circles

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introduction

This project seeks to explore different ways users unconsciously play with their mobile devices. Pushing past just the exploration, I aim to create a series of unique interaction 'sprints' that work to put meaning behind the fidget.

These interaction explorations will live in a conceptual app, and seek to solve the problems specific to it.

● **introduction**

problem

Social media feeds are muddled with content we don't really care about, and the content we want to see is often buried beneath it.

● **introduction**

solution

A social media aggregator that thwarts the social media algorithms and serves the specific content that you **want** to see, **when** you want to see it.

goals

1

Connect people to their friends and family through providing meaningful, intentional access to their social media content.

2

Elminate the time consuming behavior of combing through feeds to find the content you want to access.

3

Utilize the user's behaviors of playing with their phones and create a fun, meaningful interaction to get them from point A to point B.

research

After establishing what I wanted to solve for, I began researching social media algorithms to understand how they currently populate, and how people feel about the way their social media feeds work.

social media & algorithms

Social media feeds are filled with content designated by the service, not the user. Social media platforms employ the use of algorithms to feed in related sponsored content, as well as sort posts for the user.

Each social media platform sorts their content differently, but one factor remains the same amongst them all; users are frustrated with the content their feed is populated with, and upset about the posts they miss out on.

research

facebook's algorithm

relevancy to user

Facecbook's algorithm orders content on timelines based on the users' friends and the users' activity habits.

who posted it

Who posted it, when they posted it, how many other friends have engaged with it, and how many other people have posted the same thing play into where the content shows up.

type of post

Whether it's a status, photo, or video affects when and where the content appears on the users' timeline.

facebook testing

When a new facebook product or feature launches, facebook will filter it into users' feed to test it in the wild.

instagram's algorithm

Instagram recently shifted to a new algorithm that moves away from their former chronological sorting pattern to a system based on what the user "cares about most". Instagram, and all of it's data analytics, determines what it is the user cares about, instead of the user directly defining what they deem most important.

See the Moments You Care About First

272 NOTES   JUNE 2, 2016

In March, **we announced** a new way of ordering posts in feed so you'll see the moments you care about first.

On average, people miss 70 percent of their feeds. It's become harder to keep up with all the photos and videos people share as Instagram has grown. Over the past few months, we brought this new way of ordering posts to a portion of the community, and we found that people are liking photos more, commenting more and generally engaging with the community in a more active way.

With this new ordering you won't miss your favorite band's video after the concert, even if it took place across the world in a different time zone. And no matter how many accounts you follow, you should see your best friend's latest posts.

You'll see this new experience as we roll it out over the coming month. We're going to keep improving over time to help make Instagram even better. Learn more in the **Help Center**.

#INSTAGRAM, #INSTAGRAM NEWS

instagram's reactions

Instagram was met with some kickback. Users immediately responded to instagram's blogpost detailing their anger and frustration of the new, forced sorting pattern.

1. **a-tad-sketchy** said: My Instagram just updated and changed out of chronological order. Please make a way to switch view ability! I hate that I feel that INSTAGRAM decides what I should see. I don't see posts anymore from close friends or small businesses.

2. **jackpiratee** said: Since the new feed came in, I've used Instagram much less. I hate it being out of order, defeats the point for me. Please bring in an option to change it back to chronological order!

3. **niksunshine** said: I just got the new feed today. I hate it. I'm off of Instagram.

4. **ecuatoria415** reblogged this from **instagram** and added:
   I gave it a shot, but this just doesn't work for me. Until there's an opt-out feature I won't be making much time IG.

5. **sarskirulz** reblogged this from **instagram** and added:
   I HATE this. I keep seeing the same posts that I've seen 8 hours ago & posts that I've liked before. I don't know what...

6. **stevelam** reblogged this from **instagram** and added:
   This is FUCKING TERRIBLE. At least give us the fucking option to revert back to chronological order, you dumb pieces of...

7. **hea-ther** reblogged this from **instagram** and added:
   Dumbest. Shit. Ever.

twitter's algorithm

Twitter includes the most customizable options for social media users, although those options are hidden deep within your account settings. Twitter also explains what they are doing with your timeline, as opposed to facebook. However, the remain vague about how they decide what they deem as pertinant to you.

What's in your Home timeline

When you log in to Twitter, you'll land on your Home timeline.

• Your Home timeline displays a stream of Tweets from accounts you have chosen to follow on Twitter. You may see suggested content powered by a variety of signals. You can reply, Retweet, or like a Tweet from within the timeline.

• Tweets you are likely to care about most will show up first in your timeline. We choose them based on accounts you interact with most, Tweets you engage with, and much more. You can find instructions for how to turn off this behavior here.

• You may see a summary of the most interesting Tweets you might not have seen, labeled as **In case you missed it**.

• You may also see content such as promoted Tweets or Retweets in your timeline.

• Additionally, when we identify a Tweet, an account to follow, or other content that's popular or relevant, we may add it to your timeline. This means you will sometimes see Tweets from accounts you don't follow. We select each Tweet using a variety of signals, including how popular it is and how people in your network are interacting with it. Our goal is to make your Home timeline even more relevant and interesting.

• Clicking or tapping anywhere on a Tweet in your timeline expands the Tweet, so you can see photos, videos, and other information related to that Tweet.

interaction model

Aside from understanding the current issues with social media feeds and how users gain access to the content they want, I sought to explore different interactions that were meaningful and fun.

● **interaction model**

old school throwback

I was heavily inspired by the rotary phone. This phone forced users to have an intention in dialing someone, and I wanted to recreate that friction. I wanted to play off of the idea of having a deep intention in connecting with someone, instead of the traditional mindless act of scrolling or swiping.

● **interaction model**

why a rotary dial instead of 10 buttons?

I learned a brief history on why the rotary dial existed in the first place. Why not just use 10 buttons instead? It comes down to user experience. Phones prior to the rotary phone required a hand crank, which generated the signal. The rotary dial was created to keep the interface familiar and relatable to that of the hand crank.

intentional friction

I wanted to mimic the act of dialing on a rotary phone and translate that as a means of entering a circle's social media feed. I wanted to emphasize the intention of looking for specific content, and give more meaning to that interaction.

audience, story, & case

Once I solidified my concept and the interaction I wanted to solve for, I defined the target audiene and users to help further guide my decisions.

target audience: millennials

Accustomed with social media and it's practices, this audience enjoys staying up to date, catching up with friends, and sharing their lives through this mobile expression.

Meet Daria, age 21

Daria is in her last year of college, completing her degree in biomedical sciences. She's enjoying her last year and trying to get the most out of college before she heads off into the "real world". She is involved in the college radio station as well as the varsity swim team. Daria likes to keep busy, and has little time to herself. Keeping up with all of her friends is super important, but she doesn't always have the time to scroll through feeds to find her friends' content.

> "It's really important to me to stay connected with my friends. We are making our last college memories together and it's important that we share and cherish them"
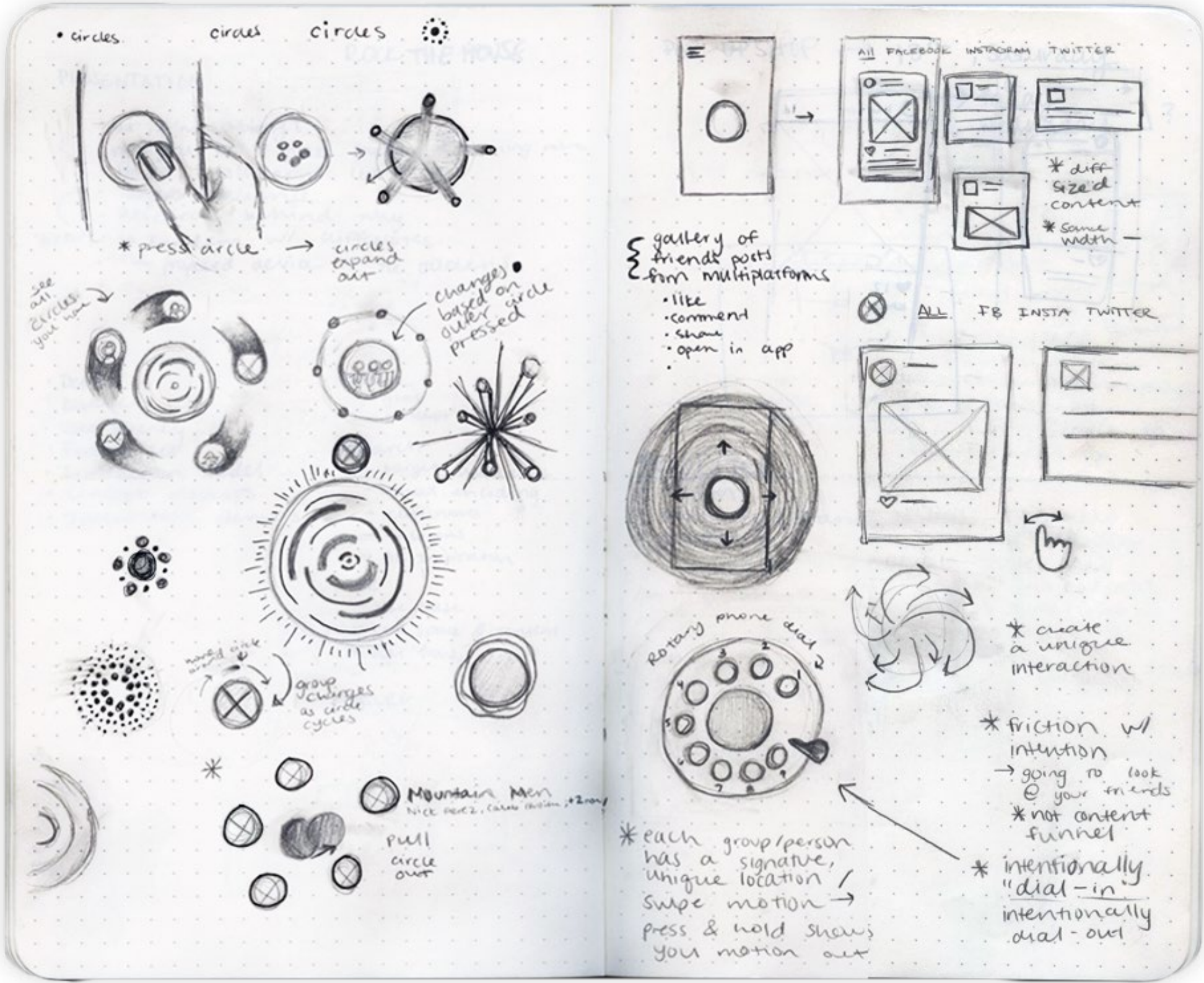
use case

base

From defining my target users and a specific use case that a user would go through, I began sketching and iterating through different ways to communicate my concept.
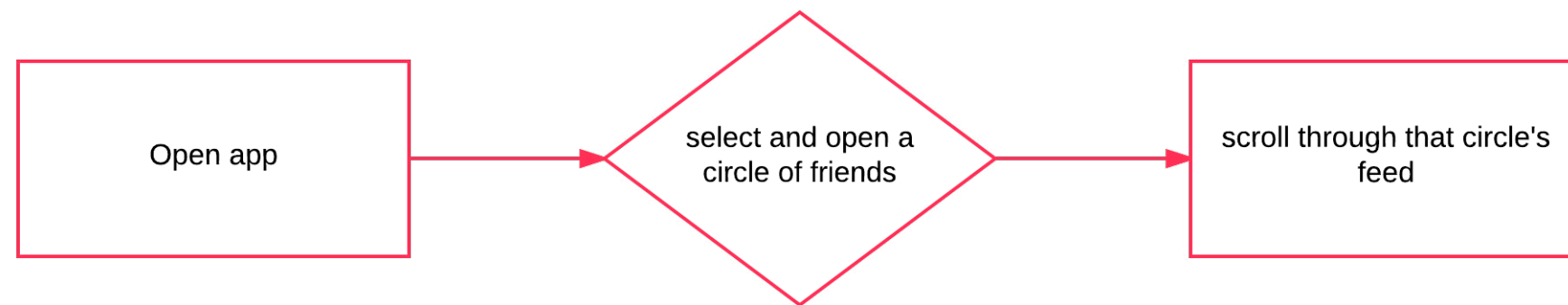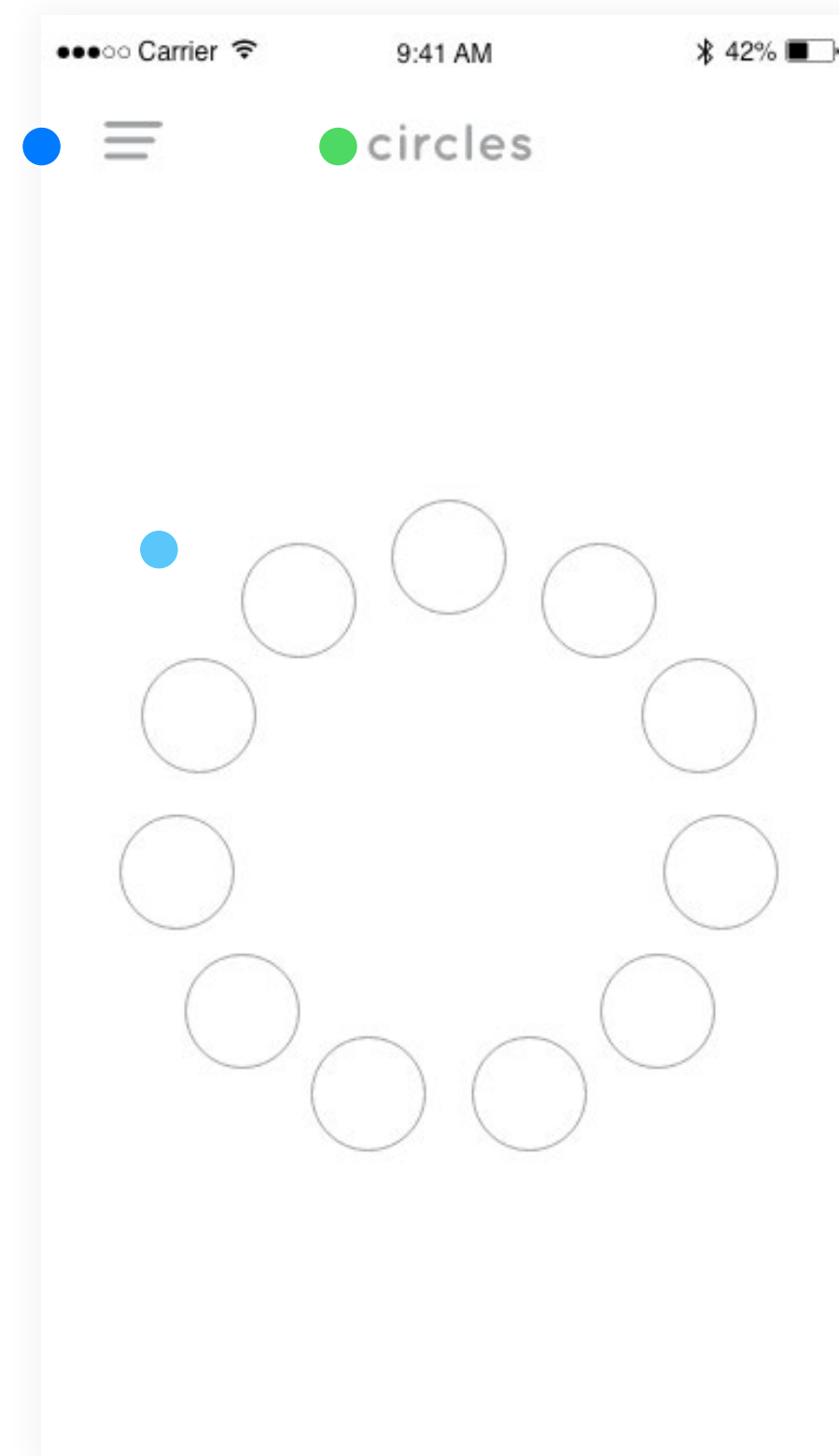
base

sketches

● base

wireframes

homes

● menu

Contains profile options, add new group,
organize group options, and settings

● branding

● circle

Circle of groups user has created, users can
enter the group's specifically curated social
media feed through an interaction with that
group's circle

●●●○○ Carrier 📶   9:41 AM   ❋ 42% ▭

☰   ● circles

base

wireframes

circle's feed

● **group name**

● **group info**

Contains information about who is in the group, customization options, and social media accounts linked
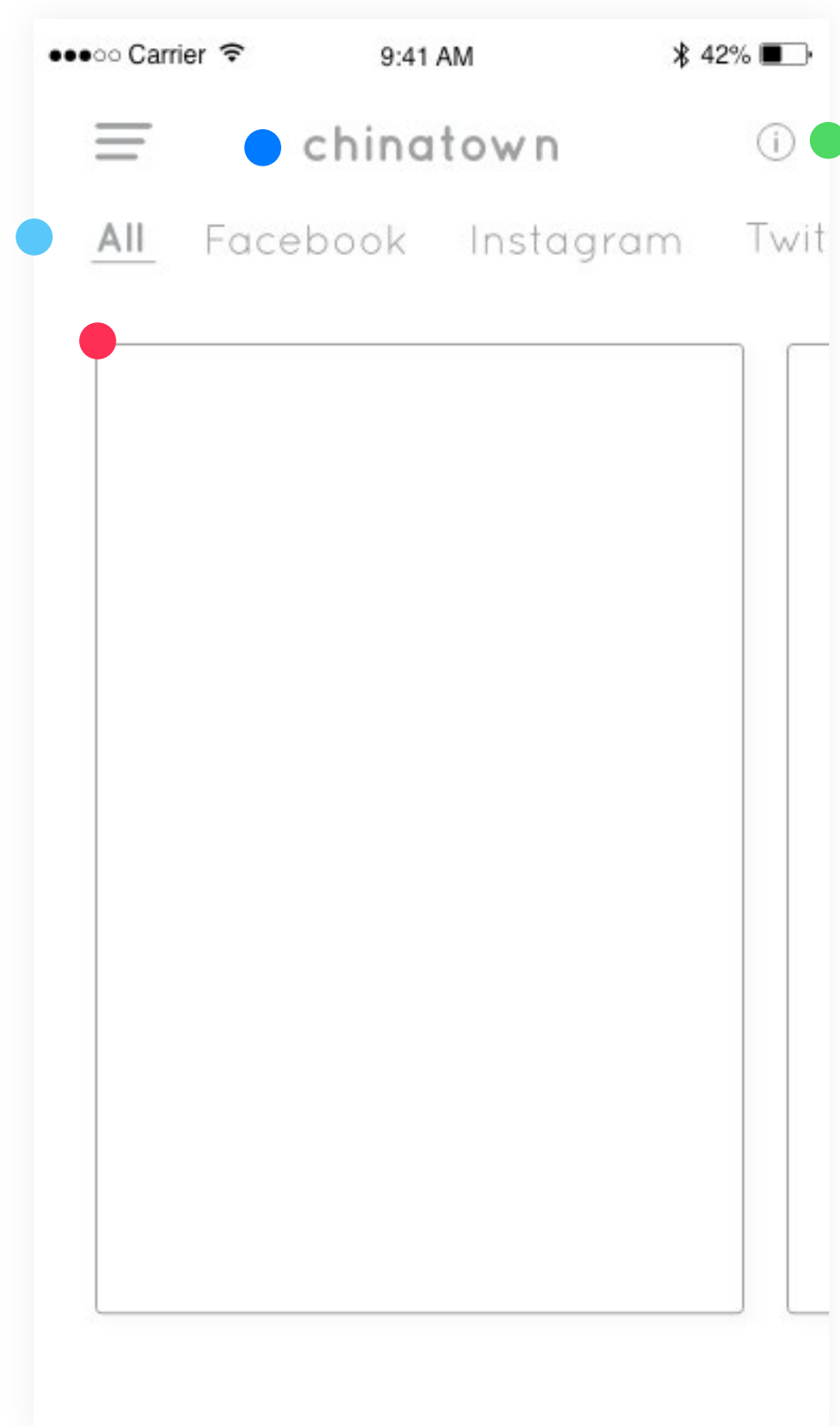
● **social media filter**

Specify what type of social media content you want to see from your friends
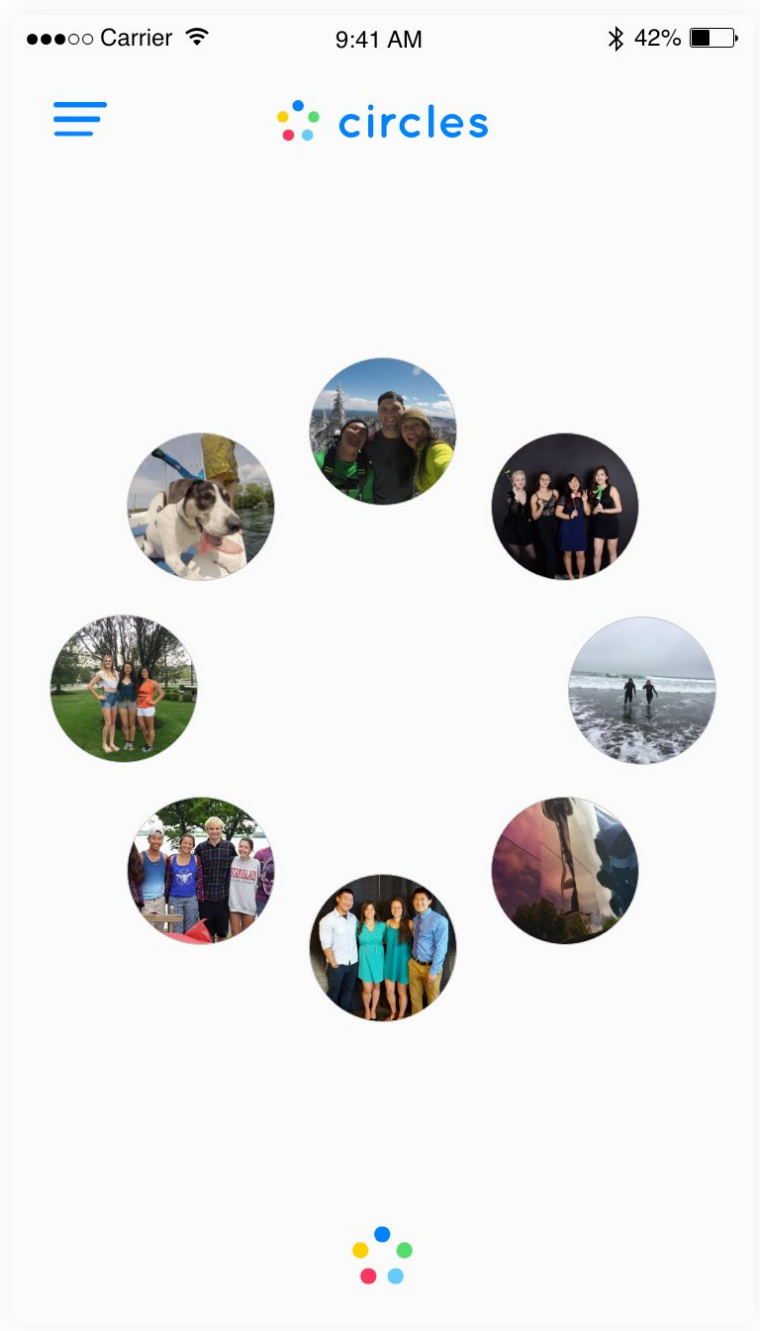
● **social media content**

Social media content of only the friends in that group aggregated into a feed

press and hold on social media content to see it in it's original app

design

Initial sketches and wires in hand, I did a quick sprint in visual design. After quickly fleshing out the look and feel, I explored different ways the user could interact with these circles: working to put meaning behind the interaction and create a sense of intention.
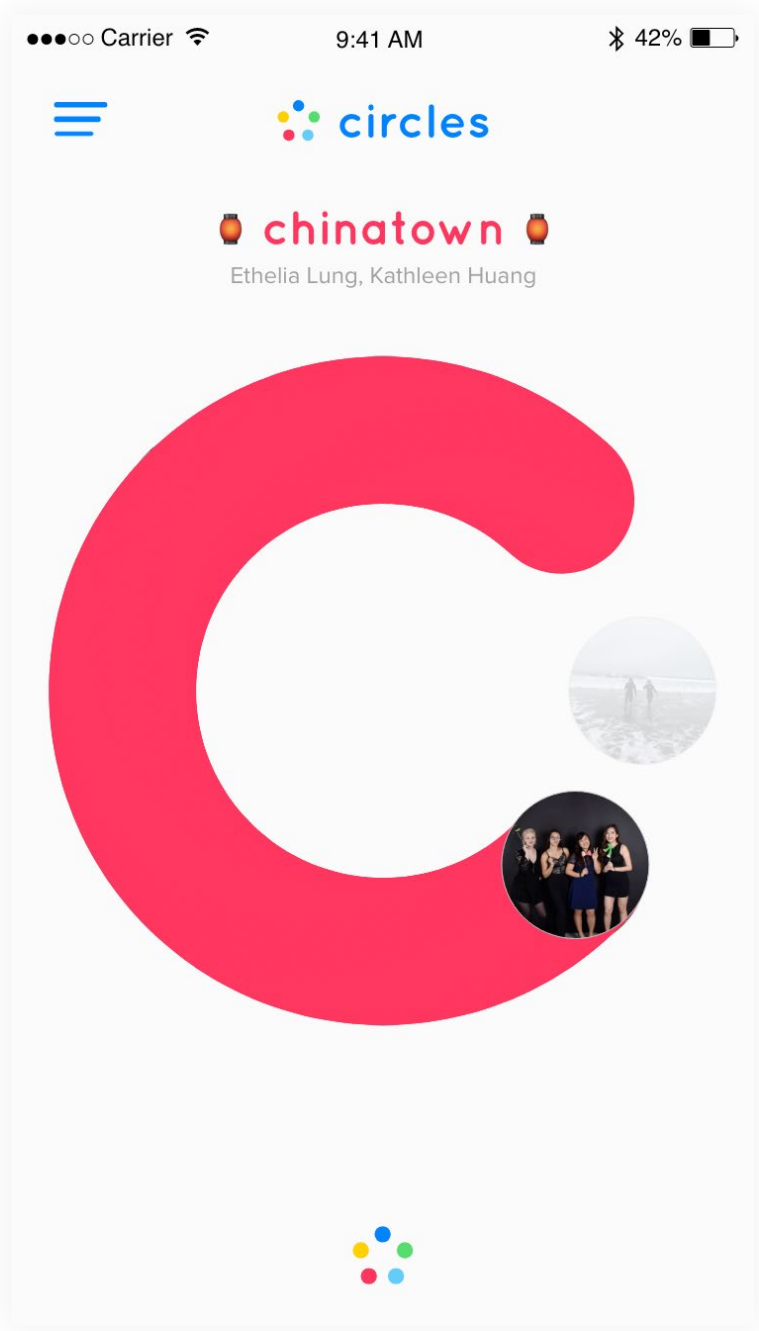
● design

interaction breakdown 1

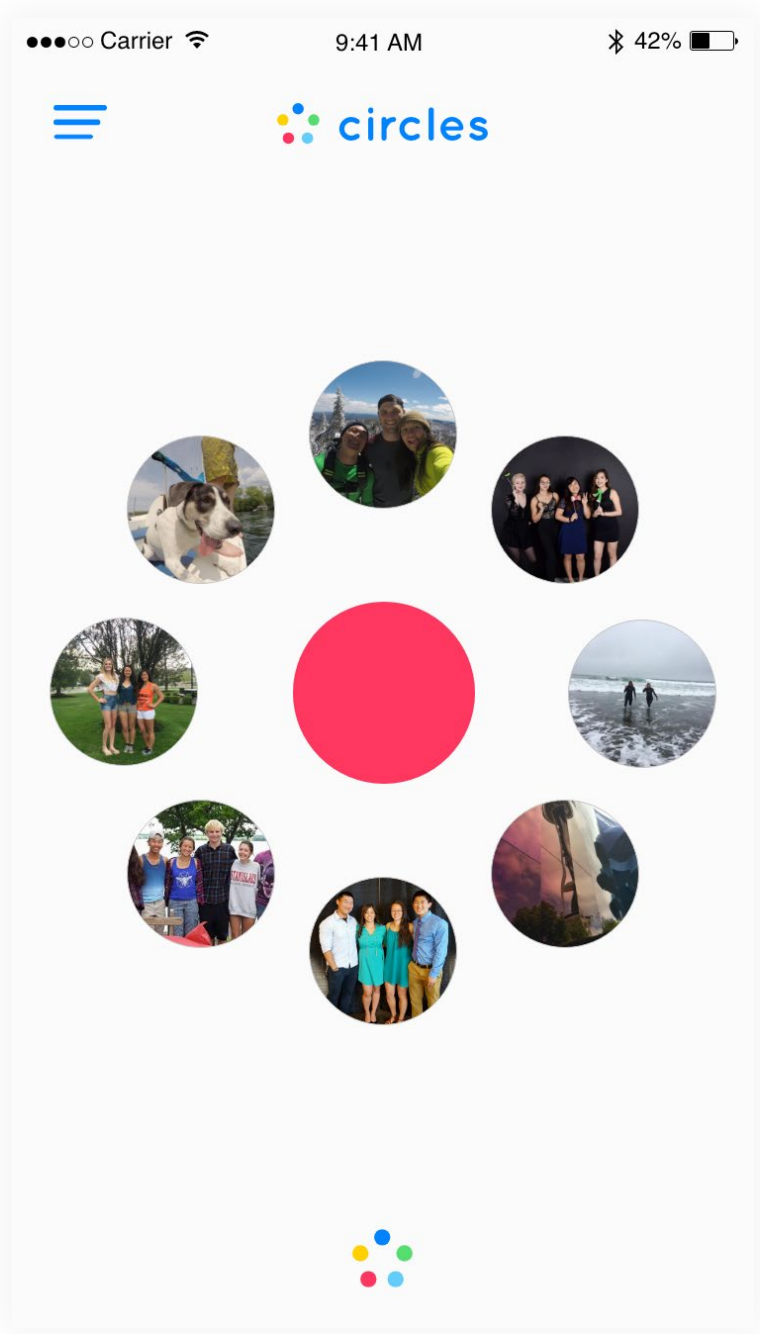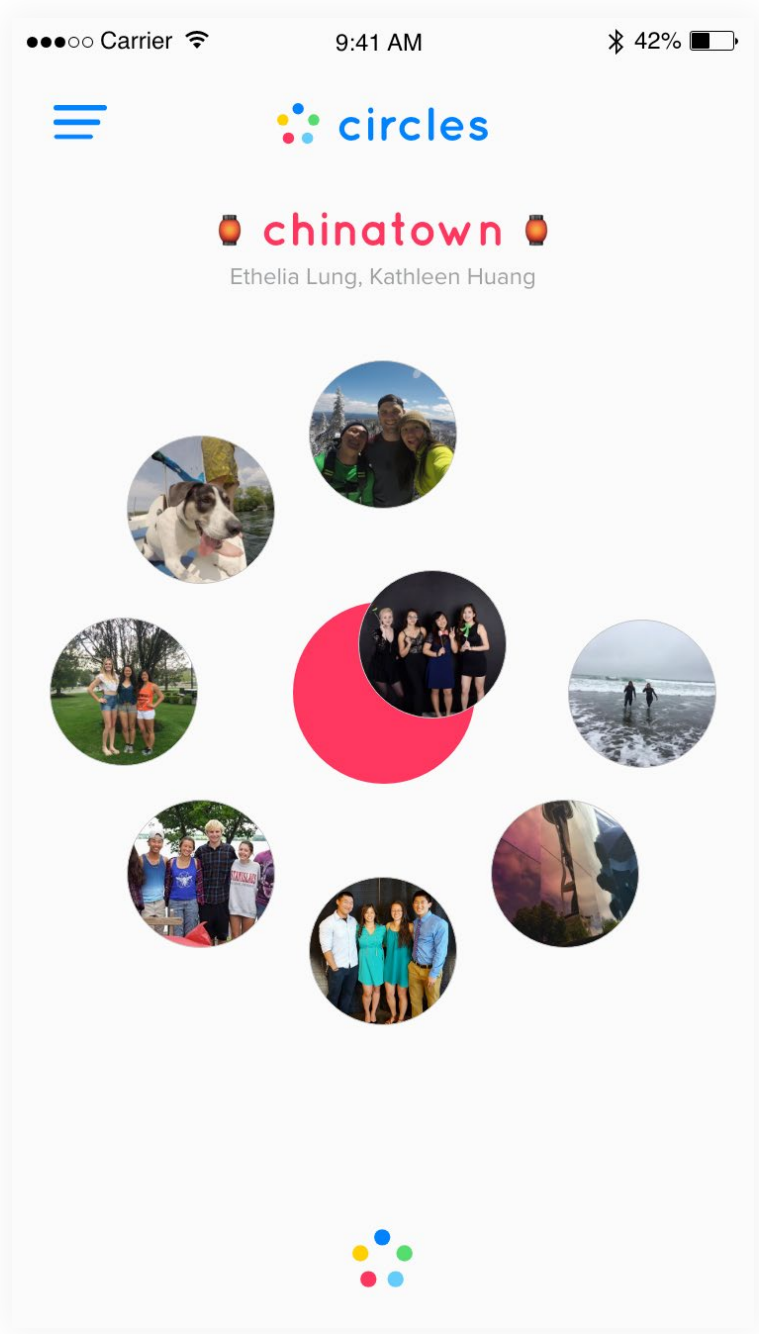home   open group's feed   group's feed
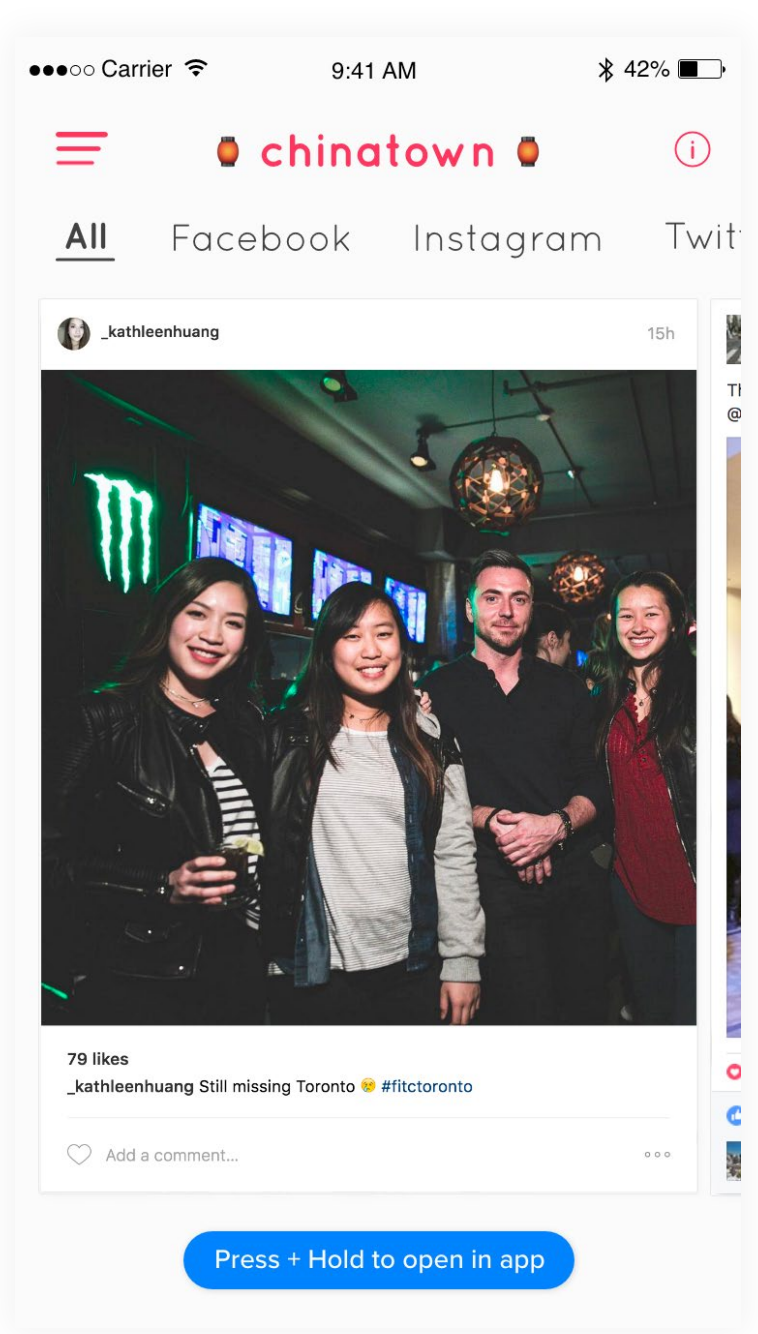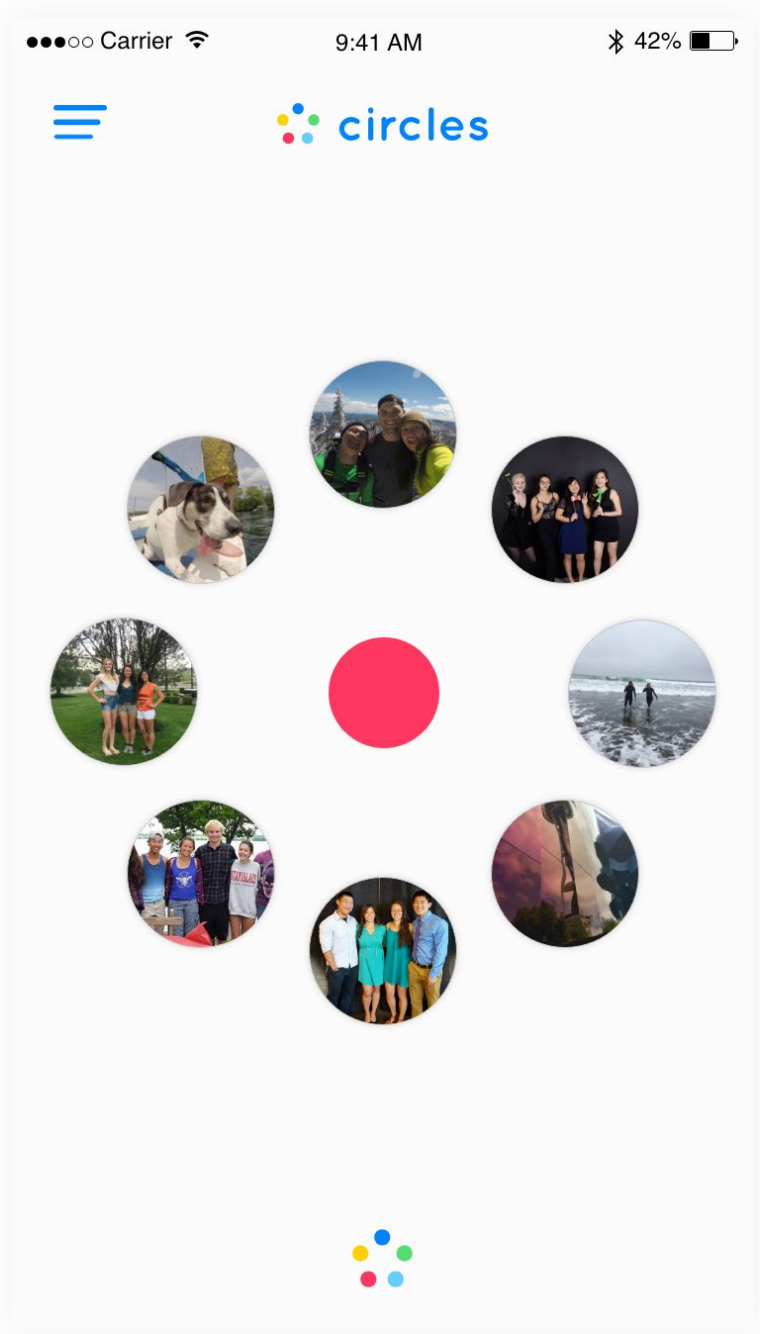
● design

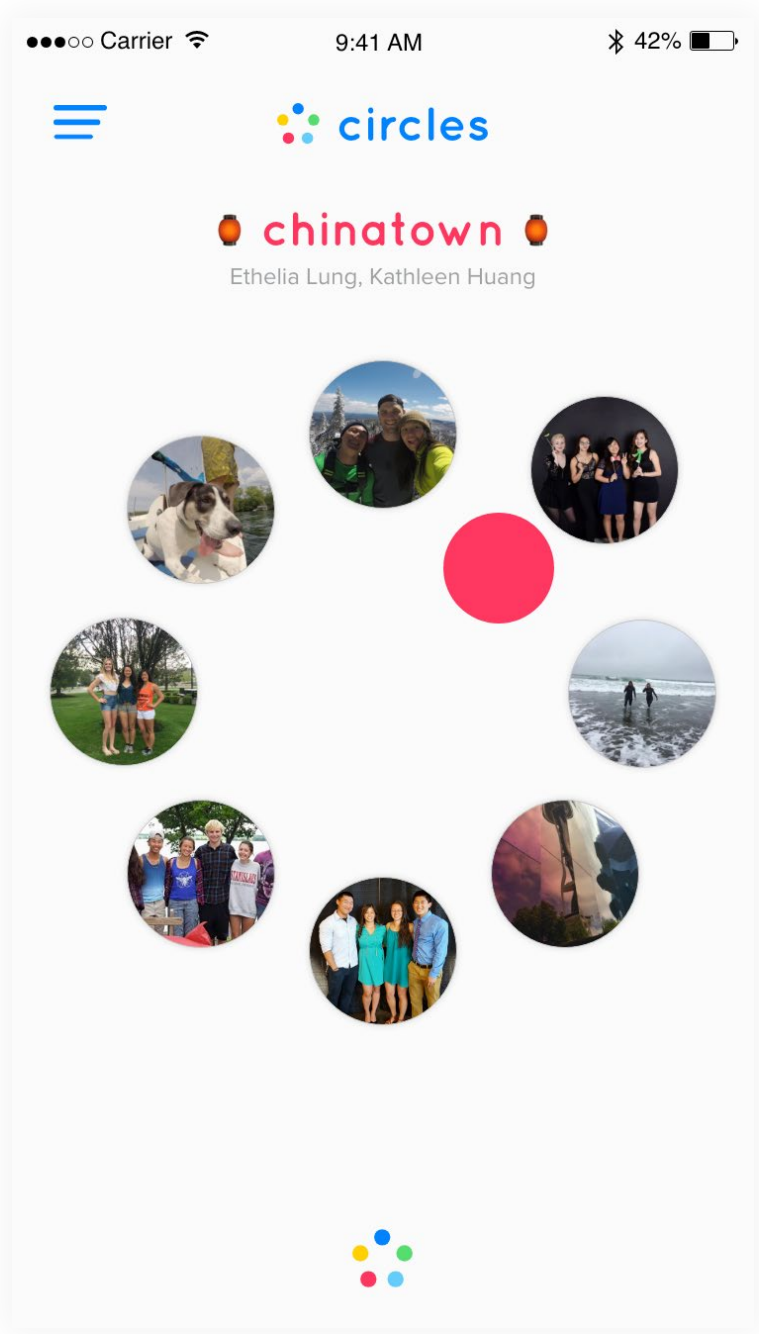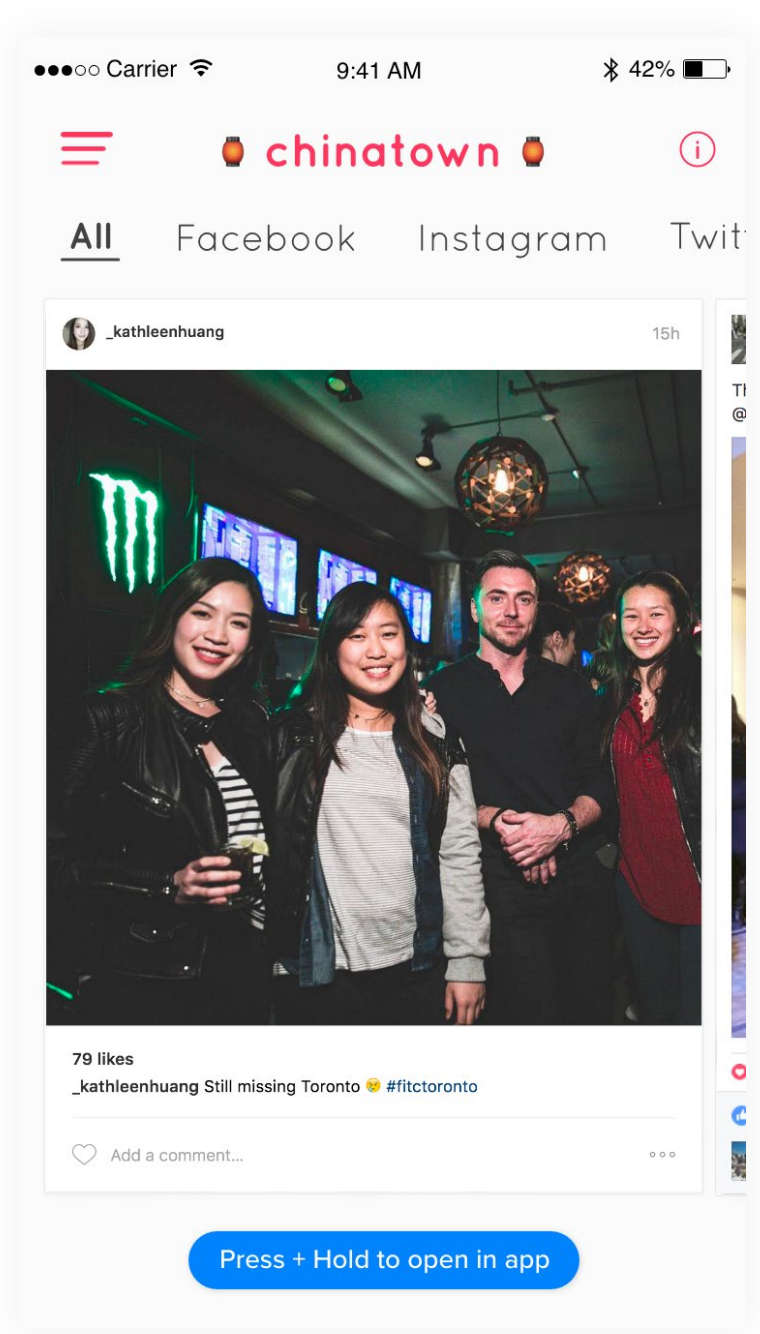interaction breakdown 2

home

open group's feed

group's feed

● design

interaction breakdown 3

home

open group's feed

group's feed

conclusion

Circles will provide access to your closest friends and family's social media content, all organized on one platform. Eliminate the need to search for specific people, while honoring the intention behind doing so.

post-mortem

Due to a short timeline and the end of the semester sprint to the finish I had to reduce the scope of this project. Post-mortem I would like to revist the visual design of this project, as well as fully tackle the UX challenges that would come with this app, such as creating groups, editing groups, and onboarding.

Interaction-wise, I would like to create a suite of 5 possible interactions for entering a group to further explore the possibilities of translating intention and user interaction.

Thanks for checking this out!
Abbey Lee, 2017