

Local Vocal App Design

Raphael Battle

Project overview



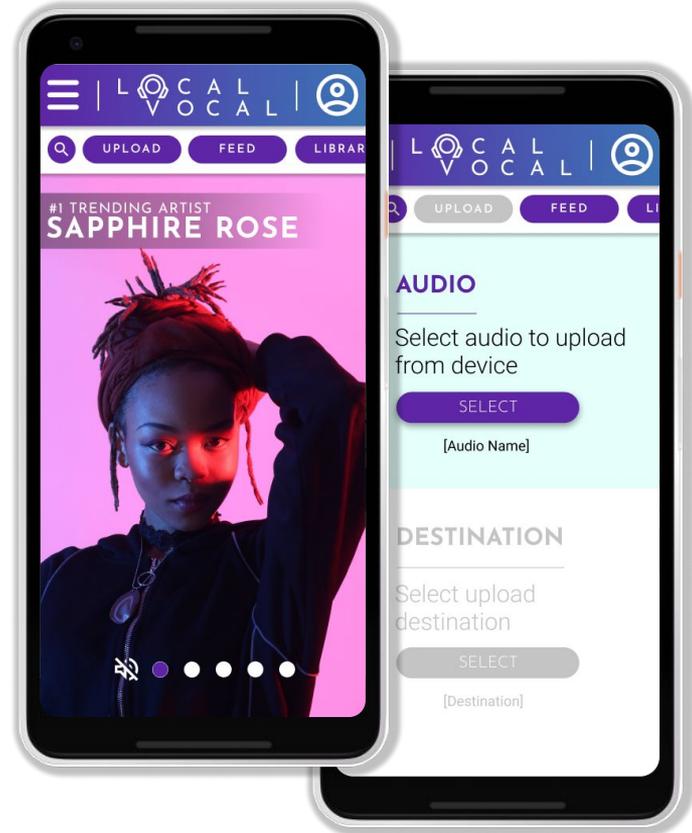
The product:

LOCAL VOCAL, an app where local creatives - musicians, artists, producers - and music enthusiast can build community, connect, create & collaborate.



Project duration:

March 2021 to October 2021



Project overview



The problem:

Artists with demanding schedules lack time necessary to build a following.



The goal:

Design an app that allows local creatives to collaborate and increase their online presence.

Project overview



My role:

UX designer designing a music sharing app from conception to delivery.



Responsibilities:

Conducting interviews, paper and digital wireframing, low and high-fidelity prototyping, conducting usability studies, accounting for accessibility, and iterating on designs.

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary



I conducted interviews to understand pain points that users have with regards to music sharing apps. I created empathy maps and personas to better understand the users and their needs. A primary user group identified through the research were professionals that were music enthusiasts who wanted more from their music sharing apps.

During my research, I revisited my prompt, *“Design a music sharing app for a trendy musician”*, before conducting my first usability study. I decided to pivot to more clearly defining the user as a musician. I did this to be more true to the prompt, because when the phrase, “music sharing app” was initially used it was mostly associated with music streaming apps like Spotify and Apple Music, which are more static; usually limited to only listening to audio. This pivot was not obstructive since the majority of the primary user group were musicians.

User research: pain points

1

Personalized curation

Professionals want music that speak to their interest.

2

Offline mode

Platforms do not easily switch to offline mode when WiFi becomes unavailable.

3

Navigation

Platforms have confusing interfaces that are not intuitive.

4

Unique features

Offerings that separate the app from the other major music sharing apps.

Persona: Emma

Problem statement:

Emma is a System Administrator who needs an app that will streamline the process of increasing their online presence because their job is time consuming and they don't have time to build their presence from scratch.



Emma

Age: 31

Education: Bachelor of Science degree

Hometown: Silver Springs, Maryland

Family: Lives with roommate

Occupation: System Administrator / Independent Artist

"I want an app offers tailored music and the ability to grow as an artist "

Goals

- To maintain network according to protocol of client and identify vulnerabilities.
- To be able to maintain focus while working in order to catch the small issues before they spread across the network.
- To find time to grow my representation as an independent artist.

Frustrations

- "When the feed is random."
- "When the music just doesn't correlate on the playlist."
- "The app is hard to navigate."

Emma is a System Administrator for a company with hundreds of users. They maintain the network with protocols and troubleshoot issues for users. Emma requires a level of focus to mitigate issues in real time in order to stop them from spreading across the network. They achieve this focus by listening to music that matches the mood and level of stress. Sometimes Emma can be taken out their workflow with songs on a playlist they are listening to that do not match the overall mood. Emma specifically would like there to be app that has music that speaks to them and encourages growth for artists..

User journey map

Mapping Emma's user journey revealed how helpful it would be for users to be able to tag music and filter feed.

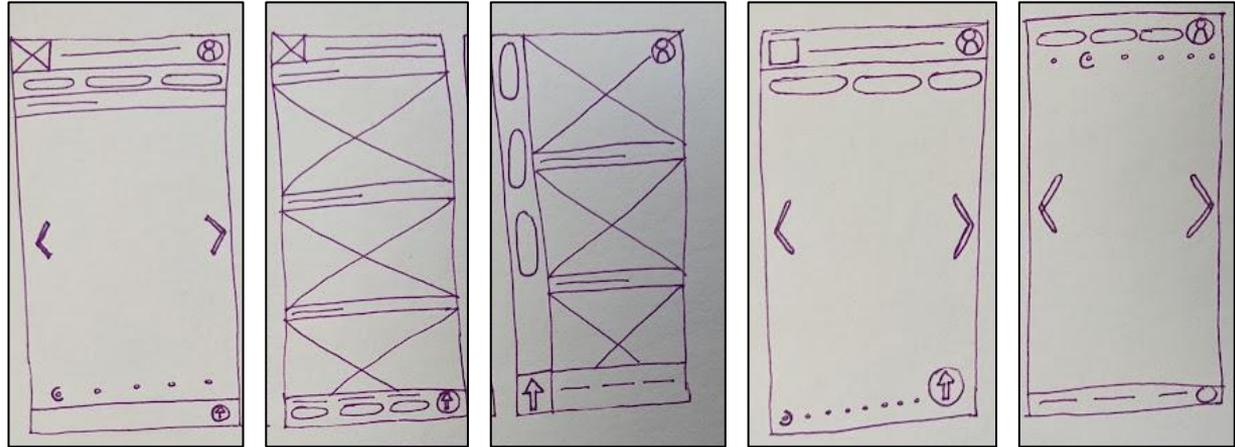
Persona: Emma

Goal: Streamline the process of increasing online presence

ACTION	Download app	Build Page	Upload audio	Browse Artists	Connect
TASK LIST	A. Go to app store on phone B. Download music sharing app C. Sign up for a personal account	A. Log in to music app B. Fill out biography	A. Upload music to app library. B. Tag music C. Upload to major platforms of choice	A. Discover artists B. Discover music C. Follow favorites	A. Follow favorite artists B. Reach out to collaborate
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Excited about new app Annoyed by the sign up process for the many different apps	Excited by the design of the app and focused on the wording of bio	Happy about selection of music that will be uploaded	Excited about a new artist and their music	Nervous about message sent to newly discovered artist
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Create a web base platform Give app dark mode option for contrast	Allow for biometric sign in Add bio for artists	Display percentage upload rate and allowed space	Show stats of artists , allow option to make public	Have feed with filter (e.i., genre, mood, etc.)

Paper wireframes

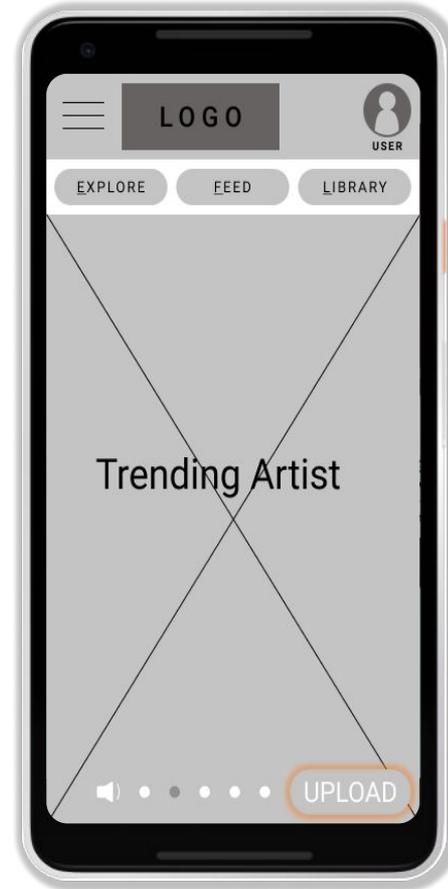
Brainstormed the layout of a screen that would be found in the app and the possible placement of elements on the screen.



Digital wireframes

While designing, I considered how to enhance visuals with images that maximized screen real estate. I also wanted an intuitive navigation interface.

Navigation bar for users to move to different pages.



Top five trending artist's cover page.

Floating Upload button for quick access to main user flow.

Digital wireframes

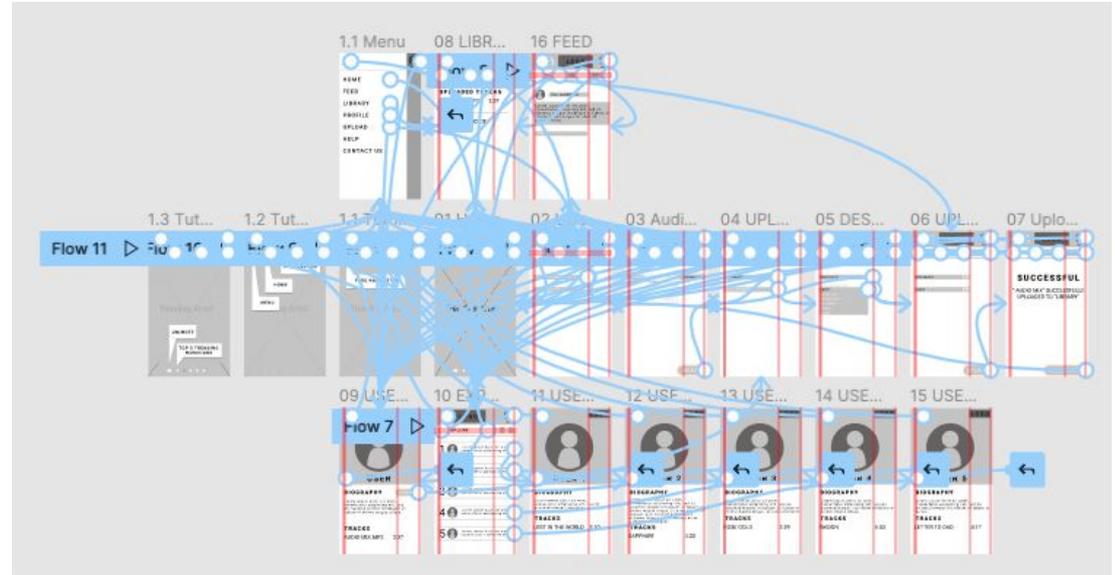
I choose to make the upload process- a main user flow- simplistic. The simplicity helps to make the app more user friendly.

**Simplified
upload process.**



Low-fidelity prototype

I used the digital wireframes to model my low-fidelity prototype. The main user flow of the app was centered around the uploading process, so I connected this flow in order to study this process in the usability study.



View the Local Vocal:
[Low-fidelity prototype](#)

Usability study: parameters (first)



Study type:

Unmoderated



Location:

Remote, US



Participants:

Three males, two females between the ages of 30-65.

One participant was a person with a visual impairment.



Length:

5-10 minutes

Usability study: parameters (second)



Study type:

Unmoderated



Location:

Remote, US



Participants:

Three males, two females between the ages of 25-50.

One participant was a person with a visual impairment.



Length:

5-10 minutes

Usability study: findings

I conducted two rounds of usability studies. The findings from the first usability study aided the direction I took to change my wireframes to mockups, then to the high-fidelity prototype which I used in the second usability study.

Round 1 findings

- 1 Users need a button to update their profiles.
- 2 Users want a more intuitive User Interface.
- 3 Users want more direction to execute the upload process.

Round 2 findings

- 1 Users want upload process to be more simplified.
- 2 Users want a simple tour to familiarize them with the app's features.

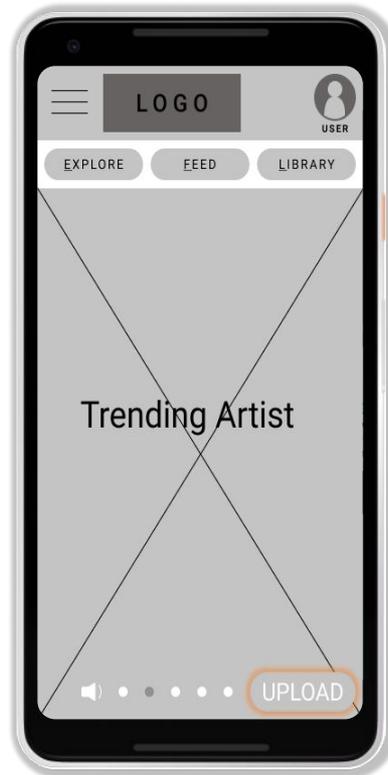
Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

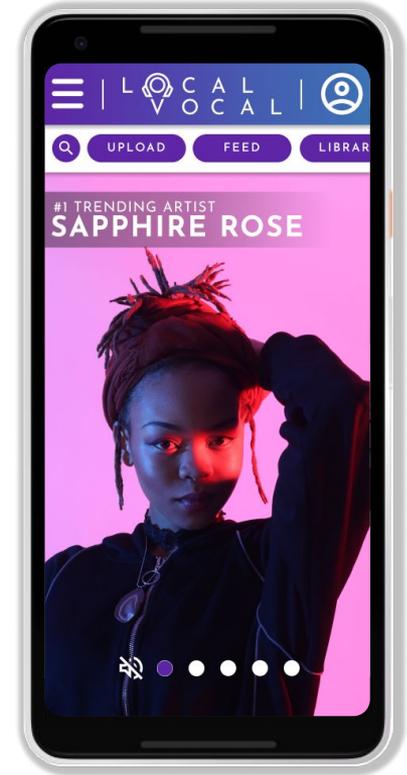
Mockups

In my initial design, I made the upload button a Floating Action Button (FAB) that was in the bottom right corner. After the study, I moved the upload button to the top of the screen for better visibility.

Before usability study



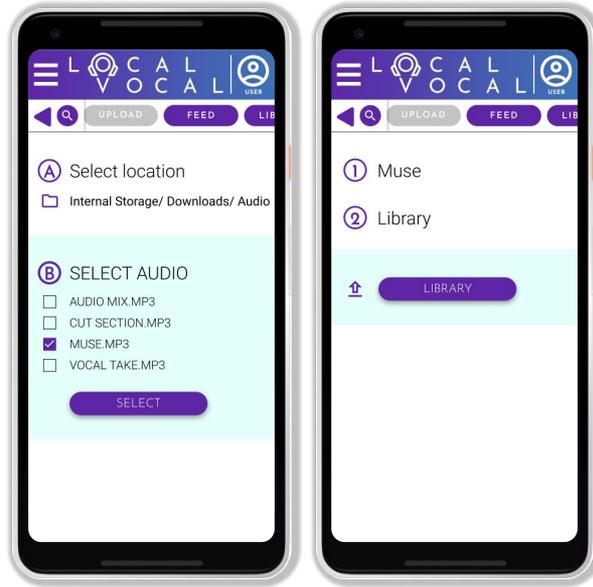
After usability study



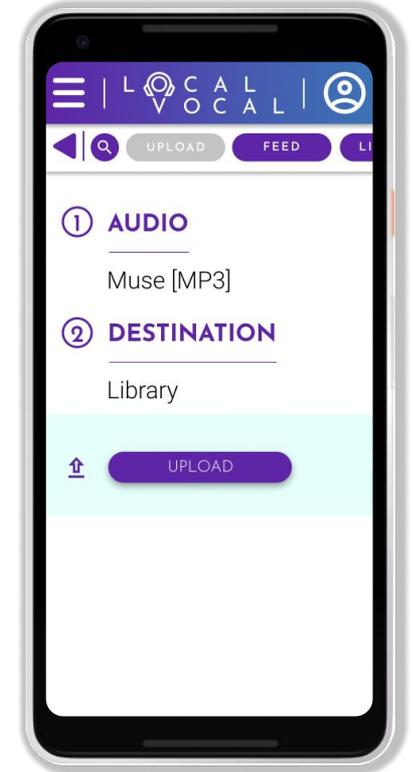
Mockups

The second usability study revealed confusion with the main user flow-uploading audio. To improve the user flow, I got rid of the subcategory "A" & "B", then had each action be identified under category "1 - audio" or "2 - destination".

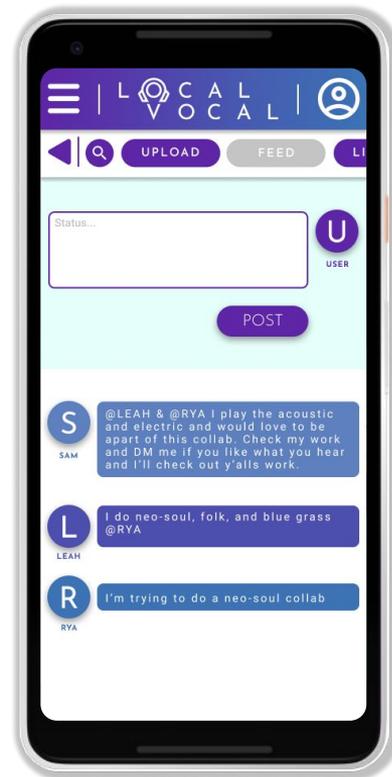
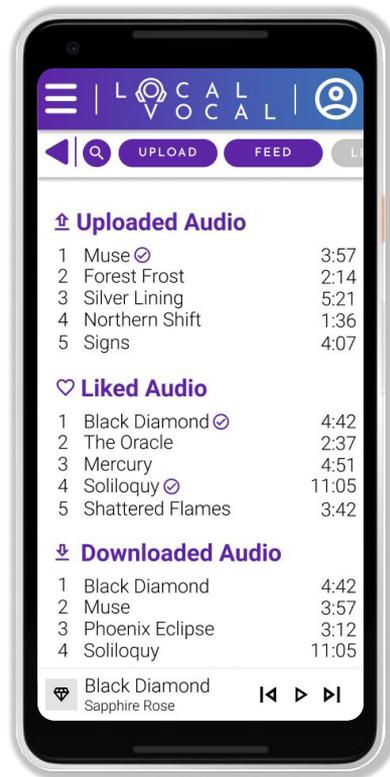
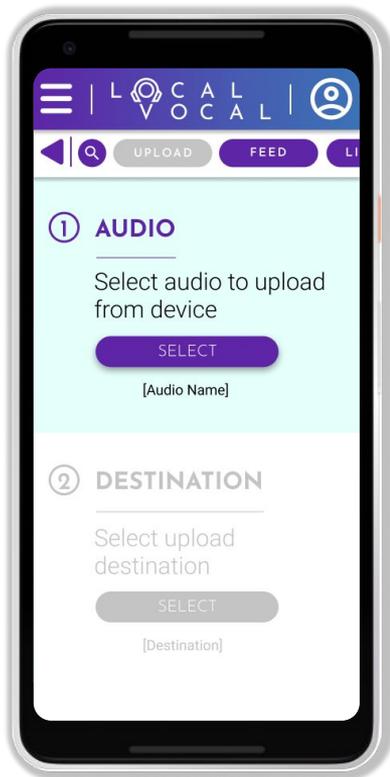
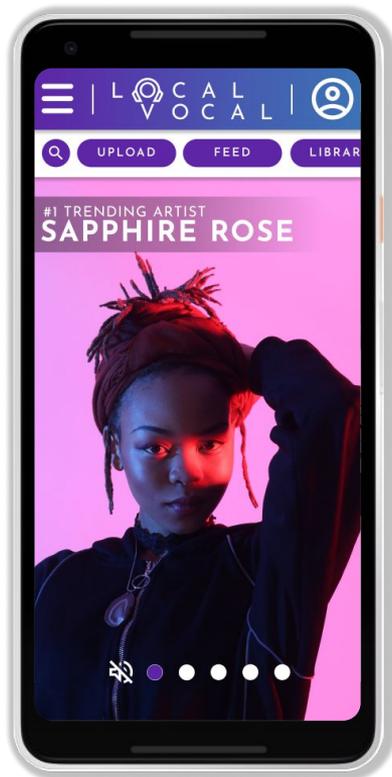
Before usability study 2



After usability study 2

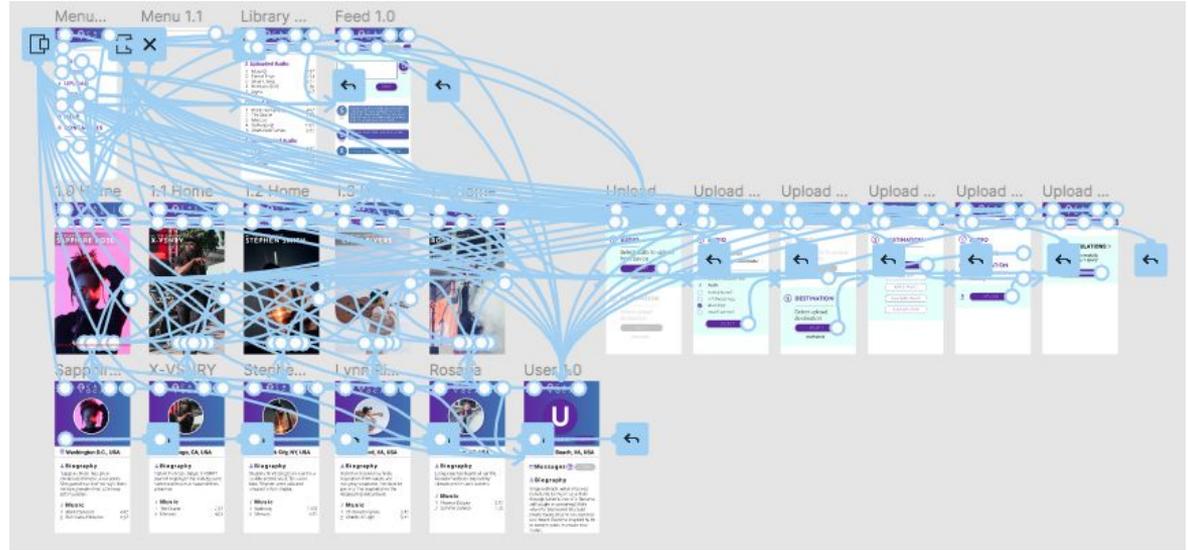


Mockups



High-fidelity prototype

The final high-fidelity prototype presented a clear upload process and flushed out the user flow for accessing the library, feed, menu, user profile, and the top five trending artists' profile pages. I also made customizations to the home screen to auto scroll.



View the Local Vocal:
[high-fidelity prototype](#)

Accessibility considerations

1

Accessibility was considered through the color palette choice and contrast. The colors in the app were tested and align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

2

Accessibility was considered throughout the user flow in the prototypes when making connections. Multiple ways were created to navigate through the app.

3

Accessibility was considered by making sure both usability test included participants with visual impairments. Iterations were made to have larger hotspots for small elements for better accessibility.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

The app makes users feel apart of community and considers how to help them grow their presence.

One quote from peer feedback:

“This app is great..., It will help me to get my music out there.”



What I learned:

While designing the Local Vocal app, I learned that there is a lot of planning and many iterations that go into the development process. Usability studies and peer feedback influenced my designs, and helped me to consider perspectives outside of my own.

Next steps

1

Conduct another round of usability studies to confirm that the last iterations addressed the users pain points.

2

Iterate design according to the findings from the usability study.

Let's connect!



Thank you for taking time to review my work on the Local Vocal app! If you'd like to see more of my work or get in touch, my contact information is provided below.

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Thank you!