

Incognito Blog - Product Study

Introduction

Incognito Blog is a free product launched in February 2023 with the primary goal of informing internet users about technology-focused updates and recent events from across the globe. The unique value proposition of the product is the lack of pop-up advertisements, and the brief and concise reporting format.

Incognito Blog informs users about trending topics in less than 2 minutes, without the need for information overload or opinion driven reporting. The website encourages users to read the news and move on to more important things.

Problem Statement

Incognito Blog aims to solve the problem of misinformation. In recent years, internet users have become increasingly dependent on social media as a means of staying informed about recent events. The problem with social media is that everyone is reporting the news from their perspective, either for personal engagement or to drive an agenda. Incognito Blog hopes to change that by becoming the platform that people can rely on for simple, factual reports, without the fear of data farming like traditional news platforms.

Background

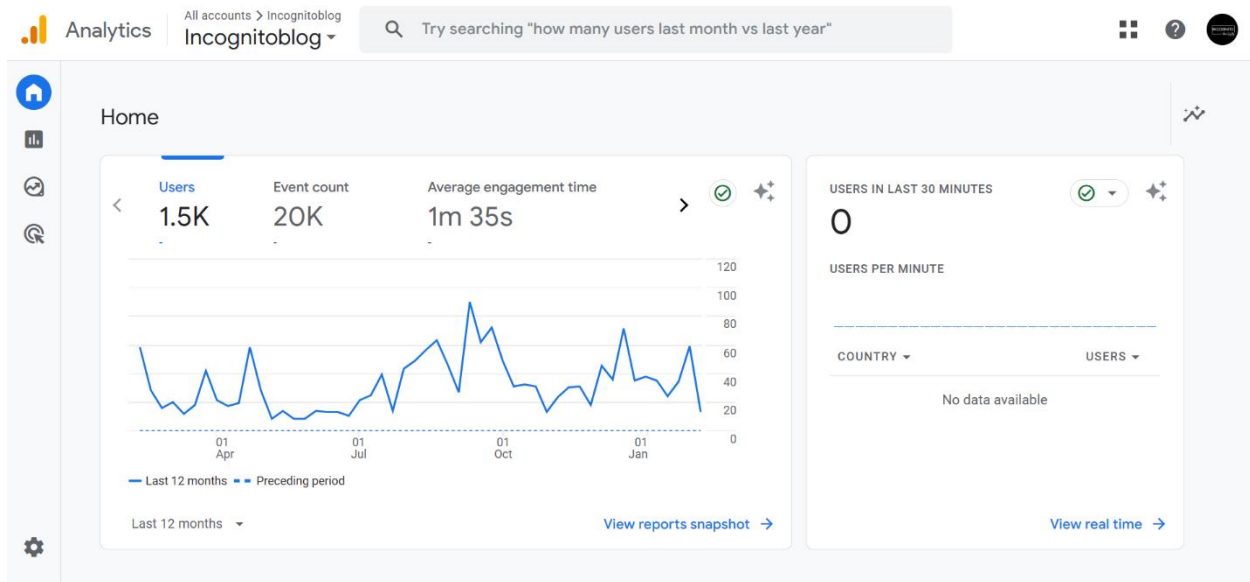
I lead the product management division of Incognito Blog, guiding a team of engineers, product designers, and a content manager. Together, the website was developed on the WordPress CMS and content creation/distribution/management is organized on Notion. The product roadmap, product strategy, and product backlog are also organized on Notion, and the team maintains constant communication using slack and email.

I led multiple customer interviews and developed product surveys to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the product. Conducting several team brainstorming sessions to determine the next steps in the product's lifecycle.

I defined the metrics that are relevant to the product, and constantly measure them against the predefined baselines to ensure that our focus and progress remain aligned with the product strategy. These important performance indicators led to the need for a mobile application, to boost user retention and increase engagement on the platform.

I identified potential risks associated with developing the mobile application and conducted qualitative and quantitative risk analysis to determine the most appropriate development approach.

I leverage analytics tools like Google Analytics and Amplitude to gain valuable insights into user behavior, preferences, and overall website performance. By analyzing metrics such as user engagement, traffic sources, and content interactions, I identified patterns and trends that informed strategic decision-making.



Snapshot of the total Incognito Blog website visitors in the last 12 months. Source: Google Analytics

Objectives

This product study showcases the work that has gone into building, managing, monitoring, and controlling the Incognito Blog project.

Collaborating closely with my product team, I initiated and led continuous product discovery sessions to better understand underlying user needs and market dynamics. Through a combination of recurring customer interviews, competitor analysis, and stakeholder discussions, we gained valuable insights that shaped the product roadmap.

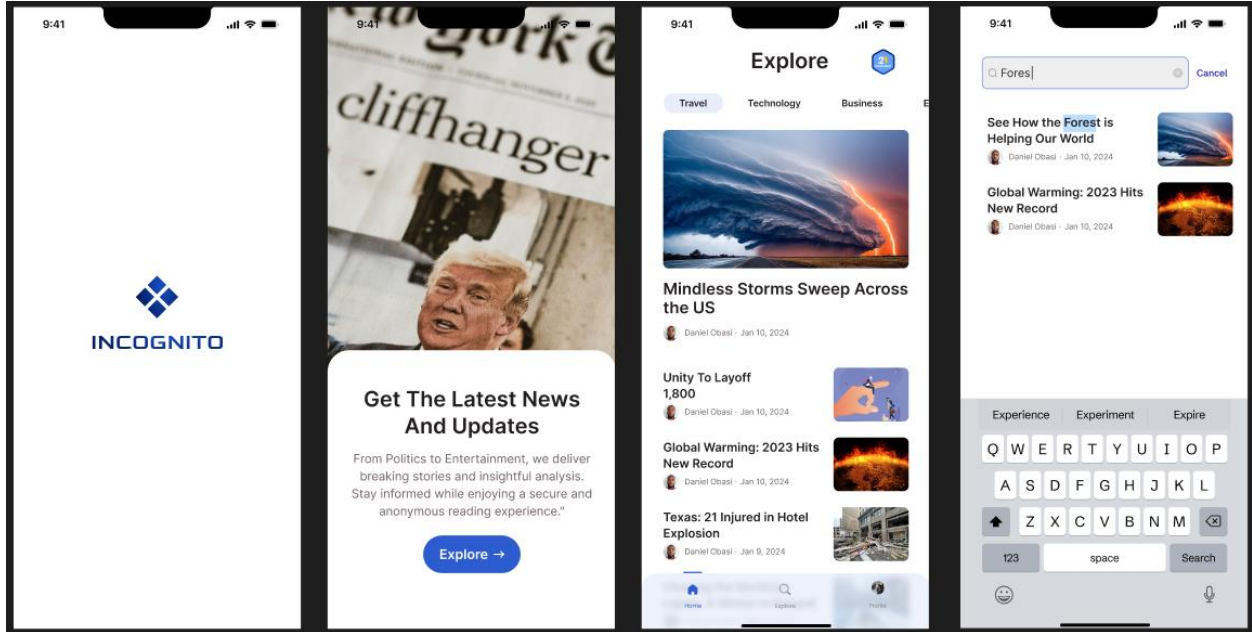
The product's strategic vision is centered on transforming the user experience in news consumption. By creating an intuitive platform, the goal is to facilitate effortless information access and foster meaningful event reporting. This approach focuses on building a platform that actively engages users, encourages informed discussions, and adapts to evolving news consumption trends.

Product Roadmap and Feature Prioritization

The core input to the product roadmap was communicating with the entire team. The roadmap was not built in a silo, instead, I organized brainstorming sessions with individual contributors and discussed perspectives. After gathering internal stakeholder insights, I evaluated the survey results gathered from the already completed customer interviews and surveys.

I utilized the qualitative data to assess the effort required to deliver the predefined product goals, and based on available market data, I developed a roadmap on Notion that outlined the timelines, initiatives, deliverables, and available resources.

The roadmap is a living document that gets updated as new lessons are learned, either from completed development sprints, customer feedback, KPIs, or stakeholder feedback. I manage the updates by gathering inputs from across the board and implementing them accordingly.



Snapshot of the design screens for Incognito Blog mobile application. Source: Figma

For the design screens above, I created over 50 user stories to guide the product designer's efforts. These screens were created using Figma, with predetermined acceptance criteria to maintain a certain quality standard.

The features to be built/designed were prioritized by considering various components like effort required, risk involved, impact of proposed feature, and confidence of the team. Again, for feature prioritization, I placed consistent feedback/communication at the forefront of the important inputs to consider.

Cross-Functional Collaboration

The mobile application development commenced in January 2024 and so far over 2 sprints have been successfully completed, with working iterations of the product available and being improved by the team. The lead engineer works on providing API endpoints to fetch the required data from WordPress, the mobile engineer develops the UI using Flutter/Dart, working through the designs provided by the product designer.

I utilize slack to ensure the constant flow of information between the product team, while removing blockers, and assisting with dogfooding and resource provision. The agile method of continuous delivery and incremental progress has led to better team performance.

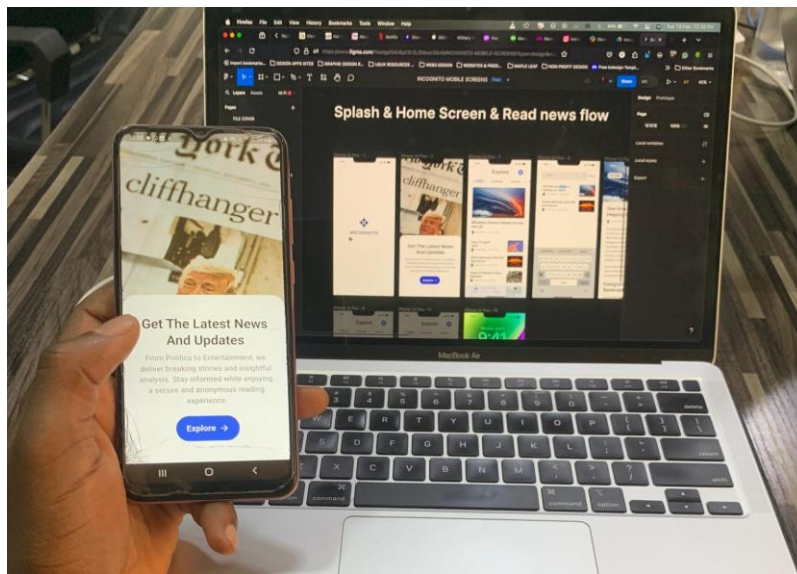
Stakeholder feedback remained instrumental in influencing product decisions as I relied on guiding the team to build from a user perspective.

Metrics

The metrics I outlined for the incognito blog mobile application include user adoption rate, user retention rate, user engagement rate, and application load time, etc.

- ❖ User adoption rate: For this metric, I would monitor the number of new app installations across both android and iOS devices. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) will be increasing the number of app installations by 20% in the next quarter following the launch on both App Stores.
- ❖ User retention rate: Here, I would monitor the average number of daily/weekly/monthly active users across both devices. The KPI will be retaining at least 60% of our active users over the next quarter following the launch.
- ❖ User engagement rate: I would monitor the average time spent on the app, and the number of articles read per user. The KPI will center around increasing the average time spent on the app by 20% over the next quarter, while aiming to boost the number of articles read per user by 10%, over the same period.
- ❖ Application load time: I would measure and monitor the speed at which the mobile app loads on various devices, aiming for a shorter load time to enhance the user experience. The KPI will focus on maintaining a load time less than 4 seconds and decreasing the bounce rate by 10% through constant improvements.

Visuals



Snapshot of the product designer testing the Incognito Blog mobile application with the Figma design in the background.
Source: Product Designer

The team decides what features to design and build, and the feature is placed at the top of the product backlog. Working in 2-week sprints, the engineers work to complete the selected backlog item within the timeframe. If development works are not completed in 2 weeks, we note the reason for the delay, to avoid overloading the user story for future sprints.

After the sprint, I demo the working iteration of the product to the entire team and select customers, to gain instant feedback to help drive reprioritization efforts. After the sprint review/demo, I organize a retrospective to assess the processes we adopted during the completed sprint, analyzing what worked well and what didn't.

A new sprint starts immediately after a completed one, with sprint planning brainstorming sessions taking place only a few hours after the bi-weekly retrospectives. At the end of every month, I create a monthly 'State of the Product' analysis report where I point out how the overall product is doing, and how the effort of every department is contributing to the single goal of the organization. This report is sent via email to internal stakeholders (designers, engineers, etc.) and contains quantitative data from our dashboards, along with progress statistics.

Conclusion

The lessons learned from the development of the Incognito Blog mobile app are simple – product management is an iterative, gradual process of coordinating people, resources, processes, and initiatives. Product management is not the same for any two products because of the difference in teams, thinking, and goals etc.

I am confident that I have achieved the goals I defined along with my team, and as we work towards completing the development of the Incognito Blog mobile application, we continue to learn and give our best towards project perfection.

Visit Incognito Blog [here](#), and anticipate the release of our mobile application.