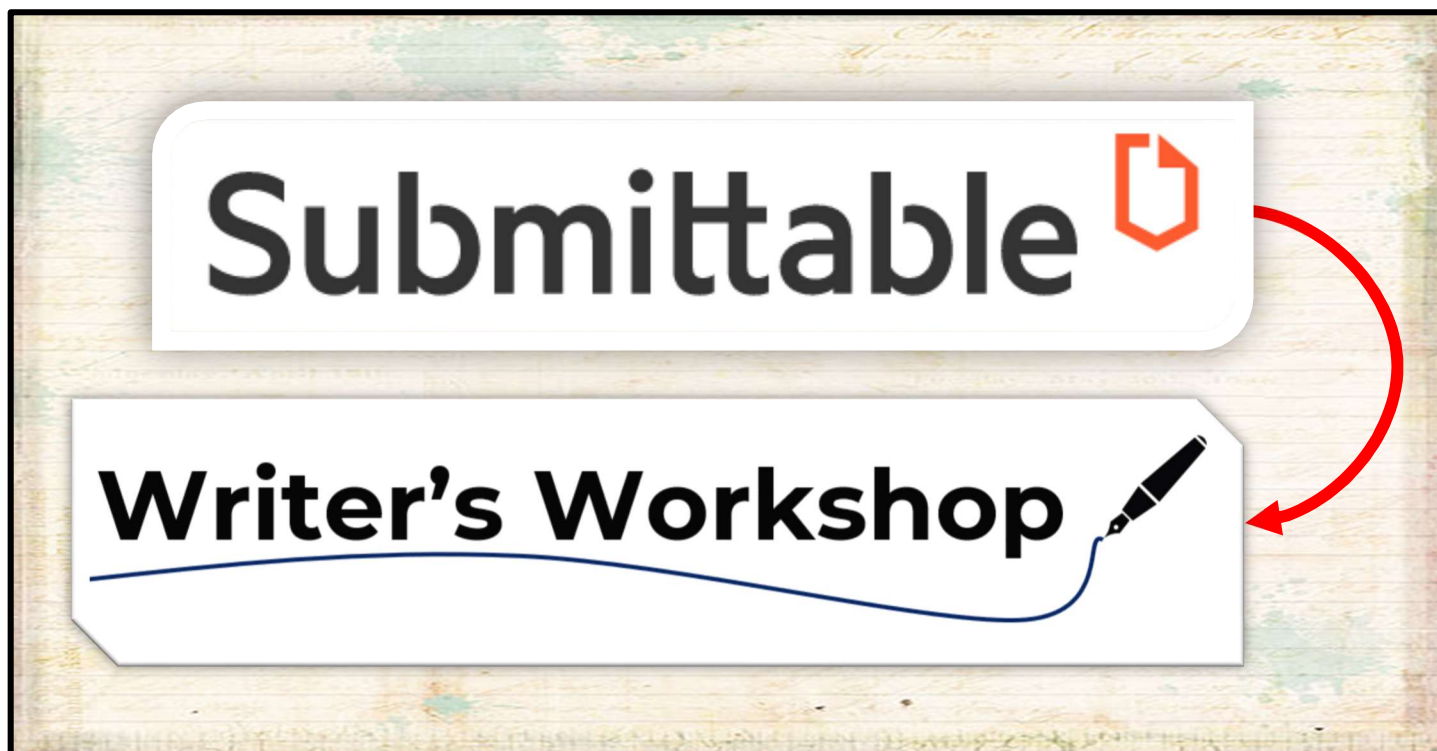


TEAM ENDGAME

Proposal to Redesign Submittable.com



**BY: JORDON GASCA, KAREN DEVENARO, REILLY LOVINGOOD,
SARA ZELLER, SATIN SCOTT, AND STEPHEN CONNELLY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utilizing in-person interviews and surveys, Endgame compiled the results to isolate key features that users missed while using the current iteration of Submittable. With a focus on brand identity, clarity, and loyalty, the focus was on rebranding Submittable into two separate spheres, one focused on the social change aspect of the business, and the new Writer's Workshop powered by Submittable. The rebranding allowed the project team to reformat the UX and build out a new UI wireframe to simulate what the user experience will be in the new framework. The user research was referenced in every choice to ensure increased usability, higher utilization, and user return rates.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Current users of Submittable.com found it difficult to locate Submittable for Writers, the writing submission aspect of Submittable. The social change portion of Submittable's business currently appears in search results first. The decreased visibility of Submittable for Writers lowered user satisfaction. When writers accessed the writing category of the business, they found the available tools non-intuitive, the layout bland, a disordered tagging system, and a search engine bereft of the power needed to find markets and opportunities.

Endgame will increase the functionality of the current Submittable for Writers structure through rebranding. The Opportunities page will be greatly enhanced with a more robust search engine. A new community hub will build stronger brand loyalty and higher utilization. The My Submissions portal will also be substantially updated with new functionality. We expect to see a refinement of additional applications in the Writers Workshop to entice both users and publications to join the Submittable ecosystem.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Endgame created a survey for both in-person interviews and online participants. The goal was to gather information from a wide range of users to find the intersection of functional needs for beginners to advanced users that have held Submittable accounts for years. The survey used open-ended questions, scales, and force rankings to mine the greatest amount of information from user responses. The major focus was on visibility (how easy it was to find Submittable for Writers), features that were difficult to use or misunderstood, and what features users wished Submittable had to support their writing careers.

The results were clear: finding Submittable was a chore for users, and once they were able to log in, the features available were unclear. The bulk of survey responses was from novice users, and the likelihood of repeat users was low.

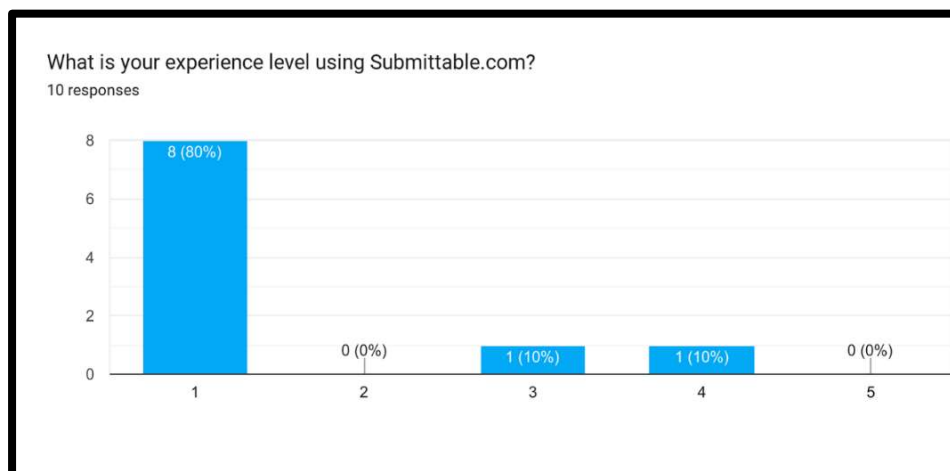


FIGURE 1: EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Endgame believes it will be hugely successful to rename the writing-focused portion of the business: **Writer's Workshop, Powered by Submittable**. This will increase visibility and ensure users can easily find the tools needed to accomplish their goals. It will allow Submittable to be a dream maker, to help writers, young and old, be the published writers they know they can be.

There is a great deal of research that shows the more clicks or taps it takes to find a resource, the less likely a user will look for an artifact again. When that artifact is an entire portion of a business, it is clear that rebranding is a necessity.

Next, Endgame focused on User Value. Endgame explored what Submittable could offer over its competitors, and why users would continue to use the platform as opposed to migrating. Seven current applications on Submittable were listed for users to force rank for overall usefulness. Among those surveyed, the most significant number were interested in No-Fee Submissions. Next, users were interested in clearly marked lists of deadlines by market. And finally, a robust writing market search engine was third. This told Endgame that writers needed a powerful tool to find the right markets, with easy-to-filter content specifically related to market deadlines and posted dates. These features are poorly developed in Submittable's current iteration. Submittable uses a tagging feature that makes it difficult for users to navigate searches, and it is inaccurate in returning queries that writers are looking for.

The Opportunities page is a major priority for the success of this project and user adoption. Endgame proposes the addition of robust filtering tools which will address the needs of users by helping them to find the best markets for their work. Better filtering will also provide stronger searchability for journals that publish opportunities through Submittable. The goal is to provide an interface that allows users and publishers to "find" each other. Providing this opportunity to both ends of the 'customer' spectrum simultaneously is a decisive win.

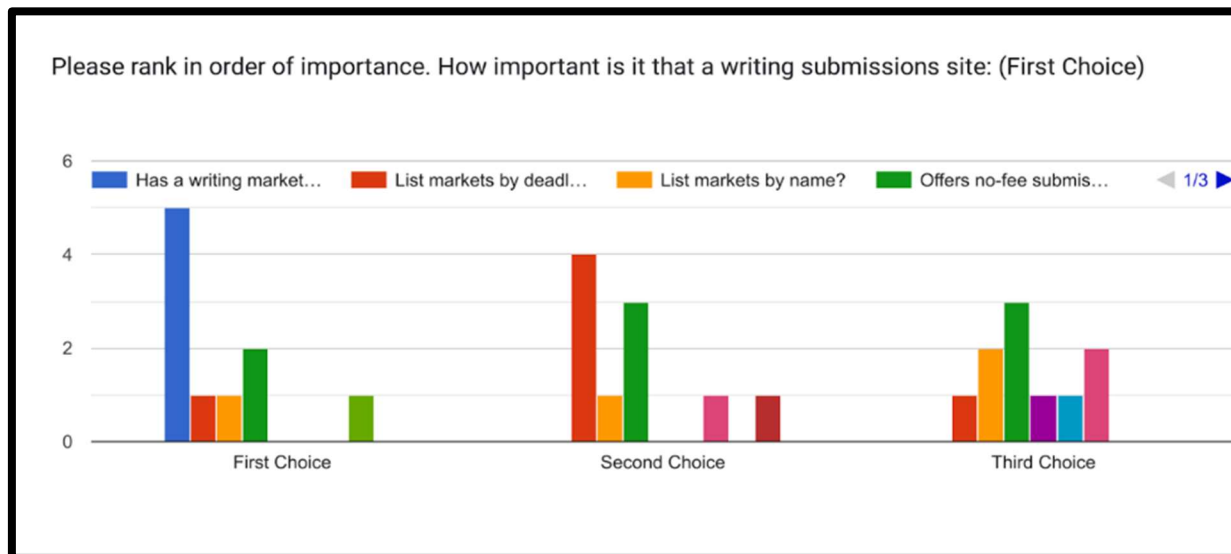


FIGURE 2: FEATURES RANKED BY IMPORTANCE

With stronger filtering, users will also be able to search opportunities by submission fee, as the research results show that this was one of the best features currently available on Submittable. Clearly defined entry fees can also help users to better find contests (that yield higher than average pay rates or visibility for published stories).

Endgame also focused on a specifically requested feature: A feedback section for users who have had success in particular markets to share their experience with the writing community. Community is a key feature missing from Submittable's current slate of product features, and it's a space where brand loyalty and repeat use can provide more traffic and engagement. Endgame believes that an increased focus on community could provide a secondary market in Submittable

where users can request collaborations and feedback, either for free or at cost from the writer or collaborators that respond to the posted request. With additional functionality to follow specific journals or genres, niche markets can become more reliably discoverable, creating individual ecosystems for writers of specific communities or genres to build momentum. This rebranding of Submittable as a writing community and as a submission platform can completely rewrite Submittable's role from a necessary evil to a pinnacle of products for writers.

Current users also noted that the process of submitting work to Submittable was difficult to understand and unintuitive. To this end, Endgame proposes adding a link to the Opportunities page to a quick guide on the Community page with the steps for how to submit work on Submittable.

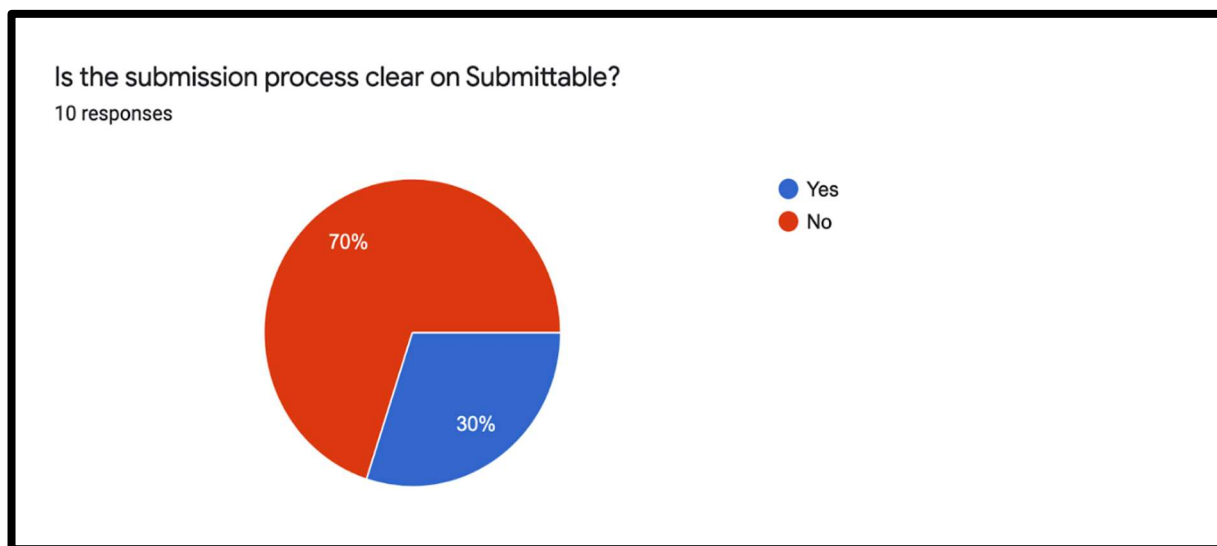


FIGURE 3: CLARITY OF SUBMISSION PROCESS

If users cannot submit their work, they will find an alternative to use. This is a contender for the greatest source of user hemorrhage.

PERSONA PROFILE

With all of the information gathered in the user research process, Endgame created a user persona to create tangible conclusions for where the maximum effort could yield the highest rewards. With the use of a persona profile, empathy map, and user journey map, a clear path forward revealed itself. Submittable needs to be a space for creation, research, submission, and easy monitoring. The Writer's Workshop Powered by Submittable is not just a source of submission, but of personal growth, career development, networking, and coalition building. The Writer's Workshop is the first place that writers look to get their work published, and there is no other place they should be.

WIREFRAMES

Below are constructed wireframes showing the proposed designs as proof of concept. Upon review and confirmation, these wireframes will provide the framework for the mock-ups of the Writer's Workshop. Each outlines a specific part of the website, from the Homepage to the User's submission page.

WIREFRAMES

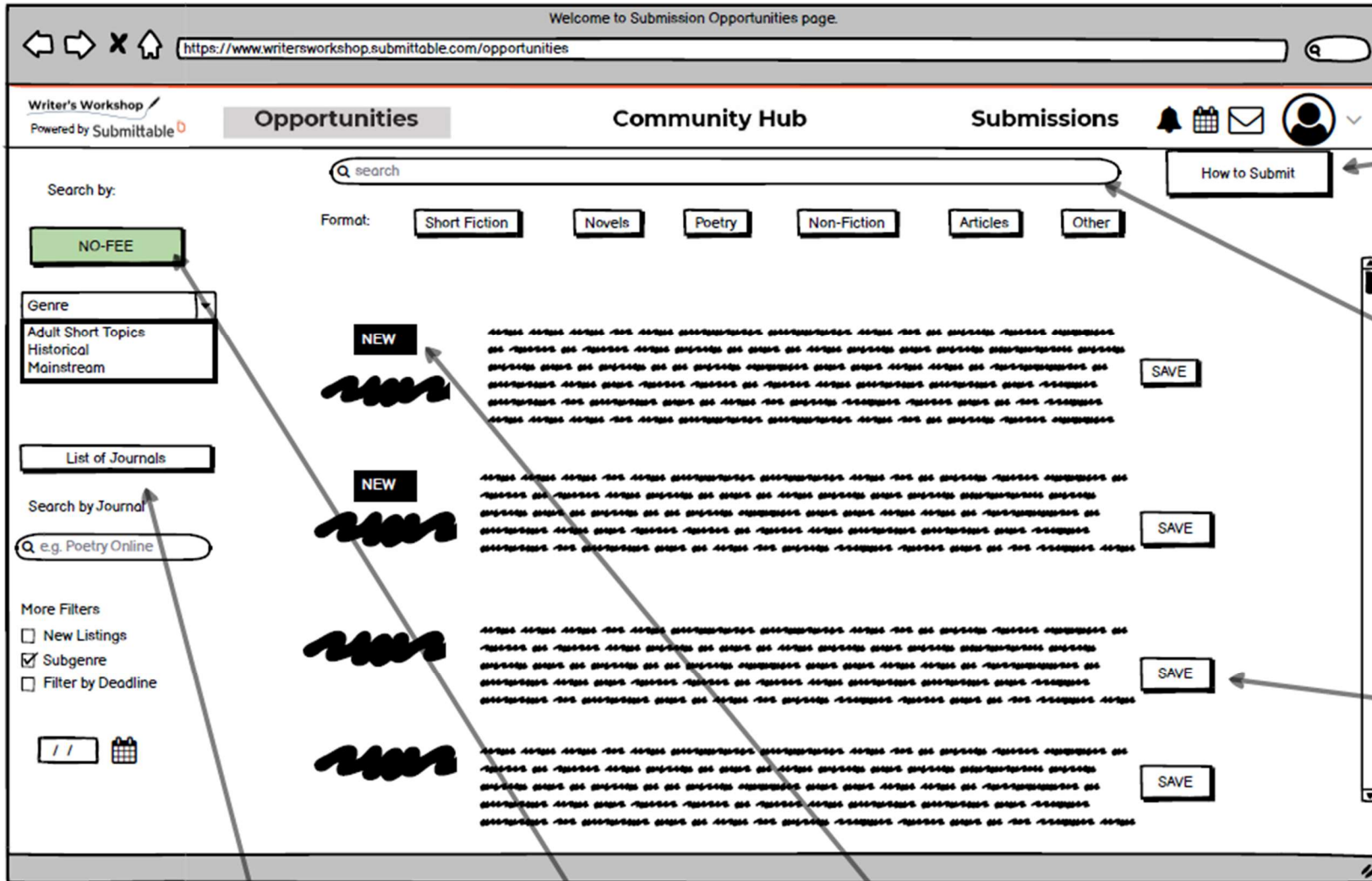
Homepage

Designed by Stephen



Opportunities

Designed by Karen and Satin



Research indicated that most users wanted a clear guide to how to submit their work on Submittable.

One of the major concerns of users from the research was the lack of ability to search opportunities by format/genre. We created a dual mechanism to filter opportunities by both format and genre.

The save button is an existing feature of Submittable that is tied into users' requests to be able to keep track of submission opportunities.

Users wanted an alphabetized list of publications that post opportunities through Submittable. We also included a feature that allows users to search for journals by name.

Easy access to no-fee opportunities was the top feature requested by Submittable users in our survey.

Our SME's noted that it would be useful to have newly posted opportunities appear at the top of the search results.

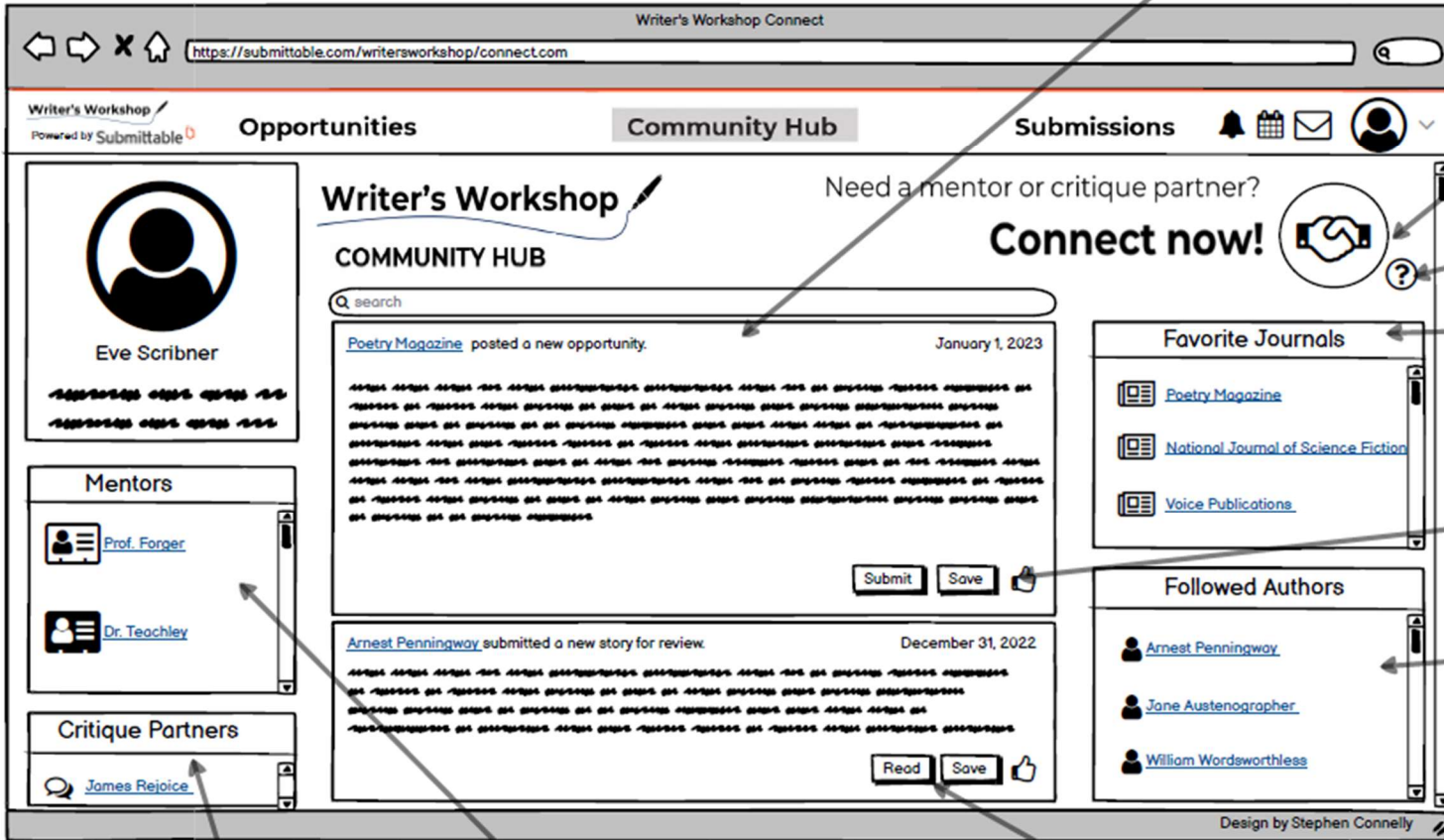
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Community Hub: Main Page

Designed by Stephen

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The newsfeed feature is populated by opportunities posted by journals and pieces submitted by writers. Users can choose to favorite/follow journals and writers for automatic updates. The feed will also produce content aligned with the user's submission preferences and like-history if opted for.



This button leads users along the "Connect" path illustrated further down.

This icon will present a step-by-step tutorial on the "Connect" feature.

Scroll bar displaying all the journals that the user has "favorited."

Options to Like, Save and Submit (journal opportunities) or Read (Author posts).

One can choose to "follow" authors who publically submit works.

Displays critique partners that the user has connected with (see more in the explanation of the "Connect" feature).

Displays mentors that the user has connected with (see more in the explanation of the "Connect" feature).

Submissions by writers allow users to read the entry (if that writer has opted for public submissions).

Community Hub: Connect Feature

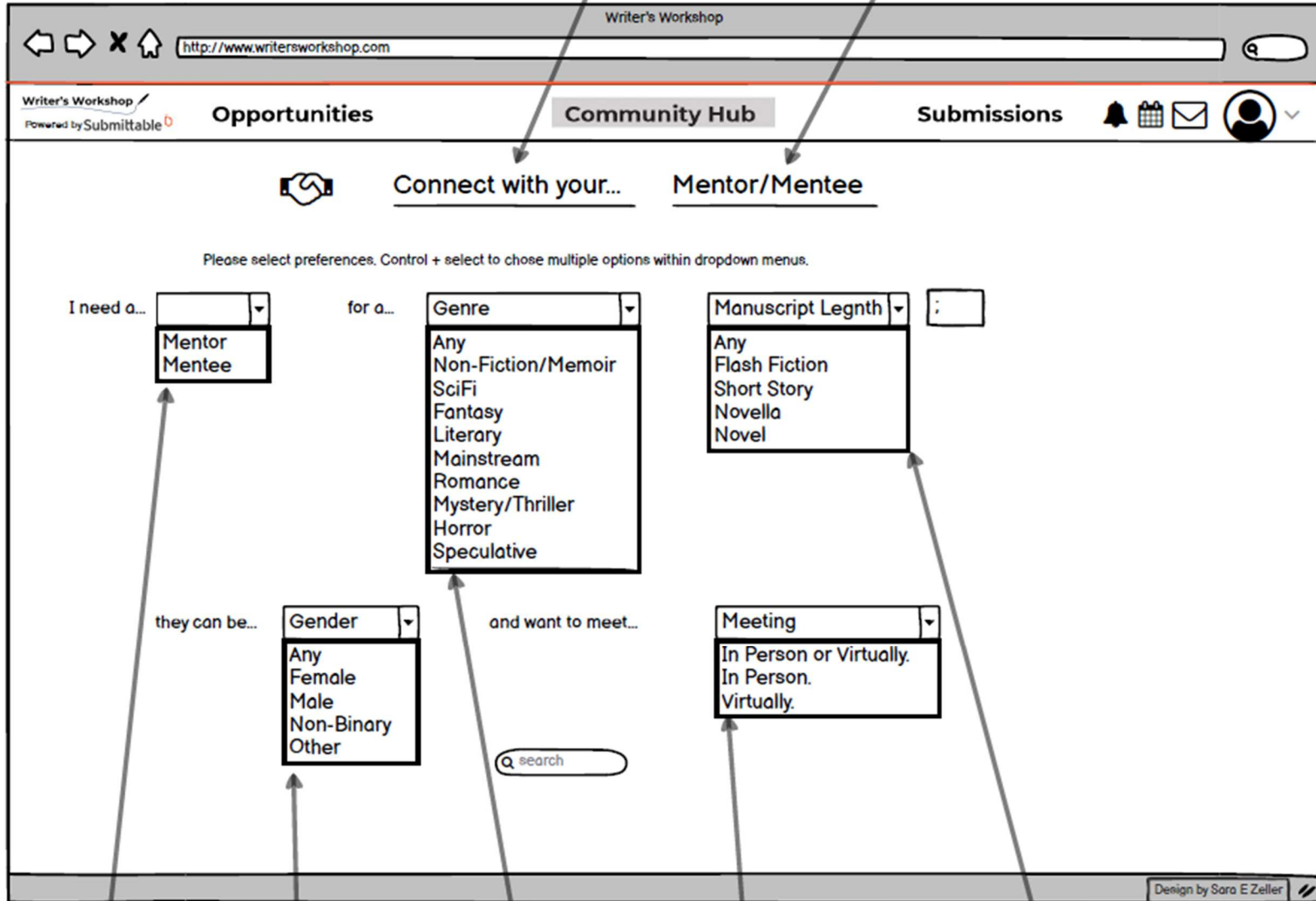
Designed by Sara

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Connect with your... is central to the Community Hub search area, and reminds the user of why they are there. It emphasizes the connections that users can make within the Writer's Workshop community.

This field changes with selected Connection:
• Mentor/Mentee
• Critique Partner
• Audience
• Favorites

We chose this element to locationally ground the user, as there is more than one search page within Writer's Workshop by Submittable.



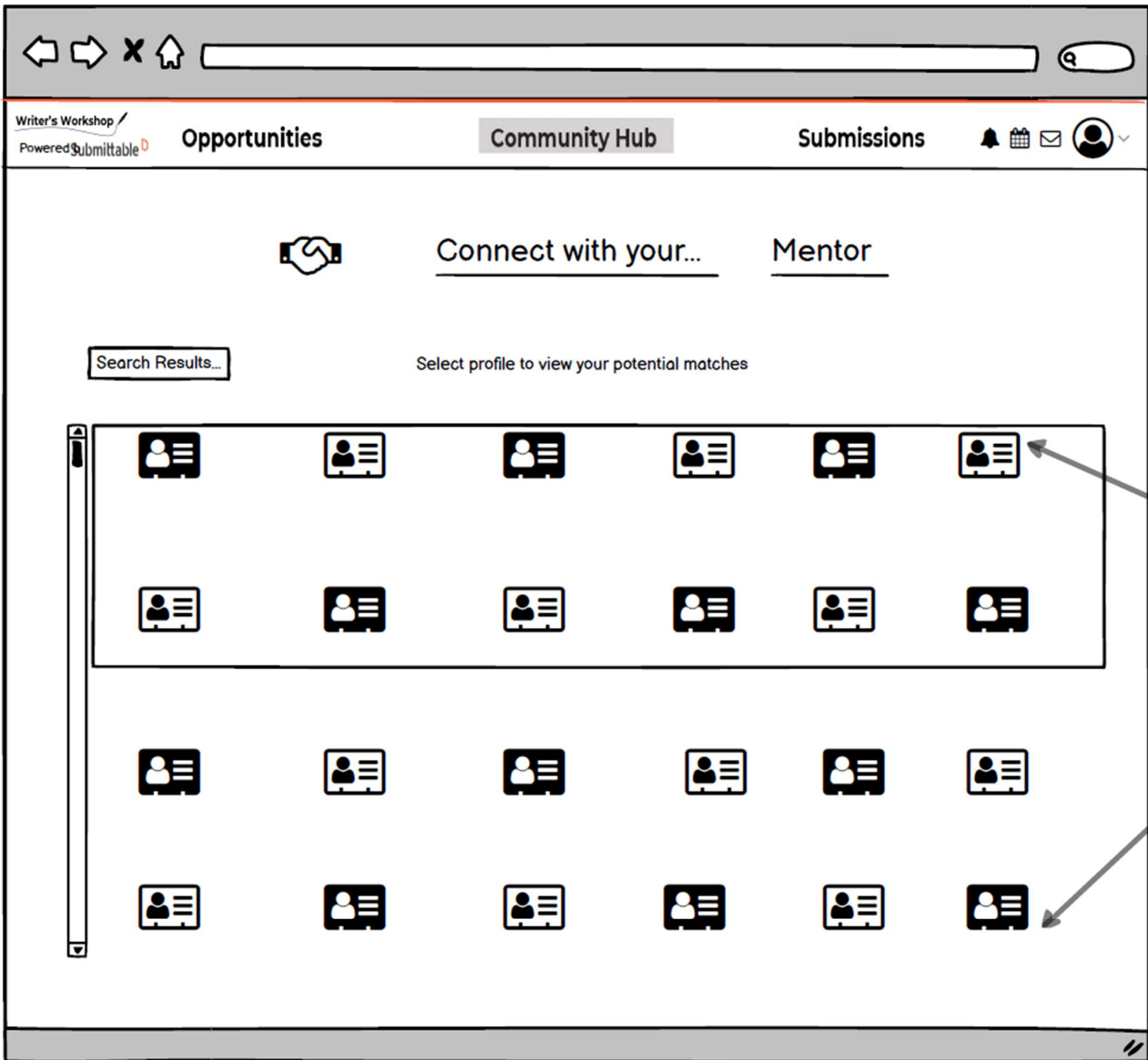
Choosing whether you need a mentor or mentee is primary on this screen, as it is the primary function of this search.

Including gender allows for user personal comfort levels. Sharing creative work can be a difficult and emotionally charged endeavor.

The Genre option gives the user options depending on genre preference. It does have a multi-select option (control + click).

Meeting Preference is a demonstration of empathy for the user, as this preference has become an important aspect of any working/personal relationship since the pandemic began.

Manuscript length options give the perspective mentor options on how long they are willing to be a mentor, whether that is for just a short project, or a longer and larger commitment like a novel.

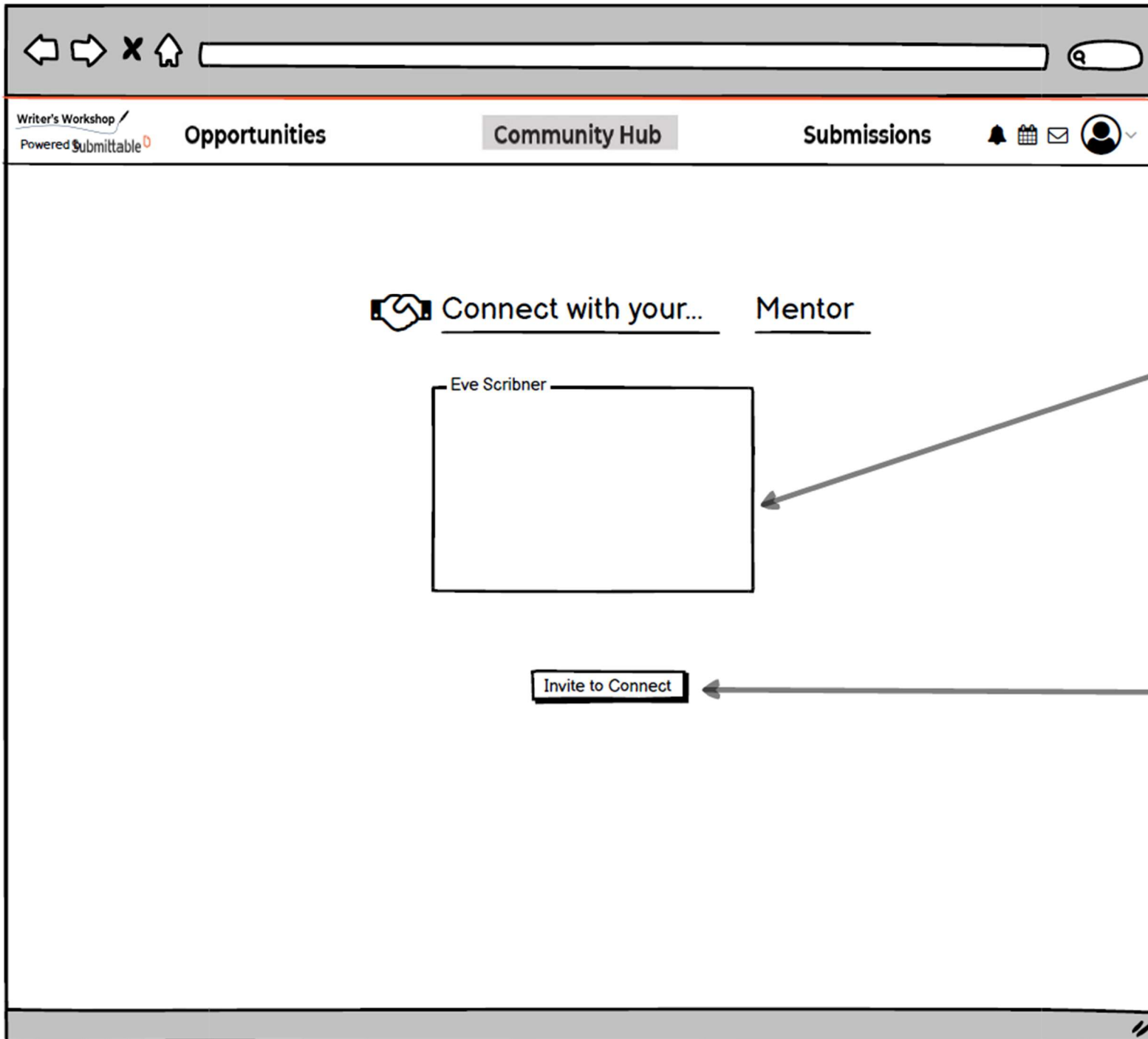


These are thumbnails of potential mentor profiles.

Profiles include:

- Name/Pen Name
- Gender
- Social Media Links
- Genre(s) written
- Publication Credits
- Years writing
- Meeting Preferences

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This this Eve Scribner's (persona) profile screen.

Profile includes:

- Name/Pen Name
- Gender
- Social Media Links
- Genre(s) written
- Publication Credits
- Years writing
- Meeting Preferences

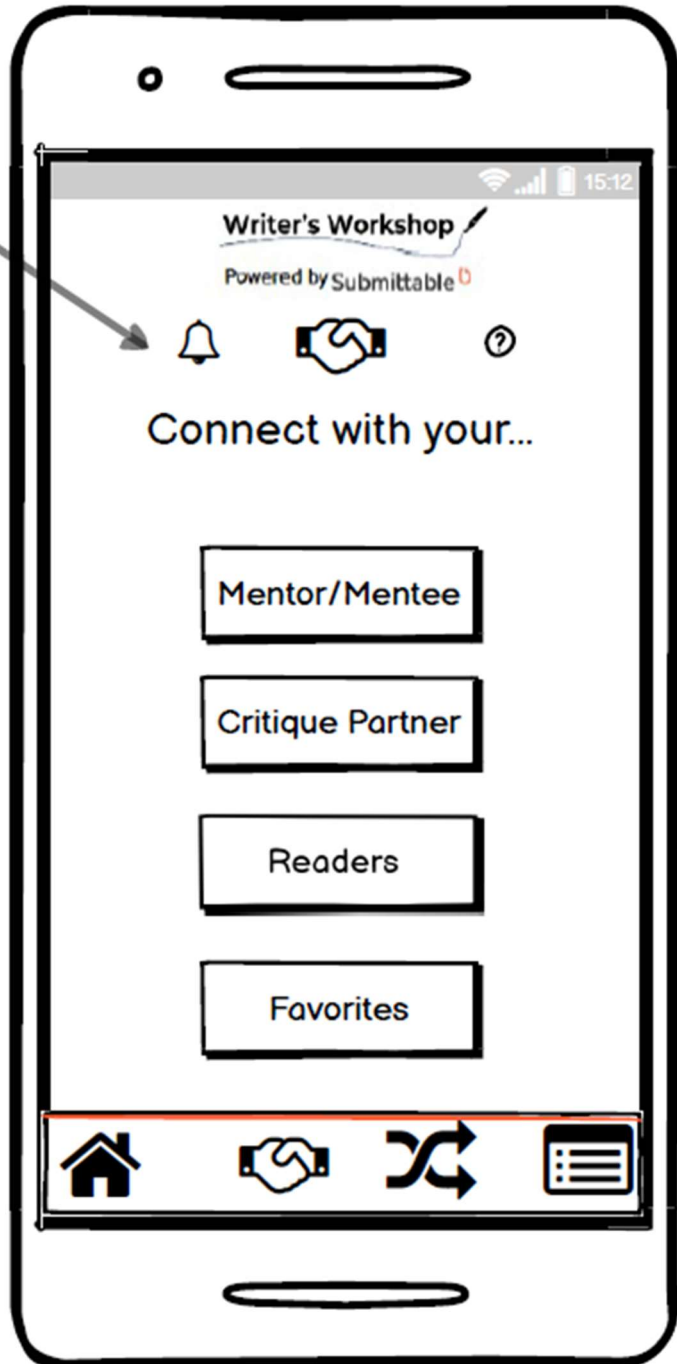
Invite to Connect: Sends an email invite to potential Mentor/Mentee

Community Hub: Mobile Design

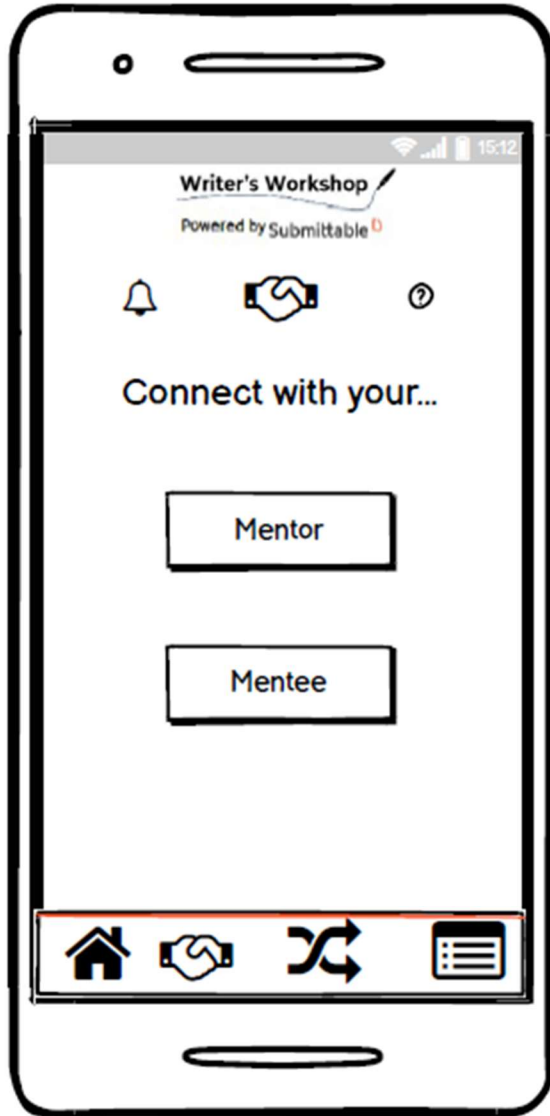
Designed by Sara

The notification icon lights up when the user has a notification of pending connection/connection made, etc.

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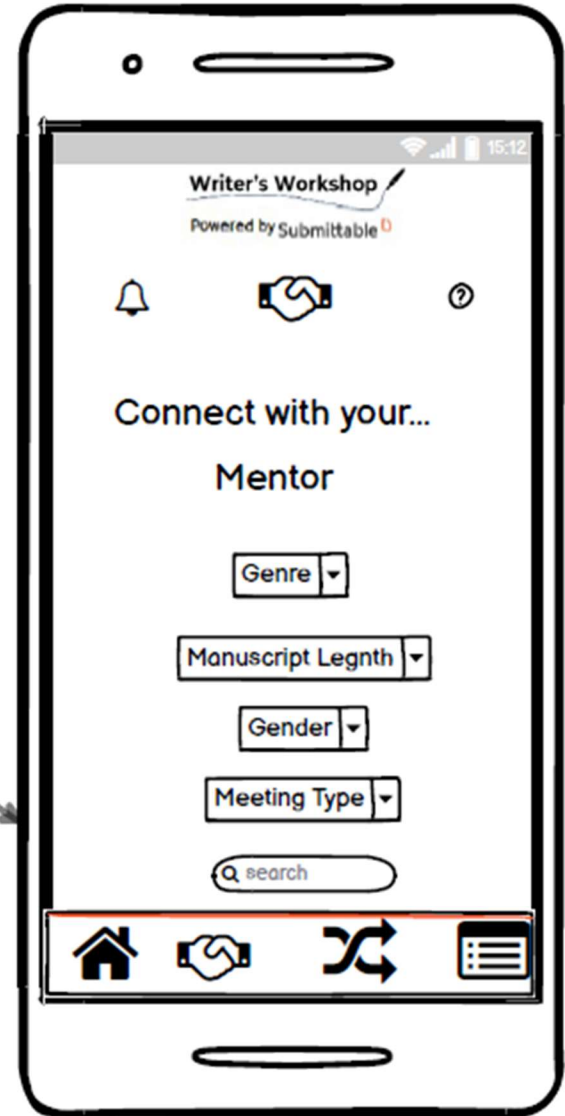
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Mentor selection screen #1



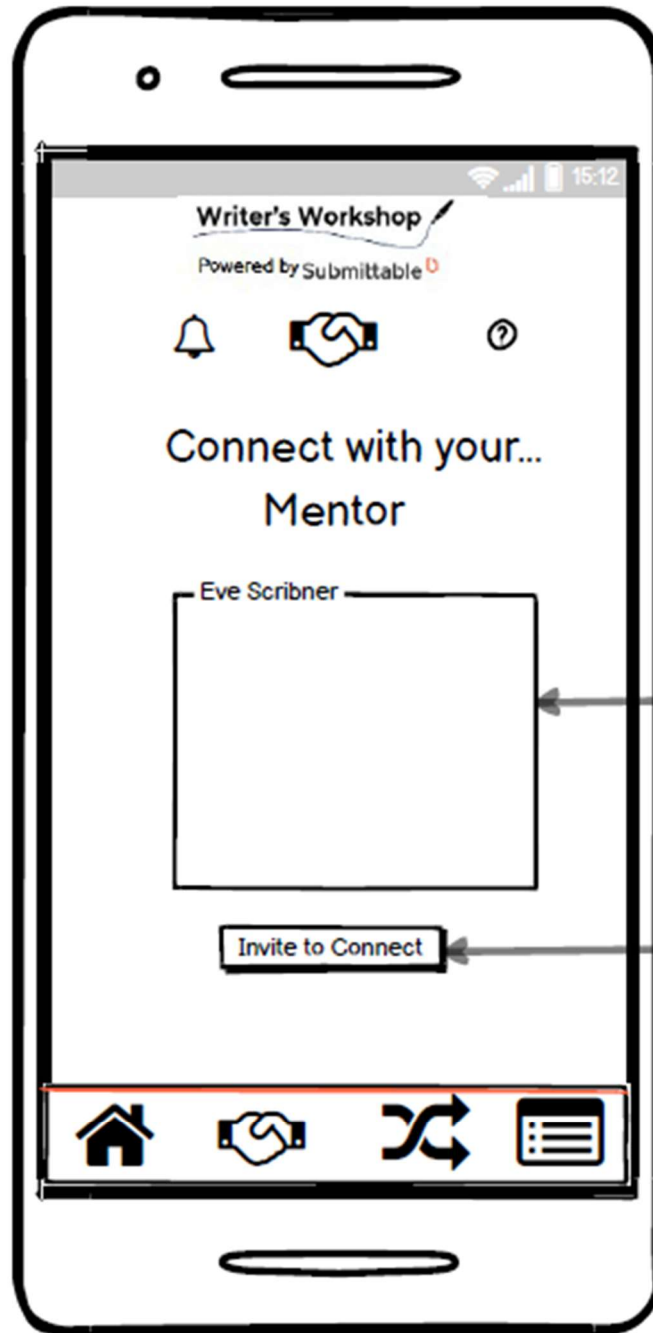
Mentor selection screen #2



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This box is Eve Scribner's "Profile." The Profile includes a picture of Eve, her genre(s), gender, meeting preferences, publishing credits, etc.

Invite to Connect: Sends an email invite to potential Mentor/Mentee

Submissions: Submitted Places

Designed by Jordon

The publishing company's name.

The title of the contest or writing project.

The bell is a notifications symbol that will light up when the user receives notification updates such as new opportunities, friend requests, and due date reminders for projects.

The user's profile image will be displayed to show who is currently logged into Submittable

User's email will be stored here. They can view any emails sent by opportunity hosts or communicate with other writers.

Displays any upcoming opportunity events that the user is interested in or upcoming due dates for submission work.

The status section will indicate the current status of each writing project.

Check symbol represents that the project has been accepted by the opportunity host.

X symbol is the rejection letter, indicating that the publisher has no interest in the user's work

The minus symbol indicates that the project is currently being reviewed by the publisher

A box will appear here whenever a person would like to look over a company's rules, deadlines, or any other contest information that's usually posted in submittable.

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Publishing company	Date	Project Title	Status
Harper Colins Publishing	5/10/2022	Civil War Forbidden Love Story	☑
Scholastic Publishing	1/27/2022	Time Travel Titanic Contest	☑
Doubleday Publishing	9/11/2021	Joan of Ark vs. Ruth Ginsburg	☒
Queen Valhala Publishing	6/6/2022	Inner Venus	☒

Submissions: Universal Submission

Designed by Reilly

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A Web Page

https://

Writer's Workshop
Powered by Submittable

Opportunities Community Hub Submissions

🔔 📅 ✉️ 👤

🔍 search

Submitted Pieces
Universal Submissions
Free Write

New Universal Submission Current Universal Submission Drafts

Author's Name
Enter your name, or pen name here

Story Title
Enter the title of your story as you would like it to be printed

Cover Letter Journal Name

Please write your universal cover letter for this story. Include previous background information, and any inquiries.

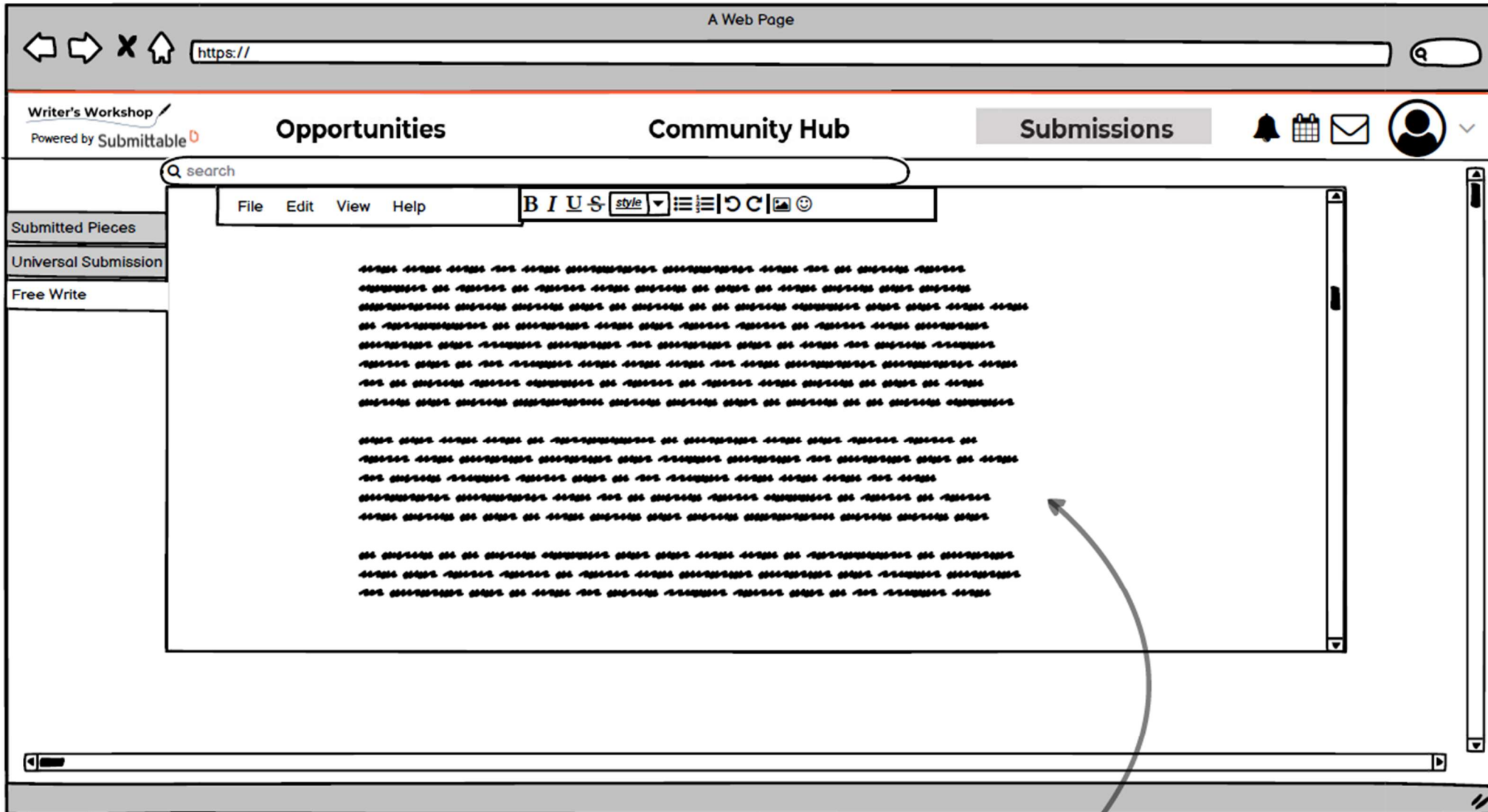
Context Information
List your email here

Attach your story
Story Title displays here when attached

Submissions: Free Write

Designed by Jordon

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Free Write will be a word processing feature inside the Writer's Workshop. It's a great way for writers to make last-minute edits or complete small projects.

EXPLANATION OF SOLUTION

The largest changes presented by Endgame are the proposed split of focus for Submittable, creating increased visibility and optics by rebranding to the Writer's Workshop for the writing portion of Submittable's business. Email blasts to current users can easily capture the majority, and holding the URL for discovery.submittable.com and redirecting users to the new URL is a simple and elegant way to capture the rest of the users that don't readily check their emails between submissions. UX writing on the front page will provide some context to users that may not be aware of the change when they see the new Home Page, but the Powered by Submittable will be clearly viewable, so they will have the context to understand the change, and that they are still using Submittable.

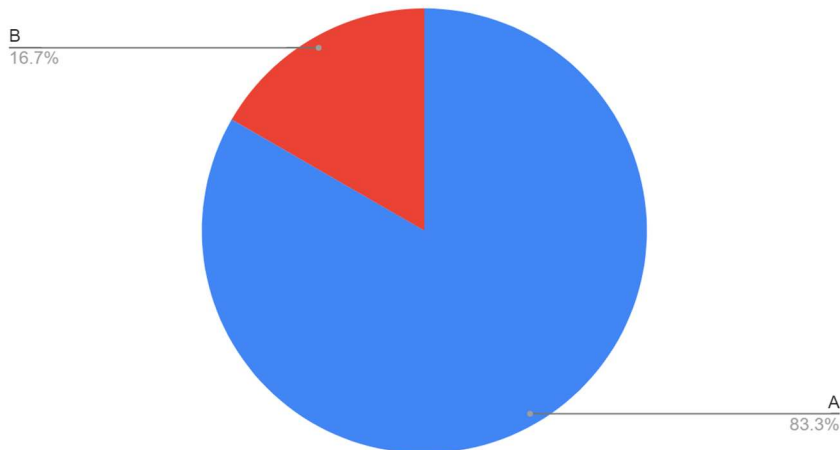
The major addition of the Community area with social media functionality will require the most extensive work by a software development team. The features need to capture the user needs (collaborations, reviews, following, commenting, liking, and subscribing), but the overall functions do not need to be as complicated as some of the UX/UI for major social media outlets like Meta and Twitter. As the community grows, additional features can be added to meet user needs. A Minimum Viable Product to gauge user interest is the recommended pathway forward as the Community area builds through user engagement.

Endgame proposes additional UX writing to add clarity to functions that exist (that are not clearly outlined in Submittable's current build). There will be some additional functionality added to the current framework that includes the ability to remove submissions from a user's submission list, a quick follow button, and a withdraw button for ease of use.

Upon further investigation using A/B Testing, Endgame provided users with multiple versions of the My Submissions page to discover what features from each version were most viable for the user's overall experience. Option A was designed for a streamlined user experience with an overall focus on personal note-taking, saved opportunities found through the Opportunities search bar, and an easy-to-sort list of submissions with the ability to add additional notes per list item. Option B presented additional visual elements, a more streamlined submission tracking list, and an 'Universal Submission' option that allows users to create a templated submission for a story that auto-fills journal information into submission forms and cover letters. The A/B test was given to multiple users that were able to test the features of each option with the opportunity to provide additional comments. Endgame directed testing to users with a similar background to our User Persona: young, unpublished, and new to Submittable. Preference was recorded with a majority of users preferring the features presented in Option A over Option B.

Several users provided additional comments. They suggested the use of the 'Universal Submission' feature. One user noted that the simplicity of Option A would easily translate to multiple types of devices that users would be using, whether a tablet, phone, or computer, with some thinking the visual elements of Option B would be slow to load. One tester mentioned, "as a new user, A is easier for me to pick up and start using where B took me time to figure out how to use." Since the Writer's Workshop design is built with new writers and users in mind, it was an easy choice to move forward with Option A while incorporating the 'Universal Submission' feature of Option B to create the best possibility for new users. Results of the A/B test follow:

Submission Feature AB Test Results



Endgame will work with designers where necessary to help establish a consistent visual tone, as well as increase the ‘spectacle’ of the site to challenge user expectations (especially the common feedback that the UI/UX design is boring and difficult to navigate).

Endgame believes these proposed solutions will increase usability, utilization, and recapture of new and old users alike.

CONCLUSION

Submittable is a staple of the writing community. It’s used across multiple channels, for schools, literary journals, publishing houses, etc. In its current form, it is seen as a necessary tool, but its dated UI/UX creates a poor user experience. It’s time for Submittable to focus on its symbiotic relationship with its two customer bases: the user and the publisher. Supporting both customers simultaneously will generate the best result. Creating a focus on the user experience through community and allowing the community to work for the publishers to build their audience through the Writer’s Workshop will accomplish this symbiosis.

By working to become the ‘first place’ for writers, their home for their writing community, Writer’s Workshop powered by Submittable has the potential to corner the writing market and not only provide the best user experience but also the only user experience that will matter to writers of all skill levels.