COSPLAYERS
& POP CULTURE

SOCIAL NETWORK STUDY

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SCAD

"I did not set out to become a cosplayer for a living. I fell into this art form as a natural extension of a geeky, dorky, anime-obsessed kid in 1999, and never dreamed that my beloved hobby would one day become an industry, or be recognized by mainstream media."

-Yaya Han, Professional Cosplayer

"Cosplay Collabs: Yaya Han's Artistic Associations." Cosplay Culture, cosplayculture.com/2018/08/24/cosplay-collabs-yaya-hans-artistic-associations.

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INTRODUCTION

For this project, we were tasked with **developing a business plan for a new approach to a social network that targets a niche and fills a gap in the existing market**. We knew our concept should appeal to and engage a specific target market that could benefit from the network structure in a social or business environment. We spent our first week refining an idea for a social group and narrowed it down to three niche markets: cosplayers, travelers with pets and first-time college students. After evaluating the possibilities and white space that each group presented, we landed on cosplayers.

Cosplayers - fans who design and make their own intricate costumes to celebrate their favorite pop culture characters - represent an interesting target group. Although the top five highest-grossing films of 2018 represent key pop culture franchises, those that participate in pop culture conventions are often seen as anti-social members of a fringe society.

Throughout this project, we hope to form a social network that **brings pop culture celebration into the mainstream.**

PART 1

NETWORK ANALYSIS
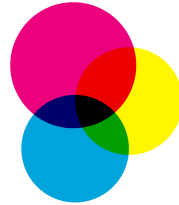
PART 1 OBJECTIVES

Use **contextual design inquiry** to discover opportunities in which a social-media company could be established.

Conduct **contextual and competitor analyses** of existing social networks.

Analyze current market leaders' business models for successes and need states, defining **specific strategies**.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

Our research into existing social network collaboration for cosplayers examined niche websites and apps as well as mainstream social media platforms with collaboration points. We identified the competition for a new cosplay and pop culture social network as follows:

- Blog posts and fan-centric content on franchise websites, such as DCComics.com, DisneyStyle.com, Marvel.com, StarTrek.com and StarWars.com

- Cosplayer influencers who own their own social spaces, such as YayaHan.com

- Cosplay Amino app

- CosplayCulture.com

- Cosplay.com

- TheRPF.com

- In-person and virtual collaboration around fan conventions, such as organized in-person meet-ups and online convention forums

- Social media sharing through hashtags such as #cosplay

- Facebook Groups for cosplayers

Using the 2x2 Axis we were able to catalog where the competition sits from a post frequency and mainstream popularity standpoint. And by charting the competition from a Different & Good perspective, we could pinpoint the competitors who had differentiated themselves in the marketplace.

2x2

MAINSTREAM

• COSPLAY BLOG POSTS

• SOCIAL SHARING HASHTAGS

INFREQUENT / FREQUENT

• CONVENTION MEET-UPS

• CONVENTION FORUMS

FRINGE

GOOD & DIFFERENT

GOOD, NOT DIFFERENT	GOOD, DIFFERENT
COSPLAY BLOG POSTS CONVENTION MEET-UPS	DISNEYBOUND
NOT GOOD, NOT DIFFERENT	NOT GOOD, DIFFERENT
SOCIAL SHARING HASHTAGS	CONVENTION FORUMS
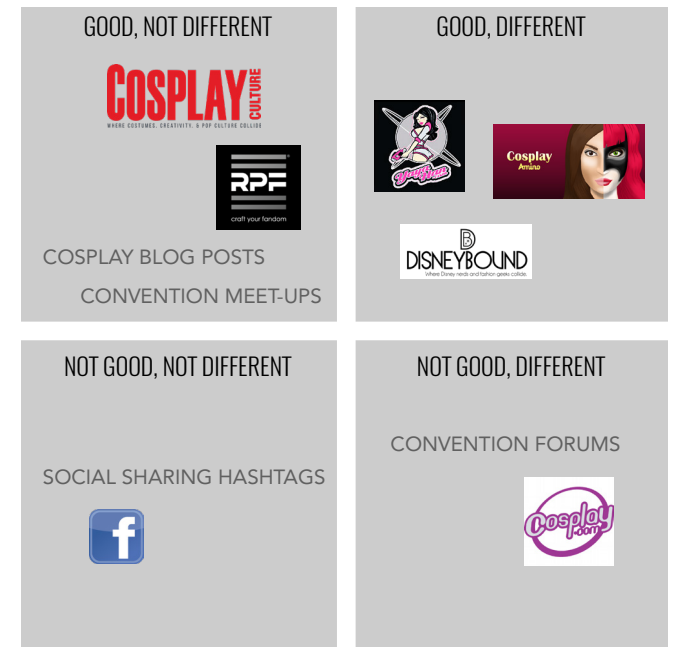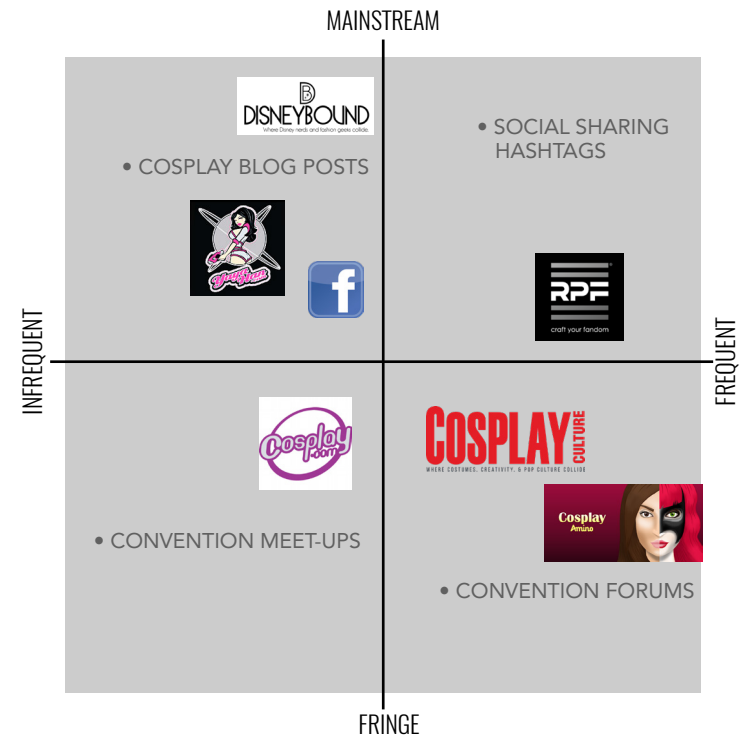
CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Cosplay means many different things to many different audiences. For non-cosplayers, it may mean wrongly-labeling a group of people as those who don't want to live in reality. For professional cosplayers, it is a source of income and an outlet for creativity. For those just getting started, it may represent a significant financial investment or just a way to participate in their favorite fandoms. In order to evaluate the audience for potential social network white space, we have to understand all aspects of the audience. Using SWOT analysis, we examined cosplay with contextual analysis.

Strengths | What are the characteristics of this social network that make it successful? How does it allow users to share information that creates successful propagation?

Weaknesses | What are the characteristics of this social network that place it at a disadvantage? What limits the propagation of this network model?

Opportunities | Where are the opportunities for continued success and growth moving forward? What kind of changes should be made to continue and/or facilitate more propagation?

Threats | What would threaten the business model of this social network? What would decrease propagation opportunities?

SWOT

STRENGTHS

Endless Eye Candy

Fan interaction with pop culture

User generated tutorials

Socialization

Empowerment

WEAKNESSES

Not considered mainstream

Often associated with social awkwardness

Little product in market for cosplayers since everything has to be handmade

Market saturation with existing social network interactions

OPPORTUNITIES

Open up pop culture celebration to the mainstream

Capitalize on the success of existing franchises such as DC Comics, Marvel, and Star Wars

Integration of cosplay and pop culture into a singular social network

THREATS

Discrimination

Shaming

Sexual Harassment

Copyright Infringement

High costs of cosplay participation

RESEARCH FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The first thing we discovered when evaluating cosplayers as a social network is that the market is highly fragmented and highly stigmatized. Although there have been advances in the recent years that have shined the light on pop culture and those that celebrate it, it continues to have a close association with anti-social or socially-awkward individuals. But the stigma is fading. Major entertainment franchises celebrate their fans' passion for cosplay with posts and photos on their websites. Emerging retailers such as ThinkGeek and Hot Topic's Her Universe line are designing products that allow fans to incorporate both subtle and over-the-top pop culture touches into their apparel, accessories and home decor. We've found that cosplayers are an often-misunderstood demographic, and in order to appeal to them, we have to understand and embrace them.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Social media around cosplay is **highly fragmented**. Users have to depend on sourcing their own content from a variety of sites and applications. While social networks like Facebook and Instagram do allow interaction, the size and breadth of the sites means that there is little customization.

Major entertainment franchise sites do **legitimize cosplay** by including it as a recurring topic for blog posts. Cosplay is a major feature of pop culture conventions, and many feature cosplay contests and photo opportunities to encourage participation.

Cosplay is still is a **highly stigmatized** subject in social circles. Professional cosplayer Yaya Han said cosplay is often viewed as "extreme, often misunderstood as a fetish, even amongst geeks. Parents were not always supportive of their kids dressing up in these weird outfits, my own included" (Cosplay Collabs).

There is an **emerging consumer market** around pop culture celebrations in daily life. While a "distant cousin" to actual cosplay, brands like ThinkGeek and Hot Topic's Her Universe are making daily apparel inspired by pop culture franchises more mainstream.

INFLUENCING FACTORS & TRENDS

While researching, we stumbled on many trends and influencing factors in the cosplay community. Each of us was drawn to particular facets of cosplay culture, and they also represent "white space" areas that are currently under-represented in social networks for cosplayers.

BRIEANA'S INSIGHTS:
BUDGET-FRIENDLY

"A quick Google search of 'Cosplay on a Budget' just brings up articles with lists of tips."

THE INFLUENCING FACTOR:
Cosplay is an expensive activity. There are many other social networking platforms that help consumers find bargains and work within budgets.

THE TREND:
Thriftiness is no longer something people hide. People now celebrate money-saving workarounds and lifestyle "hacks" on sites such as Pinterest.

DANI'S INSIGHTS:
EVERYDAY LIFE

"It's the idea of daily wear. Maybe something aimed at the casual day-to-day fan?"

THE INFLUENCING FACTOR:
There is an up-tick of consumer products aimed at pop culture fans that are considered mainstream. The box-office performance of pop culture franchise films continues to fuel daily pop culture celebration.

THE TREND:
A current trend in fan fashion is more subtle participation. One example of this is Disneybounding, the act of wearing colors and accessories to suggest the attire of popular Disney characters (Chambers 2014).

TRAVIS' INSIGHTS:
A BOOST FOR KIDS

"I wonder about cosplay for kids targeting parents. A way to help child self-esteem and socialization."

THE INFLUENCING FACTOR:
With a recent focus on bullying and children's empowerment, cosplay may represent a way for parents to connect with their children and encourage them to embody the best characteristics of fictional characters.

THE TREND:
Parents are always looking for ways to connect with their kids and celebrate what makes them unique. Blog posts and advice on parenting reach millions of readers annually.

PART 2

NETWORK DESIGN
DEVELOPMENT
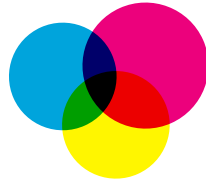
PART 2 OBJECTIVES

Identify **three potential concepts** for a social network
and define user groups for social-networking concepts.

Select a **general concept for a social network** for which
a creative brief can be formed.

Form a design strategy, which outlines the creation of a
network **in the form of a creative brief**.

CONCEPT #1
SOCIAL NETWORK FOR CASUAL COSPLAYERS

As pop culture fandom grows, so does cosplay. But not all fans are ready to go all outside wearing a Batwoman costume just yet. This is where our social network concept comes in. **A network of pop culture fashionistas and fans sharing day-to-day outfits inspired by their favorite characters.** There is ample white space in this area since the fashion styling website Polyvore.com closed. Recent trends like Disneybounding, the act of dressing in an outfit using subtle colors and accessories that nod to a pop culture topic. The casual cosplay social network would serve as a collaboration hub for fans to style mood boards, view products and merchandise with a flair for pop culture and receive curated content from the entertainment industry.

INFLUENCERS

Fashionistas
Pop culture creators
Seasons

INFLUENCES

Trending pop culture
Pop culture history
Fashion trends

ACTIVITIES

Show outfits on boards
Show outfits being worn
Places to buy items
Tips for styling
Competing in mood board challenges

COMPETITORS

Pinterest
HotTopic.com
Tumblr
DisneyStyle.com

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR CASUAL COSPLAYERS

5W, 1H

WHY?

With the box-office success of pop culture franchise films, there's opportunity to engage fans with an organizational tool that connects them with new ways of celebrating their pop culture passion through creative fashion inspired by their favorite characters.

WHAT?

Virtual mood board sharing driven by pop-culture-inspired purchasable items found online.

WHERE?

Primarily geared to consumers in North America.

WHEN?

Once it's launched, it will be accessible all the time.

WHO?

Pop culture fans, entertainment professionals, fashion designers, licensed merchandise makers and sellers.

HOW?

Provide high-quality images to develop dynamic mood boards and albums fans can use to collect and showcase fashion inspired by pop culture.

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR CASUAL COSPLAYERS
SWOT

STRENGTHS

Reliable place for outfit inspiration
One-stop-shop for inspiration
Wider audience of fans
User involvement
Fashion items for purchase
Heavy user involvement
Communal approval

WEAKNESSES

Unknown product availability
Not a fashion movement yet
Might need mediation or approval
Technical problems
Franchise legality

OPPORTUNITIES

Selling licensed merchandise
Clothes viewed on a virtual model
Hob for fans and cosplayers
Lifestyle brand building
Create a pop culture verb
Advertising opportunities
Tie-ins and cross-promotion
Contests and competitions
Passionate community

THREATS

IP Owners
Budget
Competitors like FamousOutfits.com,
ShopLook.com, Pinterest and Tumblr

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR CASUAL COSPLAYERS
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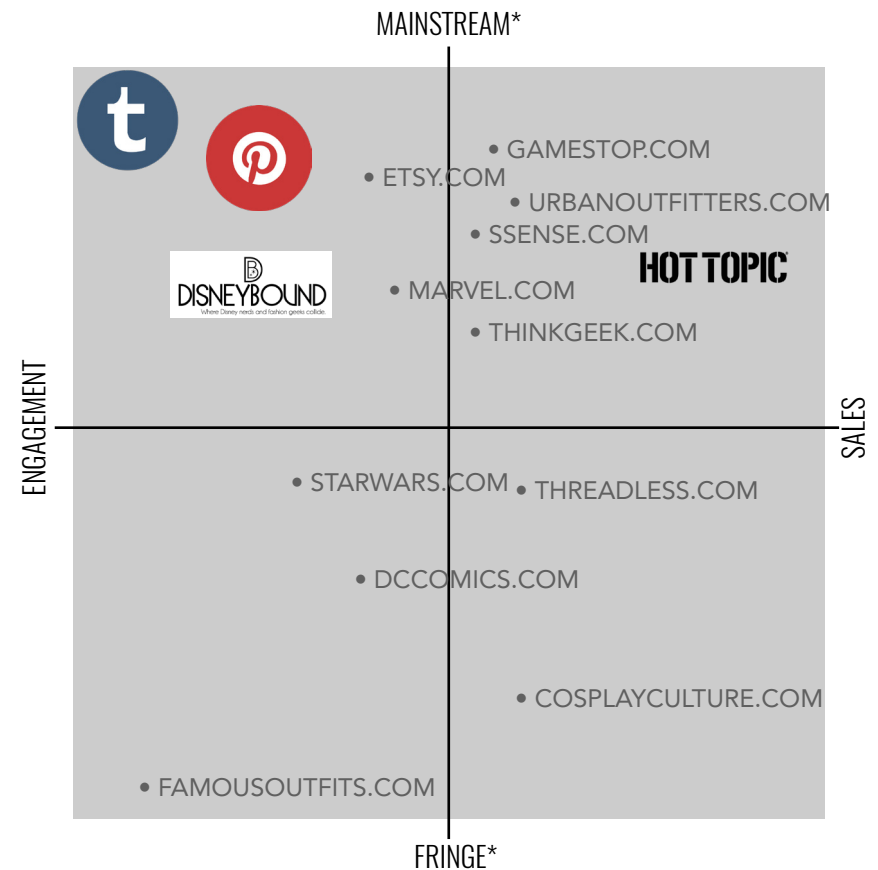
*Source: "Keyword Research, Competitor Analysis, & Website Ranking | Alexa." Traffic, Demographics and Competitors - Alexa, www.alexa.com/.

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USER GROUPS

	USERS ACTIVE IN A POP CULTURE FANDOM, INTERESTED BUT NOT ACTIVE IN COSPLAY	USERS WITH AN INTEREST IN FASHION STYLING	DISNEYBOUNDERS AND OTHER USERS FAMILIAR WITH CASUAL COSPLAY	LICENSED MERCHANDISE MAKERS AND SELLERS
DEMOGRAPHICS	Age: Typically Millennial, Gen X, and Gen Z Income: Varied	Age: Typically Millennial, Gen X, and Gen Z Income: Varied	Age: Typically Millennial, Gen X, and Gen Z Income: Varied	Age: Typically Millennial, Gen X, and Gen Z Income: Varied
OCCUPATION	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries	Creators - Fashion, Wig, Accessories Designers, Small and Large Business Owners
COMMUNICATION METHODS	Existing Social Media Platforms utilizing specific #Hashtags, listicles, website forums	Existing Social Media Platforms utilizing specific #Hashtags, Fashion Oriented blogs	Websites, Existing Social Media Platforms utilizing specific #Hashtags	E commerce Websites and Social Media Marketing, Email, Phone
EXISTING NEWS	Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, Facebook, Blogs, ThinkGeek.com, HotTopic.com, Ebay, Amazon	Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, Facebook, Snapchat, Blogs	Tumblr, DisneyStyle.com, Disneybound specific blogs, Pinterest, Instagram	Etsy, Ebay, Hot Topic, Think Geek, Amazon, Instagram, Facebook, Email, Phone
INFORMATION SHARING	This user actively follows one or more fandoms and has a want for a creative outlet, but do not always want to be seen at first, as they develop their style. They also want to express their personality through their minimal fandom inspired outfits	Fashionistas want to be inspired and have a space to utilize their creativity	This user is looking to connect with other users interested in the same fashions, likely to post their outfits for feedback or to inspire other users. Wants to be seen	This user wants to be able to market their goods
FUTURE NEEDS	An outlet that can be private to explore their creativity in their fandom through minimal clothing choices	Fashionistas want to be inspired and have a space to utilize their creativity, but not always related to pop culture	Need a centralized place for outfit creation, inspiration and research	Makers and Sellers need to connect directly with their intended fan-bases

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR COSPLAY BUILDERS & MAKERS

A friendly network of geek culture makers and builders of all ages. **This is a positive place to learn and share how to build costumes, props, food, and any other pop culture related builder projects.** Users can share their own tutorials, how-to videos and step-by-step processes, and other users can comment and share. The social network would also allow opportunity for pop culture entertainment companies such as film studios to curate their own fan-engagement content such as behind-the-scenes videos or detailed reference photos.

INFLUENCERS

Popular Cosplayers
Popular Builders/Makers/Crafters
Makers of materials/supplies

INFLUENCES

Trending pop culture

ACTIVITIES

Show creations
Share what materials they used
Share where they found the materials
Share the process of making
Share techniques
Creation tips

COMPETITORS

Makezine.com
Tested.com
Therpf.com
Cosplay.com
Pinterest
Reddit

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR COSPLAY BUILDERS AND MAKERS

5W, 1H

WHY?

Cosplayers are already sharing their creations across multiple spaces and whether they're veterans of pop culture projects or just getting started, these dynamic makers need a place to collaborate.

WHAT?

A curated social network of tutorials on how to make pop culture related projects.

WHERE?

An open online media content sharing forum.

WHEN?

Once it's launched it will be accessible all the time.

WHO?

For pop culture builders and makers across all disciplines.

HOW?

This social network unites pop culture fans with activities, projects, and other makers to further connect them to the stories and characters they love - it's a celebration of the makers as much as it is a tribute to the pop culture content they're inspired by.

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR COSPLAY BUILDERS AND MAKERS
SWOT

STRENGTHS

Dedicated place for cosplay makers
User involvement through sharing
Communal feedback, support
Heavy user contribution

WEAKNESSES

Relies on makers sharing processes
Possible high costs of building/making
Skill levels needed for projects
May need legal permissions
Safety concerns for projects

OPPORTUNITIES

Contests and competitions
Advertising
Tie-ins and cross promotion
Curated content
Selling licensed merchandise
Craigslist-type marketplace

THREATS

IP Owners
Budget
Competitors like Makezine.com,
Tested.com, Reddit.com, Pinterest

SOCIAL NETWORK FOR COSPLAY BUILDERS AND MAKERS
2x2

PROFESSIONAL

SIMPLE

COMPLICATED

AMATEUR

• TESTED.COM

• BRICKLINK.COM

• MAKEZINE.COM

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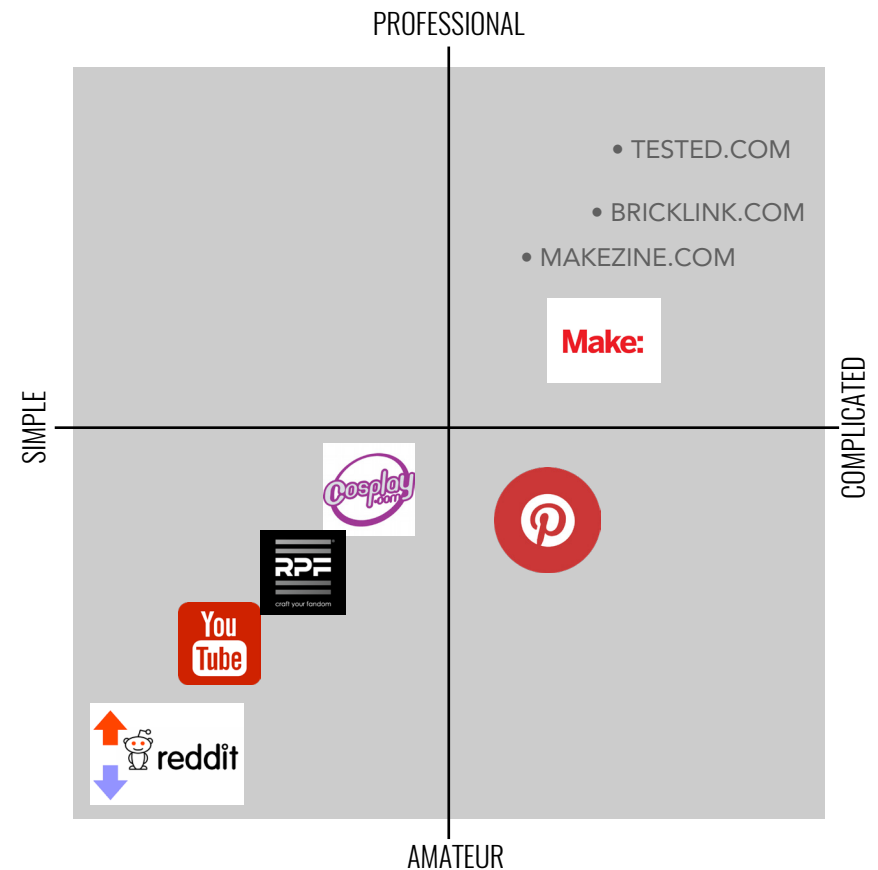
USER GROUPS

	CREATORS/ARTISTS INSPIRED BY POP CULTURE	USERS WHO ENJOY CRAFTS AND DO IT YOURSELF (DIY) PROJECTS	COSPLAYERS	POP CULTURE FANS
DEMOGRAPHICS	Age: Gen Z-Baby Boomer Income: Varied	Age: Gen Z-Baby Boomer Income: Varied	Age: Majority fall into the Millennial Generation, but is not exclusive to this age group Income: Varied	Age: Gen Z-Baby Boomer Income: Varied
OCCUPATION	Makeup Artists, Costumers, Fashion/Jewelry/Accessory Designers, Wig Stylists, Bakers, Painters, and other artists.	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries	Could vary from student to a multitude of professional industries
COMMUNICATION METHODS	Websites, Social Media #Hashtags, Online Forums	Websites, Social Media #Hashtags, Email, Text, Online Forums	Websites, Social Media, Email, Text, Online Forums	Websites, Social Media, Email, Text, Online Forums
EXISTING NEWS	Instagram, Tumblr Pinterest, DeviantArt, YouTube, Blogs, Cosplay.com, Cosplay Amino	Instagram, Tumblr Pinterest, Buzzfeed, YouTube, Blogs	Instagram, Tumblr Pinterest, DeviantArt, YouTube, Blogs, Cosplay.com, Cosplay Amino	Instagram, Tumblr Pinterest, YouTube, Blogs, Cosplay.com, Cosplay Amino
INFORMATION SHARING	Want their art to be seen, want to inspire and support other creators	These users want to research new DIY/craft projects, they are also share their own projects for feedback	Cosplayers want to share their own creations through tutorials and posts, as well as get inspiration and advise from other cosplayers. Seeking connection with artists/creators	These users have a specific need such as Halloween Costumes, Party, and event ideas. Not always interested in sharing their own creations, but being inspired by others. Utilizes tutorials
FUTURE NEEDS	Want their work is shared in a safe space where intellectual property is protected, but accessible	Collaborative forum to interact directly with creators/artists	An interactive space to connect with other cosplayers and creators to solicit feedback, inspiration, and advice on their own costumes	Information gathering and research is most important to this group, they will need a centralized space organized by fandom for their specific need

POP CULTURE CONVENTION NETWORK

Although many fan and pop culture conventions have their own promotional websites, there is **an opportunity to connect fans across the nation with a singular convention-focused social network**. Moreover, the site could serve as a hub for all pop culture and convention news and networking. This concept allows users to socialize with other fans and sort upcoming events based on specific aspects of pop culture conventions they enjoy: celebrity photos and autograph opportunities, topic panels, cosplaying, collecting and merchandise, career opportunities and portfolio reviews, and socialization. There's an opportunity to differentiate this social network from mainstream social networks like Facebook and Twitter by emphasizing this is "a place to be your nerdiest self."

INFLUENCERS

Celebrities
Exhibitors
Artist
Writers
Designers
Conventions

INFLUENCES

Trending pop culture
Location/Destination
Con Events/Activities

ACTIVITIES

Convention Details
Celebrity Sightings
Exhibitor Attending
Maps
Event Details
Photos/Videos from the con
Travel Tips
Local Recommendations
Meet-ups

COMPETITORS

Individual Convention Marketing
TheRPF.com
Cosplay.com
Comic-Con.org

5W, 1H

WHY?

Hundreds of pop culture conventions take place around the world annually, but there is no centralized social space devoted to uniting fans and providing details for all of them.

WHAT?

A unified place for convention information from around the world, along with an active forum and fan profiles for social engagement.

WHERE?

Online.

WHEN?

Once it's launched it will be accessible all the time.

WHO?

Pop culture convention-goers from around the world.

HOW?

Through a dynamic social network that links pop culture fans with upcoming conventions and other convention-attendees.

SWOT

2x2

STRENGTHS

Single online destination for news, reports, photos from conventions

A single destination to search for upcoming conventions worldwide

Exposes new users to convention opportunities

Plan a trip around certain celebrities or convention activities

Users can review conventions and provide feedback about experiences

WEAKNESSES

Most convention attendees are local and already using specific convention sites

Dependant on convention-provided content, which is often late-breaking

OPPORTUNITIES

Advertising

Tie-ins and cross-promotion

Travel arrangements

Lodging deals and hotel blocks

Food deals

Transportation deals

Sponsorships

Potential to become a pop culture news source

THREATS

IP Owners

Budget

Individual convention websites

Competitors like Cosplay.com and TheRPF.com

Market saturation on traditional social media like Facebook and Instagram

PROFESSIONAL

SIMPLE

COMPLICATED

AMATEUR

• SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING THROUGH HASHTAGS

• CONVENTION MEET-UPS

• CONVENTION FORUMS
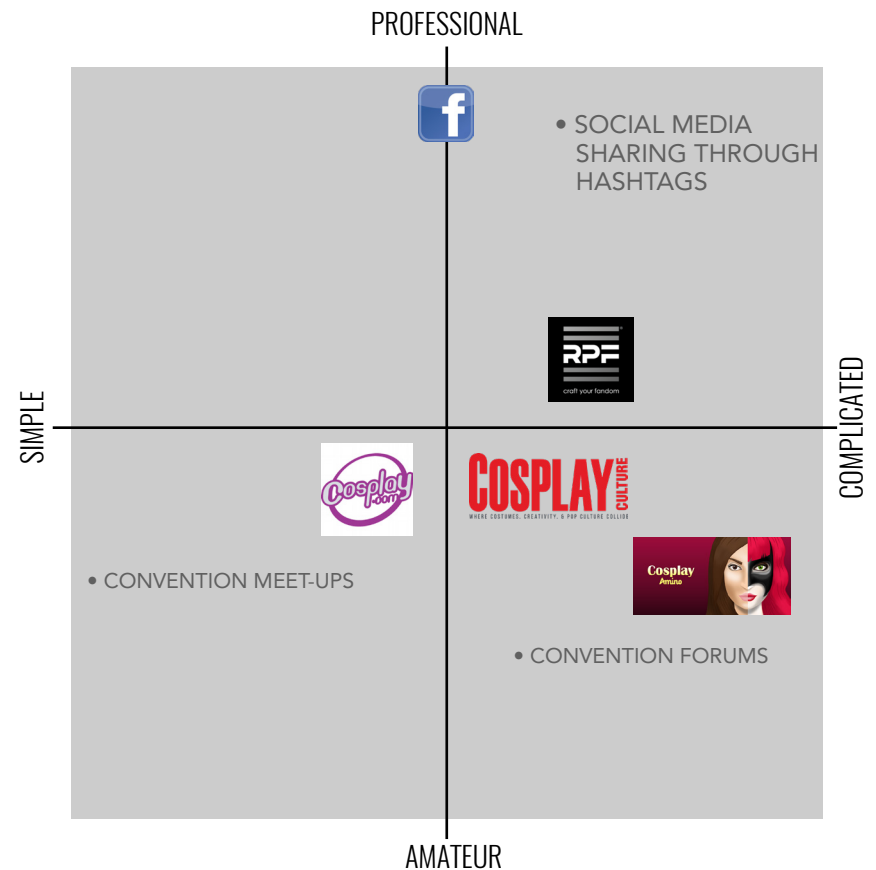
USER GROUPS

	CONVENTION ORGANIZERS	CONVENTION ATTENDEES	EXHIBITORS	ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS
DEMOGRAPHICS	Ages: Millenials-Baby Boomer Income: Convention organizers may be on a volunteer basis or employed with the convention	Age: Varies from Families with young children to Pop Culture Fans upwards of 50 years old Income: Varied	Age: Millenials-Baby Boomer Income: Varies from low income smaller exhibitors to larger million-dollar corporations	Age: Gen Z-Baby Boomer Income: While difficult to determine a median salary, it is a multi-billion dollar industry
OCCUPATION	Those directly employed/volunteering with the facilitation of a convention	Varied: Students, young professionals, executives	Varied: Artists, Comic Book Dealers, Writers, Small Business Owners, Larger Companies	Varied: Studio Executives, Talent Managers, Public Relation Managers, Directors, Producers, etc.
COMMUNICATION METHODS	Phone, Email, Social Media, Websites	Social Media, Online Forums, Websites (cosplay.com)	Phone, Email, Social Media, Websites	Phone, Email, Social Media, Websites
EXISTING NEWS	Individual Convention Websites, TheRPF.com, Cosplay.com	Facebook, Individual Convention Websites, therpf.com, Cosplay.com	Individual Convention Websites, therpf.com, Cosplay.com	Individual Convention Websites, Cosplay.com
INFORMATION SHARING	These users seek to market and advertise their conventions, as well as provide attendees with up to date/accurate information	These users seek information regarding their intended convention including boarding, transportation, as well as planning their time at the convention at panels, exhibits, autographs etc. Also interested in meeting other fans.	These users want to know what conventions are upcoming to exhibit with	These users have multiple intentions such as seeking advertisement and promoting their work. Connecting with convention organizers
FUTURE NEEDS	With convention attendance at an all time high, these users will want to make sure their convention is not lost in the saturated market	A singular platform for all convention information to be accessed to plan their trips.	This user will need a platform to build rapport and relationships with convention organizers to grow their fan-bases	High traffic website that connects them with their fan-bases and the conventions they are most interested in attending
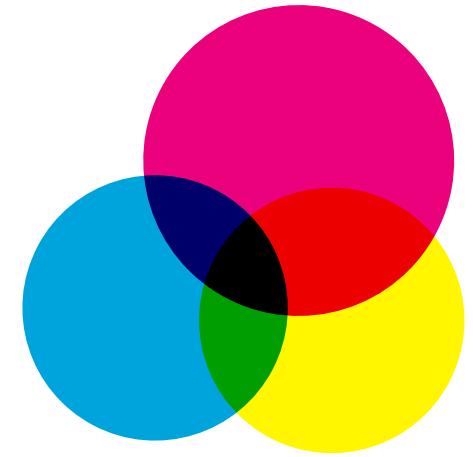
NETWORK SELECTION

Of these three social network concepts, the one that presented the most white space was the social network for casual cosplayers. As the popularity for pop culture continues to grow, more people are looking for ways to celebrate and participate in the fandom. And they are spending a lot of money doing it. In 2016, **global retail sales of licensed merchandise rose 4.4 percent to $262.9 billion**. Among the licensed merchandise product categories, apparel led the way with 14.9 percent of total global licensed retail sales, followed by toys and fashion accessories.

We also discovered that many **people are intrigued by cosplay, but they are not quite willing to dress in a costume** themselves. What some Disney fans have started doing is what they call Disneybounding. They create subtle outfits that are inspired by their favorite characters to wear to the Disney theme parks. These outfits are far from costumes, but are styled using the colors of their character's attire and feature iconic accessories. Its a fashionable way of celebrating, without feeling like they are drawing too much attention to themselves. And it's grown beyond the theme park walls; the trend of Disneybounding applies to any pop culture character-inspired outfit, not just those that are associated with just Disney. We discovered that many Disneybounders also **participate in a popular online fashion activity of making outfit mood boards** to share on sites like Pinterest, Tumblr, and Facebook.

We believe **these three insights together** create a strong case for a social network for casual cosplayers.

CREATIVE BRIEF

> " Our proposed casual cosplay social network provides pop culture junkies with a subtle, fashion-forward way of expressing their love for their favorite pop culture characters without having to wear a costume. In contrast to the popular cosplay hobby of dressing up in complete costumes to look exactly like a character, casual cosplay takes a classier, inspired approach that is about suggesting how a character might look on their day off. "

NETWORK OVERVIEW

Our social network is capitalizing on white space found in pop culture social media. We know there is a growing trend for fashion-forward fans to dress in outfits inspired by their favorite pop culture characters. We will capitalize on this through a virtual mood board sharing social network driven by purchasable items found online. Users are empowered to build their designs by adding products into a shared product index, then using them to build mood boards and collages. Users can also browse other users' boards for inspiration, share with friends and interact with others through comments, likes, and real-life photos.

Online retailers will be encouraged to upload their product images to the product index and be allowed to link back to their product pages for purchased. Additionally, entertainment companies could upload photos of franchise characters' costumes, create content and share tips to engage more deeply with their fan community.

The community will be regularly stimulated by online board creation competitions centered around things that are trending in the pop culture world, like movie releases, character birthdays and anniversaries, and whatever may be catching the attention of the internet. These friendly competitions fueled by user votes or chosen by pop culture and entertainment dignitaries, will keep users engaged and active.

NETWORK GOALS

Encourage positive fan interaction. Because our concept is first and foremost a social network and not simply a blog or website, connections among fans is key. We want to promote a creative environment where people from all walks of life are encouraged to participate with their favorite fandoms.

Celebrate pop culture. Because there's a direct tie to pop culture brands and franchises, our social network provides connection between fans and the entertainment industry. Using ongoing fan mood board competitions, we can shine the spotlight on new, nostalgic or emerging trends in pop culture and fashion to encourage participation.

Allow consumers to interact with retailers and franchises in a new way. We know that today's consumer doesn't want to be "sold" anything, so allowing fans to interact with products on their own terms creates a new bridge for retailers and entertainment brands. The majority of content on the social network will be items available for purchase, either from licensed makers and crafters or from stores or fashion lines.

AUDIENCE

Based on our preliminary network research, we have identified our audience as users active in a pop culture fandom, but not active in cosplay, users with an interest in fashion styling, Disneybounders and other users familiar with casual cosplay, and licensed merchandise makers and sellers.

COMPETITORS

The competitors in the casual cosplay social network spaces are a combination of inspiration collection sites such as Pinterest and Tumblr and consumer-centric sites such as HotTopic.com and DisneyStyle.com. While these social spaces have some facets and components of a proposed casual cosplay social network, none of them are devoted to curating and showcasing fashion trends inspired by pop culture.

OPPORTUNITIES

There is ample opportunity to capitalize on the success and popularity of the box office trends that showcase pop culture franchises in new light. Geek is now chic, and our proposed social network can carve out space in the online world for fans and fashionistas to embrace their creativity and passion for these brands in new and innovative ways. Furthermore, there is opportunity to partner directly with retailers and entertainment industry leaders to connect them to their most devout fans and consumers in a way that encourages brand participation and builds loyalty, without the same feeling as advertising.

OUR VALUE STATEMENT

FOR fashion-forward pop culture fans and those who are interested in expressing their love of entertainment franchises in unique ways,

OUR SOCIAL NETWORK introduces a new way to curate and showcase your fan fashions as well as interact with retailers, brands and fellow fans

WHO are looking to express their "nerdy" sides.

UNLIKE other mood board sites and social media competitors that offer a cluttered feed of photos,

WE PROVIDE an interactive, uplifting and collaborative website that puts the user experience first and lets you celebrate your fandom.

PART 3

DEFINING
NETWORK USERS
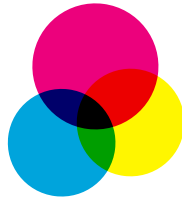
PART 3 OBJECTIVES

Create **user surveys and conduct user interviews** to
gather user-group information.

Create **personas** within user groups.

Identify an audience through the creation of
user profiles.

Document and share **user analyses, insights,
conclusions, and marketing strategies** of a network.

USER RESEARCH SURVEYS

We began our network user analysis by discussing the intent of data collection. We concluded that we not only wanted to gauge interest in a pop-culture centric social network, we wanted to find out more about what aspects of pop culture people connected with. In the end, we devised a brief **5-question mini survey for casual fans**, with an option to move to a more detailed 11-question survey if they were interested. We paid particular attention to presenting a mix of open-ended subjective questions as well as more straightforward quantitative multiple-choice questions. The questions allowed us to pinpoint what aspects of fandom users were most interested in as well as make connections between their engagement and their purchasing habits. We received **nearly 200 responses from people across the United States** who are passionate about a variety of fandoms.

SURVEY GOALS

Find out what we're up against. Get insight into users' existing social network habits and purchasing patterns.

Find out what their expectations might be for our network. Ask about what they're looking for when they seek out pop culture merchandise and cosplay inspiration.

Find out how to position pop culture fandom. Learn about how users participate in fandom online, and how they like to interact with strangers and friends when it comes to pop culture.

MINI SURVEY

Do you consider yourself a fan of pop culture characters or franchises? Select all that apply.

Who is your favorite pop culture character? Why?

Have you ever purchased a product or worn a piece of clothing to participate in your fandom?

Would you ever consider joining a social network that celebrates pop culture fandom specifically?

Would you please tell us why you gave that answer?

Would you like to answer 11 more questions about Pop Culture fandoms?

IN-DEPTH SURVEY

Which pop culture related hobbies do you have? (Select all that apply)

Please select all interactions you participate in online

Which of these networks do you use for pop culture related activities online?

Do you actively participate in pop culture and fandoms online?

Do you openly discuss your pop culture interests with others, or only fellow fans?

How often do you wear pop culture merchandise and clothing?

How much other pop culture merchandise do you own? (i.e. home decor, action figures, games, art, etc.)

Have you purchased merchandise from any of these sites?

Rank this information in order of its importance to helping you to make a decision to purchase of a pop culture related item

Do you plan or research pop culture events online?

Mini Survey Insight #1
HAVE YOU EVER PURCHASED A PRODUCT OR WORN A PIECE OF CLOTHING TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR FANDOM?

15%

85%
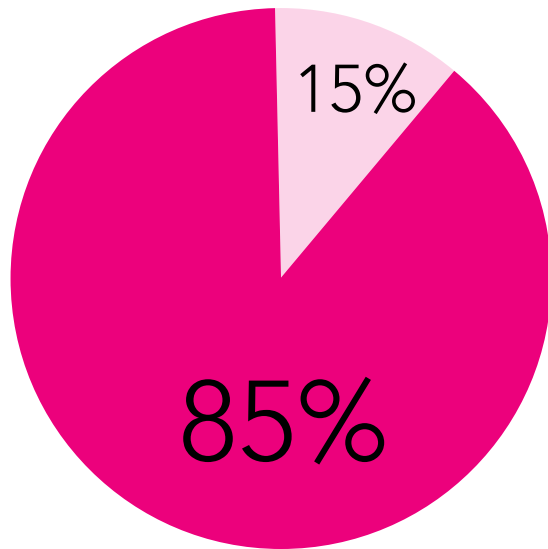
● Yes ● No

Mini Survey Insight #2
WOULD YOU EVER CONSIDER JOINING A SOCIAL NETWORK THAT CELEBRATES POP CULTURE FANDOM SPECIFICALLY?

34%

21%

45%
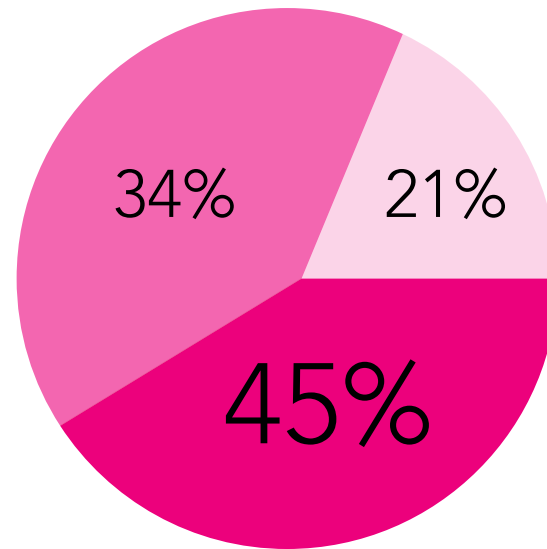
● Yes ● Maybe ● No

IN-DEPTH SURVEY INSIGHTS

WHICH POP CULTURE RELATED HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

TOP TEN RESPONSES

Watching Movies: 95%

Watching TV Shows: 92%

Visiting Theme Parks: 72%

Reading Novels: 64%

Collecting Merchandise: 59%

Playing Video Games: 54%

Playing Board Games: 54%

Reading Comics: 41%

Cosplaying: 25%

Roleplaying Games: 24%

PLEASE SELECT ALL INTERACTIONS YOU PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE

Read Pop Culture News: 85%

Like Pop Culture Media: 77%

Like Fan Art: 67%

Share Pop Culture News: 56%

Start Discussions on Pop Culture Topics: 49%

Like Cosplay Media: 41%

Make Fan Art: 15%

WHICH OF THESE NETWORKS DO YOU USE FOR POP CULTURE RELATED ACTIVITIES ONLINE?

Facebook: 82%
Instagram: 63%
Twitter: 41%
Pinterest: 31%
Tumblr: 23%
Reddit: 16%

82% of users who mentioned they use **Facebook** for pop culture social networking said they would consider using a pop culture social network (responded yes or maybe)

95% of users who mentioned they use **Instagram** for pop culture social networking said they would consider using a pop culture social network (responded yes or maybe)

87% of users who mentioned they use **Pinterest** for pop culture social networking said they would consider using a pop culture social network (responded yes or maybe)

DO YOU ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN POP CULTURE AND FANDOMS ONLINE?

Yes: 48%
No: 48%

DO YOU OPENLY DISCUSS YOUR POP CULTURE INTERESTS WITH OTHERS, OR ONLY FELLOW FANS?

Yes, with Anyone: 48%
Yes, with Fellow Fans: 26%
Depends: 23%

HOW OFTEN DO YOU WEAR POP CULTURE MERCHANDISE AND CLOTHING?

Frequently: 25%
Often: 19%
Sometimes: 37%
Rarely: 13%
Never: 6%

HOW MUCH OTHER POP CULTURE MERCHANDISE DO YOU OWN? (I.E. HOME DECOR, ACTION FIGURES, GAMES, ART, ETC.)

| A lot: 47% | A few things: 47% | Little or none: 6% |
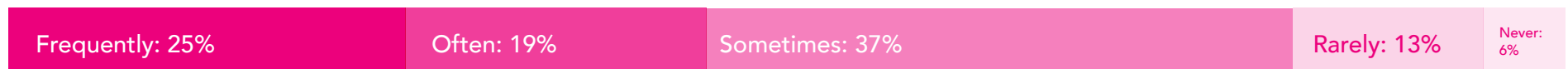
HAVE YOU PURCHASED MERCHANDISE FROM ANY OF THESE SITES? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

TOP FIVE RESPONSES

- Hot Topic: 76%
- Etsy: 65%
- Think Geek: 59%
- GameStop: 49%
- shopDisney.com: 42%

RANK THIS INFORMATION IN ORDER OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO HELPING YOU TO MAKE A DECISION TO PURCHASE OF A POP CULTURE RELATED ITEM

TOP FIVE RESPONSES

- Pictures: 66%
- Description of the Item: 52%
- Brand of the Licensed Product: 35%
- High Ratings: 32%
- Price: 32%

DO YOU PLAN OR RESEARCH POP CULTURE EVENTS ONLINE?

| Yes: 54% | No: 44% |

USER ANALYSIS INSIGHTS

The survey feedback presented key insights into how fans view their fandom, other fans, and the current state of social media. Through our survey research, we gained qualitative and quantitative feedback from pop culture fans that shaped all aspects of the social network moving forward. With respondents representing a variety of fandoms and levels of participation, our early research conclusions and potential marketing strategies point to a social network platform that would allow users to define the aspects of pop culture they want to connect with. Much of the qualitative feedback about the pop culture social network question pointed to self-awareness about multi-faceted fan bases and polarization and criticism among fans, but also for an opportunity to connect with like-minded users.

"Any new social network is appealing to me at the moment with the recent disaster of the FB hacking as well as Snapchat's controversy. I think the idea of a focused social network with shared interests sounds like a unique and interesting concept to connect with like minded people as opposed to everyone in the world." -#134

"I'm into it, but not THAT into it." -#77

"I follow lots of sites and boards and forums now that celebrate the things I love, so a social network devoted to that subject would be awesome." -#84

"I'm reluctant to join clubs, on social media or otherwise. Ppl [sic] can be harsh." -#94

"I am not a very active participant in social media as it is, so I don't know if I would commit to an entire platform that has such a specific goal." -#103

"Sometimes it's just nice to be with and hear from people who like the same things as you." -#50

"I would probably join, but wait to decide if I would stay. See what kind of people, conversations, etc. happen." -#73

"I'm a fan but not a fanatic" -#25

"This feels silly to say but I would feel childish if I joined a social network just for geeks. Like I still feel high school dynamics of what is 'cool' and what is 'not cool'." -#111

"I'm trying to stay off of and away from social media." -#59

"I find most folk super into fandom to not be enjoyable to be around" -#5

"I enjoy talking about my interests with people who share similar interests, but as someone who identifies as female, the amount of male gate-keeping/entitlement that exists in fandom/geek spaces in general is really toxic and hard to deal with. There's also a racial element with being a Latina in spaces that are predominantly dominated by white men; if the treatment of Kelly Marie Tran and John Boyega, as well as cosplayers who are black or brown, are any indication, fandom spaces aren't necessarily safe and welcoming spaces for participants of color." -#130

"I enjoy posts and memes about my pop culture fandoms and would join a social network just based in them." -#31

"It would be great to be able to go and nerd out over things and have people understand" -#56

"New social networks intrigue me, but realistically, I'm unsure if I would dedicate to another" -#127

"I am already a member of many social networking sites that celebrate geek culture." -#40

RESEARCH FINDINGS

THEIR FAVORITE CHARACTERS
Fandom representation when we asked survey respondents who their favorite characters were:

Marvel **24%**
Cartoons and Anime **14%**
DC Comics **14%**
Star Wars **9%**
Disney and Pixar **8%**
Harry Potter **8%**
General Television character **6%**
Celebrity Icon or Personality **5%**
General Cinema character **4%**
General Literature character **3%**
Doctor Who **2%**
General Video Game character **2%**
Lord of the Rings **1%**

THE FANDOM BREAKDOWN
Based on these findings, we broke down fandom representation to:

Comics: **38%**
Films: **21%**
Cartoons and Anime: **14%**
Literature: **12%**
Television: **8%**
Other: **7%**

PRODUCT OR CLOTHING
Fans with a favorite character in this genre told us they've purchased a product or worn a piece of clothing to participate in their fandom

NETWORK INTEREST
Fans with a favorite character in this genre selected either yes or maybe when asked if they'd be interested in joining a pop culture social network

	PRODUCT OR CLOTHING	NETWORK INTEREST
COMICS	88%	82%
FILMS	92%	83%
CARTOONS & ANIME	94%	94%
LITERATURE	100%	93%
TELEVISION	72%	100%
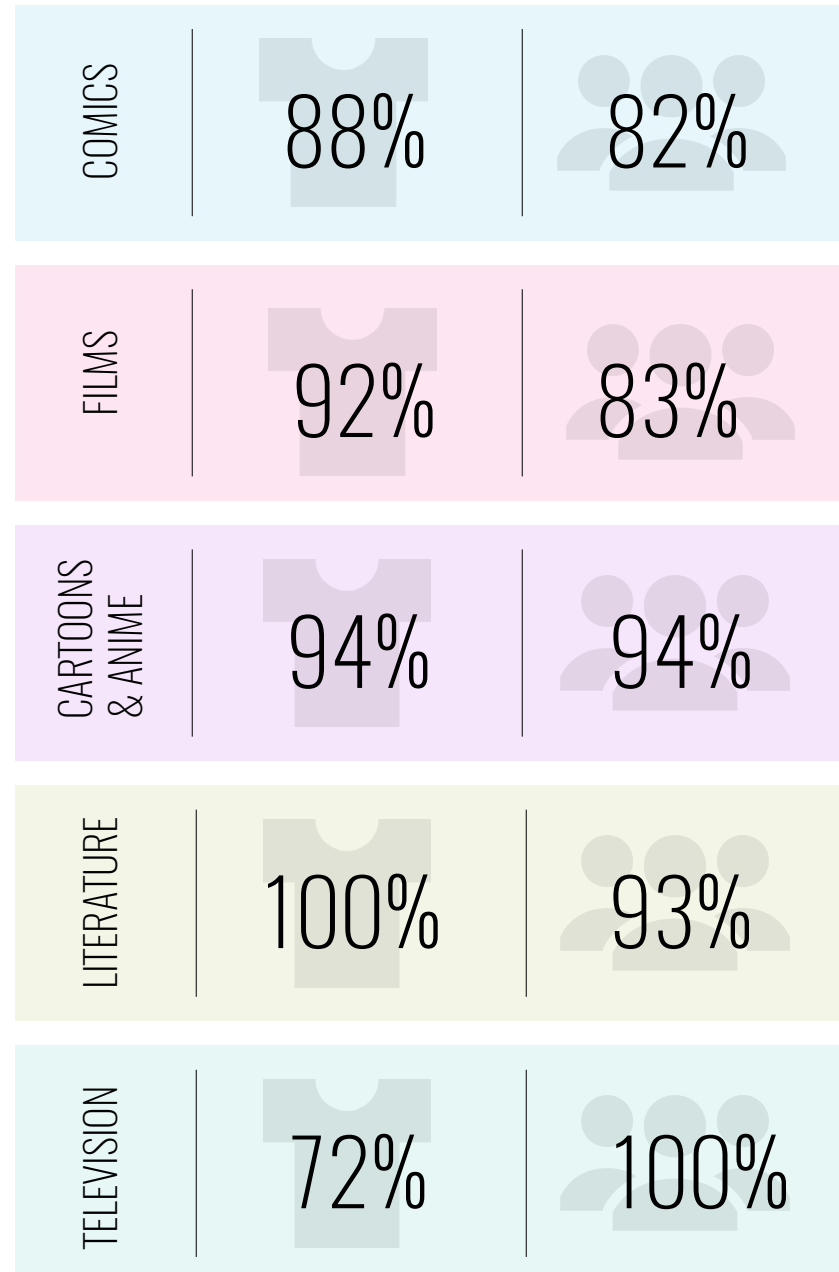
Interviews

In addition to survey research, we also conducted interviews with three pop culture fans to learn more about their interests and participation levels.

Through our interviews, we were able to dive deeper into what pop culture participation means to the fans who take part in it. Their expertise and experience also contributed to more robust personas.

DAVID, 55
NOTES FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH TRAVIS

Where do you typically cosplay?
Pop culture conventions and charity events. He started cosplaying with the Star Wars 501st group as their Darth Vader during the Attack of the Clones hype. He went with that group to many children's hospitals. Lucasfilm made him their official Darth Vader for appearances because of his costumes accuracy and because he's 7 feet tall. He transitions to cosplaying as Gandalf the Grey during Lord of the Rings and the Hobbit movie popularity.

Can you tell us about the best experience you have had while Cosplaying?
He has met many celebrities. Many of them ask him to take a photo with them. Proudest moment was when George RR Martin declared that his Cosplay of The Hound was the best Game of Thrones cosplay he had ever seen. And he did it on national TV on one of the late shows (maybe Jimmy Fallon).

What is your favorite part about the hobby?
His favorite part is seeing children's reactions to the characters. Cosplay is whatever it is for you. Each person can decide.

Do you have any holy grail/white whale characters that you would like to cosplay as?
He would love to do a Sauron costume from the Lord of the Rings films.

What's holding you back from playing them?
The amount of time and money is just too much for him to make it the way he would like. Quality and accuracy is what is most important to him about his costumes. However he isn't so concerned about that with other people's costumes. He loves when people do unique interpretations of characters and properties.

Do you work on them alone? No he works with friends and designers. He often commissions different part of the costume to be made.

What is that research process like?
Most of the time he takes screen grabs from the movies and any other behind the scenes photos he can find. He puts them in a folder in his photos on his iPad. Then he just shares them with people he is working with through email, text, or just showing them in person on his iPad.

Do you ever look for advice or feedback on your outfits from friends or strangers? Which do you prefer the feedback from?
He does ask friends and family their opinions on his costumes when he is working on them, but never publicly. He keeps his process private. He doesn't like strangers feedback of his process because often times they are just mean for the sake of being mean. Cosplay has been an advantage for him in networking to different jobs. He has used it as a way to introduce people at conventions to the products and properties he is representing. He also uses the hobby at the cons as a way of keeping his track of the pulse of pop culture.

ALEXA, 26
NOTES FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH BRIEANA

Who are your favorite pop culture characters and why?
Trixie Mattel: I am big fan of Drag, and I think she brings something interesting to the table. I fully believe Drag Queens are infiltrating pop culture at a rapid speed due to the popularity of RuPaul's Drag Race. In addition to her comedy tours, which have all been sold out across the US, she also is a folk musician, with her 2018 Album "One Stone," being considered one of the best albums of 2018 by Billboard. Her humor, music and fashion and makeup kind of encompasses everything that I love in my pop culture. Katya Zamolodchikova, Leslie Knope, Steven Universe.

What's your view on Pop Culture Fandoms? Do you consider yourself a member of any?
I love them and I love them as a space where people can talk about their favorite characters, and show endless creativity. I love fan art, and I love fan-fiction and head-canons, etc. I consider myself a part of many of them!

Do you participate online with these fandoms? How?
Tumblr, Reddit, twitter - other social media but mostly these. I also read fan-fiction on AO3 (Archive of Our Own) and Tumblr.

What's your view on Disneybounding?
I like it! It's a subtle way of appreciating or paying your respects for your favorite characters without going over the top and going out with a full costume.

What about Cosplay?
I love cosplay! Some of the artistry that goes into cosplay blows my mind! I have never done a full on cosplay myself, but I would love to try it sometime.

Would you ever consider joining a social network dedicated to pop culture fandoms?
Sure, if it was something geared towards the fandoms I liked and I saw it as beneficial!

What would that social network look like? What would it need for your participation? What would you not like to see?
A very organized way of interacting with people in the same fandom as you, and you can join multiple ones. I'd love a way to see fan-art, fan-fic, fan meet-ups, etc. incorporated.

Do you post your fashion stylings online? Do they involve pop culture? How?
I post a lot of my fashion stylings on my Instagram Some of them involve pop culture, but not all. It might be a dress in a fabric from one of my favorite fandoms, or a purse that is from Disney

Do you seek feedback from peers on your stylings?
Definitely! I like to see if people have any input.

How do you collaborate with others fans currently? How would you like to collaborate?
Not currently, no. But if I were to dive into cosplay one day, I would definitely love to collaborate with others on that.

What social networks do you currently use? Which do you like the most and why?
Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr. I love Instagram the most, since it's the best format to view visual content.

STEPHANIE, 22
NOTES FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH BRIEANA

Who are your favorite pop culture characters and why? (You can choose more than one)
Ariel the Little Mermaid, because of her desire for adventure and greater things for herself. Sora from Kingdom Hearts because of his bravery and kindness. Any of Audrey Hepburn's roles because of the life she brought to every character. Sailor Moon because of her bright personality and love for food. Anything from Bob's Burgers or The Golden Girls because they are my favorite shows!

What's your view on Pop Culture Fandoms? Do you consider yourself a member of any?
I absolutely love them, they are a great and positive outlet for fans to come together and just enjoy what they love. I am a member of several.

Do you participate online with these fandoms? How?
I don't really participate in forums or things like that, but I do "like" and "follow" my favorites online to share my love and keep up to date.

What's your view on Disneybounding?
I honestly had to research this term, but I guess I don't see anything wrong with it. If it's not hurting anyone or infringing any laws, then it should be just fine.

What about Cosplay?
It's something I've always wanted to try. I absolutely love seeing what Cosplayers are capable of!

Would you ever consider joining a social network dedicated to pop culture fandoms?
Sure! That would be a neat way to connect with other fans.

What would that social network look like? What would it need for your participation? What would you not like to see?
I'd like to see it look like a positive community of fans coming together to simply enjoy things like fan art, quotes, and fun things like that. It would need my love and support for that fandom. I would not like to any negativity or hate being spread.

Do you post your fashion stylings online? Do they involve pop culture? How?
I do sometimes, and when I do those posts usually involve pop culture. Something along the lines of, "Look at my new shirt!" or "UGH I NEED THIS DRESS".

Do you seek feedback from peers on your stylings?
Not really, but I'd be welcome to it.

How do you collaborate with others fans currently? How would you like to collaborate?
I enjoy sharing memes and just having fun with my interests. I ask things like, "Did you see the new trailer?" or "How excited are you for this?!"

What social networks do you currently use? Which do you like the most and why?
I use Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Twitter. Facebook is probably my favorite because of its connectivity and amount of cat videos available.

EMPATHY MAPS

Using the user groups we defined in the Network Design Development stage, we were able to start building empathy maps for four different targeted social network users. Cosplayers, pop culture enthusiasts, fashion followers and merchandisers each had unique elements that define them. By mapping what they see, hear, think and feel, say and do, as well as pain and gain areas, we could begin to build a social network foundation that caters to them. Part of this process also involved affinity mapping, which we did both in physical environments with notecards as well as on our virtual working wall.

USER GROUP: POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS

THINK & FEEL

HEAR

SEE

SAY & DO

- I can't wait to tell you about...
- I don't want it to be spoiled for me
- Other fans might judge me if I don't do...
- Do I have to like or dislike that because everyone else does?
- I don't want to miss out
- I need to go to...
- I wonder what they their opinion was of...
- You should watch...
- I thought you were a bigger fan than that
- Lots of people are talking about...
- Everyone is watching/reading/playing this
- We should play...
- You have to see/read/play this...
- All my friends like or dislike...
- If you like... you might also like...
- We should go see...
- Everyone is wearing merchandise with... on it
- I'm a big fan of... so I have to buy that...
- Did you see...?
- Increased mainstream participation in previously fringe areas
- Are you going to that ... event?
- I mostly buy things that are similar to others I've bought
- Have you played...?

PAIN

- Money to participate
- Limited time to experience all they want to
- Competition and polarizing topics among fans

GAIN

- Entertainment
- Making memories
- Participation in fandom
- Unique experiences
- Sense of community
- Inspiration

USER GROUP: FASHION FOLLOWERS

THINK & FEEL

- Can I get that designer look for less?
- What should I wear to the...?
- Can I "pull off" this look?
- Do I need to change my body to wear ...?
- Where can I find ... to go with this ....?
- How does this look on me?
- ... is no longer in fashion

HEAR

- Everyone is wearing ... now
- He/she looks ... in that!
- Did you see what he/she was wearing?
- I got this at...

SEE

- Everyone is wearing ... now
- He/she looked bad in...
- He/she looked good in...
- That person wears...

SAY & DO

- Looks online for alternate options
- Goes to stores to find products they think will look good
- Looks online for deals
- Follows trends they've seen on fashion icons

PAIN

- Money to participate
- Trolls, critics and body image distortion
- Time spent getting styling looks
- Pressure to wear clothing that's in fashion

GAIN

- Positive well being
- Positive affirmations
- Confidence

USER GROUP: LICENSED MERCHANDISERS

THINK & FEEL
HEAR
SEE
SAY & DO

- People want to see...
- No one will buy that
- That's too obscure
- That costs too much
- Everyone likes...
- I'm tired of license fees
- Everyone will want one of those
- What is going to be the new, hot property?
- We need to make/sell things from the most popular licenses
- Is this similar to any other product we've had success with?
- That company is selling a lot of...
- Everyone is wearing/buying...
- Right now, people like...
- How much can we sell this for?
- I make products based on what's popular in TV, movies, comics...
- I keep my finger on the pulse of pop culture
- What hasn't already been done with this license?

PAIN

- Licensing fees
- Intellectual Property holders' approvals on merch
- Development time
- Risk of investing in a product that won't sell

GAIN

- Money from sales
- Brand following and loyalty
- New customer bases as new licenses are added

USER GROUP: COSPLAYERS - CASUAL AND COMPLEX

THINK & FEEL

- I wish I had your talent then I could dress like you do
- I want to be a part of a fandom or community
- How can I create that item/accessory so it looks right?
- How can I get more attention?
- I need to change my body
- I wonder if they will like me in this
- How can I feel better about myself?
- I wonder how I would look dressed as...

HEAR

- You're too scrawny or too little
- You're unattractive
- You should try harder
- You are a fake
- You should get a "normal" hobby
- You should pose nude
- You're too big or overweight
- You don't look anything like the real thing
- What's wrong with you?
- You look great! Can I take a picture with you?

SEE

- He/she gets a lot of attention for their cosplay
- People like his/her costumes or photos
- That person looks happy
- I see other examples of fans in good cosplays
- As I encounter pop culture, I find other cosplay ideas

SAY & DO

- I keep my finger on the pulse of pop culture
- I am going to conventions
- I participate even though I may be criticized
- I am posing for photos
- I make my costumes

PAIN

- Trolls and critics
- Money to participate
- Time to assemble outfits

GAIN

- Improved well being
- Making memories
- Participation in fandom
- Positive affirmation
- Sense of community
- Confidence

Personas

Personas represent a unique opportunity for researchers to build out their fictional client base. In order to explore a pop culture social network that fits the needs of today's diverse base of fans and franchise stakeholders, we first needed to get to the heart of our user groups. With survey feedback at the ready, we built two personas for each user group.

COSPLAYERS
MICHAEL - THE FANDOM FANATIC

GOALS

Wants to connect with as many fellow fans as possible

Wants to be inspired by others' cosplaying costumes

Needs a unique social network that encompasses all his interests

BIO

Michael has enjoyed various Pop Culture fandoms since childhood and still considers himself a "kid at heart". From Star Wars and The Avengers to more obscure Anime, he cosplays and owns a plethora of pop culture items that he proudly displays at home and in his cubicle at work. If you ask him about his weekend plans, he's likely busy attending another convention. Don't ask him who his favorite character is though, he'll have a hard time choosing just one. He enjoys interacting with other fans but doesn't necessarily want those interactions to be online only and wants to make new lifelong friendships.

MOTIVATIONS

Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing
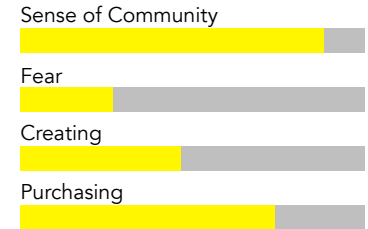
PAINS

Overwhelmed by how many networks exist within each fandom, can't keep up with it all!

Finds the internet impersonal at times

COSPLAYERS
MICHELLE - DISNEYBOUNDER

GOALS

Wants to be inspired by Disneybounders

Wants to inspire others and receive feedback from Disneybounders

BIO

Michelle loves anything and everything related to Disney. Her favorite princess is Ariel from the Little Mermaid, but she loves all Disney movies. From Orlando, she has an annual pass to Disney World and goes to the parks every chance she gets and uses that time to show off her latest stylings. Posting on her current social media, she has to rely on hashtags to get the feedback she wants from other Disneybounders.

MOTIVATIONS

Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing
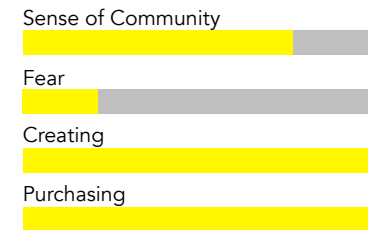
PAINS

Really only interested in the Disney Fandom

Finds other pop culture fans a bit intense

DANIELA - FEMINIST FASHONISTA

GOALS
She wants to be involved with a fandom is inclusive of all people

Wants to know that she's not participating in something that is ignorant of social issues

BIO
Daniella is a feminist and human rights activist. She fights for what she believes in and wants her fandoms to be inclusive. Her favorite movie is The Black Panther. She sees a lot of fandom participation as male and white dominated spaces that are hard to enter as a woman of color, so she doesn't even bother trying to fight for inclusivity. Given the current American political climate, Danielle sets boundaries one her social media usage, so that she can maintain her mental health, but loves her fandoms as a way to escape these realities.

MOTIVATIONS
Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing

PAINS
Finds many fans too intense and problematic

Doesn't always feel welcome in fandoms

Lack of media representation pop culture characters of color

STEPHANIE - GEEK FASHONISTA

GOALS
Wants to be inspired by what is currently trending in pop culture

Wants to inspire others and participate in the overall pop culture community

Wants to combine her fashion passion with her geeky interests

BIO
Stephanie loves going to pop culture conventions with her friends and seeing all of the cosplay. She admires the cosplayers, but is afraid of the criticism and attention that comes along with it. She considers herself a good dresser and prides herself in her skills of putting together a nice outfit. She often plans out what she is going to wear in advance using an online pin board tool. For fun, she sometimes builds pin boards using inspiration from her favorite pop culture characters.

MOTIVATIONS
Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing

PAINS
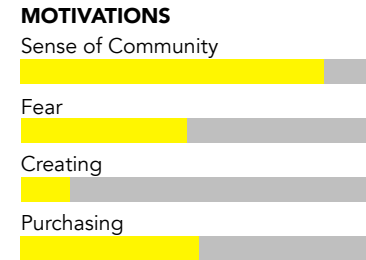Pop culture fans can be too opinionated and aggressive

BRYCE – THE CASUAL FAN

BIO

Bryce is mostly interested in what his friends are interested in. He looks to see what people think of something on the internet before deciding if he wants to see or watch something himself. He doesn't like feeling left out of things, so he will often watch a popular TV show just so he can talk with co-workers around the water cooler. He doesn't buy a lot of stuff, but he will occasionally give into the hype of an upcoming movie and buy a t-shirt or book tie-in. Bryce doesn't share or post too often about pop culture related things in his social networks, but sometimes he just cant help himself and will share the latest meme to get a laugh.

GOALS

Casually connect with fellow fans

Stay relevant on the pop culture scene with news and updates

MOTIVATIONS

Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing

PAINS

Current social networks contain too many different people and friends/family don't often share his pop culture interests

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ALEXA – THE ONE-FANDOM FAN

BIO

Alexa doesn't consider herself a huge pop culture fan, but she does love Harry Potter. As a self proclaimed "Potterhead" Alexa has been in love with the books since childhood when they were first released, and they are a huge part of her life. She's not into dressing up in a full Slytherin robe, but doesn't mind rocking a T-shirt every once in a while. She even has a tattoo of her Favorite Dumbledore quote. She keeps up with all the theme parks and news related to her fandom, but doesn't want to deal with all the other superhero or anime cluttering up other fandom sites.

GOALS

Fan on a mission, interested in only the Harry Potter fandom

MOTIVATIONS

Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing
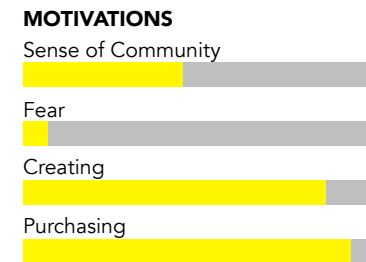
PAINS

Does not want to interact with other fandoms, very singular focused

JASON – MERCHANDISE MARKETER

GOALS
He wants to be involved with the most popular properties

He wants to be inspired by pop culture

BIO
Jason has always been a fan of pop culture related things. He currently works for big pop culture company that makes and sells a variety of merchandise from movies, TV and video games. He loves sharing what the new thing is that needs to be seen and experienced. He often joins in on nerd debates online in his different social networks. He has also developed a non work related online persona that allows him to give unbiased reviews of pop culture things. This allows him to participate without it effecting his job or the company he works for.

MOTIVATIONS
Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing

PAINS
Dealing with license merchandise approval processes

Unable to give his opinion on a movie, TV show, or video game

Fandoms can be fickle and always in search of the next flavor of the week to entertain them

JANET – LICENSED SELLER

GOALS
She wants to have the most popular and desirable licensed products in her stores

She wants products that sell themselves because of the license

BIO
Janet owns a comic book and collectible store on main street. She has a pretty good idea of what she can sell at her store based on her clientèle's purchase history. She's always a bit hesitant to carry products from new licenses because people may not now about it, and then not be looking to buy things from it. She prefers to mostly carry merchandise from reliable titles that people know and are looking for like Star Wars and Marvel.

MOTIVATIONS
Sense of Community

Fear

Creating

Purchasing

PAINS
Overstock of products that people have lost interest in

Unable to get the new hot thing that people want

RESEARCH DISCOVERIES

COSPLAYERS

Cosplayers express feelings of isolation in the existing social media marketplace. They're interested in a place where they can express their love of their fandoms without worry of being mocked or bullied.

FASHION FOLLOWERS

Are feeling the gap in the marketplace left when the fashion styling site Polyvore closed down. They're looking for mainstream ways to shop for products and build inspiration boards that are simple and to the point.

CASUAL FANS

Casual fans are tired of the same old social network scenes. They're looking for a one-stop-shop to get news, connect with friends and participate in pop culture that doesn't take a lot of time or energy.

LICENSED MERCHANDISERS

Look for ways to connect to their target consumers and engage with them. They're looking for a way to build brand awareness and brand loyalty.

PART 4

COMPETITOR
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
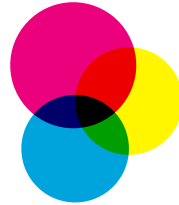
PART 4 OBJECTIVES

Use **business model generation techniques** to build business model canvases for existing social networks

Analyze current businesses to **uncover their business models' strengths and weaknesses**

Evaluate the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats** of the chosen business models.

COMPETITOR RESEARCH

When it came time to analyze competitors in our pop culture social network space, we targeted both market leaders that our survey results pointed toward, as well as existing networks that we identified on our own. Using the 9 Building Blocks outlined in Osterwalder & Pigneur's "Business Model Generation," we conducted detailed analysis on Polyvore, Pinterest, Facebook and Hot Topic. We also used our personas as sounding boards for qualitative feedback about these competitors. In the end, the insights allowed us to compare and contrast these business models and pinpoint components we wanted to leverage for our new platform.

THE 9 BUILDING BLOCKS

CS — **Customer Segments** | An organization serves one or several Customer Segments.

VP — **Value Propositions** | It seeks to solve customer problems and satisfy customer needs with value propositions.

CH — **Channels** | Value propositions are delivered to customers through communication, distribution, and sales Channels.

CR — **Customer Relationships** | Customer relationships are established and maintained with each Customer Segment.

R$ — **Revenue Streams** | Revenue streams result from value propositions successfully offered to customers.

KR — **Key Resources** | Key resources are the assets required to offer and deliver the previously described elements...

Key Activities | ...by performing a number of Key Activities.

KP — **Key Partnerships** | Some activities are outsourced and some resources are acquired outside the enterprise.

CS — **Cost Structure** | The business model elements results in the cost structure.

Pigneur, Y. and Osterwalder, A. (2010). Business Model Generation. Hoboken: Wiley & Sons, pp.16-17.

SELECTED COMPETITORS

POLYVORE | A website where users can arrange and share virtual mood boards filled with purchasable fashion, beauty, and household items from online retailers. Polyvore was a multi-sided business model that was free for users, with revenue coming from product placement on the site. They were bought-out in 2018 by Ssense and closed down.

PINTEREST | A website where users can upload, save, sort, and manage images—known as pins— on inspiration boards. Pinterest is a multi-sided business model that's free for users, with revenue coming from "sponsored pins."
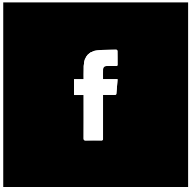
FACEBOOK | A social network site that connects users from around the world to share status updates and content; it encourages participation through a variety of features such as games, events, and sponsored content. Facebook is a multi-sided business model that's free for users, with revenue coming from "sponsored content."

HOT TOPIC | A nationwide retailer known as "the loudest store in the mall" that sells music and pop culture fashion, home decor and novelties in stores and online. Hot Topic is a multi-sided business model, with revenue coming from product sales.

POLYVORE

KEY PARTNERS

Clothing retailers and manufacturers

Home decor retailers and manufacturers

Beauty supply retailers and manufacturers

KEY ACTIVITIES

Design and development

Marketing

KEY RESOURCES

Users

Virtual mood boards

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Allow for a singular site for users to curate fashion looks and household decor ideas

Ability to connect with other users with similar interests

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Self-service

Co-creation

CHANNELS

Online retailers

Website

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

High-end luxury and boutique

Fashion, beauty and home decor

COST STRUCTURE

Office

Web Storage

REVENUE STREAMS

Advertising

Affiliate Referrals

POLYVORE
PERSONA INSIGHTS

FASHION FOLLOWERS
DANIELA
"Polyvore is great for coordinating outfits, I was so sad when I found out it closed down."
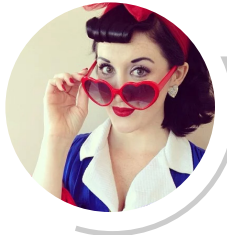
COSPLAYERS
MICHELLE
"I loved using Polyvore to create my Disneybounding outfits."

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
BRYCE
"Isn't that a site for girls? I really see no need in using it, since I just pick out what to wear in the morning."
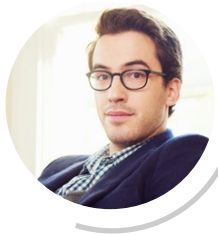
LICENSED MERCHANDISERS
JASON
"As a resource for selling merchandise, it was great, though it does seem to be aimed at more 'luxury' items, which pop culture licensing is not always."

POLYVORE
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS
Loyal user base
Virtual fashion boards
Visual appeal
User-generated content
Place to find and share specific fashion items and outfits

WEAKNESSES
Main focus is mid- to high-fashion
Content not sharable beyond the site
Fashion focus may limit user demographics and membership interest

OPPORTUNITIES
Direct sales, similar to Facebook
Exclusive items
Expand beyond fashion and decor

THREATS
Imitation
Product availability
Susceptible to takeover

BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS
PINTEREST

KEY PARTNERS

Retail companies

Users

KEY ACTIVITIES

Design and development

Marketing

KEY RESOURCES

Users

Virtual Pinboard technology

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Allows for content curation over multiple websites - mix of images, links, videos

Ability for users to send pins to friends and comment on pins for social connection

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Self-service

Co-creation

CHANNELS

Online retailers

Website and app

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Mass market

High-end luxury and boutique

Fashion, beauty and home decor

COST STRUCTURE

Developers

Tech Support

Marketing & Sales

Office

Web Storage

REVENUE STREAMS

Advertising

Online Referrals

Data Sales

PINTEREST
PERSONA INSIGHTS

FASHION FOLLOWERS
STEPHANIE
"Pinterest is my go-to. It's like a creative outlet for me and a way to stay organized - all in one!"

COSPLAYERS
MICHAEL
"Pinterest is OK, it's good when you need some craft DIY help, but I don't use it for much else."

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
ALEXA
"Oh Pinterest is the best, I use it for recipes, DIY projects, but not always related to my fandom."

LICENSED MERCHANDISERS
JANET
"I feel like the content is too cluttered, I don't know how their SEO works. I feel my products are seen as prevalently as they should be."

PINTEREST
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Brand awareness
Large, loyal user base
Virtual boards usable for any need
Visual appeal
User-generated content
Place to find specific type of products curated into interests

WEAKNESSES

Mostly adult female users
Spam
Content doesn't always link to source - difficult to find products' origins

OPPORTUNITIES

Males
Other age groups
Direct sales, similar to Facebook

THREATS

Imitation
Scams
Spam
Excess of content

FACEBOOK

KEY PARTNERS

Content creators

Sellers

KEY ACTIVITIES

Design and development

Data

KEY RESOURCES

Users

Facebook platform

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Connect with friends, family, and others around the world

Discover and engage in bigger social conversations

Personalize your experience through who and what you see, how you share, and how you sell and pay for things

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Self-service

Co-creation

CHANNELS

Website and app

Ads and Pages

Dev Tools and API

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Internet users

Advertisers and marketers

Developers

COST STRUCTURE

R&D
Developers

Administration
Tech Support

Marketing & Sales
Marketing & Sales

Data Center

REVENUE STREAMS

Advertising

Free

Payment Revenue

f

FACEBOOK
PERSONA INSIGHTS

FASHION FOLLOWERS
DANIELA
"I mean, I follow a few pages related to my fandoms like Marvel, but I don't use it as often since all that news about data usage broke."

COSPLAYERS
MICHELLE
"I use Facebook mostly for socializing and sharing my pictures of my outfits."

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
BRYCE
"Facebook is definitely where I spend the most time, but not everything I do is related to my pop culture interests."

LICENSED MERCHANDISERS
JASON
"The business pages and marketing/advertising tools Facebook uses are the best out of all the other sites we use. Similar to Instagram."

FACEBOOK
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Brand awareness
Global user base
High revenues
Innovative workforce
Data
Ability to Like and Follow interests

WEAKNESSES

Current brand image
Products and features being copied
Online advertising creating negative user experiences

OPPORTUNITIES

Business diversification
Product innovation

THREATS

Imitation
Crime
Market saturation
User behavior
Ethics

HOT TOPIC

KEY PARTNERS

Licensed merchandise makers

Distributors

Bands and music artists

KEY ACTIVITIES

Sales

KEY RESOURCES

Stores

Employees

Merchandise

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

The one guaranteed place in the mall to find pop culture fashion and novelties

Caters to licenses and content that are often fringe or under-represented by other retailers

Carries product at a variety of price points

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

In-store sales

Online support

CHANNELS

Website and app

Ads and Pages

Dev Tools and API

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Teens

Fans of music, movies, TV shows, comics, video games and counter culture.

COST STRUCTURE

Stores   Administrative

Warehouse

Payroll

Marketing & Sales

REVENUE STREAMS

In-store purchases

Online purchases

HOT TOPIC
PERSONA INSIGHTS

FASHION FOLLOWERS
STEPHANIE
"Eh, I'll order something from Hot Topic like every now and then, but the store is a bit too intimidating with that loud music and blah."

COSPLAYERS
MICHAEL
"The BEST website for all your pop culture fandom T-shirts, Funko Pops, pins, everything. They have tons of Star Wars stuff, so that makes me happy. And I like how you can filter it by fandom."

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
ALEXA
"I love Hot Topic, they have not only Harry Potter stuff, but also my favorite bands' T-shirts."

LICENSED MERCHANDISERS
JANET
"It can be hard as an independent seller to network and distribute product through such a large company."

HOT TOPIC
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Diverse offering of niche market products
Real estate
Ability to negotiate for exclusivity on items
Quick response to emerging trends
Brand awareness
Users can upload images of products or tag Instagram photos, ability to post product reviews

WEAKNESSES

Reliant on seasonal influences for sales
Item sales dependent on trends and current category popularity
Licensed product dependent
Target audience limited to mainly 12- to 22-year-olds
Marketing to consumers only - no social networking

OPPORTUNITIES

Appeal to pop-culture-loving 30- and 40-year-olds using properties from their childhoods
Fashion-forward clothing options inspired by pop culture
Hot Topic private label clothing
Expand product line to more high-end, quality products

THREATS

Losing licenses to competitors
Online sales limiting foot traffic to malls
Competing with unlicensed consumer-made products, like Etsy

	COMPETITOR SIMILARITIES	COMPETITOR DIFFERENCES	"ZAG" OPPORTUNITIES
USER GROUPS	All four platforms depend on interaction from target consumers in an online environment	Polyvore and Pinterest tend to target specific female fashion demographics, while Facebook and Hot Topic are more approachable for general consumers	Learn from demographic stigma from Pinterest and Polyvore to create a social network that feels more accessible for users of all backgrounds
REVENUE GENERATION	All four platforms connect target consumers with products and services	While Hot Topic is more of a standard business with an online shopping platform, Polyvore, Facebook and Pinterest rely on revenues from promoted content	Rely on sponsored content and consumer participation from all models to create a social network that acts as a platform for pop culture products and apparel
PARTICIPATION & INTERACTION	Consumers have a voice on all four platforms where they can leave comments about products	The voice of the consumer and how the participate with the product before and after purchasing varies based on the platform	Design a social network that encourages participation beyond simple "board building" like Polyvore and Pinterest - find a way to get users to participate and check-in in the same way they do on major social networks
PLACE IN POP CULTURE	All four platforms have spaces for consumers to see and review licensed products, and that participation weighs heavily on consumer habits	The platform determines the level of pop culture participation: in truly social spaces like Facebook, users can opt to view pop culture content, while in retail environments like Hot Topic, the pop culture products are woven into the model itself	Brand our social network as the destination for a pop culture lifestyle: instead of pop culture merely being a feature or option, leverage the ability to sort content by franchise like Hot Topic to let users customize their social network experience

Competitor Analysis Conclusions

Because the four competitors we chose to evaluate represent a wide array of businesses, it's difficult to determine which are the most and least successful. Instead, **we chose to look for opportunities for "zag" opportunities, as outlined in Marty Neumeier's book of the same name.** As far as potential competitors in our pop culture social network space, Hot Topic and Pinterest share the strongest foundation in the pop culture market. However, Hot Topic is strictly a retail e-commerce website, with no collaborative tools or ways to connect with other users. Hot Topic could be a potential collaborator rather than competitor.

PART 5

NETWORK DESIGN
DEVELOPMENT
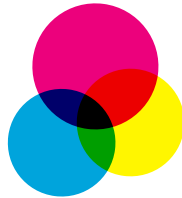
PART 5 OBJECTIVES

Use ZAG's "**17-Step Process**" to answer questions about the network

Define the **nine building blocks** to create a large-scale business model

Evaluate the **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats** of a large-scale business model for their network

Create an **ABC ... Q business presentation** to pitch business model to potential clients and investors

ZAG 17-STEP PROCESS

In "ZAG: The Number-One Strategy of High-Performance Brands" by Marty Neumeier, brand developers are challenged to evaluate how their business models are deviating from the norm to create "zag" opportunities. The 17-step process outlined in Neumeier's text helps businesses articulate their brand. He argues that the old-world adage of "cheap, good, and fast" has been replaced in consumers' minds by "free, perfect and now." Those are the expectations new businesses are up against. Using philosophies of "tribes," we've built a 17-step process model that spoke to our pop culture tribe. It outlined our approach and shaped our direction.

1 WHO ARE YOU?

We are people with a passion for pop culture

2 WHAT DO YOU DO?

We provide a space for fans to show their geeky side

3 WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

To be the top online destination for discovering pop culture products

4 WHAT WAVE ARE YOU RIDING?

Geek is cool; let your inner child shine; pop culture box office success

5 WHO SHARES THE BRANDSCAPE?

Existing social media sites

6 WHAT MAKES YOU THE "ONLY"?
We are the only fashion forward site dedicated to pop culture

7 WHAT SHOULD YOU ADD OR SUBTRACT?
Add organized categories of fandoms for easy searches

8 WHO LOVES YOU?
We understand our fans and help connect retailers to target consumers

9 WHO'S THE ENEMY?
Social stigma of needing to grow up or conform to the mainstream

10 WHAT DO THEY CALL YOU?
A virtual pinboard and shopping site

11 HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN YOURSELF?
We're like if Pinterest was a store for geeks

12 HOW DO YOU SPREAD THE WORD?
Carrying limited-edition, exclusive products

13 HOW DO PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH YOU?
Through curated content

14 WHAT DO THEY EXPERIENCE?
Ideas for various ways to celebrate their fandom in public

15 HOW DO YOU EARN THEIR LOYALTY?
By collaborating with licensed brands, studios, retailers

16 HOW DO YOU EXTEND YOUR SUCCESS
By becoming a lifestyle brand

17 HOW DO YOU PROTECT YOUR PORTFOLIO?
Fans should feel safe, encouraged, empowered and respected

LARGE-SCALE
BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

After outlining our competitors' business model canvases in Part 4, we were prepared to design a large-scale business model we saw being most successful. As part of the business model canvas, **we also took into consideration SWOT model**, so that we could maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses and build these elements into the very fabric of the business. This **strength-weakness identification created a bridge** between the SWOT analysis and business model canvas.

KEY PARTNERS

Clothing and home good retailers and manufacturers

Movie and television studios

Comic book and novel Publishers

KEY ACTIVITIES

Design and development

Marketing

Content development

KEY RESOURCES

Users

Buy links

Pictures

Virtual mood board technology

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

We are the only fashion forward shopping site dedicated to pop culture.

We let fans "collect" virtual versions of products and purchase those they're interested in.

We help round up the newest, most interesting, and most exclusive products across a variety of fandoms to save you time.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Feature user creations

Self-service

Co-creation

CHANNELS

Online retailers

Websites

Curated brand content

Studio feeds

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Fashion and home decor

Mid- to high-end pop culture enthusiasts

COST STRUCTURE

Developers

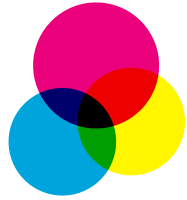Web Storage

Tech Support

Marketing & Sales

Office

REVENUE STREAMS

Advertising

Referral fee

Exclusive merchandise

Lifestyle brand original products

MAXIMIZE STRENGTHS

We know fans consider content produced by the original artist, author or filmmaker to be the most "authentic" to their creative experience. **We can** look for ways to partner with franchises and studios directly for exclusive content.

We know that people don't like to be sold; they like to buy, especially in tribes (Neumeier). **We can** build an interface design that caters to the pop culture tribe and draft site copy that is informal, on-trend and "speaks geek."

We know this site is capitalizing on white space for pop culture home décor and fashion, but that it is first and foremost a social network. **We can** emphasize the ability to connect with and be inspired by other fans and their home and fashion fandom creations.
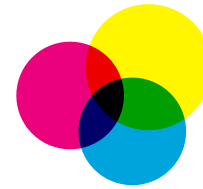
MINIMIZE WEAKNESSES

We know that concerns about harassment, shaming, and trolling are regularly in the headlines when it comes to pop culture fans. **We can** create a strict Terms of Use code of conduct for all new users and make reporting bullying and shaming, and objectification easy to report and correct.

We know that the participating in the pop culture community means different things to different people. **We can** encourage fans of all backgrounds to participate in their own ways by building a lifestyle brand that caters to varying levels of fandom, from casual fans to devout followers.

We know that today, "casual cosplay" and "Disneybounding" are fringe activities – but they're on the rise. **We can** market them like they're being part of a secret club and that users are "in the know," and ride the wave as they gain popularity.

STRENGTHS

Capturing all levels of fan participation

Collaboration with other fans and franchises directly

Curated consumer content and updated news feed

Unique fan socialization

Fan interaction with pop culture

Empowerment

Fans able to "play" with virtual products they collect

New way to participate in fandom

Users can follow a variety of content sources - other users, specific category tags, specific product types

WEAKNESSES

Fashion and home decor stigma of "for girls only"

Moderation of user-generated content - misuse of site

Social media market saturation

Difficult to police licensed and non-licensed products

Not considered "mainstream"

Requires explanation - "what is cosplay?"

Pop culture has a history of being male-dominated

Shopping and pin boards have a history of being female-dominated

OPPORTUNITIES

Fans can use pin boards as holiday wish lists

"Shelfies" and "man caves" - real-life photos of shelves and interior spaces for collectibles

Limited-time offers and sales

Life style brand building and unique product

Show clothing on different body types

Capitalize on niche-market of like-minded fans

Community of inclusion and encouragement

Partner with licensed retailers

Partner with other social media sites for wider reach

Discover unlicensed product and assist with licensing

Community engagement of voting and contests

Advocate for relevant social causes

THREATS

Inspiration board market cornered by Pinterest

Difficult to blend news feed, shopping and social network into a single brand interface

Social media pop culture history of objectification, shaming, trolling and bullying

Difficult to gauge product availability and shipping in real-time

User uploads of non-licensed product for sale

Market clutter

LARGE-SCALE
SWOT ANALYSIS

The large-scale SWOT analysis of the future-state pop culture social network had evolved over the course of the project. Initially, **we had explored cosplayers from a contextual analysis**, evaluating the tribe's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as we explored early social network concepts. Now that we had begun to evaluate from a business perspective, we were ready to identify these areas and activate segments in the business model.

ABC...Q PRESENTATION

The ABC...Q method is an **idea management method** that presents the creative journey through a series of concepts. By moving through the ABC...Q process, our pop culture concept delivers first on initial objective, then solves for minor issues at each stage, **arriving at the more radical re-contextualized result**. We created a video presentation of our four-stage development as a tool for pitching prospective investors.

A	B	C	Q
Meet expectations by delivering on the original objective	**Create confidence by solving for a minor challenge**	**Create anticipation by adding additional benefits**	**Re-contextualize with a more expanded idea**
Create a hybrid shopping and social network site that allows users to curate fashion-forward looks inspired by pop culture and find new items in real-time.	The site isn't limited to fashion and will also include home décor items and accessories from a variety of fandoms that fans can use to curate mood boards for interior spaces and pop culture collections.	Partner with comic book publishers and studios to deliver behind-the-scenes footage and reference photos for fans as they curate their collections, and partner with retailers to sell exclusive items directly on the site.	Launch into a lifestyle brand with a line of fashion and home décor with a focused effort on philanthropy and social causes important to the pop culture community.

REFRAMING

INTRODUCING POP STYLE

We were tasked with developing a business plan for a new approach to a social network that targets a niche and fills a gap in the existing market. The niche we chose was cosplayers, fans who design and make their own intricate costumes to celebrate their favorite pop culture characters. Although pop culture is as prevalent and accepted as it has ever been, those that celebrate it unabashedly are still highly stigmatized. And we want to change that by creating a safe online space for fans to show their "geeky side."

VALUE PROPOSITION

Pop Style is the only fashion forward shopping site dedicated to pop culture. This site will unite users in the activity of planning fashionable outfits inspired by their favorite characters. It combines a main stream activity of wardrobe planning with the geeky hobby of cosplaying.

We will do this by using our virtual mood board tool that allows users to find and collect purchasable items found from around the internet and arrange them into a character ensemble. These ensembles will be sharable from the site's database, which will be categorized and searchable by franchise, characters, style, and item type. Users will be allowed to follow each other, share photos of their ensembles, discuss interests around this activity, and share tips.

Fans will love us because we get them. Retailers will love us because we connect to their consumers.

MISSION STATEMENT

Pop Style is the only fashion forward shopping site dedicated to pop culture. This site will unite users in the activity of planning fashionable outfits and interior spaces inspired by their favorite characters. It combines a main stream activity of wardrobe planning with the geeky hobby of cosplaying.

25-WORD STATEMENT

Pop Style is a online shopping experience that connects pop culture fans with fashion-forward products that empowers and celebrates them.

ONLINE STATEMENT

Pop Style is a social network and a shopping experience. It's the only pop culture fashion forward shopping site that prioritizes empowerment and confidence in our users. Most shopping sites are simply focused on just the selling of items. Pop Style provides an experience that inspires users by connecting them through a shared mood board design activity that helps the community to feel confident and know that they look good. Fans will love us because we get them. Retailers will love us because we connect to their consumers.

PART 6

DEFINING
YOUR USERS NEEDS
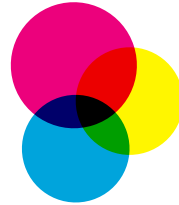
PART 6 OBJECTIVES

Create **empathy maps** to gain a better understanding
of the customer's insights.

Define the needs of each user group and its
respective users.

Begin to **define the components** of the social network.

User Needs Research Methods

1
VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS
All members of the group gathered qualitative feedback and research to create a list of users' needs, wants, desires and fears for Pop Style and paired them with a list of deliverable benefits, experiences, features and market differentiators to create a value proposition canvas.

2
PERSONA EMPATHY MAPS
Once we were in the brainstorming mindset of what the user general expectations for the site as well as some preliminary features, we began to map out what our personas would experience on Pop Style. By putting ourselves in their shoes, we were able to identify aspects that were important to them that we could build into our brand features.

3
CREATIVE MATRIX
Our personas had thoughts about so many aspects of their Pop Style experience, and our next step was to group these thoughts into broad experience categories. We laid out every persona comment into a creative matrix in order to identify themes. These themes reinforces many of the elements we'd laid out in our value proposition canvas, and they helped solidify seven unique aspects of Pop Style that we could use throughout the remainder of the project.

4
CONCENTRIC DIAGRAM
The next step in the user research process was to use some of the strongest themes in the creative matrix to build a concentric diagram. This diagram type allows a business to wrap product ideas around consumer expectations and illustrate the core message of the business.

5
FIVE E'S
Now that we understood our users' needs, it was easy to layout the five steps in their customer experience model. This model allowed us to inform the user journey map.

6
USER JOURNEY MAP
Defining users' needs had allowed us to design features and elements that met those needs. The final stage of user experience research was to build out a user journey map, which combined features, consumer insight, and action in a diagram that helped illustrate a user's interactions with our social network.

VALUE PROPOSITION CANVAS

We began our research into our users' needs by making a list of aspects we were already aware of. It became an extensive list of things we knew users wanted from interviews, surveys and persona research, coupled with a list of features our team had discussed to meet those outlined expectations. This value proposition canvas became the jumping off point for our social network brand features during this part of the project. We had several dozen aspects to capitalize on and market, but we needed to dive deeper into our personas in order to understand how to categorize our features and relate to our audiences.

POP STYLE USER

NEEDS

A way to find to find items based on pop culture preferences or clothing type
A way to discover new items or additions on the site
A way to learn of new additions by other users
A way to plan ensembles
A way to buy items
A way to connect with other fans

DESIRES

Recognition for their creations
Seamless buying experience
Know what to expect from what their buying
App platform

WANTS

Recognition for their creations
Seamless buying experience
Know what to expect from what their buying
App platform

FEARS

Searchable database
Easy to use virtual board interface
Ability to share their creations and photos of them in their creations
Ability to converse
Way to reference source material when designing collections

POP STYLE SOCIAL NETWORK

BENEFITS

Allows users to share their fashion ensembles with each other
Personalized feeds based on preferences and follows
Software that allows users to plan out ensembles using items from many sources and purchase them from one place
Helps users find new clothing based on their pop culture taste

EXPERIENCES

Quality products
Licensed products
Supportive community
Connect with their friends and other fans
Connect with content creators like studios, publishers and celebrities
A place to express and celebrate pop culture
Ability to read comments and reviews others have left on products

FEATURES

Searchable database
Easy to use virtual board interface
Ability to share photos of real-life outfits and interiors
Ability to converse in a messaging/mail system
Ability to leave comments on others' collections and individual items
Ability to leave product reviews and ask questions to the community about products

MARKET

Go to source for pop culture inspired fashion
Common-sense online shopping experience backed by a community

MICHAEL – THE FANDOM FANATIC

THINKS & FEELS	I love having access to everything on one platform	Thanks to my feed, I haven't missed out on any new additions to my interests.	It's refreshing because difficult to argue and debate pop culture topics here.
HEARS	That new design looks great!	It seems like everyone we know is getting on Pop Style.	Did you hear that Wil Wheaton joined Pop Style to build amazing man caves? You have to follow him!
SEES	My virtual board with all my Stormtrooper kitchen decor.	Details for each item - including when it's on sale.	People who are using Pop Style for both Casual Cosplay and very detailed cosplay.
SAYS & DOES	I follow others who build collections I'm interested in. I'm making new friends and contacts.	I keep track and make sure all the items are correct for the community. I hate it when things are mislabeled.	I own a lot of these products, so if people as a question about an item, I try my best to answer it for them.
PAINS	Afraid of trolls	Spends too much free time obsessing over product reviews and categories	
GAINS	Connection to the community	Confidence and encouragement	

MICHELLE – DISNEYBOUNDER

THINKS & FEELS	I like seeing how people look in the ensembles I have designed.	Joy that I can find an item that will work for me outfit quickly.	It's interesting to see reviews and comments on a product. They've saved me from buying something that looked nice but poor quality.
HEARS	Are you that Disneybounder from Pop Style?! I've seen you online!	You look great in that ensemble.	I plan out all my new looks on Pop Style.
SEES	Fans interpreting my favorite characters in new ways - through fashion looks and interior rooms.	New style ideas to explore.	Alternative options for particular items.
SAYS & DOES	Pop Style saves me time and money by being able to search in one place and find less expensive options for a type of item I am searching for.	I'm able to see what people are thinking about wearing to Dapper Day at Disneyland so that I can do something unique.	Building inspiration boards for Disney characters is a hobby. I'm addicted to it.
PAINS	Sometimes overwhelmed by the other fandoms when she goes searching for general collections	Now that Disneybounding and Casual Cosplay are more mainstream, fears she isn't seen as very special as she once was	
GAINS	An inspirational idea database for looks and styles	Collaboration and feedback on ensembles	

USER EMPATHY MAPS:
COSPLAYERS
USING POP STYLE

DANIELA - FEMINIST FASHIONISTA

THINKS & FEELS	So many non-branded products in their marketplace, it's nice to just be able to style an outfit that has nothing to do with Pop Culture if I feel like it.	I like how Pop Style gets involved with important movements and causes in the community.	I like seeing models/characters of different ethnicities, backgrounds, and bodies being showcased and celebrated.
HEARS	That new design looks great!	It seems like everyone we know is getting on Pop Style.	Did you hear that Wil Wheaton joined Pop Style to build amazing man caves? You have to follow him!
SEES	The focus is on the ensembles.	Fans leaving helpful reviews as comments on products I'm considering buying.	Inspiration boards others have created for fandoms I've never even heard of, but have a new appreciation for.
SAYS & DOES	I call out and keep in check bullies in the community. I'm not going to let them ruin this for us.	I leave reviews for products I like and dislike - especially products that have production methods that are unethical. People should know what they're supporting with their money.	I have an entire board dedicated to African American women modeling pop culture fashion. It's not even for one specific character. it just inspires me.
PAINS	Worries that other fans will not be as socially conscious as she is	Fashion create false images and expectations for users	
GAINS	A positive community focused on a common shared interest	A platform to spread the word about issues important to her to the pop culture community.	

STEPHANIE - GEEK FASHIONISTA

THINKS & FEELS	I like seeing my inventory of what I own. Its like having my own virtual closet in my pocket.	I know I'll never actually wear half of these board looks, but they're really fun to out together.	I'm more interested in fashion styling with pop culture items, but I've been seeing the home decor boards others are making.
HEARS	I wish there was a way to see this stuff in person.	Cool shirt! Where did you get it?	Are you on Pop Style? I'd love to Follow you.
SEES	Exclusive content and reference photos from Warner Brothers about the Wizarding World.	My feed is not cluttered with random stuff, I love how organized it is.	The latest Harry Potter ensembles and added Harry Potter items added to the site index.
SAYS & DOES	I offer advice and options for how ensembles could be improved or added on to.	I build way more boards than I actually will ever wear. But that's the fun of it!	I let myself splurge on one item a month - maybe two. It's nice to be able to buy things right from the Pop Style website.
PAINS	Constant pressure to be wearing what is new and trending.	It is expensive to always have the new stuff.	
GAINS	Can help advice and curate, instead of having to own and wear	Incentivized purchases for boards	

USER EMPATHY MAPS:
FASHION FOLLOWERS
USING POP STYLE

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
BRYCE - THE CASUAL FAN

THINKS & FEELS	I love being able to filter only the things I want to see.	LOL, so many awesome ideas for casual Friday!	I'll be honest. It's cool to see so many pretty girls posting photos of their casual cosplay outfits.
HEARS	Aw, man, you're on Pop Style? Isn't that for chicks?	Wow, great shirt. Where did you find that?	Did you hear that the studio is launching a new product line to tie to the movie release? I saw it on Pop Style.
SEES	New trending things on generalized feed	Fans interacting with things they're passionate about.	Occasional sales and promotions on the site.
SAYS & DOES	I have a ___ themed party that I'm going to. I'm gonna check out Pop Style for something to wear.	Pop Style is quickly becoming the place to find pop culture news first.	I search by property or character to find generalized stuff that I might be looking for.
PAINS	Friends say Pop Style is for women	So many products to see	
GAINS	Compliments on obscure pop culture shirts	Items provide endless entertainment	

POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS
ALEXA - THE ONE-FANDOM FAN

THINKS & FEELS	I love how I can customize my content by my fandom so I only see Harry Potter.	I love being able to connect with other Potter fans.	I'm going to spend my entire paycheck on this stuff!
HEARS	You're spending way too much time building Harry Potter outfits on Pop Style!	I love your Gryffindor coffee mug. Where can I get one?	Did you see that Warner Brothers posted behind the scenes photos of the Fantastic Beasts set for people to use for inspiration on Pop Style?
SEES	The latest Harry Potter ensembles and added Harry Potter items added to the site index.	My feed is not cluttered with random stuff, I love how organized it is.	Exclusive content and reference photos from Warner Brothers about the Wizarding World.
SAYS & DOES	Convince my friends to join and participate.	Follow my favorite celebrities to see what they're up to.	I go on Pop Style so I can check up on my friends.
PAINS	Worried about spending too much money	Concerned about number of likes her boards get	
GAINS	Finds items she's never seen before	A place for connecting with the Harry Potter community	

USER EMPATHY MAPS:
POP CULTURE ENTHUSIASTS USING POP STYLE

JASON – MERCHANDISE MARKETER

|			
THINKS & FEELS	These ensembles are so awesome to look at, this community is creating marketing content for me.	I'm seeing a lot of fans build their own boards for _____, and there's not a lot of product for that fandom out there. We should make more.	Studios and publishers are able to help fans feel connected to the upcoming releases, and I feel more confident pushing products.
HEARS	Pop Style just sold out of _____ in a matter of minutes! Great work.	We need to make more _____. It's been performing well.	How many of _____ can we sell on Pop Style?
SEES	Activity around a property or character or style	Look at all those fans who follow _____.	Studios and publishers helping stoke the fan fire by releasing exclusive photos and first looks for upcoming projects.
SAYS & DOES	The creativity in of this ensemble is amazing, lets show it off to the community!	I didn't realize that many people were into _____ again lets target them with some of these new _____.	This movie/comic/show is about to come out, lets make some ensembles for it.
PAINS	Staying relevant now that content creators can go right to fans	Still hard to predict the next pop culture trend	
GAINS	Market products more effectively	Fans are proven buyers for product backing	

JANET – LICENSED SELLER

THINKS & FEELS	The ensembles these fans are creating are great. This gives me an idea for a new product.	I wish there was a way for my store to be a featured seller. I'm worried fans will just buy what they see from the site and not come into the store.	I've been waiting for an online space for pop culture fans to come together like this. It's nice to see.
HEARS	Your store is like walking into Pop Style in person!	You have _____?! I saw this on Pop Style! And I think it's less expensive here in your shop!	Do you carry _____? I saw it on Pop Style, but I want to see how it looks in person.
SEES	There are _____ amount of fans of this license looking for merchandise.	Popular items users are adding to their ensembles	Reviews of items carried in my store.
SAYS & DOES	These fans are being under-served, we should make some stuff that they would like.	I can create ensembles myself to show multiple items that I offer together.	I started a photo backdrop in my store where fans can take photos to post to Pop Style - and promote my store while they're at it!
PAINS	Time it takes to get products in market	Smaller retailers can't sell on Pop Style	
GAINS	Connect with customers directly	Use Pop Style content trends to stock her local store	

USER EMPATHY MAPS:
LICENSED MERCHANDISERS
USING POP STYLE

CREATIVE MATRIX

Using our virtual working wall, we collaborated to categorize **every comment on the empathy maps** into themes. The result was that every comment fit within one of seven categories: personalization, unique shopping experience, positivity and social activism, connection with studios, publishers and celebrities, connection with friends, style and creativity and general pop culture. These comments below represent the strongest **examples of each brand feature**.
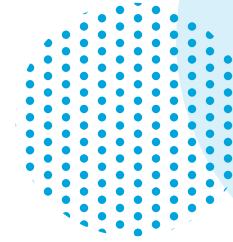
PERSONALIZATION

"I love being able to filter only the things I want to see." -Bryce

"My feed is not cluttered with random stuff, I love how organized it is." -Alexa

"I like seeing my inventory of what I own. Its like having my own virtual closet in my pocket." -Stephanie

SHOPPING

"I leave reviews for products I like and dislike - especially products that have production methods that are unethical. People should know what they're supporting with their money." -Daniela

"I own a lot of these products, so if people as a question about an item, I try my best to answer it for them." -Michael

"I have so much readily-available qualitative feedback to use when considering new products to showcase." -Jason

POSITIVITY

"It's refreshing because difficult to argue and debate pop culture topics here." -Michael

"I like how Pop Style gets involved with important movements and causes in the community." -Daniela

"I like seeing how people look in the ensembles I have designed." -Michelle

CONNECTION WITH CONTENT MAKERS

"Did you hear that the studio is launching a new product line to tie to the movie release? I saw it on Pop Style." -Bryce

"Did you see that Warner Brothers posted behind the scenes photos of the Fantastic Beasts set for people to use for inspiration on Pop Style?" -Alexa

"Did you hear that Wil Wheaton joined Pop Style to build amazing man caves? You have to follow him!" -Michael

CONNECTION WITH FRIENDS AND FANS

"I've been waiting for an online space for pop culture fans to come together like this. It's nice to see." -Janet

"Fans engaging with each other and with fashion." -Stephanie

"I go on Pop Style so I can check up on my friends."-Alexa

STYLE AND CREATIVITY

"These ensembles are so awesome to look at, this community is creating marketing content for me." -Jason

"I can create ensembles myself to show multiple items that I offer together." - Janet

"I build way more boards than I actually will ever wear. But that's the fun of it!" -Stephanie
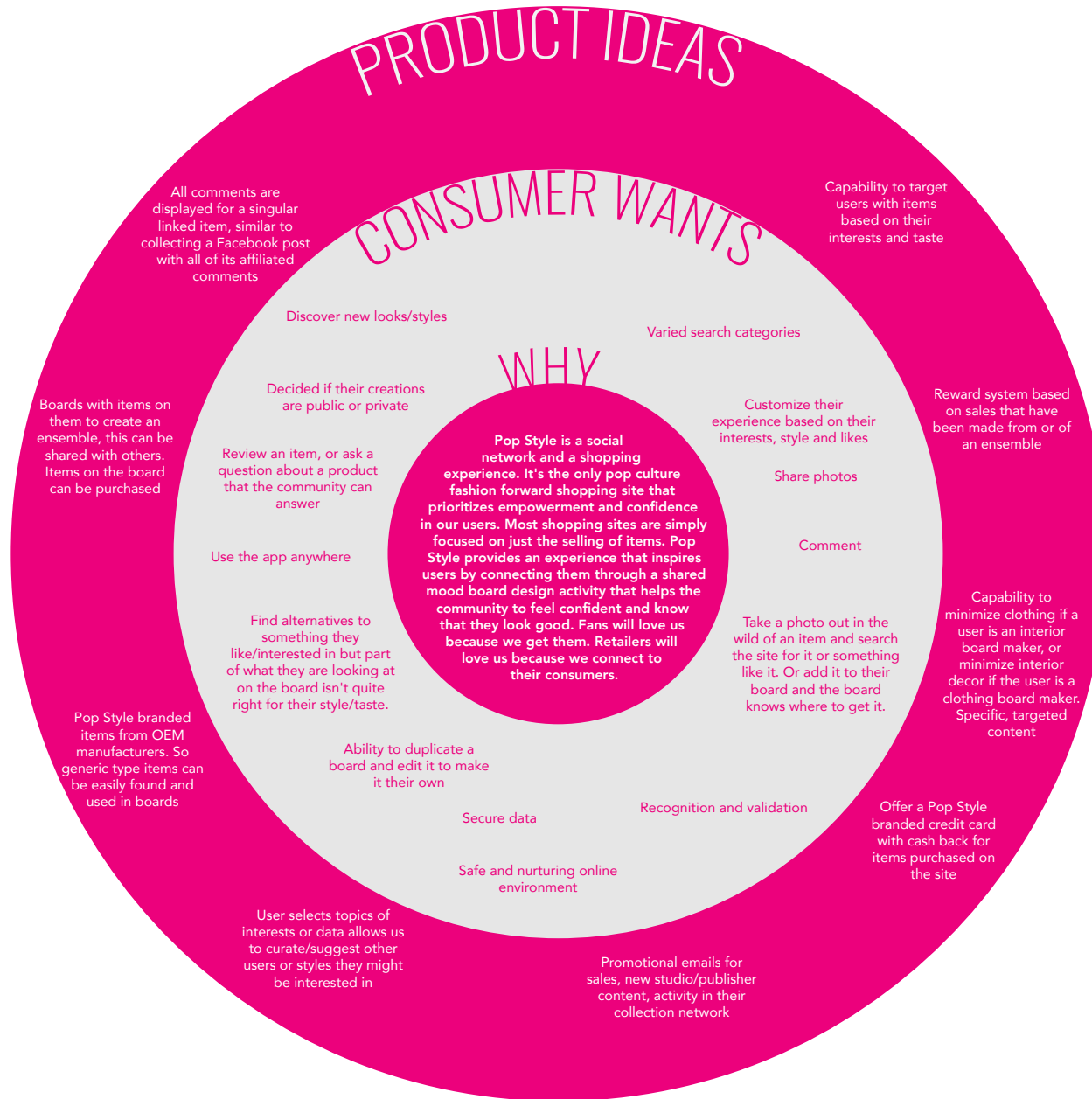
POP CULTURE

"Pop Style is quickly becoming the place to find pop culture news first." -Bryce

"I have a new appreciation for pop culture franchises now that I've seen fans coming together in an encouraging way like this." -Daniela

"These fans are being under-served, we should make some stuff that they would like." -Janet

CONCENTRIC DIAGRAM

PRODUCT IDEAS

CONSUMER WANTS

WHY

Pop Style is a social network and a shopping experience. It's the only pop culture fashion forward shopping site that prioritizes empowerment and confidence in our users. Most shopping sites are simply focused on just the selling of items. Pop Style provides an experience that inspires users by connecting them through a shared mood board design activity that helps the community to feel confident and know that they look good. Fans will love us because we get them. Retailers will love us because we connect to their consumers.

All comments are displayed for a singular linked item, similar to collecting a Facebook post with all of its affiliated comments

Capability to target users with items based on their interests and taste

Discover new looks/styles

Varied search categories

Boards with items on them to create an ensemble, this can be shared with others. Items on the board can be purchased

Decided if their creations are public or private

Customize their experience based on their interests, style and likes

Reward system based on sales that have been made from or of an ensemble

Review an item, or ask a question about a product that the community can answer

Share photos

Use the app anywhere

Comment

Find alternatives to something they like/interested in but part of what they are looking at on the board isn't quite right for their style/taste.

Take a photo out in the wild of an item and search the site for it or something like it. Or add it to their board and the board knows where to get it.

Capability to minimize clothing if a user is an interior board maker, or minimize interior decor if the user is a clothing board maker. Specific, targeted content

Pop Style branded items from OEM manufacturers. So generic type items can be easily found and used in boards

Ability to duplicate a board and edit it to make it their own

Secure data

Recognition and validation

Offer a Pop Style branded credit card with cash back for items purchased on the site

Safe and nurturing online environment

User selects topics of interests or data allows us to curate/suggest other users or styles they might be interested in

Promotional emails for sales, new studio/publisher content, activity in their collection network

FIVE E'S OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

ENTICE

Easy sign-up process

Paid digital marketing

Franchise blogs

Social media promotions

Pop culture personalities promote through social channels

Word of mouth

Partnerships to brand on product packaging

Kick-off events at pop culture conventions

Users share their Pop Style username for connections with their existing networks

ENTER

Arrive at the landing page

Download the app

Create a profile

List of interests to follow

Chose home decor, fashion or both

Start-up tutorial for how to navigate

Agree to community terms of use

Arrive at the home page

ENGAGE

See what's new on customized news feed

Make a collection board

Duplicate and edit a collection board

Comment on other collection boards

Share real-world photos

Leave reviews and comments on products

Share reference images

Flag inappropriate behavior for site admins

Follow your friends, other fans and celebrities

EXIT

Set up an ongoing search to follow certain terms like a favorite character or franchise

Choose to buy a collection

Choose to buy an item

Save credit card information

Make a purchase without an account

Exit the site

EXTEND

Offer rewards to users who create popular ensembles

Send emails with new updates for user's feed, breaking news, and sales

Offer a Pop Style credit card that gives cash back for purchases that can be redeemed on Pop Style

Notifications when there is activities with my ensembles

Participate in other social networks as a merchandiser - advertise sales and exclusive content

USER JOURNEY MAP

	SIGN UP		SPECIFY		SEE	INTERACTION			BUY
USER JOURNEY	Who are you?		What do you like?		See what you like?	Collect items on boards	Share collections	Follow	Buy items
POP STYLE'S JOURNEY	Gather	Teach	Filter	Curate	Deliver content	Content creation and social activity engagement			Purchasing
WHAT'S HAPPENING	Email Address User Name Privacy Preferences are inputed by the user. Pop Style then begins walking the user through the sites features and activities.		Interest Preferences are chosen by the user (select which Franchises and products they want to see).		The user is transitioned to there homepage that displays things that are trending of their interest. They see news, ensemble boards, new recent items, and create a new ensemble option.	The user can make a new ensemble board, or duplicate and existing board to edit.	The user can share boards with friends, share pictures of the ensembles in real life, comment on ensembles.	The user can follow a ensemble or another user to have new ensembles show up in their homepage feed from that user.	The user can add individual items or complete ensembles to their cart for purchasing.
HOW IT'S HAPPENING	To gather items we add them when licensors/retailers offer them. These get indexed and added to the Pop Style database for users to use on their Ensemble boards. Also users may add items of their own finding from other sites.		The items and ensembles are indexed in the database. When they are entered they are given tags in the following categories: Item Description, Brand, Source link, property, character, color, style. Based on the users selections, there homepage feed will be populated by the content of interests.			The mood board is powered using proprietary software. It is divided into a limited amount of sections that single items may be added to. The mood board keeps track of how much each item costs in the ensemble and shows a total for all the items. Users have the option to add all the items to their cart or a single item at a time.			During the checkout process, users simply pay. The retailer the items came from are paid for the items minus the Pop Style check out/affiliate/referral fee. / Pop Style adds purchased items to your virtual closet so you can always reference if you have something or not at anytime. The closet is divided into what you own, and what you would like to own.
THINKING	Where can I go to find something from _____ movie/comic/show? I need a gift for someone that likes _____. I'm going to a _____ party, I need some ideas for something to wear. Where can I plan out what I'm going to wear? Where can I keep track of what I own in my closet? Where can I discuss and socialize with fans who like _____? Where can I go to feel good about myself? Where can I go to not be judged for the stuff I like?					Can I add items to my ensemble from stores I've found outside of the site? Where can I find reference for ensembles I'm designing? I love this ensemble, how can I tell the creator how much I like it? Can I show off how I look in my ensemble? How can I make sure not to miss any new ensembles from a creator? My friend would love this ensemble, I have to share it with them. I surprised by how fun the ensemble making activity is.			Can I buy all these things without having to go to different stores to checkout? Can I buy just one item on an ensemble? I like everything on this ensemble, but this. What other options are there? How long do I have to wait to get my stuff? Can I keep track of my purchase history/what I own?
FEELING	This process is super easy I'm excited about receiving updates from this creative community					I enjoy receiving updates customized to my interests. Discovering new looks and styles I wouldn't have found anywhere else makes me happy. Joy from creating the ensembles. Relief for being able to find something to wear for a specific type of event.			I'm happy that I can make one transaction to buy all of this stuff. Reliant on being able to track what I have and don't have.
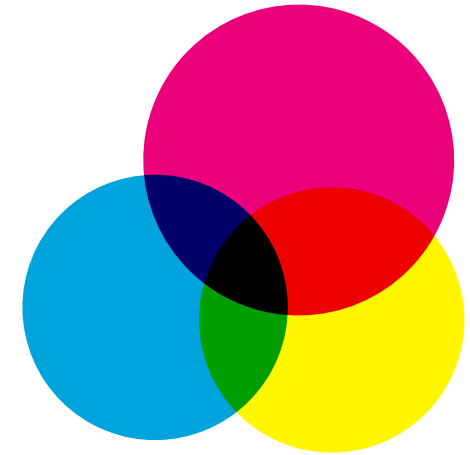
USER NEEDS CONCLUSIONS

After completing the value proposition canvas, persona empathy maps, creative matrix, concentric diagram, five E's, and user journey map, we defined the three pillars of pop style:

CONNECT: Whether connecting with friends and fellow fans or connecting with content creators, one of the most unique aspects of Pop Style is the social networking component. We will deliver on this with social site functionality such as chat and news features.
CONNECTION WITH CONTENT MAKERS, CONNECTION WITH FRIENDS AND FANS

CREATE: Pop culture fans are already curating product collections across social spaces today, without a true dedicated home for this activity. We will deliver on this with a unique user experience that celebrates pop culture fashion and home décor as well as the people that participate in it.
PERSONALIZATION, SHOPPING, STYLE AND CREATIVITY

INSPIRE: Perhaps what sets Pop Style apart more than anything is its commitment to positivity and encouragement. Our user needs research showed that fans are looking for a place to connect without fear of trolls, body shaming or harassment. We will deliver on this with a terms of use that outline anti-harassment and anti-bullying terms of use, and will take it a step further by only promoting quality products that are ethically sourced.
POSITIVITY, POP CULTURE

PART 7

PROTOTYPING &
BRAND DEVELOPMENT
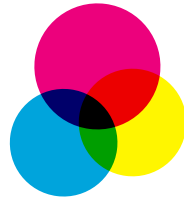
PART 7 OBJECTIVES

Develop a **mock-up of the network site**, including pertinent details, flow, components, images, wireframe of site, and basic function prototype

Define the **network's brand** and how the **business model** strengthens the brand

Create presentation that **captures the initial thought process** for the network and maps the future plans for progress

BRAND DEVELOPMENT AT A GLANCE

Our brand development was guided by the recurring terms and phrases we saw in our persona empathy maps. Some of the sentiments represented positive reactions, while others were fears or pain points users wanted to avoid. We used both sides of the data to make a list of brand attributes.
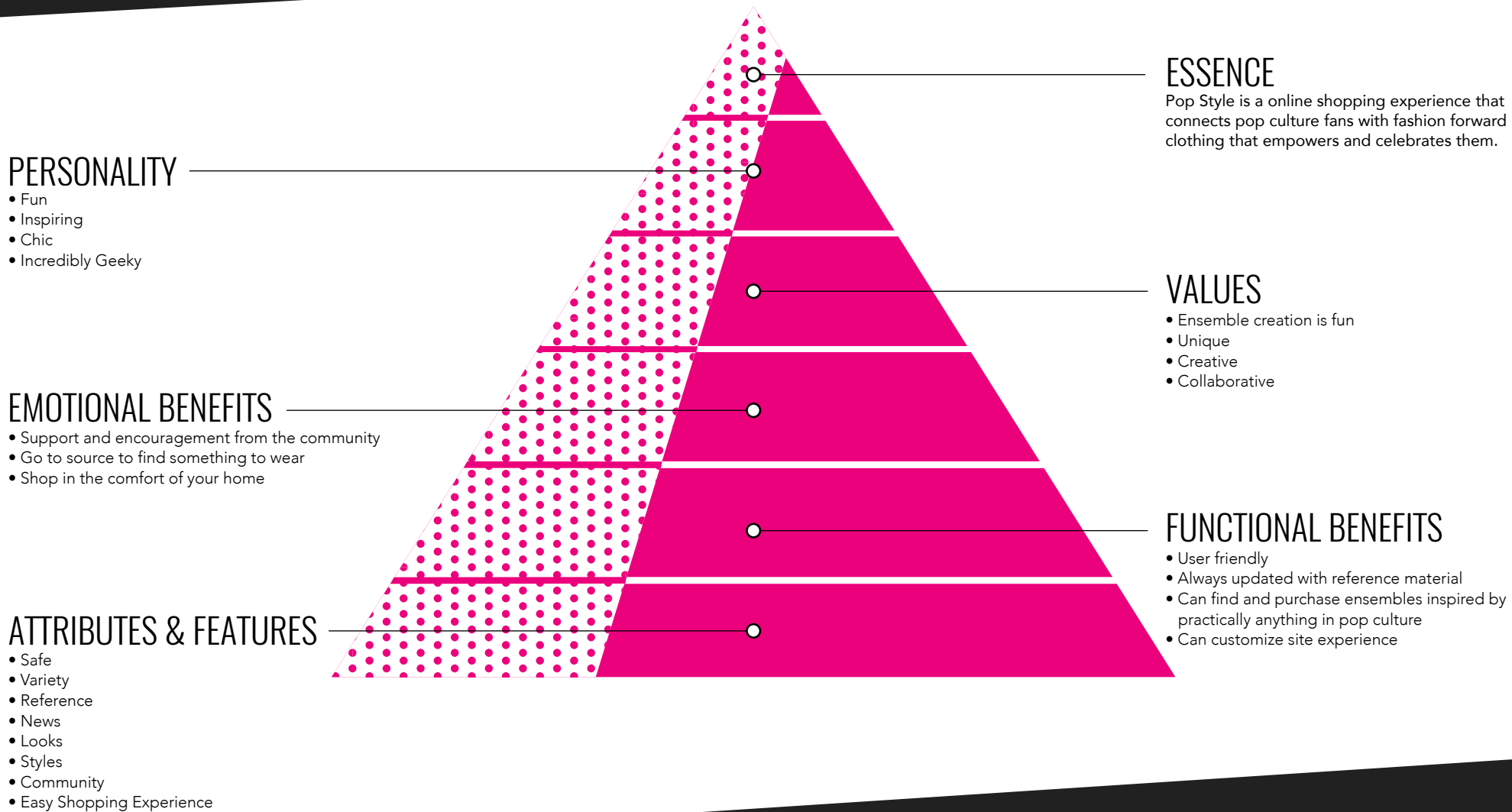
ATTRIBUTES & FEATURES

- Filter
- Fun
- Positive
- Curate
- Engaging
- Customize
- Ideas
- Interaction
- Passion
- Trends
- Exclusive

- Feed
- Friends
- Follow
- Purchase
- Belonging
- Unique
- Community
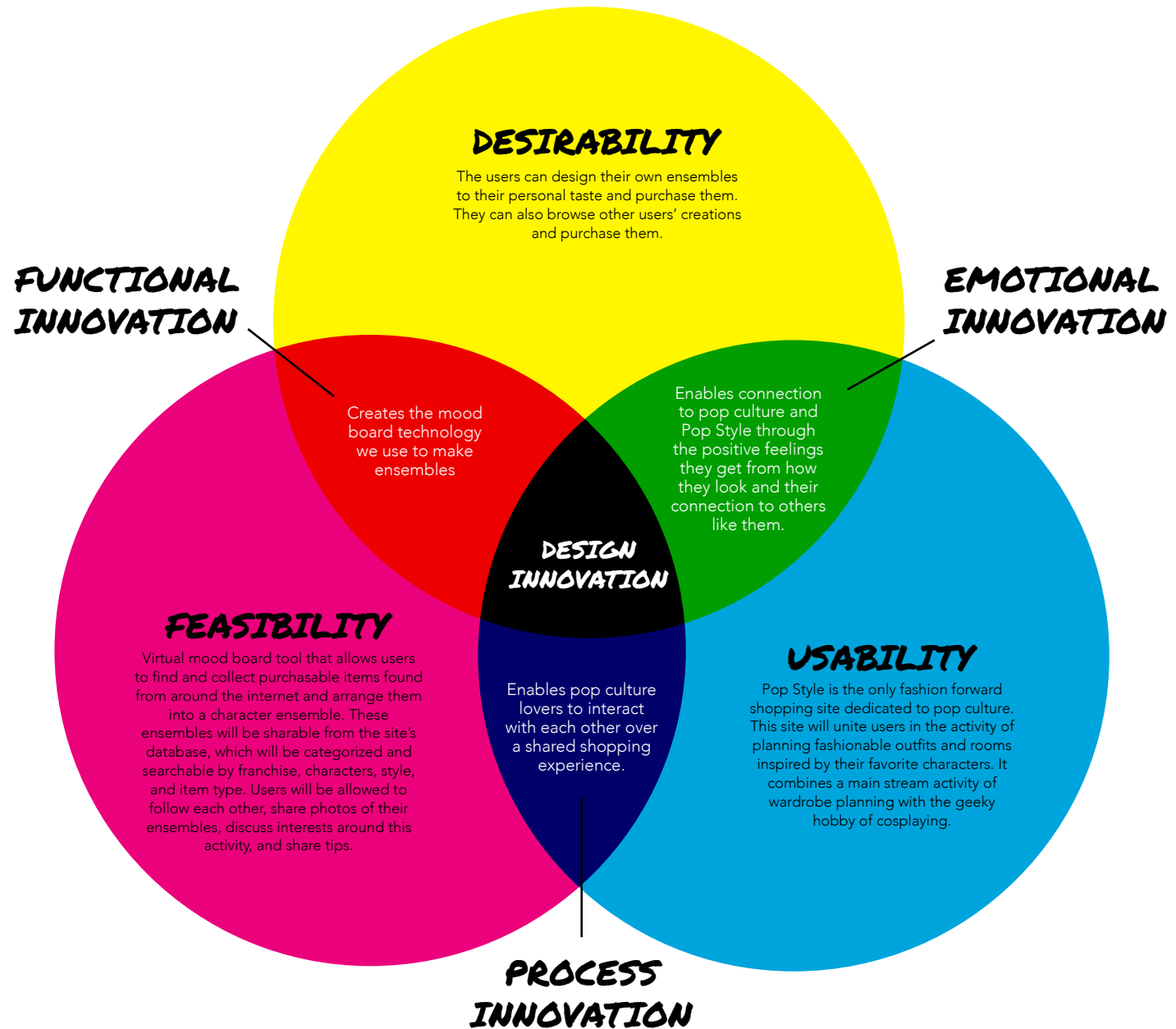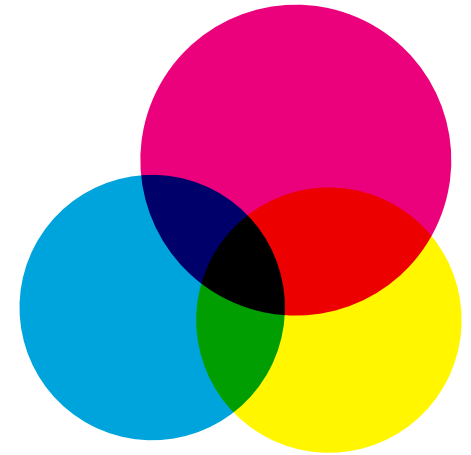- Ensembles
- Activity
- Major brands
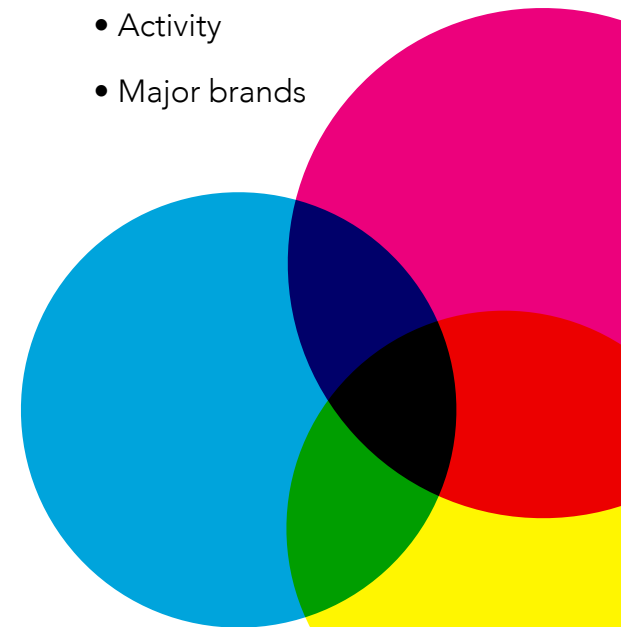
BRAND PYRAMID

Our brand pyramid built off the brand attributes to create a foundation of users' emotional benefits, functional benefits, and values to ultimately help us define Pop Style's brand personality and essence.

ESSENCE
Pop Style is a online shopping experience that connects pop culture fans with fashion forward clothing that empowers and celebrates them.

PERSONALITY
- Fun
- Inspiring
- Chic
- Incredibly Geeky

VALUES
- Ensemble creation is fun
- Unique
- Creative
- Collaborative

EMOTIONAL BENEFITS
- Support and encouragement from the community
- Go to source to find something to wear
- Shop in the comfort of your home

FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS
- User friendly
- Always updated with reference material
- Can find and purchase ensembles inspired by practically anything in pop culture
- Can customize site experience

ATTRIBUTES & FEATURES
- Safe
- Variety
- Reference
- News
- Looks
- Styles
- Community
- Easy Shopping Experience

VENN DIAGRAM

We opted to explore Pop Style's functionality, desirability and feasibility through a Venn Diagram. Before we began to build site maps or lay out user experiences, we wanted to prioritize our site features and evaluate how they fit with the overall strategy of Pop Style.

DESIRABILITY

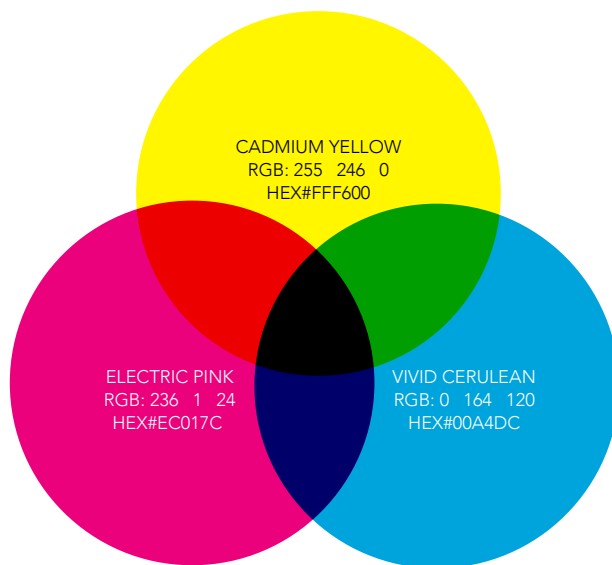The users can design their own ensembles to their personal taste and purchase them. They can also browse other users' creations and purchase them.

FUNCTIONAL INNOVATION

Creates the mood board technology we use to make ensembles

EMOTIONAL INNOVATION

Enables connection to pop culture and Pop Style through the positive feelings they get from how they look and their connection to others like them.

DESIGN INNOVATION

FEASIBILITY

Virtual mood board tool that allows users to find and collect purchasable items found from around the internet and arrange them into a character ensemble. These ensembles will be sharable from the site's database, which will be categorized and searchable by franchise, characters, style, and item type. Users will be allowed to follow each other, share photos of their ensembles, discuss interests around this activity, and share tips.

USABILITY

Pop Style is the only fashion forward shopping site dedicated to pop culture. This site will unite users in the activity of planning fashionable outfits and rooms inspired by their favorite characters. It combines a main stream activity of wardrobe planning with the geeky hobby of cosplaying.

PROCESS INNOVATION

Enables pop culture lovers to interact with each other over a shared shopping experience.
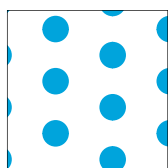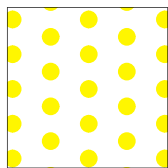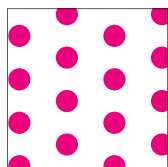
IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

The modern, minimalistic design for Pop Style was strategic and intentional. We know that authenticity is critical for how our users identify their fandoms – Pop Style should be a place that "gets them." The design for Pop Style takes inspiration from the original production process of comic books and uses three simple design themes to convey this brand essence:

HALFTONE DOTS: Comic book production of yesteryear relied on tiny dots of color to create a range of hues beyond the limited ink color palette. Halftone dots are featured prominently in the design, but are brought into the 21st century with angular, single-accent bars in a single color.

OVERSATURATED TONES: Using the iconic "CMYK" formula, Pop Style's color palette celebrates all that can be achieved when we come together in harmony. The bright, quirky colors achieved by layering cyan, magenta, yellow and black are also representative of how many fandoms cross over into one another and how fans interact and support one another.

HANDWRITING MEETS SAN SERIF: A majority of the typefaces used in Pop Style branding are sleek, simple sans serif from the Avenir and Oswald font families. However, in homage to comic books, the Permanent Marker typeface is leveraged for special use to provide a quirky, softer side to the Pop Style branding.

BRAND STYLE GUIDE

CADMIUM YELLOW
RGB: 255 246 0
HEX#FFF600

ELECTRIC PINK
RGB: 236 1 24
HEX#EC017C

VIVID CERULEAN
RGB: 0 164 120
HEX#00A4DC

Avenir Font Family
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0123456789

Oswald Font Family
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
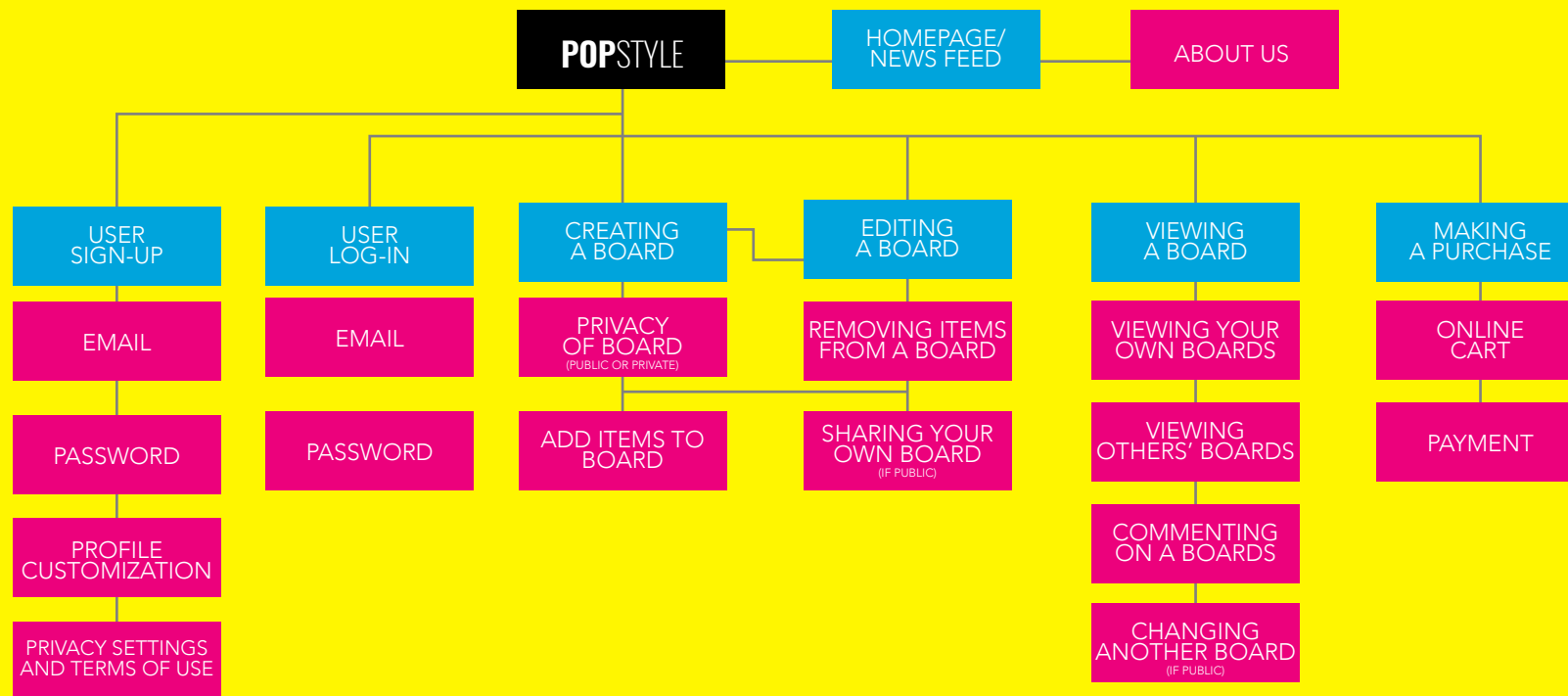Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0123456789

Permanent Marker
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
0123456789

POPSTYLE

POPSTYLE

POP

PROTOTYPE & BRAND DEVELOPMENT
SITE MAP

The user experience of our site was fairly straightforward: users needed to be able to quickly and easily create an account, read news, curate collections, participate in social functions, and make purchases. Although difficult to build into the site map structure, we knew we wanted a high level of customization at every stage in the user journey so they could filter news, collection items, and more by individual fandoms that interested them.
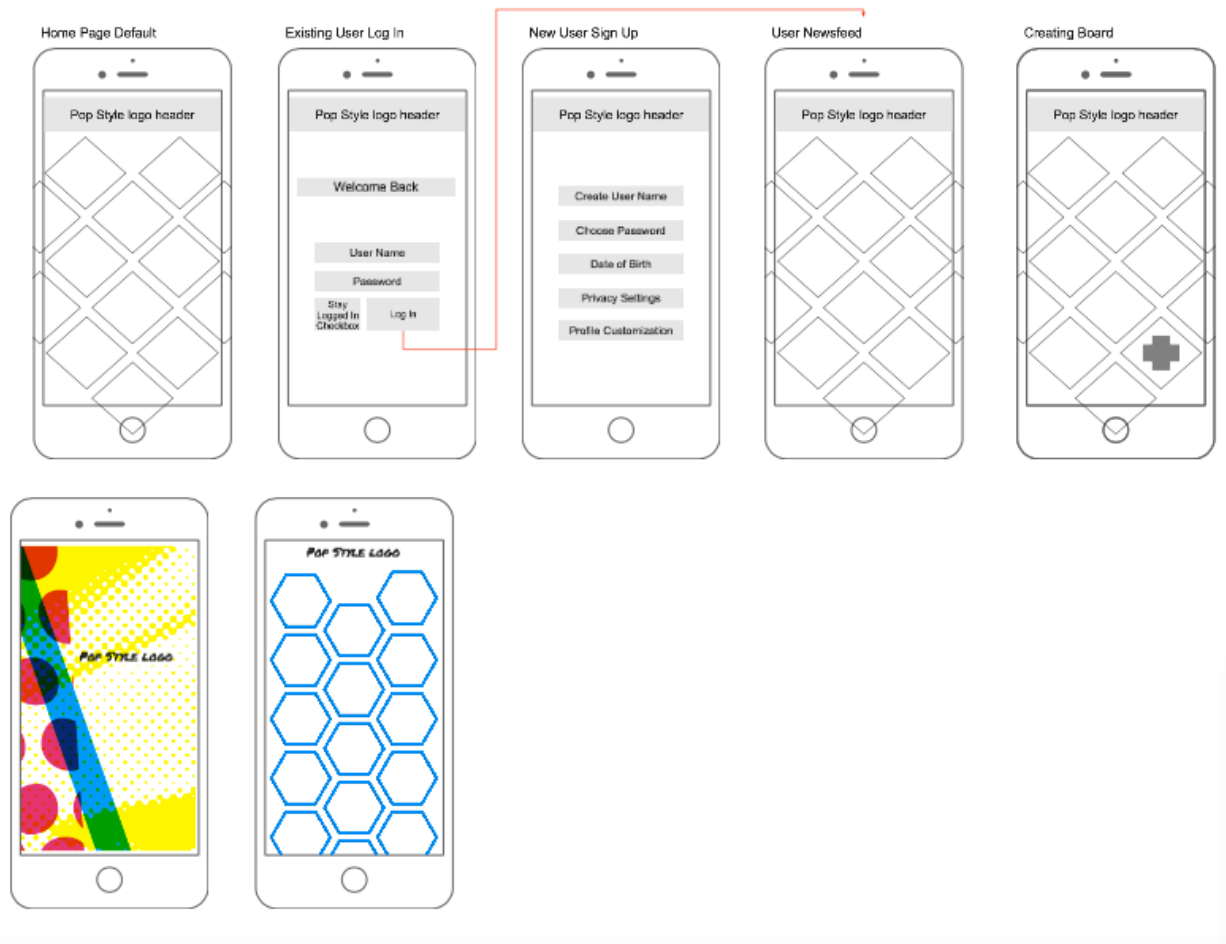
POPSTYLE — HOMEPAGE/ NEWS FEED — ABOUT US

- **USER SIGN-UP**
  - EMAIL
  - PASSWORD
  - PROFILE CUSTOMIZATION
  - PRIVACY SETTINGS AND TERMS OF USE

- **USER LOG-IN**
  - EMAIL
  - PASSWORD

- **CREATING A BOARD**
  - PRIVACY OF BOARD (PUBLIC OR PRIVATE)
  - ADD ITEMS TO BOARD

- **EDITING A BOARD**
  - REMOVING ITEMS FROM A BOARD
  - SHARING YOUR OWN BOARD (IF PUBLIC)

- **VIEWING A BOARD**
  - VIEWING YOUR OWN BOARDS
  - VIEWING OTHERS' BOARDS
  - COMMENTING ON A BOARDS
  - CHANGING ANOTHER BOARD (IF PUBLIC)

- **MAKING A PURCHASE**
  - ONLINE CART
  - PAYMENT

LOW-FIDELITY PROTOTYPE
MOBILE MOCKUP

LET'S RETHINK
Diamond & Hexagonal shapes, not UX friendly. Instead, let's follow Material Design Human Interface Guidelines. This will ensure content is visually appealing, with less constraining guidelines compared to iOS.
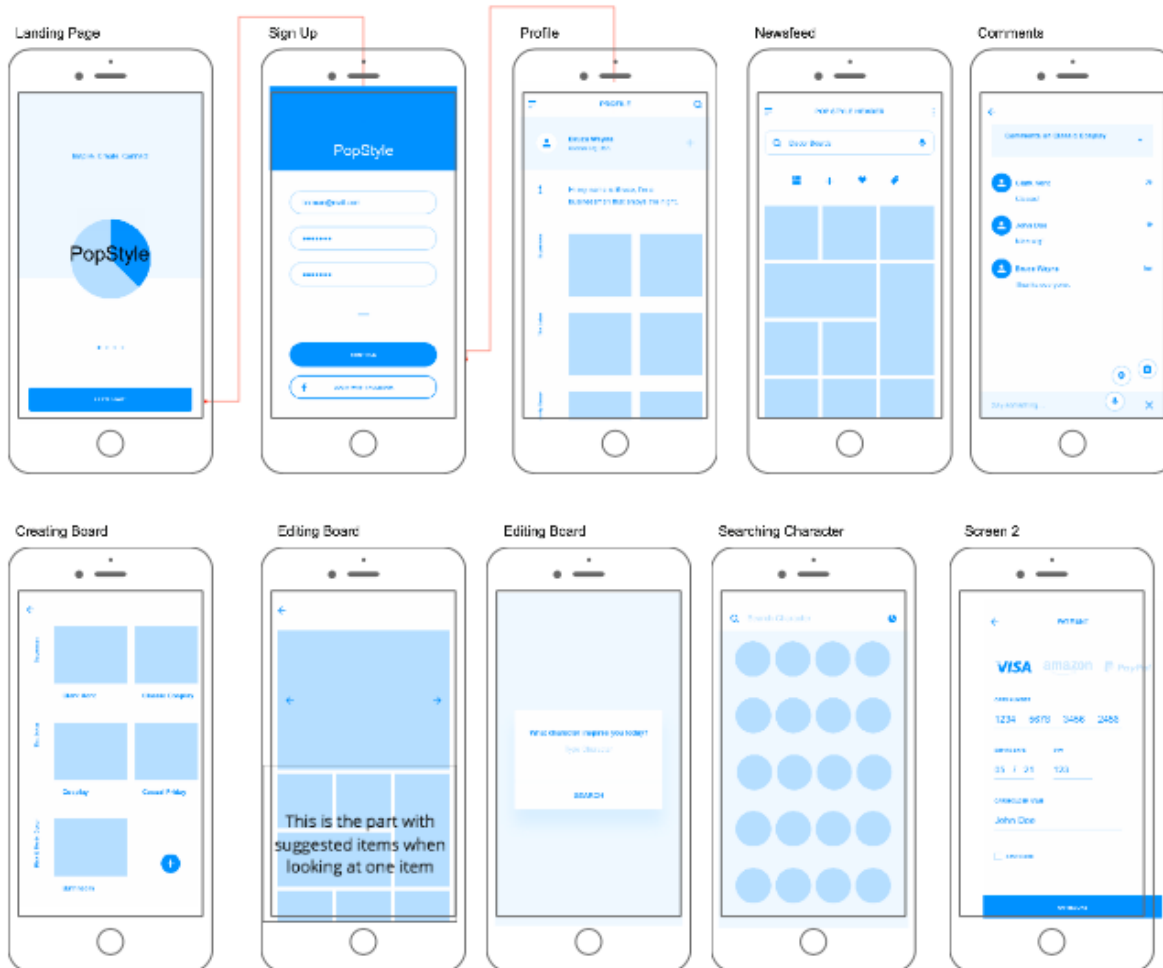
LET'S KEEP
Similar functionality to Polyvore when it comes to creating boards. Refer to the Pop Style brand guide to create a cohesive look.

Home Page Default

Pop Style logo header

Existing User Log In

Pop Style logo header

Welcome Back

User Name

Password

Stay Logged In Checkbox

Log In

New User Sign Up

Pop Style logo header

Create User Name

Choose Password

Date of Birth

Privacy Settings

Profile Customization

User Newsfeed

Pop Style logo header

Creating Board

Pop Style logo header

POP STYLE LOGO

POP STYLE LOGO

Landing Page

Sign Up

Profile

Newsfeed

Comments

Creating Board

Editing Board

Editing Board

This is the part with suggested items when looking at one item

Searching Character

Screen 2

LET'S RETHINK
Visual iconography. Look for ways to be consistent across feeds by either using all circles or all squares.

LET'S KEEP
The way boards are created on the mobile app, with suggested items below the collection. Expand this style into the full site mock-up.

HIGH-FIDELITY PROTOTYPE

MOBILE AND WEB MOCKUP
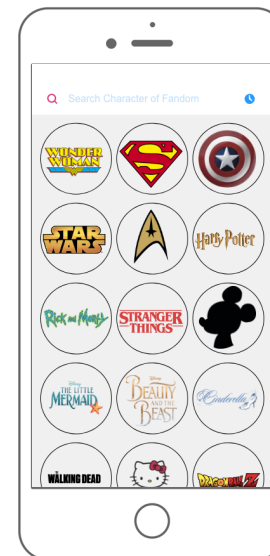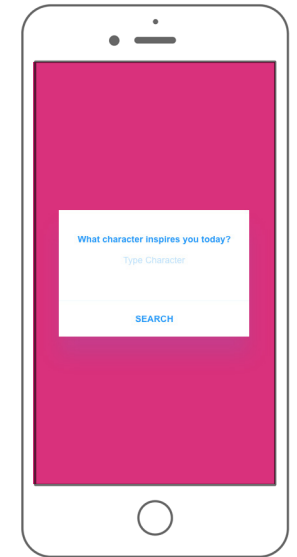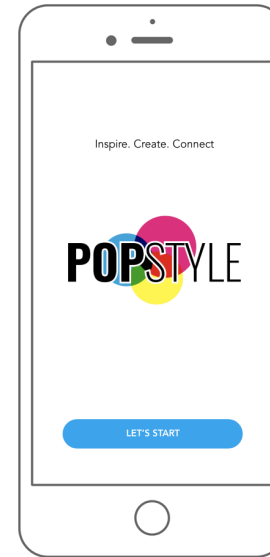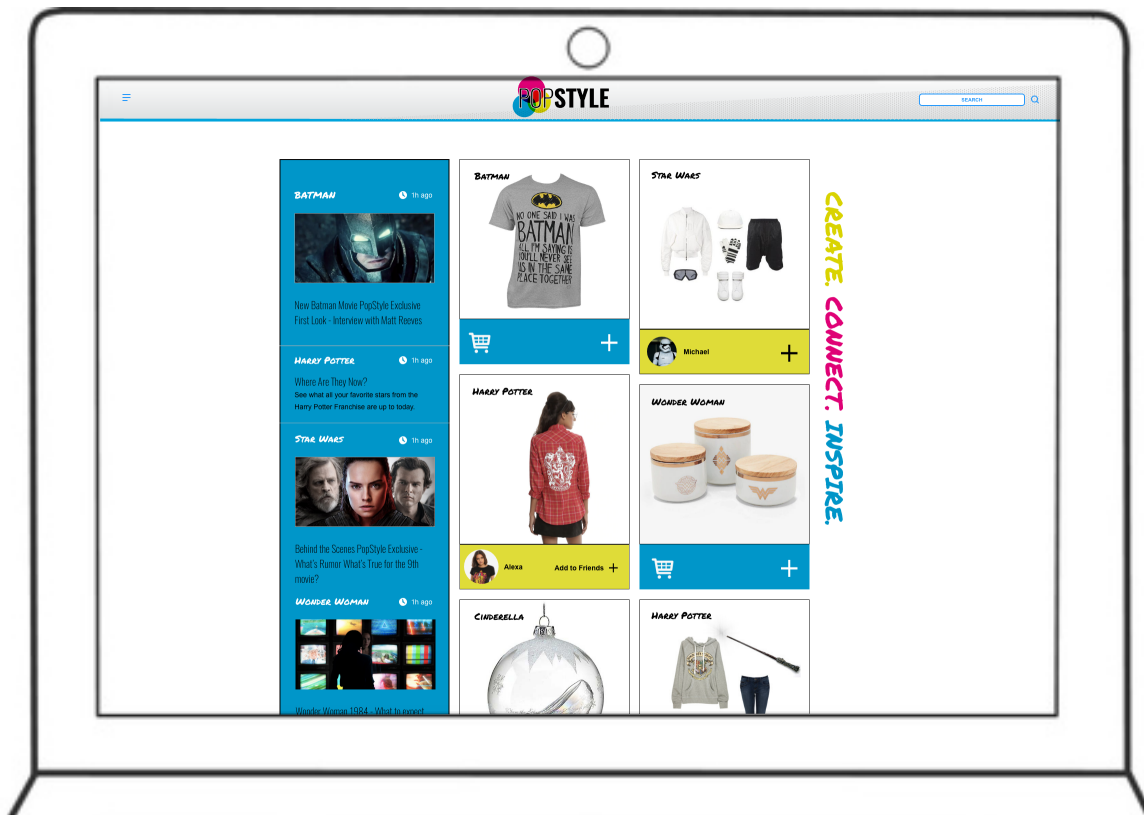
STRENGTHENING THE BUSINESS MODEL

Today's social media marketplace is cluttered, and for Pop Style to be successful, we knew that it had to stand out from the crowd. **It does this because it's a hybrid social network and commerce website.** We anticipated profits coming from a percentage of product sales, as well as the design and development of an exclusive product line. In order to fuel our business needs, we need to ensure users continue to engage with the brand.

We feel that the three pillars of Pop Style strengthen the business model

CONNECT

Pop Style is first and foremost a social network. The connections that users form with each other and the interactions help bring a human element to the online shopping experience. We anticipated that fans would return time and again to the site, not just to design new collections, but to see what their friends and fellow users are doing.

CREATE

Users actively participate with real-world products available for purchase. This act of building collections allows users to indulge in a fantasy of owning the products and using them to style original ensembles and rooms. It's our belief that this participation, combined with an easy-to-use purchasing system, will lead to product sales.

INSPIRE

We designed Pop Style to be an uplifting, positive environment for pop culture fans to come together. This commitment to ethics goes both ways. For users, this means terms of use with zero tolerance for bullying and harassment. For business partners, this means promotion of quality, ethically-sourced products. We felt both areas of this commitment strengthen our business model because they're promises we make to our users.

PART 8

NETWORK
SALES PITCH
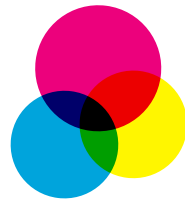
PART 8 OBJECTIVES

Create a three-to five-minute **video commercial or pitch presentation** of the business model that emphasizes the model brand

To view our video, please visit **vimeo.com/300205481** and enter password "**popstyle**".

For Part 8 of our project, we were tasked with putting our work for the past nine weeks into a polished video presentation. While we knew we had an abundance of content we could feature, we chose to deliver a short, compelling look at Pop Style as it fit in the marketplace. We touched only on what the site is, who the site was designed for, and high-level snapshot of the site's functionality. Our hope was that the commercial would spark an interest in investors who would want to learn more.

PART 9

PROCESS
BOOK
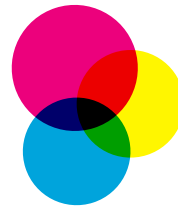
PART 9 OBJECTIVES

Use project methods, experiences, and results to
**create a narrative, comprehensive, verbal-visual
process book** of the entire project

DESIGNING THE PROCESS BOOK

Our group elected to document our research findings each week in a process book. Along the way, we refined the visual style and brand voice of Pop Style. The result is over 100 pages dedicated to the creative origins of Pop Style. Throughout the course term, our group used our interests and experience to shepherd the process. **Travis Watkins** served as project lead, outlining tasks each week and directing the strategic vision for Pop Style. **Brieana Nestler** served as user experience lead, focusing on the service design behind the site's functionality. **Dani Noland** served as the group's information designer, providing graphic design support and copy-writing to help put abstract ideas on paper.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Brieana Nestler
SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
SERVICE DESIGN CLASS OF 2019

As the customer experience lead in our team, I feel the most significant contributions I made to our project were conducting the user research and developing the personas. Since this was my first design management class, every reading, concept, and framework for ideating our social network were completely new tools I had never utilized before. As a Service Design major, I felt most comfortable while conducting research, then using that data to create future customers for Pop Style. While creating them, I combed through the responses we received and the interviews to take the perspective of the user. Since I have been interested in the topic as a user myself, I reminded myself of the User Experience mantra "you are not your user" and was able to develop 8 unique fictional people who would potentially be a customer on our site. Our team then fully fleshed out their full biographies and empathy maps, but these personas were a significant part of Pop Style's ideation and the final product.
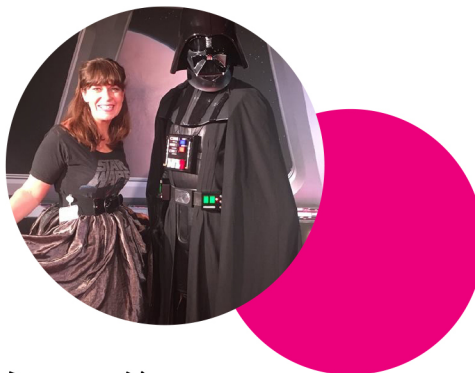
Dani Noland
SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
DESIGN MANAGEMENT CLASS OF 2019

When I began DMGT-720, I had no idea that at the end of the course, we'd have a social network concept that was so unique or as fully realized as Pop Style. The prospect of finding white space in a world so dominated by sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter was daunting, which is why I'm so glad our group thought small instead of large. By focusing on a niche market that's under-served, like cosplayers are in the Pop Style model, we were able to "zag" when other social networks are "zigging." We created an intimate but very strategic community built entirely for our target demographic. To me, the most interesting component of the learning process was synthesizing the data from the user personas into the Creative Matrix in Part 5. Having so much content to sort through was overwhelming at the outset, but once we started to see the patterns emerge, it help us define themes that were critical to the Pop Style brand. From there, we were able to use personalization, shopping, positivity, connection with content makers, connection with friends and fans, style and creativity and pop culture as guiding principles that informed the remainder of the project. The Creative Matrix was also a great chance to collaborate with the group in real time, using our online working wall to sort the individual data points. I'm so pleased with the final results. As a fan myself, I would love to see a site like Pop Style join the social media landscape someday.

Travis Watkins
SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
DESIGN MANAGEMENT CLASS OF 2019

Never in a million years would I have thought that I would work on a design for an online fashion shopping social network. But that is the magic of the user-centered design process. Being fans of pop culture ourselves and our familiarity with the ways in which it is commonly consumed and celebrated provided an interesting challenge for adding something new to the social landscape. I'm forever grateful for being introduced to Marty Neumeier's ZAG presentation. The 17-Step Process was invaluable for discovering white space in the crowded pop culture market and then constructing communication of the value of that space to others. For me the magic really took place when we were challenged to formulate an ABC-Q solution for our network. Studying the personas and empathy maps that we created, the Q solution presented itself in an interesting way. By feeling the pain, fear, and challenges in the everyday lives of our pop-culture-loving users we discovered our answers by looking to their heroes. Most pop culture icons fight injustices and stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves. What would be more amazing than a community of super hero fans that come together to fight important social causes that are plaguing everybody?

COSPLAYERS
& POP CULTURE

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