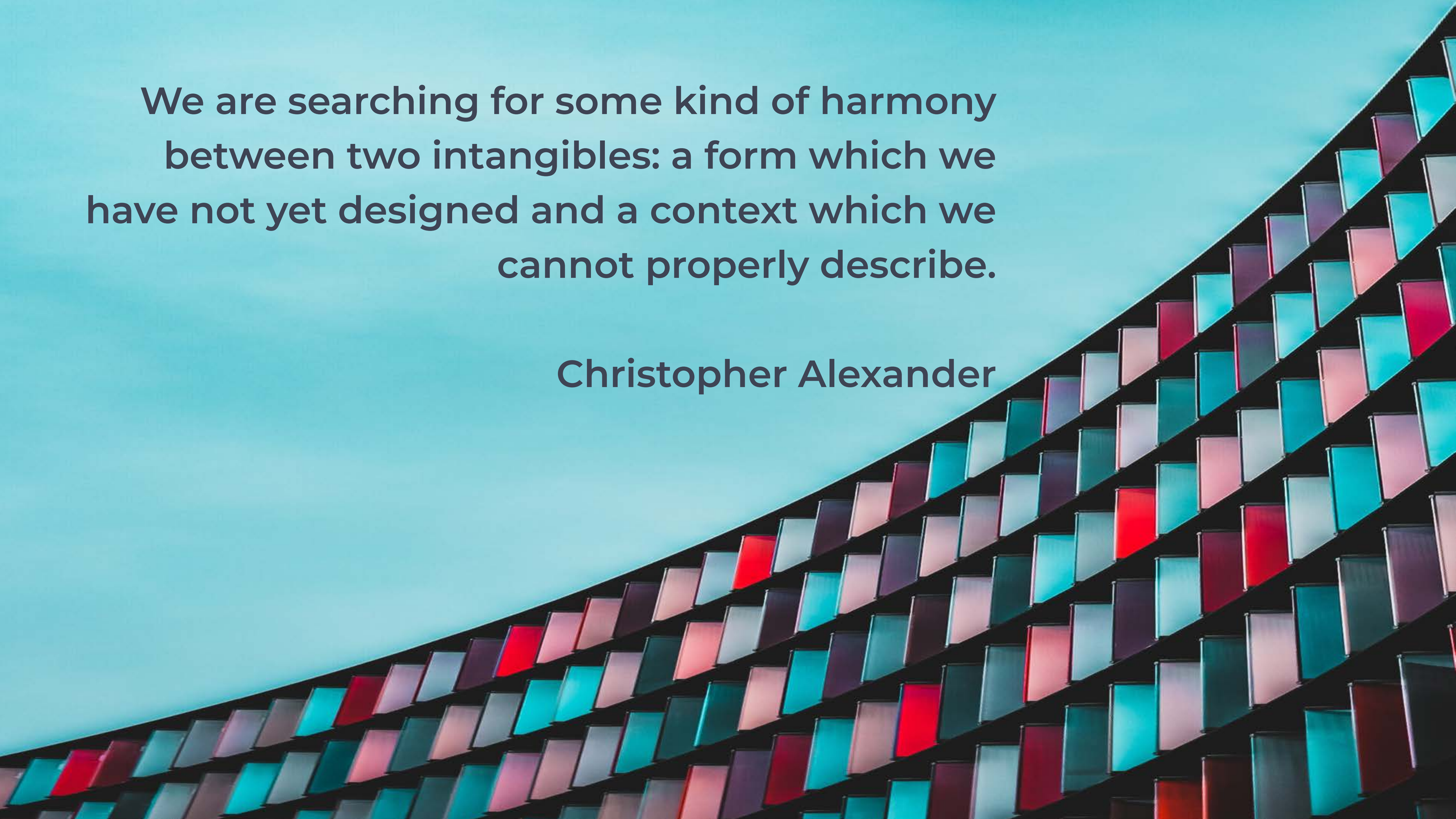
Theater Db
Content Strategy Exercise

Objective

Create a fluid, intuitive Theater Database, akin to IMDb.com, focused around plays and musical theater. Organize and structure content in the experience in a way that allows users to access all of the relevant content about their favorite plays and musicals, discover works that are new to them, and generally get them excited about live theater, even if they are new to it.


We are searching for some kind of harmony between two intangibles: a form which we have not yet designed and a context which we cannot properly describe.
Christopher Alexander

Strategic Process Outline

First

BRAINSTORM

√ **Ideas**

Free of unfluence of existing platforms.

- Asking “What if?”
- Unrestricted by the medium in order to potentially recreate the medium with a new experience.
- Include Design, UX, Developer, Client, Content.
- Meet for 2 hours. Before meeting each person must come in the room with 1-2 ideas on how it could look and feel, what they would like to see.

Second

RESEARCH

√ **What Exists?**

Research how this a theater database has already been done, taking note of what works and doesn’t work.

√ **How’s it Feel?**

- Relevant examples
- Color Palette
- Typography
- Logo Toolkit

√ **Data**

- Relevant Search Data
- Keywords?
- Traffic

Third

INTERVIEW

√ **Questions**

Develop list of releveant Qs that are both curious and user experience relevant. Adjust as needed for audience.

√ **Who**

- Patrons
- New Fans
- Producers
- Actors
- Writers

Fourth

MOCKUPS

√ **Collaborate**

Build design and flow based off steps 1-3. Adjust as needed from Big Idea to what works.

√ **Asks**

- Does this work?
- What’s missing?
- Is it simple?
- How’s the flow?
- What’s the story?
- Can I choose my adventure?

Fifth

BUILD

√ **Structure**

- Hosting
- Make sure structure is cooperative.

√ **Connect**

Weekly communication.

- Front-End
- Designers
- Client

√ **Break**

Host a bug and break party to make sure it works properly. Inlcude client and a few non-involved users to offer a third perspective.

Sixth

LAUNCH

√ **Governance**

Free Initially static, but needs to be flexible based on real-time feedback.

- 6 & 12 month reviews.

√ **International**

Launch global experience 6 months after initial launch.

First

BRAINSTORM

√ Ideas

Free of unfluence of existing platforms.

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- Meet for 2 hours. Before meeting each person must come in the room with 1-2 ideas on how it could look and feel, what they would like to see.

If too few opportunities for curiosity are available, if too many obstacles are placed in the way of risk and exploration, the motivation to engage in creative behavior is easily extinguished.

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

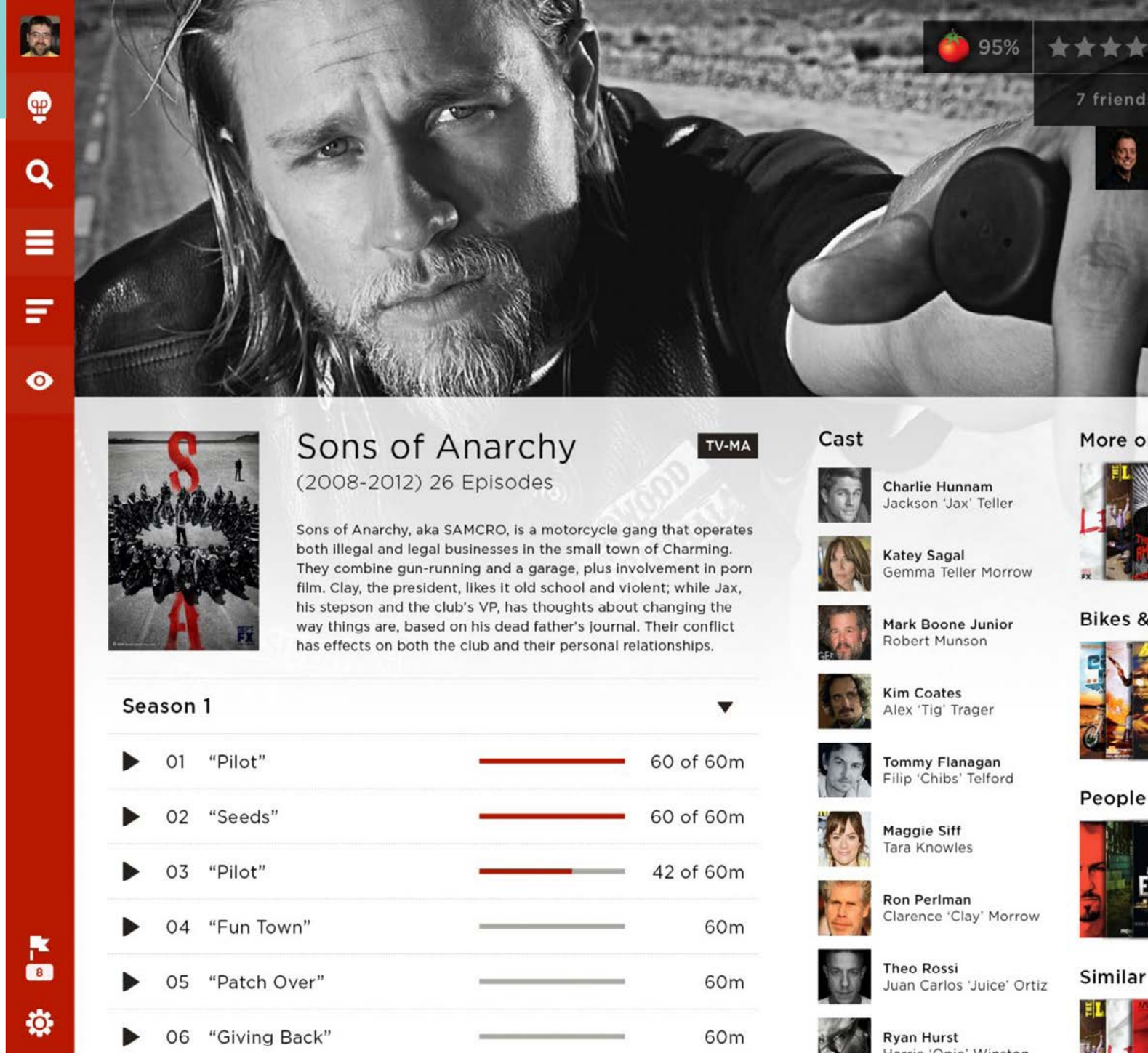
First

Netflix Experience

What if Content Experience is more like Netflix and less like IMDB?

You saw a local production of **True West.**
You want to find out more about the playwright and other productions of the play, as well as other plays they have written.

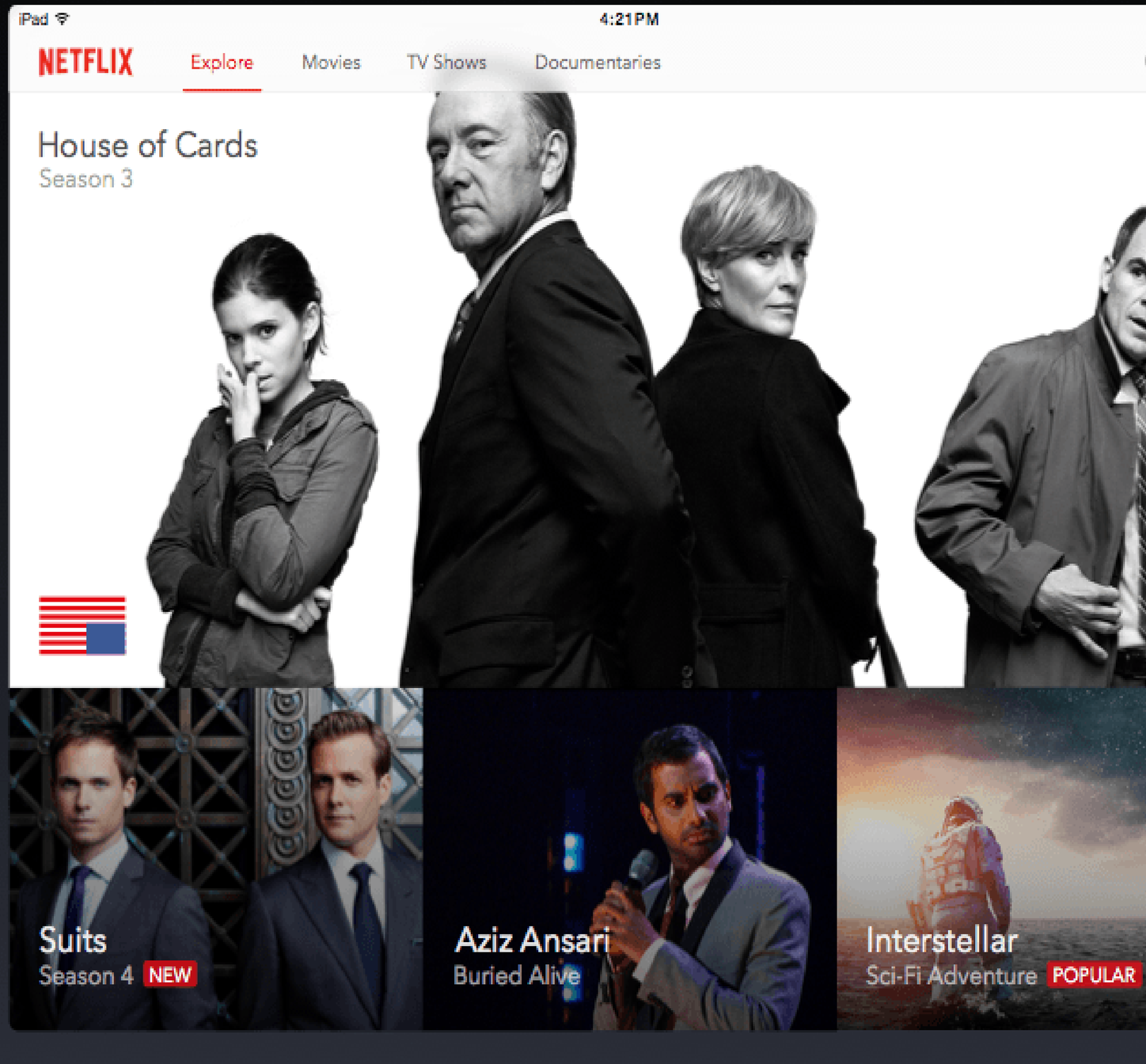
- **True West** has a profile page.
- Playwrite is listed as Sam Shepard, with hyperlink to his profile page.
- Videos of scenes from different productions of the play, ranked by most likely to be popular.
- Other Shepard plays with links to each.
- Unique Productions of the play
- Cast is list of actors who have played the role(s) and what else they may have been in.
- Current or upcoming productions of the play regionally or nationally.
- Suggested shows. “If you like this, then check out…”



First Considerations

Within the Netflix concept, some things to consider:

- CONS: Netflix tends to limit experience after algorithm adjust for behavior.
- SOLUTION: Limit search history, or simply do not have pigeon hole flow with too much AI.
- Subscription option, similar to IMDB?
- Advertising on the site?
- Integrate geolocation to curate data for where a user is currently accessing.
- User “reddit” discussion boards to limit the troll reviewing and foster fan community.
- Podcasting and/or Videocasting wherein a play, a writer, a director, an actor, or even stage production crew are interviewed. Similar to how Rich Roll does his with both audio and video production.



Second

RESEARCH

√ What Exists?
Research how this theater databases have already been done, taking note of what works and doesn't work.

√ How's it Feel?

- Relevant examples
- Color Palette
- Typography
- Flow
- Ease of use

√ Data

- Relevant Search Data
- Keywords?
- Traffic

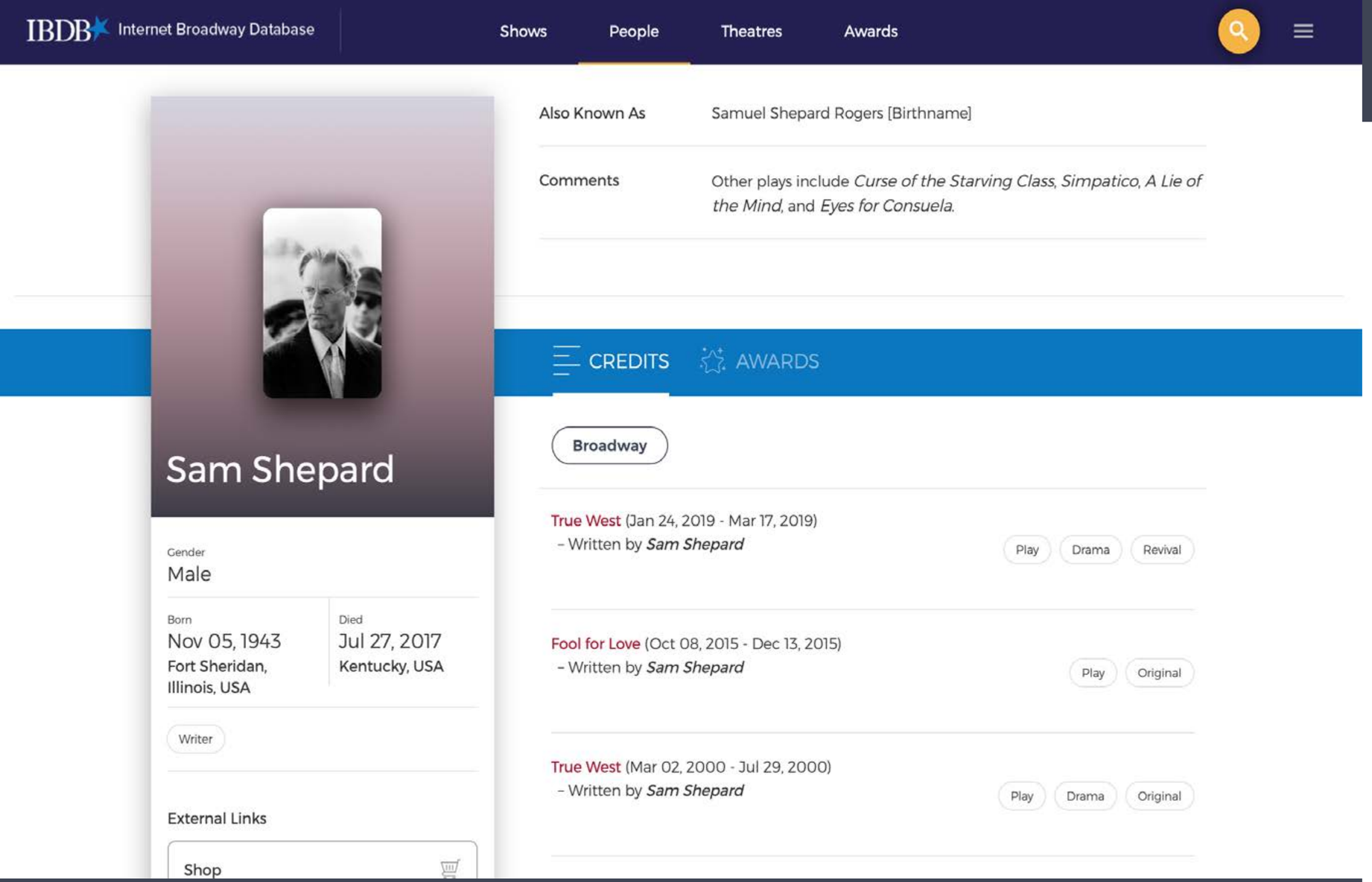
Second

The Others

Existing versions of the Theater Databas Concept, for good or bad.

ibdb.com:

- Professional feel.
- Four top categories: Shows, People, Theaters, Awards.
- Design feels like facebook.
- Less visual, more linear.
- Limited connection of dots when you find person, making it hard to learn more and thus is less holistic..
- The Shows pages are built out with all the details of a production, staffing, actors, directors, hair and makeup.



IBDB.COM

THEATREDB.COM

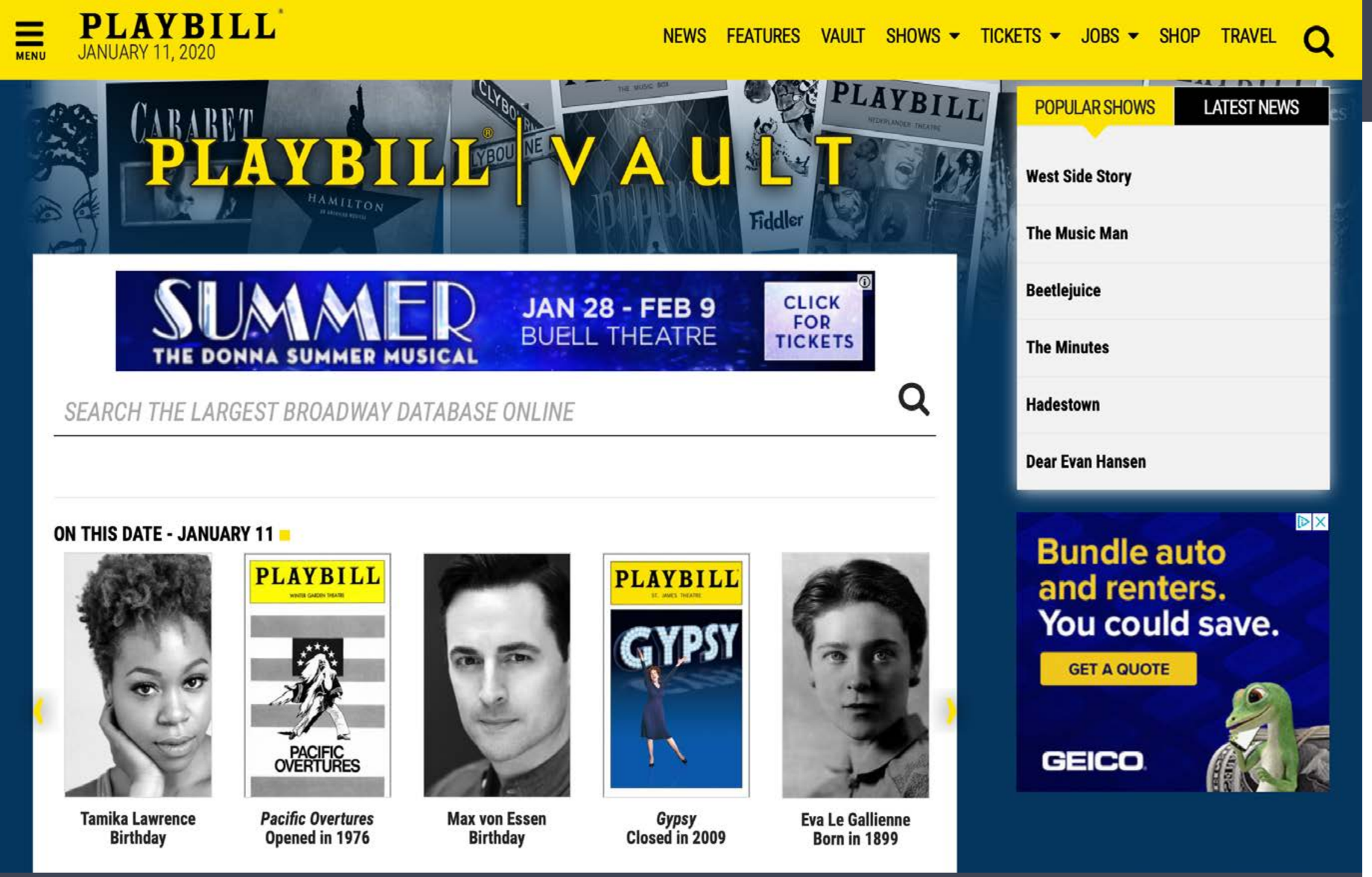
Second

The Others

Existing versions of the Theater Databas Concept, for good or bad.

theatredb.com:

- May have been designed in the 90's
- Feels like a Wikipedia page
- Too much text, no imagery.
- Colors are trying to feel like a stage and curtain, but make for undesirable experience.
- search is suboptimal



PLAYBILL.COM

Second

The Others

Existing versions of the Theater Databas Concept, for good or bad.

playbill.com/archives:

- Closest in look & feel to IMDb.com
- Design off longstanding brand within the theater world.
- Includes targeted advertising
- Provides ability to buy tickets
- Feels outdated
- Shows are sub-catagoried by Broadway, Region, London, Off-broadway, Hard-to-find, Touring.

Third

INTERVIEW

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√ Who

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- Producers
- Actors
- Writers

Third

Questions

We need to ask a variety of questions based in curiosity while seeking to gain insight into how people experience theater, why and how they would use a database, and what current interfaces they use and enjoy...and why.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

√ **Curiosity**
What is it about a play or musical theater that you enjoy?

Do you ever want to find out more about a play, who wrote it, directed it, acted in it or other productions?

√ **Insight**
How do you usually go about learning more about the actors, plays, or writers you enjoy?

Do you search on your mobile device or a desktop computer?

If you've used IMBd for movies, what do you wish it did that it doesn't?

√ **Features**
If you were searching for more information about a musical, would you like to know where it is playing next, and if it is near your home?

Would you pay for premium features if a subscription was an option? (early access to tickets, notifications about upcoming shows, new releases)

Third

Who

Patron

New Fan

Writer

Director

Actor

Unknown

Fourth

MOCKUPS

√ Collaborate

Build design and flow based off steps 1-3. Adjust as needed from Big Idea to what works.

√ Asks

- Does this work?
- What's missing?
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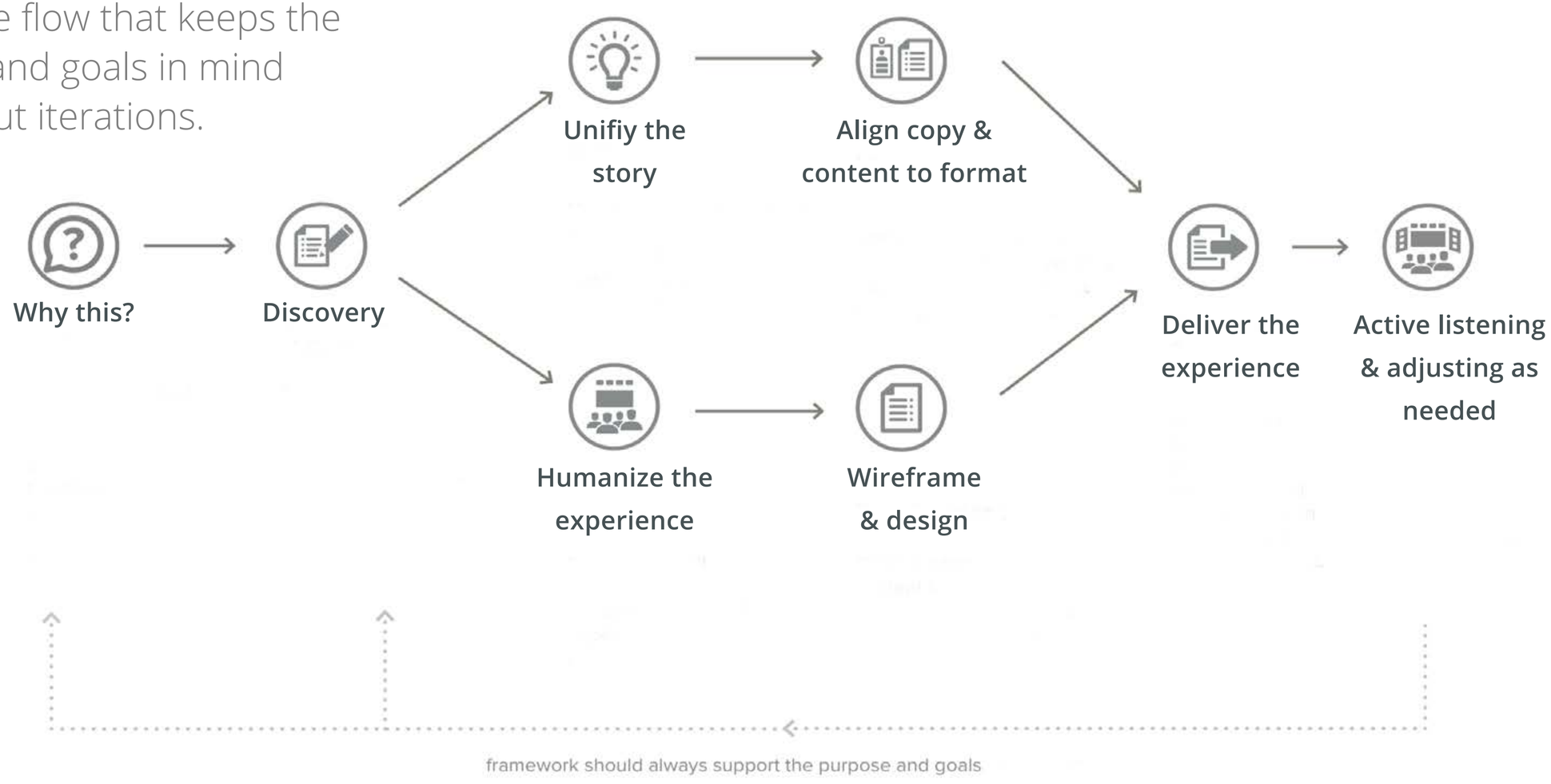
Fourth

Collaborative Content Architecture

Design and infrastructure need generative flow that keeps the purpose and goals in mind throughout iterations.



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