Being Human
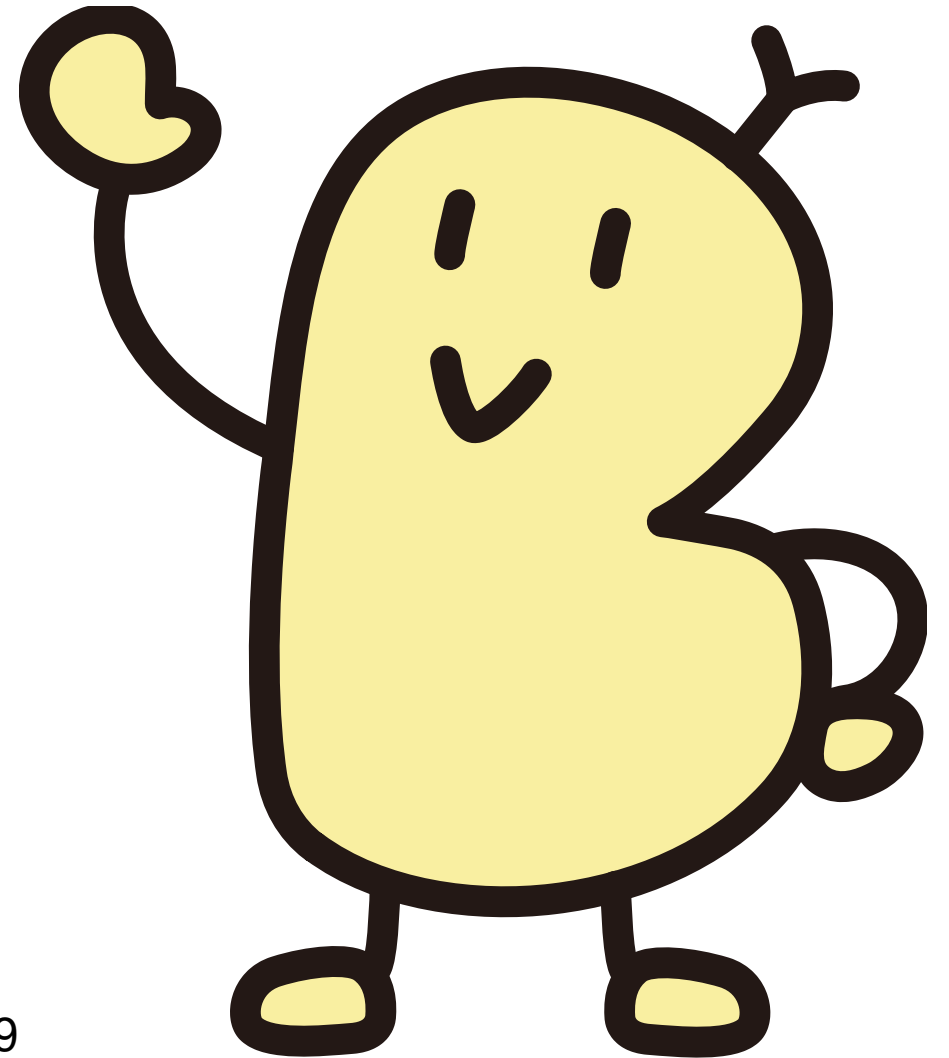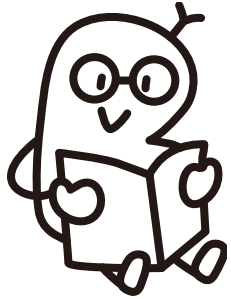
Helping Youth Reduce Smartphone Dependency
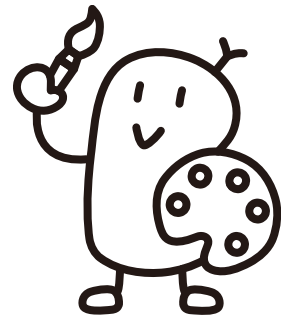
BeYou App Design

Ge Linling 35902329

Introduction

Young people today are highly dependent on smartphones, which affects their focus, productivity, and well-being. This project aims to create an app that helps teens reconnect with real-world activities by offering engaging offline tasks.

Goals: Reduce screen time with fun tasks.

Target Audience – Chinese Adolescents and Young Adults

Cultural Background

- 📱 **Frequent Smartphone Usage**: Chinese teenagers heavily rely on smartphones for:
  - **Short Videos** (e.g., Douyin/TikTok)
  - **Social Platforms** (e.g., WeChat, QQ)
  - **Gaming** (e.g., Honor of Kings)
- 👨‍👩‍👧 **Parental Awareness**: Parents are increasingly concerned about screen time and favor educational or task management apps.
- 📖 **High Academic Pressure**: Tasks must be flexible to fit into their tight schedules.

Design Directions

- 🎓 **Education and Well-being**: Include daily tasks and stress-relief mini-games.
- ⏰ **Parental Integration**: Add features such as screen time reports and usage challenges.
- 🖌️ **Localization**: Introduce culturally relevant activities like calligraphy writing tasks and traditional festival themes.

Selection Rationale

I understand the cultural context, academic stress, and lifestyle of Chinese teenagers, enabling me to create solutions tailored to their needs.

BeYou – Introduction

APP : BeYou

target audience — 13 - 21 yo

① Help teens and young adults overcome anxiety
- Address social media- induced insecurities, such as appearance comparison and skill- related anxiety.
- Foster confidence and self- acceptance through daily tasks and growth tracking.

② Reduce smartphone dependence and improve offline quality of life
- Promote offline activities that encourage meaningful engagement with the real world.

③ Provide a gentle path to growth
- Offer personalized tasks and rewards to motivate users to build healthier habits gradually.

My notes

"Find your true self, one step at a time."

BeYou is an innovative app that seamlessly integrates mental wellness, screen time reduction, and offline activities, designed to help teens and young adults rediscover their true selves. With a focus on personal growth, positive reinforcement, and holistic engagement, BeYou addresses a critical gap in the market.

Why BeYou?

Helps reduce screen dependency while addressing anxieties caused by social media.

Builds self-confidence through achievable offline goals.

Promotes healthier habits and a balanced lifestyle for teens in a digital age.

Purpose:
Empower teens (13-21) to reduce screen time, combat social media-induced anxieties (e.g., appearance and skill pressure), and reconnect with meaningful offline activities.

Key Features:
- **Personalized Challenges**: Daily tasks like creative exercises, mindfulness breaks, and fitness goals to encourage less phone usage.
- **Screen Time Tracking**: Visual tools to monitor and gradually reduce phone dependency.
- **Growth Journal**: Track emotional well-being and celebrate personal achievements over time.
- **Gamified Rewards**: Earn badges and milestones for consistent progress and reduced screen time.

BeYou – Market Positioning

Competitor Analysis

Forest

Focuses solely on productivity without addressing mental health.

Calm

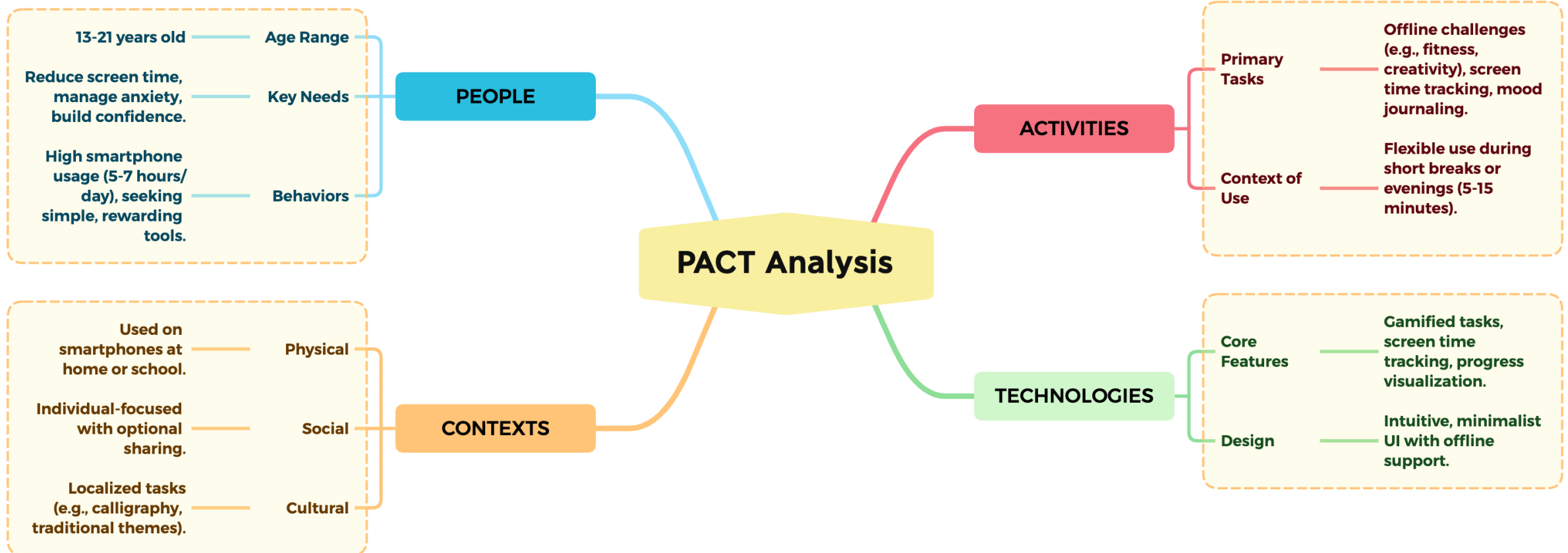Emphasizes meditation but lacks interactive, gamified elements.

TickTick

Task management-oriented with little focus on emotional well-being.

Differentiation

BeYou uniquely combines mental wellness, screen time management, and offline engagement into a holistic solution.

PACT Analysis

PEOPLE

- **Age Range** — 13-21 years old
- **Key Needs** — Reduce screen time, manage anxiety, build confidence.
- **Behaviors** — High smartphone usage (5-7 hours/day), seeking simple, rewarding tools.

CONTEXTS

- **Physical** — Used on smartphones at home or school.
- **Social** — Individual-focused with optional sharing.
- **Cultural** — Localized tasks (e.g., calligraphy, traditional themes).

ACTIVITIES

- **Primary Tasks** — Offline challenges (e.g., fitness, creativity), screen time tracking, mood journaling.
- **Context of Use** — Flexible use during short breaks or evenings (5-15 minutes).

TECHNOLOGIES

- **Core Features** — Gamified tasks, screen time tracking, progress visualization.
- **Design** — Intuitive, minimalist UI with offline support.

Personas – Emma Chen

EMMA CHEN

I want to use my creativity more, but I always end up scrolling on my phone instead.

|	
AGE	16
OCCUPATION	Student
STATUS	Single
LOCATION	Shanghai, China
TIER	Daily User
ARCHETYPE	Creative Explorer

Creative · Imaginative · Distracted · Artistic

Bio
Emma is a creative high school student who loves drawing and journaling but spends over 5 hours daily on social media platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu. She feels overwhelmed by appearance comparisons online and struggles to focus on offline activities. Emma wants to spend more time on art and reconnect with her hobbies while building self-confidence.

Personality
Introvert ——●———— Extrovert
Intuitive —●—————— Sensing
Thinking ————●——— Feeling
Judging —————●—— Perceiving
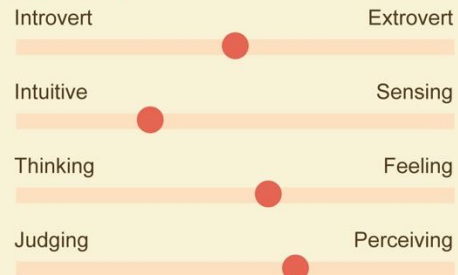
Brands

Goals
- Spend less time on social media.
- Improve focus and reconnect with her creative hobbies.
- Build confidence through small achievements.

Frustrations
- Struggles with appearance anxiety due to online comparisons.
- Lacks motivation to start offline activities.
- Feels distracted by constant phone notifications.

Motivations
- Reduce anxiety and feel better about herself.
- Rediscover her passion for art.
- Achieve personal growth through manageable goals.

Technology Use
Mobile Apps
Social Media
Design Tools
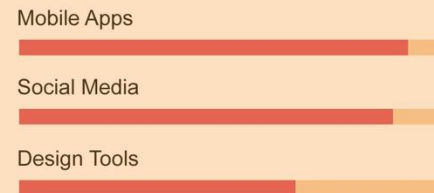
Profile
Emma is a 16-year-old high school student from Shanghai who loves drawing but spends over 5 hours daily on social media. She struggles with appearance anxiety and often feels distracted, preventing her from focusing on offline hobbies.

Challenges
- Feels overwhelmed by social media comparisons.
- Lacks motivation for offline creative activities.

How BeYou Helps
- Creative daily tasks like sketching challenges rebuild her confidence.
- Growth tracking tools and rewards motivate her to reduce screen time.
- Mood tracking helps her notice positive emotional changes.

Personas – Jason Wong

JASON WONG

I need quick, fun challenges to stay active and avoid wasting time on my phone.

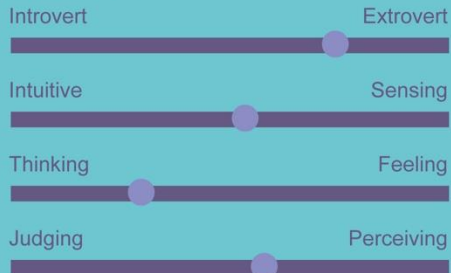|	
AGE	21
OCCUPATION	Student
STATUS	Single
LOCATION	Beijing, China
TIER	Motivated Achiever
ARCHETYPE	Active Challenger

Active   Focused
Competitive   Energetic

Bio
Jason is a third-year computer science student who enjoys gaming and fitness but struggles to manage his time effectively. He spends 6-7 hours a day on his phone, mostly playing games or watching tech reviews. Jason wants to balance academics, fitness, and personal development by reducing distractions and staying focused.

Personality
- Introvert — Extrovert
- Intuitive — Sensing
- Thinking — Feeling
- Judging — Perceiving

Brands
Nike   Steam   YouTube
myfitnesspal

Goals
- Improve focus and reduce gaming time.
- Build consistency in his fitness routines.
- Stay on top of academic and personal goals.

Frustrations
- Feels guilty about wasting time on his phone.
- Finds it difficult to break the cycle of procrastination.
- Lacks inspiration from conventional productivity apps.

Motivations
- Develop a healthier routine.
- Stay motivated through small, achievable challenges.
- Visualize his progress in academics and fitness.

Technology Use
- Mobile Apps
- Social Media
- Gaming Platforms
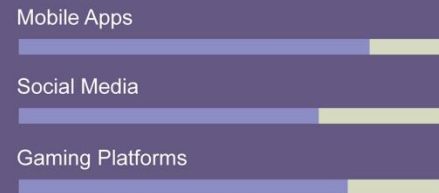
Profile
Jason is a 21-year-old computer science student in Beijing. He spends 6-7 hours daily gaming or streaming and struggles to balance academics, fitness, and personal goals.
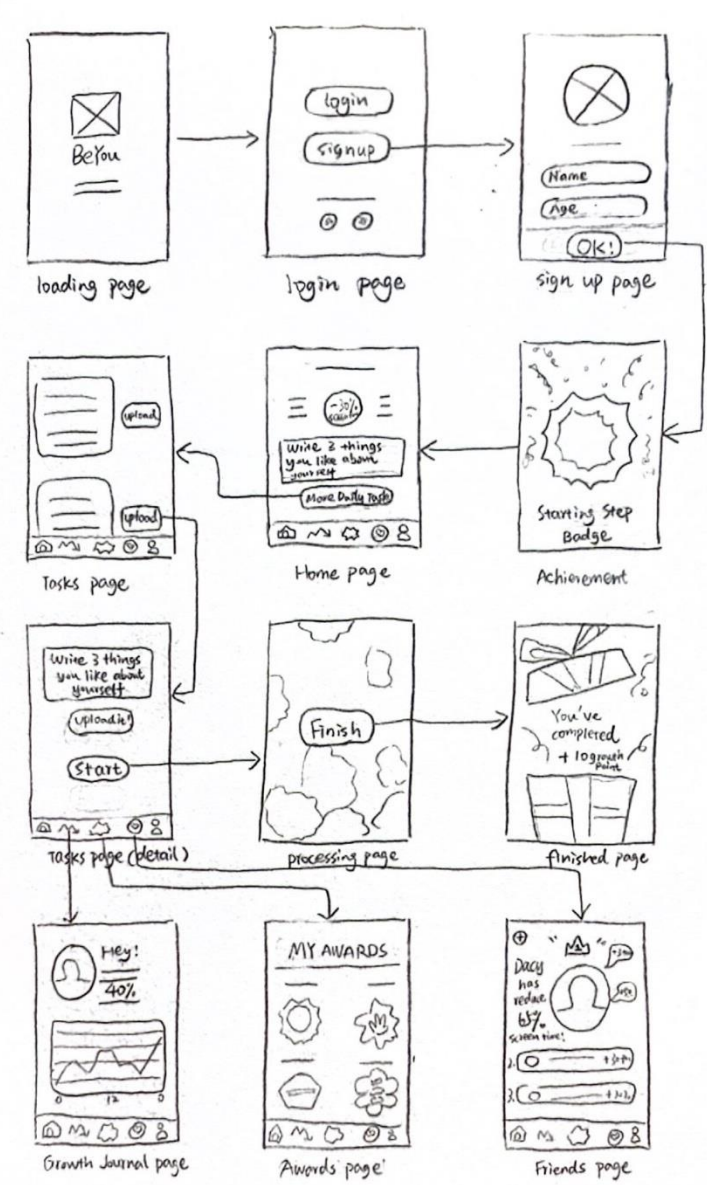
Challenges
- Finds it hard to manage time and break procrastination cycles.
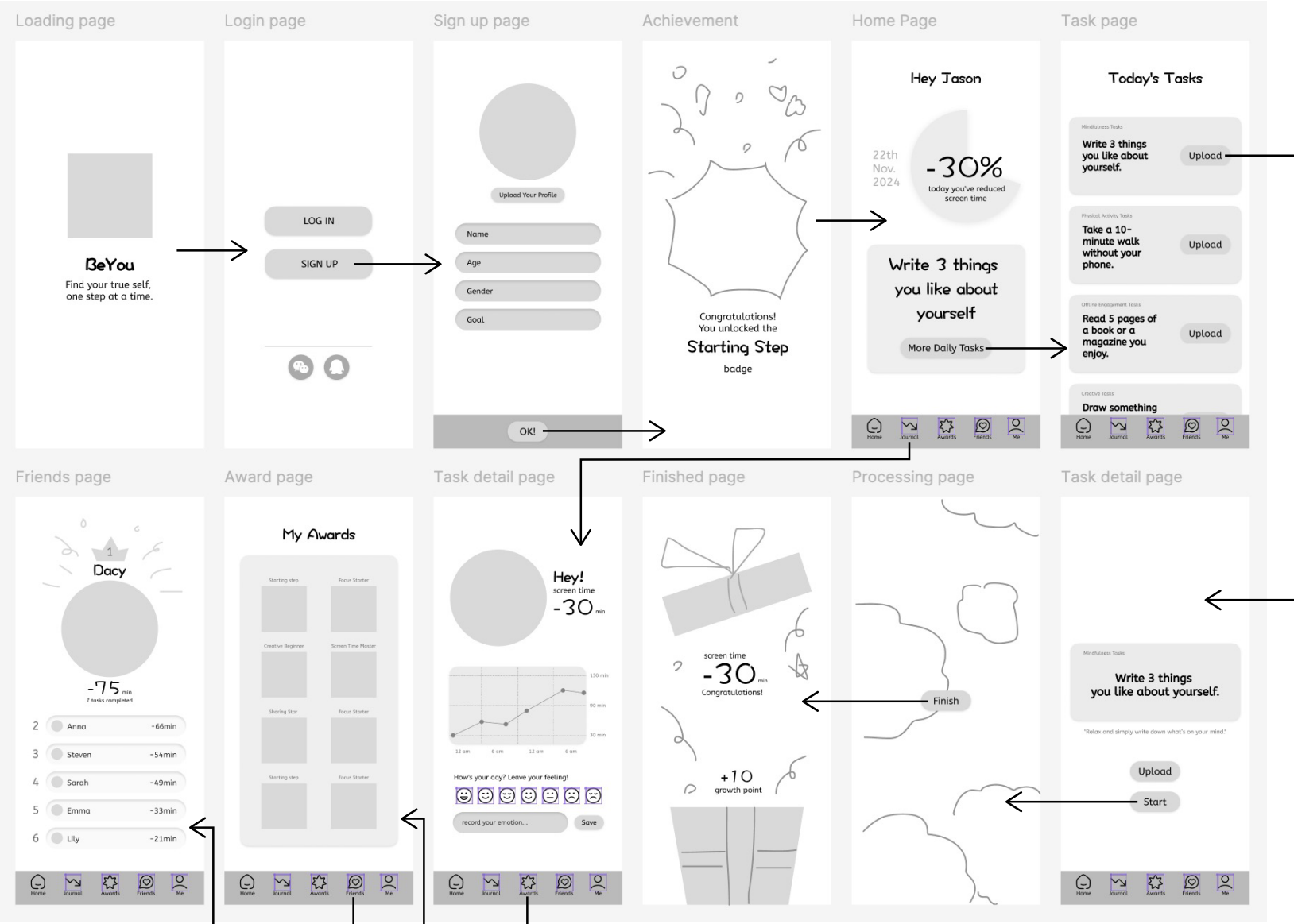- Needs tools to make productivity engaging and rewarding.

How BeYou Helps
- Fitness and focus tasks encourage balanced habits.
- Screen time tracking visualizes progress, reducing distractions.
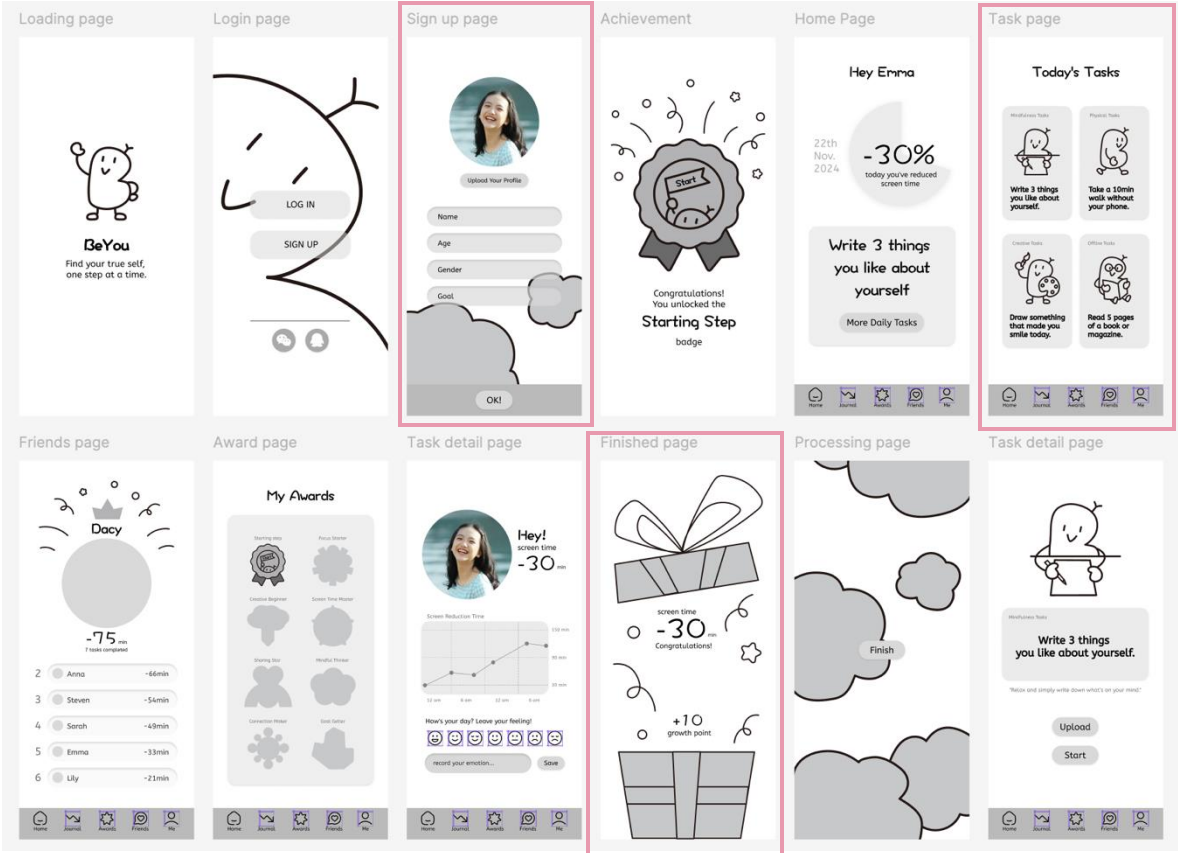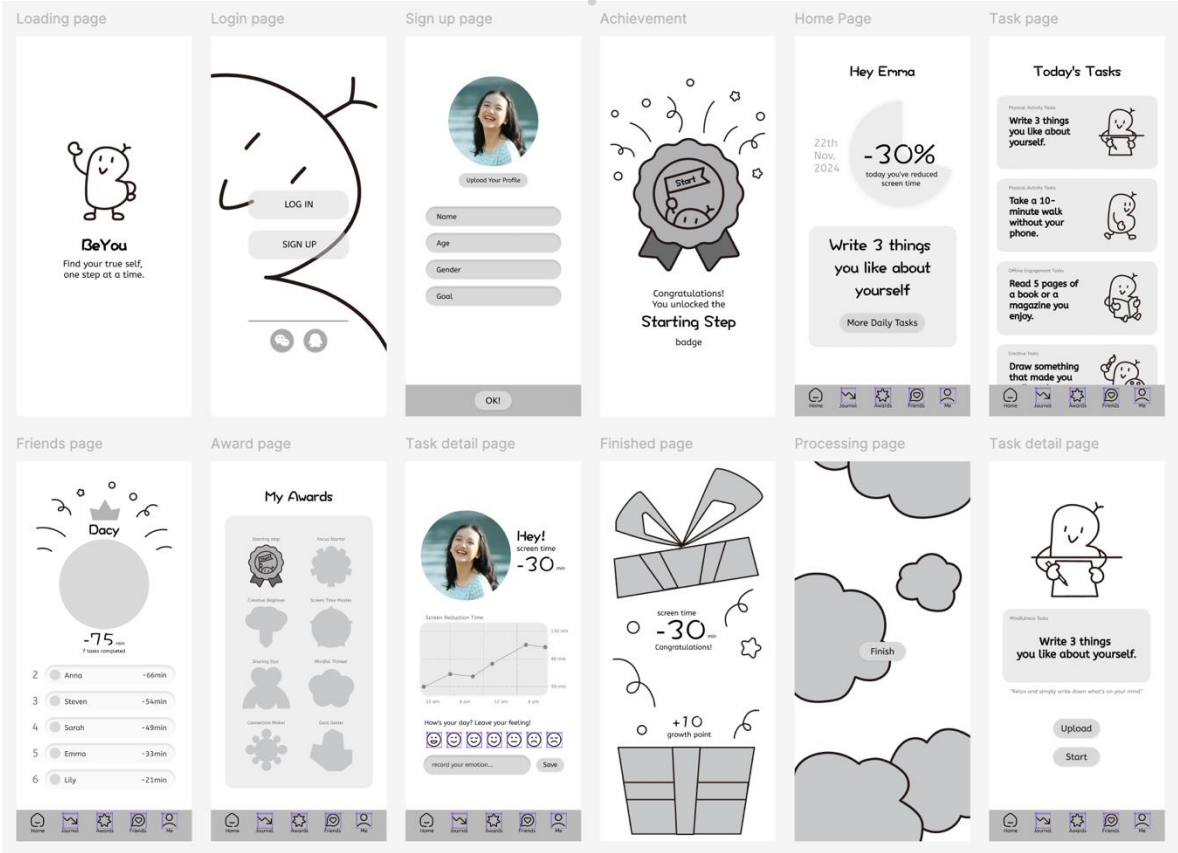- Rewards and achievements keep him motivated.

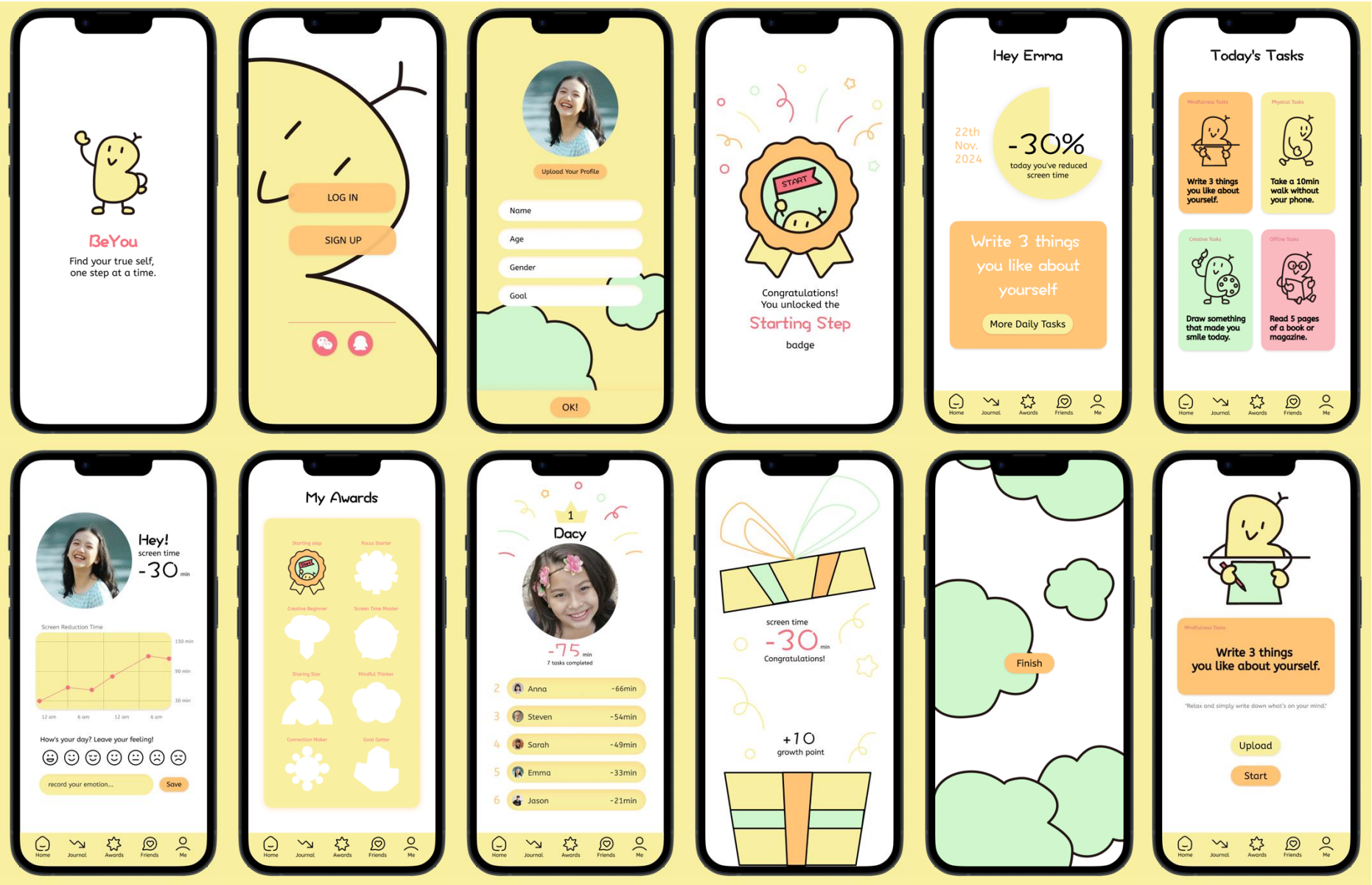# Wireframes

Drawn in sketchbook

Wireframes (rough version)

Wireframes

iteration

Wireframes (illustrations add), version 1

Wireframes (illustrations add), version 2

Digital Mockups - Version 1

Color palette:
- F67280
- F9EFA1
- FFC477
- D0F6CC

Digital Mockups - Version 2

Color Palette:
- F67280
- F9EFA1
- FFC477
- D0F6CC

Digital Mockups - Version 3

Screen 1 — BeYou
BeYou
Find your true self,
one step at a time.

Screen 2 — Login
LOG IN
SIGN UP

Screen 3 — Profile
Upload Your Profile
Name
Age
Gender
Goal
OK!

Screen 4 — Badge
Congratulations!
You unlocked the
Starting Step
badge

Screen 5 — Hey Emma
Hey Emma
22th | Nov | 2024
-30%
today you've reduced
screen time
Write 3 things
you like about
yourself
More
Start
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Screen 6 — Today's Tasks
Today's Tasks
Mindfulness Tasks
Write 3 things you like about yourself.
Physical Tasks
Take a 10min walk without your phone.
Creative Tasks
Draw something that made you smile today.
Offline Tasks
Read 5 pages of a book or magazine.
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Screen 7 — Screen time
Hey!
screen time
-30 min
Screen Reduction Time
150 min
90 min
30 min
12 am 6 am 12 am 6 am
How's your day? Leave your feeling!
record your emotion...
Save
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Screen 8 — My Awards
My Awards
Starting step
Focus Starter
Creative Beginner
Screen Time Master
Sharing Star
Mindful Thinker
Connection Maker
Goal Getter
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Screen 9 — Dacy
1
Dacy
-75 min
7 tasks completed
2 Anna   -66min
3 Steven -54min
5 Sarah   -49min
5 Emma   -33min
6 Jason   -21min
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Screen 10 — Gift
screen time
-30 min
Congratulations!
+10
growth point

Screen 11 — Finish
Finish

Screen 12 — Mindfulness Tasks
Mindfulness Tasks
Write 3 things
you like about yourself.
"Relax and simply write down what's on your mind."
Upload
Start
Home Journal Awards Friends Me

Color Palette
F67280
F9EFA1
FFC477
D0F6CC

Digital Mockups - Compare
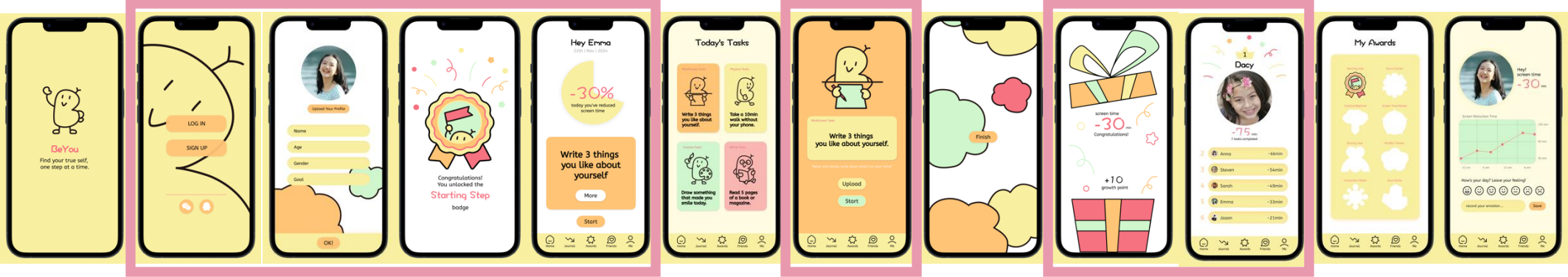
User Testing Process

Participants	Testing Methods	Test Scenarios
8 users aged 13–21 A mix of frequent and moderate smartphone users seeking to reduce screen time.	**Task-Based Testing:** Users completed three daily tasks and navigated key app features. **Observation:** User behavior was monitored to identify pain points and confusion. **Feedback Collection:** Surveys and interviews were conducted to gather opinions and suggestions.	**Completing a daily task.** **Viewing and interacting with badges in the rewards section.** **Exploring the growth journal and screen time tracker.**

Click on the task page →
Complete the task →
View the achievement
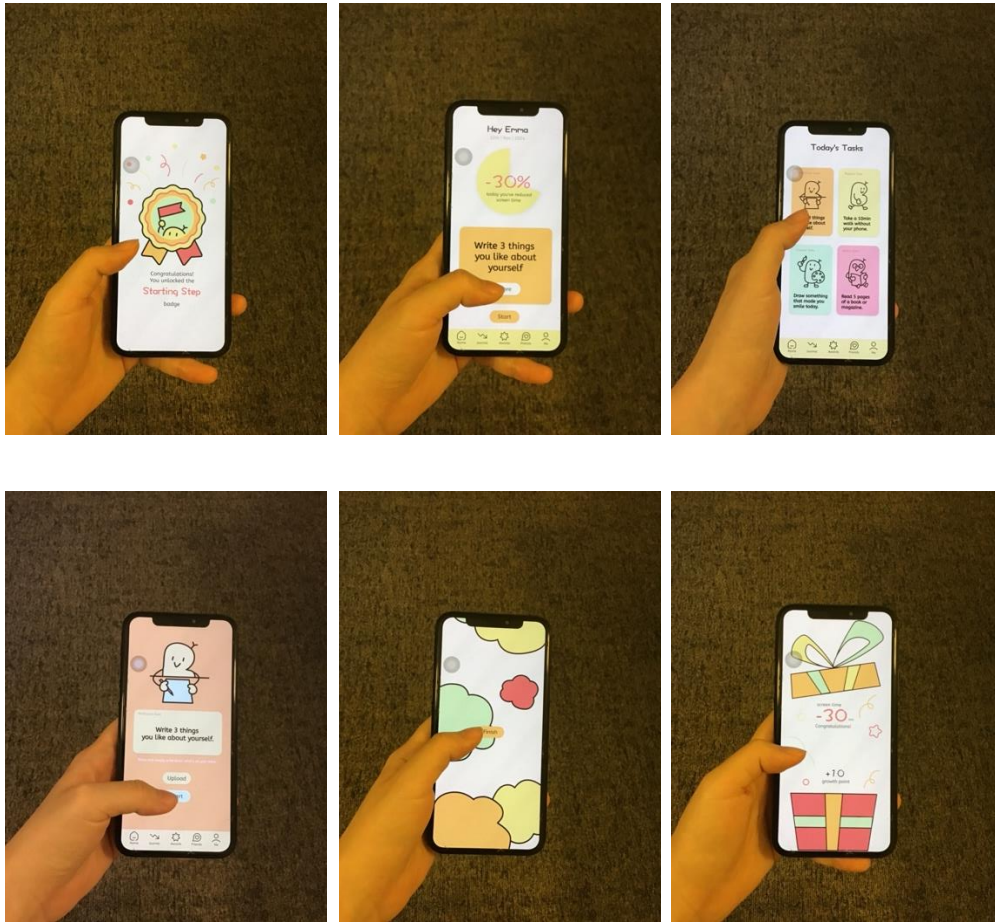
The process of user testing BeYou (User: Lily, 19)

User Testing Feedback

Category	Details
Positive Outcomes	80% of users found tasks engaging and easy to complete. Growth journal and screen time tracking were well-received. 70% praised the intuitive interface.
Improvement Suggestions	Personalized task recommendations needed. Add animations or motivational quotes to loading page. Enhance task page with themed backgrounds.
Key Observations	Task completion rate: 75% (Creative tasks: 85%).
Next Steps	• Short-term: Optimize task descriptions, improve loading and task page visuals. • Long-term: Develop personalized recommendation system, enhance reward interactivity.

TASK COMPLETION RATES BY CATEGORY

■ Task Completion Rates (%)

TASK POPULARITY DISTRIBUTION

- ■ Creative Tasks
- ■ Mindfulness Tasks
- ■ Action Tasks

40%
25%
35%
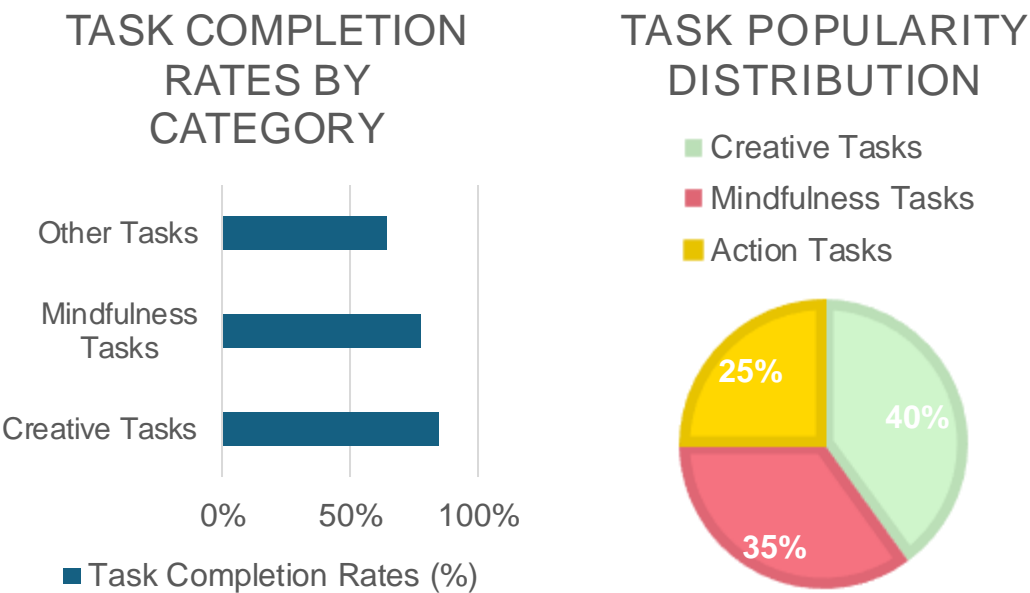
After User Testing Feedback
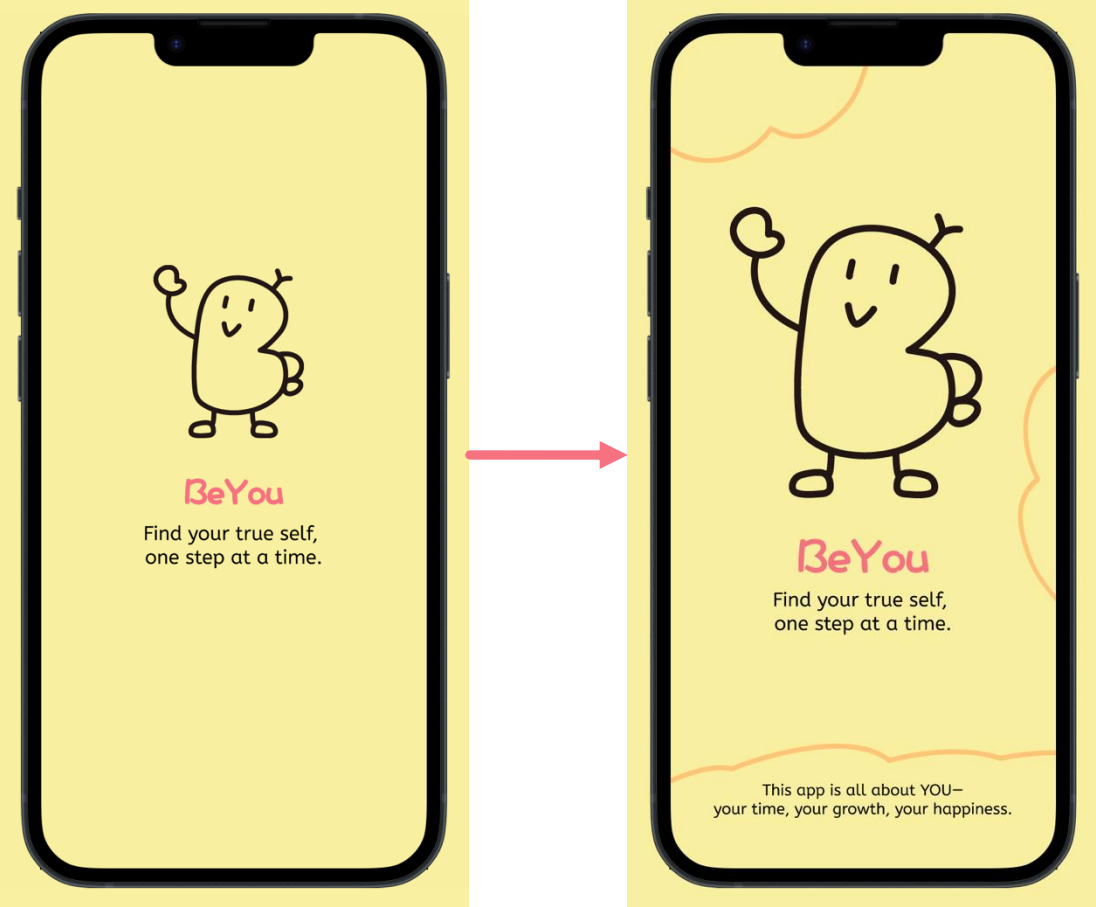
Loading page
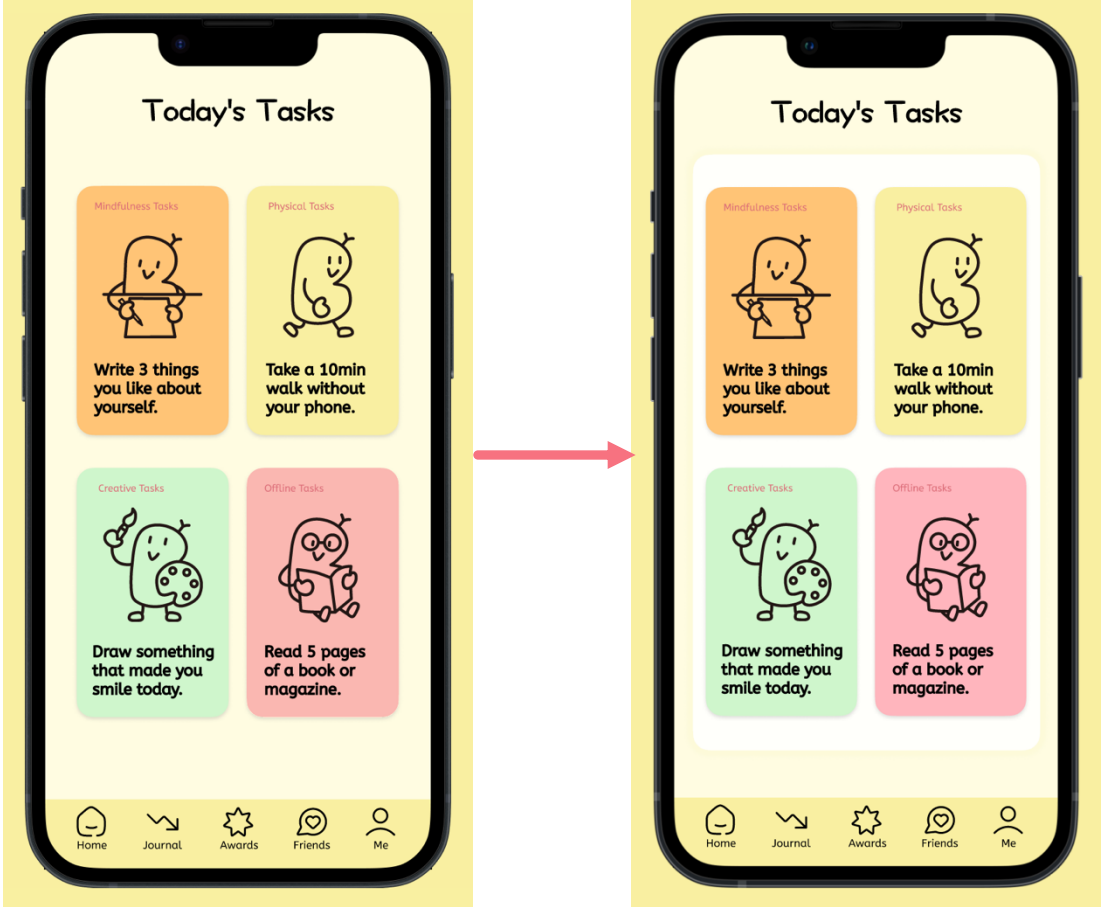
Tasks page

Supporting Research

New WHO report indicates need for healthier online habits among adolescents

Copenhagen, 25 September 2024

New data from the WHO Regional Office for Europe reveals a sharp rise in problematic social media use among adolescents, with rates increasing from 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022. This, coupled with findings that 12% of adolescents are at risk of problematic gaming, raises urgent concerns about the impact of digital technology on the mental health and well-being of young people. These findings come from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, which surveyed almost 280 000 young people aged 11, 13 and 15 across 44 countries and regions in Europe, central Asia and Canada in 2022.

Key findings include:

- More than 1 in 10 adolescents (11%) showed signs of problematic social media behaviour, struggling to control their use and experiencing negative consequences. Girls reported higher levels of problematic social media use than boys (13% vs 9%).
- Over a third (36%) of young people reported constant contact with friends online, with the highest rates among 15-year-old girls (44%).
- A third (34%) of adolescents played digital games daily, with more than 1 in 5 (22%) playing for at least 4 hours on days when they engage in gaming.
- 12% of adolescents are at risk of problematic gaming, with boys more likely than girls to show signs of problematic gaming (16% vs 7%).

Positive aspects of social media use

While the report highlights the risks, it also underscores the benefits of responsible social media use. Adolescents who are heavy but non-problematic users reported stronger peer support and social connections.

As one 17-year-old boy from Poland shared, "There are many benefits of social media, especially when it is used in moderation. Among the benefits, there is connection and connectedness. Teenagers may meet others who share their passions and interests".

"This study reveals both the promise and the pitfalls of digital engagement for our young people," said Dr Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat, Director for Country Health Policies and Systems, WHO Regional Office for Europe. "It's crucial that we take steps to protect youth to allow them to navigate the digital landscape safely and equip them to make informed choices about their online activities, maximizing the benefits while minimizing the risks to their mental and social well-being. In short, they should rule social media, and not have social media ruling them."

Screenshot 1. New WHO report indicates need for healthier online habits among adolescents

Although prior studies have provided theoretical and empirical evidence for the factors affecting adolescent smartphone use, mainstream research has tended to focus on the negative effects of smartphone addiction, or "cyberloafing," without considering the multifaceted aspects of the smartphone usage patterns (Kim, 2013; Rosen et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a poor understanding of the variances in adolescent smartphone usage patterns, which is problematic because these days, smartphones have become a part of their daily lives for various purposes, such as communication (Bae, 2017), learning (Ozer and Kılıç 2018), and entertainment (Przybylski, 2019), which means it is unrealistic to suggest there is only a single usage time variable (Toh et al., 2019). Even though smartphone use can have adverse outcomes, such as addiction or poor academic performances (Bukhori et al., 2019), it may also allow students to engage in flexible mobile learning (Fu et al., 2020), gain access to important information about their possible future careers, and achieve their personal goals (Chee et al., 2017). Therefore, to explore the benefits students gain from their smartphone use, it is important to identify the way they use their devices and the impacts these patterns have on their lives.

Screenshot 2. Relationships between adolescent smartphone usage patterns, achievement goals, and academic achievement

SHORT READS | OCT 14, 2024
Most Americans back cellphone bans during class, but fewer support all-day restrictions
Overall, 68% of U.S. adults say they support a ban on middle and high school students using cellphones during class.

SHORT READS | JUN 12, 2024
72% of U.S. high school teachers say cellphone distraction is a major problem in the classroom
Some 72% of high school teachers say that students being distracted by cellphones is a major problem in their classroom.

REPORT | MAR 11, 2024
How Teens and Parents Approach Screen Time
Most teens at least sometimes feel happy and peaceful when they don't have their phone, but 44% say this makes them anxious. Half of parents say they have looked through their teen's phone.

REPORT | JAN 31, 2024
Americans' Use of Mobile Technology and Home Broadband
Most U.S. adults today say they use a smartphone (95%), have a smartphone (90%) or subscribe to high-speed internet at home (80%). About four-in-ten report being online almost constantly.

Screenshot 3. All Smartphones Publications in Pew Research Center

Research the use of mobile tech in relation to my user group. - *Adolescents and young adults (13-21 yo)*

Essential Uses	Non-Essential Uses
📞 **Communication**	📱 **Social Media**
Staying connected with family and friends	Facilitates connections but can distract teens
📚 **Education**	🎮 **Gaming**
Access to online classes and learning tools	Engaging but often leads to procrastination
🛡️ **Safety**	📺 **Entertainment**
Features like GPS and emergency contacts	Excessive streaming and browsing waste time

While essential uses contribute to growth and security, managing non-essential use is critical to improving productivity and well-being.
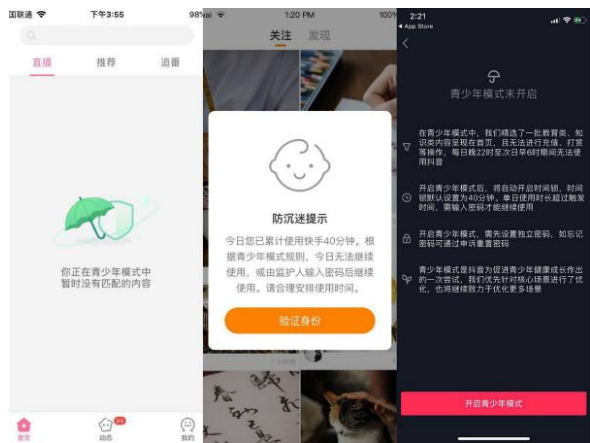
Supporting Research

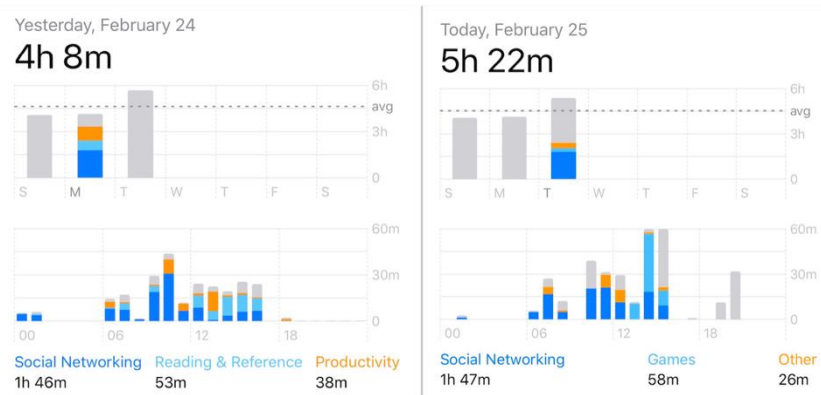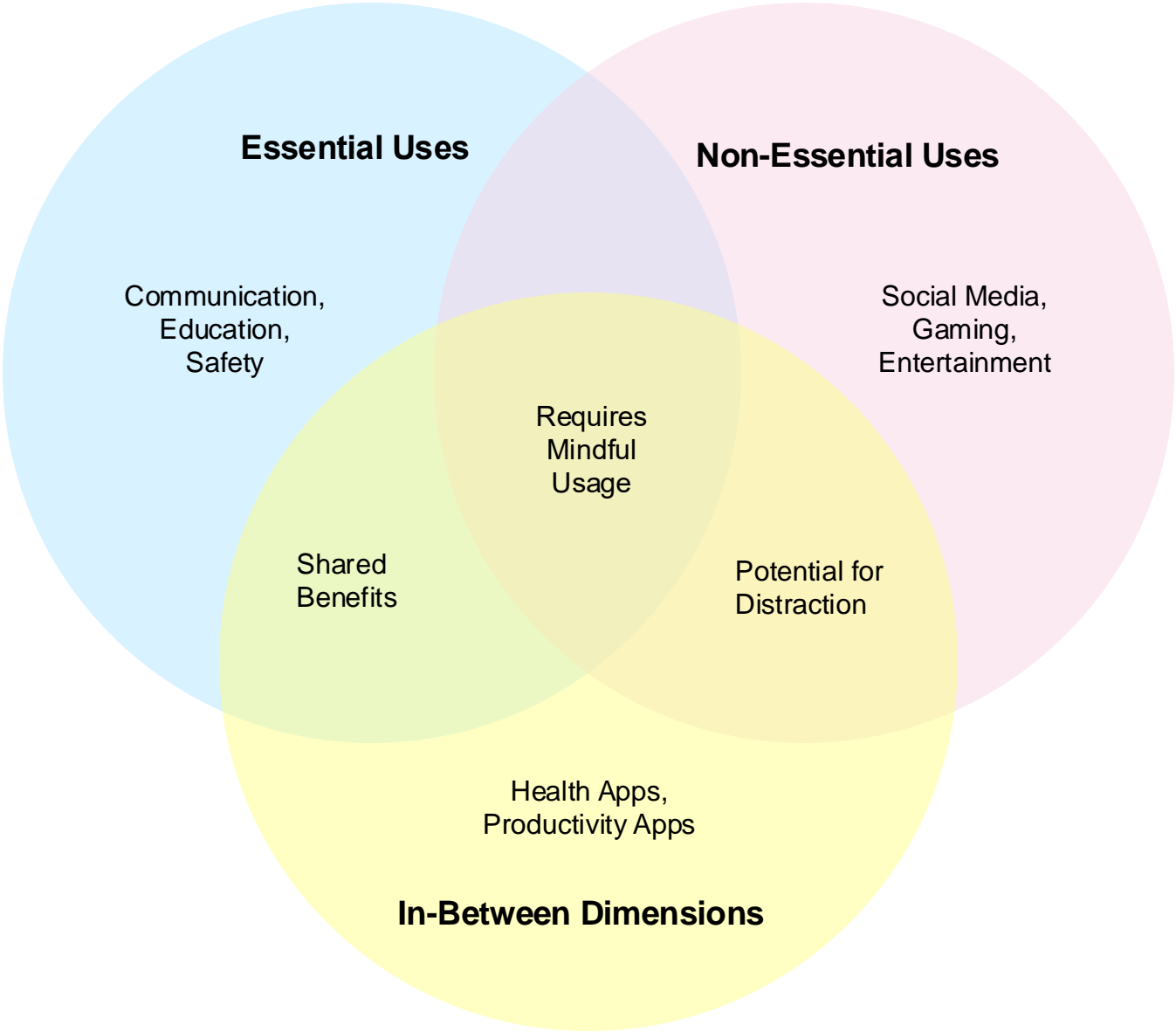Fig 1. Anti-addiction mode for teenagers in Chinese video software

Fig 2. Screen time

Current tools to monitor screen time

Essential Uses

Communication,
Education,
Safety

Non-Essential Uses

Social Media,
Gaming,
Entertainment

Requires
Mindful
Usage

Shared
Benefits

Potential for
Distraction

Health Apps,
Productivity Apps

In-Between Dimensions

Supporting Research - Preferred Style (13-21 yo) + Inspiration

Screenshot 4. From Boomers to Gen Z: How Design Changes with Each Generation

Screenshot 5. Quantifying Visual Preferences Around the World

Visual preferences of 13-21 year olds

- ◆ Bright and Bold Colors
- ◆ Interactive and Gamified Features
- ◆ Minimalistic and Clean Layouts
- ◆ Trend-Driven Visuals
- ◆ Personalization Options
- ◆ Creative and Social Features

- 🎨 Bright Colors
- 🏆 Interactive Features
- ⬜ Minimalistic Layouts
- 📷 Trend-Driven Visuals
- 👤 Personalization
- 🐤 Creative Features

App Design Competitor

Logo Design Popular apps among 13-21 yo

Icon & Elements
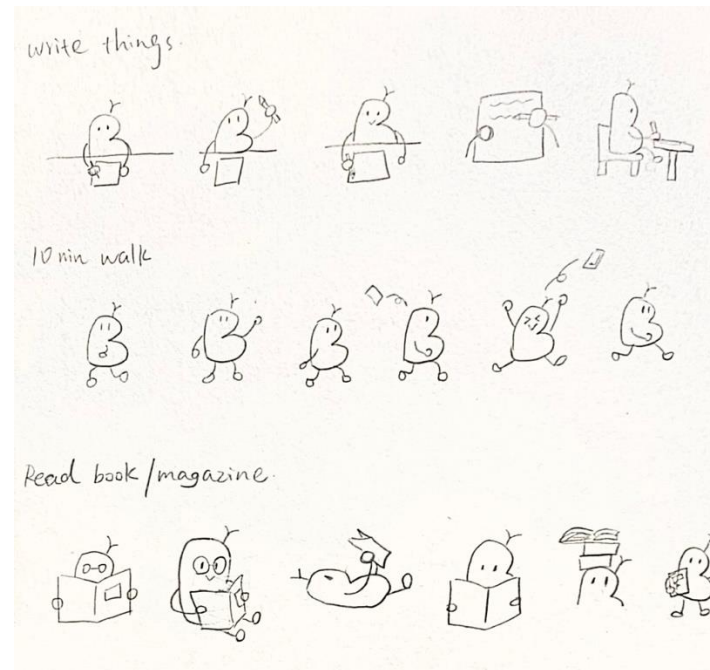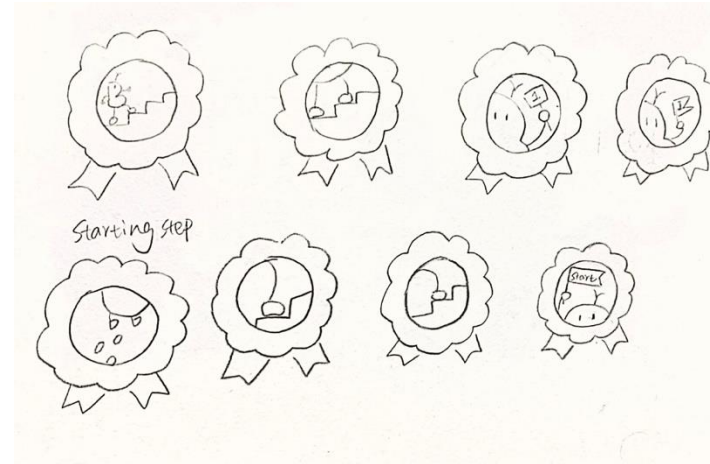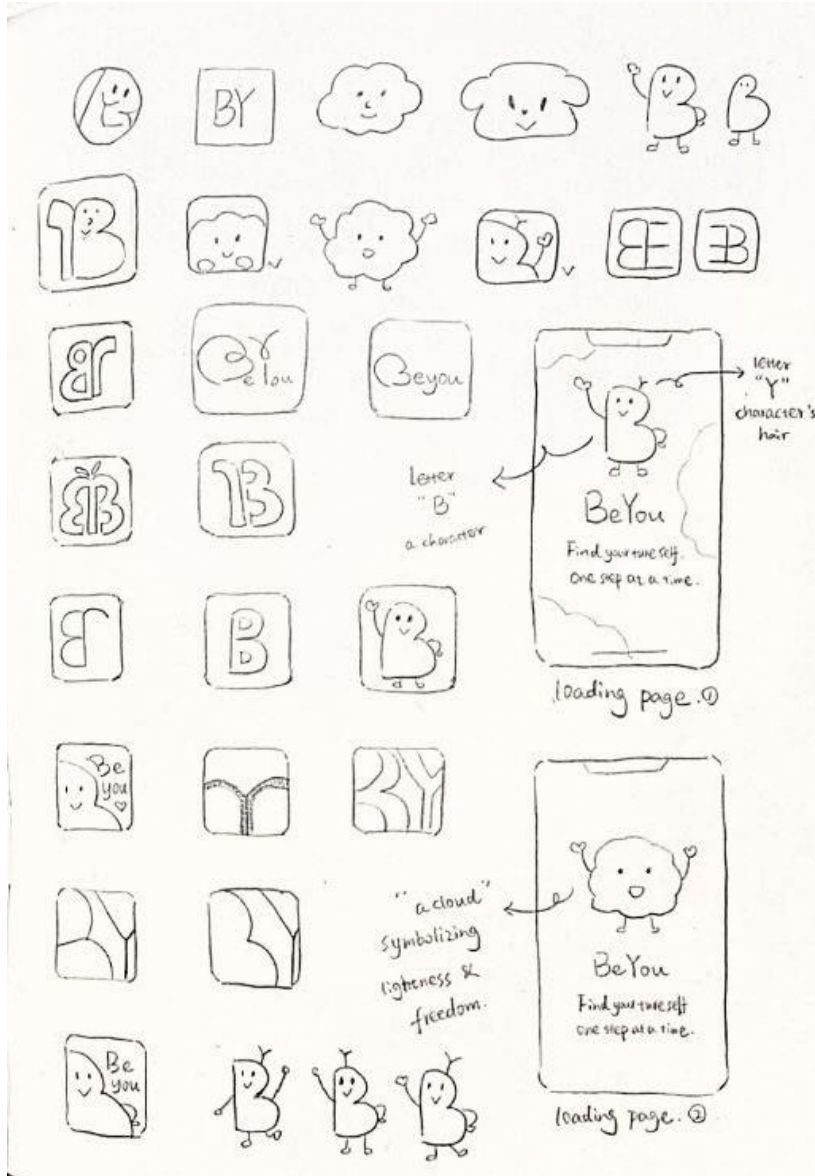
Logo and Icon Concepts (Left Section):
I combined the letter B with clouds to symbolize lightness and freedom, aligning with the app's calming vibe. Playful characters were added to make the icons more fun and engaging for young users.

Loading Page (Middle Section):
The loading page features the phrase "Find your true self, one step at a time" to motivate users and set a positive tone from the start.

Achievement Badges (Top Right):
The badges mark milestones, like starting tasks or making progress, to reward users and keep them motivated.

Task Illustrations (Bottom Right):
These sketches show simple tasks like journaling, walking, or reading, making them relatable and encouraging small, healthy steps.

IP Character - "B":
I decided to choose B as the app's mascot because it directly represents the name "BeYou." The body is shaped like the letter B, symbolizing "Be Yourself," and the hairstyle is inspired by the letter Y, connecting it to "You." I wanted the character to feel simple but meaningful, something that's friendly, memorable, and visually tied to the app's mission of self-discovery.

Layout Exploration
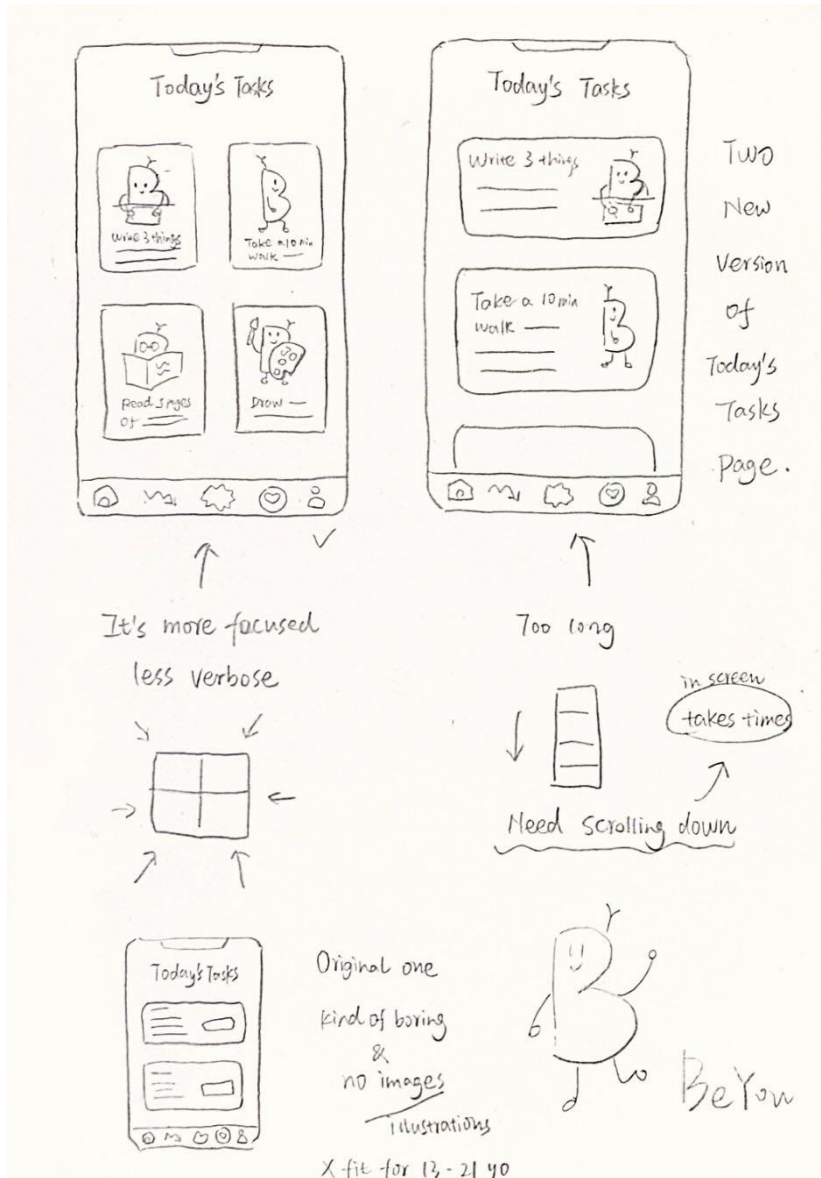
Revised Version of the Original Layout (Top Left):

- This design is my attempt to improve the original layout. The original version felt a bit plain and lacked visuals, so I added **images next to tasks**.
- My idea was to make it simpler and more visually focused. I wanted users to instantly understand what they need to do without too much effort.
- Adding images makes the tasks feel more dynamic and interactive. I thought it would also make the page more fun to use.

Text-Heavy Layout (Top Right):

- This layout goes in a different direction, focusing on detailed task descriptions. While working on it, I realized it might take more time to scroll and navigate, which could frustrate users who prefer a quick overview.
- It's informative but risks feeling overwhelming, especially for those who want a faster experience.

Comparison with the Original Design (Bottom Left):

- The original design had no images, and I felt it didn't stand out enough. I thought it might not grab users' attention or motivate them to engage with tasks.
- My revisions added images and a cleaner layout to fix this, making it easier for users to connect with the tasks.

Character Inclusion (Bottom Right):

- I added the **B character** to make the layout more lively and personal. The character gives the page a friendly vibe and ties back to the app's branding.
- My goal was to make users feel like the app is guiding them in a fun, approachable way.

Conclusion

BeYou tackles screen dependency by promoting mindfulness and creativity for users aged 13–21. The app combines playful design with emotional principles to reduce anxiety and encourage personal growth.

Bibliography

Pew Research Center, n.d. *Smartphones*. [online] Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/internet-technology/platforms-services/mobile/smartphones/ [Accessed 22 November 2024].

Gao, Q. and Wong, K.H., 2021. Technology addiction in education: a systematic review of definitions and approaches. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, [online] 22(4), pp.591-606. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12564-021-09718-5 [Accessed 22 November 2024].

IBS Foundation, n.d. *Smartphone addiction: The fine line between necessity and obsession among young people*. [online] Available at: https://www.ibsafoundation.org/en/blog/smartphone-addiction-the-fine-line-between-necessity-and-obsession-among-young-people [Accessed 22 November 2024].

World Health Organization (WHO), 2024. *Teens, screens and mental health*. [online] Available at: https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/25-09-2024-teens--screens-and-mental-health [Accessed 22 November 2024].

Sohn, S., Rees, P., Wildridge, B., Kalk, N.J. and Carter, B., 2019. Prevalence of problematic smartphone usage and associated mental health outcomes amongst children and young people: A systematic review, meta-analysis and GRADE of the evidence. *BMC Psychiatry*, [online] 19(1), p.356. Available at: https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-019-2350-x [Accessed 22 November 2024].

Bibliography

Flueed, 2024. *From Boomers to Gen Z: How Design Changes with Each Generation*. [online] Available at:

https://www.flueed.com/blog/from-boomers-to-gen-z-how-design-changes-with-each-generation?utm_source [Accessed 22

November 2024].

Reinecke, K. and Gajos, K.Z., 2014. *Visual Preferences as a Window to Users' Age and Culture*. [pdf] Available at:

https://www.eecs.harvard.edu/~kgajos/papers/2014/reinecke14visual.pdf [Accessed 22 November 2024].

List of Images

1. **Screenshot 1.** Available at: https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/25-09-2024-teens--screens-and-mental-health [Accessed 22 November 2024].

2. **Screenshot 2.** Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12564-021-09718-5 [Accessed 22 November 2024].

3. **Screenshot 3.** Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/internet-technology/platforms-services/mobile/smartphones/ [Accessed 22 November 2024].

4. **Fig 1.** Available at: https://m.yicai.com/news/100203892.html [Accessed 22 November 2024].

5. **Fig 2.** Available at: https://dongxiaoran.com/screentime/ [Accessed 22 November 2024].

6. Screenshot 4. Available at: https://www.flueed.com/blog/from-boomers-to-gen-z-how-design-changes-with-each-generation?utm_source=chatgpt.com [Accessed 22 November 2024].

7. Screenshot 5. Available at: https://www.eecs.harvard.edu/~kgajos/papers/2014/reinecke14visual.pdf [Accessed 22 November 2024].