How I tackled Sports Stories content design at Facebook

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An overview

The Highlights

- **Switching my own mental model** of trying to create football content, to solving a sports-related design problem helped me shift my strategy and working style completely
- This was a great project to test my own understanding of "**meeting users where they are**" –and yes, I went to a sports bar for a few immersive Sundays to *get a read* on sports fans
- **Partnering with localization-focused content designers** was a HUGE help in moving fast
- Taking gambles and **experimenting with different tone** types was absolutely necessary
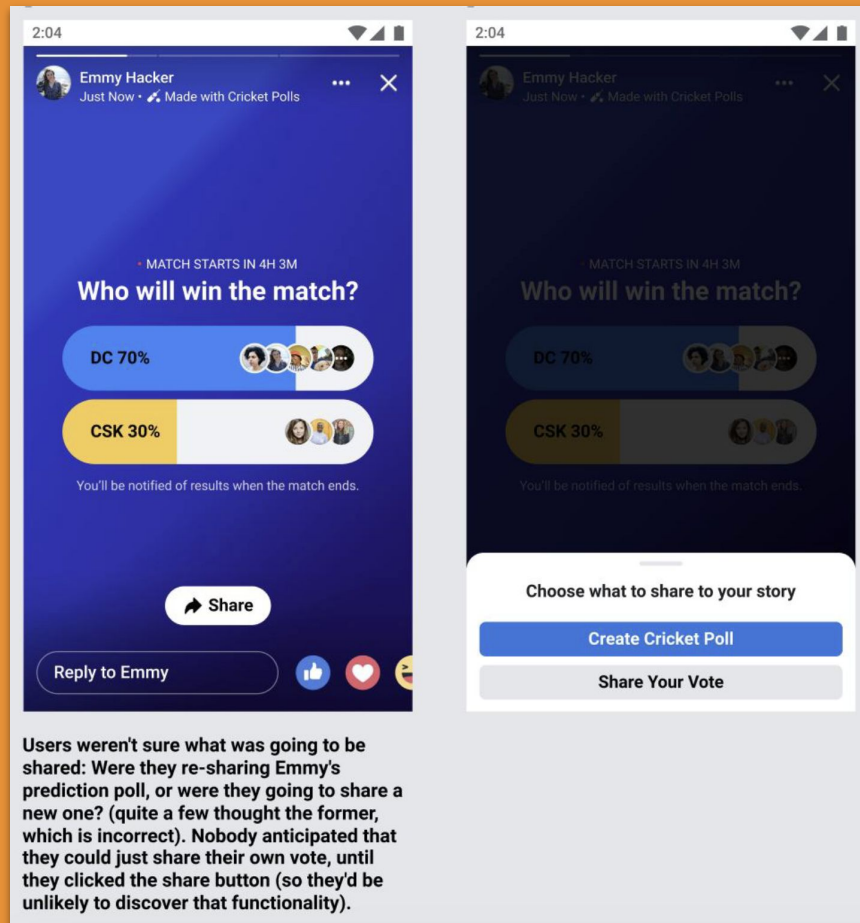

SPORTSBALL!!

The Design Challenge that Started it All

I was initially asked to make changes to a WIP Cricket Poll feature in FB Stories.

The biggest challenge was showing and teaching Cricket Poll users that they could share their results to their FB or IG Stories.

Clarity was needed around what was actually being shared with limited instructional text. Users didn't realize they could share their own vote because the CTA was so short.

Localization and inclusive design was absolute priority since users were outside of the US.

Users weren't sure what was going to be shared: Were they re-sharing Emmy's prediction poll, or were they going to share a new one? (quite a few thought the former, which is incorrect). Nobody anticipated that they could just share their own vote, until they clicked the share button (so they'd be unlikely to discover that functionality).

Exploring CTAs

The product team wanted easier paths for creation flows and the design team was juggling various solutions

Giving users an easy creation path, or share functionality ended up being a really big sticky point for the content team.

Previous research showed that users were confused and hesitant about what the first Share button would let them do.
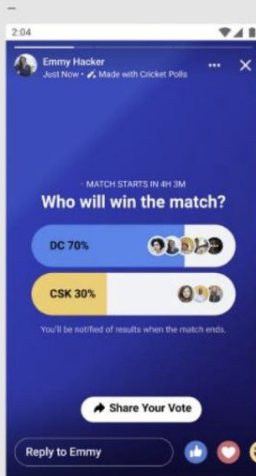

EXPLORATIONS - Single CTA

let you Create your own cricket poll?

2. India audience is often reluctant to read extra text/not super fluent to read the type provided in their device language so would lean toward helpful visuals vs helpful text wherever possible!

Does this sound too vague or awkward?

Is Create Yours even more vague?

seems less scary
sounds friendly, inviting
wonder if we can run by India research to
validate understanding,
since no object is referenced
+1 Jlo, ask for data on either direction

Kinda works if following screen didn't have same CTA

Seems more descriptive but doesn't account for sharing your vote

From Acrolinx: Add is preferred if someone can only share to their story

+1 Share Your Vote - tells exactly what I'll be doing confusion about goal in singular CTA

Share this Poll - your vote could be part of poll, share poll or vote option
Create Your Own - your own what? poll, story or something different?
Create feels like heftier task than sharing; might have to do something/put more energy into it would be less likely to do it unless creating your own story

Cricket Solutions that Informed NFL Predictions

I took my Share button problem to India office hours and crits that specialized in writing for "emerging markets" or users who were non-native speakers.

Balance was needed to write in simple and straightforward terms that were also literal and educational.

Testing different ways to ask the same question

Who knew there'd be to so many ways to ask users who they thought would win the game? With Cricket, we used "Who will win the match?"

With the NFL, we started out with "Who will win" and eventually transformed the question to better align with sport betting terminology: "Make your pick"

Immersive Content Design

If you know me IRL, it might be obvious that I'm not a sports fan. But I am a huge people watcher. Knowing that sports vernacular wasn't my strong suit, I went to our internal NFL fan workplace groups to see how my fellow Meta-mates interacted with each other, the memes they'd post on Sundays, and even the gentle jabs they'd make when a player did something embarrassing.

I asked sports fans during crit what puns or clever terms they'd heard of in the hopes it would inspire new experimental headers.

I even went to my local sports bar in Western Seattle to see how fans interact with each other and the TV screens.

As a non-football fan, I wanted to leverage a voice and vocabulary that would resonate with this audience, along with the average user who enjoyed making polls or betting with friends. The UI needed to be simple but also **include a casual nod to the banter football fans use on game day**.

Dedicating a couple Sunday afternoons to NFL not only gave me insight into fans and behaviors, but it also **helped me think about the overall vision.** My time at the sports bar informed how I wrote contextual replies, congratulatory headers and mid-cards. I found ways to incorporate the banter and keywords football fans were already used to seeing.

Testing strings with fans allowed me to not only bring a ton of content options to crit, but it **made building complex flows joyful.**

Betting on a Funner Tone of Voice

Areas like post-game contextual replies, the congratulatory celebrations when users picked the winning team, and even a network outage message made for really fun places to inject a bit more color.
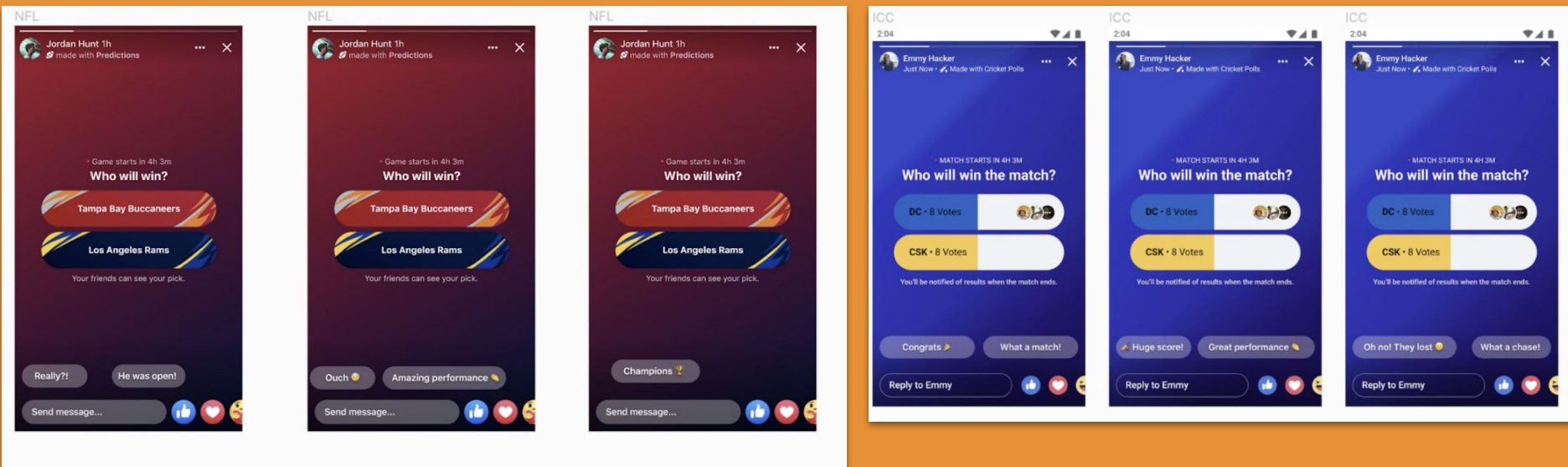
Experimenting with the Post-Game Experience

Asking football fans how they would normally say things or text friends while watching a game became a great way to come up with a content strings.

Sports Stories was a really fun place to test playful and colorful content. I learned so much just by seeing how strings would evoke different feelings when paired with an emoji!

While not all of my explorations made it across the finish line, **Sports Stories was a perfect place to practice writing more conversationally**.
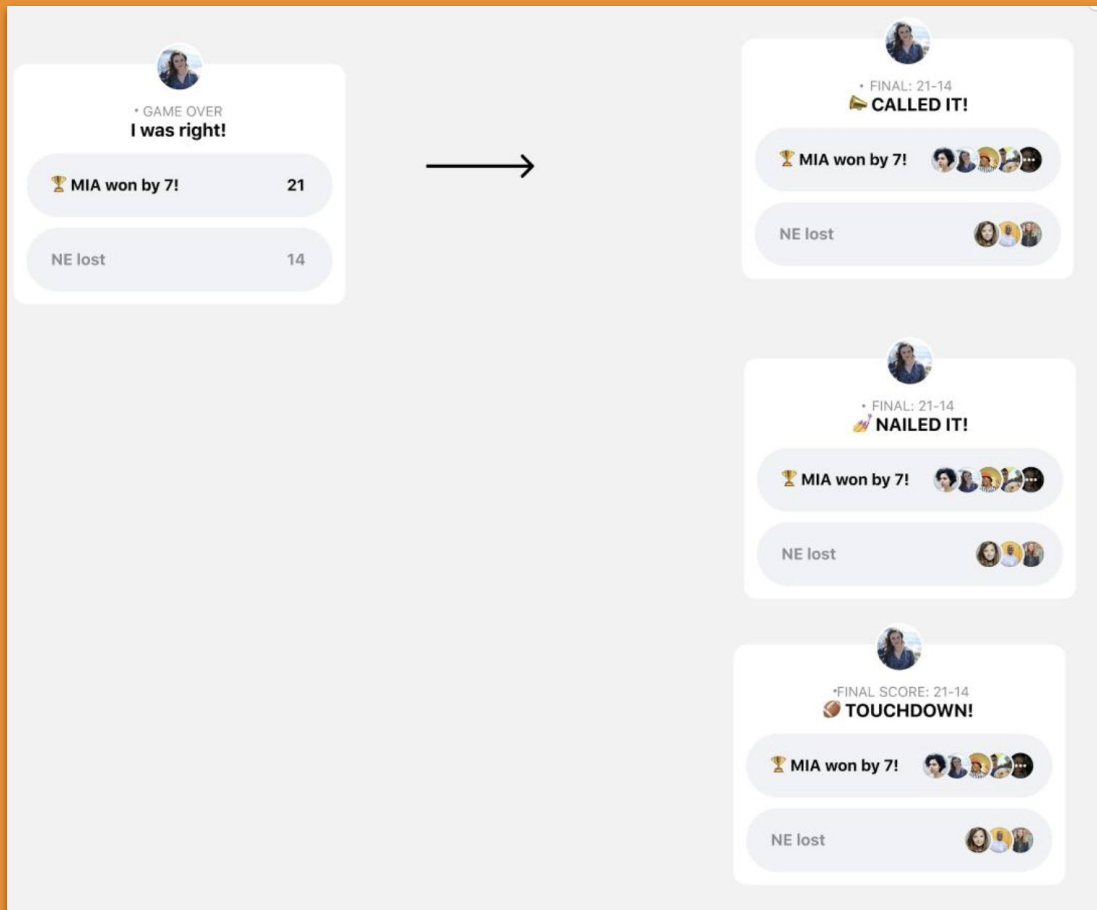
Predictions v. Picks: A Naming Workshop

Once we started seeing how the words "predictions" and "picks" was being used across our UI, the team and I started questioning if "Predictions" was the right name for our product. The word was too long for certain elements and our product team questioned if there was a shorter, punchier name we could use instead.

I hosted a naming workshop and learned the importance of doing these early and during the design process **to test a product name's plasticity before it goes into final designs**.

We examined the product's platform, entry points, bylines, CTAs and headers and considered button styling, localization, and other contextual moments to ensure it was the right name.
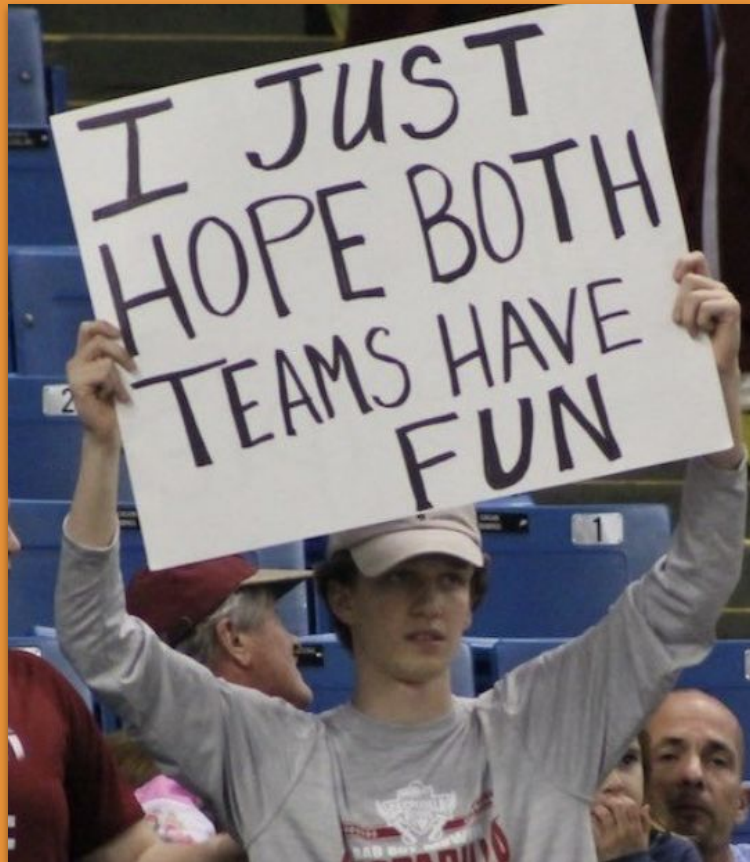
The Learnings

Instead of focusing on perfecting my sports-related strings (or my insecurities about not knowing much about sports), I concentrated on thinking about Predictions in terms of a UX problem to solve.

There were complicated flows that we designed around and lots of time considering the best components to use. But what remained true the need for alignment with product marketing, engineers and product management to ensure our designs and words fulfilled our problem statements and promoted discoverability.

All this to say that working cross-functionally helped me as a designer to *predict* content problem areas and to be impactful with how I presented my findings and rationale.
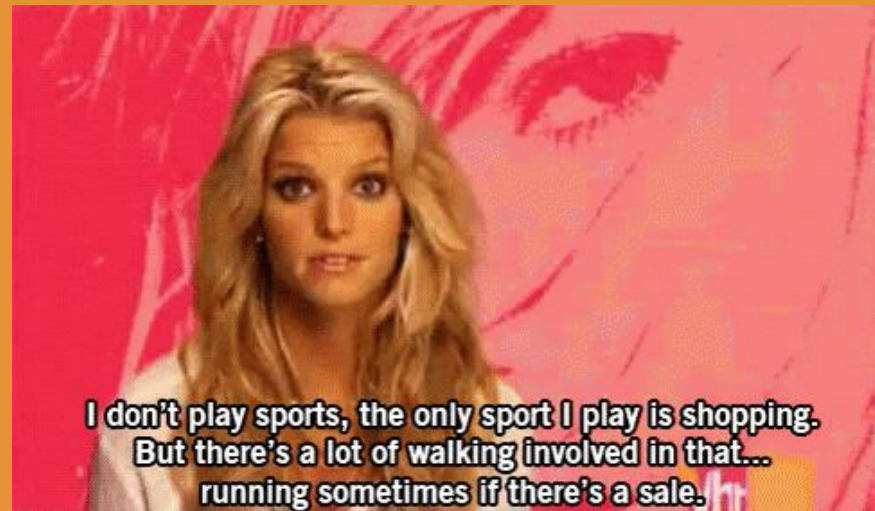
THANK YOU!

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