

Assignment 1 - Phase 2 - User Research

User Interviews

Interview Insights

Name	Varsha	Shruti	Mahesh	Jay
Interview/Summary	Young tech professional (18-24) watching on a Laptop/Desktop . High consumption of Shorts (11-50/day).	25-34 year old female, accessing via Smartphone .	25-34 Male, Heavy user (6-15 standard videos/day), Laptop/Desktop .	25-34 Male, watching on Smart TV
Unexpected Insights	Despite being in Tech and using a laptop (where blocking is easiest), she still reports Slight annoyance rather than complete indifference, suggesting even ad-blockers might have leaks or she encounters ads on other devices she didn't list. She watches a very high volume of Shorts (11-50) compared to	She felt the for length/frequency as lengthier, which correlated with a strong desire to quit the app entirely. She sees herself as a Doom-scriber .	He is a Power User who solved the pain of ads with money. His primary reason for Premium was simply to have an ad-free experience. He watches a significant amount of long-form content compared to others.	He feels the ad length to be high but said was not concerned with quitting the application to make him feel like stopping. This contradicts Shruti, who also rated it 5 but wanted to quit.

	standard videos (0-5), indicating her primary TV is actually a vertical feed.			
Actual Workflows	Step 1: Opens YouTube on Laptop/Desktop. Step 2: Relies on Ad-blocking browser extension (e.g., uBlock Origin) to skip ads automatically. Step 3: Bypasses the Skip ritual entirely and watches her videos.	Step 1: Opens Smartphone app. Step 2: Encounter Ad. Step 3: wait patiently for the magical 'Skip' button. Step 4: Endures high friction without a workaround.	Step 1: Login to account. Step 2: Watch uninterrupted. Tool: YouTube Premium Subscription.	Step 1: Watch on Smart TV. Step 2: I wait patiently for the magical 'Skip' button.
Emotional Moments	<i>Slightly:</i> Her reaction to whether ads make her want to stop. The friction is low because she has engineered it away.	<i>Yes, I wanted to stop immediately:</i> The presence of ads during the clip triggered a strong churn signal.	<i>No, not at all:</i> Zero emotional reaction to ads because they don't exist for him.	<i>I wait patiently</i> - The use of patiently combined with <i>Not at all stopping</i> suggests a passive acceptance common in TV viewing (lean-back experience) vs. the active annoyance of mobile (lean-in).
Hypothesis Check	Tech-savvy users don't pay; they hack.	Mobile users feel more trapped by ads than	High volume users eventually convert to	The device dictates the patience level.

	Varsha uses uBlock Origin instead of buying Premium, unlike her peer Mahesh	Desktop users. Shruti has no defense mechanism and reports higher frustration	Premium. Mahesh is a high volume users eventually convert to Premium.	TV user Jay tolerates ad loads; Mobile user Shruti wants to quit at the same load.
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New Question to Explore

- **The Shorts Paradox:** V1 blocks ads on Desktop but watches 50 Shorts/day. Does she tolerate ads on Shorts (which are harder to block) or does she not count them as *ads*?
- **The Breaking Point:** For V2, what specific ad made her want to stop immediately? Was it the content of the ad or just the interruption?
- **Passive vs. Active:** Is V3's patience due to the Smart TV remote being harder to reach/use than a phone screen?

Survey Insights

Survey Link:

YouTube Experience Feedback Survey

About you

 https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSebDnpv5nwRC2tyLZRsgVpU0rWC_45PTD-vy38R-2UjaPzpuA/viewform?usp=dialog

YouTube Experience Feedback Survey

About you

Your email will be recorded when you submit this form

* indicates required question

Please provide your Name:

Your answer:

What is your current age range? *

Under 18

19-24

25-34

Key Insights

- **Device shows the suffering of the user:** It's clear that mobile users feel the pain of ads much more acutely than desktop users. While laptop users like Vanita just install an extension like uBlock Origin and forget about it, mobile users like Shruti seem trapped without a workaround. They are the ones reporting that they want to quit the app immediately when ads hit.
- **Smart TV users have patience:** There is a weird dynamic with the Smart TV users. Ishkinder rated the ad frequency a 5 out of 5 (very high), yet said it didn't make him want to stop watching at all. It seems like when people are on the couch, they are much more passive and willing to tolerate interruptions compared to when they are holding a phone.

- **Shorts is the new YouTube definition:** For a specific slice of your users, YouTube actually just means *Shorts*. I saw users like Vanita and Murtuza hitting up to 50 or even 100 Shorts a day, while watching almost zero standard long-form videos. For them, the ad experience isn't a pre-roll before a movie; it's an interruption in a dopamine scroll.
- **Tech understanding how users go about solving the problem:** The tech/IT professionals immediately cited specific tools like uBlock Origin or Brave Browser for removing ads completely. The non-tech users simply relied on the manual Skip button.

New Question to Explore

1. **The Creator Support Paradox:** Is supporting creators a genuine behavior as given by some survey respondents, or is it a psychological coping mechanism users tell themselves to justify the pain of sitting through ads they actually hate?
2. **The Doom-Scrolling:** Does the flow of doom-scrolling made users unaffected to the pain of ads? If you admit you are doom-scrolling, you have already accepted you are wasting time, so an ad is just another part of the waste.

SWOT

User Research Summary

Number of Survey Respondents	23
Number of User Interviews	4
Number of passive observations	5

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
For power users, the product value is so high that they view the subscription as a non-negotiable utility, not a luxury.	The ad load on mobile is reaching a breaking point for non-tech users who cannot easily install blockers. (Highest friction)	Users self-identify as Doom-scrollers and show a different psychological response to ads. They consider are less resistant to an ad response.	While long-form video has high switching costs, Short-form content is getting commoditized.
Unlike Netflix or TikTok, YouTube	The platform's ad model is easily	Users want to support creators but hate the	Ad-blocking is moving from

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
users feel a moral obligation to the content source, which creates a higher tolerance for ads than other platforms.	defeated by tech-savvy users on desktop, creating a revenue leak among high-value demographics.	interruption of ads that comes in their way of watching their content	extensions to default browsers
YouTube has successfully captured the TV environment where ad tolerance is significantly higher than on mobile.	Users are forced into an All or Nothing choice. They must pay for a full bundle (Music + Background play + No Ads) even if they only want one feature.		

Goal Setting

Mapping Each Problem

Problem Overview	Problem Description	User Behavior	Business Metric Impacted
Mobile Watching Dilemma	Mobile users feel trapped by frequent, unskippable ads because they cannot easily use ad-blockers like desktop users.	High frustration due to ads leading to session abandonment.	Decreased Session Duration (Watch Time). YouTube sells attention. If a user quits the app after 5 minutes instead of 20, that is lost ad revenue on the platform.
Workaround on Desktop	Ads interrupt the flow, but the user is tech-savvy enough to solve it.	Installing ad-blockers to bypass the system entirely.	Decreased Ad Revenue Per User (ARPU). The user is still watching but YouTube makes \$0 ad revenue

Metric Selection

Based on all the pain points and the user research, the most important metric to solve in this case **Average Session Duration (ASD)**

Definition of the metric: The average amount of time a user spends on YouTube in a single sitting before closing the app

Final Goal

Improve Average Session Duration (ASD) for non-premium Mobile users by 10% in the next 6 months.

User Persona

	Persona 1	Persona 2
Name	Shruti	Zoro
Role	Finance Professional	Student
Device	Smartphone	Laptop/Desktop, Smart TV
Goals and Motivations	- Wants quick entertainment to decompress between work tasks or during transit. - Uses YouTube primarily to doom-scroll Shorts or watch short clips without mental effort.	- Watches specifically to connect with favorite creators. - Wants to support these creators financially but cannot afford Premium.
Behaviors	- Platform: Exclusively uses the Mobile App. - The Ritual: She doesn't use blockers. When an ad starts, she freezes and stares at the countdown timer, waiting patiently for the magical 'Skip' button. - Reaction: When ads are too frequent, her immediate reaction is to exit the app entirely.	- The Moral Watch: unlike Shruti, he sometimes watches full ads to support the creator intentionally. - The Breaking Point: Despite his loyalty, when asked why he would buy Premium, his answer is strictly for Removing all ads, proving that his patience is finite. - Content Type: Consumes longer-form content where mid-roll ads interrupt deep focus.
Frustrations	- Trapped Feeling: She feels held hostage by unskippable ads on mobile, unlike desktop users who can tab away. - Disrupted Flow: Ads break her doom-scrolling trance, making the	- The Guilt Tax: He feels guilty skipping ads because he knows it hurts the creator, but the ad experience is degrading his enjoyment. - Intrusive Timing: Ads pop up

	Persona 1	Persona 2
	content not worth the wait. - Frequency Overload: She perceives the ad length and frequency as High, which triggers the urge to stop immediately and close the app.	during crucial moments of long-form content (like tutorials or storytelling), breaking immersion.
Memorable Quote	"I just want to watch a quick video. When the second unskippable ad starts, I just close the app. It makes me want to stop immediately."	"I try to watch the ads to support the creators I love, but eventually, I just want them gone. If I had the money, I'd pay just to remove them

Problems Prioritization

Problems

After all user interviews, competitor analysis and surveys, the following are the 3 problems:

- **Problem A: The Rage Quit Trigger.**
Mobile users encounter high-frequency (rated 5/5) unskippable ads which cause them to physically close the app immediately rather than wait.
- **Problem B: The Doom-Scroll Breaker.**
Users watching Shorts (doom-scrolling) find the ad interface cramped and intrusive, breaking their dopamine loop and causing them to quit.
- **Problem C: The Blind Investment Friction.**
Users are forced to watch 30+ seconds of ads *before* knowing if the video is good, leading to regret and drop-off if the content doesn't match the ads.

Table(Population, Intensity, Frequency)

Problem	Population	Intensity	Frequency
A	5	5	5
B	4	3	5
C	4	2	4

Strategic Filters

Questions	Problem A	Problem B	Problem C
Does it link to the Business Goal?	YES. If a user stops immediately, the Session Duration drops to zero for that segment. Fixing this directly extends the session	YES(Barely). Unlike the Rage Quitters group, these users are in a trance. Solving this might improve user delight, but since they aren't quitting immediately, the impact on Session Duration (ASD) will be lower than solving Problem A.	NO. If a user watches an ad and then drops off because the content was bad, you have technically already captured some ad revenue and session time. The drop-off here is caused by content quality, not the ad itself.
Does it align with Product Strengths?	YES. YouTube has a massive inventory of content. If you stop the user from quitting during the ad, the content will keep them there.	NO. Shorts is a commodity; YouTube's unique strength isn't the vertical feed. Doubling down here fights a competitor on their turf rather than leveraging YouTube's unique value.	YES. YouTube's recommendation engine is a core differentiator. Improving this aligns with the platform's tech strengths.
Is it solvable within scope?	YES. You don't need to remove ads. You need to change how they are delivered to stop the trapped feeling on mobile.	NO. Fixing the ad experience here likely requires a major UI overhaul of the Shorts player, which is a massive engineering effort compared to tweaking ad timing on long-form video.	YES. features like "Summarize video using AI (Gemini)" are already being explored.

Problem Selected: Problem A - The Rage Quit Trigger

Problem Statement

Non-premium Smartphone users frequently terminate their viewing sessions prematurely when encountering back-to-back unskippable ads, because they feel 'trapped' by the inability to multitask or use blocking tools unlike desktop users.