CSE 440 - 2G: Design Review
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Why we chose this design:

Through our contextual inquiries, we discovered that many people want to learn more about current political news, but find it a bit overwhelming to sift through multiple news outlets. Our target audience would like an easy solution for receiving the news in one place. We chose a standalone phone application because a smartphone is something that most people in our target audience already own and have on their person throughout the day. Our contextual inquiry participants revealed that they generally read the news during downtime or times of passing (for example, as they walk to class, drive to work, etc.); using a mobile device to listen to podcasts or read news stories enabled our participants to get their news while they accomplish other tasks. During the day, our phone app has the ability to send the user instant push notifications to alert them of ongoing news development. The individuals we're designing for are college students, and our contextual inquiry participants revealed that smartphone use is a popular and familiar medium for news consumption amongst their peers. The phone app design would therefore require a minimal learning curve for new users. Our target audience wants to become informed in the most efficient, seamless manner possible, and we believe that the "focused" nature of mobile app layouts will aid this goal. A mobile app will allow us to provide our users with an easily parsable interface that aggregates news stories into a single endpoint.

Although our "smart house" design enabled users to receive their news in a passive manner, we recognize that this is a "future" design that is not plausible to implement in the near future. The "smart house" also introduces privacy concerns because a user's news stories would be deeply embedded in their private space. It would also create an invasive environment when users are in the company of others. We also prefer the smartphone application over the social media extension/add-on because we don't want to limit what users see to just what people they are friends with or follow post. However, we recognize the importance of social media to our users, and we will incorporate said social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) into our smartphone application designs going forward.

Why we chose these tasks:

The first task that we decided to focus on was "Socializing with Friends, Both Online and Offline" because our contextual inquiries found that one of the most important parts of learning about political news is being able to talk about it with friends. Knowledge of current political issues is transferred between individuals through conversation, as well as in passing through posts on social media. Individuals emphasized that in social situations, it is important to be able to keep up with what their friends are talking about. Additionally, friends tend to influence the type of news that individuals are interested in.
(See Figure 1)

The second task that we chose to focus on was "Personalizing News Consumption." We found through our contextual inquiries that individuals are more motivated to learn about political news when it has personal relevance to their own lives. (Relating to the previous task, what an individual's friends are interested in also counts as being personally relevant.) One of the current issues with the task of finding political news is that there is too much information to wade through in order to find personally relevant and interesting posts. (See Figure 2)

These tasks are more compelling than the other tasks (following development of stories, comparing different perspectives, privacy, gauging general opinion of a region on a topic) because our other four tasks are subcategories of "Personalizing News Consumption" and "Socializing with Friends, Both Online and Offline"; our other four tasks augment these two core features. We believe that our two main tasks - "Personalizing News Consumption" and "Socializing with Friends, Both Online and Offline" - provide the motivation for engaging in our other four tasks; without "Personalizing News Consumption" and "Socializing with Friends, Both Online and Offline," our other four tasks would not exist.

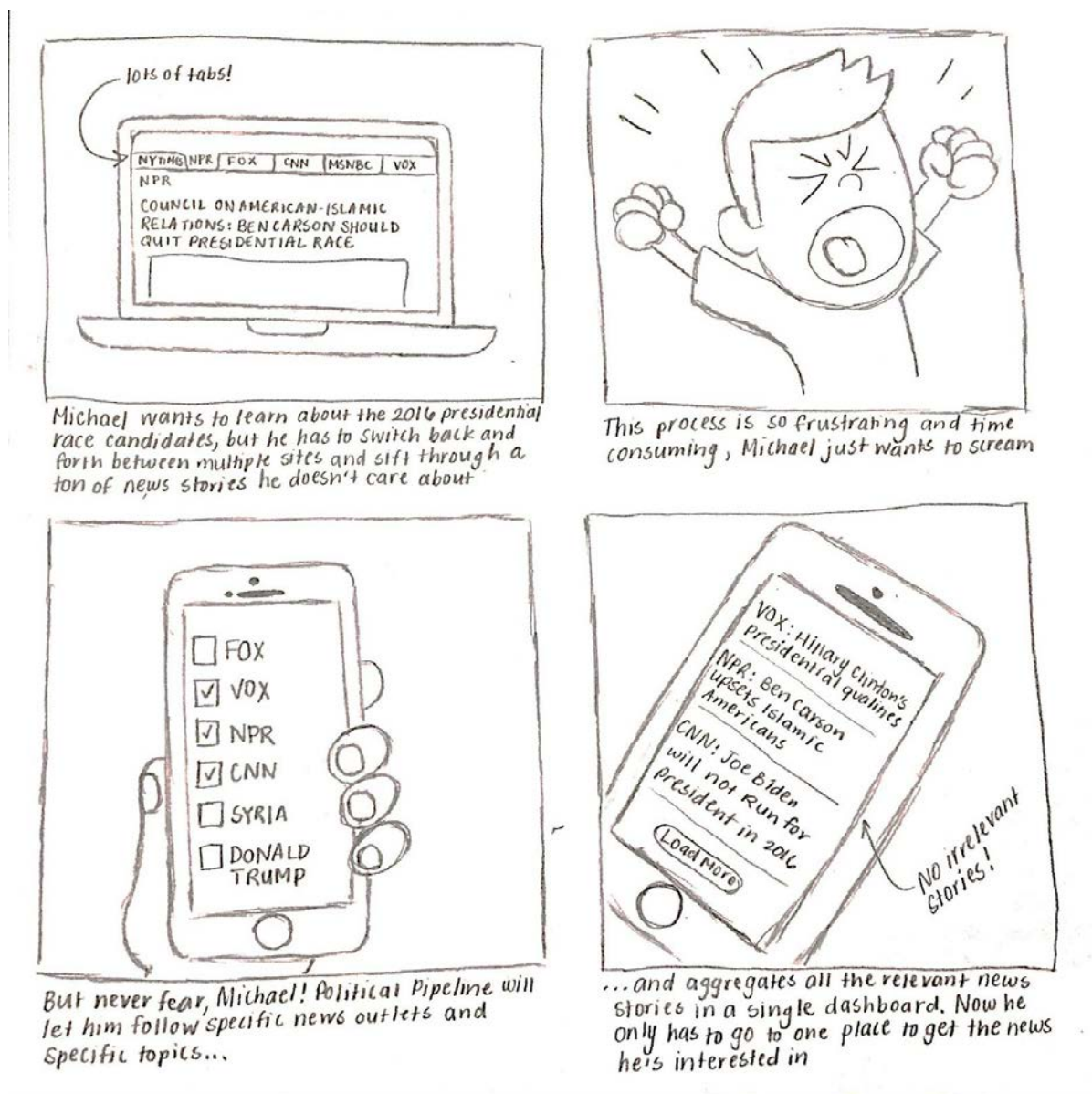**Figure 1** "Socializing with Friends, Both Online and Offline"

Figure 2 "Personalizing News Consumption"