

Onboarding Flow Prototype (Concept Study)

Role: Product Designer (end-to-end) Scope: Account creation, first-run, permissions, progressive profiling

Platforms: Mobile-first (responsive web + iOS/Android prototypes) Timeline: 3 weeks (rapid sprint)

Team: Me (design), 1 PM, 1 engineer (consult) Tools: Figma, FigJam, ProtoPie/Loom

1) Context

Sign-ups were healthy but activation lagged. Users created accounts yet stalled during first-run setup. The objective was to prototype a shorter, clearer onboarding that builds momentum—reducing early drop-off while collecting only what’s essential.

2) Problems & Signals

Behavioral

- Drop-offs clustered around permission screens and profile questions.
- Many users skipped helper copy; unclear next steps on mobile.

Heuristics

- Too many fields up front; no defaults.
- Passive CTAs; low contrast and vague labels.
- No inline validation; errors surfaced late.

3) Goals

- Momentum: help users achieve a first win within 60–90 seconds.
- Clarity: single-task screens with explicit next actions.
- Trust: ask for permissions with context and timing.
- Data minimization: collect only what’s needed; defer the rest.
- Accessibility: readable, tappable, and keyboard-friendly.

4) Approach

Flows

- Entry → account method → minimal profile → guided setup → first success.

Patterns

- Progressive disclosure: defer non-critical inputs; use defaults where safe.
- Inline validation and helper text paired with fields.
- Primary CTA pinned within thumb reach; clear secondary actions.
- Clear back/exit paths; state saving for resume.

Prototype

- Mobile-first sequence with motion cues and stateful feedback to teach by doing.

5) Key Design Decisions

- Account first, depth later: email/SSO upfront; profile details after value is shown.
- Just-in-time permissions: request location/notifications only when benefits are obvious.
- Copy & hierarchy: headers say why; CTAs say what happens next.
- Sticky CTA on mobile: keeps progress visible; reduces reach and indecision.
- Recovery states: error copy with actions; save-and-exit for interruptions.

6) Accessibility

- Minimum 44px touch targets; logical tab order.
- Labels, descriptions, and live-region feedback for validation.
- Contrast-safe palette and visible focus styles.

7) Prototype Highlights

- Step indicator with clear count and labels.
- Contextual helper modals for tougher choices, without derailing flow.
- Micro-success moments (e.g., checkmarks, short toasts) to reinforce progress.

8) Outcome (pilot)

In pilot tests (n=10) and heuristic review, the concept reduced perceived effort and time-to-first-success. Early signals suggest:

- Faster completion (2-3 minutes → ~90 seconds).
- Fewer permission declines when asked contextually.
- Clearer understanding of next steps.

9) My Role

- Led audit, flow design, microcopy, and mobile prototypes.
- Defined UI states and validation rules; documented edge cases.
- Ran quick hallway tests and async Loom walkthroughs for feedback.

10) What I'd do next

- A/B test copy and the timing of permission prompts.
- Add SMS/email magic link option for faster auth in high-drop regions.
- Instrument granular analytics on each step to quantify bottlenecks.

Quick Summary (for portfolio card)

Low-friction onboarding with guided steps, progressive disclosure, and contextual permissions to reduce drop-off and reach first value faster.