Design a seat reservation app for a movie theater

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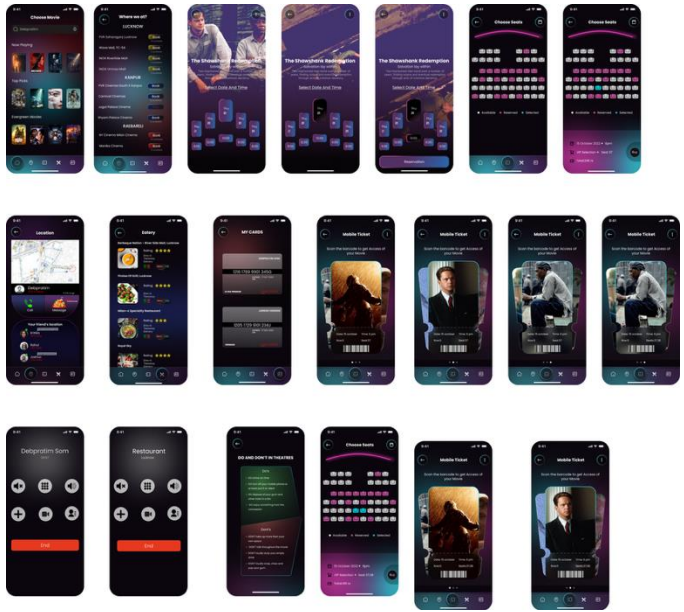
Project overview

The product:

This application is designed to provide an online platform for users worldwide, allowing them to book movie tickets with greater flexibility, such as selecting their preferred seats and rescheduling tickets without the need to visit the theater in person.



Project duration:

May 2025 – June 2025

Project overview

The problem:

Users face difficulty booking movie seats efficiently and flexibly without visiting the theater in person.

The goal:

The goal is to create a user-friendly app that allows people to easily reserve, choose, and manage their movie theater seats online.

Project overview

My role:

To design an intuitive and seamless user experience for the seat reservation app, focusing on simplifying the booking process and enhancing user satisfaction.

Responsibilities:

I was responsible for user research, wireframing, prototyping, and designing a smooth seat reservation flow to enhance the movie booking experience.

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Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary

For user research, I began with the assumption that most users preferred in-person booking due to trust and habit. I conducted online surveys and a few one-on-one interviews with frequent moviegoers to understand their pain points. The insights revealed that users actually wanted to avoid long queues and valued flexibility in choosing or changing seats digitally. This shifted my focus toward designing a more streamlined and transparent digital reservation experience that builds user confidence.

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User research: pain points

1

Pain point

Unclear seat layouts
Users found it difficult to visualize the theater seating, often leading to incorrect seat selection

2

Pain point

Lack of real-time availability
Seats shown as available were sometimes already booked, causing frustration during checkout.

3

Pain point

No option to modify bookings
Users couldn't easily reschedule or change their selected seats once the booking was made.

4

Pain point

Confusing confirmation
The final booking process lacked clarity, leaving users unsure if their reservation was successful.

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Persona: **Aryan**

Problem statement:

Aryan, a busy college student in Seattle, needs a quick and easy way to book movie tickets because he wants to efficiently plan outings with friends without wasting time on complicated processes.

Aryan

Age: 27
Education: Masters in CS
Hometown: Seattle, WA
Tech Literacy: High
Occupation: Student

"Aryan would likely prefer a movie booking app that's quick and clear, letting him easily find showtimes and book tickets without any unnecessary complexity."

Goals

- Wants to quickly find a movie and showtime.
- Needs to book tickets easily, without unnecessary complications.

Frustrations

- Get annoyed by a slow or confusing app.
- Dislikes having to go through too many steps just to book a ticket.

Aryan is a college student in Seattle, just finished his Friday classes and started coordinating a movie night with his friends. When the new sci-fi film Downtown got the thumbs-up, Aryan reached for his phone to handle the tickets. He prefers things to be straightforward; scrolling through showtimes, picking seats, and paying should be quick so they can make their pre-movie pizza plans. For Aryan, the ideal movie booking app is one that gets him to the tickets without any unnecessary hassle.

Image generated by Gemini

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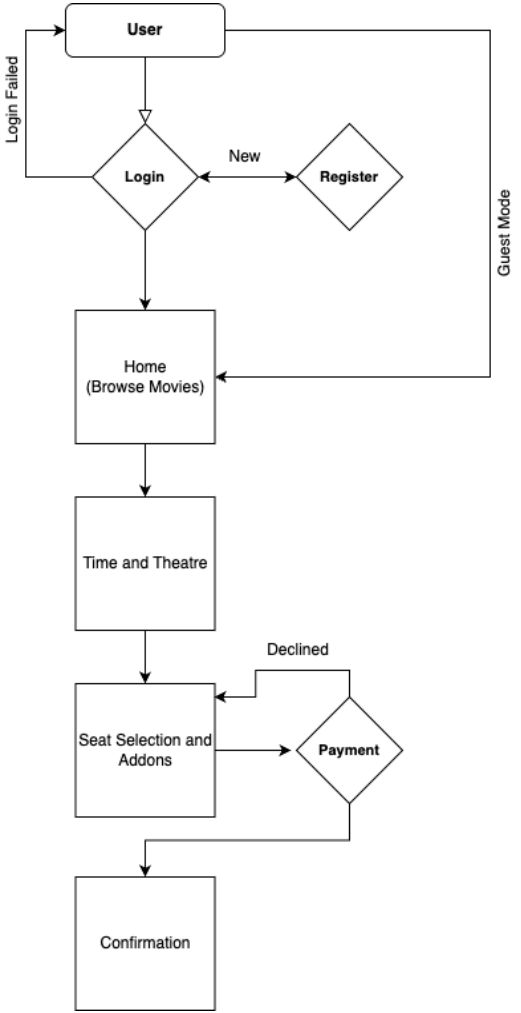
User journey map

The goal was to create a simple and intuitive movie booking experience that minimizes user effort and decision fatigue. Each step, from browsing movies to booking seats, is designed to be clear, accessible, and frustration-free. By including optional login, clear navigation, and accessibility features like screen reader support and color contrast, the app ensures that all users can complete their booking confidently and quickly.

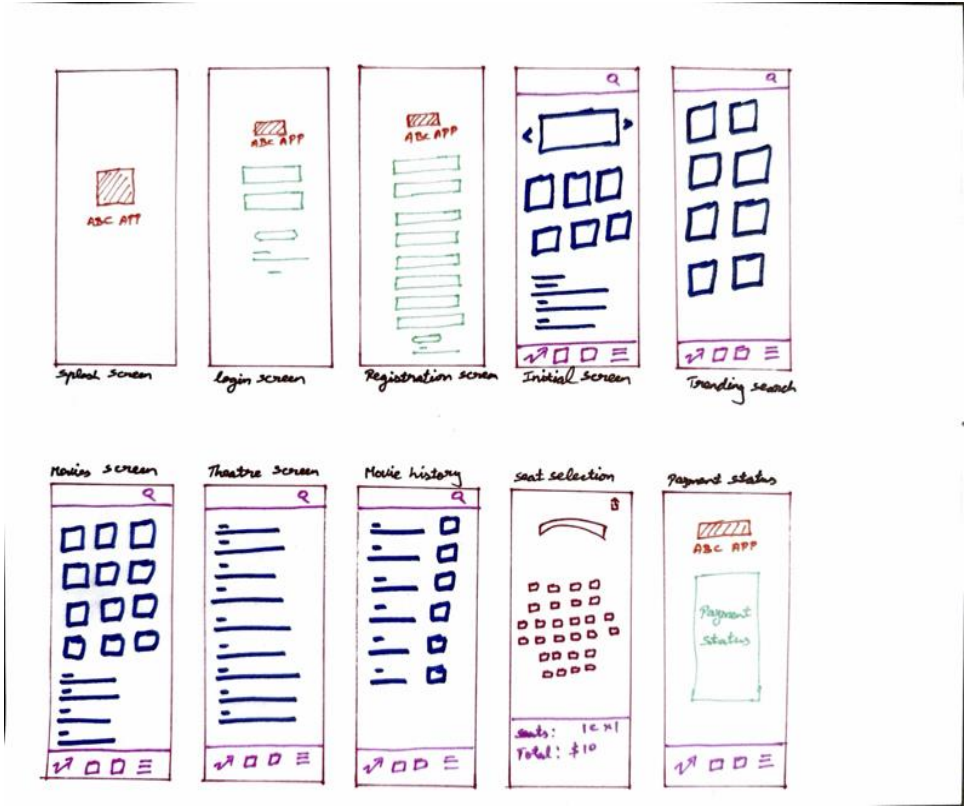


Starting the design

- Paper wireframes
- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

Paper wireframes

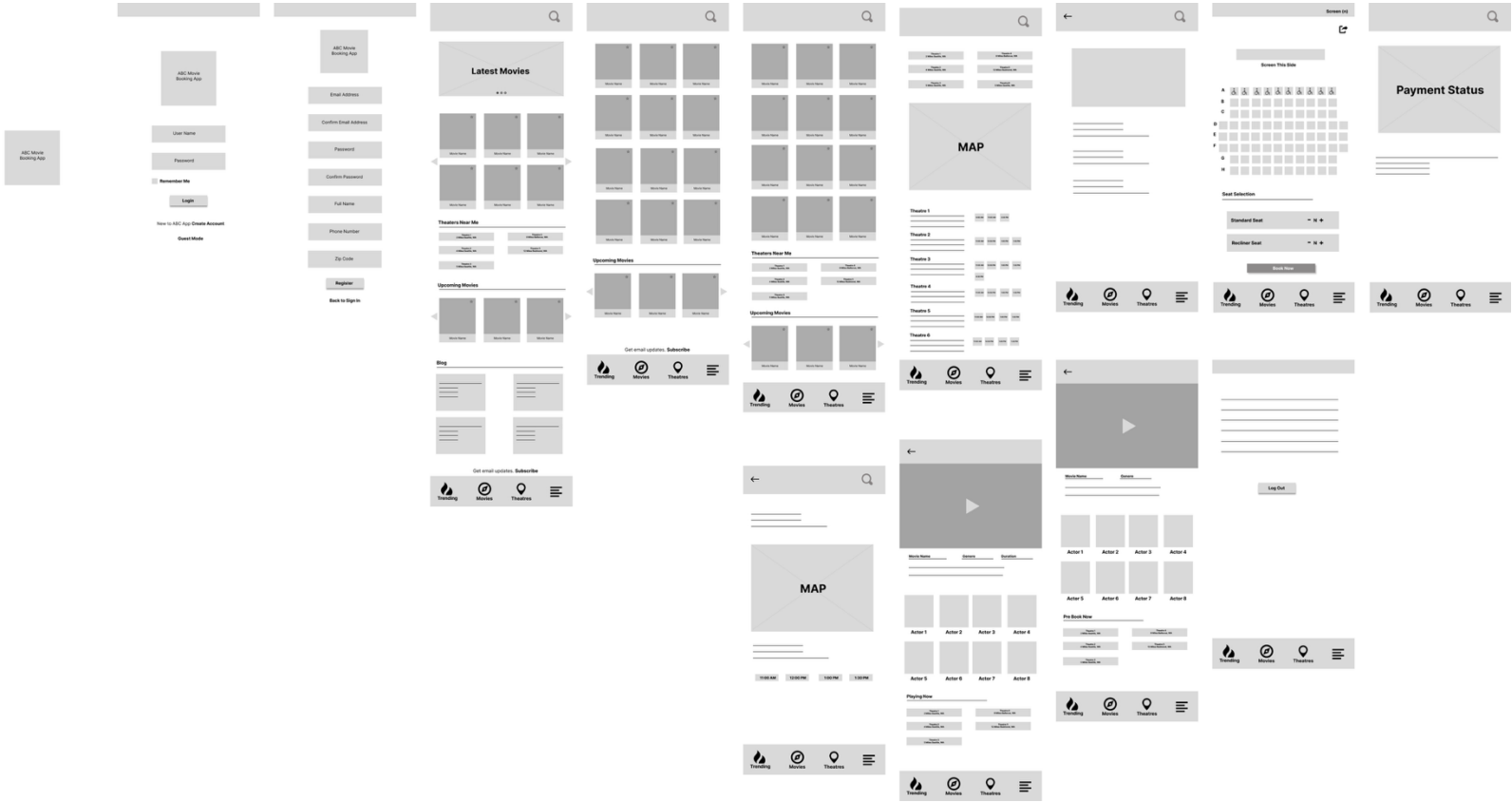
My goal here is to design a user flow that starts with a splash screen, moves through login or registration, and then allows user to select movies and seats before reaching the payment stage. My thought process involves creating clear entry points, logical information gathering at each step, and a straightforward path to completing the booking.



Digital wireframes

The goal was to create a simple, accessible movie booking app that allows users to easily browse movies, select showtimes, choose seats, and complete payment. The design flows from login/registration to browsing, booking, and confirmation. I focused on intuitive navigation, minimal visual clutter, and clearly labeled Call To Actions - CTAs. The use of wireframes helped quickly visualize the structure and ensured user journeys were smooth and logical. The inclusion of map views, filters, and quick access tabs supports a frustration-free experience.

Digital wireframes



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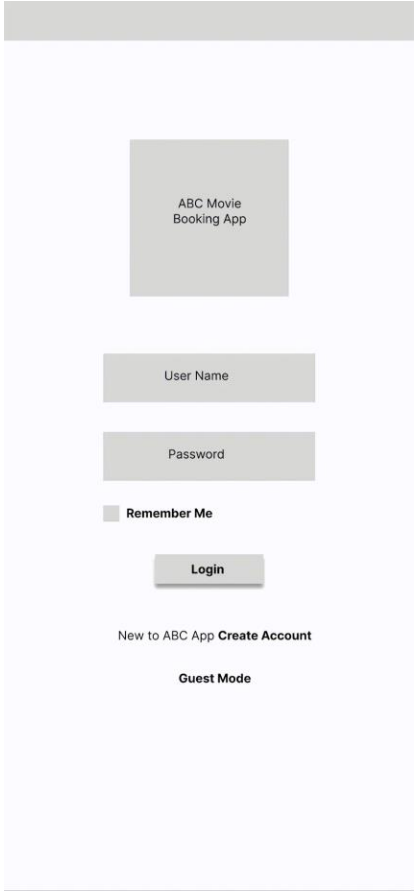
Low-fidelity prototype

The user flow starts with a login or registration screen, leading to the home page featuring latest and upcoming movies. From there, users can explore trending films, view theaters nearby via a map, and select a movie for more details. Once a movie and theater are chosen, users proceed to seat selection, followed by the payment status screen. Navigation is supported by a persistent bottom menu, allowing easy switching between main sections like Trending, Movies, and Theaters.

Prototype



Usability study: findings

I conducted a usability study where users tested key tasks like booking and seat selection. Navigation was smooth, but some users wanted clearer feedback during the payment step.

Round 1 findings

1. Users struggled to locate theaters near them quickly.
2. Some buttons lacked clear labels, causing confusion.
3. Seat selection was not intuitive for first-time users.

Round 2 findings

1. Users found the updated map and theater filters helpful.
2. Button labels improved task completion speed.
3. Confirmation after payment still needed stronger visual feedback.

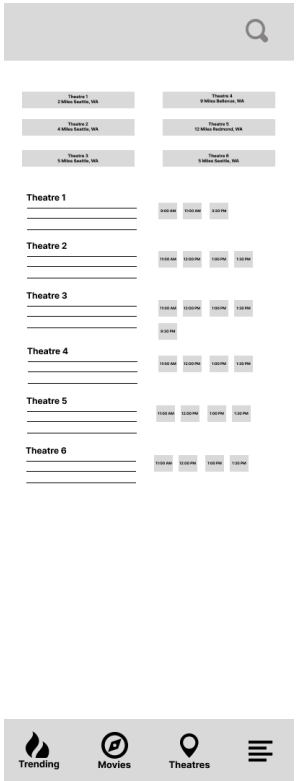
Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

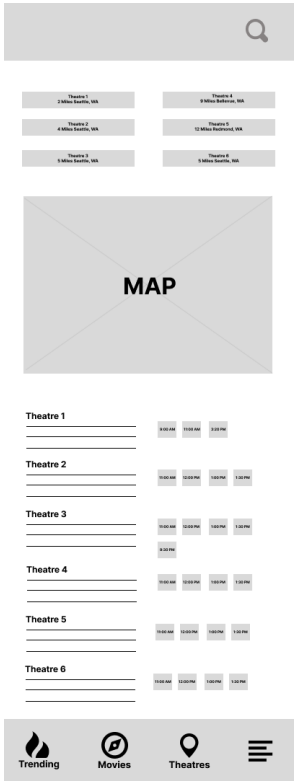
Mockups

The goal was to make it easier for users to find nearby theaters quickly. Adding a visual map helped reduce confusion and improved location clarity. The update focused on making navigation more intuitive and user-friendly.

Before usability study



After usability study



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Mockups

The aim was to reduce user effort in discovering popular content. I noticed that most users tend to search manually or rely on external suggestions. By introducing a "Trending Movies" section, I wanted to make the app more proactive, helping users explore current hits directly from the home screen. This change was driven by user feedback around convenience and speed.

Before usability study

Most movie booking apps today don't offer a dedicated "Trending Movies" section. This feature was added to help users quickly discover popular titles without needing to browse extensively, making the experience more engaging and time-efficient.

After usability study

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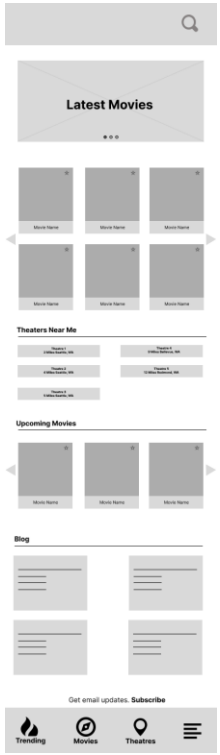
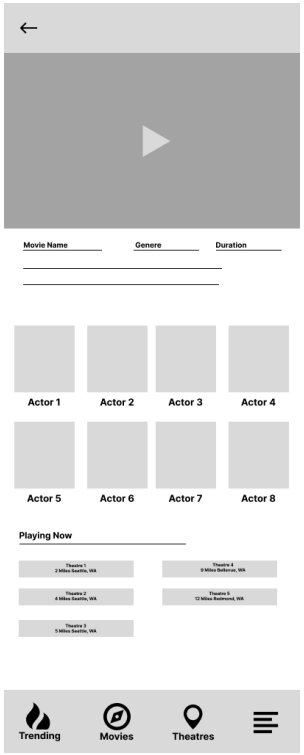
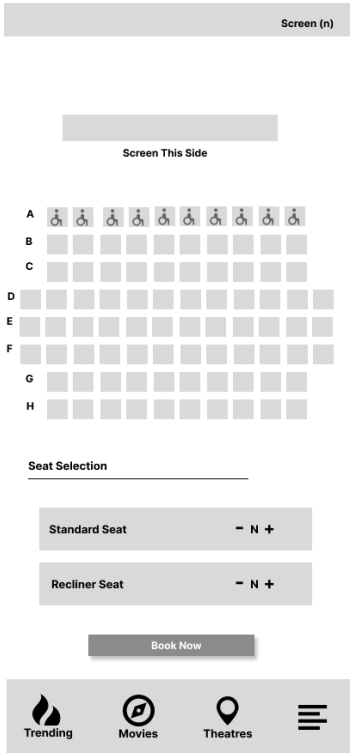
Mockups


Latest Movies
Theaters Near Me
Upcoming Movies
Blog
Get email updates. Subscribe
Trending
Movies
Theatres


Movie Name
Genere
Duration
Actor 1
Actor 2
Actor 3
Actor 4
Actor 5
Actor 6
Actor 7
Actor 8
Playing Now
Trending
Movies
Theatres


Theaters Near Me
Upcoming Movies
Trending
Movies
Theatres


MAP
11:00 AM
12:00 PM
1:00 PM
1:30 PM
Trending
Movies
Theatres


Screen (n)
Screen This Side
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
Seat Selection
Standard Seat
Recliner Seat
Book Now
Trending
Movies
Theatres

High-fidelity prototype

[Prototype]

Accessibility considerations

1

I used clear, high-contrast text and buttons to ensure readability for users with visual impairments.

2

All interactive elements are sized and spaced to support users with limited motor skills or touch precision.

3

Icons are paired with text labels so that users relying on screen readers or unfamiliar with iconography can still navigate easily.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways

Impact:

- The usability studies helped me uncover small design gaps that impacted user flow.
- Adding visual elements like maps and trending sections made navigation easier and more engaging.
- User feedback led to better content grouping and clearer CTAs across key screens.
- Overall, the updates improved task completion time and boosted user confidence during booking.

What I learned:

- I learned how valuable early user feedback is in shaping intuitive and user-friendly designs.
- I realized the importance of accessibility and how small changes can make a big difference for all users.
- I gained hands-on experience in iterating designs based on real user interactions and needs.

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Next steps

1

I would conduct another round of usability testing with a broader group to validate the recent updates and uncover any missed friction points. This helps ensure the design works well across different user types.

2

Next, I plan to focus on micro-interactions and animations to make the app feel more responsive and polished. Small design details can greatly improve the overall user experience.

3

Finally, I would prepare the design for handoff to developers by organizing design assets, documenting functionality, and ensuring consistency across screens to streamline implementation.

Let’s connect!

Feel free to reach out if you'd like to collaborate or dive deeper into my design process - I'd love to share more of my work!

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