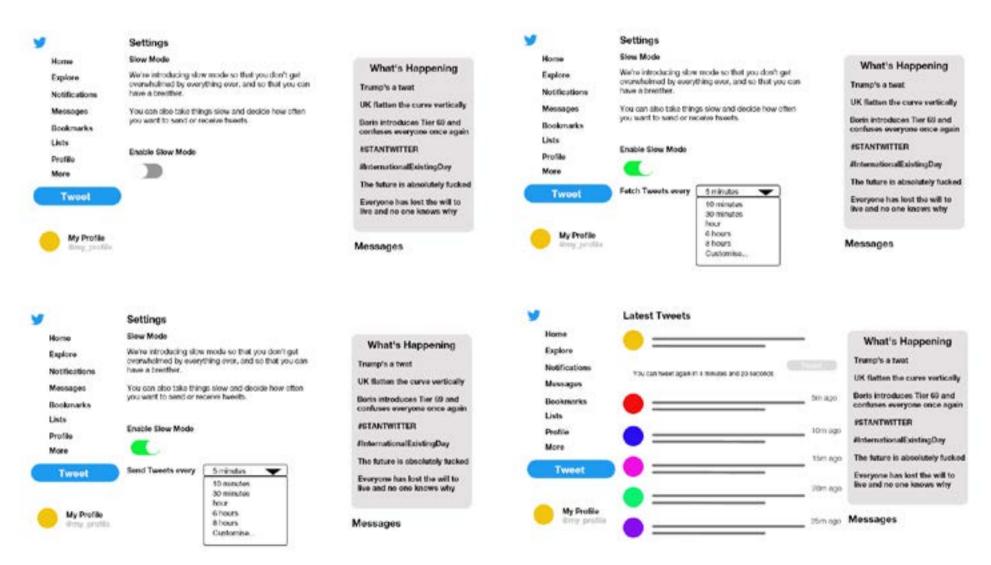# Bridging the Divide: A product and service design proposal to prevent the spread of fake news, negativity, and desensitisation by encouraging and promoting positivity as well as good mental health habits and mindfulness for users on Twitter.

Proposal

This proposal will prevent the spread of fake news, negativity, and desensitisation by encouraging and promoting positivity as well as good mental health habits and mindfulness for users on Twitter. In order for this to work, I've designed 5 new features (with 3 of them built in, and 2 optional features) which will be in the form of browser plugins. So far, these features have been designed for the desktop, but they will also be designed for mobile so that everyone can make use of these features.
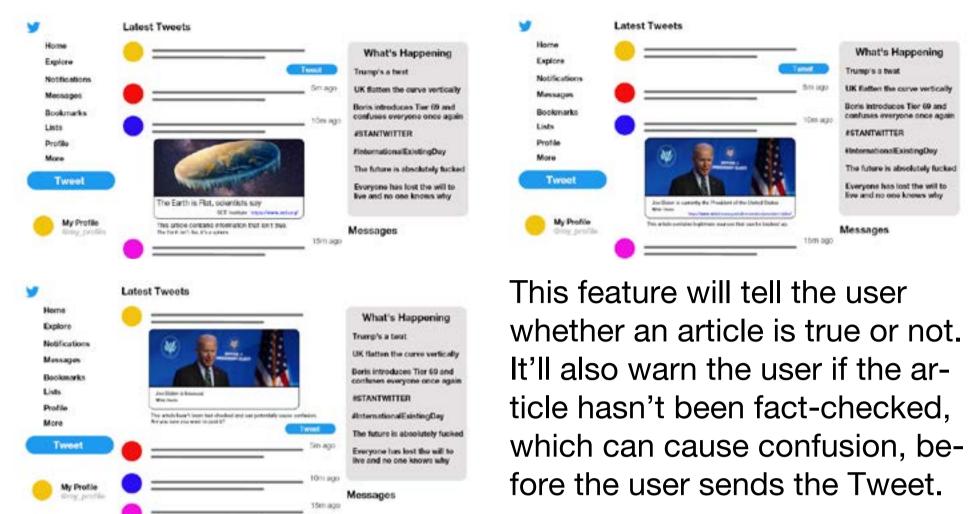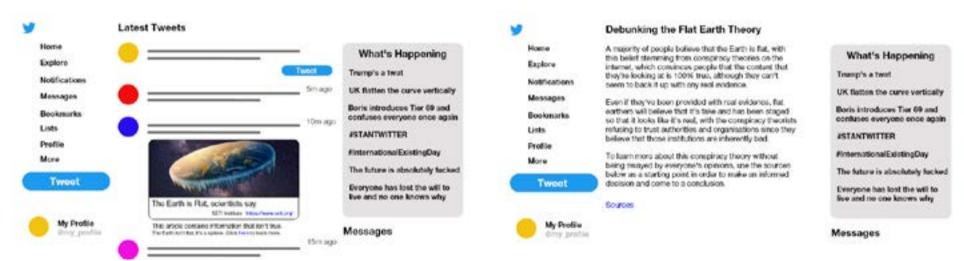
Feature #1 - Slow Mode

This feature is optional because it might not work for everyone, and will allow users to customise how often they can send and receive Tweets so that it can suit them, which in turn, will encourage users to use Twitter mindfully. If the feature is enabled, Tweets will only be fetched from the server every 5 minutes (for example) rather than as and when they happen, in order to prevent the user from becoming overwhelmed with lots of content. Similarly, if the user sends a Tweet, they can't Tweet or Retweet anything else during their time limit, and this will encourage users to think about what they post before sharing it as well as considering if it's worth it.

Feature #2 - Article Sources That Have Been Fact-Checked

This feature will tell the user whether an article is true or not. It'll also warn the user if the article hasn't been fact-checked, which can cause confusion, before the user sends the Tweet.

Feature #3 - Unbiased Summaries with Links to Unbiased Sources

This feature will tell the user the content of the article by providing an unbiased Wikipedia style summary with links to unbiased sources so that the user can do their own research.
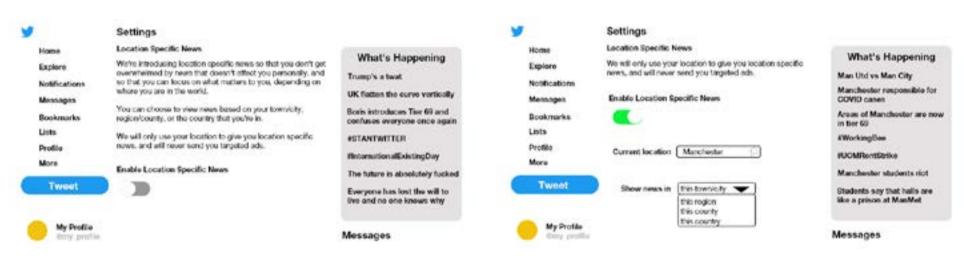
Feature #4 - Information Overload

If the user has had enough of viewing negative news, they can view an uplifting version of their timeline instead. Either way, the user can click on the panic button and view some calming content for a while.

Feature #5 - Location Specific News

This feature is optional since some users might not want to miss out on world news. However, if this feature is enabled, the user will only see news based on their current location, and they can customise how much news they want to receive by limiting it to either the town/city, region/county, or the country that they're in, so that they don't have to deal with the news of the world if they don't want to. Additionally, this feature will act as a local newspaper and will prevent users from stressing about things that don't personally affect them at all.

Judging Criteria

Social and Environmental Impact

This proposal makes a positive difference for people within the context of social media since it prevents the spread of fake news, negativity and desensitisation since users are encouraged to look at the facts before they post articles, as well as being encouraged to take time out and focus on what matters to them since this will help improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Rigorous Research and Compelling Insights

I've looked at how users interact with each other on certain topics, as well as reading up on articles about how social media affects mental health and wellbeing. My insights were that users felt more negative the more time they spent on social media platforms as well as not being mindful of what they did on there, so I designed some features which would solve those problems.

Systems Thinking

My idea connects to a wider set of issues on the platform (such as toxicity and negativity), by turning those negative features on its head and designing a better user experience. Unintended consequences would involve users finding loopholes and workarounds, where they would then abuse the optional features in particular, and not use them how I intended them to be used.

Viability

I've created visualisations and prototypes of my work to get an idea of how it would work in the real world. Users can donate as a form of thanks if they genuinely like the features, but there might not be a big enough interest for these features.

Creativity and Innovation

My proposal looks at how users can use social media mindfully since most platforms don't have that feature directly on their own platforms, which means that users often rely on third party apps to do that. My time out feature will show a different type of calming content each time the user clicks on the panic button, so that there's an element of pleasant surprise each time they click it.

To view all this in more depth, click here

Problem

The specific problem that I identified within the brief topic was the overall negativity of the platform, through the use of spreading fake news, and encouraging negativity as well as mindlessness and overwhelm. Everyone experiences this problem to some extents, and it negatively impacts their mental health and wellbeing.

Process

I investigated this issue by looking at user interactions under different topics on Twitter and seeing how users interacted with each other as well as seeing how they reacted to certain news. The key insights were that users were negative towards each other on topics that revolved around politics and current events. The journey of this was to look at the negativity and flip it on its head so users could use Twitter for good.

Proposal

My proposed intervention is to add features to the platform to encourage positivity and mindfulness by encouraging users to think about what they share with others. This will also encourage users to stop spreading fake news, desensitisation and negativity amongst other users in order to make Twitter a better platform.