

# Advocating for accessibility and simplicity during a website redesign

**News & Media - Interaction Design • Visual Design • Research & Testing • Accessibility**



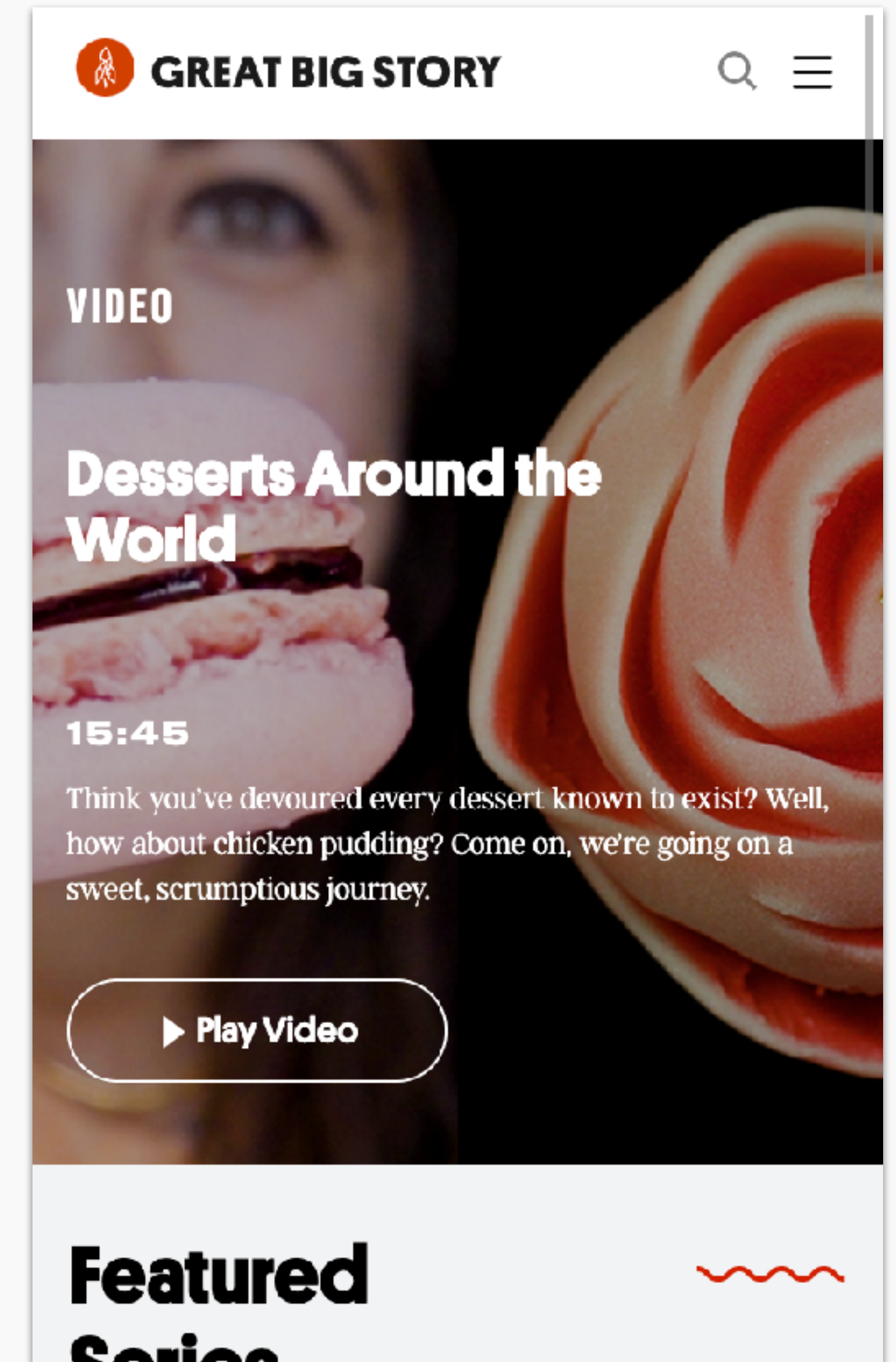
*A photo of a person holding a film slate with the Great Big Story logo on it*

## Context

Great Big Story, an award-winning media company known for its uplifting and inclusive micro documentaries, boasts a huge and engaged audience across social platforms. But, when it came to their website — *it didn't reflect it.*

## Business Problems

With an average bounce rate of 61% and a 6% video completion rate, Great Big Story had an issue with keeping their users to spend time on their site— which reflected in their user loyalty and their relationships with advertisers.



*A screenshot of the Great Big Story homepage*

## **My Role**

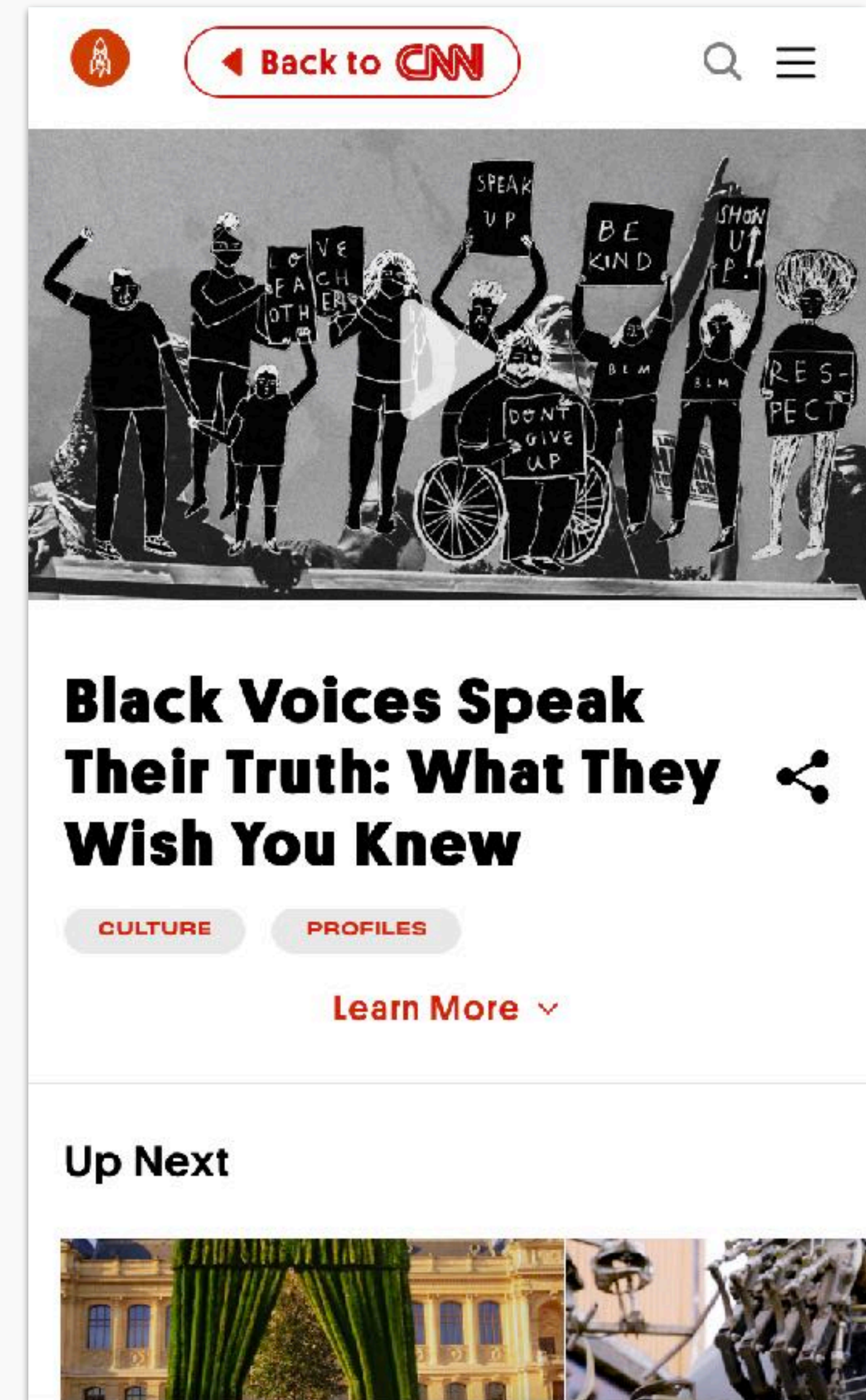
# **Product Designer**

- Responsible for creating roadmaps, research, testing, interaction design, visual design, QA, presentations and leading information sessions.
- Collaborated daily with audience intelligence, publishers, content writers, engineers, leadership, ad operations and art department.

## Primary User Role

# Deep-linked users

- Users who come directly to a story from CNN (69%), Age Range: 40-65.
- *Desired.* Users who come directly to a story from social marketing, Age Range: 18-32



A screenshot of a video on the GBS website redirected from CNN

## Business Goals

*“We want to keep our users on our site for as long as possible.”*

*“We need a website that reflects our brand and craftsmanship to advertisers”*

*“We want to create loyalty among users”*

## #1 - Measures of Success

Decrease bounce rate to 40%

With a 61% bounce rate, we discovered that when they were redirected, we didn't have what it took to keep them.



## #2 - Measure of Success

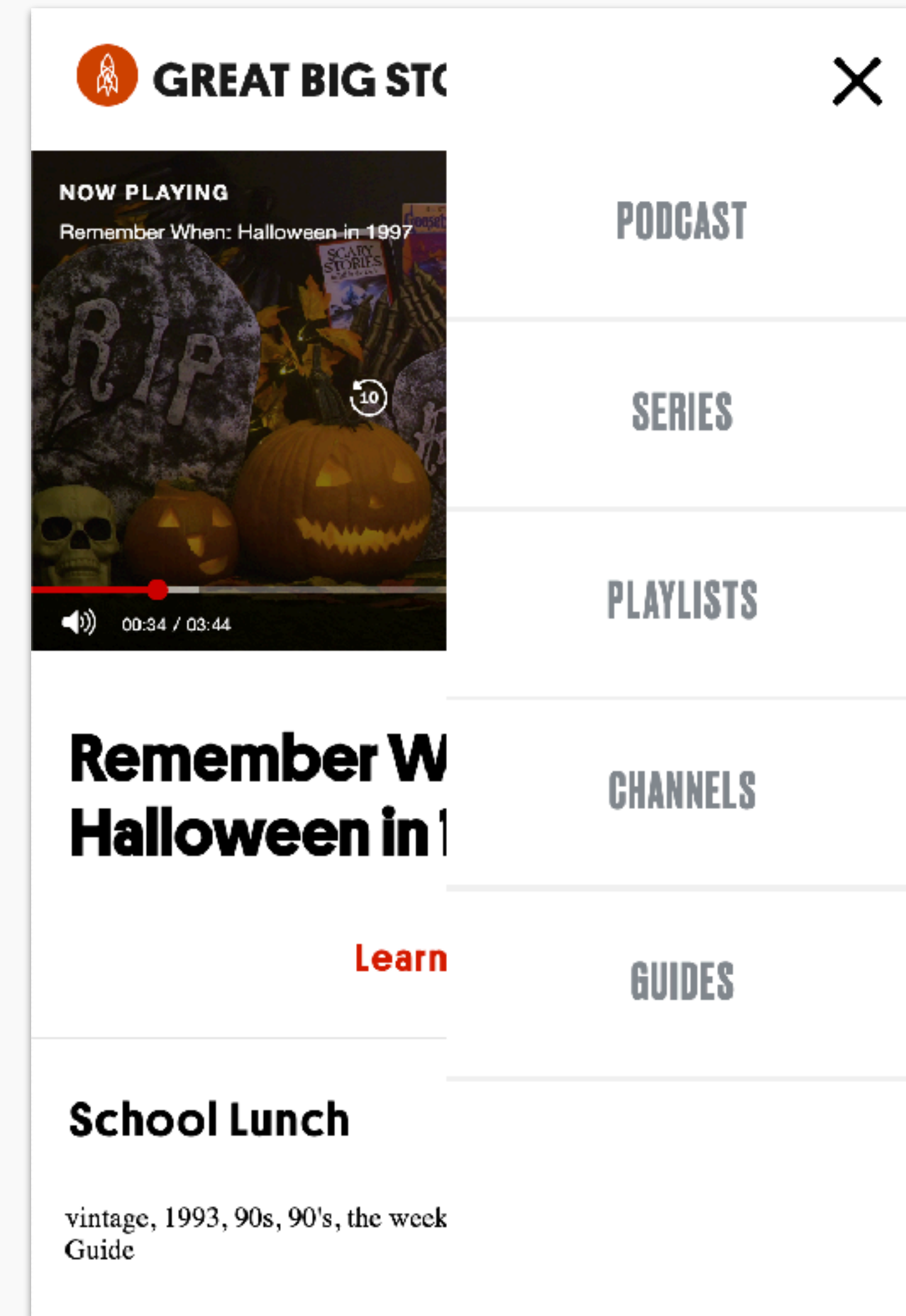
Increase time spent, 5-7 min

Most users spent 2 min before leaving the site, and only 6% finished watching videos all the way through. Once the user watched what they came for, they didn't engage with additional content.

### #3 - Measure of Success

Increase page visits, 3-4

Users rarely engaged with navigation items or clicked on related content, and only 2-4% of traffic was making it to the homepage— which is where most programming efforts were being put.

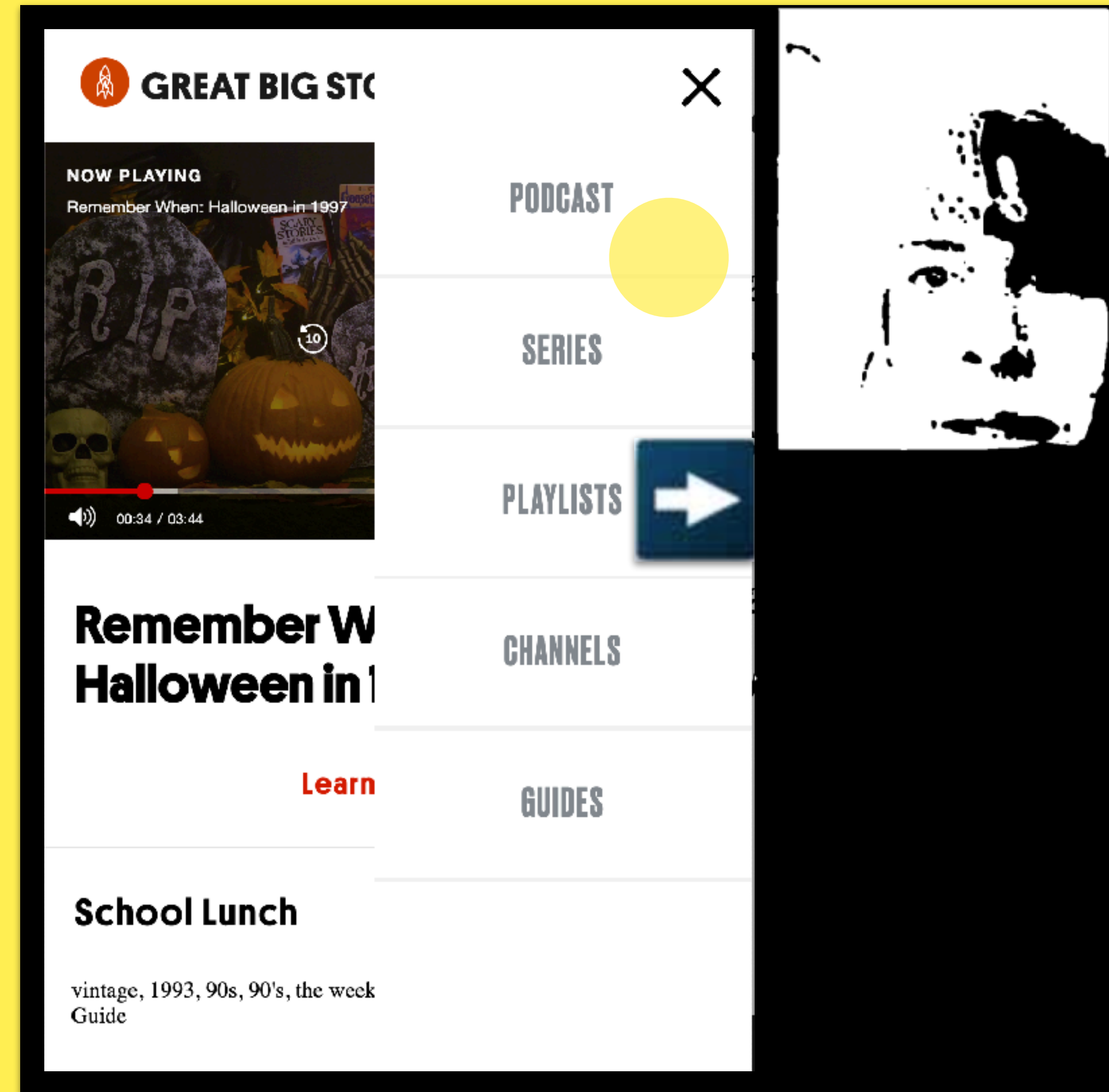


A screenshot of the navigation with items; Podcast, Series, Playlists, Channels, Guides

## Usability Problems & Goals

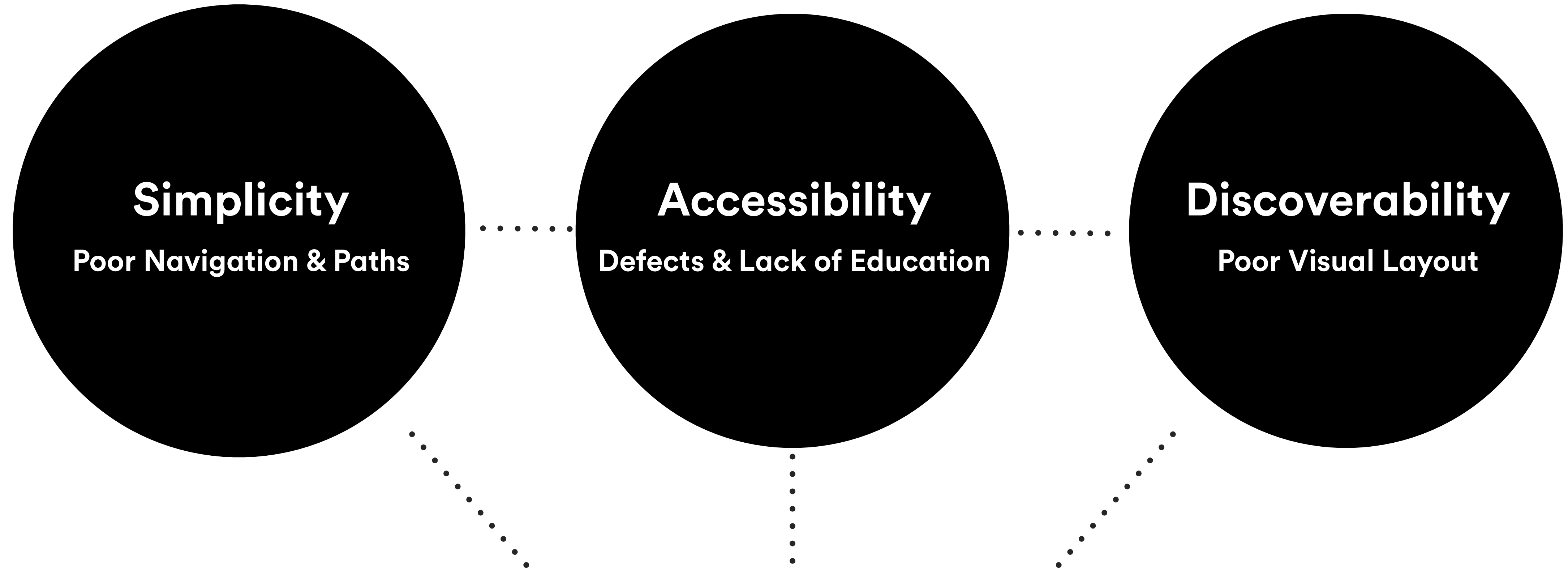
Before strategizing how to keep users engaged, first I needed to identify *what was driving them away*.

I conducted usability tests to help identify key issues in those areas. 90% of drop-off was in the navigation or on a story page (video or article).



*A screenshot of a participant and their screen during a usability test*

# Usability Problems & Goals



## Measures of Success

Decrease bounce rate   Increase time spent   Increase page visits

# Usability Problems & Goals



## Measures of Success

Decrease bounce rate   Increase time spent   Increase page visits

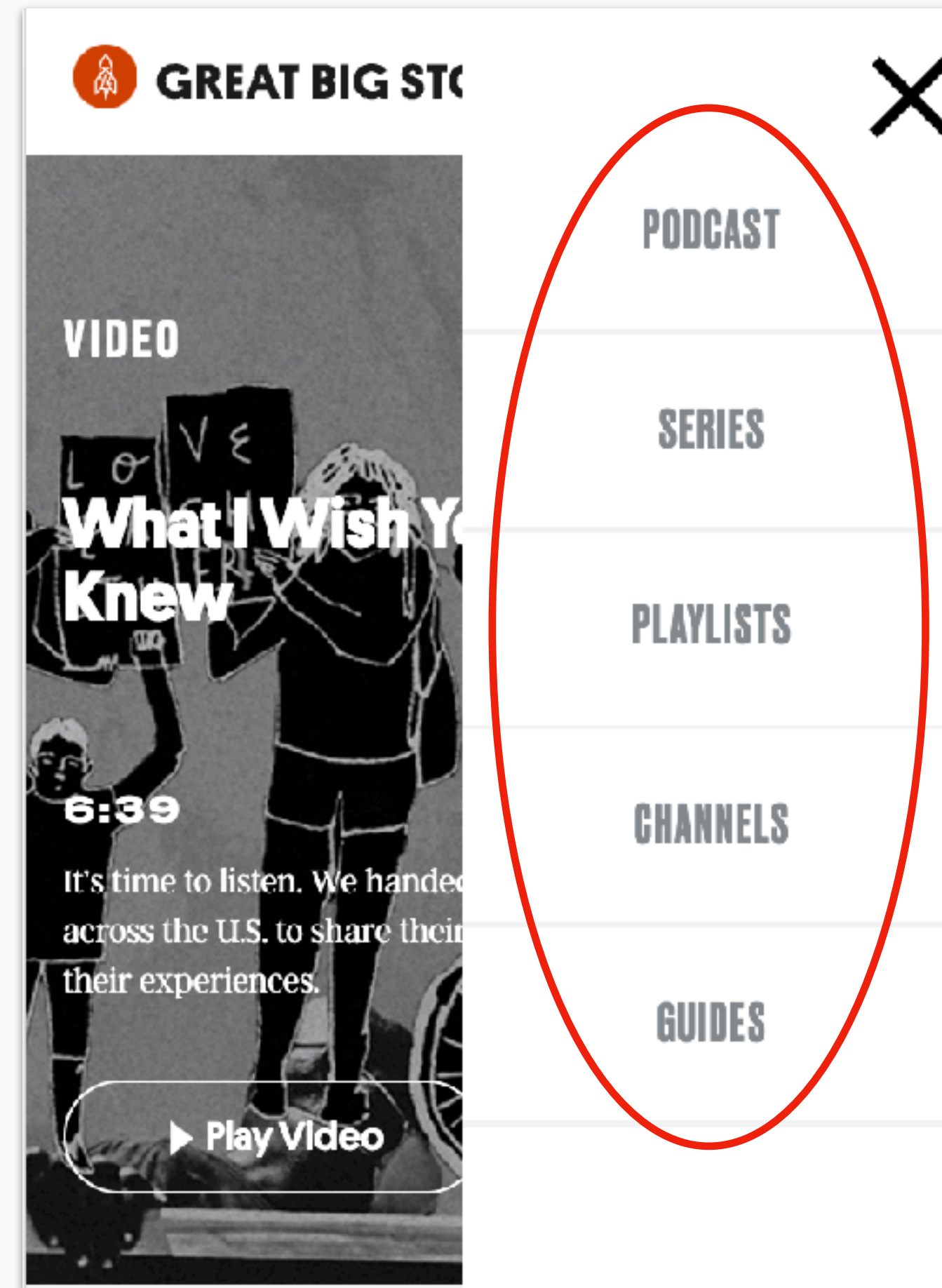
## Navigation - Usability Tests

*“I don’t know what I’m getting into here... what’s the difference?”*

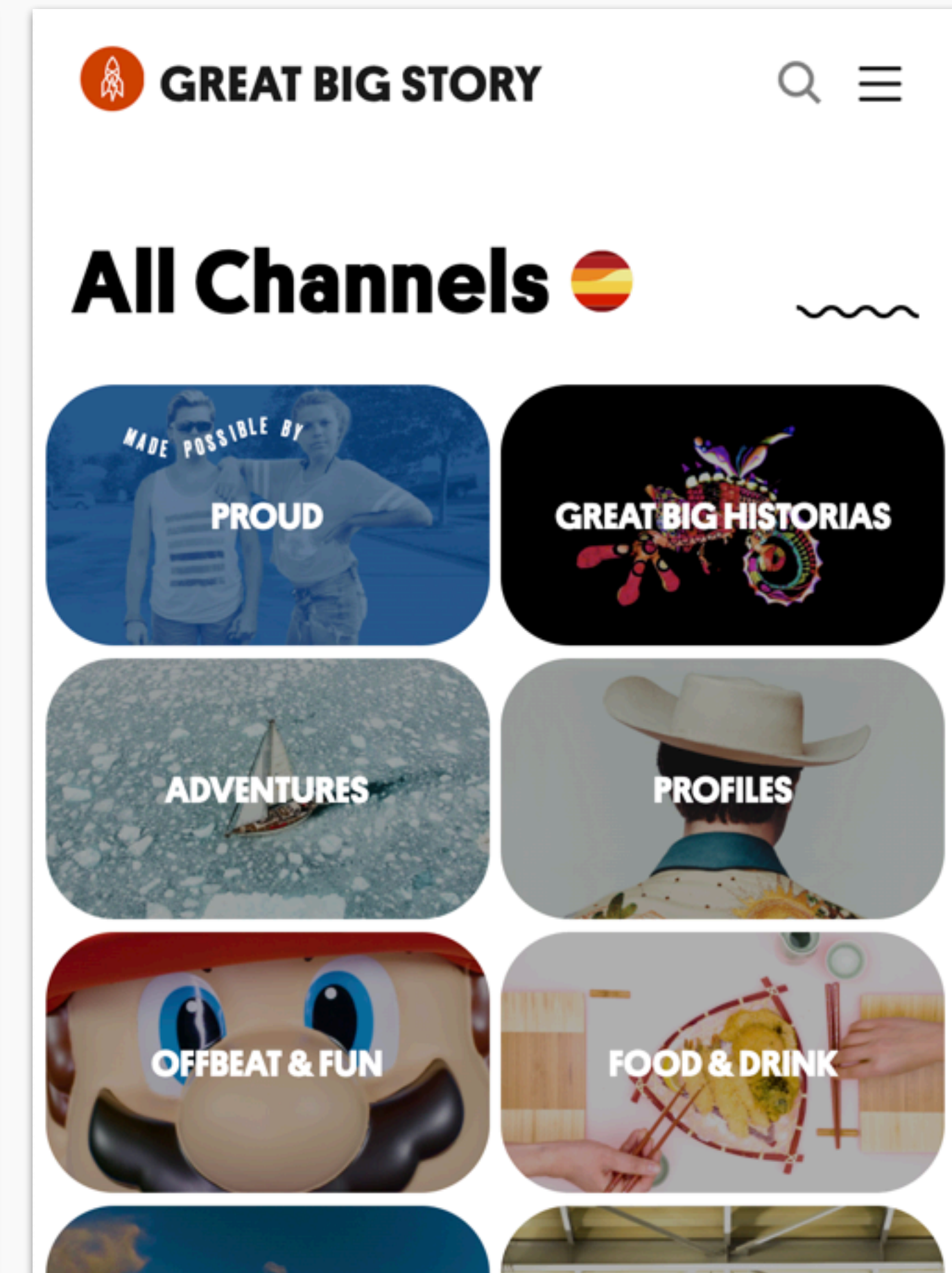
## Navigation & Path - Usability Tests

Navigation and paths confused users during key opportunities of engagement.

Most found the nav items vague and disengaging, many found the groupings unnecessary.

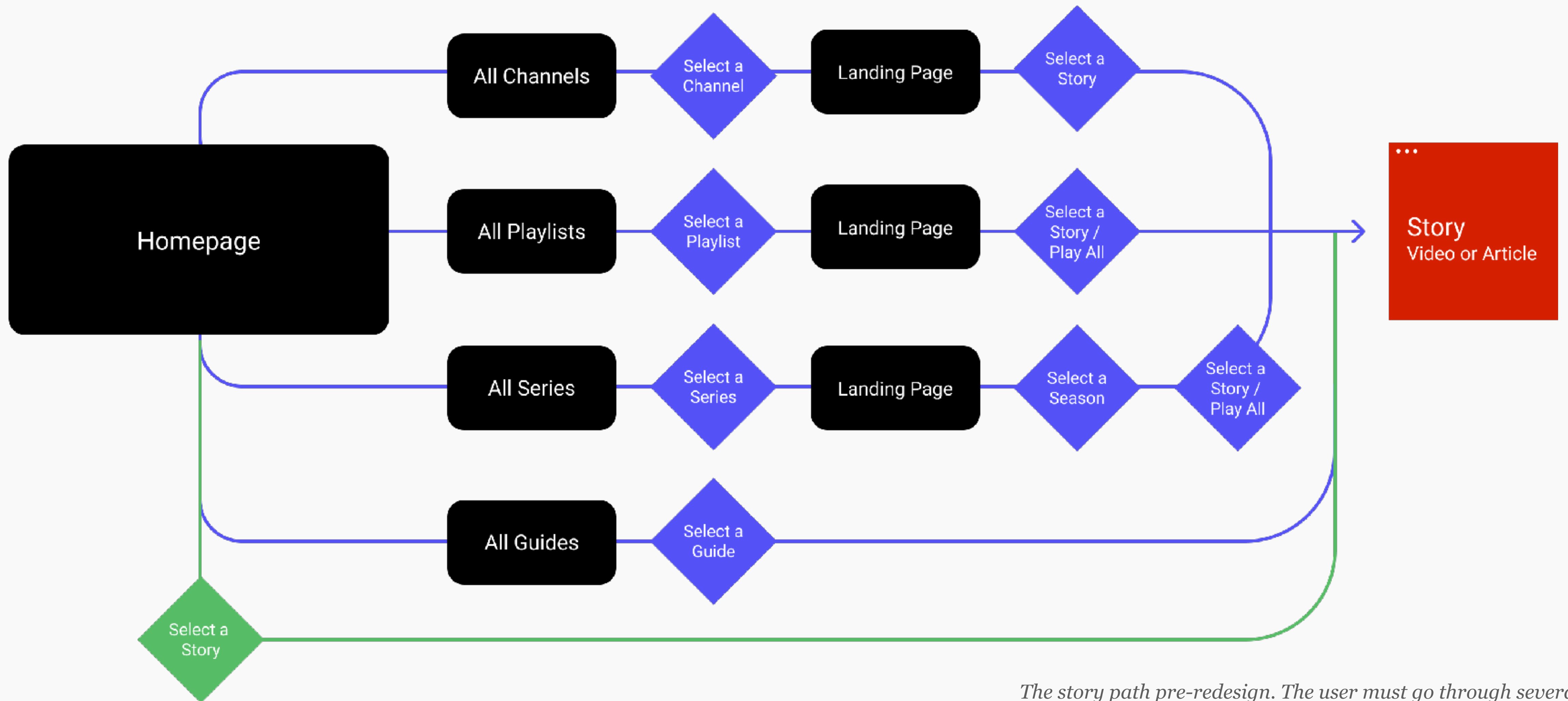


*A screenshot of the navigation with items; Podcast, Series, Playlists, Channels, Guides*



*A screenshot of the Channels landing page*

## Navigation & Path - Previous



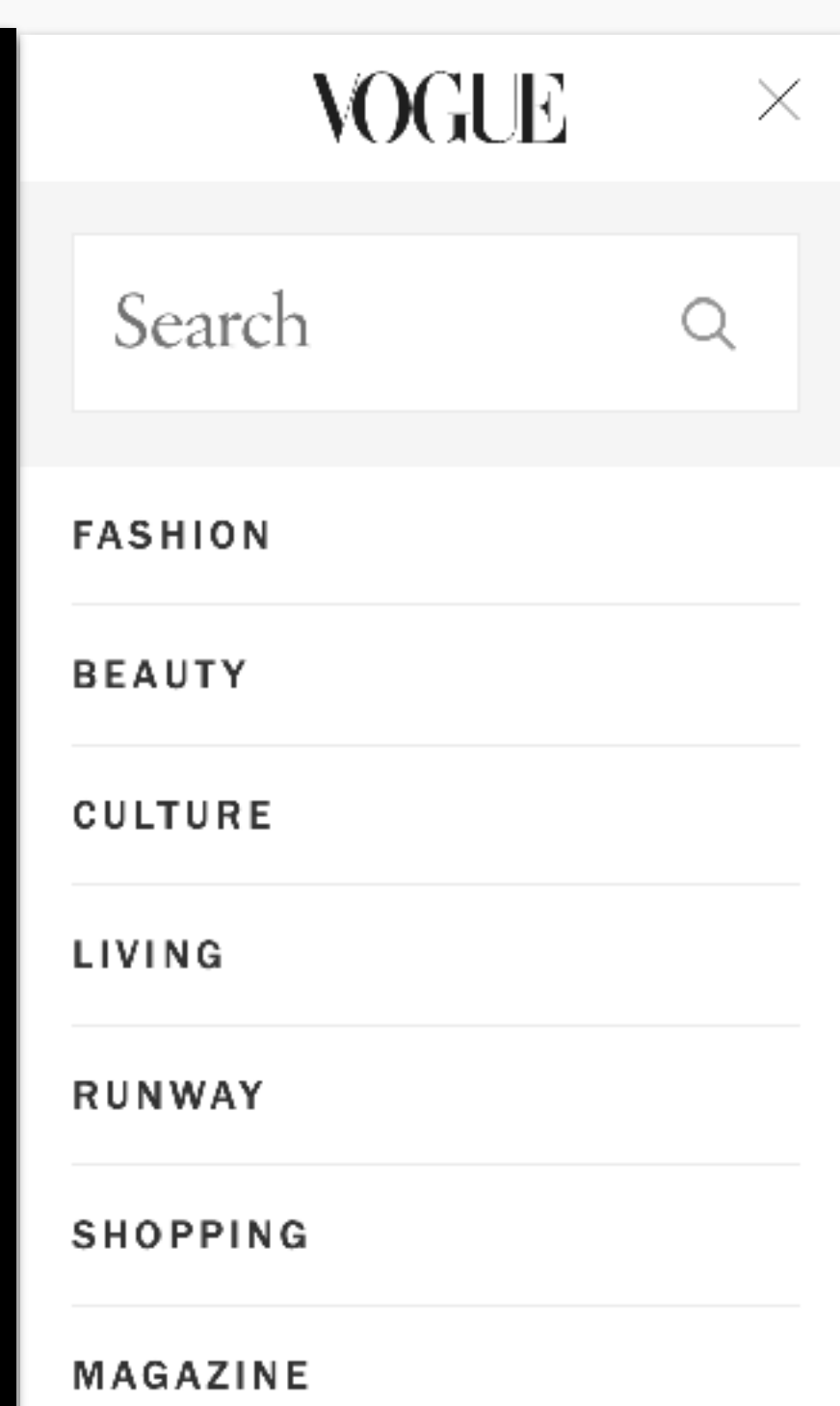
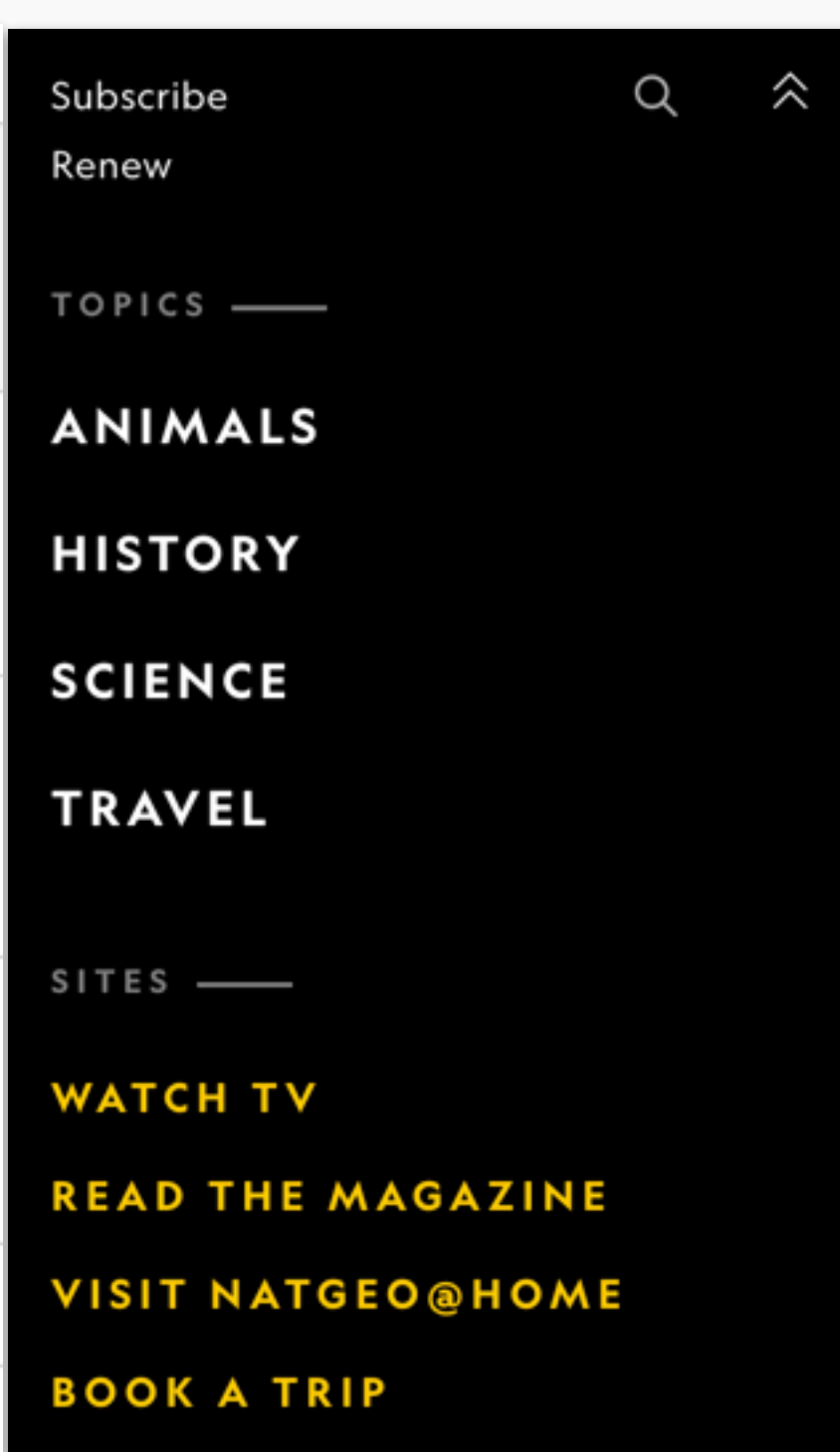
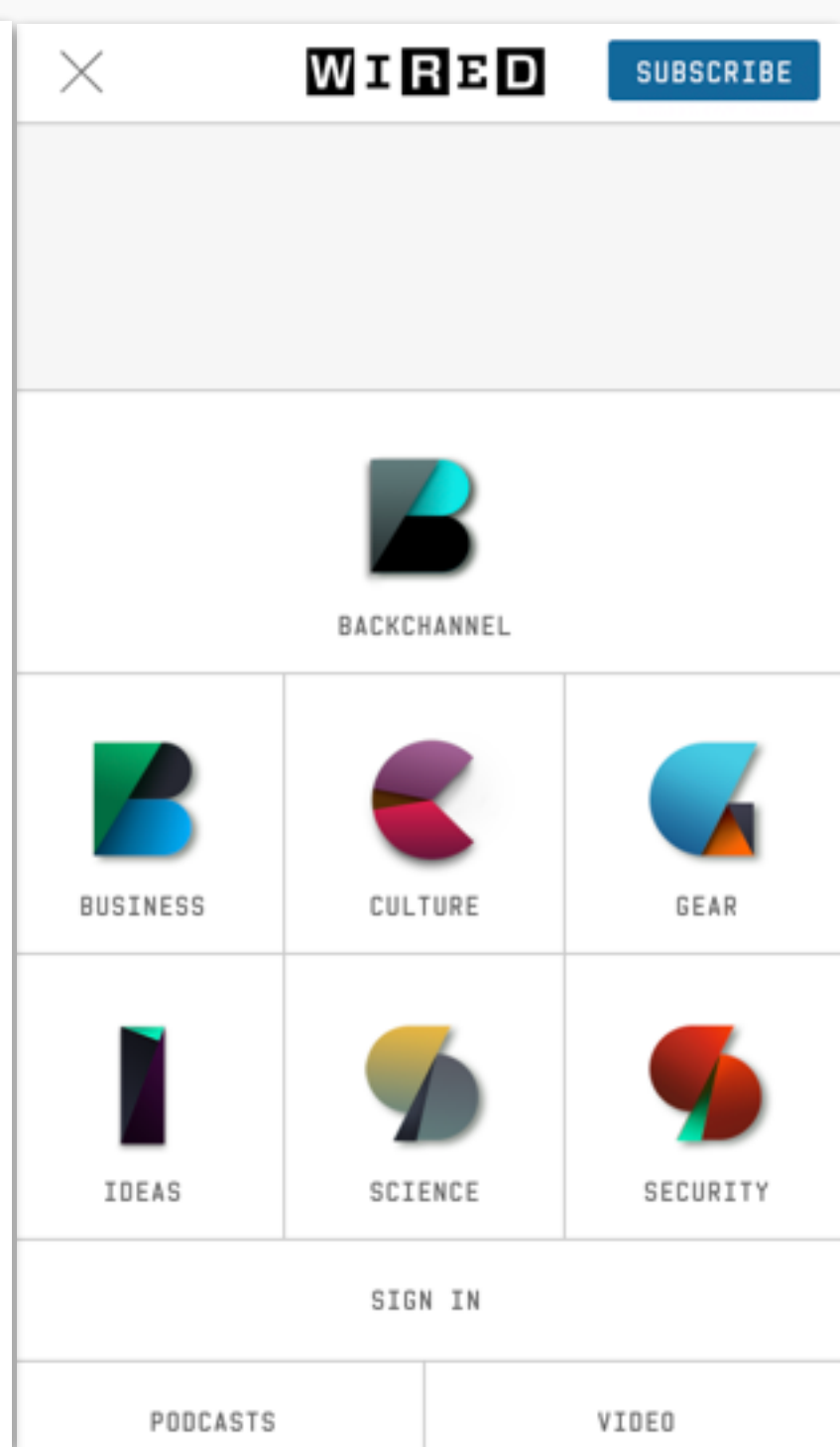
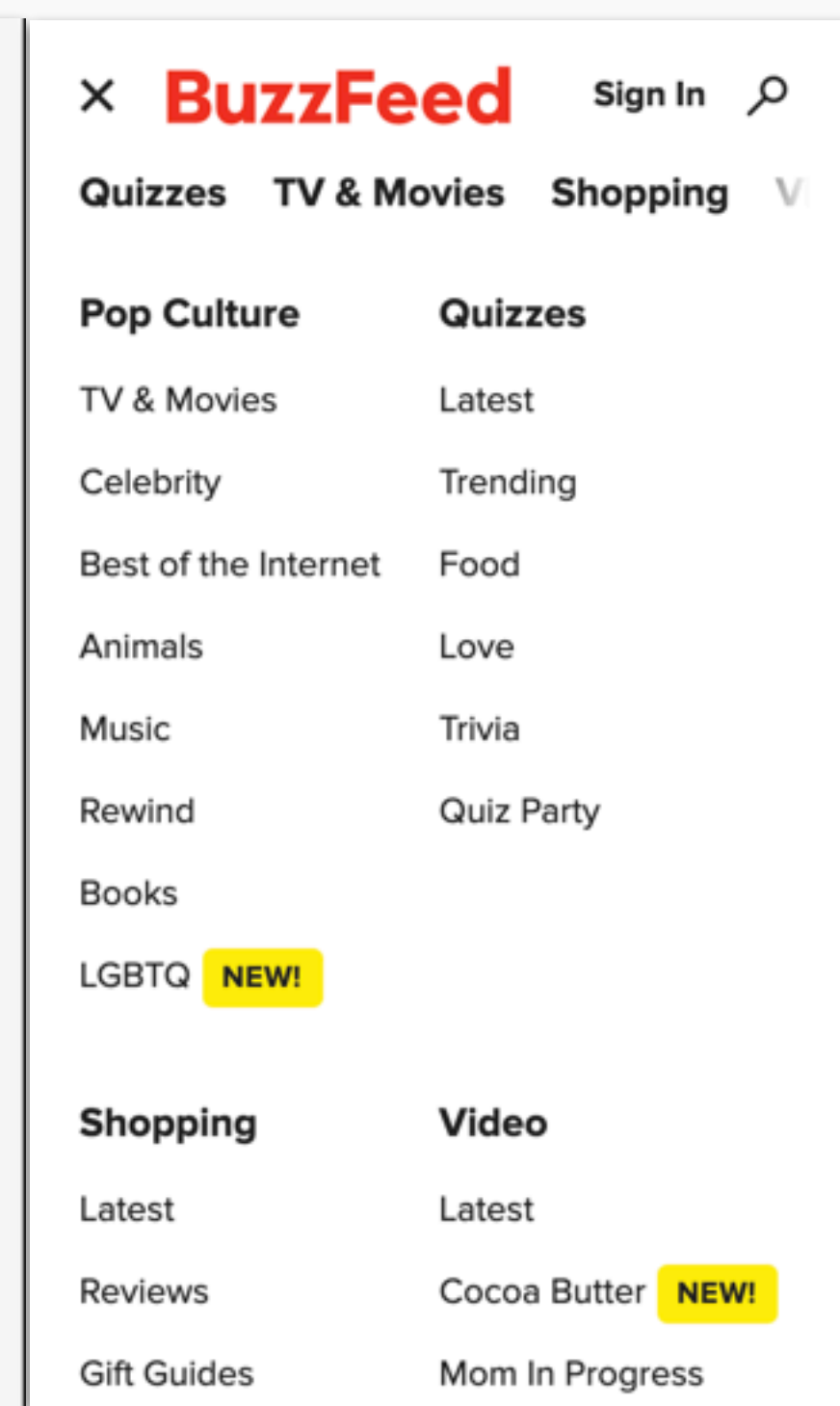
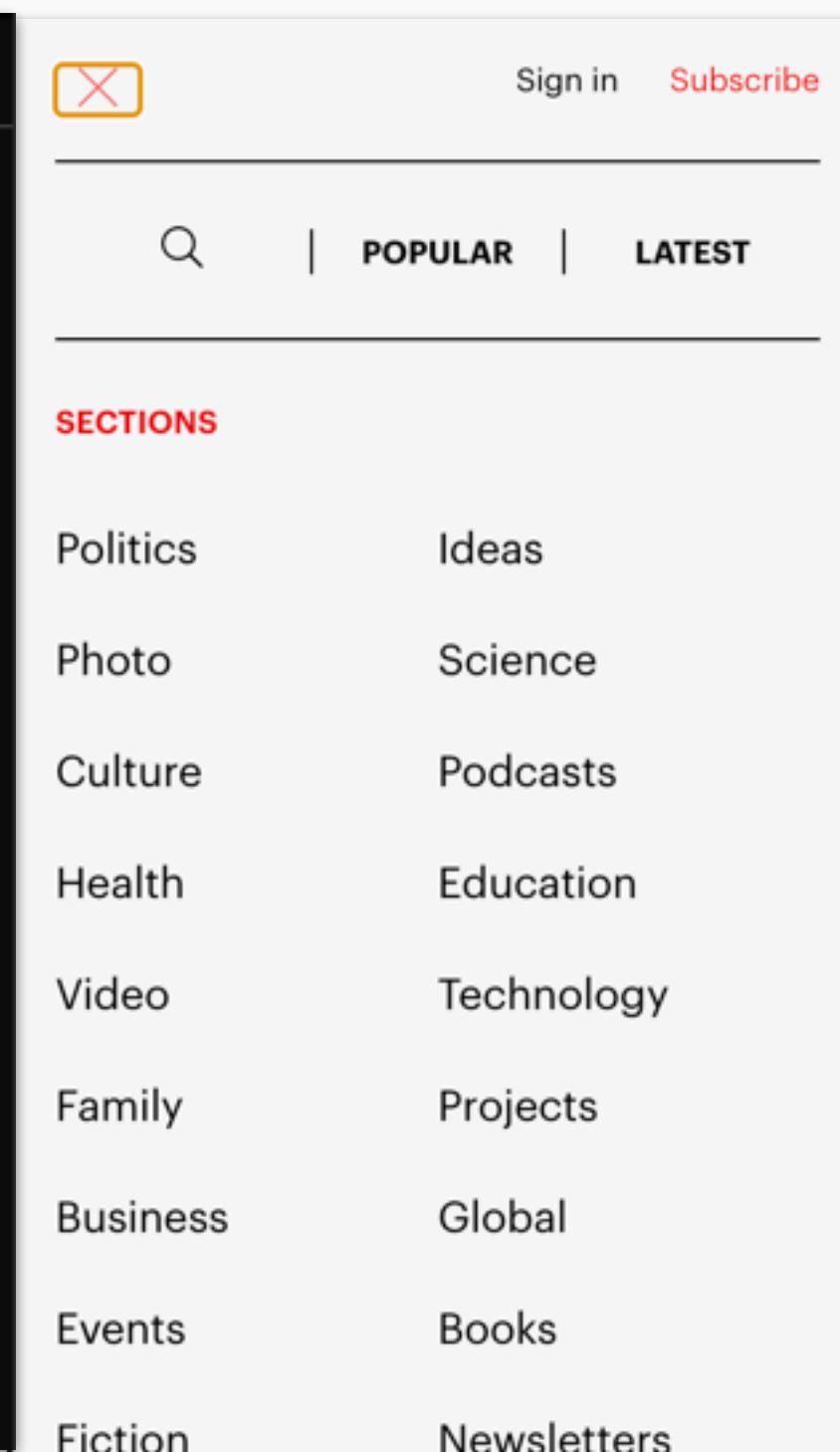
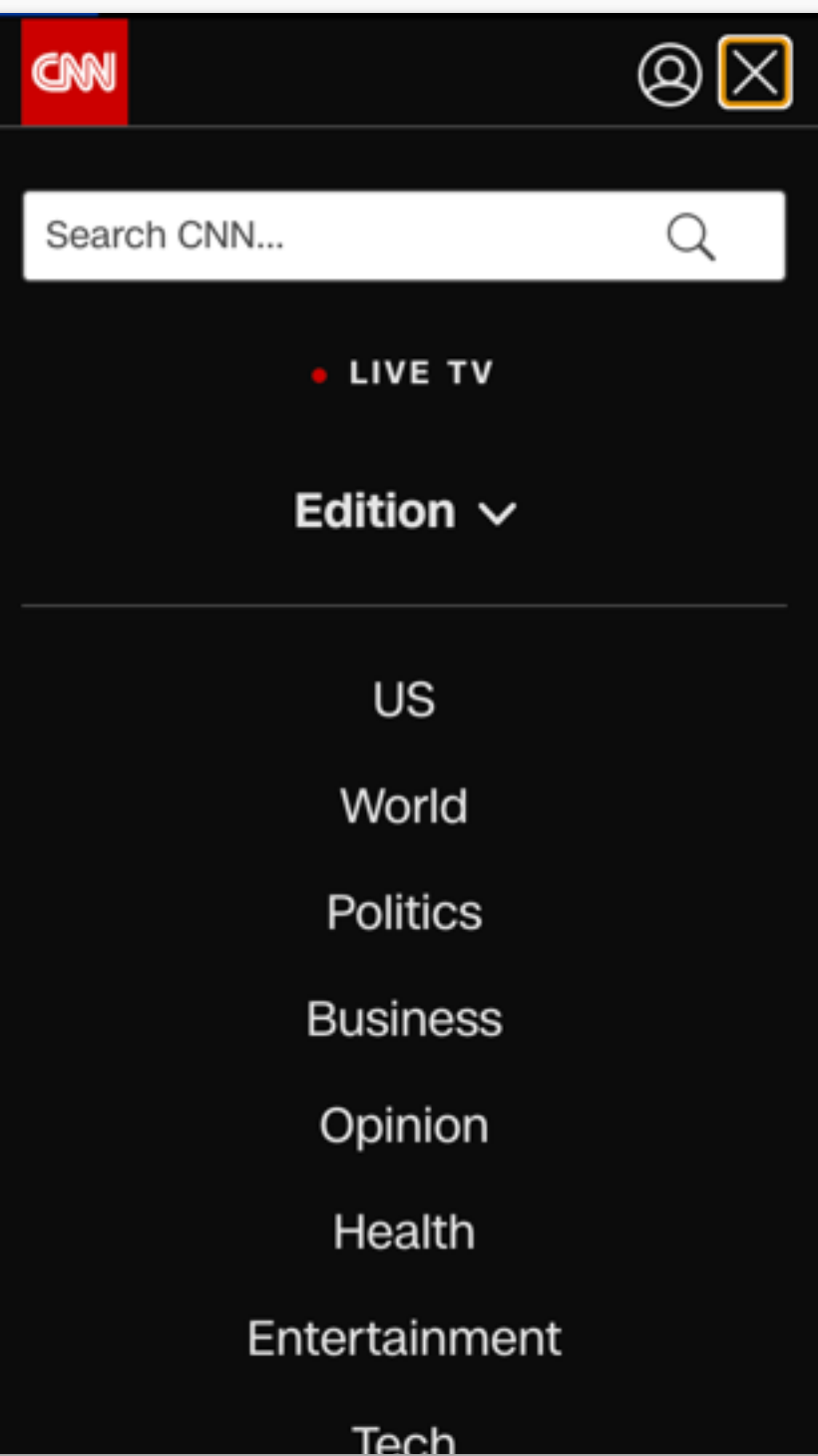
*The story path pre-redesign. The user must go through several collections, landing pages and actions in order to get to the story, or they can get to one from the Homepage or deep-link.*



# Navigation & Path - Competitive Research

Through competitive research of media sites, we decided to test a category-based navigation.

*Multiple screenshots of navigations from CNN, The Atlantic, BuzzFeed, Wired, National Geographic, and Vogue*



# Navigation - Sort Test

**Tech & Innovation**

- The Mother And Father Of The MP3 3:19
- How Solar Farms Are Helping Bees In England 3:42

**Pop Culture**

- Remember When: Halloween In 1997 3:45

**Travel & Culture**

- It's Called Hurling, It's Irish And It's The Fastest Game On Grass 3:45
- Relive Your Childhood At The 'Museum Of It Of Soap Making In Play' 3:20
- Exploring Guatemala's Mayan Ruins 1:28
- Turning Plastic Water Bottles Into Prosthetic Limbs 1:06

**Food**

- The Best Street Food Finds In Phnom Penh, Cambodia 4:50
- How This Mexican Chef Is Changing Perceptions With Food 6:44

**Identity**

- The Transgender Wrestling Champion Breaking Barriers For Herself And Others 3:10

**WOW**

- This Couple Rode Over 2,000 Roller Coasters Around The World 10:00
- Best: The Tradition Of The Church 2:25

**603**

- Dancer Yanis Marshall Struts His Stuff In High Heels 4:58
- Meet The Long Nail Goddesses Of Newark 4:14
- How Jazzercise Turned Into A Viral Sensation 5:42

**Action & Adventure**

- How A Free Ambulance Service Is Saving Lives In Rural India 3:11
- How A Doctor Without Legs Treats Patients In Her Mountain Village 2:22

**Environment**

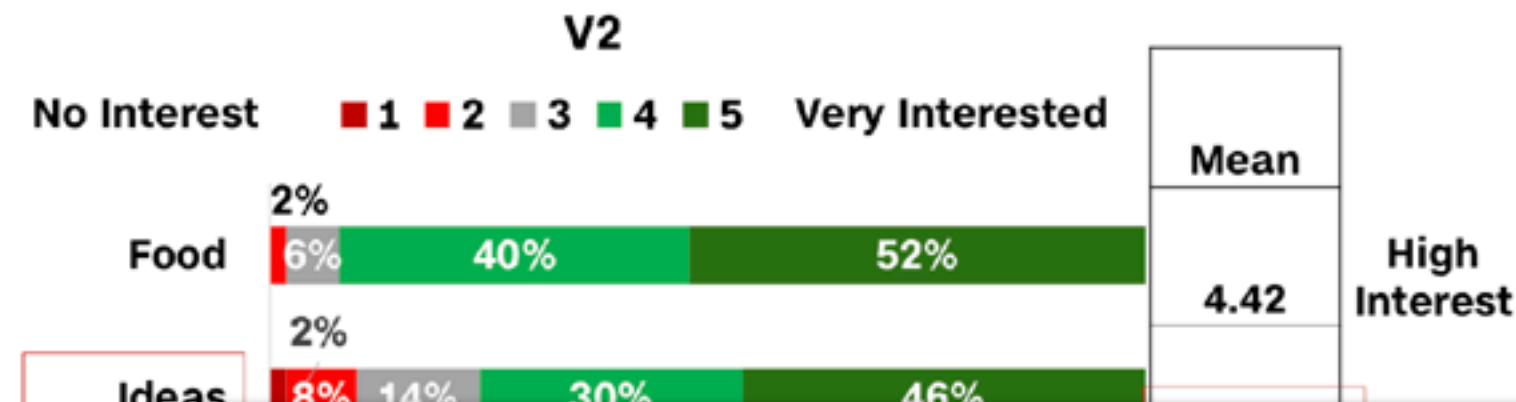
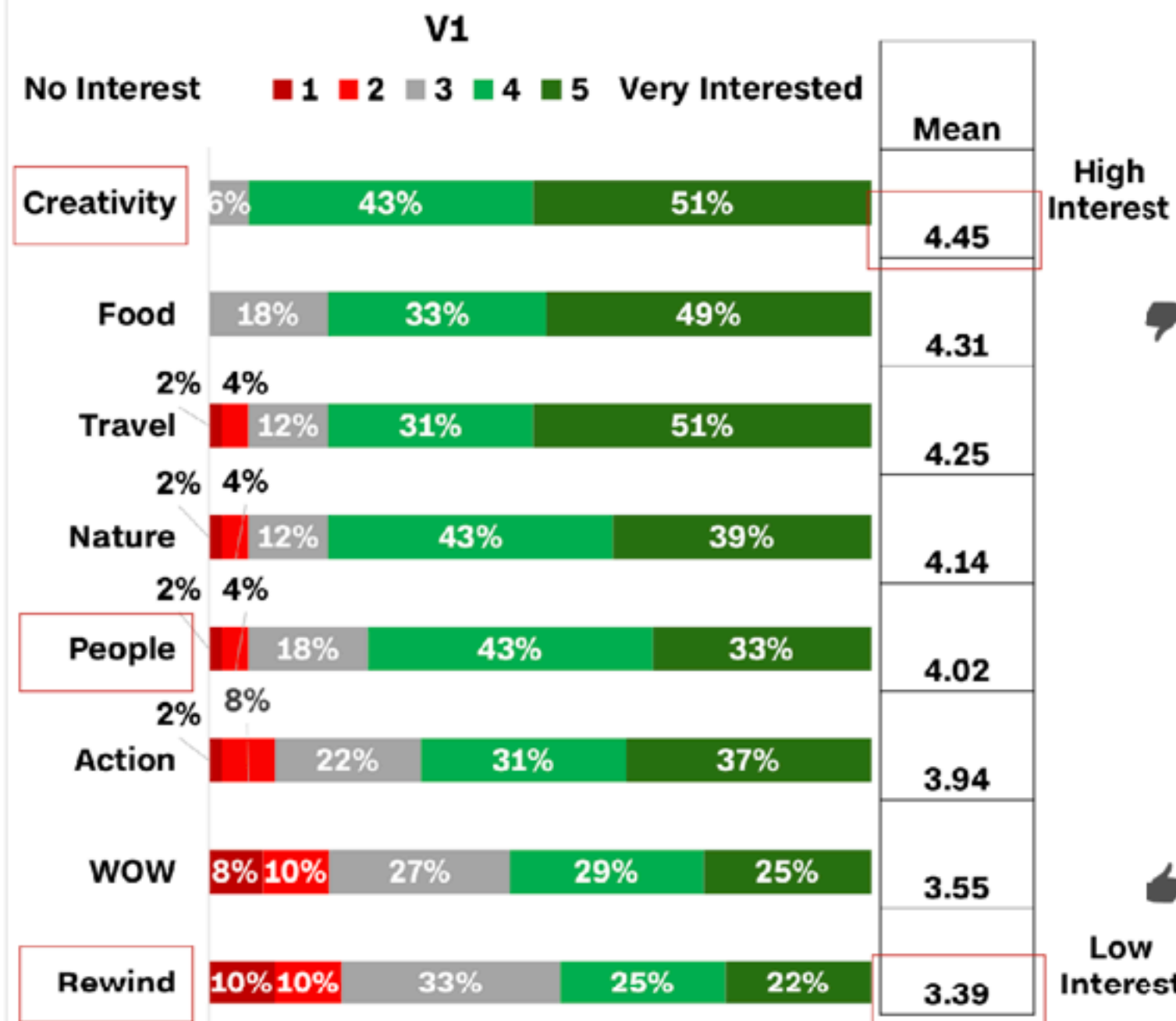
- Tracking Green Sea Turtles In The Bahamas With TurtleCams 8:13

Screenshot from a sort test. Users sorted 21 story thumbnails into the category that best aligned with the headline.

# Navigation - A/B Survey

## Interest in video consumption of topics

Please rate your interest in watching a short 2-3 minute video about the following topics where 1 = No interest and 5 = Very interested.



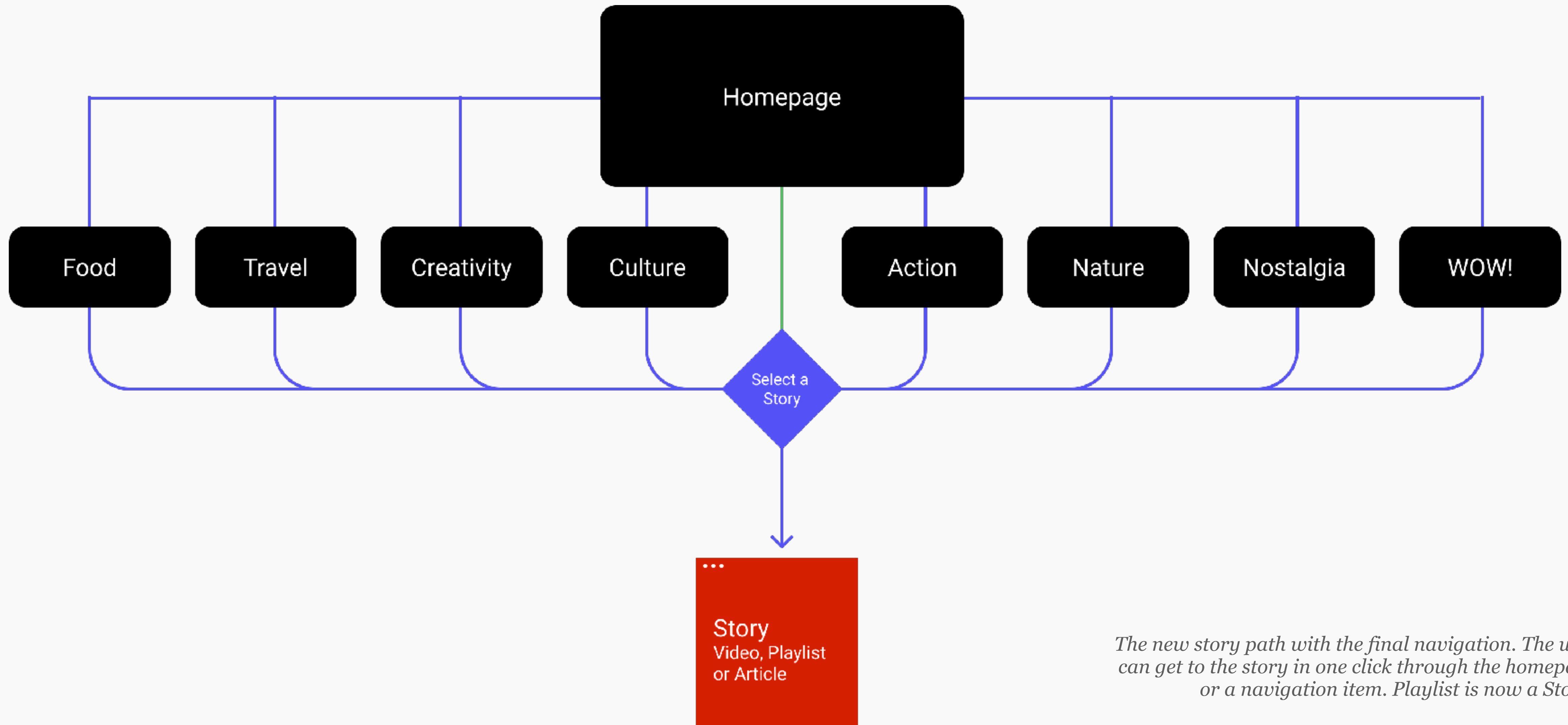
## V1: Users' expectations of video content under topics

In a few words, what types of videos would you expect to find under each topic?

	Food	Travel	Creativity	People	Action	Nature	Rewind	WOW
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recipes (12)</li> <li>Cooking (10)</li> <li>Food tour</li> <li>Signature dish of each country</li> <li>Chef interviews</li> <li>DIY fast food at home recipes</li> <li>Recipes for desserts</li> <li>Restaurant news</li> <li>Interesting unique food</li> <li>Food from different cultures</li> <li>Restaurant reviews</li> <li>Where food came from, how to make it, new ways to make classics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different/ Cool destinations around the world (10)</li> <li>Hidden places</li> <li>Glance to different cities</li> <li>Big sites and new countries</li> <li>Abandoned places</li> <li>Paradise, resort and vacation spots</li> <li>Discovery</li> <li>In state travel</li> <li>Traveling out of the country</li> <li>Landmarks around the world</li> <li>reviews of towns or attractions</li> <li>videos exploring different cultures and destinations</li> <li>Traveling tips and tricks</li> <li>How to travel using different stuff like car, bus, plane, train</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIY project (14)</li> <li>Art (5)</li> <li>music, poem</li> <li>jobs, homework and more</li> <li>home project</li> <li>paintings</li> <li>inventions</li> <li>Painting techniques</li> <li>the creative arts of people of the country</li> <li>people making unusual things</li> <li>music, reviews of creators</li> <li>artist coverage, weird cool stuff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrities and Famous People (11)</li> <li>Trend, lifestyle</li> <li>Humans doing different activities</li> <li>Lifestyle, fashion</li> <li>actores, youtuber e influencer</li> <li>life stories</li> <li>local heroes</li> <li>current events</li> <li>helping others</li> <li>visits into other cultures</li> <li>Different people around the world</li> <li>Entertainment news</li> <li>various types of professionals talking about their jobs</li> <li>Cultures, current global news, learning about different areas of the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Movies (9)</li> <li>Sports (3)</li> <li>I don't know (3)</li> <li>adventure series (3)</li> <li>News (2)</li> <li>Thrilling, adventure</li> <li>trailers, movies and episodes</li> <li>exciting stuff</li> <li>Superheroes</li> <li>news-like stuff</li> <li>Action shots</li> <li>skydiving, fast cars, doing active stuff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals (8)</li> <li>Natural wonders</li> <li>Life outside civilization</li> <li>national parks</li> <li>Forests</li> <li>documentaries, trips</li> <li>outdoor science</li> <li>state parks, hiking, surfing</li> <li>great footage in the wild</li> <li>scenic views</li> <li>Planting and gardening</li> <li>neat nature stories</li> <li>Mountains, Hiking, activities</li> <li>beautiful spots in nature</li> <li>weather</li> <li>organisms</li> <li>Camping</li> <li>Trees</li> <li>Outdoor photography, being outside, gardening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throwback (7)</li> <li>No Idea (4)</li> <li>multi-million views video</li> <li>Collection of memories</li> <li>historical events</li> <li>retro</li> <li>tapes</li> <li>a quick recap of the day/week/year etc</li> <li>things that have happened in the past</li> <li>pop culture</li> <li>Music</li> <li>reviews of the past year/decade</li> <li>Memories</li> <li>Popular articles, cult classics</li> <li>Facts of the past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have no idea (11)</li> <li>Fantasy</li> <li>Interesting or satisfying videos</li> <li>big news</li> <li>action</li> <li>cool trending videos</li> <li>videos that amaze</li> <li>Interesting things</li> <li>new exciting news</li> <li>Really cool and interesting videos</li> <li>crazy vids</li> <li>world of warcraft videos</li> <li>Popular news</li> <li>Random videos</li> <li>Large Money Spending</li> <li>All I can think of is world of warcraft so gaming I suppose?</li> <li>Trends</li> </ul>

Findings from a 100 person A/B survey about navigation labels. Left: Interest in video consumption of topics, Right: V1: Users' expectations of video content under topics

# Navigation & Path - Redesigned

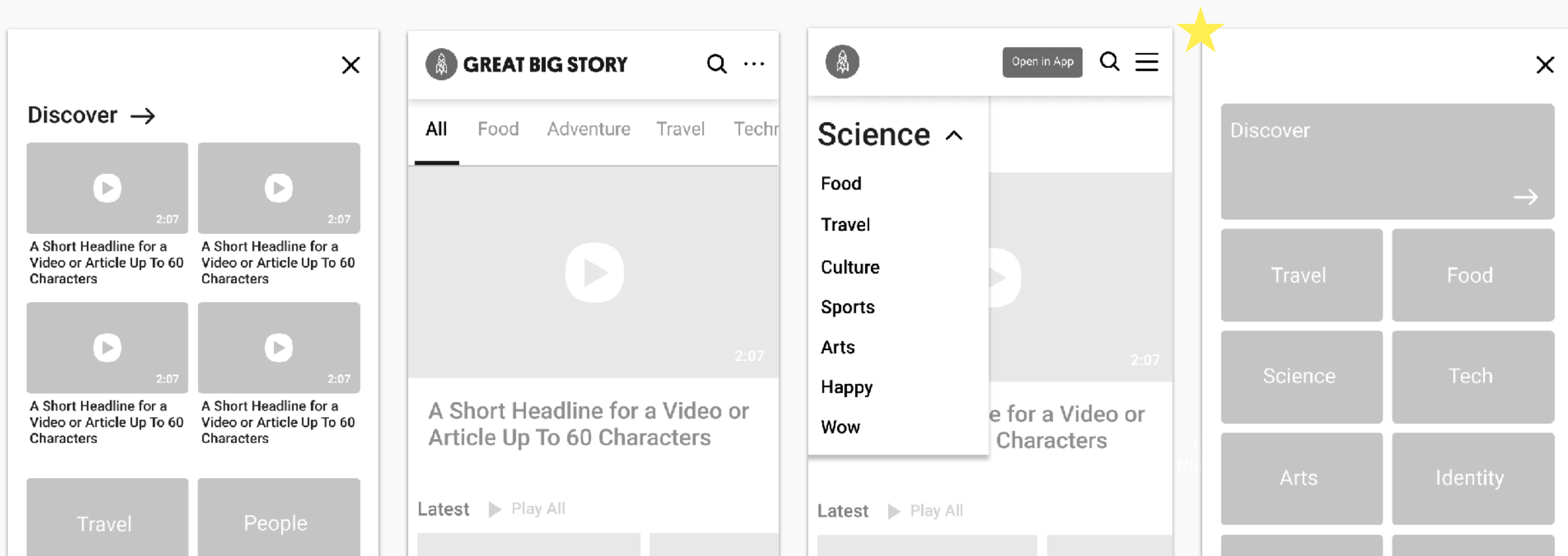


*The new story path with the final navigation. The user can get to the story in one click through the homepage or a navigation item. Playlist is now a Story.*

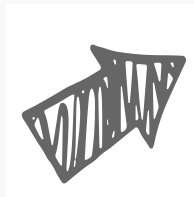
## Wireframes - Early Rounds

We sent several navigation designs in for usability testing. As always, simple was best.

*Multiple wireframes of different navigation layouts*

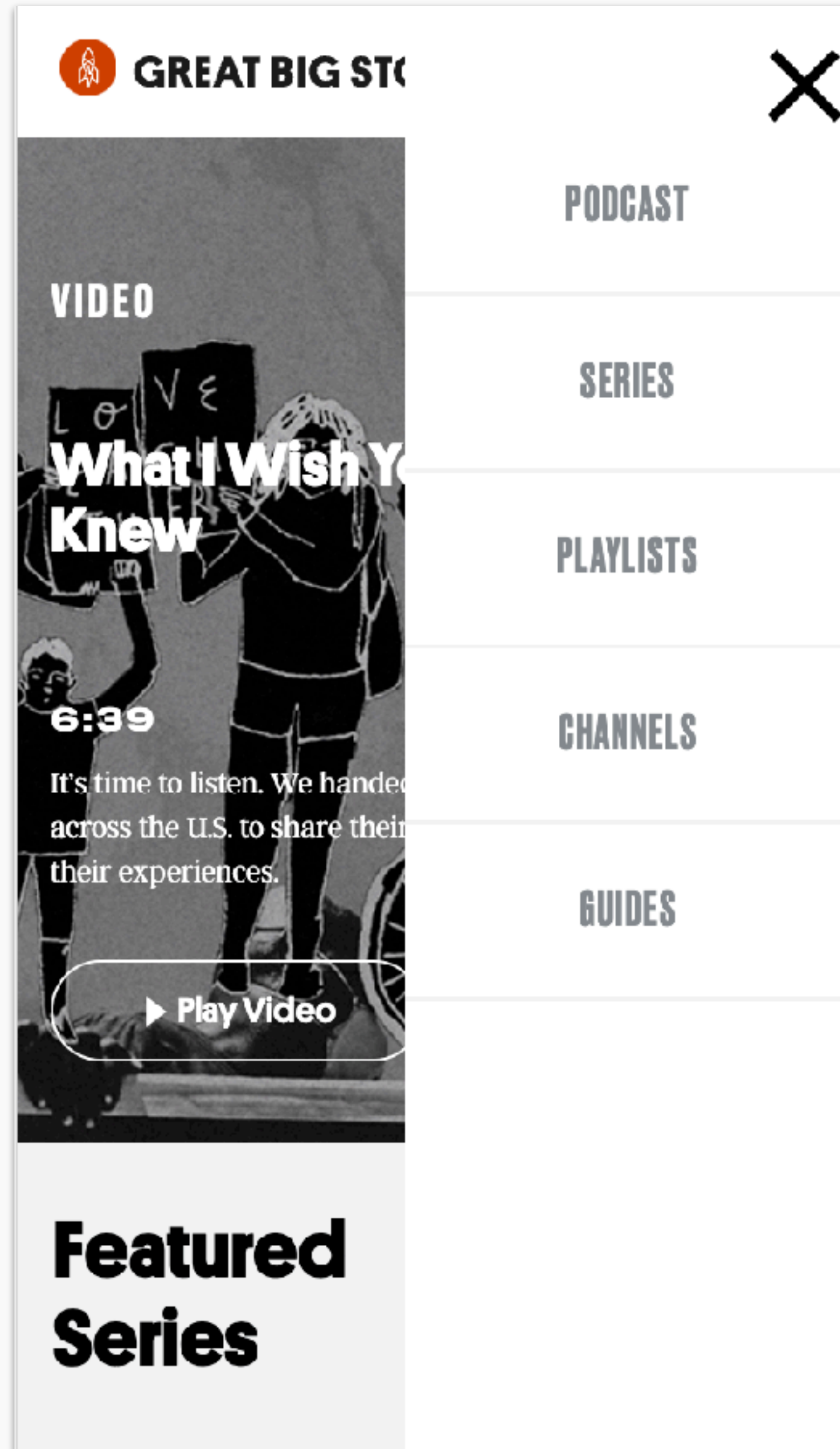


# Redesign - Navigation



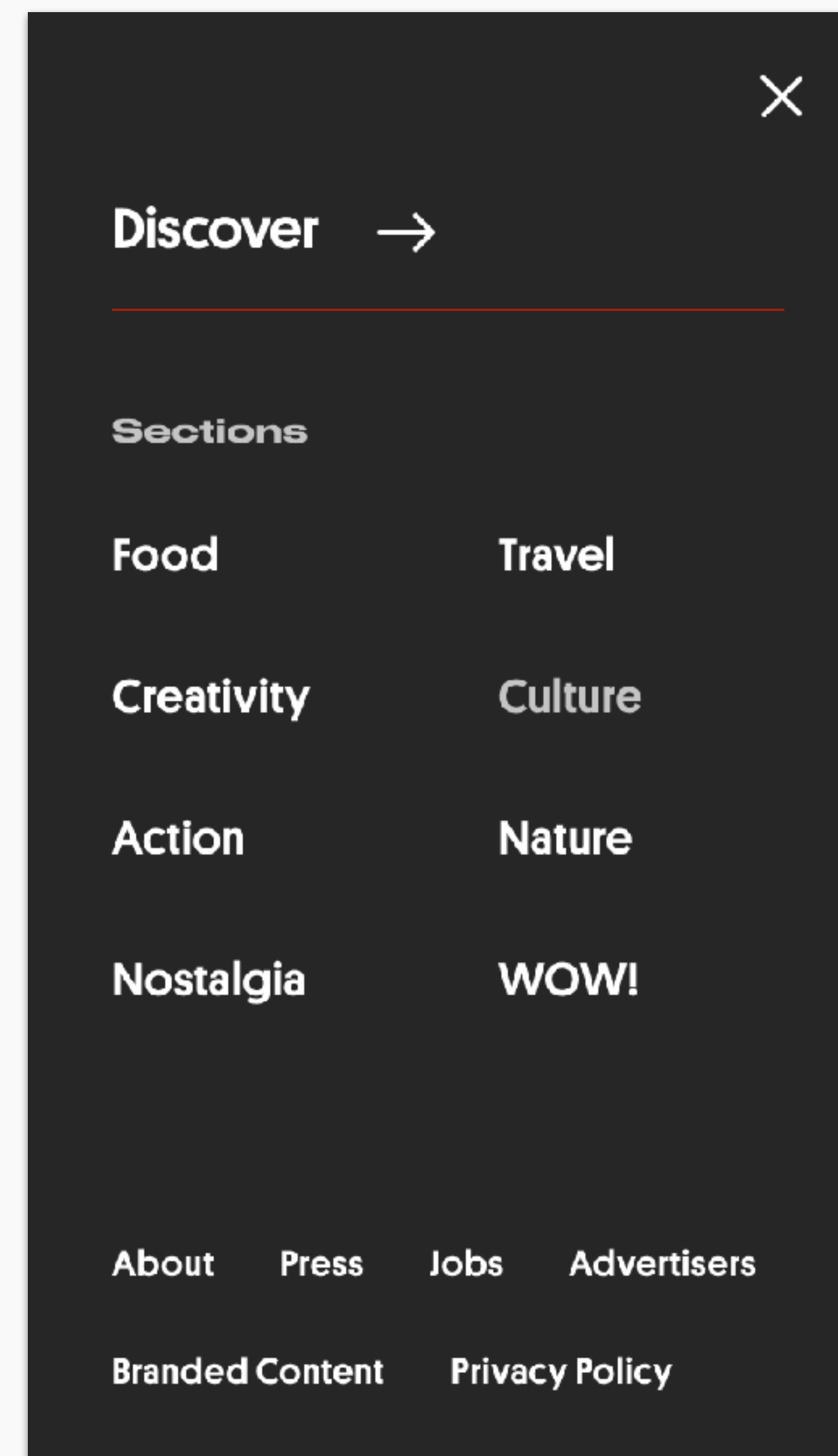
## Before

Screenshot of the previous navigation on mobile



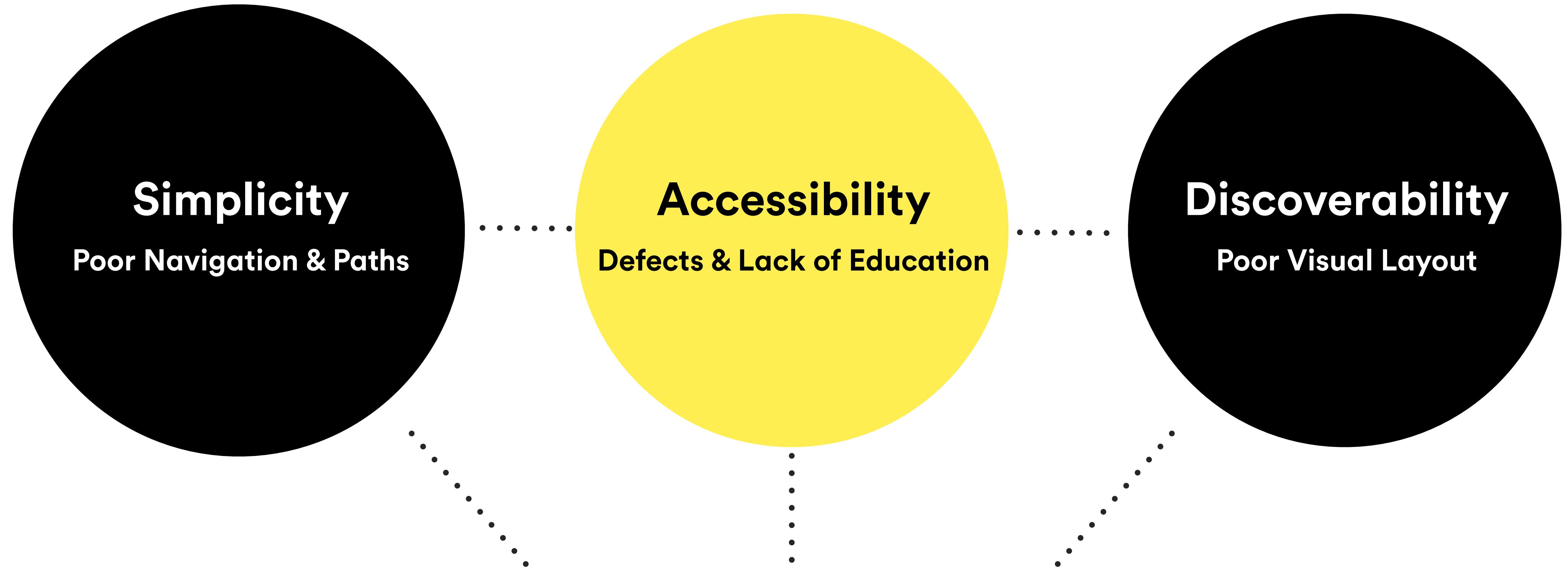
## After

Screenshot of the redesigned navigation on mobile



a sort test. Users sorted 21 story into the category that best aligned with the headline.

# Usability Problems & Goals



## Measures of Success

Decrease bounce rate   Increase time spent   Increase page visits

Scenario: You come to the our website, this is what you hear.  
Close your eyes and try to visualize what is happening.

**(Please play audio clip)**



# Audio Clip Transcript

Screen Reader: *Great Big Story visited, link*

*Featured playlists, heading level 3*

*Native American, Indians, Founders, Traditions, Native, Image*

*Sign, possible text, L*

*gillian\_thumb-7bkda32kfiujxj8ucsf00.png, image (jumbled)*

*One face, adult, document, jewelry, tiara, possible text ST*

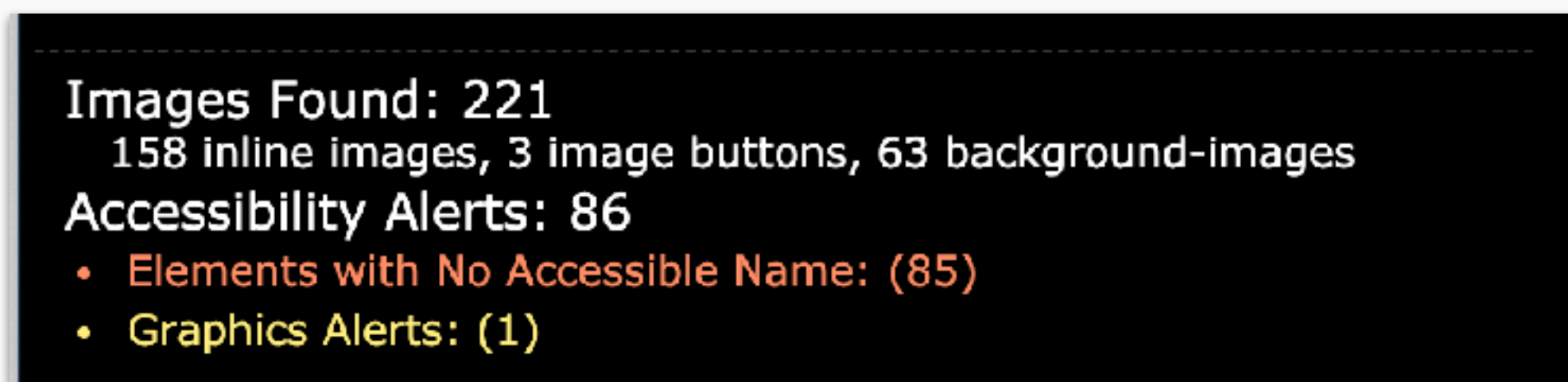
*Latin America, Peru, Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica,  
Ecuador, Costa Rica, Dominica Image*

# Accessibility Audit

**Tools Used: Screenreader, Inspect Tool, ANDI, WCAG 2.1, Color Contrast Checker, NoCoffee**



Screenshot, ANDI Audit. Heading structure, many duplicates and skipped heading levels (H1 → H3)



Screenshot, ANDI Audit. 86 accessibility defects for graphics and images on homepage, mostly alt text and color contrast.



NoCoffee Low vision simulation of what a user might see when they came to the website. Settings: Low Acuity, Deuteranopia, Glaucoma

## **Accessibility Audit - Solutions**

### **CMS**

- Alt text
- Heading Structures
- Linear Storytelling
- Color Contrast
- Type & Image

### **Code**

- Heading Structures
- Aria Labels
- Magnifying
- Touch Targets
- Interactive States

### **Interface**

- Scale & Composition
- Visual Hierarchy
- Page Templates
- Design System
- Transcripts

## Accessibility - Education

Publishing and Art Department didn't know about their poor accessibility practices. I gave an accessibility talk which included business value, defects, best practices and resources.

After auditing, advocating and educating, WCAG 2.1 compliance *became a measure of success.*

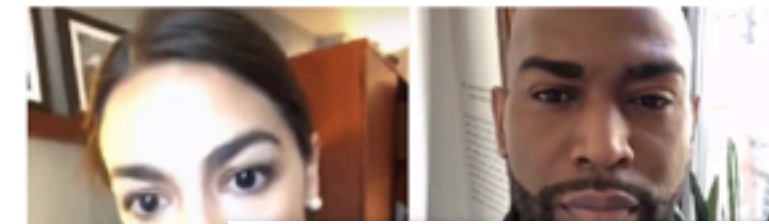
[Download Accessibility Presentation](#)

*Screenshots from the accessibility presentation. Download the presentation to view and/or listen.*

### Captions & Transcripts

## Captions on Instagram

- For stories and videos we upload, record using an auto-caption software app like [Clipomatic](#)
- Currently no way to add captions for IG live



### Screen Readers & Alt Text

## What is Alt Text?

- Alt Text describes the appearance and function of an image on a page.
- Screen readers will read the description so that the user can better visualize or understand it
- Alt Text will be read if there is no alt text
- If no Alt Text is provided, the image name will be used



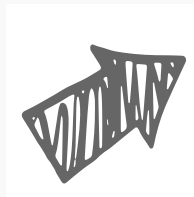
### Introduction

## Accessibility is better business

People with disabilities consume content, so if you do not make your content accessible, you are missing out on an enormous market of people.

Accessibility helps boost SEO and conversions. For example, adding captions and subtitles can increase views by 80% on YouTube

# Accessibility - Homepage Redesign



## Before

Type over image, poor color contrast, tiny type, nonlinear heading structures, broken grid

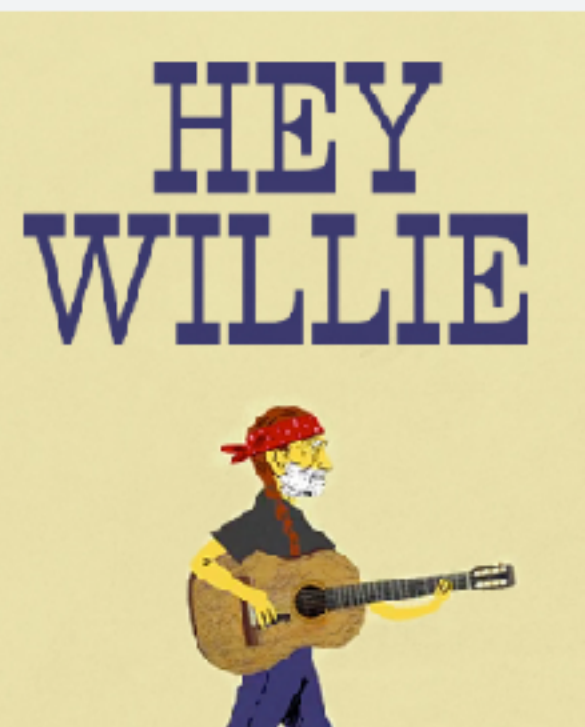
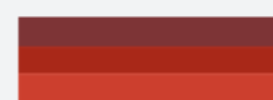
**Desserts Around the World**

15:45

Think you've devoured every dessert known to exist? Well, how about chicken pudding? Come on, we're going on a sweet, scrumptious journey.

▶ Play Video

## Featured Series



## This Buddhist Monk Doubles As A Celebrity Makeup Artist

### Featured Story

Kodo Nishimura calls on his training as a monk and a makeup artist to help others become the best versions of themselves.



## Celebrating Native American Culture

▶ Play All

Made Possible by Proctor & Gamble

6 Videos

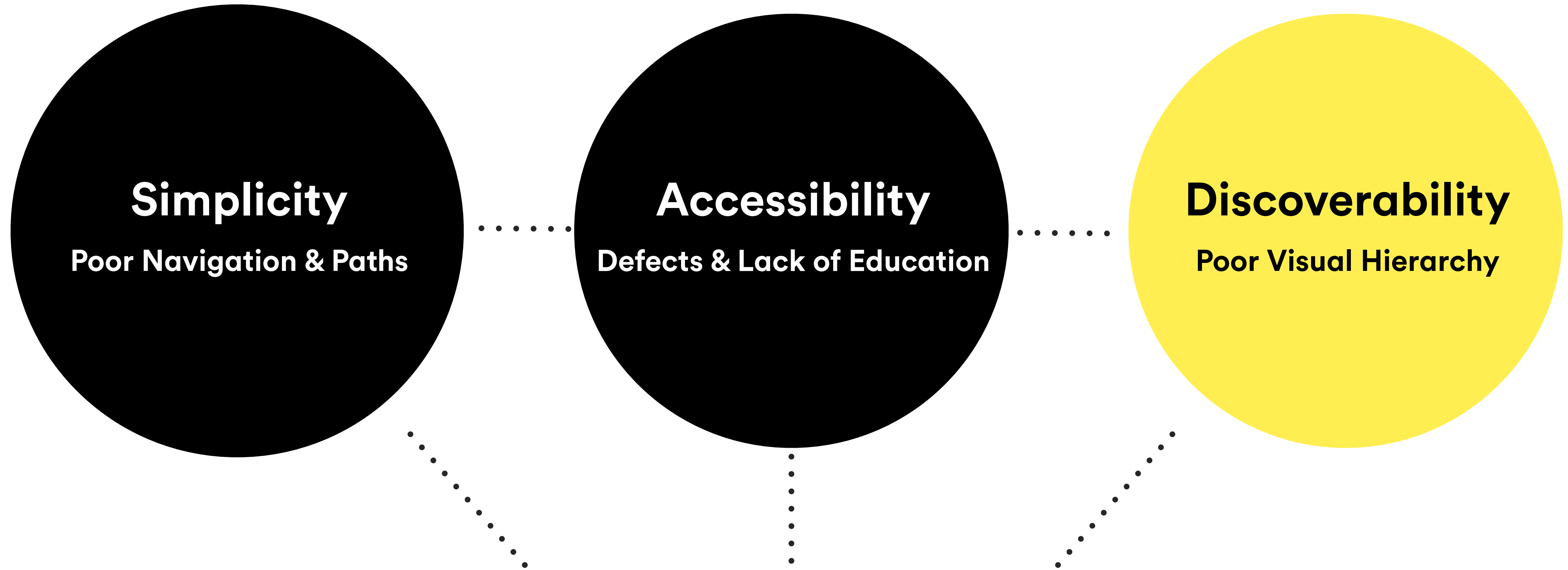


## After

Clear heading structure & visual hierarchy, accessible type, no type over image, accessible touch targets

In a sort test, users sorted 21 stories into the category that best aligned with the headline.

# Usability Problems & Goals



## Measures of Success

Decrease bounce rate   Increase time spent   Increase page visits

## Discoverability

Creating an intuitive navigation and site structure helped immensely with discoverability. On the video page, I focused on page layout, queue and autoplay patterns.

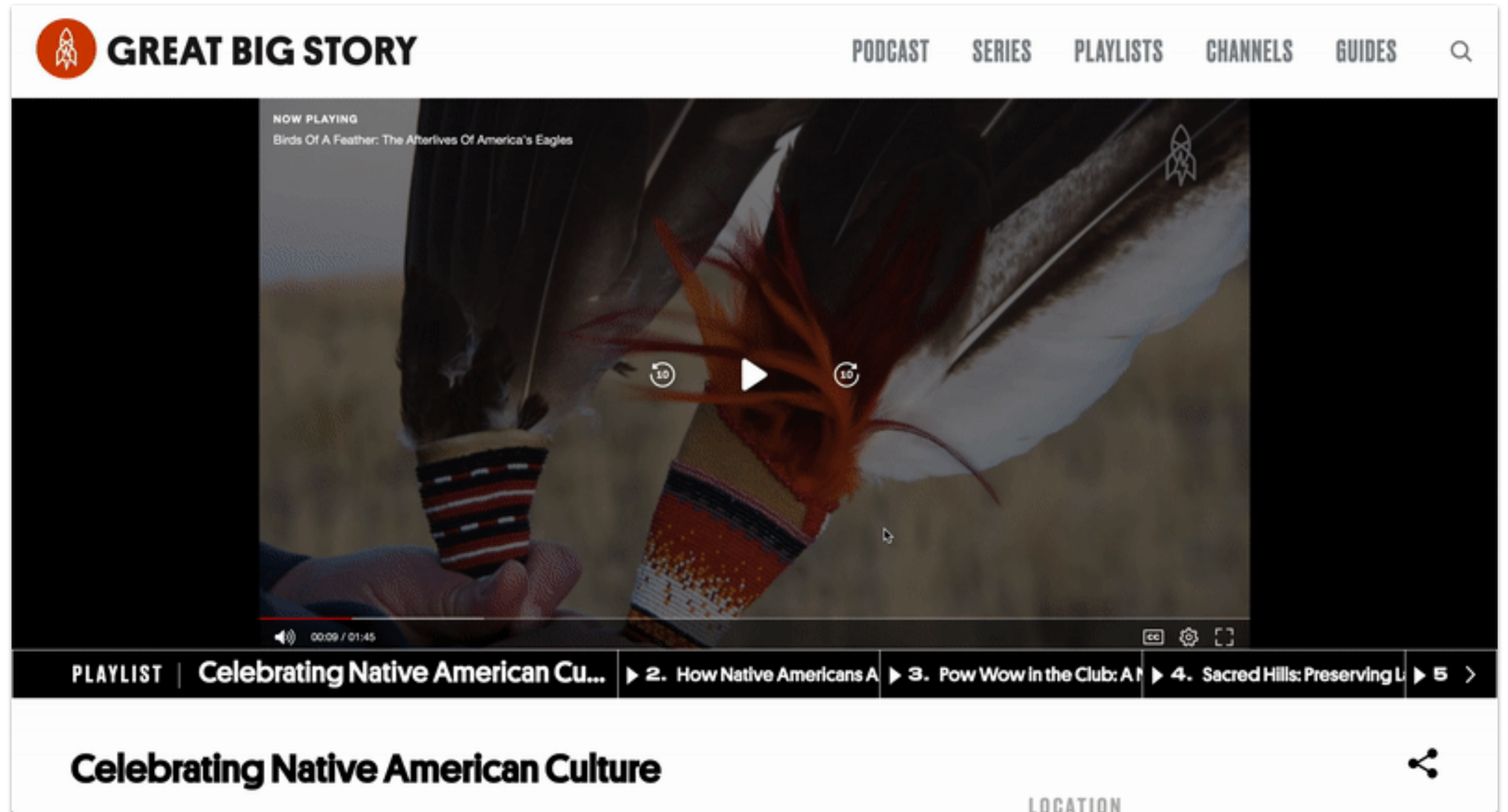
# Discoverability - Video Page Redesign



## Before

*GIF of the original video page.*

*Full width screen with interactive queue had many accessibility and discoverability concerns.*





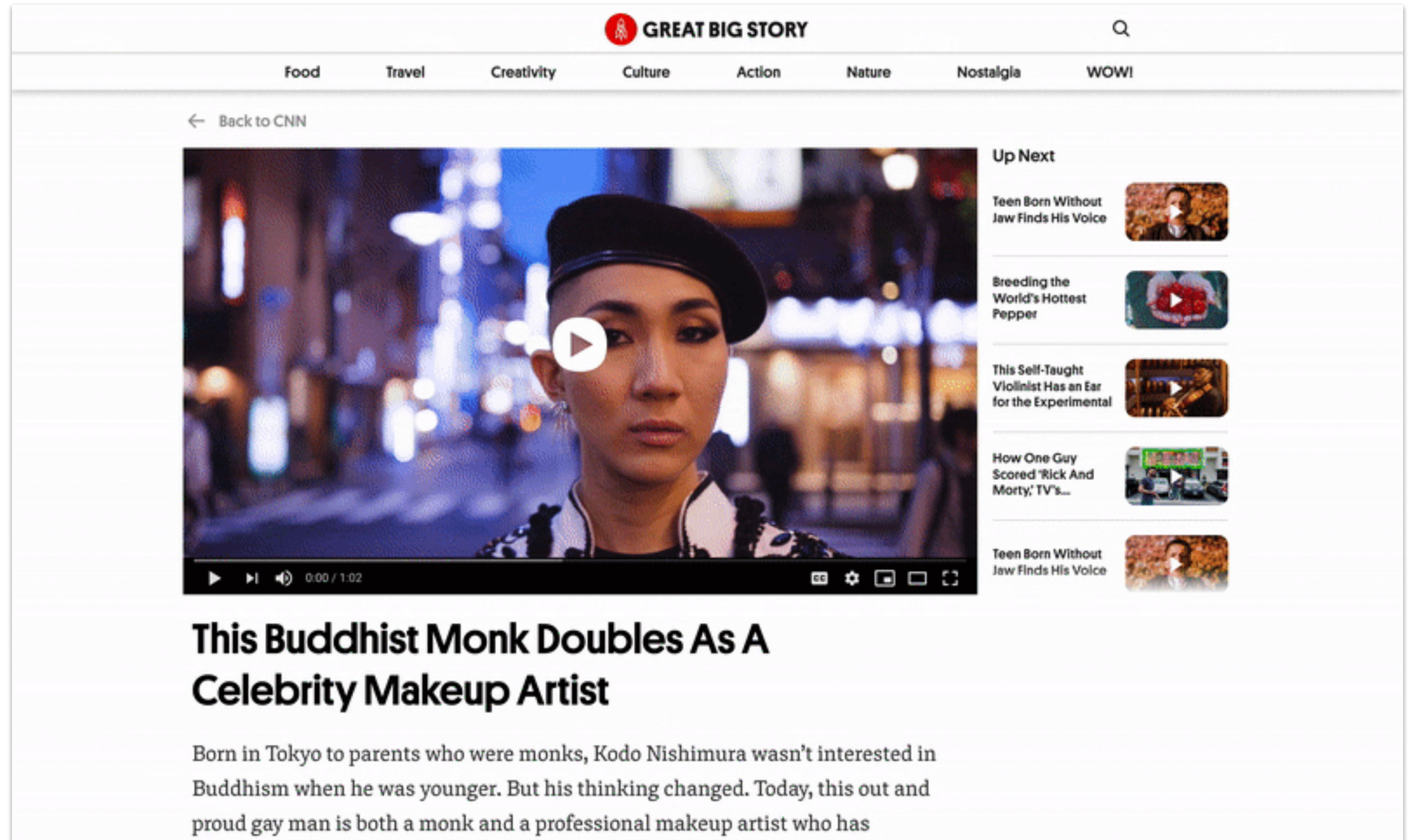
# Discoverability - Video Page Redesign



## After

*GIF of redesigned video page.*

*The queue and player share space above the fold, the autoplay pattern is more accessible, and there are more suggestions at the bottom*

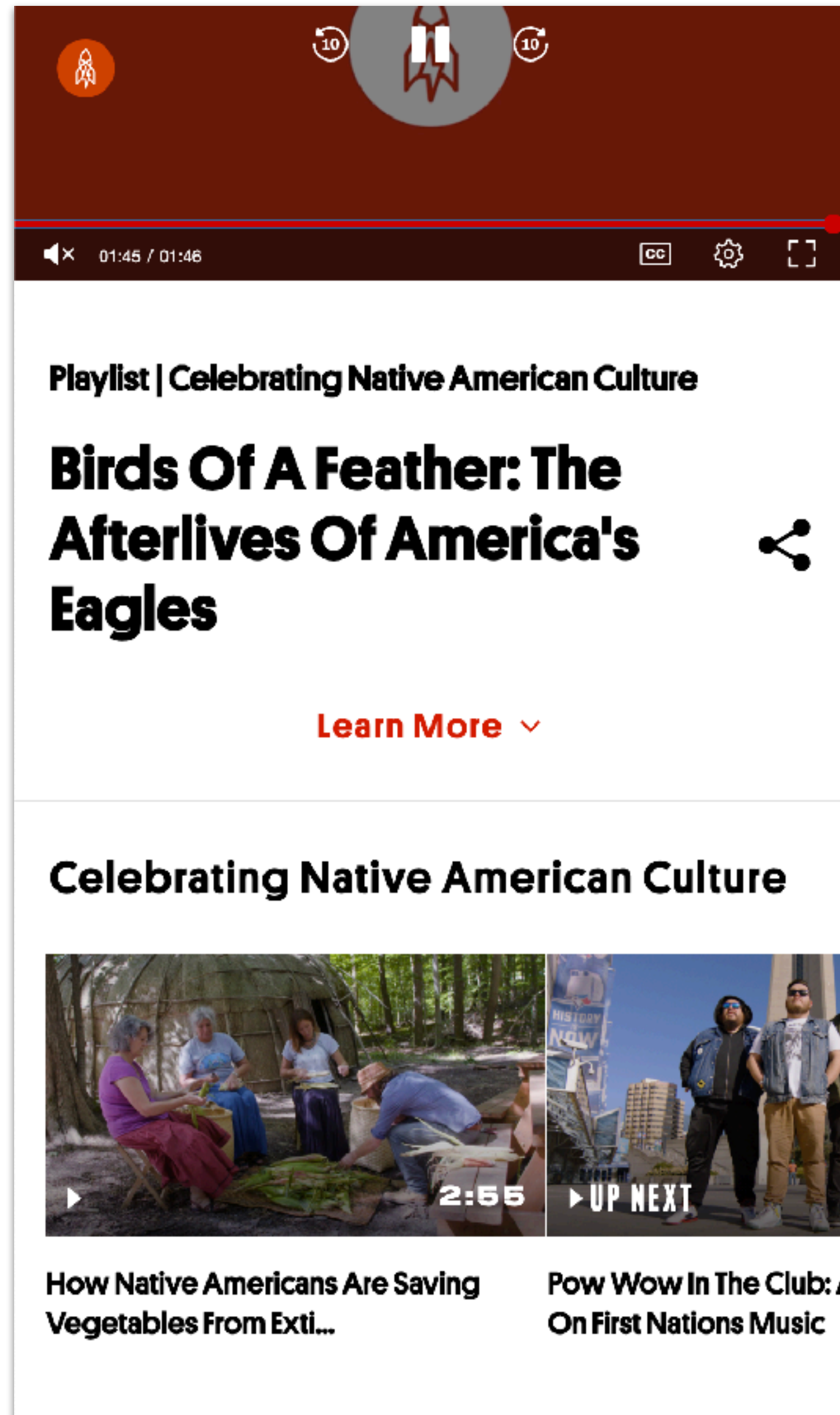


# Discoverability - Autoplay Redesign



## Before

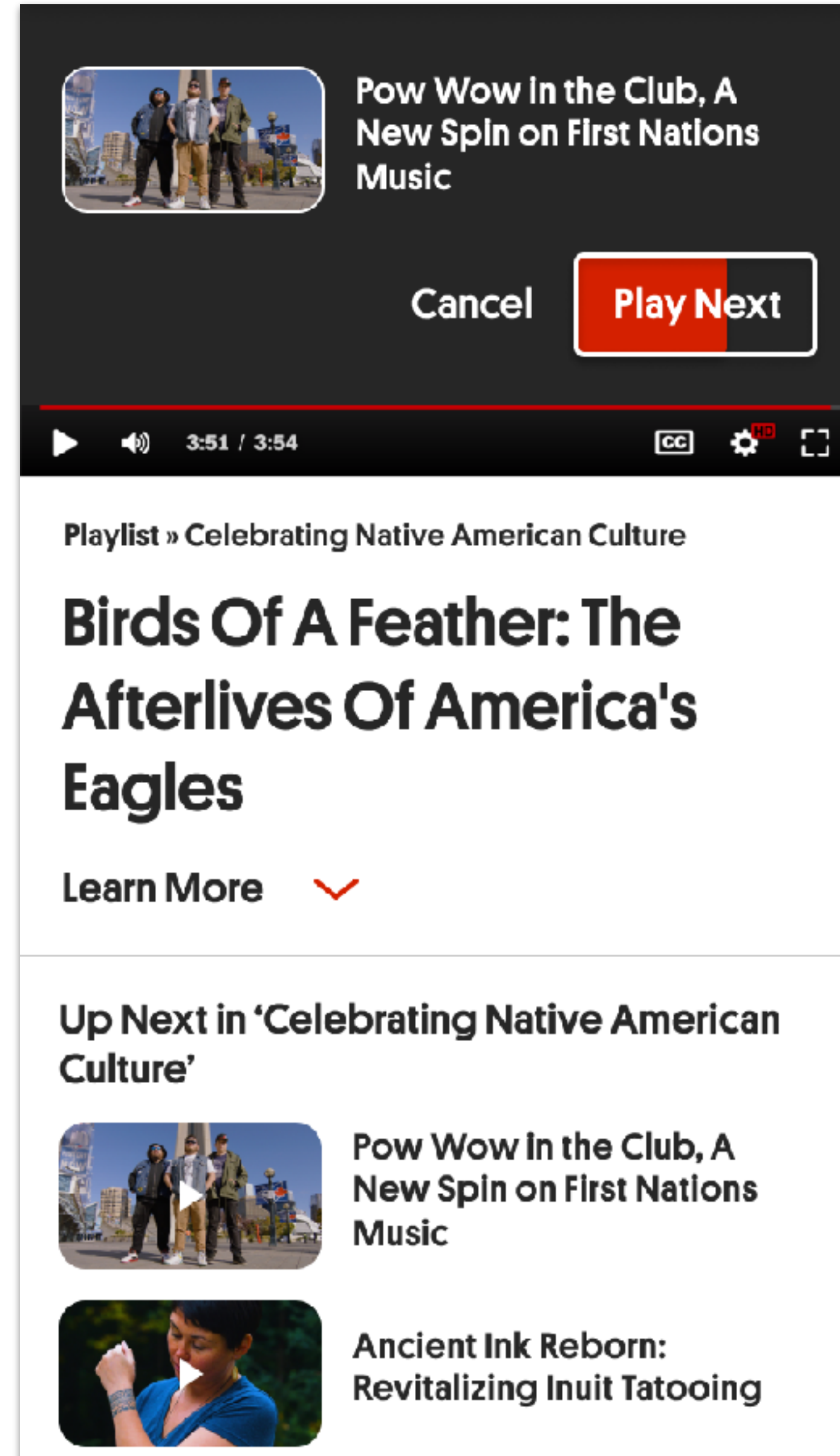
Screenshot of the previous autoplay pattern on mobile



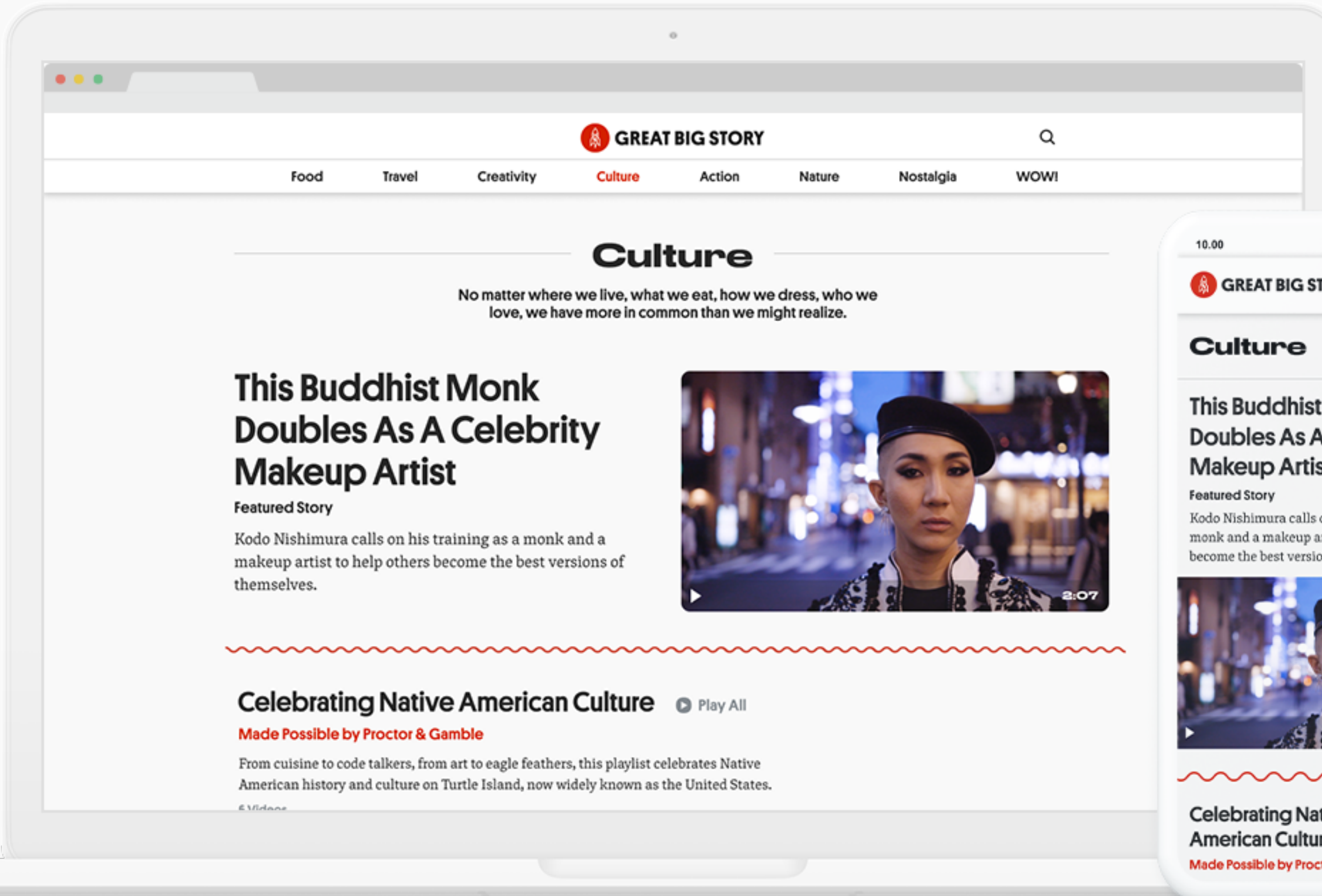
## After

Screenshot of the redesigned autoplay pattern on mobile.

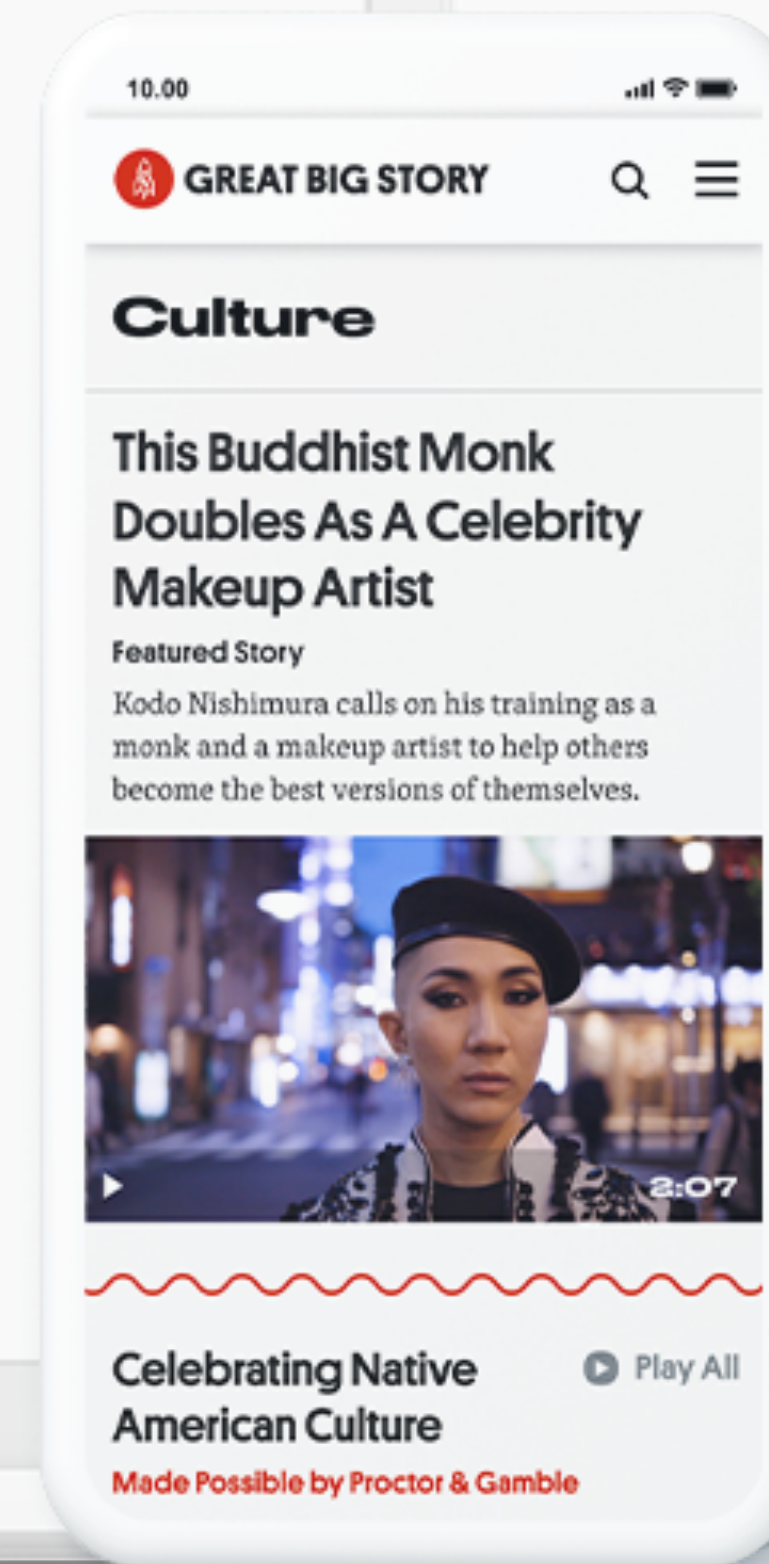
For playlists there is a 0:08 delay before autoplay, for videos user must click 'Play Next'



# Final Designs - Prototype



Desktop Prototype



Mobile Prototype