

Product Management Career Accelerator

FilmSlate Business Case

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1. Product description

This streaming platform offers the largest catalogue of independent films, enabling users to discover never before seen content with a personalised and easy to navigate user interface. New content is consistently added to keep our customers entertained. Featured film recommendations and smart categorisation give the user a personalised experience to quickly find what they are looking for that matches their taste. This is achieved through a new product feature that suggests film titles to the user, during onboarding, from which the user selects titles that they watched and found interesting or haven't watched but would like to. Users have the ability to receive in-depth information around a film's background, theme, references, and influences to enhance their film knowledge by watching mini-documentaries attached to films. They can then discuss their film knowledge, passions and share recommendations with other users through a social community forum. Signing up is quick and intuitive, making it simple to start watching curated independent movies tailored to the users' preferences right away.

Indie Addicts are independent film enthusiasts whom enjoy discovering and discussing indie films with like-minded individuals, through Reddit, film articles and podcasts. They want a streaming service that makes finding new indie films easy with further information on the background of the films they like. They struggle to find a streaming service that is personalized to their interests and has a large library to never run out of films to watch. This leaves them feeling deflated and frustrated as they resort to other (illegal streaming) methods, that do not provide the required quality or satisfactory experience, to find what they are looking for.

2. Product strategy

For FilmSlate to achieve its mission, the service must look to acquire and retain new customers. By personalizing the sign-up and onboarding process through user film selection prior to entering the home page, we can train a recommendation engine to tailor the film suggestions to a particular user and make finding new films of interest easy for our target customer. By adding user account image personalization, we can make our customers feel important and part of a community. By addressing these pain points, customers will see FilmSlate as the best viewing experience for independent films and champion our platform, increasing both customer acquisition and retention.

GOALS:

Reduce the time required to complete user onboarding by 30% in the next quarter.

This will aid in the acquisition of new customers as simplifying the sign up procedure creates greater accessibility to new users. Achieved by reducing the number of pages required to sign-up and making the user interface intuitive.

Increase the number of users that remain subscribed for more than one year by 30% in a year.

Retaining new customers after sign up is a key metric that is aimed to be satisfied and requires some time to be measurable. Achieved through personalizing the film suggestions and categories of every user, making them have a greater user experience.

Increase customer recommendations by 10% in one year.

By making customers champion our product, recommendations to new customers will boost sales and increase customer acquisition. Achieved through an unrivalled viewing experience that allows users to discover independent films they are interested in more easily.

3. Market analysis

From Figure 7, two companies were analysed, Mubi and Kanopy (points specific to Mubi are in grey and points specific to Kanopy are in black), from which many opportunities can be leveraged by us. Firstly, a large film library will help the service differentiate itself within the market by having more variety than competitors. Keeping the library consistent across all served countries may be difficult due to regulations in each country being different and competitors winning out on exclusive film rights in a particular country. However, utilising a distributed global server infrastructure and creating a smart and intuitive user interface, combined with a recommendation engine, will enhance the user experience. This provides customers with a fast and easy to use personal service, which will incentivise them to return regularly to the platform. This may be expensive so it will be difficult to keep pricing low, but when successful will yield high return-on-investment. We should aim to reduce costs where possible to provide accessible pricing that undercuts competitors.

Serving customers with unique films that they find of interest to them personally will attract more users to the platform, as there are no current offerings on the market that meet this need. Account personalisation helps foster community amongst users and assist in an immersive user experience, which is not being executed well by competitors.

4. User analysis

The Indie Addict is an extreme independent film enthusiast who wants to easily discover films they have not seen and dive deeper into the background behind a film. They want to be a part of a like-minded community with which they can share their passions and knowledge. They are well connected online and know of similar products on the market. They fear that subscribing to a streaming service may be a waste of money as they will run out of interesting things to watch.

Figure 10 helps us focus on our target audience and extract detailed information on what they want from our product, to help develop a feature that is useful and necessary. It conveys the users' behaviours, making it easy to predict how the user will look to interact with our product. We can infer that users are driven to be an independent film expert. They seek a personalised onboarding experience which tailors films to their taste and respects their knowledge of the genre. This highlights new opportunities that can be incorporated into the development of new features and uncovers any potential gaps that may have existed previously in the product.

USER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Goal: Understand what makes indie addicts remain subscribed to a streaming service.

INTRO

Welcome [Participant],

I am Amin and I am working on behalf of FilmSlate. We are developing a new streaming service that specialises in independent films. In order to do this, we are conducting some interviews to better understand perspectives on streaming services. Any information shared is confidential and will not be shared publicly. I'd like to thank you for taking some time to participate and welcome any questions you may have for me before we start?

General

- 1) Tell me how you use a streaming service you subscribe to?
- 2) Think of why you stopped subscribing to a particular streaming service that you were previously subscribed to?

Specific

- 3) Why do you use streaming services?
- 4) What are you missing from streaming services that you wish they did?

Follow-up

- 5) How do you get around this/these problems?

CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of the interview. Again, I'd like to thank you for taking time to share your experiences openly. This will really help us develop a service that meets yours and other's needs. We have further interviews taking place, after which we will collate all our data into actions for growing the service. If you are interested, we will share progress updates with you through email. You can also get in touch with us via email [email address] if you have any additional information you would like to share or questions you would like to ask. Is there anything you would like to ask before we finish today?

5. Product-market fit

Figure 1. Mind Map

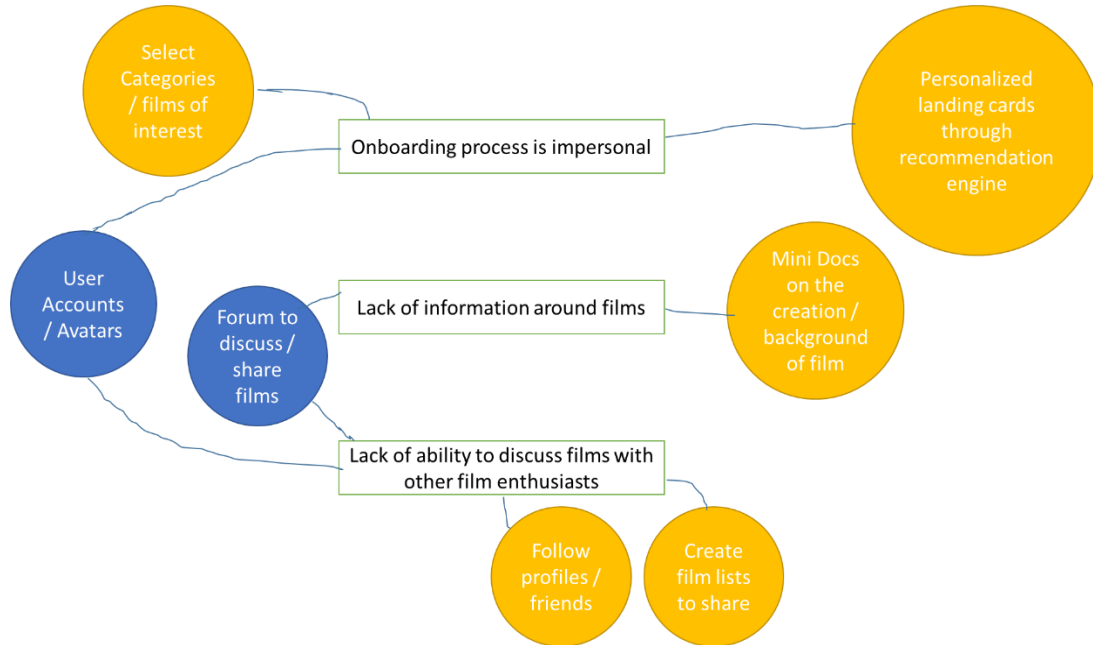
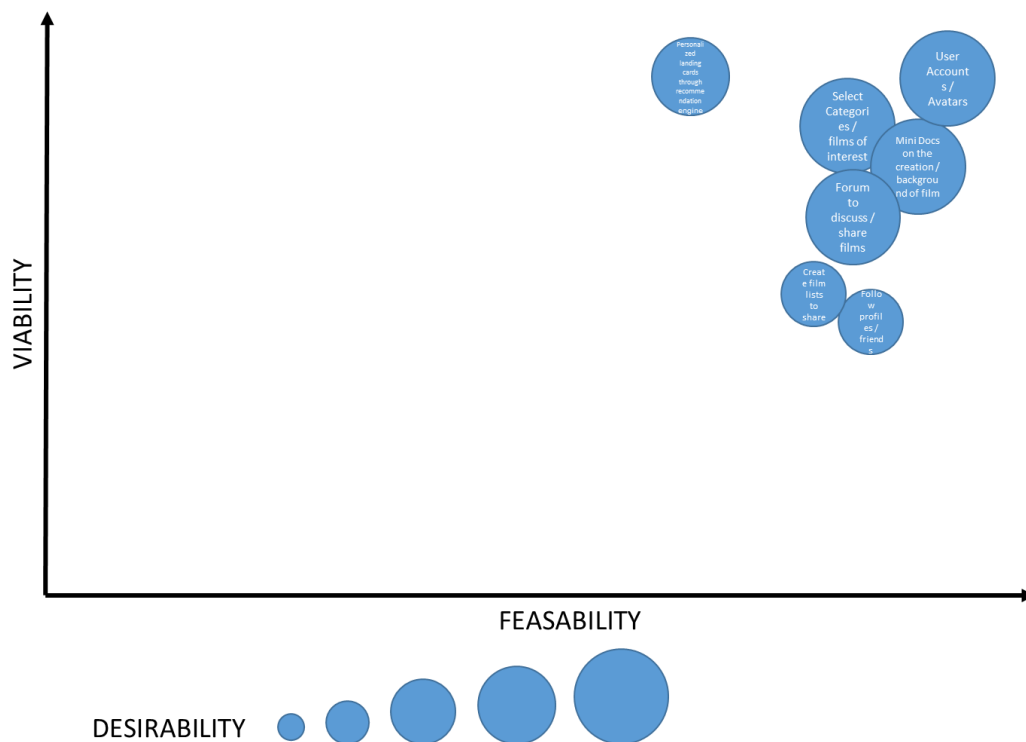


Figure 2. Three Lenses of Innovation



The product feature that has been chosen is to add ‘selecting films of interest’ to the sign-up and onboarding process. This will be used to train a recommendation engine that will suggest films and categories to match the users’ taste. Additionally, users will be given the ability to assign an avatar/image to their user account during sign-up. From Figure 1, we can see this will assist in personalizing the sign-up and onboarding process as well as foster a community environment for users. Even though competitors on the market already have a similar features, it is assumed as a necessary aspect of a streaming service and improves usability and user experience vastly. This will increase user commitment and increase sales greatly, as it directly solves the user problem of an impersonal experience.

Figure 2 helped identify this feature as highly desirable, viable and feasible. Figure 3 gave the above insights and showed that ‘selecting films of interest’ directly meets the value proposition because it results in film recommendations and smart categorisation allowing users to quickly find films that match their taste. Whilst the account avatar/images are not explicitly mentioned in the value proposition, it will enforce customer loyalty and help with retention, a key goal of ours. Finally, from figure 4 we identified our main feature as an immediately actionable idea as it provides high business value through revenue and user acquisition, and it is highly urgent as it solves a key user pain point.

Figure 3. Evaluation Table

User Account s / Avatars		Select Categories / films of interest	
Facet of Idea	Note	Facet of Idea	Note
Technical attributes	Creation of User profile name and avatar picture (similar to Apple avatars). Data needs to be securely stored within a dynamic cloud server infrastructure to enable growing user behaviour data. Moreover, servers need to be running modern OS to enable game engines to run.	Technical attributes	Used to train recommendation engine that will use AI, complicated to create reliable model. Data needs to be securely stored using a dynamic server infrastructure. UI needs to be intuitive and easy to complete.
Market Value	Competitors have user profiles with pictures but not 3D avatars.	Market Value	This is done by competitors, thus is expected by users.
Financial Value	Sales will increase, as feature is novel. ROI expected within 2 years.	Financial Value	Expensive to build, but will increase sales greatly as user experience is improved vastly. ROI should take some years.
Users’ perception	Necessary and useful, improves user experience.	Users’ perception	This is seen as necessary and extremely useful. Improves ease of use.
Social Value	Improves loyalty and commitment as expresses user personality and solves major pain point.	Social Value	More personalized experience and film recommendations will increase user commitment.
Interconnected & influenced by external market conditions	Risks include feature is not sufficient enough to solve user problems so will be adopted in the short term but decline thereafter.	Interconnected & influenced by external market conditions	Risk is that competitors do this better or film suggestions do not span a broad enough range of films.
Relation to value proposition	Is not explicitly mentioned in VP but will assist in experience when participating in discussion and storing personal behavioural data to recommend films.	Relation to value proposition	Directly meets VP “Featured film recommendations and smart categorisation give the user a personalised experience to quickly find what they are looking for that matches their taste”

Figure 4. Urgency/Value matrix

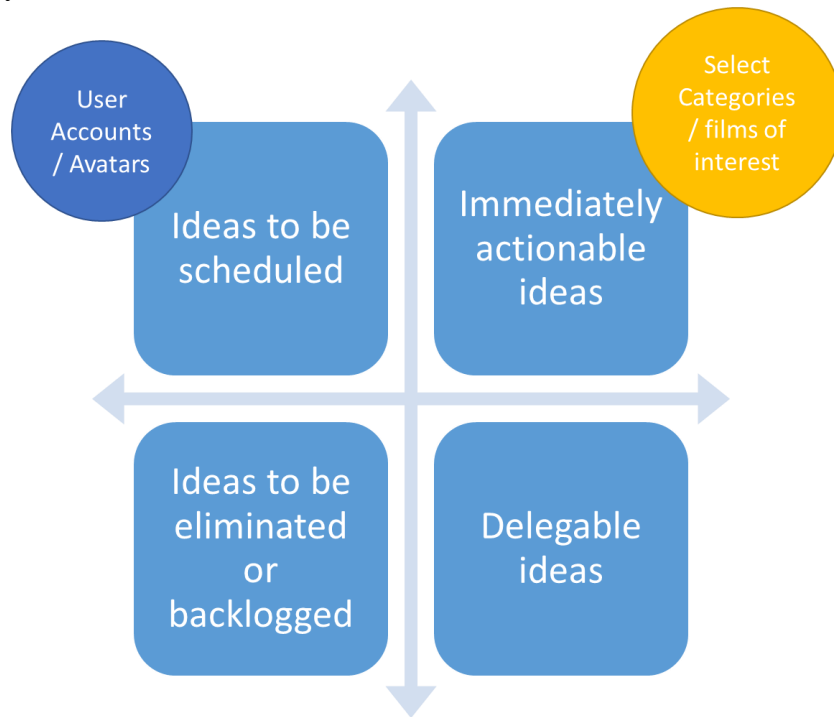


Figure 5. Low-Fidelity Prototype



Following a combination of user testing and interviews based on the low fidelity prototype (Figure 5), validation found users like the shorter sign up process with fewer pages because it was fast and logical. Users identified a need for feedback on password and username input constraints. Picking their favourite films during onboarding was positively received as it was felt the platform was being adapted to the user. Users found the account creation page to be simple but still somewhat impersonal as account images were pre-sets. Additionally, users felt a 'next' button on the film selection page was unnecessary, as it should be automatic.

From figure 11, there are several opportunities identified to improve the business model. Increasing brand awareness will help to increase customer acquisition, as they will have FilmSlate at the front of mind when thinking of Indie Films. By personalising & streamlining the sign-up process, the customer conversion rate will increase. Making the user interface intuitive will increase customer retention. Finally, tiered subscription levels and/or special offers will help attract more users.

User Stories

CINEPHILE

As a Cinephile, I want access to lesser-known film titles so that my film knowledge is reflected in my film suggestions.

INDIE ADDICTS

As an Indie Addict, I want to easily find film suggestions that match my personal taste so that I can quickly watch new films that interest me.

GENRE FANS

As a Genre Fan, I want to be able to discover a diverse range of horror and thriller films so that my film suggestions reflect my unique taste and interests.

6. Recommendations

Sebastian knows the market well, as such his input will help tailor the feature to the correct audience, during the design phase. He will be heavily involved in the product feature launch, thus it is important to update him with new developments, so he can frame the release in the correct way to align with the company mission. He is interested in growth, hence any user feedback is to be relayed to him.

Robyn needs to be informed of the design ideas proposed, the development timeline and release dates so she can work with distributors and film makers. This will allow for interest in the product to be maintained to get buy-in from sales agents, film makers and shareholders.

Suggested form of communication would be ad-hoc emails or urgent meeting calls.

Farah will be heavily involved in creating the feature, thus will need to be informed of user feedback. Regular meeting calls, which are collated into notes, will allow for development timelines and challenges to be captured. Farah has the final decision on anything technical around the product feature.

All founders should be collaborating with each other at each stage of the product life cycle.

Recommended metrics to be measured to achieve our North Star,

- 1) Number of customers remaining after a certain period – user retention rate
- 2) Amount of time spent on service – Average Session Duration

By measuring user retention rate we can determine the level of customer satisfaction. Moreover, it gives a good indication on whether further improvements need to be made to retain customers.

By measuring average session duration we can assume that if customers are spending a large amount of time on the platform they are likely to return to using it. Customers who enjoy using FilmSlate will continue to subscribe and recommend the service to others, hence generate further revenue.

Upon accepting this proposal, I suggest the prototype be turned into a high-fidelity design. Further investment should be sought to add extra features, like mini-documentaries, that will enhance revenue and grow the brand further. A development timeline should be drawn up and major release dates decided on.

7. Appendices

Figure 6. *Stakeholder Map*

Stakeholder	Level of Engagement (What they need to know)	Ideas for communication activities (How and When to communicate)	Notes
Executive Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings around development progress throughout all stages of product lifecycle. Raise any potential blockers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily scrum type meetings summarising what has been done. 	Seb, Robyn and Farah need to be made aware of detailed changes and challenges, to make informed decisions that impact product development.
Shareholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform them of product development progress and impacts on release dates. Inform them of developments in the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media releases on mainstream and social media platforms Sebastian or Robyn may lead direct communications with them, but they will need monthly updates to provide accurate information. 	Due to the strategic goals of this particular product, their influence in this project will be limited unless market forces dictate otherwise.
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get regular feedback on intended developments and iterate accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Research group sessions User Testing sessions 	Their involvement allows for market trends to be captured quickly
Sales Agents/Distributors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform them of product release dates. Inform them of key features being developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Newsletter emailed to them 	Sales Teams need to know how the product aims to solve the customers so they can maximise profit.
Film Makers/Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform them of product developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Newsletter emailed to them 	Making Film Producers aware of the platform and gaining their buy-in will increase the likelihood they will want to have their films added to the FilmSlate library.

Figure 7. *Competitor SWOT Analysis*

<h3>Strengths</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collections & Featured Films• Available on many platforms• No Ads• Information on Film Industry, Film Art, Genres• Free access with a library card• Kids collection• Free 7 day trial• Free handpicked movie tickets• Community discussion & user lists• New film everyday• Self-funded films• Limited day releases	<h3>Weaknesses</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on Film Industry, Film Art, Genres• Smaller library of films• No or bad recommendation engine• User Interface• Interrupted Streaming• Different film libraries in different countries• Expensive (Kanopy plays as much as library pays)
<h3>Opportunities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target family market – have indie films for all ages• Explore feature for information on film creators, artists, music, backstory• Have near same library of films in all served countries• Have large library of content• Intuitive UI (easy to find films) with recommendation engine• Better pricing – more accessible• Distributed Server Infrastructure – fast streaming	<h3>Threats</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broadcast Video Streaming entering indie space – no payment required/stream with ads for free• New regulations on UK films being released• Competitors able to licence same films

Figure 8. Value Proposition Canvas

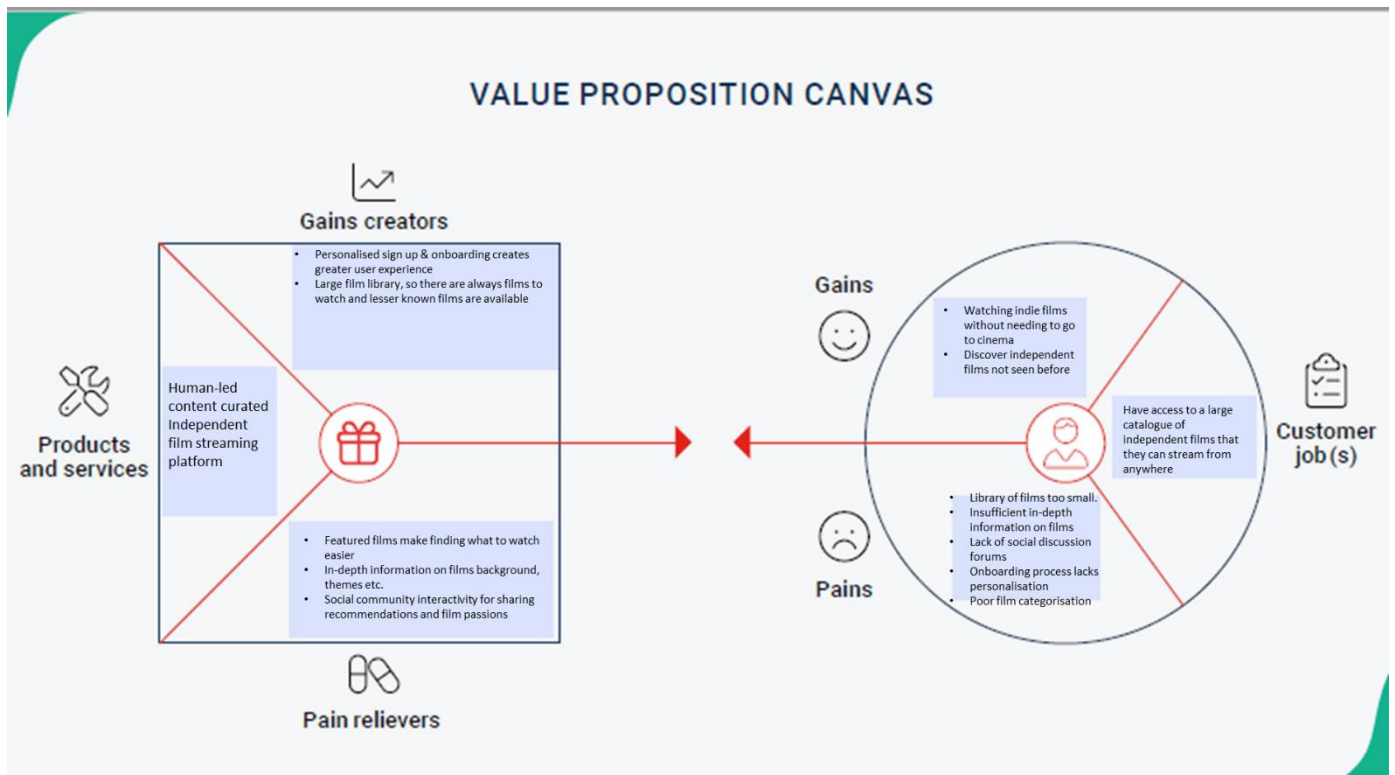


Figure 9. *Empathy Map*

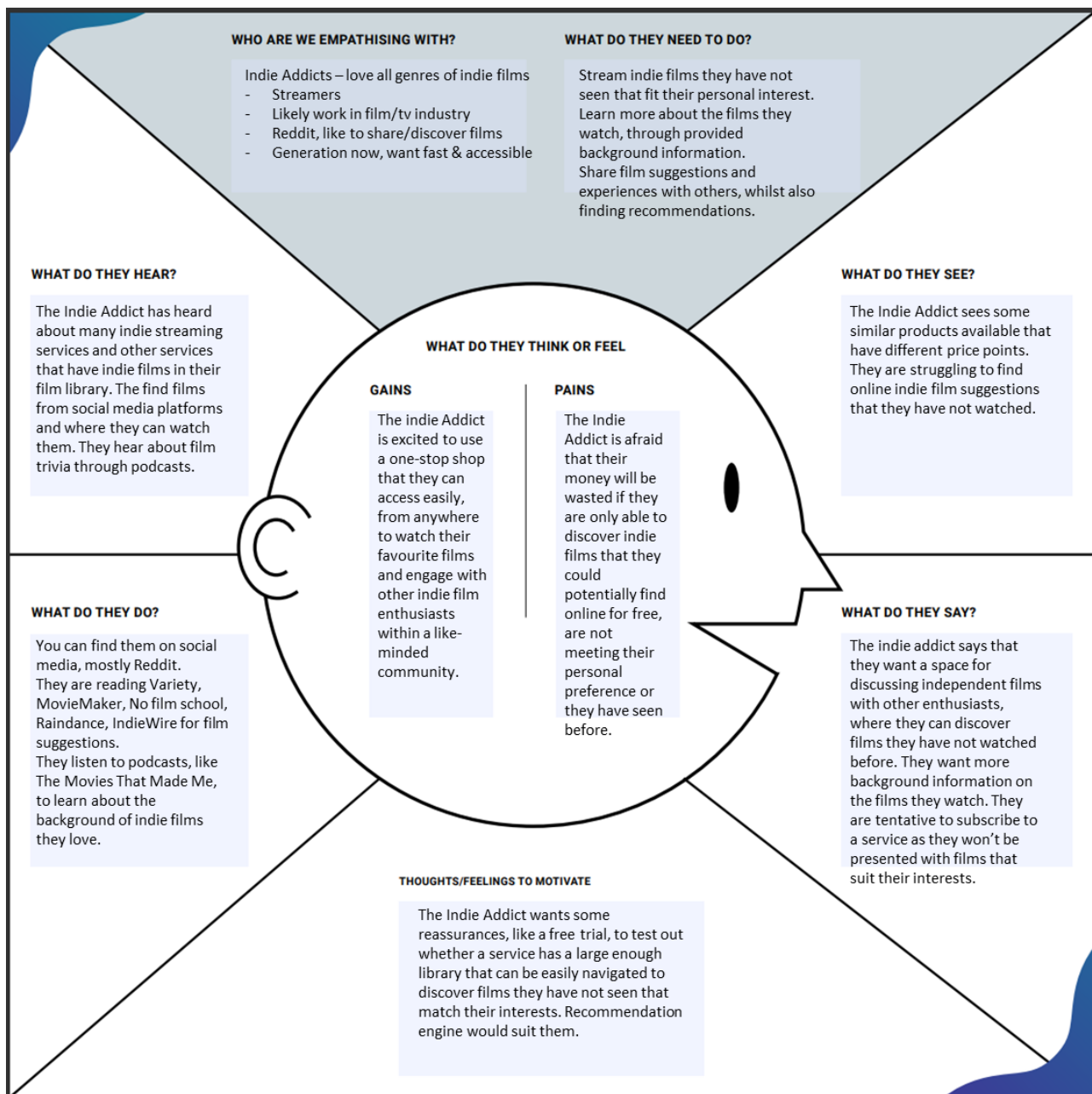
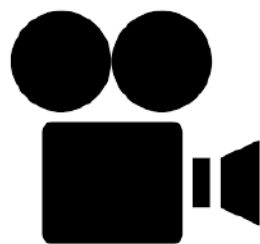


Figure 10. *User Persona*

User Persona




Persona name		Indie Addicts	
<div> Demographic information</div>			
Age		18 - 35	
Persona goals		Motivators	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive in-depth background information on indie films.• Be able to share recommendations and experiences around indie films.• Receive personalized film recommendations.• Easily discover new indie films.• Connect with other indie film enthusiasts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discovering new indie films and being able to share recommendations on films of their preferred genres to other film enthusiasts, effectively being an independent film expert.	
Challenges		Demographic information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Onboarding process is impersonal and does not tailor recommendations that match their genre tastes or viewing habits. Additionally, it does not include information on independent films or allow for connection opportunities with other indie film enthusiasts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent Reddit user, prefer streaming films rather than going to the cinema and listen and read articles and podcasts on indie films.	

Figure 11. *User Journey*

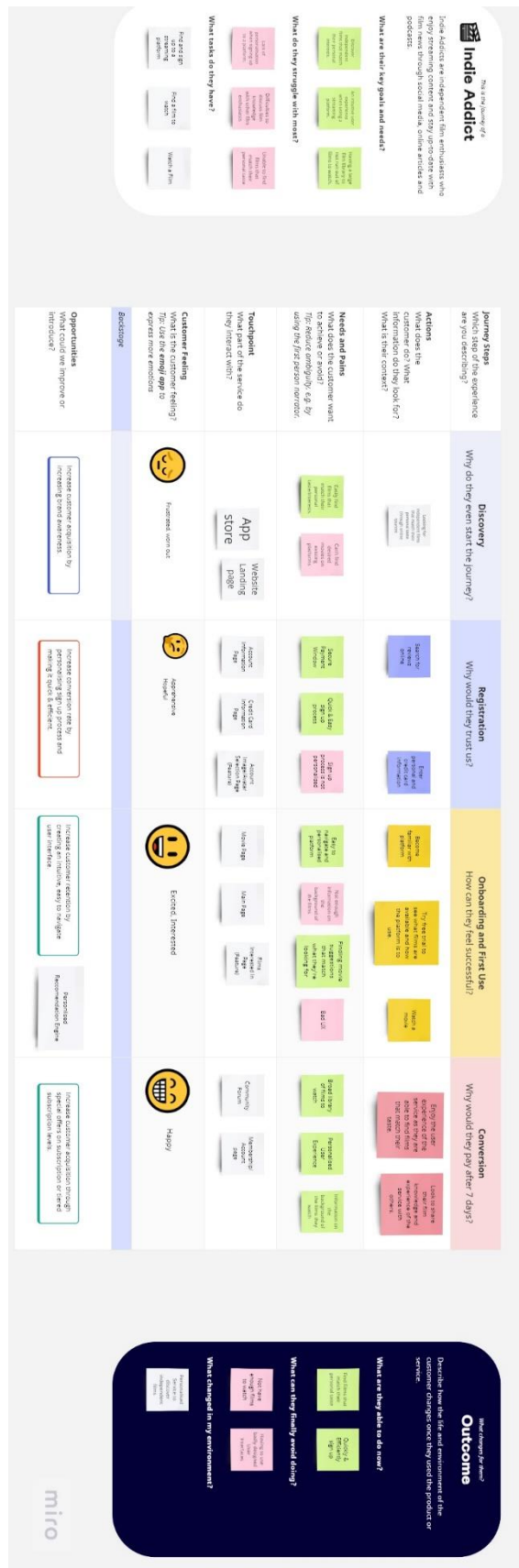
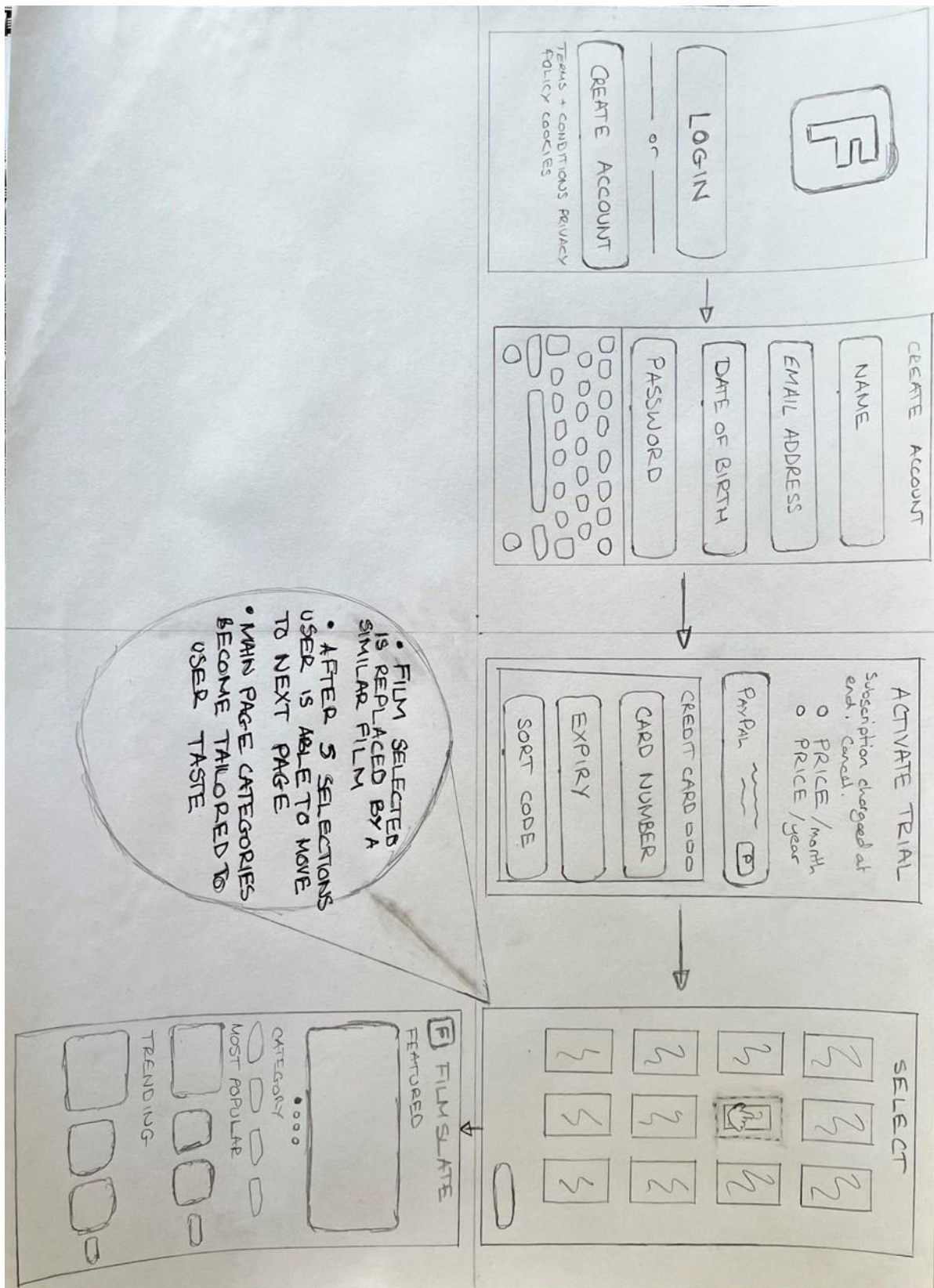


Figure 12. First-draft Prototype



8. References

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