THINK 66: Design That Understands Us
Final Project: Boola
Part I: Poster

Blueprint
Boola is a social media platform that promotes meaningful and healthy usage.

It is available on smartphone, tablet and laptop.

It has similar stylistic features to Facebook, but its additional elements make Boola more human-centered.

Boola's main color is green, which is often associated with health, tranquility, and growth. Green is also found to improve reading ability!
More people are becoming aware of the harmful effects of today's social media platforms. These apps are carefully engineered to maximize user engagement and have thus created addictive ecosystems based on misinformation. But we shall not forget that the initial reason for social media's invention was a good one: to stay connected with the world. This is where Boola comes in; we are a social media platform that reminds us of the good social media can do while tackling its negative aspects. We emphasize transparency, human-AI interaction, and healthy usage; essentially, we are revolutionizing the social media game.

The app, available on smartphone, tablet, and laptop, has a clean and intuitive layout, making it appealing to all age groups. In the app, the user has the ability to select the content type they wish to see during their visit. This increased human-AI interaction enables the user to have more control over what they want to see, embracing the notion of human agency. Suppose it is late at night, and the user simply wants to enjoy amusing content; this platform would then omit any news articles from their feed that could bring down their mood. Through this, human tastes and preferences are not just accounted for, but the main driving force of the app.

In other social media apps, posts often appear on one's feed which might be uninteresting or irrelevant, because the app’s ulterior motive is to promote content that will maximize their profits. Boola instead prefers to be transparent with its users, which is the reason behind the “Why am I seeing this?” feature. The explanations provide users with increased transparency, enabling a perception of the platform as a tool rather than an oracle.

Another important area where misinformation is tackled is the news category. The feature “Show only credible news sources” uses artificial intelligence to distinguish credible versus fake news, through a combination of predictive reputation, a natural language processing engine that weighs facts, and spotting sensational words. Our AI also observes activity to present news content from multiple sources and perspectives, preventing the formation of echo chambers. To us, it is crucial that users feel comfortable both with their interactions on the app and with being exposed to diverse viewpoints to make better-supported judgements. This tool is key to combat the misinformation crisis in social media.

Lastly, we mitigate the issue of social media as an unhealthy distraction through two principal features. Firstly, Boola does not send notifications when the user is not on the app. It is a small but powerful tool in preventing distraction and allowing people to focus on other tasks more deeply and for longer. Secondly, the timer on the upper-right corner of the page helps the user keep track of how long they spend on the app. Nowadays, people’s main issue with social media is that they end up spending way more time than they realize, which can lead to addictive use, so Boola addresses this problem through the timer. These tools are designed to be simple, since we still want the user to have an enjoyable experience on the app, but they are nonetheless effective in preventing addiction.

So who can use this app? Pretty much everyone! Boola is a fun platform whose human-centered design makes it ideal for meaningful use and human flourishing.