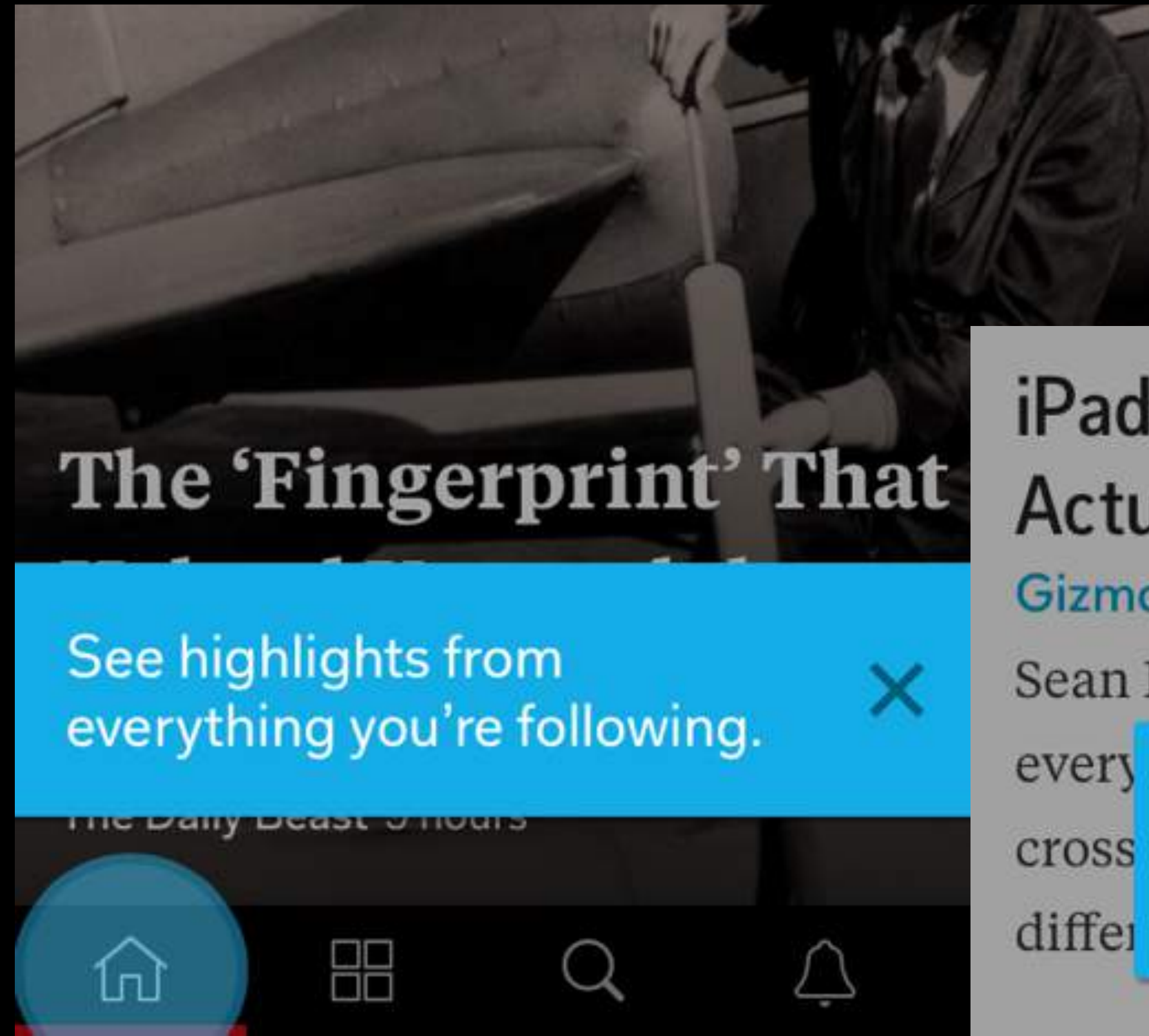


FIRST-RUN CALLOUTS

Better than the modal stepped pattern.

It draws the user's attention to key areas and provides concise, clear explanations.

But how do you see it again if you wanted?



BROWSE

- Heavy Rotation
- Recent Activity
- Top Charts
- New Releases

YOUR MUSIC

- Collection
- History
- Queue

PLAYLISTS

ambient/instrumental
by Aaron Irizarry

Welcome! Find something to play. ✕



Heavy Rotation: Trending albums that we think you will like based on who you follow and what you listen to.



Recent Activity: Your network's activity stream, including music reviews and playlist updates.



Top Charts: Listen to the most popular music and playlists on Rdio.



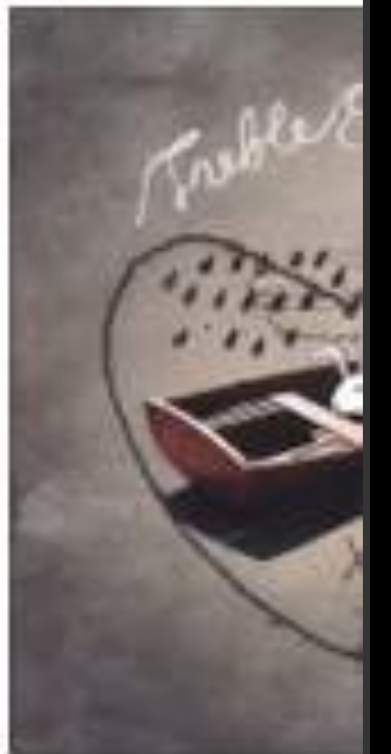
New Releases: Browse hundreds of new albums, added every week.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Continue Tour ▶



Tornado
Little Big Town
11 songs



Treble & Trem
Earlimart
13 songs



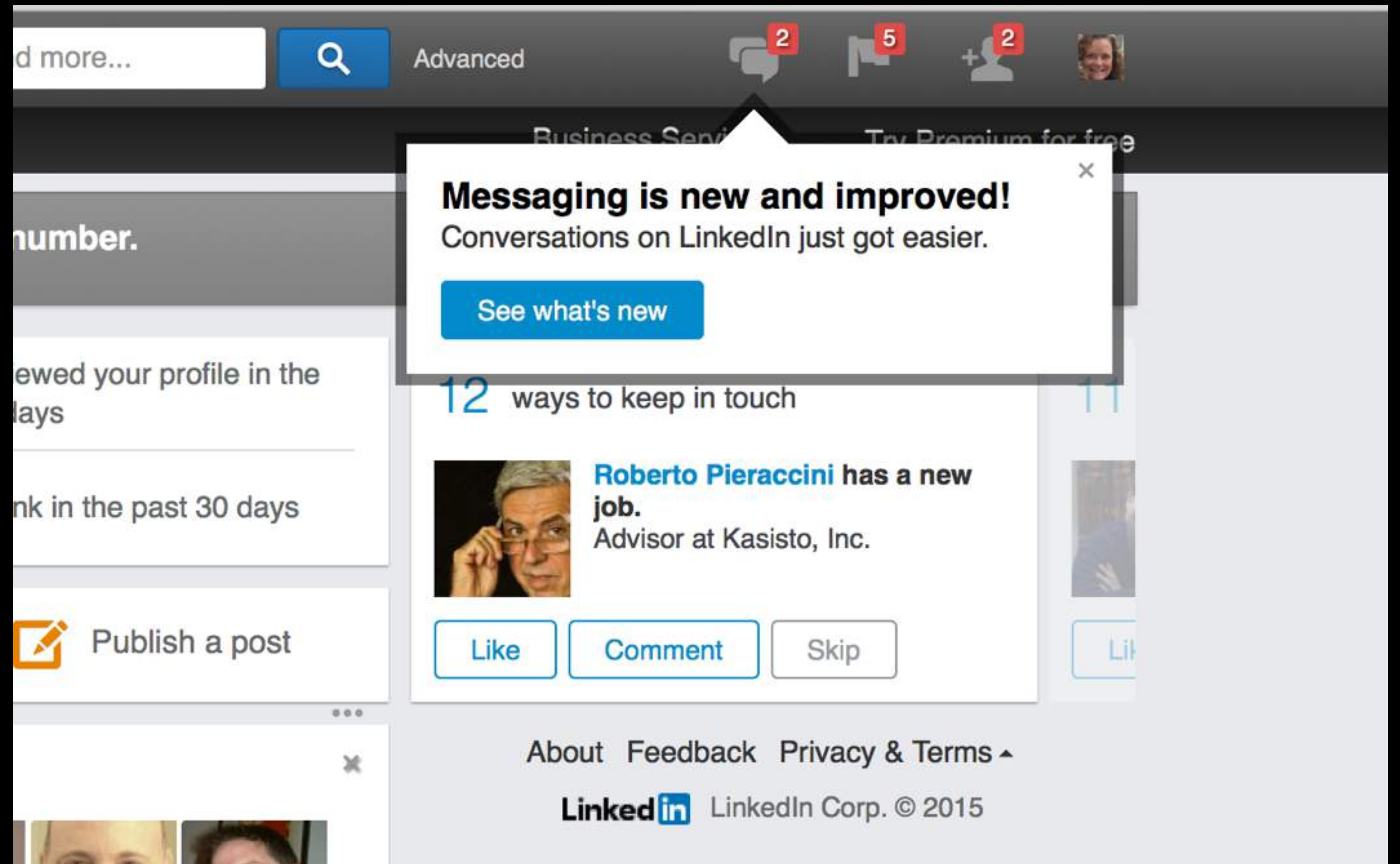
Another first-run callout example.

But what if I just want to explore now and see this later?

NEW FEATURE CALLOUTS

It also draws the user's attention to key areas.

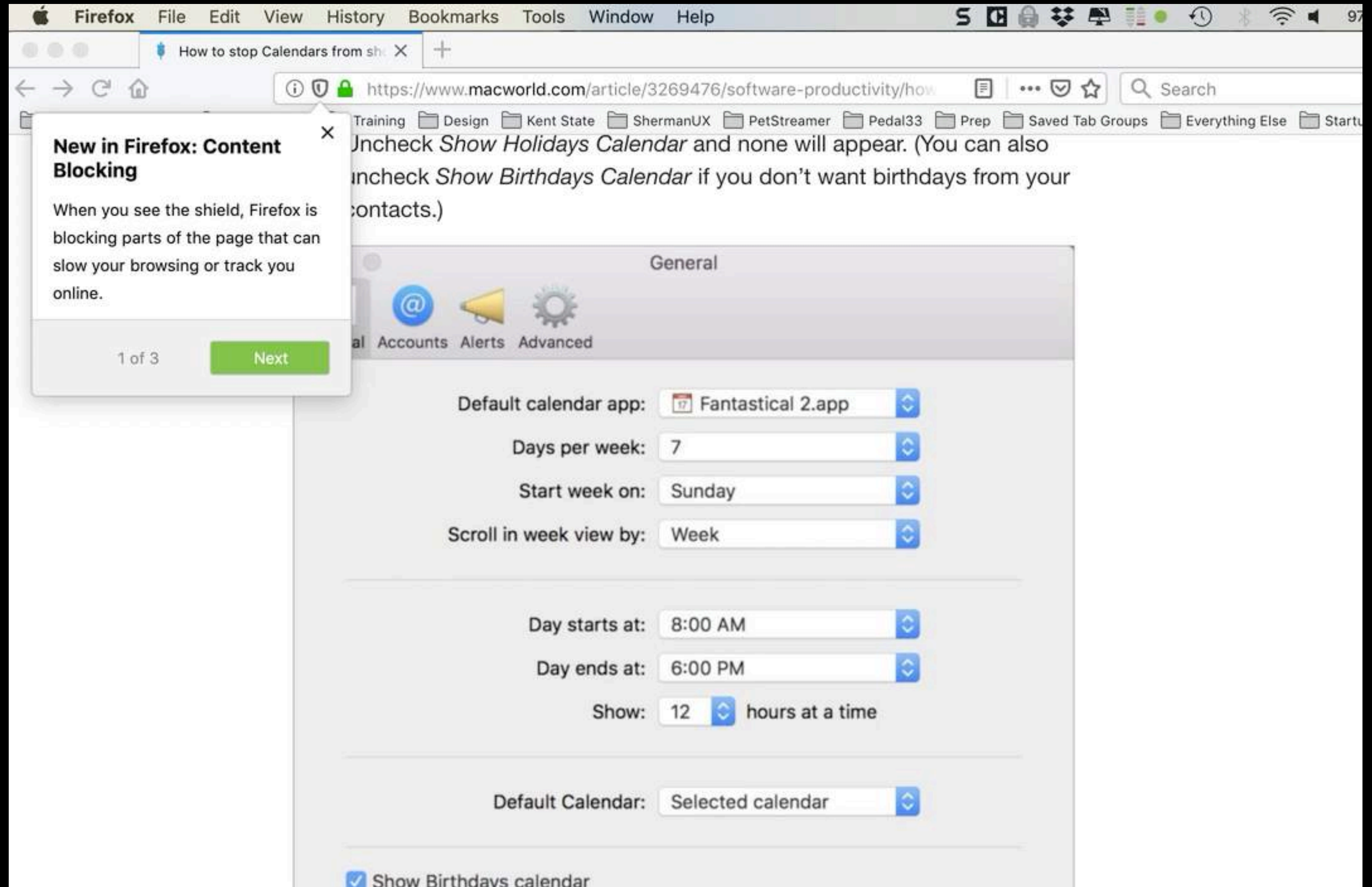
But again...what if you wanted to check it out later?



NEW FEATURE CALLOUTS

Firefox's new feature callout is interactive.

There's a good chance I'll remember how to do this.



VIDEO TUTORIAL

Provides video and voice.

Ugh, just let me in...I'll check out the video later.

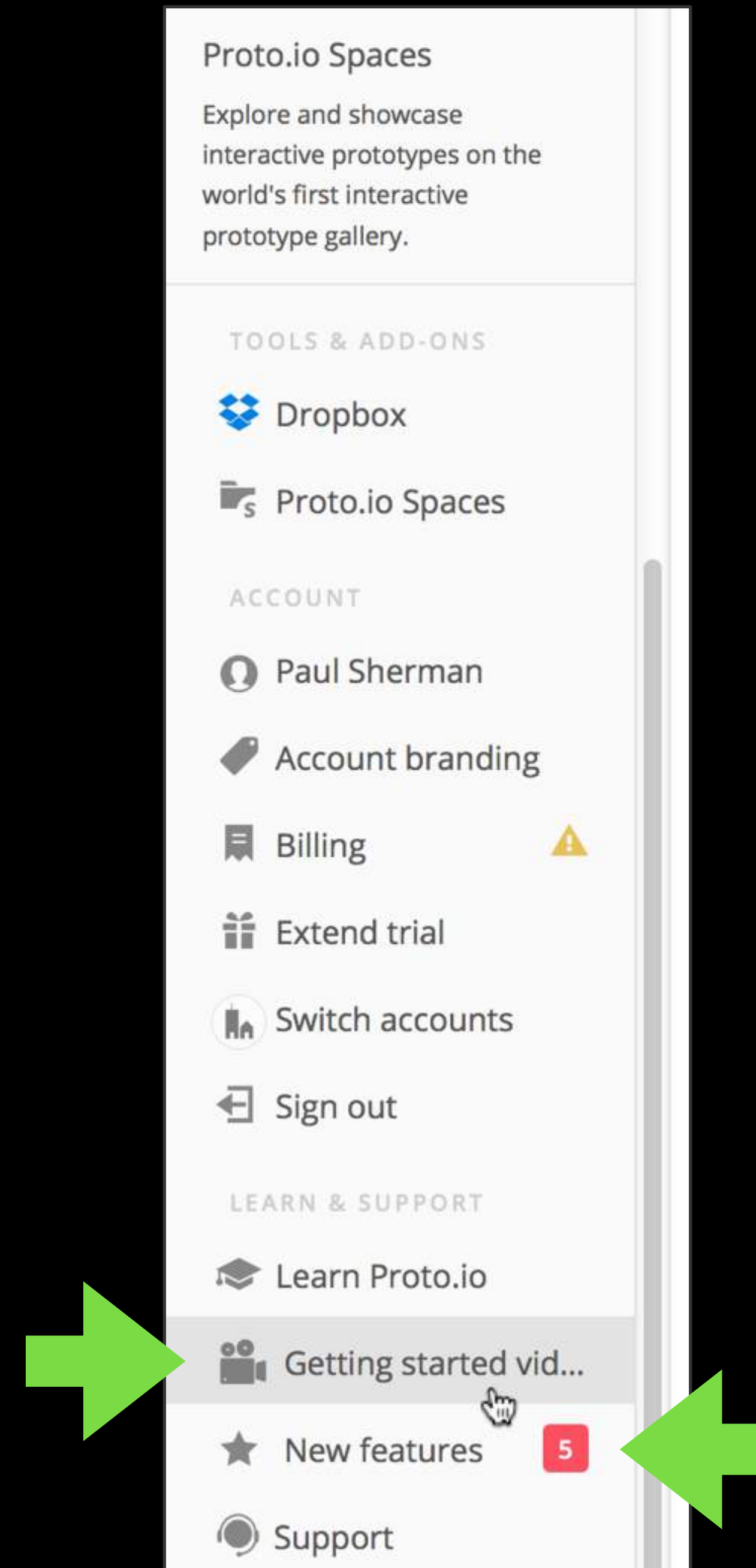
Wait, how do I get back to it?

The image shows a screenshot of the Proto.io web application interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: MAIN (Projects: 0, Users: 1, Devices: 0), NEW (Dropbox sync), Proto.io Spaces, TOOLS & ADD-ONS (Dropbox, Proto.io Spaces), and ACCOUNT (Paul Sherman). The main area displays a video player titled "Getting Started video" with a close button (X) in the top right. The video content shows a "proto.io" interface with a "holland_large.png" image being added to a prototype. A properties panel for the image is open, showing options for "Image" (Reset to original dimensions, Repeat image instead of stretch) and "Advanced" (Propagate all events to the item below, Position fixed on transitions). The video player includes a play button, a progress bar at 03:09, and a Vimeo logo. A "Create a new project" button is visible in the bottom right corner of the video player overlay.

VIDEO TUTORIAL

Yeah...they got that covered.

And they have a link to new features, as well as a new feature count badge.



CONTEXTUAL ASSISTANCE

Good in theory...
often not so good
in practice.

Just look up
“Clippy” or
“Microsoft Bob.”

It looks like you're
writing a letter.

Would you like help?

- Get help with
writing the letter
- Just type the
letter without
help
- Don't show me
this tip again

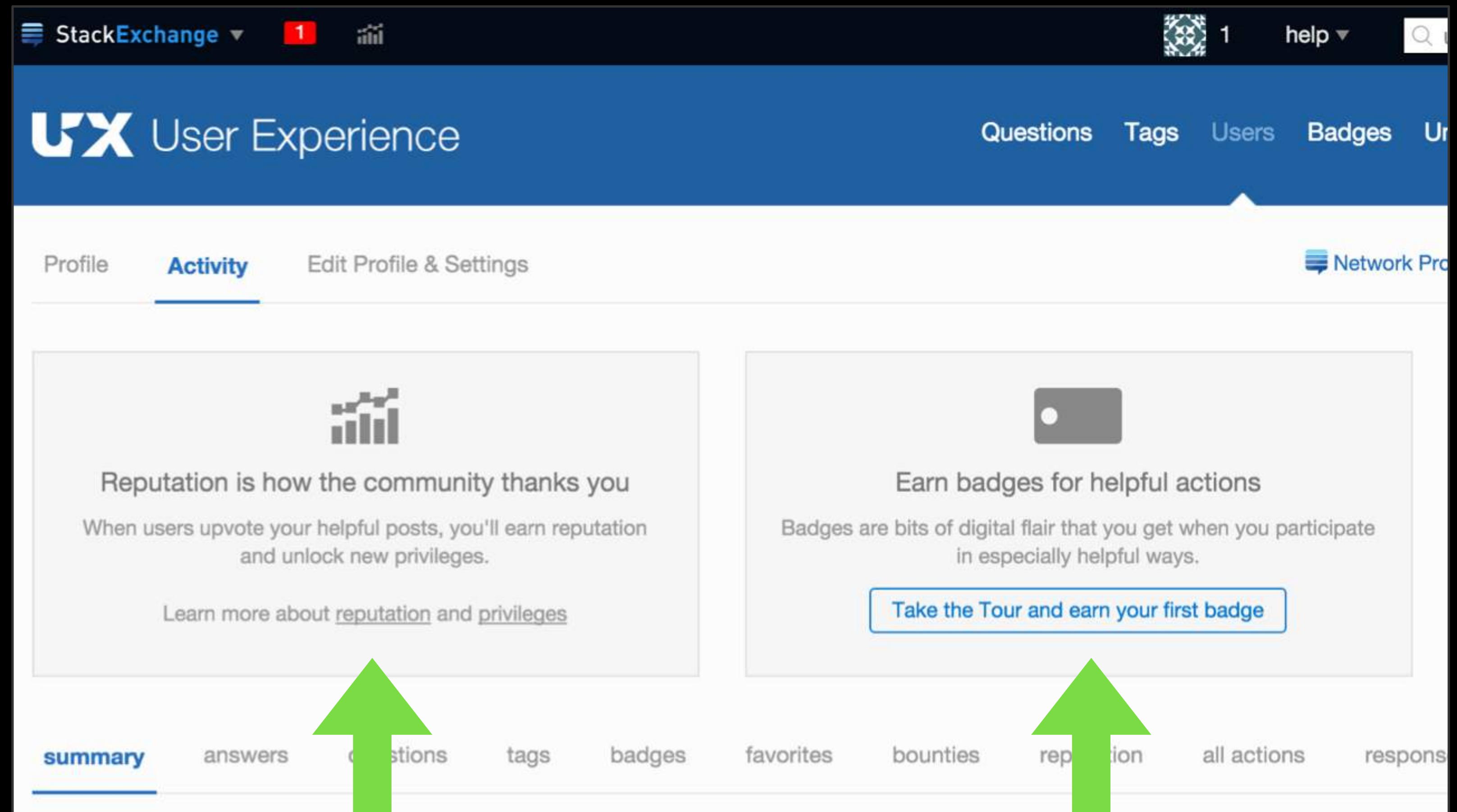


GAMIFICATION & SOCIAL COMPARISON

Gamification and social comparison trigger people's desire to complete a process and earn achievements.

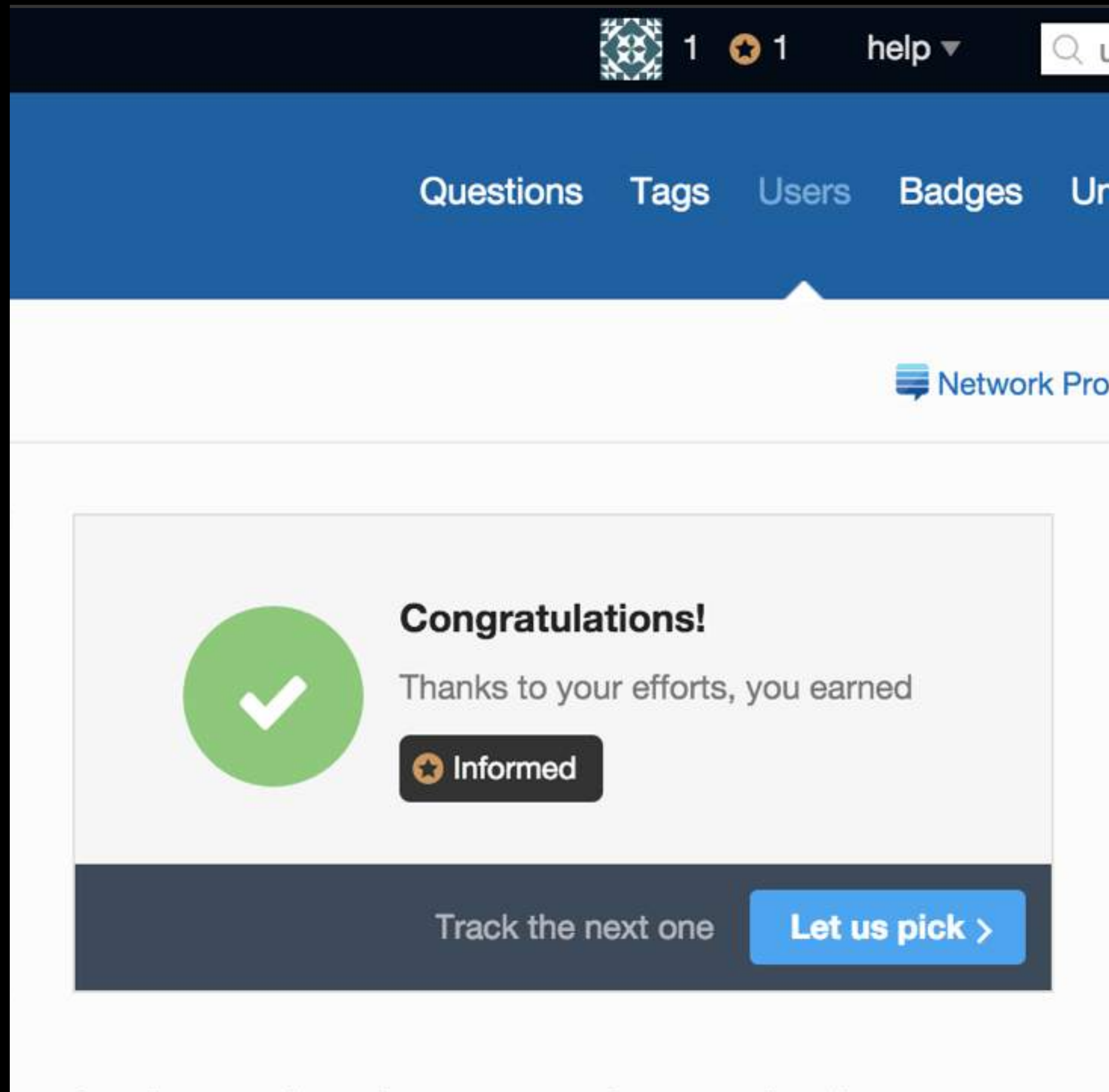
Both can be effective... but also expensive to implement.

Social comparison can also backfire and cause users to abandon.



I earned a badge!

Yay.



The screenshot shows a user profile page with a dark blue header. The header contains a profile picture, a score of '1', a star icon with '1', and a 'help' dropdown menu. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Questions', 'Tags', 'Users', 'Badges', and 'Un'. A 'Network Pro' badge is visible on the right side of the page. The main content area features a 'Congratulations!' notification. The notification includes a green circular icon with a white checkmark, the text 'Congratulations!', and 'Thanks to your efforts, you earned'. Below this text is a dark grey button with a star icon and the word 'Informed'. At the bottom of the notification, there are two options: 'Track the next one' and a blue button labeled 'Let us pick >'.

SOCIAL FACILITATION

Showing frequently asked questions and answers.

Providing easy access to user forums and expert help.

The screenshot shows the TurboTax software interface. At the top right, there are links for 'Create User ID | Exit' and a 'Federal Refund' box showing '\$0'. Below this is a navigation bar with 'Print & File', 'Flags', and 'Tools' buttons. The main content area features a 'Get Started' button and a 'Quick Tour' section with a video player. On the right side, there is a 'TurboTax Help Center' sidebar. A green circle highlights this sidebar, which includes a 'Get Expert Help' button, a description of access to FAQs and experts, a 'Live Community' section with a search bar and a list of 'Top user questions', and a 'See More' link. The bottom of the sidebar has the text 'Answer a question, help other users'.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM THESE PATTERNS

Let the user return to the onboarding content later.

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Gamification and social comparison can increase motivation, but are costly. And social comparison can backfire.

Social facilitation requires critical mass or it suffers from the "empty store shelf" problem.

Going Deeper: Onboarding Principles

10 ONBOARDING PRINCIPLES

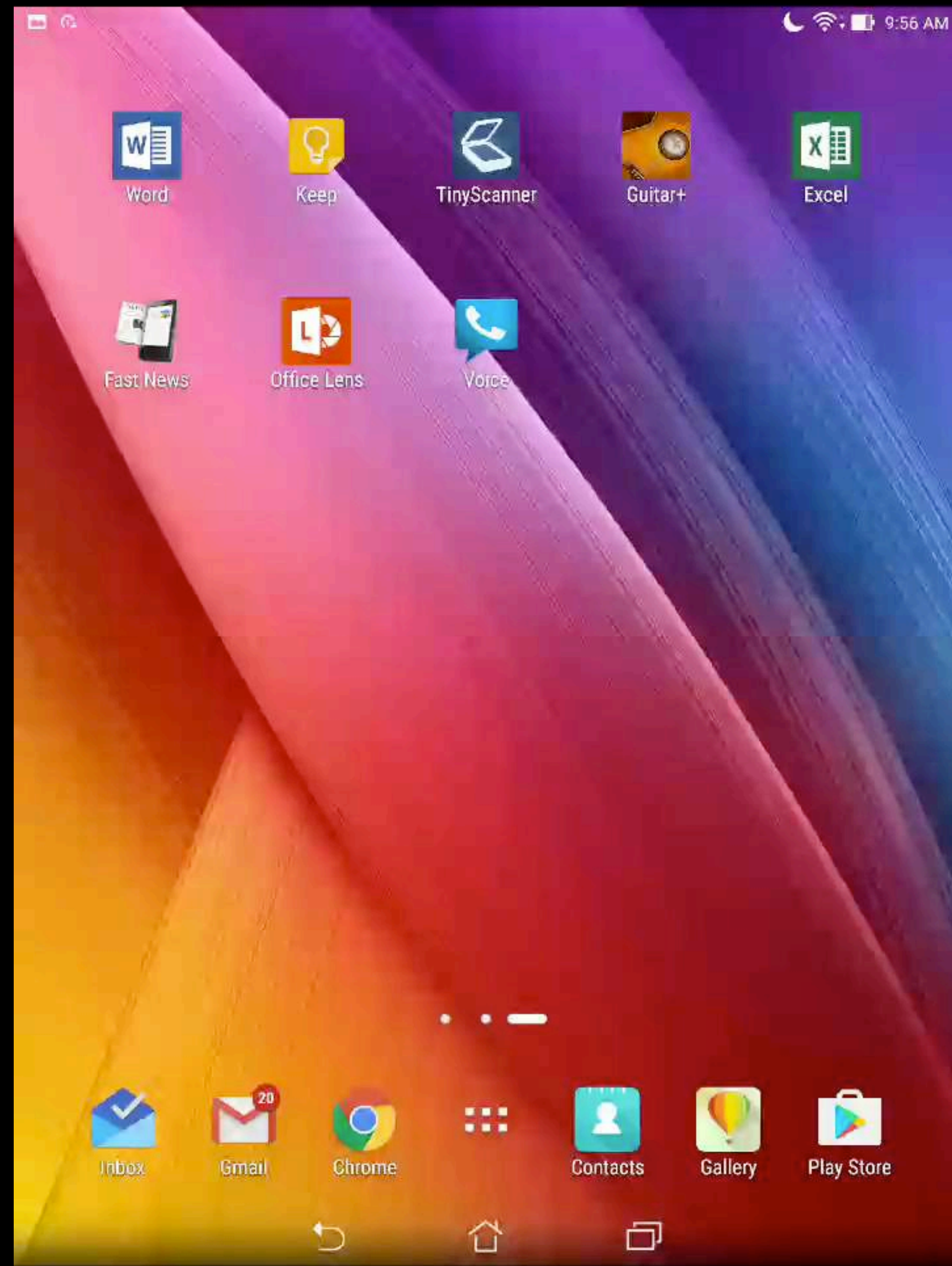
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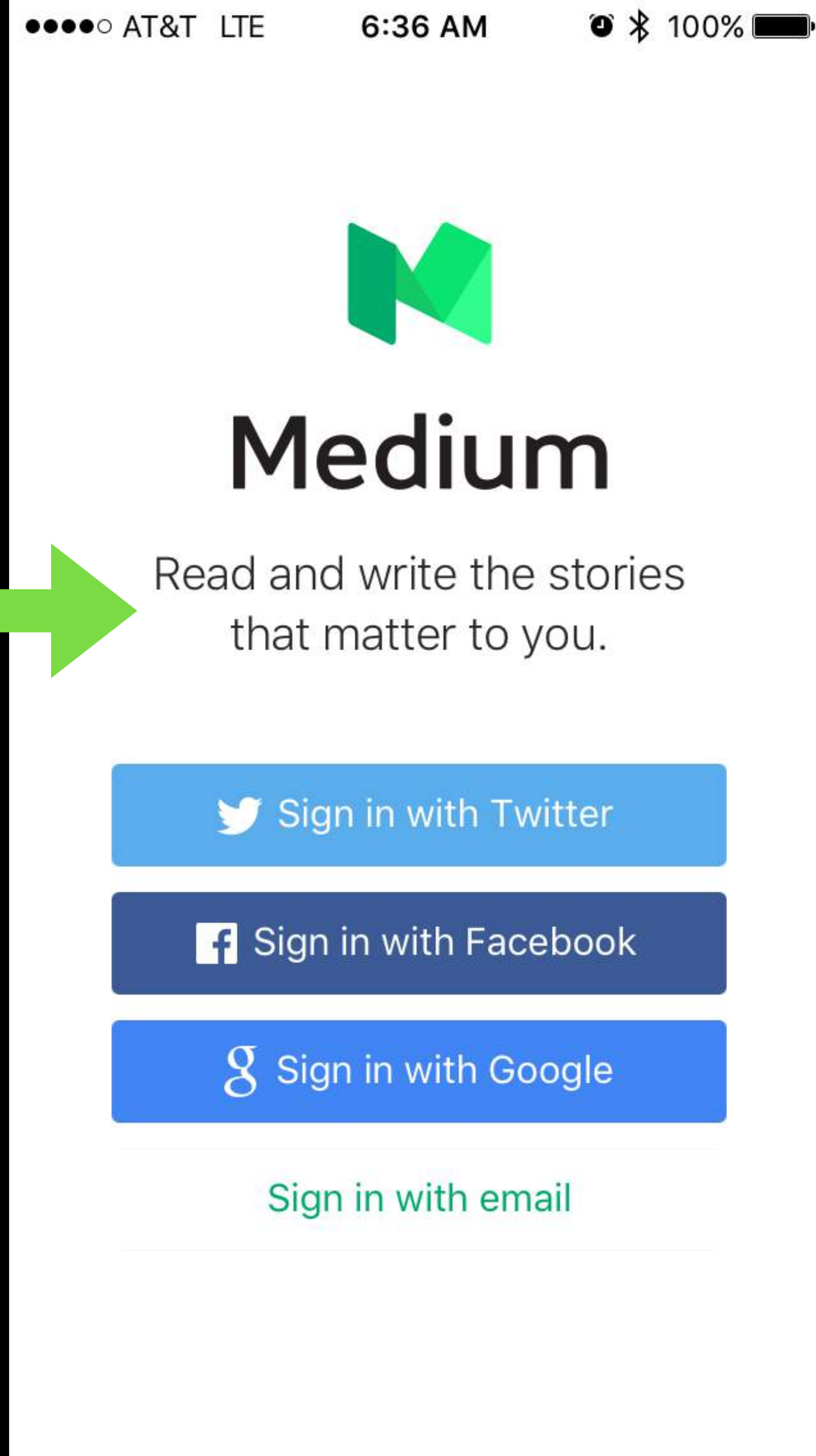
Office Lens

Clear value proposition



Medium

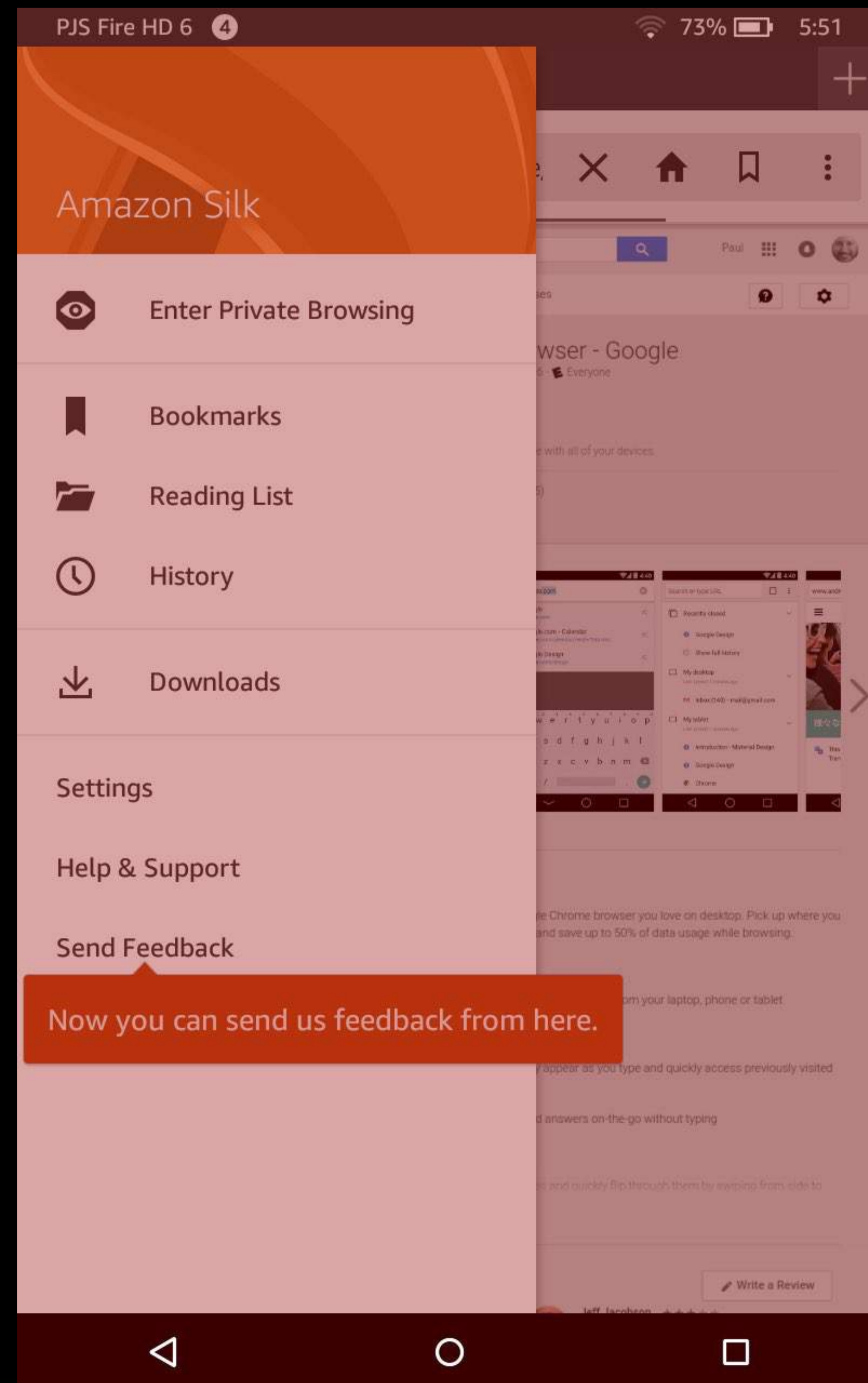
Clear value proposition



Amazon Silk Browser

Unclear value
proposition.

I'd like another
browser please.



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5 notes linked to Focus (Account)

Context

Evernote makes it easy to take notes and share information.

Take notes
Create notes to capture and update information about clients and leads.

Stay productive
View, edit, or search your notes on any device. Keep all of your information in one place.

Share with colleagues
Link notes to your records to work together on projects or campaigns. [Learn more.](#)

Get Started

Prep for Meeting with Netflix
Today Agenda: Discuss possible partnerships between our company and Netflix, where movies and television shows produced by...

Melissa

Current Distribution Terms & Agreements
06/11/14 Reed Hastings, Founder and CEO, Kelly Bennett, Chief Market Officer, Tawni Cranz, Chief Talent Officer, Jonathan Friedland...

Contact List From Netflix Meeting
06/11/14 Reed Hastings, Founder and CEO, Kelly Bennett, Chief Market Officer, Tawni Cranz, the Chief Talent Officer, Jonathan Friedland, Chi...

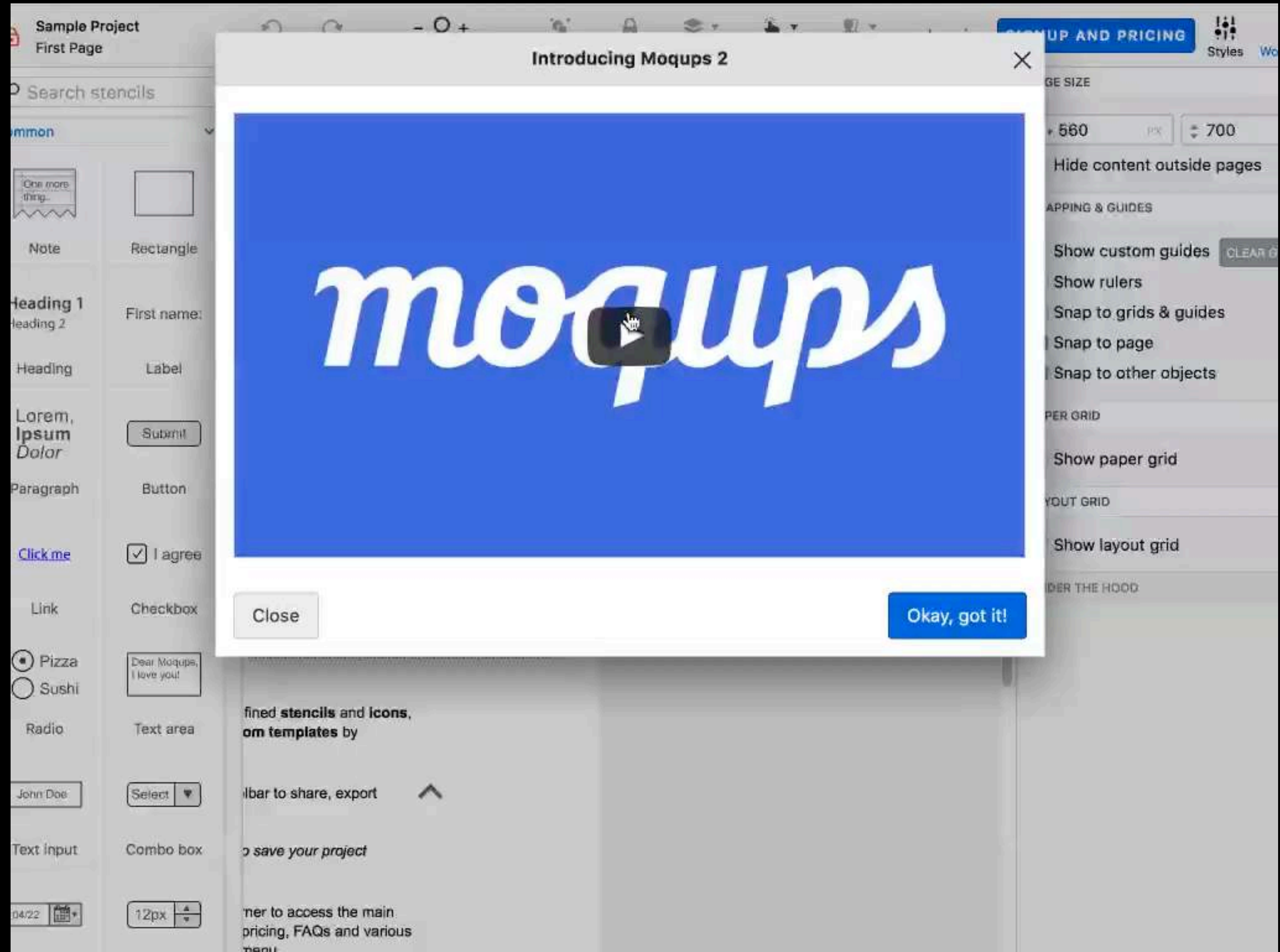
Melissa Lau

Aspirational appeal - “my best self”

Moqups

It's all about them.

Not me and my better self.

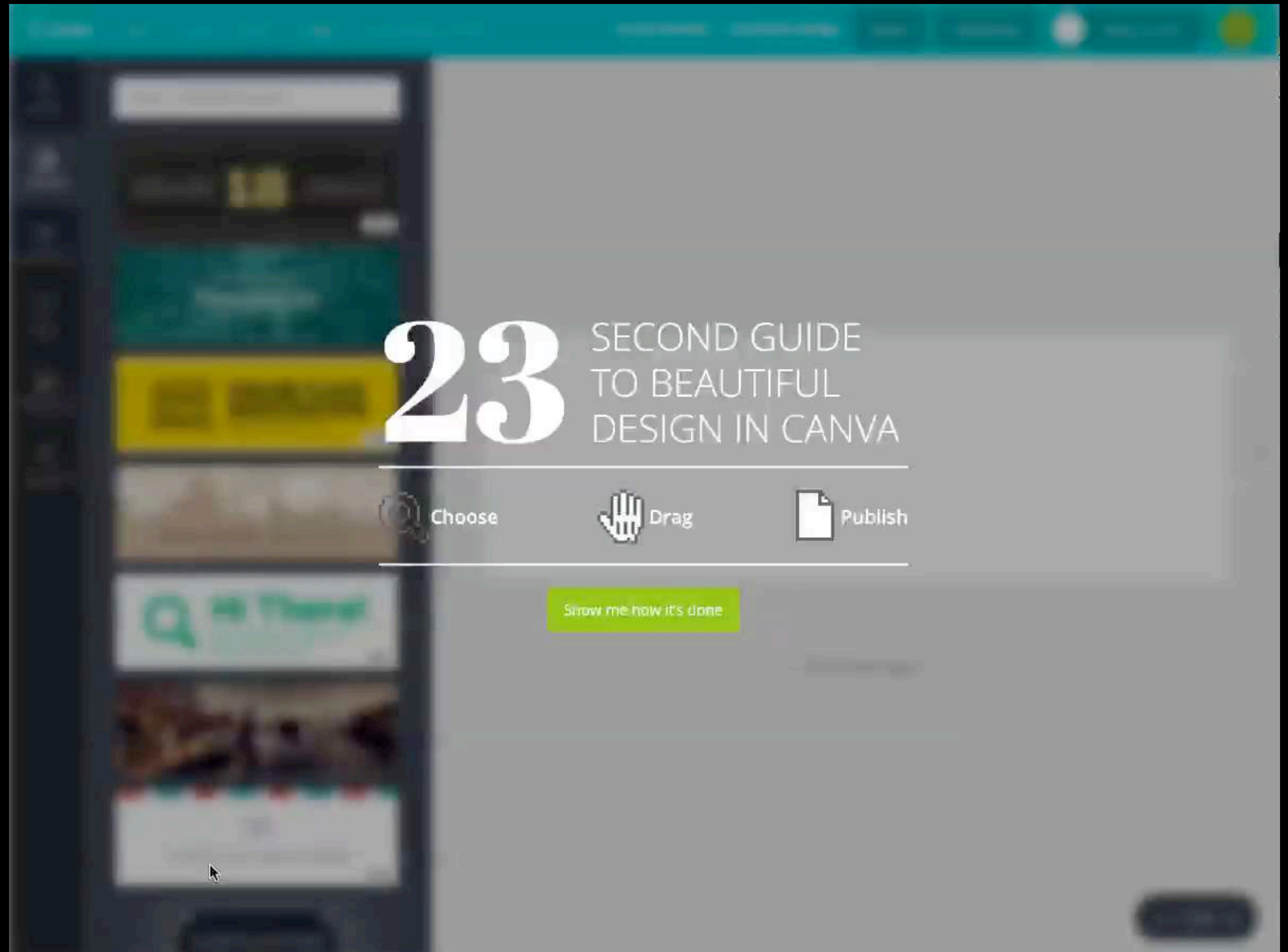


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Canva

Nailed it.



WordPress

Showing and
telling at warp
speed.

I'm not going to
remember any of
this.



The screenshot shows the WordPress 4.5 update notification page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a notification icon, the number '5,402', a '+ New' button, and the 'UpdraftPlus' logo. On the right side of the navigation bar, it says 'Howdy, pjsheerman'. The main heading is 'Welcome to WordPress 4.5'. Below the heading, there is a message: 'Thank you for updating! WordPress 4.5 streamlines your workflow, whether you're writing or building your site.' To the right of this message is a blue square containing the WordPress logo and the text 'Version 4.5'. Below the message, there are three buttons: 'What's New', 'Credits', and 'Freedom's'. The main content area features a video player with the title 'Introducing WordPress 4.5 "Coleman"' and a 'SHARE' button. The video thumbnail shows a man in a suit playing a saxophone, with the text 'WORDPRESS 4.5' and 'COLEMAN' overlaid on the image.

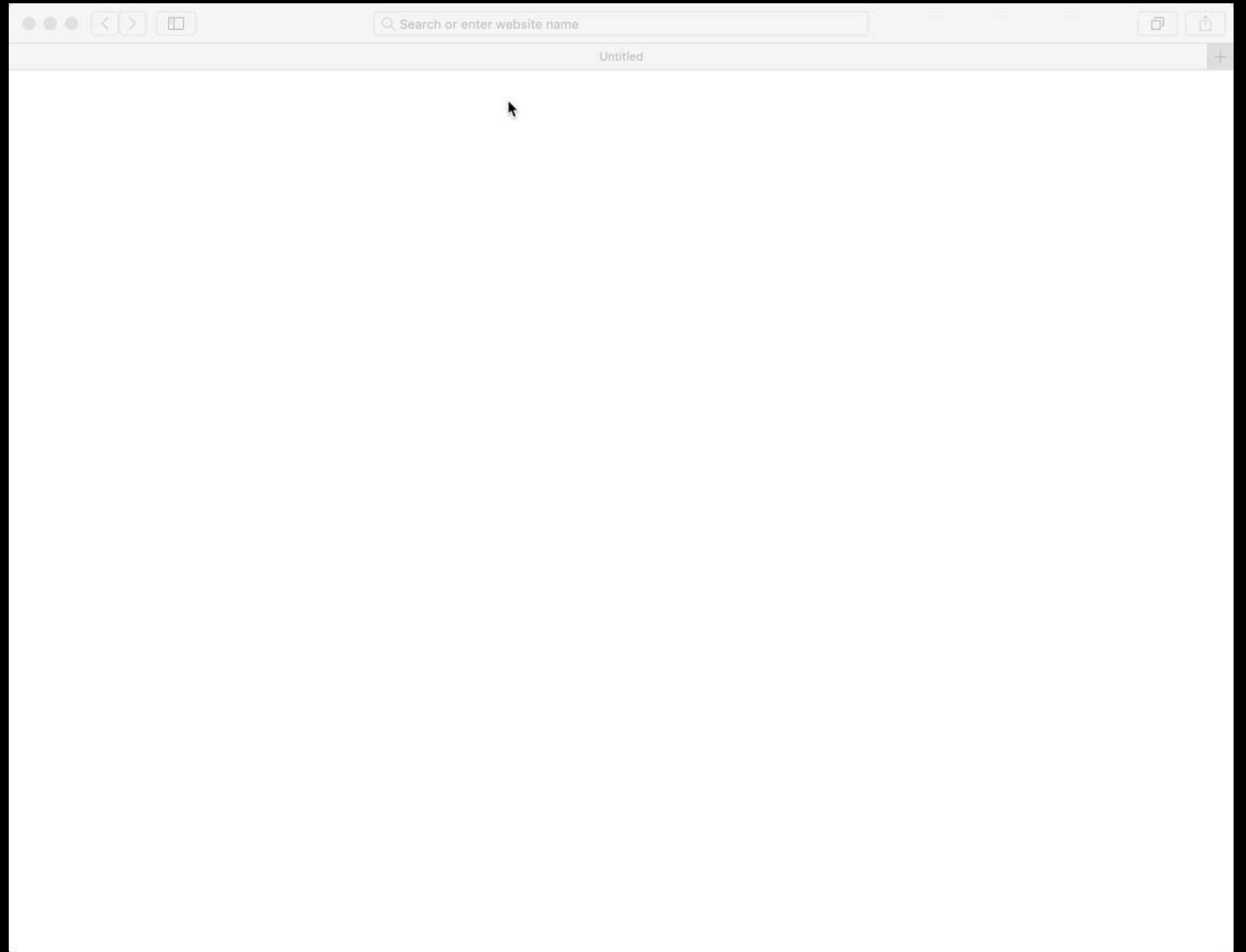
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Moqups again

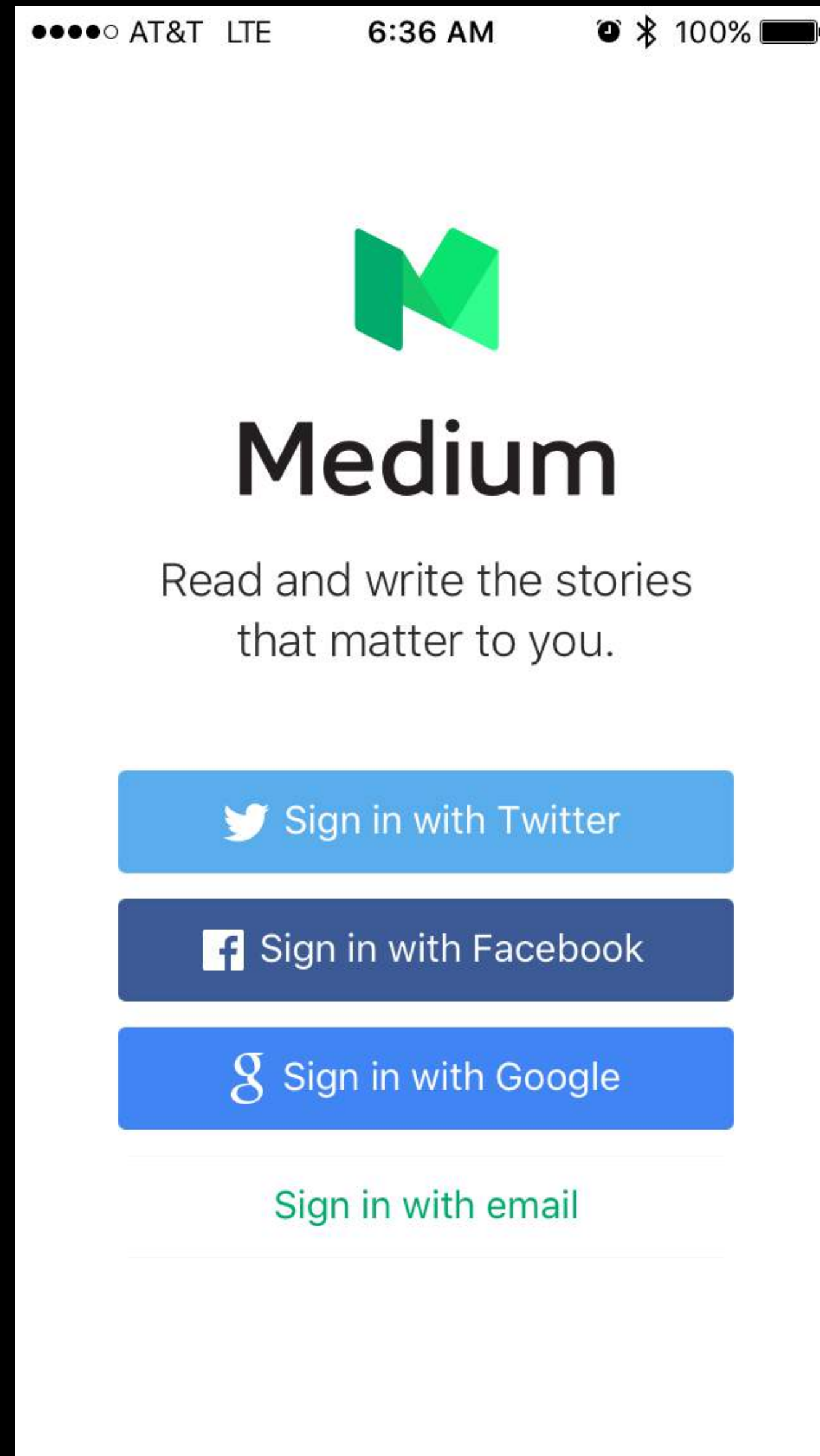
No signup!

Get in there
and play!

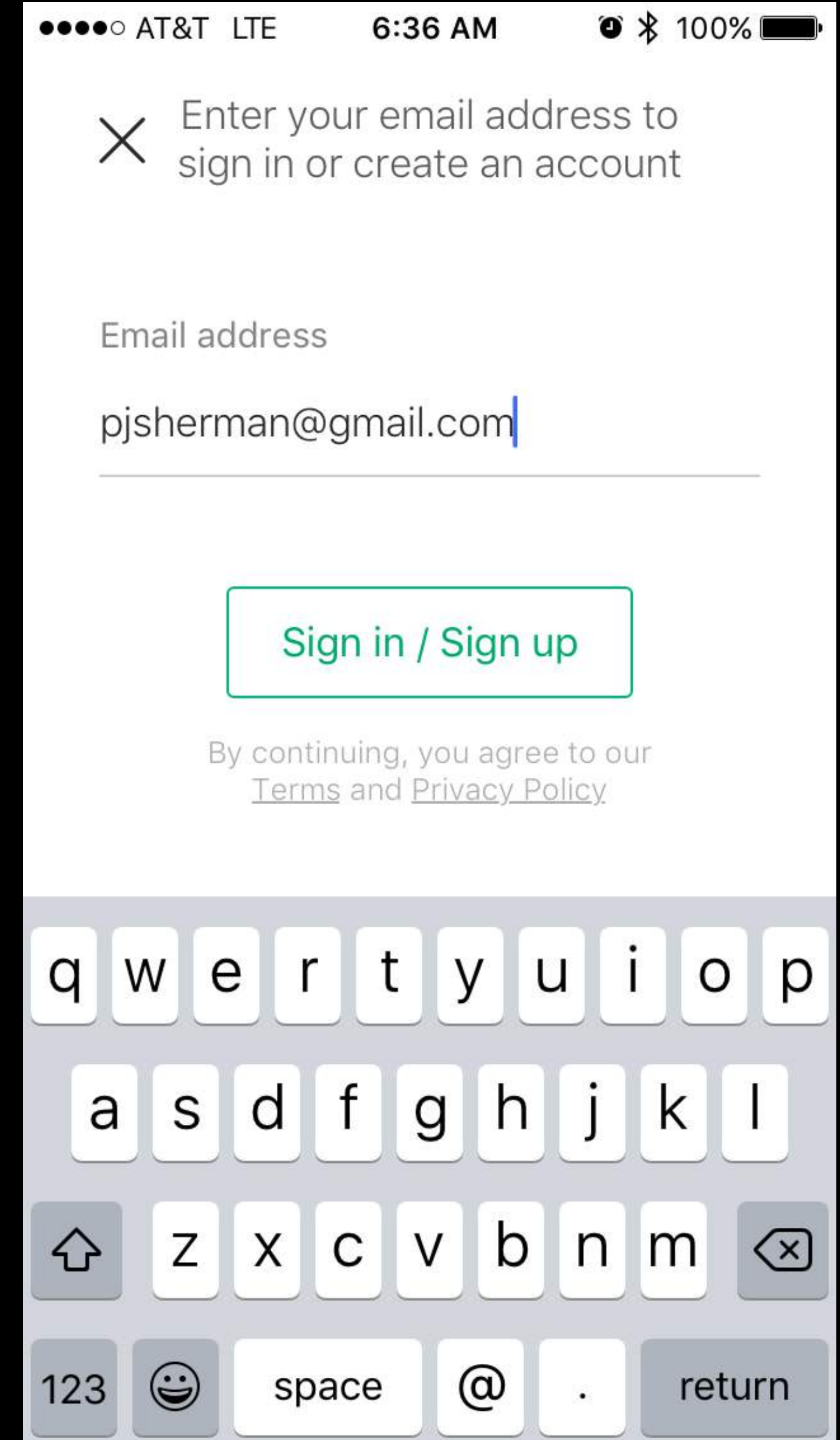
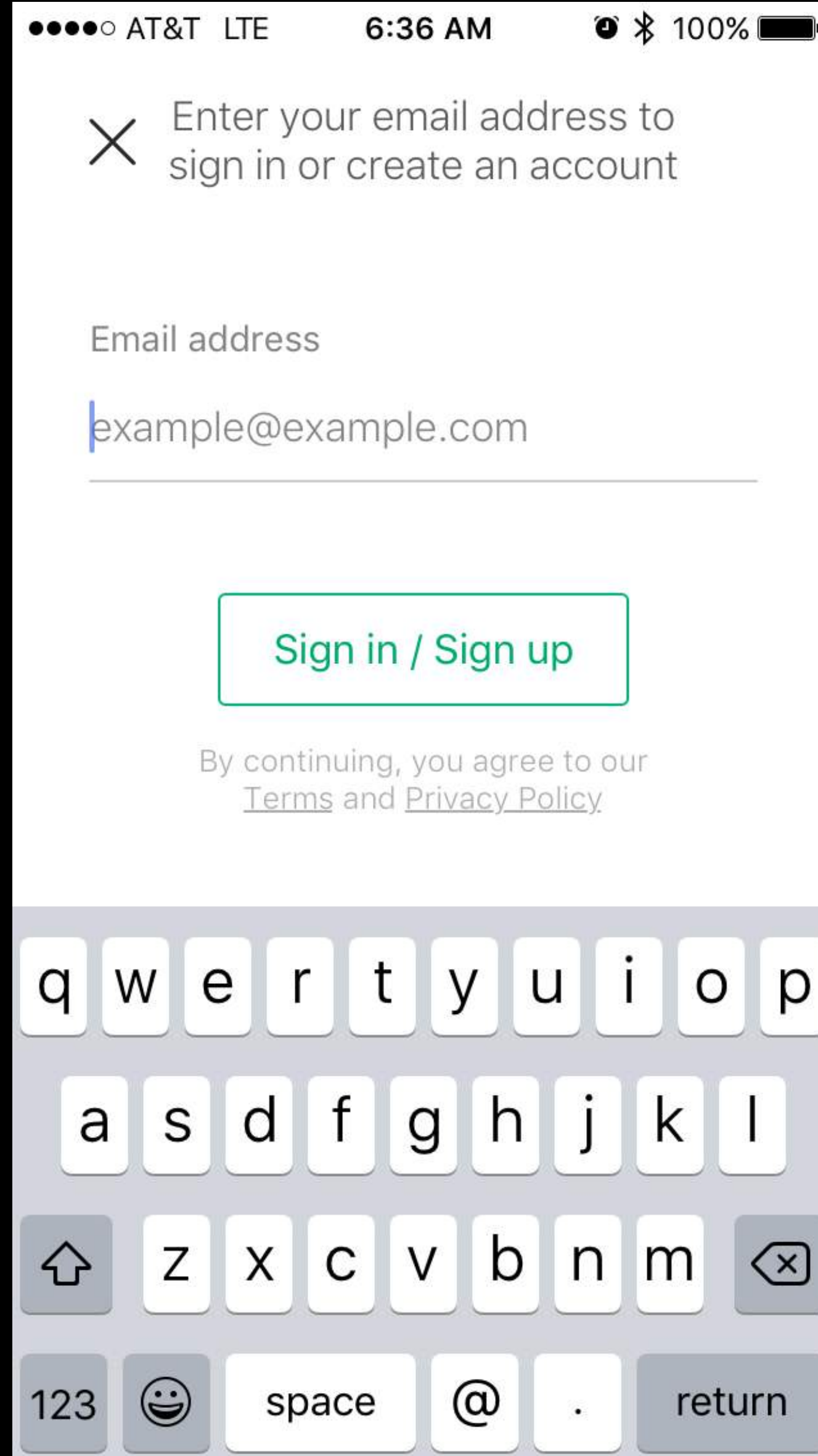
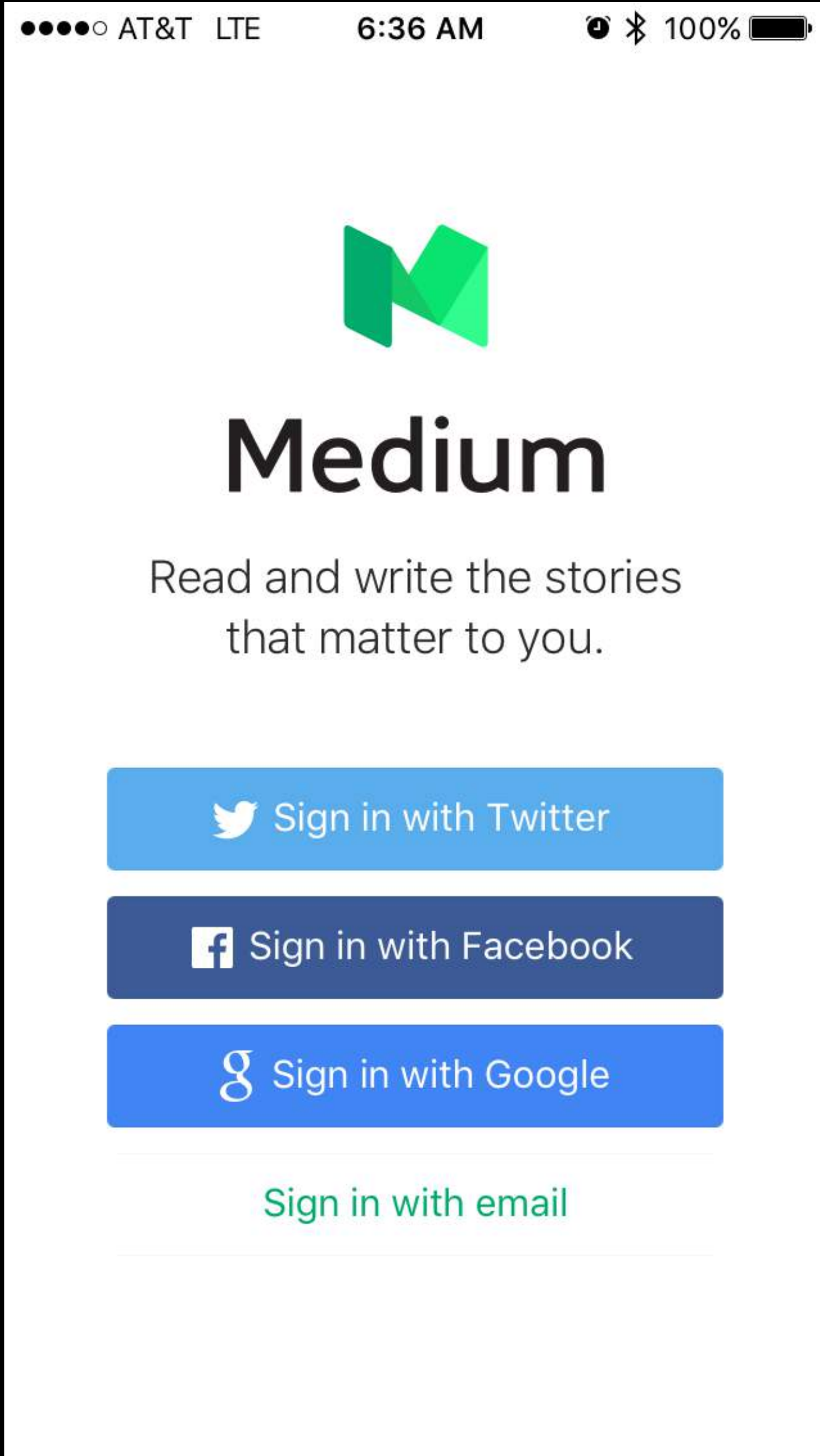


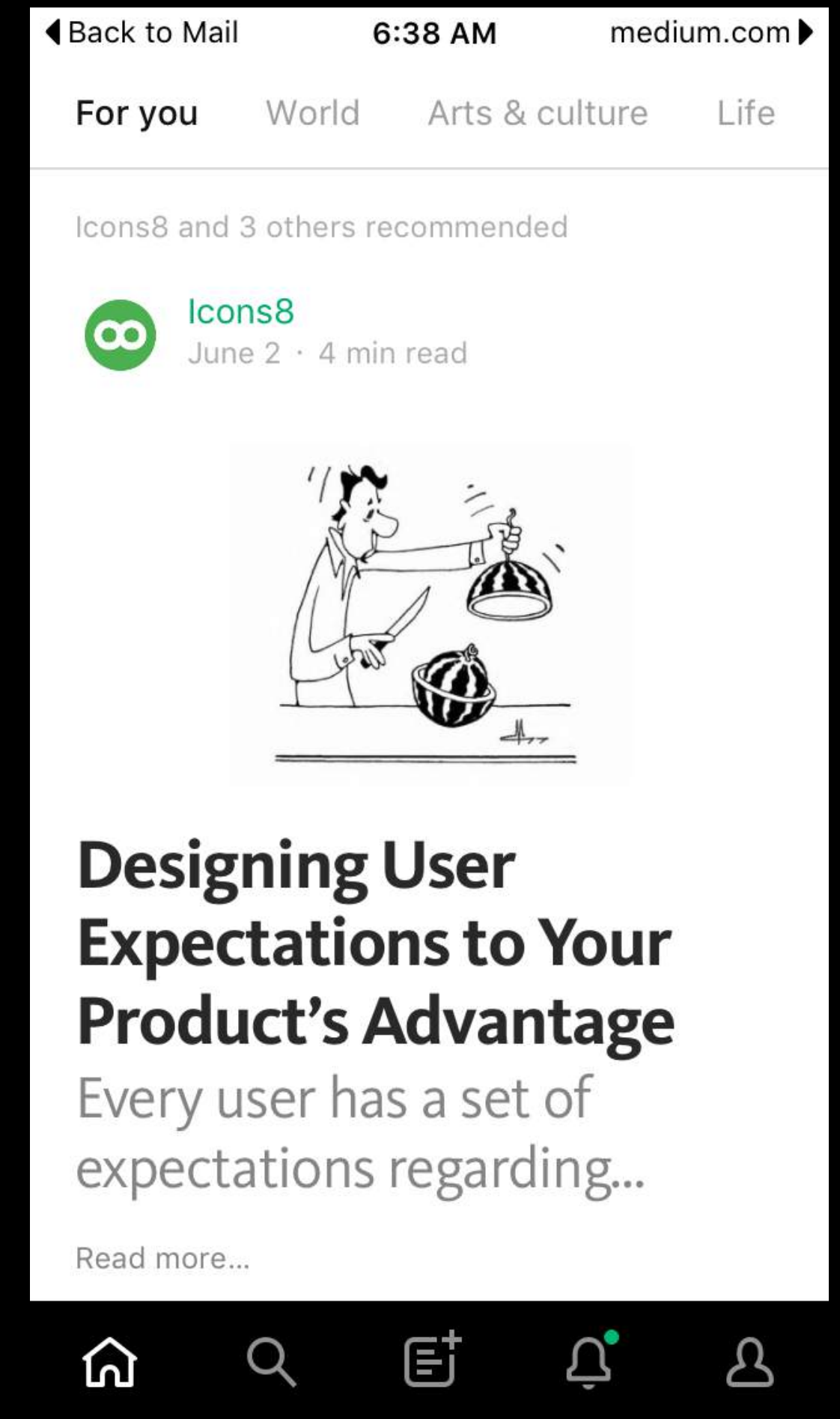
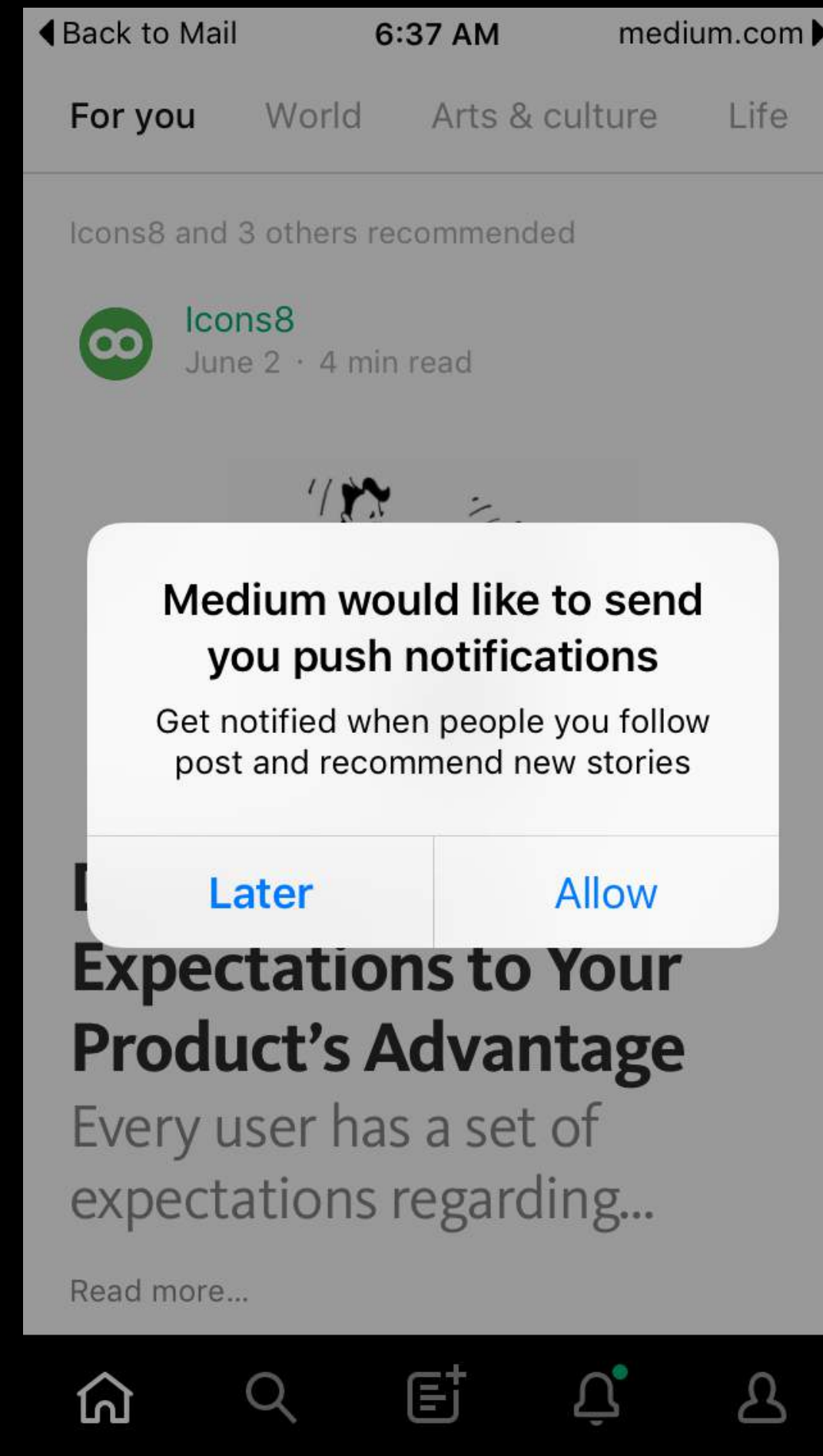
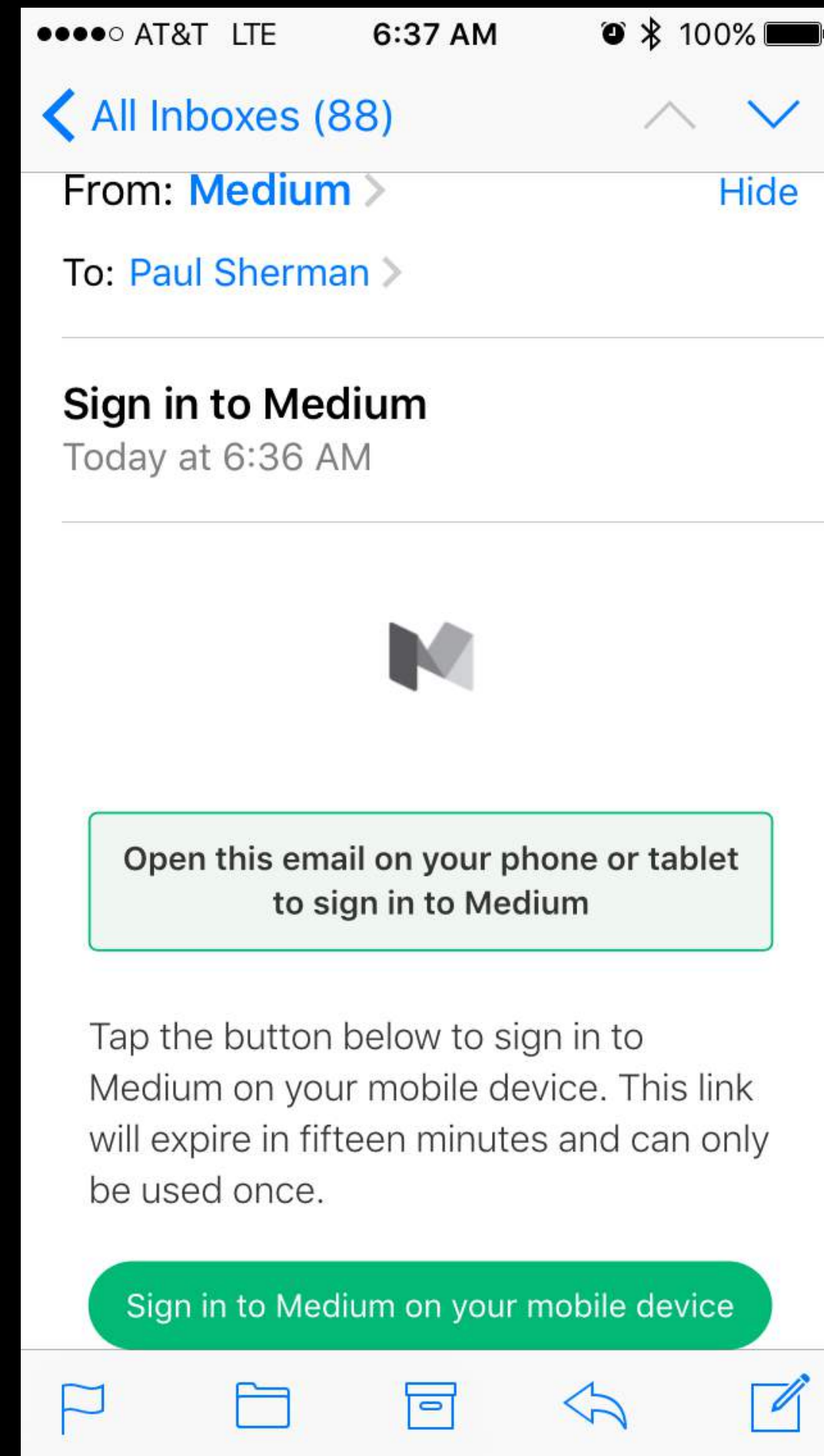
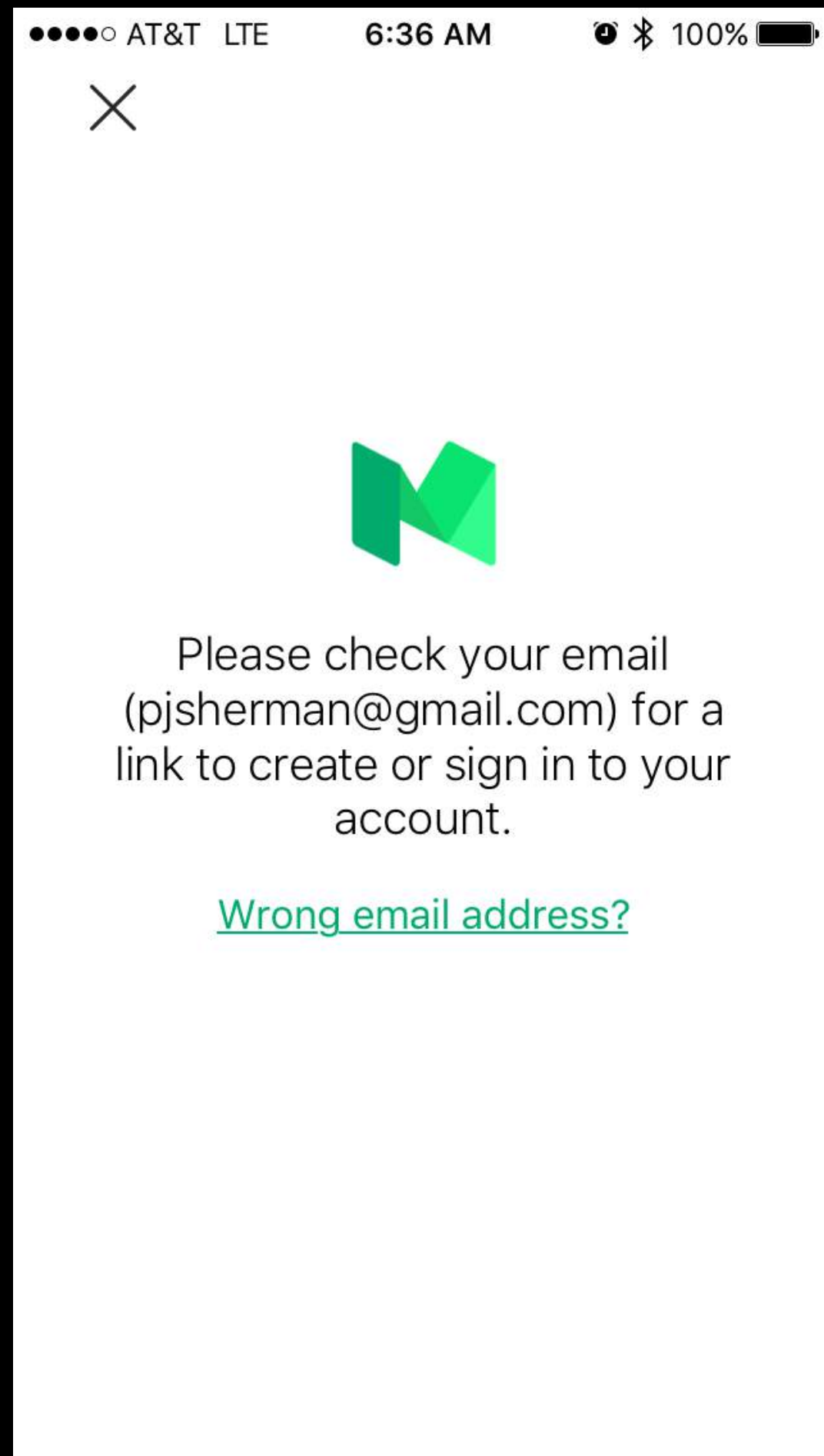
Medium again

I just want to read some stories....



Do I really have to slog through yet another dumb signup flow?





Ugh.

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InVision

They give you nice samples to play with.

The screenshot shows the InVision web interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the InVision logo and links for Prototypes, Boards, Activity, People, and Learn. On the right side of the navigation bar, there are notification and user profile icons, with the name 'Paul Sherman' visible. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'My Prototypes' with a dropdown arrow. A search icon is located on the left side of the main content area. On the right side, there are filters for 'Recent', 'All Types', and 'All Collaborators'. A red circular button with a white plus sign is positioned in the top right corner of the main content area. The main content area displays three prototype cards:

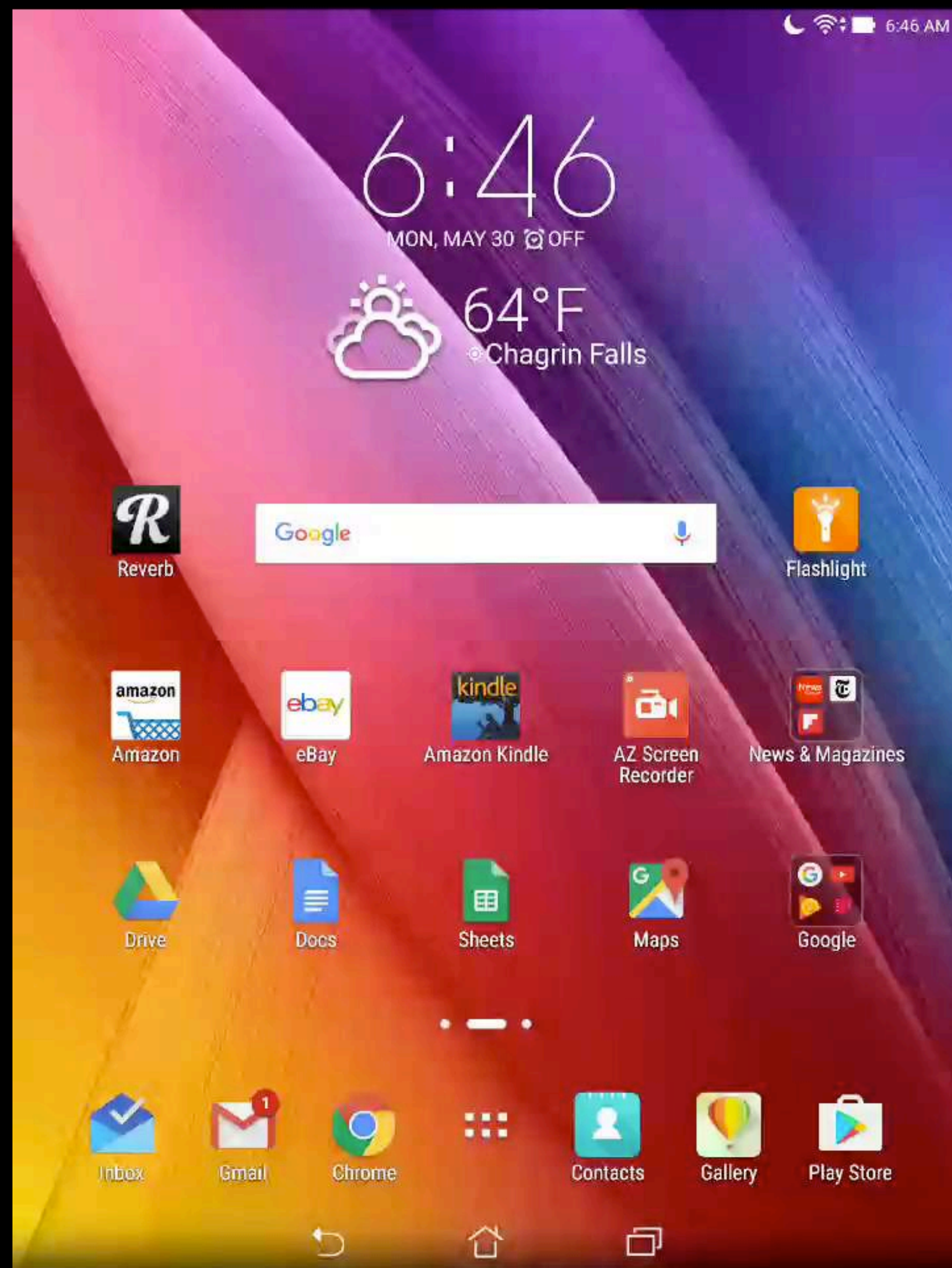
- Web App Prototype**: A demo prototype showing a social media-style feed with a search bar and a 'What's on your mind?' prompt.
- Clickable Wireframe**: A demo prototype for 'Textify' with 26 screens, featuring a 'VIEW PROTOTYPE' button and a 'Login To Textify' form.
- Mobile App Prototype**: A demo prototype showing a mobile app interface with a 'Close' button, a 'Send' button, and a form with fields for 'To:', 'Cc/Bcc:', and 'Subject:'.

At the bottom left of the interface, there is a URL: <https://projects.invisionapp.com/d/main#/projects/7227316>. At the bottom right, there is a 'Help' button with a question mark icon and a user profile picture.

Flipboard

Takes you right to the content.

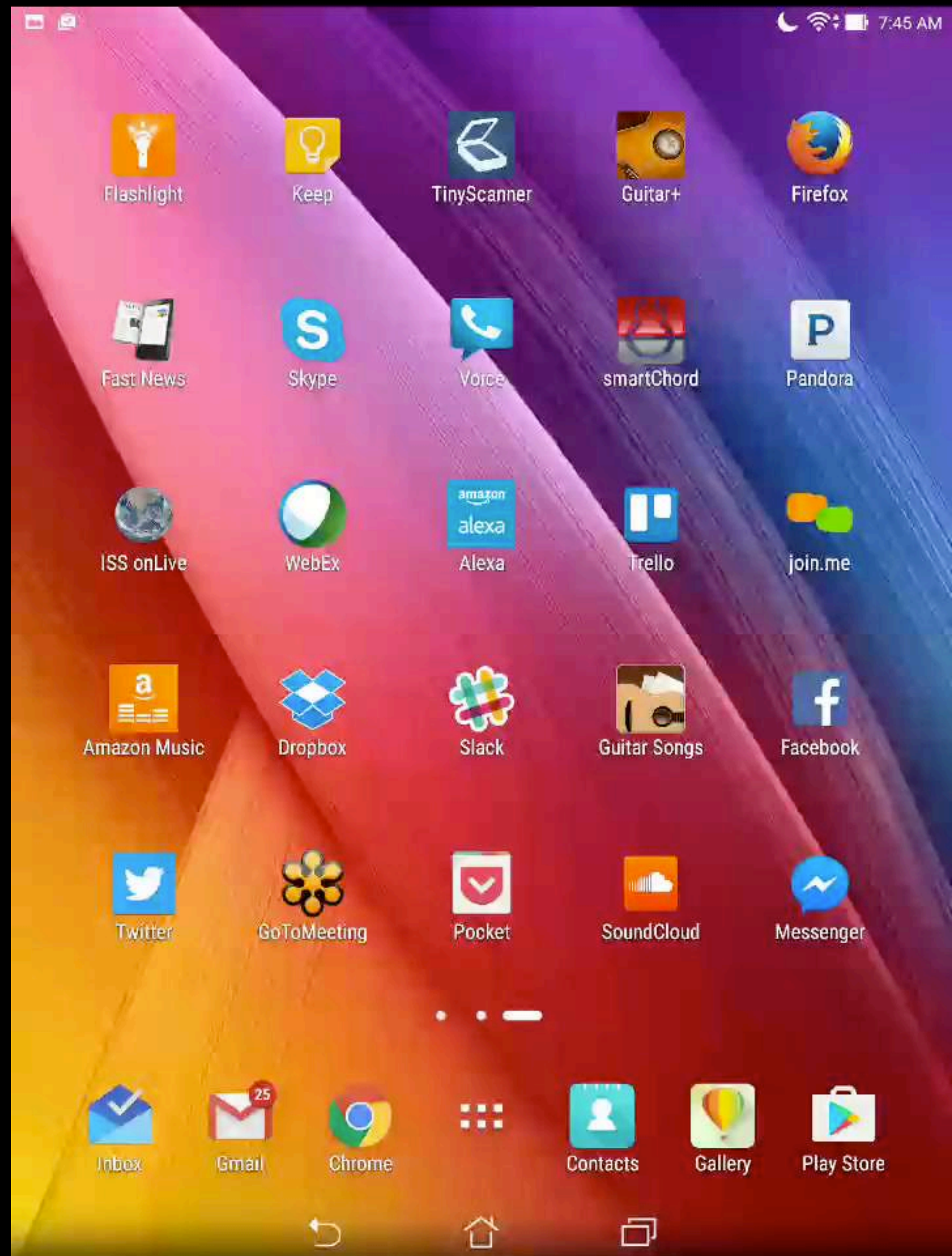
The callout also supports learning.



Pocket

Big empty.

But at least they
gave me some calls
to action.

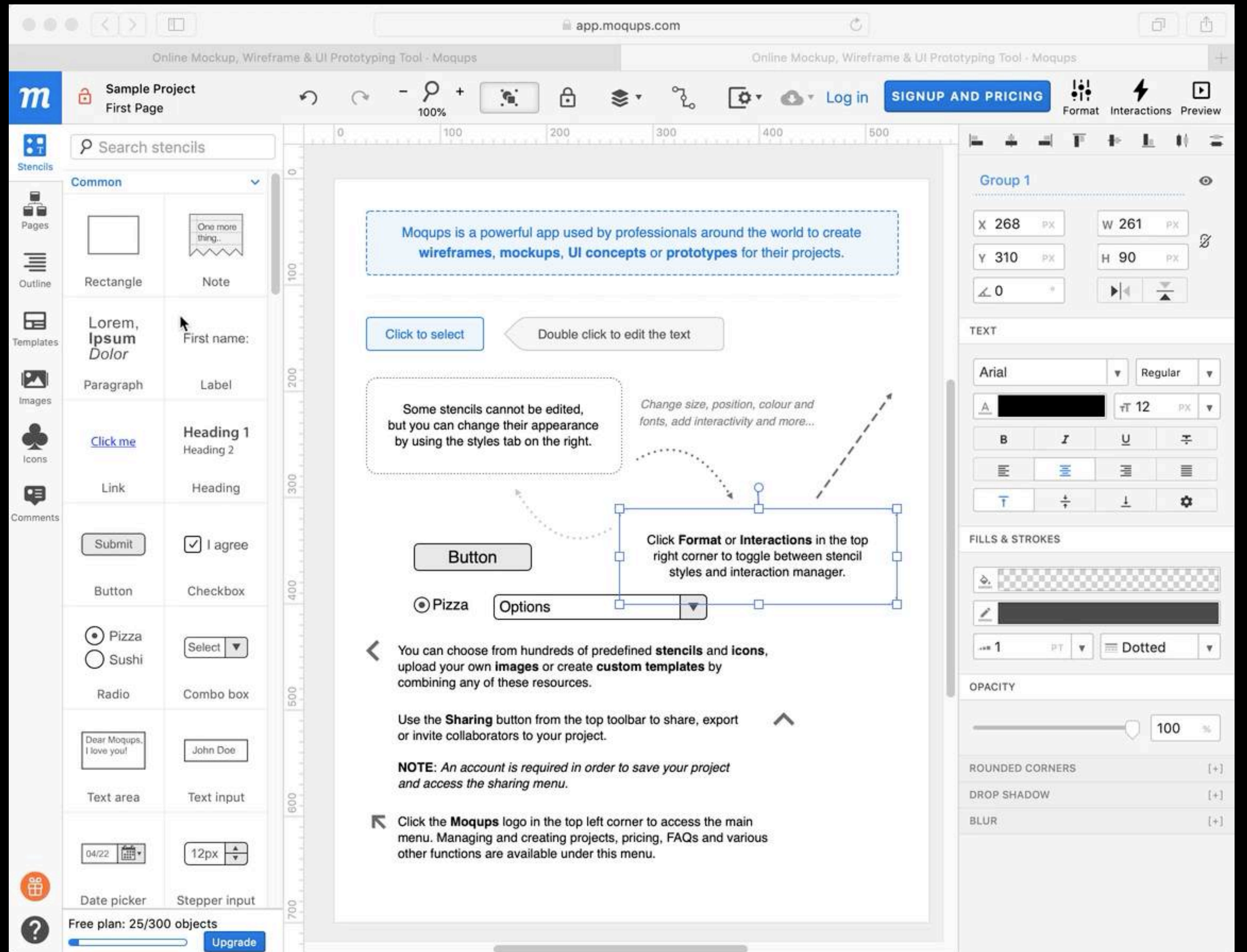


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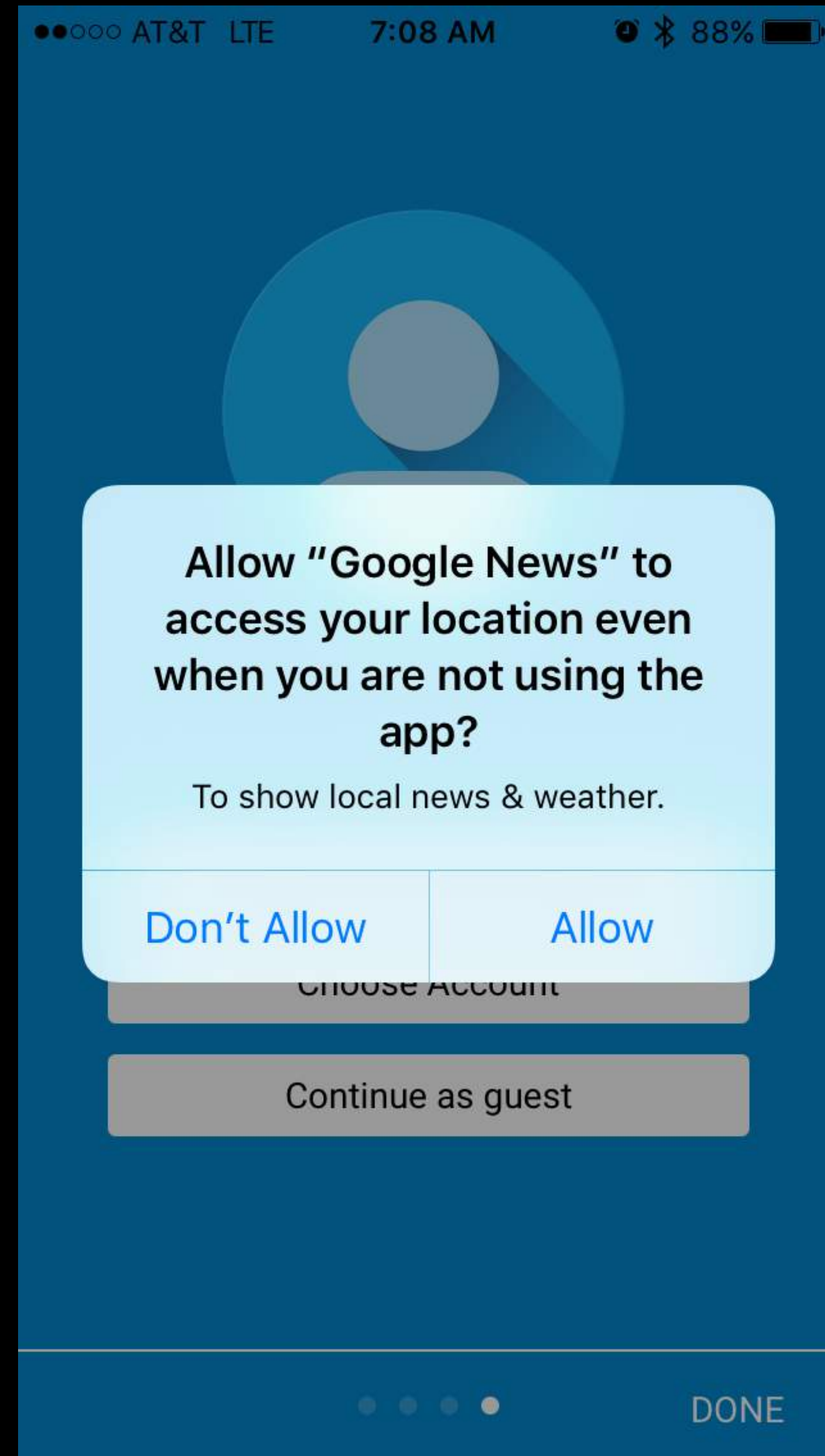
Moqups again

No
commitment
until I'm good
and ready!



Google News

Gives me a good reason for tracking my location.

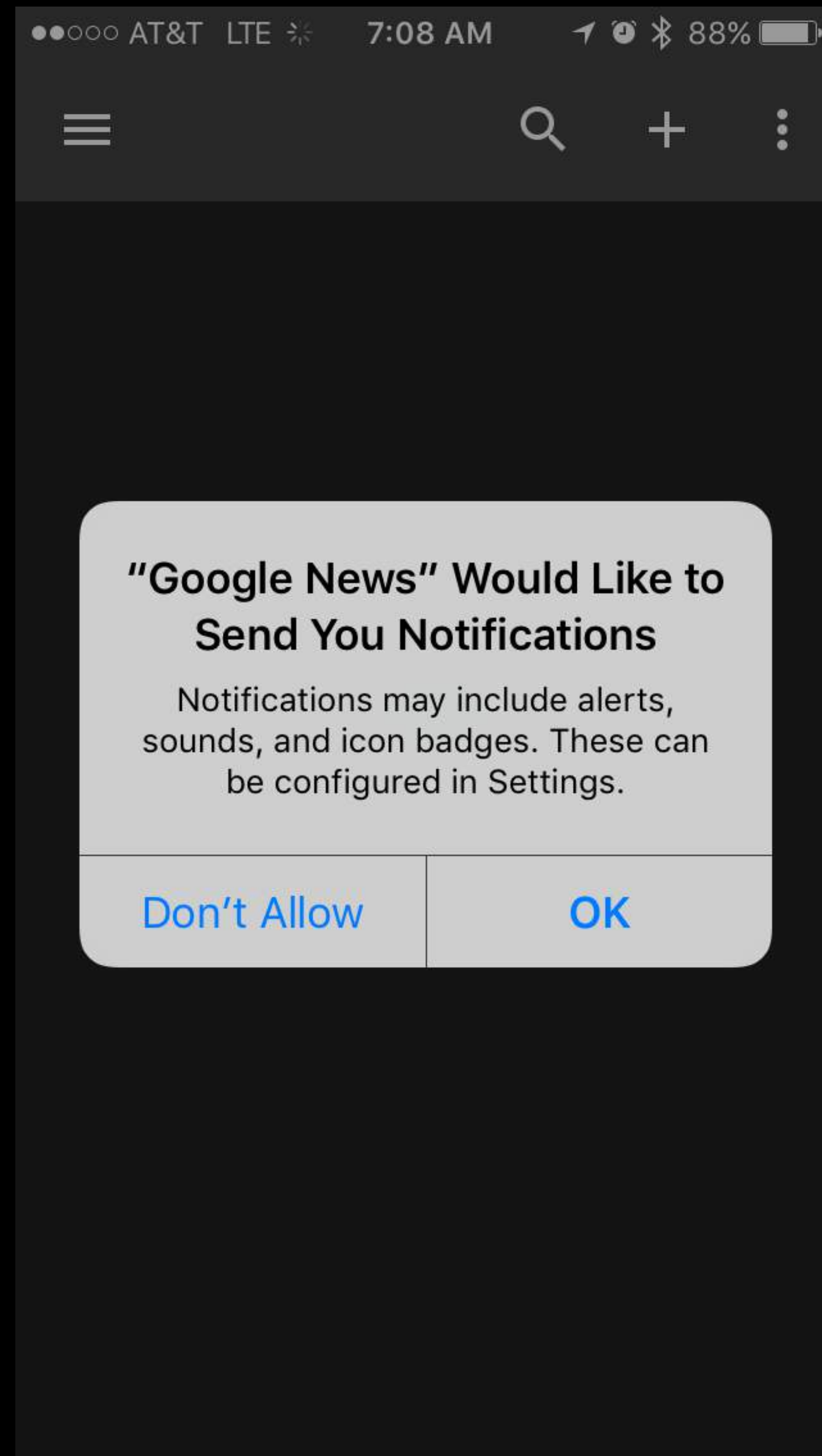


Google News again

Same flow!

I know what notifications are. Why would I want these notifications?

Denied.



Facebook

Um, no.

Text Anyone in Your Phone

Messenger will continuously upload your contacts to connect you with friends.

[Learn More](#)

[OK](#)



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Stack Exchange


Badging and reputation are rewards.



The screenshot shows the Stack Exchange website interface. At the top, the StackExchange logo is on the left, and a search bar is on the right. Below the logo, the text "UX User Experience" is displayed. The navigation menu includes "Questions", "Tags", "Users", "Badges", and "Ur". The main content area is titled "Profile" and "Activity", with "Activity" being the active tab. Below the tabs, there are two main sections. The left section, titled "Reputation", features a bar chart icon and explains that reputation is earned by upvoting helpful posts, which unlocks new privileges. It includes a link to "Learn more about reputation and privileges". The right section, titled "Congratulations!", features a green checkmark icon and states that the user has earned the "Informed" badge. It includes a link to "Track the next one" and a button labeled "Let us pick >".

StackExchange 1

UX User Experience Questions Tags Users Badges Ur

Profile **Activity** Edit Profile & Settings Network Pro

 Reputation is how the community thanks you
When users upvote your helpful posts, you'll earn reputation and unlock new privileges.
[Learn more about reputation and privileges](#)

 **Congratulations!**
Thanks to your efforts, you earned
 **Informed**
Track the next one [Let us pick >](#)

I couldn't find any gamification and social facilitation anti-patterns...probably because they're removed for failure.

But I'm sure they're out there.

Maybe Amazon's reviewer system?

Wikipedia?

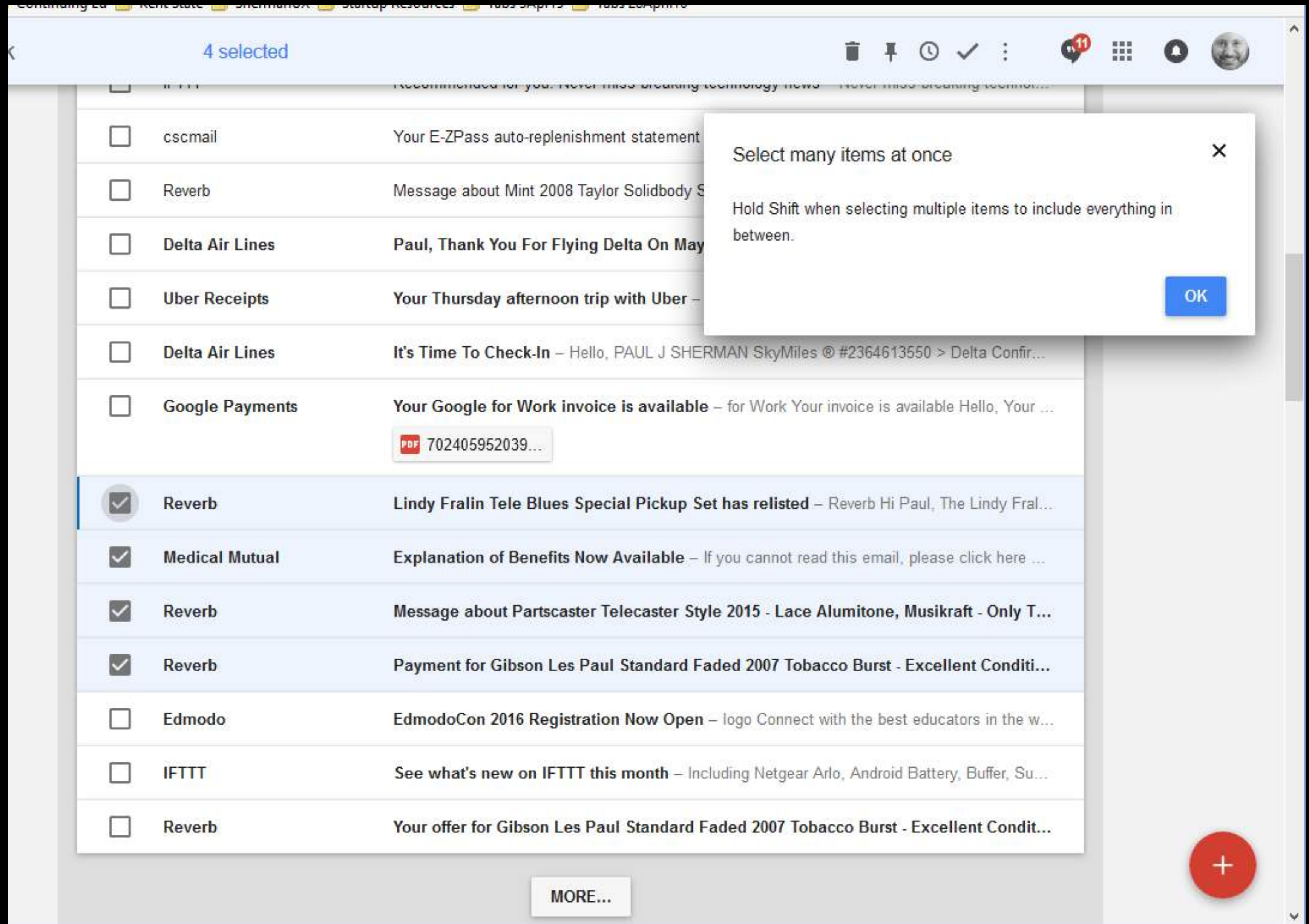
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Gmail

I started selecting multiple items.

It recognized this and offered information.

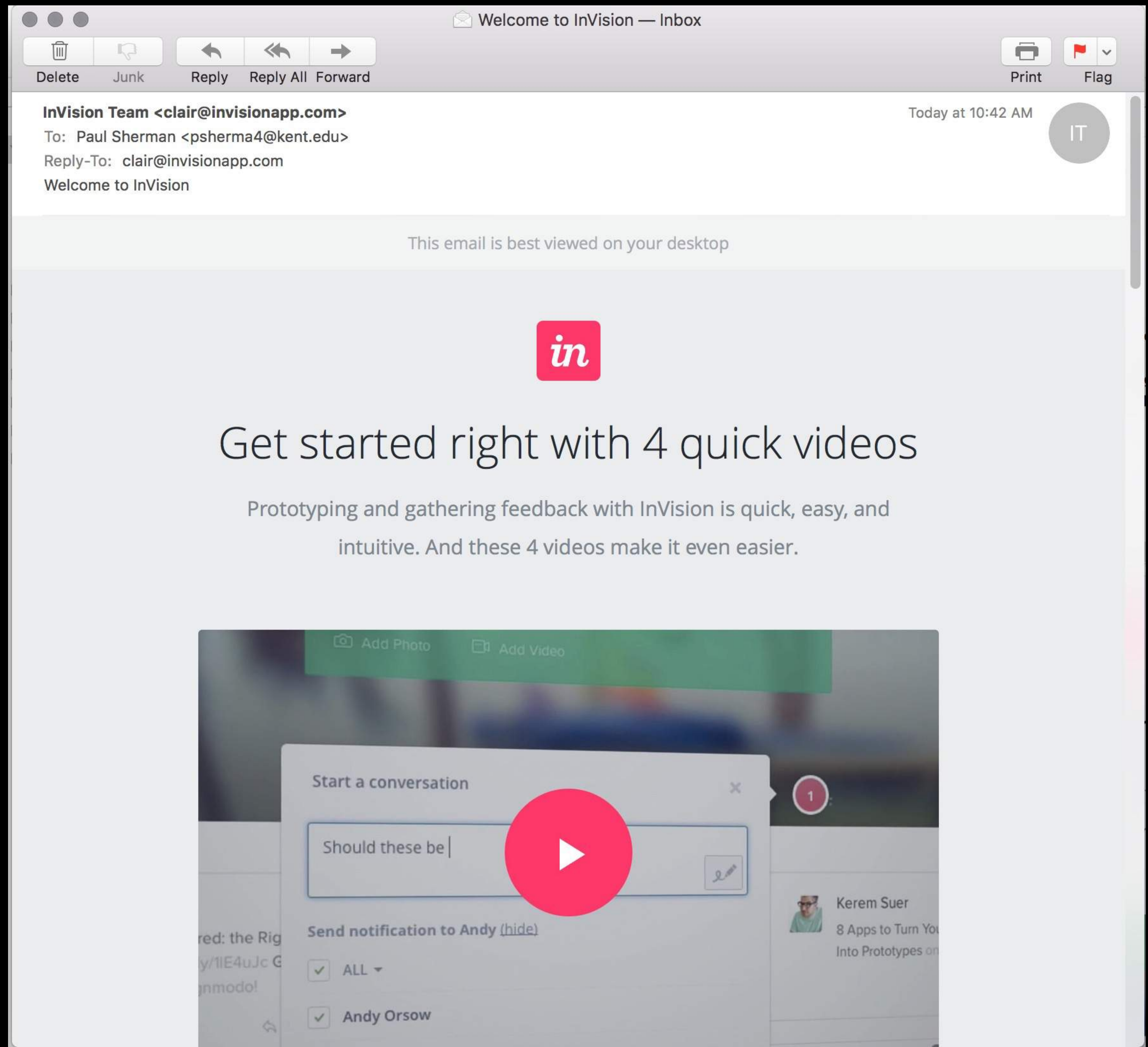


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InVision

Lower the
perceived cost
of adoption.



Proto.io

Lower the perceived cost of adoption.

Build an iOS App Prototype in 30 Minutes — Inbox

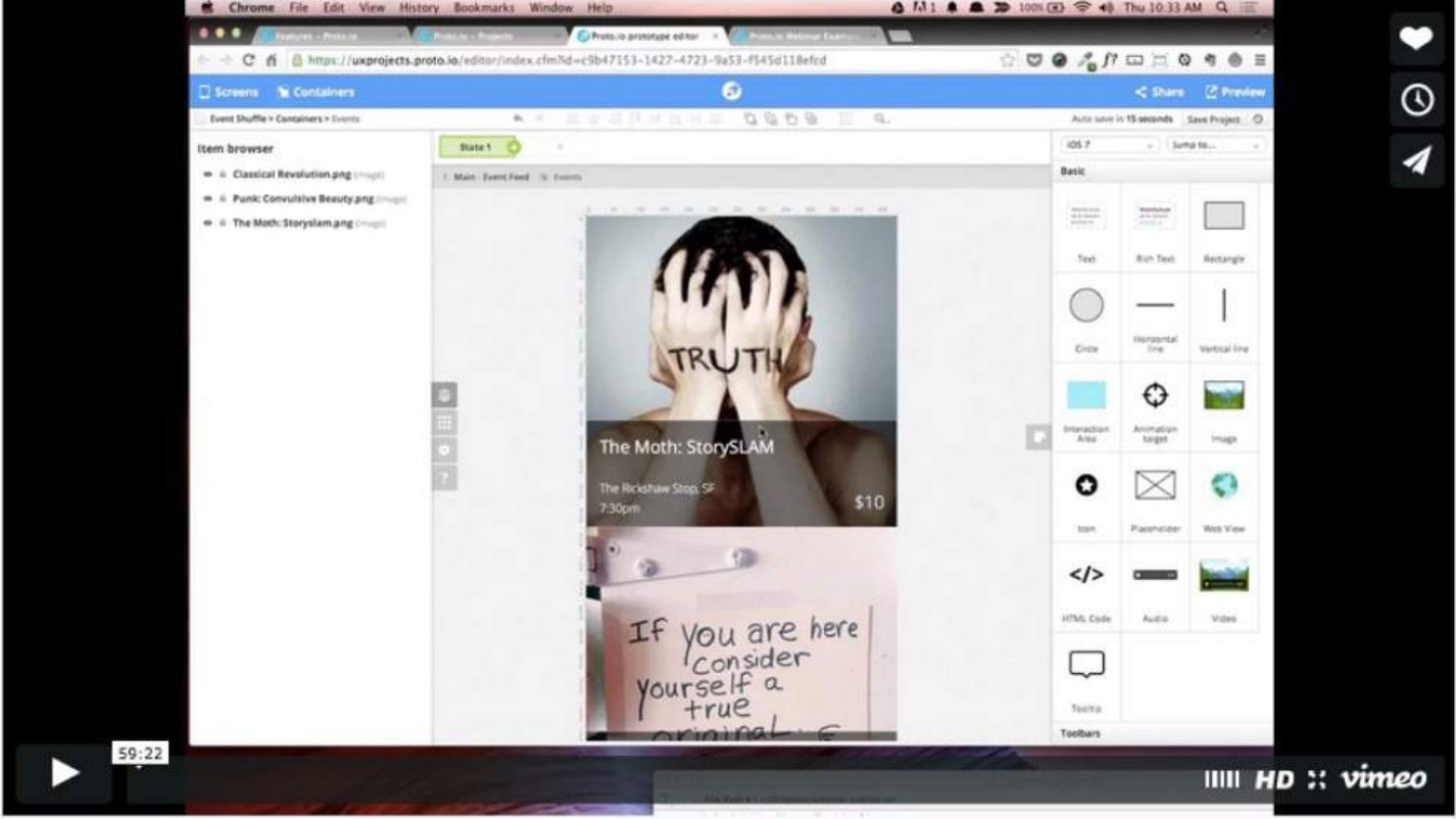
Delete Junk Reply Reply All Forward Print Flag

Alexis Piperides <alexis.piperides@protoio.mail.intercom.io> May 5, 2015 at 5:32 PM AP

To: Paul Sherman <psherma4@kent.edu>
Reply-To: Alexis Piperides <alexis.piperides@protoio.mail.intercom.io>
Build an iOS App Prototype in 30 Minutes

Hi Paul,


Check out our most popular tutorial video below to learn how fast it is to build a high-fidelity interactive iOS app prototype.



Build an iOS app prototype in 30 minutes

[GET STARTED](#)

Thanks,
The [Proto.io](#) Team

 Alexis Piperides from [Proto.io](#) 5 May 2015

And don't forget the obvious...

10 ONBOARDING PRINCIPLES

1. Present a clear value proposition.
2. Engage emotional and aspirational motivations.
3. Doing is better than showing or telling.
4. Minimize friction and barriers.
5. Stock the shelves. Avoid the empty store.
6. Don't ask for a commitment before the user is ready.
7. Leverage social comparison and gamification. But don't be cheesy.
8. Support learning and mastery at the point of need.
9. Share content via different channels to encourage engagement.
- 10. Measure and test!**

Dark Patterns In Onboarding

Are there dark patterns lurking in the onboarding experience?

Tricks used in websites and apps that make you buy or sign up for things that you didn't mean to.

- [DarkPatterns.org](https://darkpatterns.org)

TYPES OF DARK PATTERNS

Bait and Switch

Confirmshaming

Disguised Ads

Forced Continuity

Friend Spam

Hidden Costs

Misdirection

Price Comparison Prevention

Privacy Zuckering

Roach Motel

Privacy Zuckering

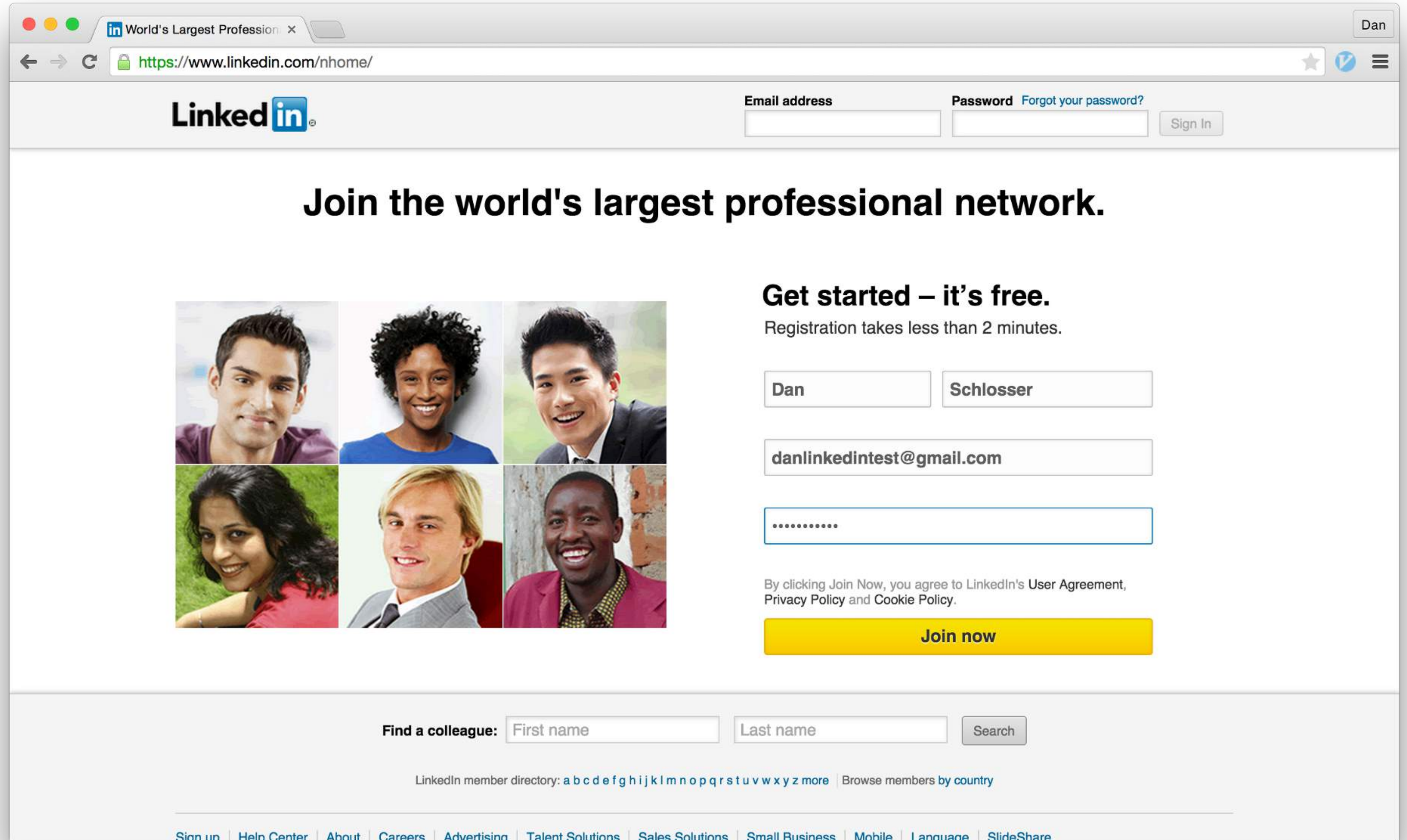
You are tricked into publicly sharing more information about yourself than you intended to.

- [DarkPatterns.org](https://darkpatterns.org)

LinkedIn

Friend
spam +
privacy
Zuckering.

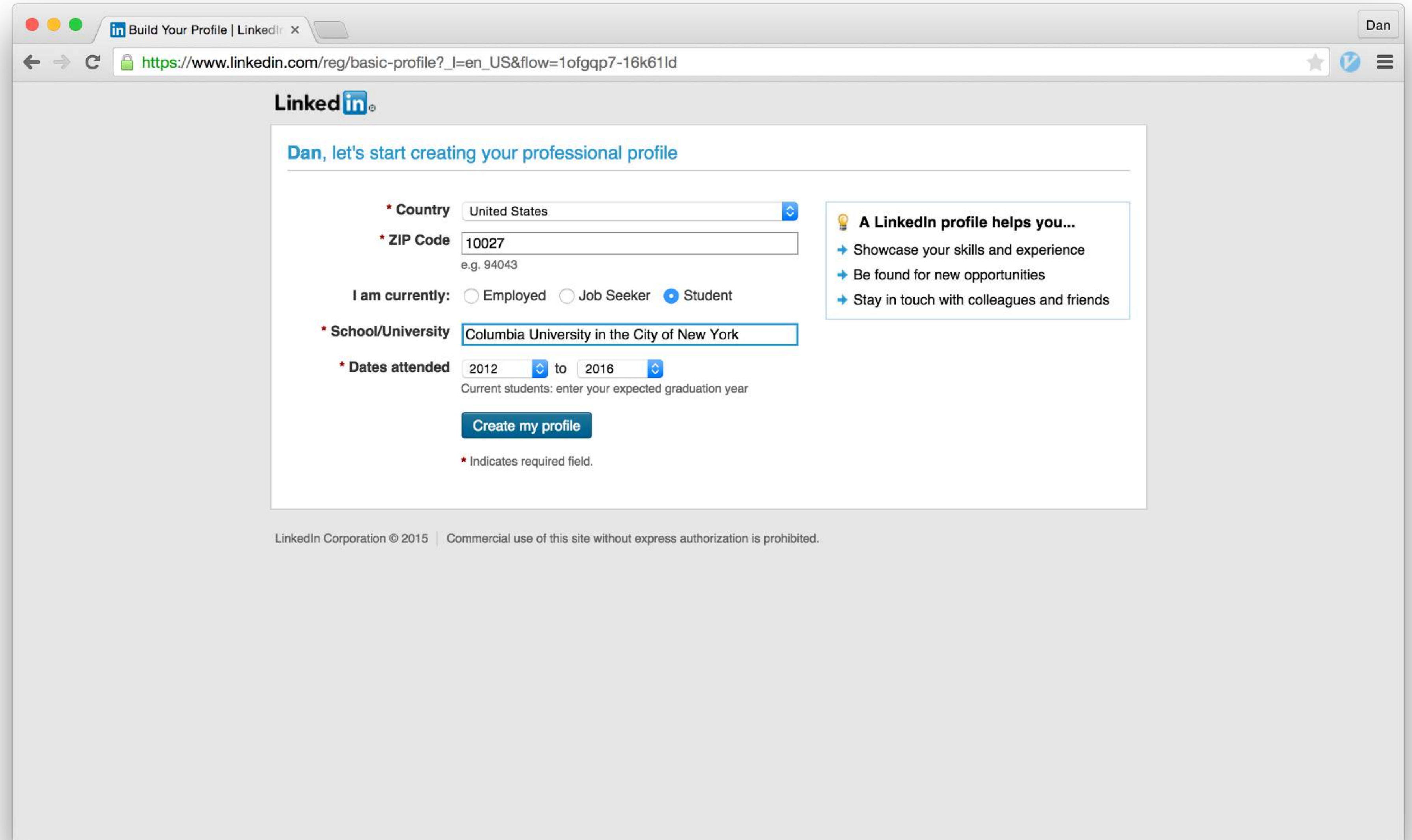
Social
facilitation
run amok.



LinkedIn

Friend
spam +
privacy
Zuckering.

Social
facilitation
run amok.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL https://www.linkedin.com/reg/basic-profile?_l=en_US&flow=1ofgqp7-16k61ld. The page title is "Build Your Profile | LinkedIn". The main heading is "Dan, let's start creating your professional profile".

The form contains the following fields and options:

- * Country:** United States (dropdown menu)
- * ZIP Code:** 10027 (text input, with a note "e.g. 94043")
- I am currently:** Employed Job Seeker Student
- * School/University:** Columbia University in the City of New York (text input)
- * Dates attended:** 2012 (dropdown) to 2016 (dropdown). A note below says "Current students: enter your expected graduation year".

A blue button labeled "Create my profile" is positioned below the form. A lightbulb icon is followed by the text "A LinkedIn profile helps you..." and a list of benefits:

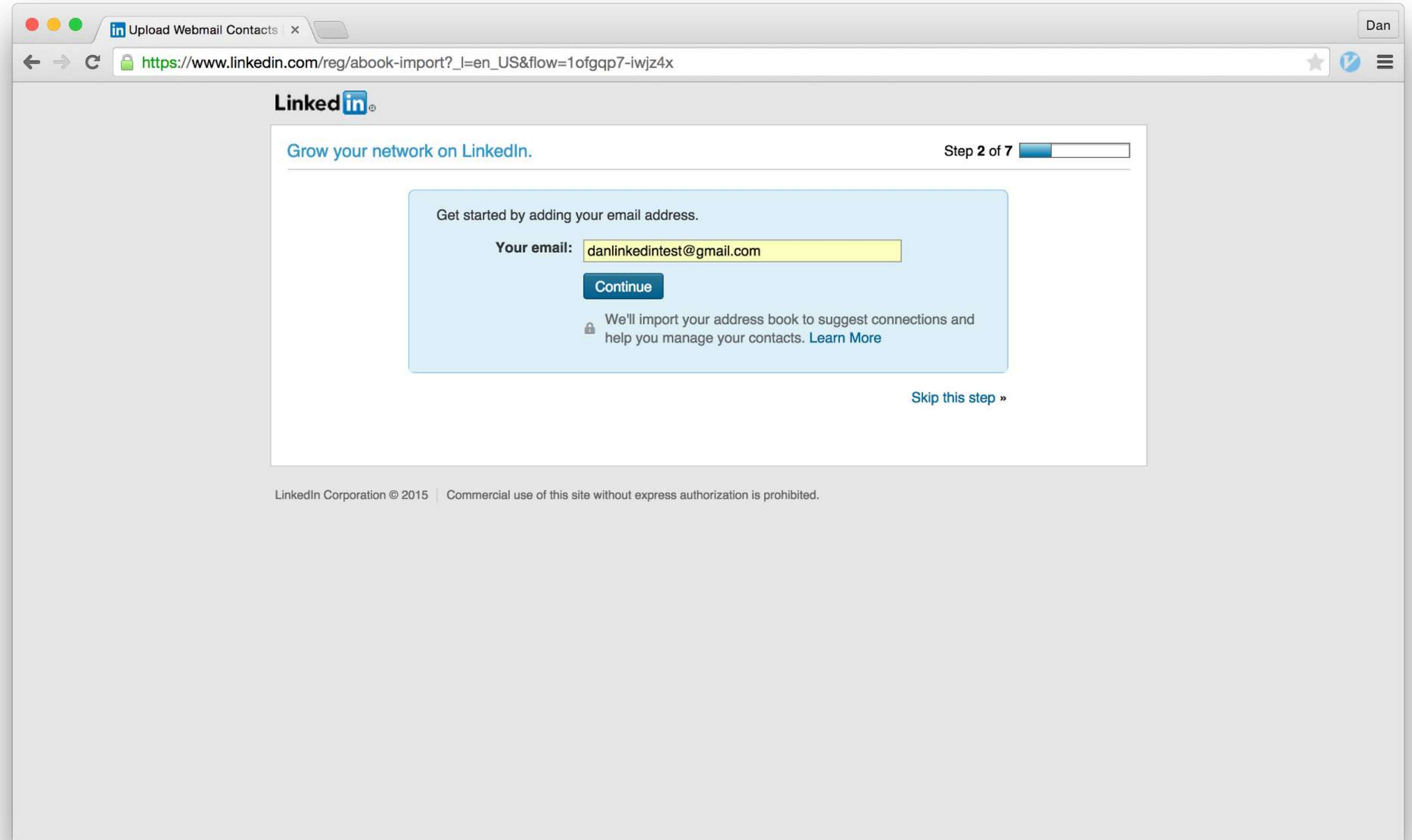
- Showcase your skills and experience
- Be found for new opportunities
- Stay in touch with colleagues and friends

At the bottom of the form, a small note states: "* Indicates required field." Below the form, the footer text reads: "LinkedIn Corporation © 2015 | Commercial use of this site without express authorization is prohibited."


LinkedIn

Friend
spam +
privacy
Zuckering.

Social
facilitation
run amok.




LinkedIn

Grow your network on LinkedIn. Step 2 of 7 

Get started by adding your email address.

Your email:

[Continue](#)

 We'll import your address book to suggest connections and help you manage your contacts. [Learn More](#)

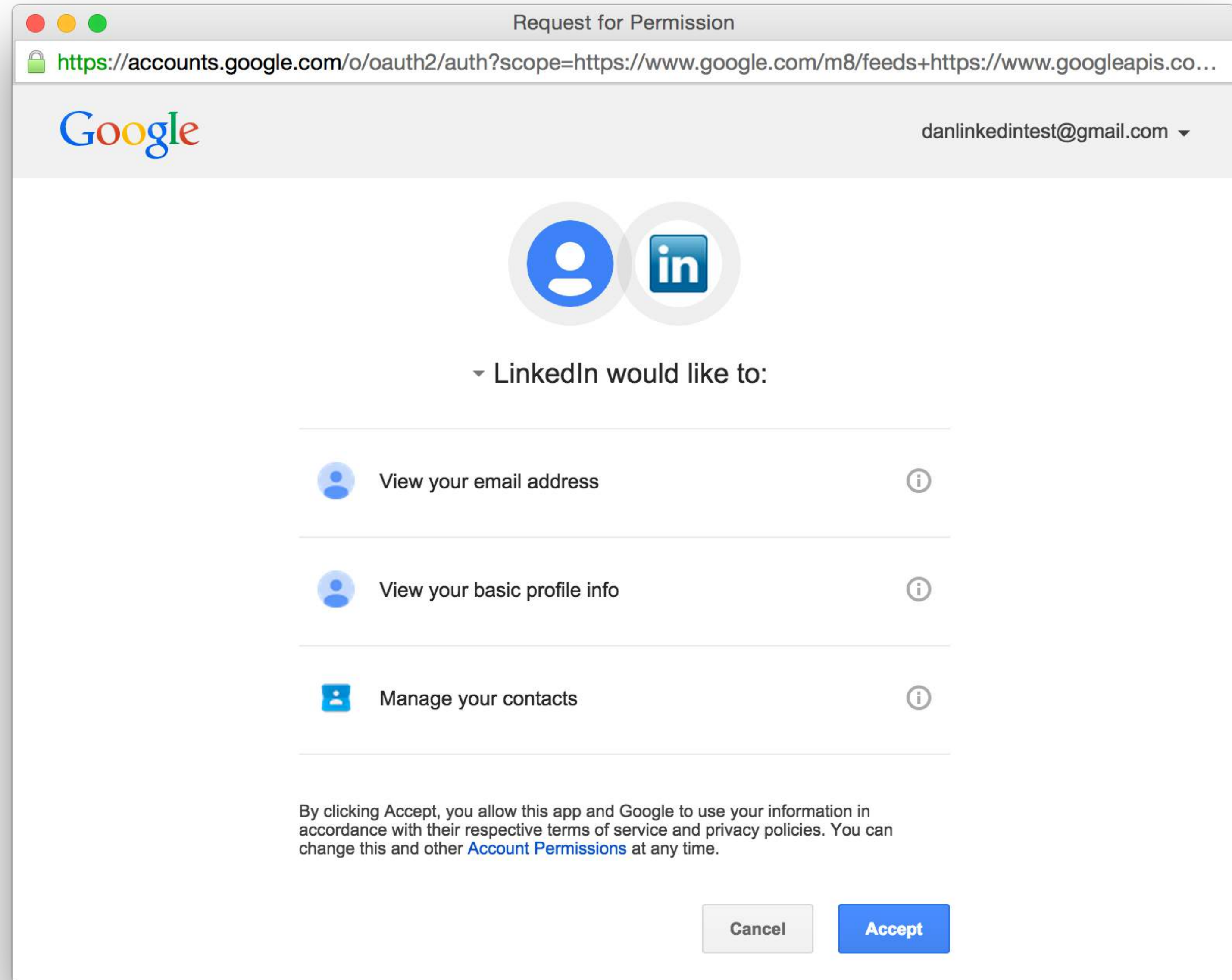
Wait..what?

[Skip this step »](#)

LinkedIn

What does
Cancel do?

If I click it, did
I just waste a
lot of time?



LinkedIn

Intentionally
“misused”
error
message


Grow your network on LinkedIn. Step 2 of 7

Get started by adding your email address.

We are unable to import your email contacts. Please try again later.

Your email:

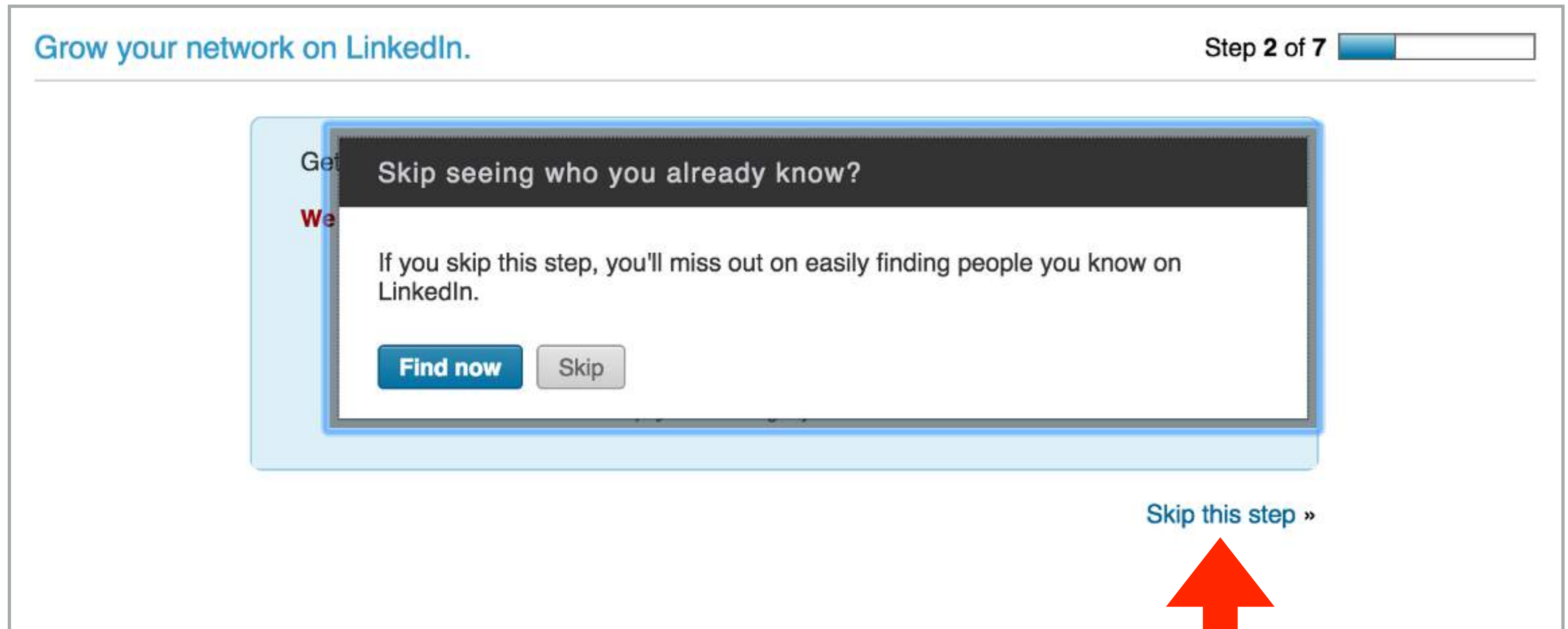
[Continue](#)

 We'll import your address book to suggest connections and help you manage your contacts. [Learn More](#)

[Skip this step »](#)

LinkedIn

Mild shaming



The "make it stop" link.

LinkedIn

The dark patterns continue...

The confirmation email looks like a lowering cost of adoption pattern.

It's actually just more Zuckering.



LinkedIn Messages <messages-noreply@linkedin.com>

1:17 PM (3 minutes ago)



to me

LinkedIn

Please confirm your email address

Dan, confirming your email address will give you full access to LinkedIn.

[Confirm your email address](#)

If the button doesn't work, you can click here

This email was intended for Dan Schlosser. [Learn why](#)
If you need assistance or have questions, please contact us

Oh FFS...



Thanks for confirming your email address, danlinkedintest@gmail.com

Grow your network on LinkedIn.

Step 2 of 7

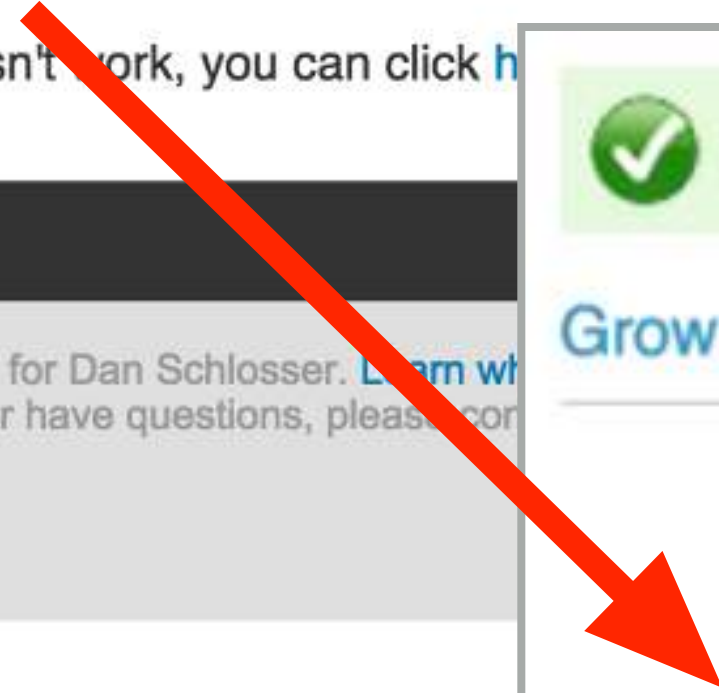
Get started by adding your email address.

Your email:

[Continue](#)

We'll import your address book to suggest connections and help you manage your contacts. [Learn More](#)

[Skip this step »](#)



Is this ethical?

Why or why not?

Ethics And Design

A realization I had while writing this talk...

Everything I've covered here is amoral.

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10. Measure and test!

Partially adapted from Lisa Battle, First Impressions Matter: Onboarding for First Time Users. UXPA 2016.

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**Not necessarily immoral or unethical.
But it's divorced from ethics and morality.**

Ethics

Dictionary

Enter a word, e.g. "pie"



eth·ics

/ˈeθɪks/

noun

1. moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.
"medical ethics also enter into the question"
synonyms: moral code, morals, **morality**, values, rights and wrongs, principles, ideals, standards (of behavior), value system, virtues, dictates of conscience
"your so-called newspaper is clearly not burdened by a sense of ethics"
2. the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles.



Translations, word origin, and more definitions

Ethics

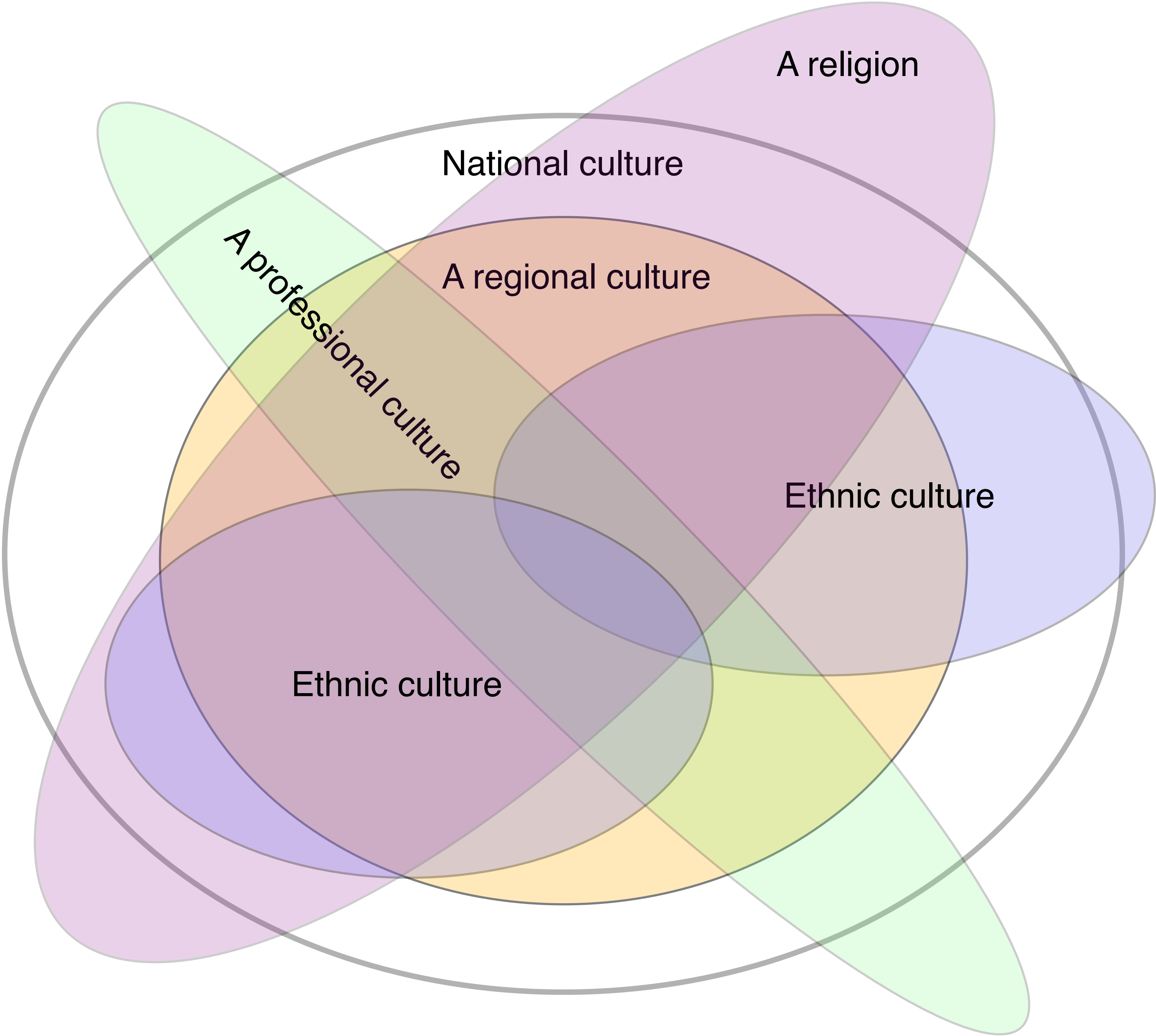
eth·ic | \ˈe-thik  \

Definition of *ethic*

- 1 **ethics** *plural in form but singular or plural in construction* : the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation
 - 2 **a** : a set of moral principles : a theory or system of moral values
 - // the present-day materialistic *ethic*
 - // an old-fashioned work *ethic*
 - often used in plural but singular or plural in construction
 - // an elaborate *ethics*
 - // Christian *ethics*
 - b** **ethics** *plural in form but singular or plural in construction* : the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group
 - // professional *ethics*
 - c** : a guiding philosophy
 - d** : a consciousness of moral importance
 - // forge a conservation *ethic*
- 3 **ethics** *plural* : a set of moral issues or aspects (such as rightness)
 - // debated the *ethics* of human cloning

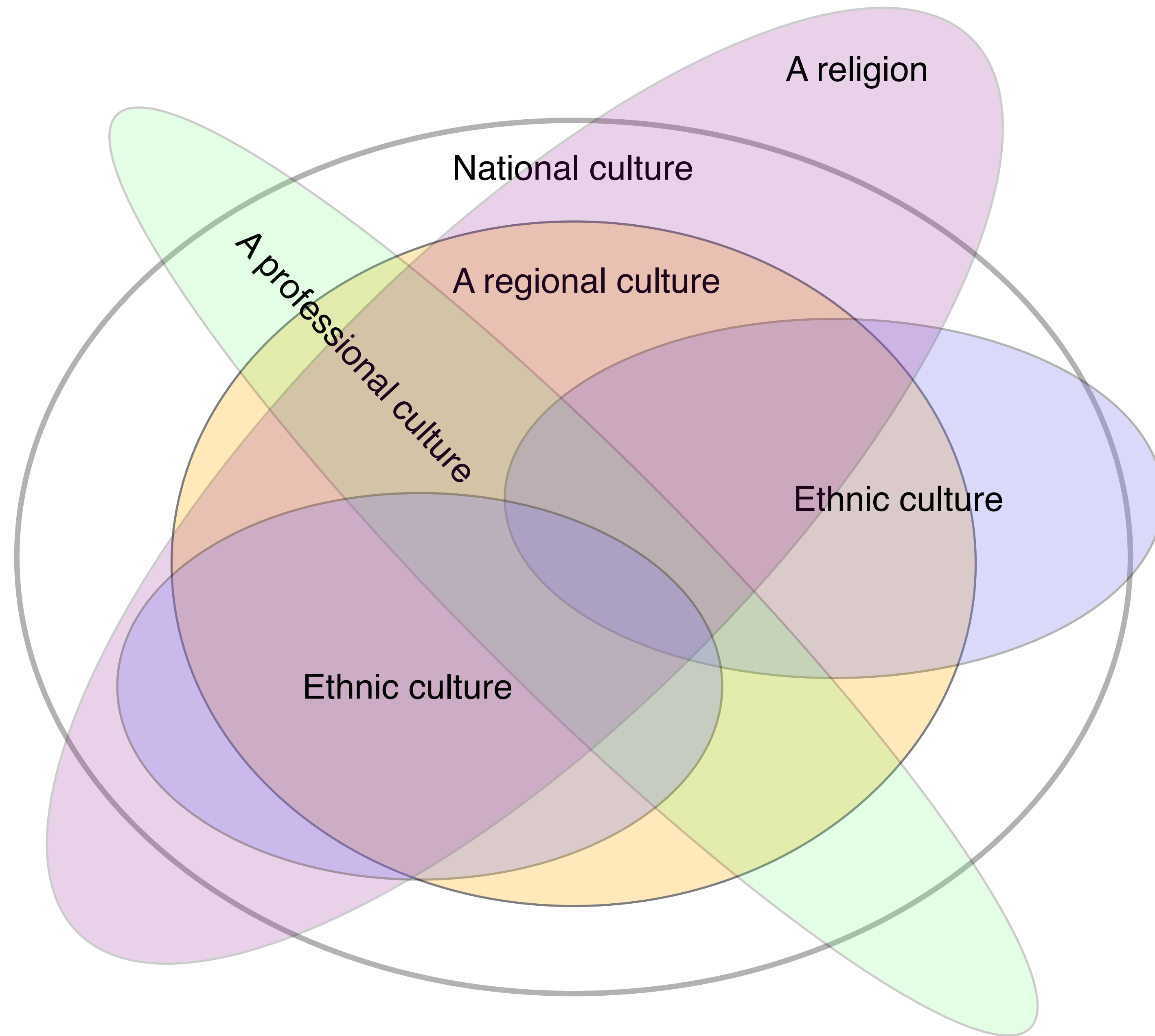
Ethics are internal guidelines - our “firmware” - governing how we treat each other.

Ethics are influenced by national culture, religion, ethnic culture, upbringing, education, profession, etc.



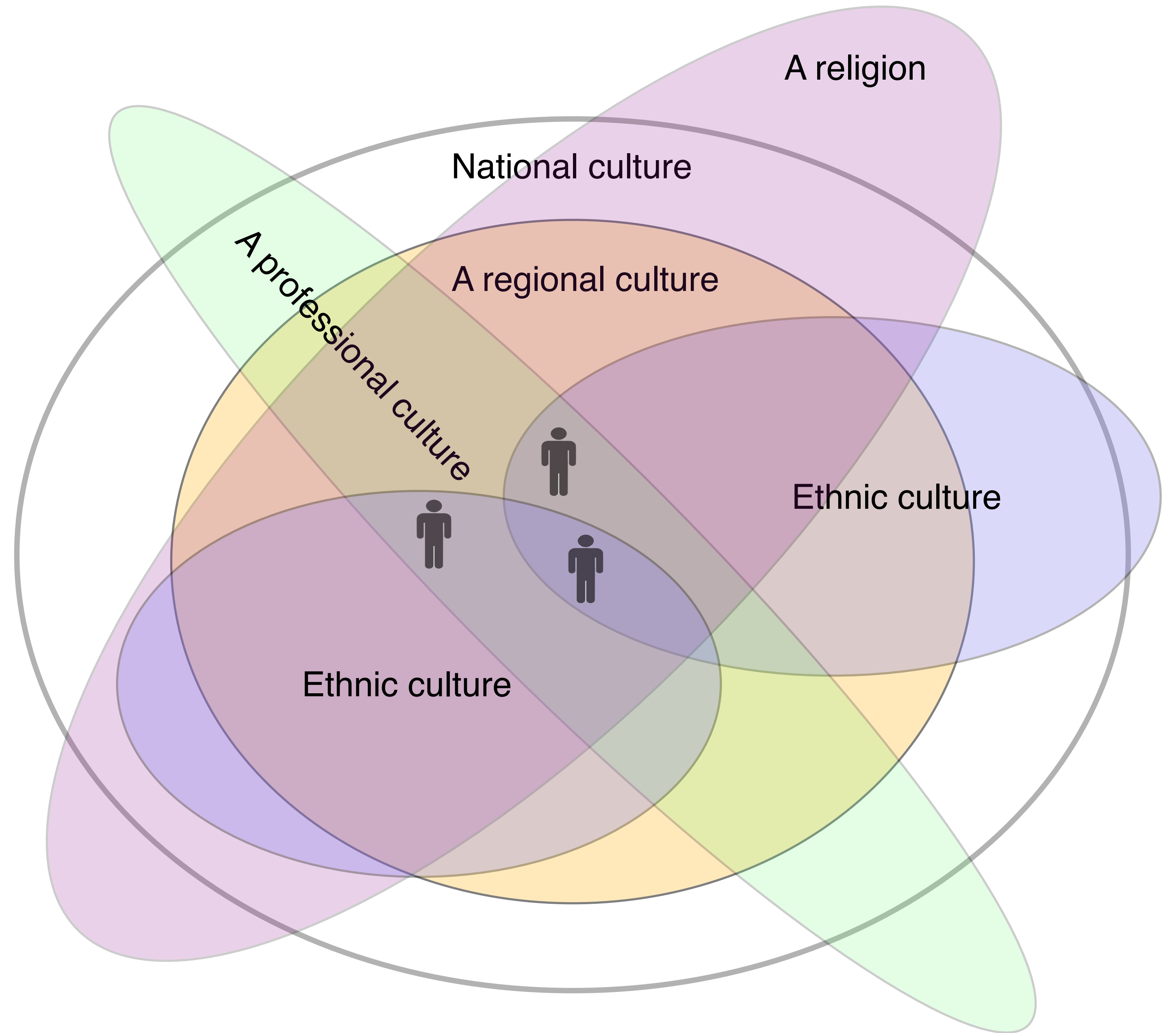


A person, with their unique upbringing, education, economic status, etc.



Everything affects our personal ethics.

People in the same profession will differ. Sometimes in big ways.



Ethics determine how we treat the living...and the dead.



Ethics are really interesting because they don't necessarily align with inherently moral or good behavior.

Professional vs. personal ethics

Think about a defense attorney...

What's a primary ethical guideline in organized crime?

Let's make an assumption...

Designers want to do right by people.

And yet, some organizations employ our designs in ways that add to human suffering.

Facebook use, envy, and depression among college students: Is facebooking depressing?

[EC Tandoc](#), [P Ferrucci](#), [M Duffy](#) - [Computers in Human Behavior](#), 2015 - Elsevier

... satisfaction reduced self-reported depression scores, but the former had a larger **effect** on reducing ...
Because envy resulting from exposure to **Facebook** can lead to such **negative health** issues,
Krasnova et al ... software showed that for the study to be able to detect **effects** as small ...

☆  Cited by 269 [Related articles](#) [All 8 versions](#)

[HTML] Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults

[E Kross](#), [P Verduyn](#), [E Demiralp](#), [J Park](#), [DS Lee](#), [N Lin...](#) - [PloS one](#), 2013 - journals.plos.org

... If **harmful** social comparisons explain how **Facebook use** predicts declines in affective well-being,
it is possible ... Future research should administer two unipolar affect questions to assess positive
and **negative** affect separately to address ... [Appl Psychol Health Well Being](#) 3: 1–43 ...

☆  Cited by 719 [Related articles](#) [All 30 versions](#) 

Negative social comparison on Facebook and depressive symptoms: Rumination as a mechanism.

[BA Feinstein](#), [R Hershenberg](#), [V Bhatia...](#) - [... of Popular Media ...](#), 2013 - psycnet.apa.org

... of research to test a priori hypotheses regarding **Facebook use** and mental **health**, we hope to
shed light on the processes that may render individuals more vulnerable to **negative effects** of
Facebook ... That said, that this **effect** was so robust in a nonclinical sample that commonly ...

☆  Cited by 174 [Related articles](#) [All 4 versions](#)

Instagram# instasad?: exploring associations among **instagram use, depressive symptoms, **negative** social comparison, and strangers followed**

[K Lup](#), [L Trub](#), [L Rosenthal](#) - *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social ...*, 2015 - [liebertpub.com](#)

... the way for future research that more closely establishes and explores the moderating **effect** of following ... for their well-being, and to help parents, teachers, and mental **health** workers help children and teens navigate social networking to reduce **negative effects** and support ...

☆  Cited by 92 [Related articles](#) [All 10 versions](#)

Instagram unfiltered: Exploring associations of body image satisfaction, Instagram# selfie posting, and **negative romantic relationship outcomes**

[JL Ridgway](#), [RB Clayton](#) - *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social ...*, 2016 - [liebertpub.com](#)

... **use**, including Facebook and Twitter **use**, can have damaging **effects** on **health** 3 and ... associated with Facebook and Twitter **use**, as well as the **negative effects** associated with ... the form of **Instagram** selfie posts, risk of **Instagram**-related conflict and **negative** romantic relationship ...

☆  Cited by 49 [Related articles](#) [All 4 versions](#)

And let's not
forget...

Destructive
social discourse

Societal
polarization

Violence



Clearly there's a dark side to “persuasive” and
“seductive” design.

What are our professional ethics?

Do we have any?

Code of Conduct for User Experience Professionals

Introduction

This code of conduct is intended to cover situations commonly encountered by user experience (UX) practitioners. Membership includes acceptance of this code. The Code is stated in two parts. Part One is a list of statements of UXPA Ethical Principles. Part Two contains examples of the practice of the Principles.

Adherence to This Code of Conduct

User experience (UX) practitioners shall ensure that their work meets the Ethical Principles laid out in this code of conduct. UX practitioners shall report any violations of this code of ethics to the Vice President of the User Experience Professionals Association. A review of the allegations will be conducted by the UXPA Ethics Advisory Committee. Violations of this code may lead to expulsion from the User Experience Professionals Association.

Part One: Ethical Principles

- Act in the best interest of everyone
- Be honest with everyone
- Do no harm and if possible provide benefits
- Act with integrity
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Respect privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity
- Provide all resultant data

Code of Conduct

The IxDA seeks to advance the discipline of interaction design by fostering a community of passionate individuals dedicated to moving our mission forward.

Our mission is broad and inclusive, and our membership is passionate and diverse. While these attributes make the IxDA a strong and vibrant organization, they also bring the possibility of disagreement and cultural disconnect. As a volunteer-led organization we rely on the active participation of our community, which can only happen if all of our members feel safe and respected.

To achieve this goal, the IxDA respectfully asks the following of our membership, both for online and in-person interactions under our brand:

- To be considerate and respectful of other cultures, backgrounds and perspectives
- To maintain a professional manner and refrain from harassment or exclusionary behavior toward other members
- To endeavor to resolve misunderstandings directly, through open dialogue and respectful feedback
- To notify the organizers or moderators if you feel you have experienced harassment or have witnessed the harassment of others.

A designer is responsible for the work they put into the world. Design is a discipline of action. You are responsible for what you put into the world.

And while it is certainly impossible to predict how any of your work may be used, it shouldn't be a surprise when work that is meant to hurt someone fulfills its mission.

- Mike Montiero, A Designer's Code of Ethics

What good is a frictionless onboarding experience if using the product or service makes people feel bad?

Yes, but...we don't own the business decisions.

This is the definition of an ethical dilemma.

We may not have our hands on the financial levers
of the organization.

But we do have agency. We can take action.

You can take action.

When you find yourself in a professional
ethical dilemma...

Leave

Stay

When you find yourself in a professional ethical dilemma...

Leave

Find a better fit
for you

Stay

Try to change
the organization

When you find yourself in a professional ethical dilemma...

Leave

Find a better fit
for you

Stay

Try to change
the organization

...and if you are
unable

When you find yourself in a professional ethical dilemma...

Leave

Find a better fit
for you

Stay

Try to change
the organization

...and if you are
unable



So...is ethical design possible?

Of course it is.

But it's up to us as designers to act on
our ethical principles.

You have to be
willing to walk away.



A person is truly ethical when they obey the compulsion to help all life, and shrinks from doing injury.

- Albert Schweitzer, The Philosophy of Civilization

Thank you.

Talk to me about...



The UX Master's program

KSU UXD workshops
On campus and on-premise /
on-demand

psherma4@kent.edu



UX consulting

Building guitars

Whiskey

paul@shermanux.com