

An appy ending

Creating compelling user stories

Seth Thomas
@sethcontext

A man with a beard and a light blue shirt is looking thoughtfully to the side. The background is a dimly lit room with a window showing a grid pattern. The overall mood is contemplative.

So you've got an idea for
a digital product...

RADIO...
ON THE INTERNET

So why not just start building?

You can always iterate later, right?



Mediocrity is the real risk

It gets the job done but doesn't
really appeal to anyone



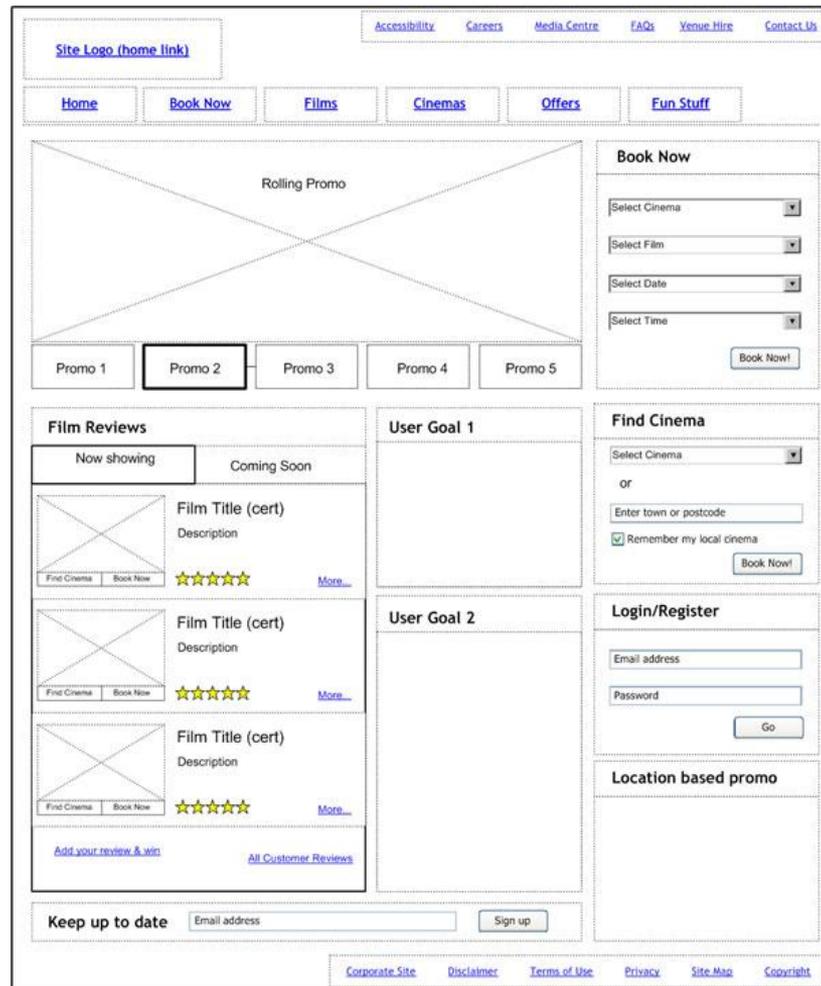
UX

to the rescue!

So... wireframes and stuff?

If you're not careful, UI is where UX goes to die.

Let's step back...

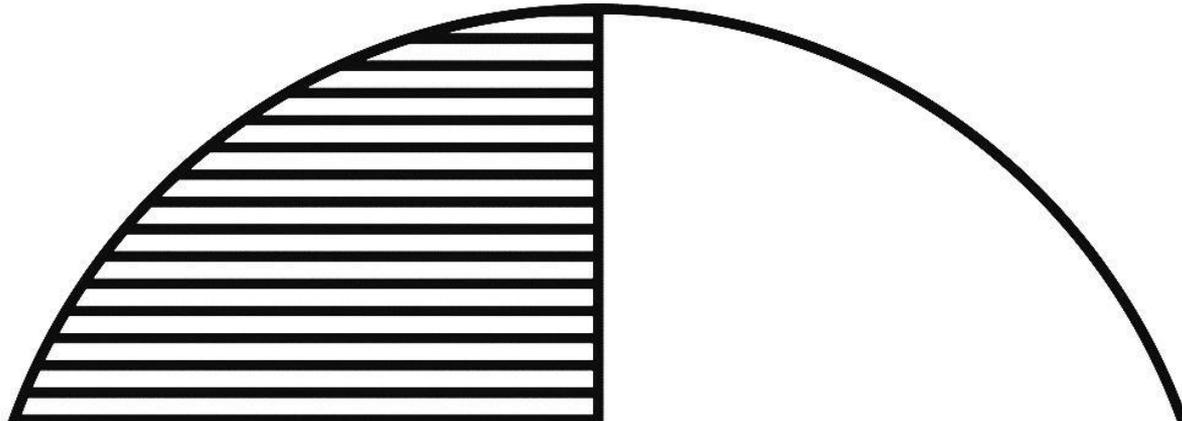


A man in a dark suit and white shirt is sitting on a blue plastic chair in a classroom. He is looking towards the left. Behind him, several children are sitting on similar chairs, looking in the same direction. The classroom has a green chalkboard with various papers and drawings pinned to it. A wooden desk with a trophy is visible in the background. The floor is green linoleum.

Who is UX and what does it do?

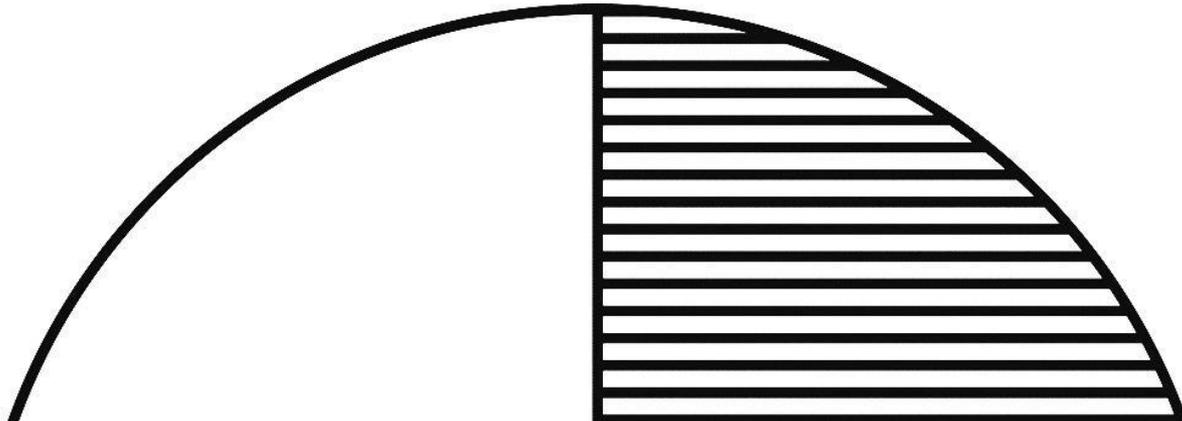
UX is data

Research, user testing, and analytics



UX is **creativity**

Synthesis, insight, inspiration, and expression

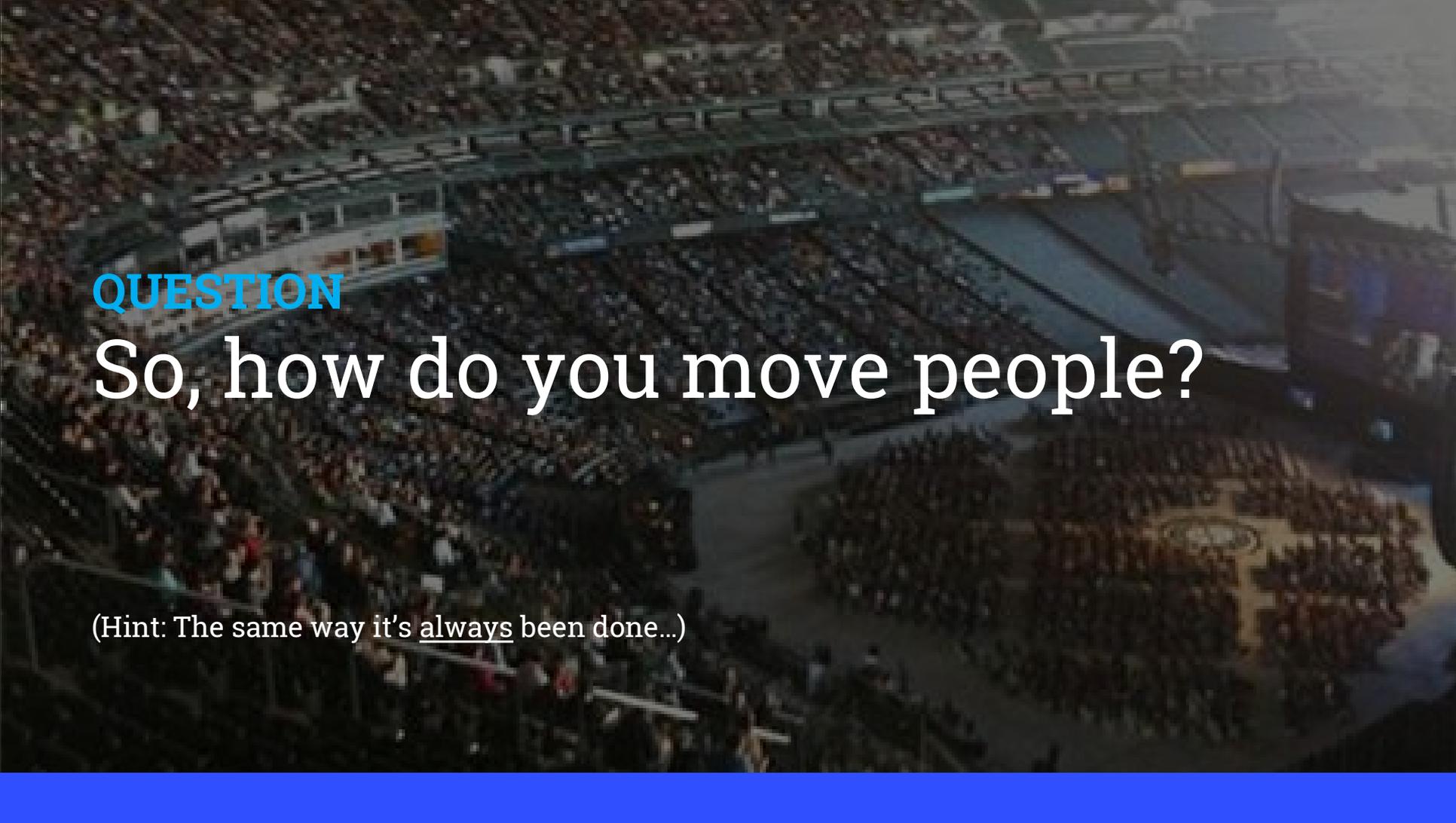


UX reconciles **data** with
creativity and communicates the
results.

Your UX must inspire people

The background of the slide is a cinematic image of the Avengers team from the movie 'Avengers: Endgame'. They are standing on a pile of rubble in a city that has been completely destroyed. The sky is dark and filled with falling debris and fire. The team members, from left to right, are Wanda Maximoff, Vision, Thor, Iron Man, Captain America, Black Widow, and Hawkeye. The overall mood is one of devastation and resilience.

- Leave their job and join your company
- Invest lots of \$\$\$ in you
- Keep far-flung teammates aligned to goals
- Inspire users to adopt & champion your product

An aerial photograph of a large stadium, likely during a major event, with the stands filled with a dense crowd of people. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

QUESTION

So, how do you move people?

(Hint: The same way it's always been done...)

S



St



Sto





Stor

Story

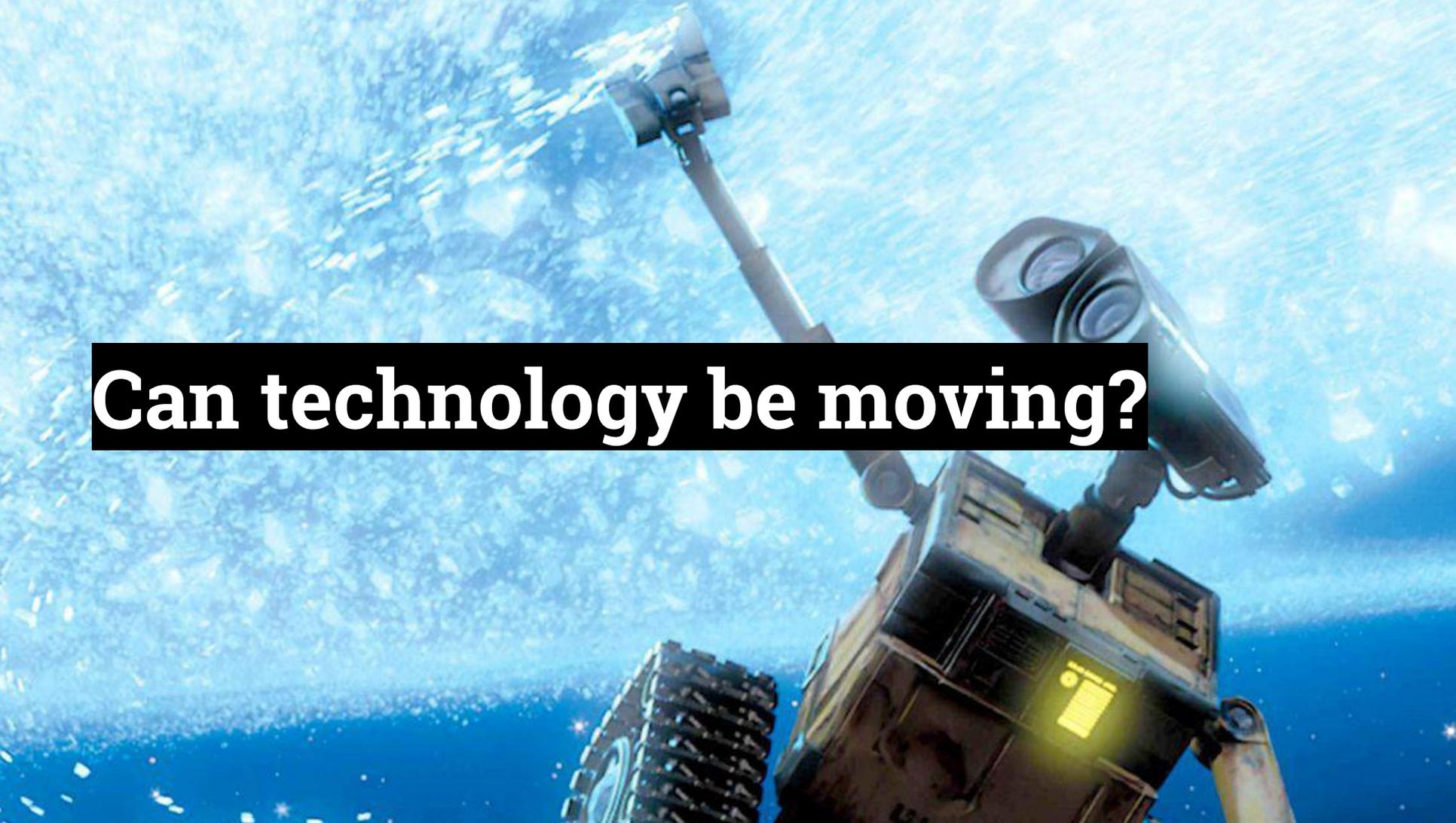


A photograph showing a line of military tanks, likely M1 Abrams, moving down a city street. The tanks are in a column, with the lead tank in the foreground. A person is visible in the lower-left foreground, standing near a crosswalk. The scene is captured from an elevated perspective. The word "Story" is overlaid in large white text on a black background on the left side of the image.

Story

The REAL stories are the most moving of all

Story fosters deep understanding
through empathy.

A low-angle shot of a large, yellow, boxy robot, likely WALL-E, set against a bright blue sky with a lens flare effect. The robot's head is a camera, and its body is a complex of metal plates and panels. A yellow light glows from a small screen on its chest. The robot is positioned in the lower right, looking upwards. The sky is filled with a bright, circular lens flare that creates a shimmering, starburst pattern of light rays.

Can technology be moving?



Can REAL technology be moving?





Even in meetings?

The image features a central inset photograph of a woman with dark hair hugging an elderly man with white hair. The woman is wearing a light-colored patterned top, and the man is wearing a brown cardigan over a light-colored turtleneck. The background of the entire image is a dark, out-of-focus scene of a meeting table with plates, glasses, and chairs. A solid blue bar is at the bottom.

I wondered...

**What makes an effective
technology storyteller?**

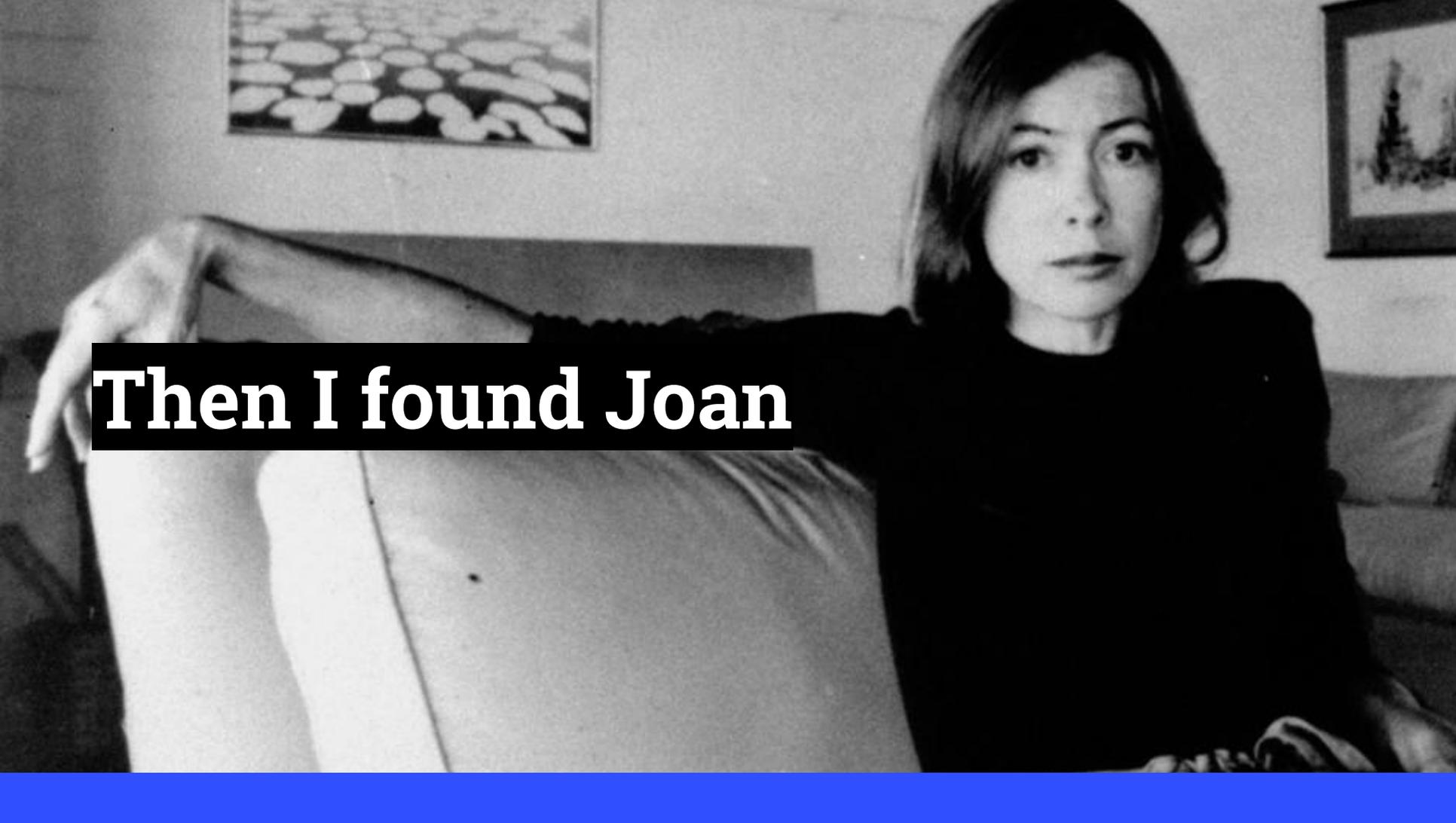
A man in a dark suit and striped tie is shown in profile, looking thoughtful with his hand to his chin. He is seated at a restaurant table with a gold tablecloth, glassware, and plates. The background is softly blurred, showing white curtains and a lamp. A solid blue bar is at the bottom of the image.

Surely the secret to selling ideas goes deeper than charisma?



Then I found Joan

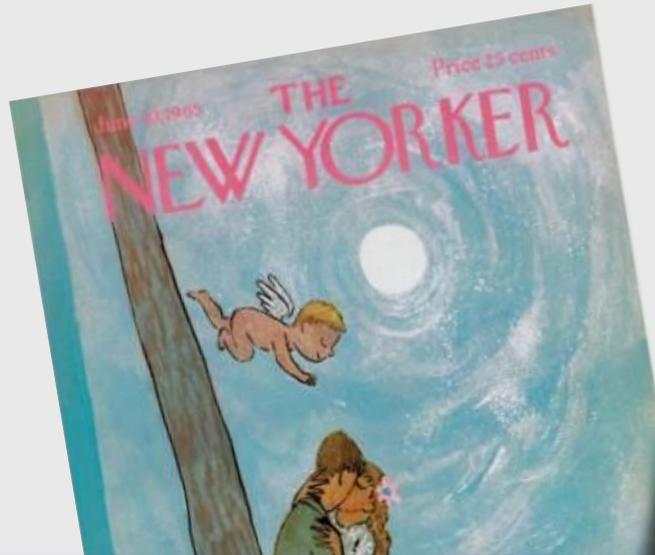
I mean...

A black and white photograph of a woman with long, dark hair, wearing a dark, long-sleeved top. She is sitting on a light-colored sofa, leaning back with her right arm resting on the backrest. The background shows a wall with two framed pictures: one with a pattern of light-colored circles on a dark background, and another with a dark, abstract image. The text "Then I found Joan" is overlaid in white on a black rectangular background across the middle of the image.

Then I found Joan

A non-fiction style called...

New Journalism



This is so relevant to UX!

UX

Intensive research

Insightful design

Persuasive presentation

New Journalism

Intensive reportage

Subjectivity

Dramatic technique



UX

Intensive research

Insightful design

Persuasive presentation

New Journalism

Intensive reportage

Subjectivity

Dramatic technique



I'd found a template
For creating compelling
product stories

1. Intensive reportage



THEN:

Be there. Live the story



NOW:

Get to know your users



NOW:

Know every gratuitous detail

A photograph of a Target retail store's exterior. The large red bullseye logo and the word "TARGET" in red, three-dimensional letters are mounted on a light-colored concrete wall. Below the signage is a red horizontal band. The entrance features several glass doors with red frames. To the right, there are palm trees, a red bench, a trash can, and a stop sign. A solid blue bar is at the bottom of the image.

TARGET

NOW:

Get to know the business

A man with glasses and a blue and white striped shirt sits on a black leather armchair, drinking from a white cup. A woman with curly hair sits on a tan armchair next to him, also drinking from a white cup. They are in a store with shelves of products in the background. A black banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

NOW:

LIVE the business, if you can

Only then will you know what
you're talking about.

In detail.

**Detail complements
subjectivity. Together, they
start to resemble **truth.****

2. Subjectivity



THEN:

Any point of view that's relevant



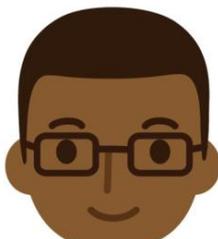
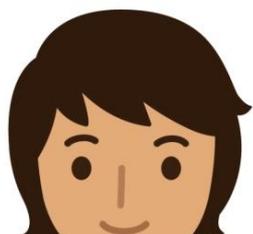
THEN:

“Frank Sinatra has a cold”

NOW

Products consider & reflect POVs

- The user
- People user interacts with
- Product team & parent company
- The culture
- **YOU**



tumblr.

34| years young

NOW:

Copy choices reflect personality

Service.



Pay your bill

Account # 84991

St

Deduct \$1.00 from your
bank accountPay \$1.00 with your
credit or debit card

Card Number

VISA



Expiration Date

07

2016

Philadelphia, PA 19147



Store this card for future payments.

I agree to the [Terms and Conditions for Stored Payment Methods](#)

NOW:

Big buttons say 'so simple'

[Back to Results](#)



PHILOSOPHY DI LORENZO SERAFINI
Silk Lace-Up Tiered Dress
\$1,450

Size

- 38 IT
- 40 IT
- 42 IT
- 44 IT
- 46 IT

[Size Chart](#)

Qty

1

ADD TO BAG



Free Shipping & Returns on All U.S. Orders. [See Details](#)

Details

Crafted of multicolored garden-print silk crepe, Serafini's dress is designed with ruffled sleeves, and a tiered skirt.

on waistband. to hem (approximately). p closure. rignon.

- Available in Multi.
- 100% silk

[Read More](#)

Size and Fit

About Philosophy di Lorenzo Serafini

NOW:

Giant photos say 'I got style'

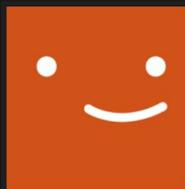
Who's watching?



Seth



Lily



Cathy



Kids



Add Profile

NOW:

Profiles say 'I understand you'



NOW:

Sketches say 'Feedback welcome'

Bluetooth: A wireless link from phone to car

1. Navigate to the Connect Menu

4. Wait for phone to be discovered

NOW:

Products reflect the values of their creators



3. Dramatic technique



THEN:

Inspired by Realist literature



New Journalism techniques

1. **Scene-by-scene construction** to give context
2. **Present dialogue in full** to reveal character
3. ***Show status life—politics, possessions, etc.***
4. **Use varied perspective—become the characters**



GOAL

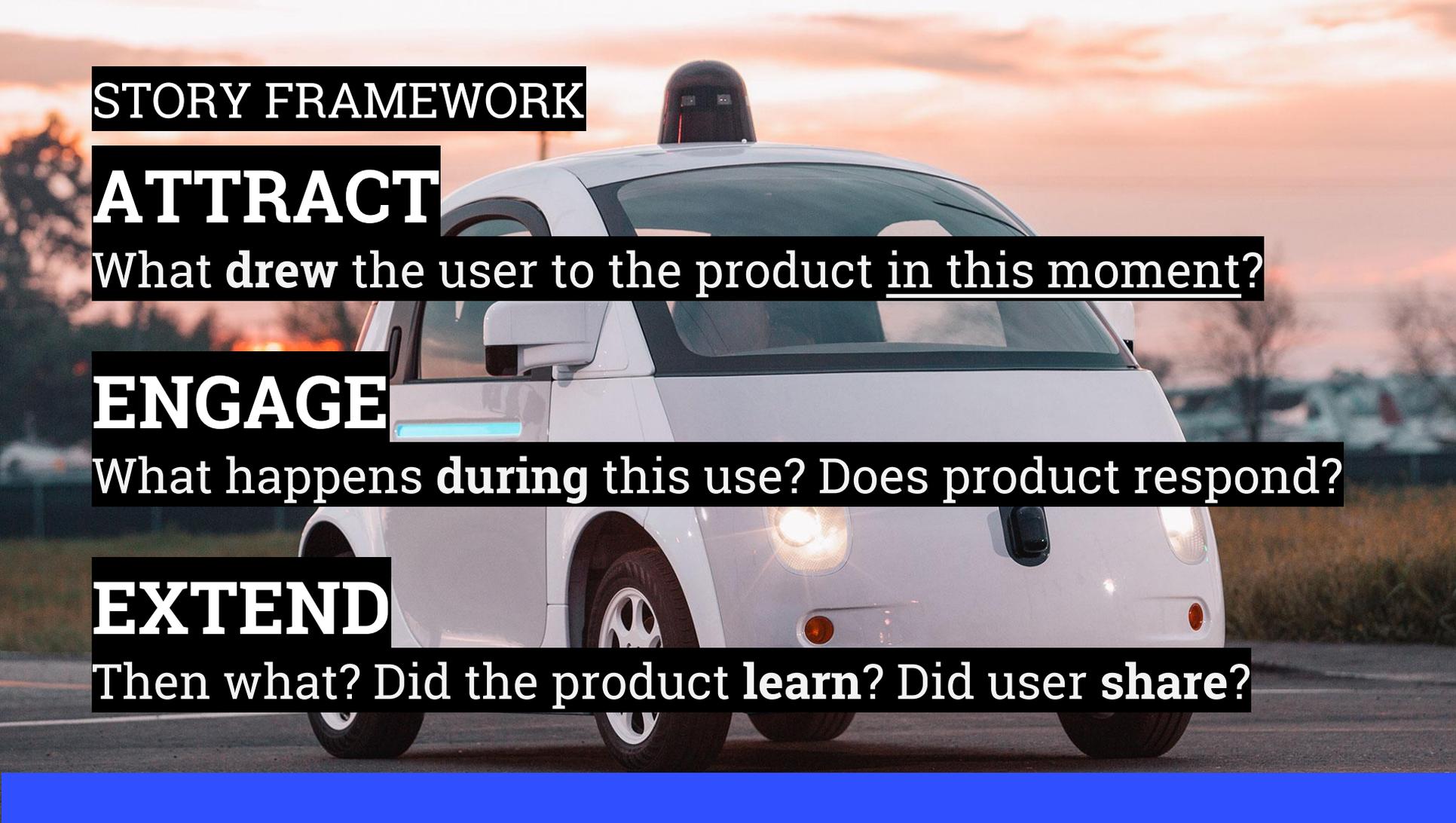
**Establish a deeply felt
understanding of the product**
Before the product exists!

EXERCISE

Write user stories

(Remember the New Journalism techniques!)





STORY FRAMEWORK

ATTRACT

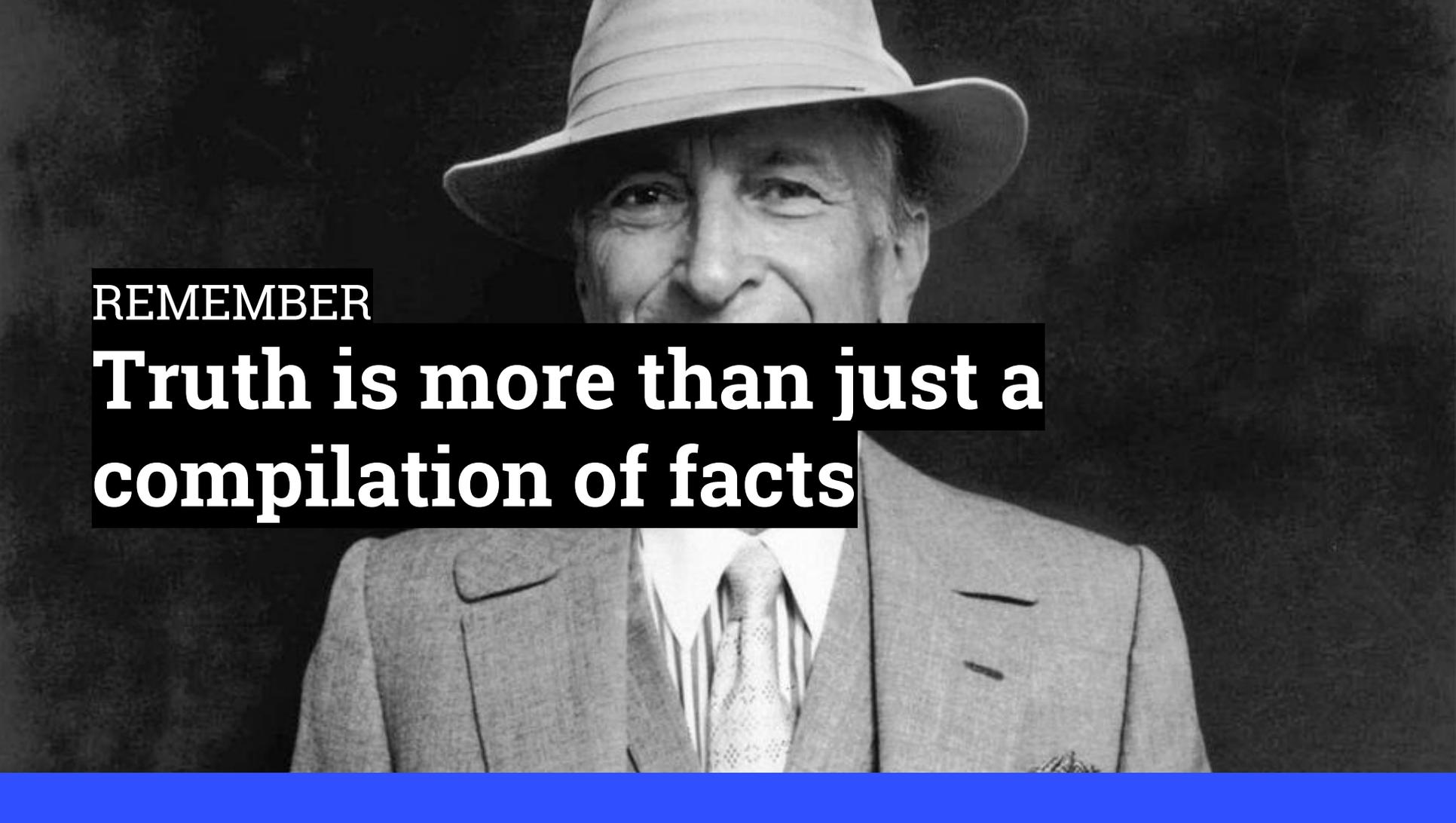
What drew the user to the product in this moment?

ENGAGE

What happens **during** this use? Does product respond?

EXTEND

Then what? Did the product **learn**? Did user **share**?

A black and white portrait of a man wearing a light-colored fedora hat and a suit with a tie. He has a slight smile and is looking directly at the camera. The background is dark. A blue horizontal bar is at the bottom of the image.

REMEMBER

**Truth is more than just a
compilation of facts**