App deconstruction

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INTRODUCTION

I chose the RTS Info application. The RTS is the Radio-Television of the Switzerland. The RTS Info application is french-speaking and provides news from Switzerland, Europe and the whole world. Other applications exist for the german (SRF), italien (RSI) and romansh (RTR) part of the Switzerland. There is also an application for the whole world, in english (SWI).

The applications belong to the SRG SSR (Swiss Broadcasting Corporation).

> ***RTS Info*** *refers to the news platforms (radio, TV and on-line) of the Radio Télévision Suisse (French-language branch of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and is also the name of its virtual television channel launched on 26 December 2006.* [1]

OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE APP

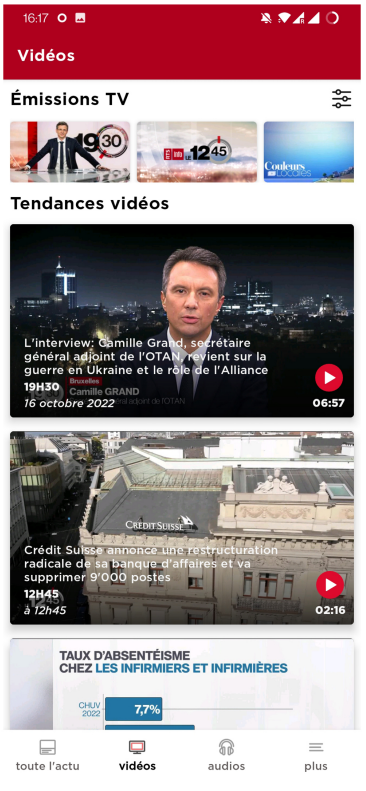
Horizontal scroll, trough topics

Button to change the topics scroll order

The first article of the page

Live updates

Bottom navigation: all the news

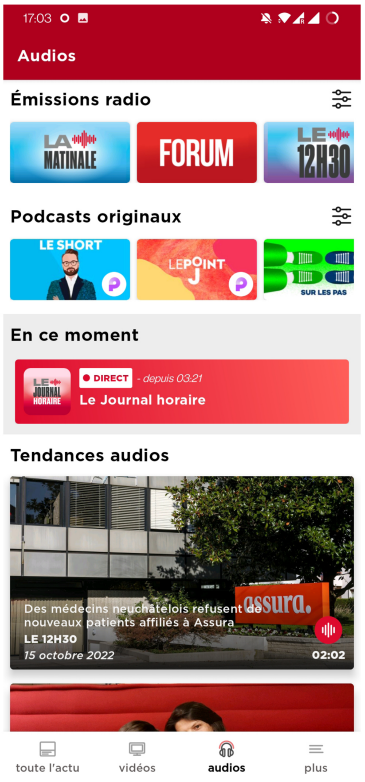


Horizontal scroll, trough the TV programs of RTS Info

Button to change the TV programs scroll order

Trendy videos

Bottom navigation: video content



Horizontal scroll, trough the audio programs of RTS Info

Button to change the audio programs scroll order

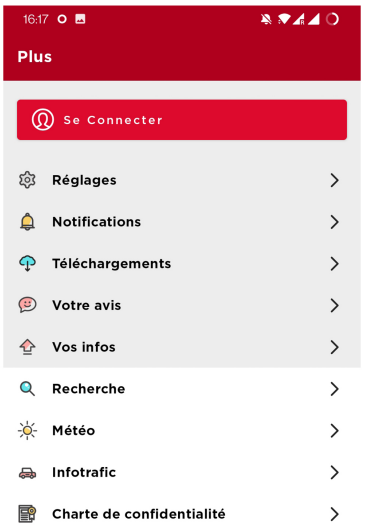
Horizontal scroll, trough the original podcasts of RTS Info

Button to change the podcasts scroll order

Live audio program, disapear when there no live

Trendy audio content

Bottom navigation: audio content

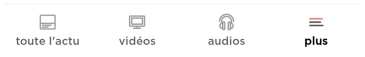


Connexion (optionnal)

Settings, notifications, downloads, reviews, personal informations

Features like search, weather, traffic information, confidentiality contract

Bottom navigation: plus



THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF APP DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Phone features

As the RTS Info application is made to be read, listen to, or seen, the application don't use a lot of phone features. For the audio and video news, it uses the speaker. The app provides a weather report. In order to do that, it needs the location application. As I am in Stuttgart, the application cannot access my location.

Business model and USP

The SRG is a not-for-profit enterprise. It is financed 78% by the media licence fee, 15% by commercial revenues and 7% by other revenues. SRG's annual revenues amount to around CHF 1.57 billion, of which 41% is spent on information, 21% on entertainment and film, 17% on culture, society and education, 15% on sport and 6% on music and youth (2021 figures). [2]

In Switzerland, the population pays a licence fee which is collected by Billag on a mandate from the Confederation. Part of the licence fee is distributed to private radio and television broadcasters which have a specific performance mandate in accordance with their licence. The other part goes to the SRG, which distributes it to its channels in the four language regions according to a distribution key. This is also a public service medium.
RTS, which offers the RTS info application, is one of the SRG's channels. It covers the French-speaking part of Switzerland. [3]

The strong USP of the application is that it is a public service application. As such, it has to be neutral, honest, unbiased and provide relevant information from serious sources. It also publishes information that is socially important and useful, not financially.
RTS also promotes national cohesion, national and regional integration. [4]

What is the market share?

RTS's market share is not divided between digital platforms. This is why the figures concern all the group's digital platforms.

With an average of 699,000 daily visits in 2021, the website and mobile applications (RTS Info, Play RTS, RTS Sport, Couleur3, RTS Kids) are maintaining the high level reached in 2020 (705'000 daily visits). [5] [^6]

Type of device

RTS Info is reacheable via the url https://www.rts.ch/info/. On this website, we can access the other contents of the RTS offer. For example, we can access the sport section and we are able to filter by sports, see the results, have a look at the RTS sport tv program, see videos about sport events, etc.

This is not possible in the RTS Info application. In order to do all those things, we need to download RTS Sport.

The same phenomen occurs with the cultural section. Except this time, there is no RTS application dedicated to the culture.

RTS makes money available and finances the production of Swiss fiction films, series and documentaries. These productions are then broadcast during prime time.

> *RTS strives to develop quality regional production by working in partnership with independent writers.authoress, directors. directress, actors.actresses and producers in French-speaking Switzerland. Unique fiction anchored in the reality of the French-speaking part of Switzerland.* [6]

Specifically on the https://www.rts.ch/info/ page, the user can research key word via a visible research bar. In the application you have to access it in the "plus" bottom menu. It requires the user to quit the main pages and the main navigation, and it increase the interaction cost.

The web page allows the user to access more small content of the RTS, like this feature called "Swiss good", which gather some "good things" that happens in Switzerland during the week, it can be article, audio, or tv program.

The RTS Info application focused on more general news, general reading, and occupied every fields. If the customer want more precise informations about specific topics like sport, culture, cinema, etc., he·she can download the RTS Sport application, or go to rts.ch.

Popularity of the app

RTS's digital platforms have largely become part of the public's habits in French-speaking Switzerland.

According to similarweb.com, RTS Info is in the 17th place in the Google Play Store in the category "news and magazines". In the first place we can see the SRF News which is the German-speaking RTS Info application. [7]

Between these 2 applications, we can find 20 Minutes (DE/FR), Watson (DE/FR), Blick (DE), and more.

In the Apple App Store's category "news", RTS Info is also in the 17th place. 20 Minuten is in the first place of the news app. Then we can found the SRF News. [8]

As there is more german-speaking people in Switzerland, it is normal to find the german application first.

We can observe that news applications with a "younger" look and feel have become more popular in the App Store and Play Store in Switzerland. This is to the detriment of applications such as RTS Info, or SRF News, which tend to lose market share.

CONTENT & INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

Context of use, content & content strategy

Context of use

After asking some of my friends and family about the context in which they use the application, I found that some people like to browse the content in the morning, or during their lunch break.
I asked them if they ever search for audio or video content specifically. One person replied that he listened to the programs mainly to pass the time, but that the videos were very interesting for sport.

One person prefers to read rather than watch videos, as the content is more focused on the essentials. He mentioned that in certain situations reading is more appropriate.

What we can deduce, with a pinch of salt (due to the lack of information in my little study and my personal knowledge), is that the context for this kind of application is very important. On the one hand, the use of this application does not usually take much time. Because the screen of a smartphone is not comfortable for reading long texts, and the RTS offers solutions on larger screens as well. The situations in which it is used can be diverse and play an important role in the user's choice of content, depending on the environment.

Content

The video and audio content are generally around 2, 3 or 6 minutes. But we can also find the complete TV program episode and complete radio show episode which can be from 10 minutes to an hour.

Except original radio podcast, a part of the audio content is the video content, without images. Which add a possibilty to consume the content differently.

Each content publication in the "all news" page is supported by an article of about 500 words.The articles presented are generally around 500 words. According to a study by researcher Marc Brysbaert [9], reading time is estimated at 238 words per minute. An article can be read in 2 to 3 minutes.

One article on "All news", is constructed on this base:

1. Audio, or audio-visual element, if there is one
2. Legends
3. Title
4. Category and date
5. Text article, optionally including external links, images, related articles
6. Section called "To be consulted as well", which encourages the user to keep reading other articles.

These articles do not take long to read, and many can be read easily on the train, bus, or during a coffee break.

Similarly, if someone is using the application on the train, for example, and cannot listen to or see the videos, they can stay on the "all news" page, and read the articles.

What the app lacks is the ability to filter news without audio or video, only textual news.

On Audio and Video pages, there is no legends and text article, only the media.

User

One of the main user's goal is to catch information on different field, or in one specific domain thanks to the filters.

Content strategy

The RTS Info application offers its different content formats in one place. Thus, depending on the context and preferences, the user can easily redirect within the application thanks to the separation of content types in the foreground.

We can also program notifications, and decide about which subjects we want to receive notifications.

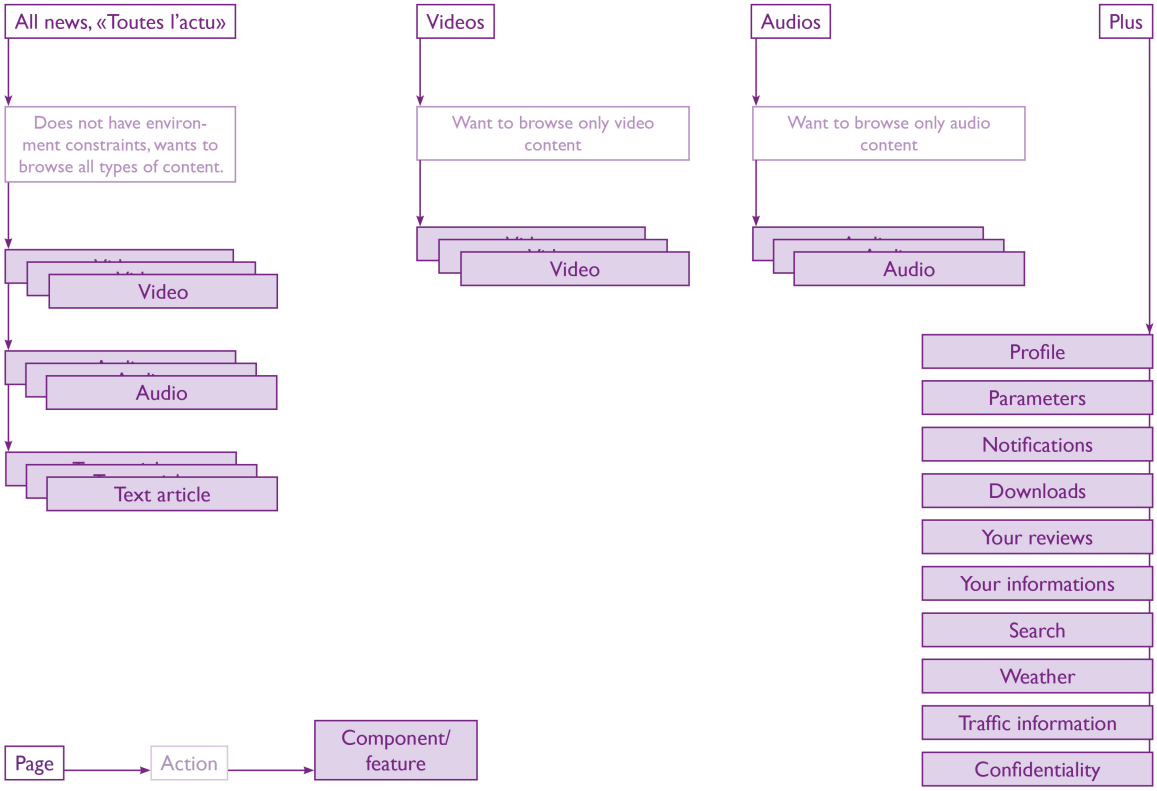
These are two ways of getting the right content to the right person, at the right place in a simple way.

We can deduce that they focused a lot on the user's context of use, and then on their interests by offering notifications and filters.

The application refresh its content every day, multiple time in the day.

Information architecture

Identification and definition of site content and functionality



This is the structure as we found it on the application.

NAVIGATION & INTERACTION CHOICES

User of the app

RTS Info is mainly use by french-speaking people, from 20 to 50 years old. The application's audience likes to receive news daily, in the palm of their hand.

They are not interested in a specific topic like sport, but in multiple generic news. Mostly, they don't have a lot of time, or don't want to spend a lot of time on one article.

General knowledge of several topics is more important than expertise in one topic.

Objectives/main features of RTS Info

The main feature of the RTS Info app is to provides daily news, in 3 main formats: audio, video, text.

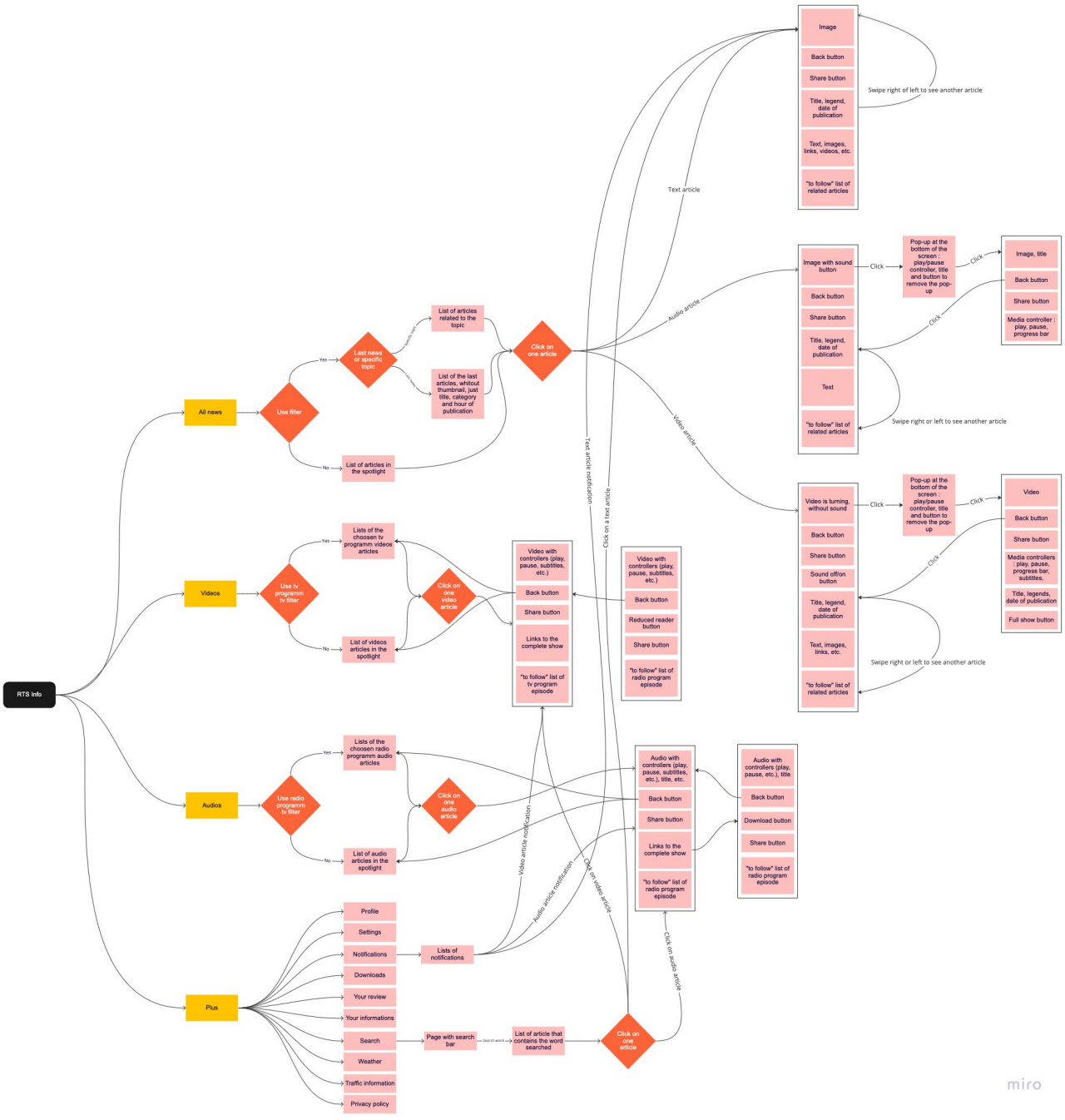
The user can also watch or hear original programs (audio & video) from the RTS, from several days before, to today.

Gestures on the app

The RTS Info application base its interraction on click and scroll. When there is an article with an image, you can click on it and pinch the screen to zoom in it.

Flow chart of the main functionnalities

Click here to access the flow chart on miro.



Scenarios

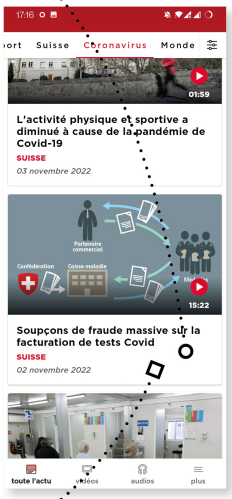
Here is a scenario of a person who want to read news about coronavirus.

I want to read news about the coronavirus crisis, let's go on RTS Info

I scroll until I find the Coronavirus topic.

Oh I found it ! I click on the topic

Mh... I scroll until I find an interesting title. This one seems interesting.

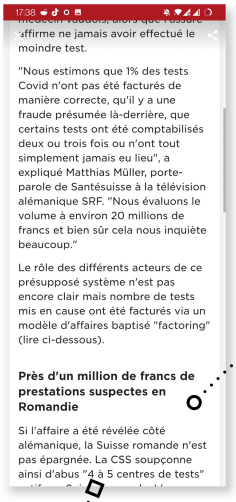


I click on the article

I want to hear the sound of the video.

This article is very interesting, let's share it.

I scroll trough the text



I scrolled until the end of the article. Let's continue the reading.

Navigation design patterns

Global navigation

On the RTS Info application, we can find a global navigation at the bottom of the screen. This navigation creates a separation in the content nature.

The global navigation completely disappears if you click on one article. Another navigation appears at the end of each article, which allows the user to switch to another article. This navigation is an associative navigation.

"All news" page

A structural navigation is available on top of "All News" page. This navigation helps the user to filter the news by categories and areas. This navigation is a section menu sub-navigation. There is 18 categories, which is big. But as the categories are included in a horizontal scroll, it does not affect the display design or accessibility, but this will have an impact in the interaction cost.

Here is the full list of categories:

- Headlines
- Last news
- Ukraine
- Sport
- Switzerland
- Coronavirus
- World
- Economy
- Culture
- Science/techn.
- Vaud *
- Geneva *
- Valais *
- Fribourg *
- Neuchâtel *
- Jura *
- Bern *
- Other cantons

*Switzerland is divided my "cantons", which are like small states basically. This is the list of the French-speaking cantons, or near to the French-speaking are (Bern is german-speaking).

As we can see, RTS Info focused on what interest people now: coronavirus & ukraine war. And thoses category are quite dynamic according to the actual main topics of the world.

Others categories such as economy, culture, sciences, etc. are pretty common, and assimilated by users via other platforms, newspapers, etc. The possibilities to filter by area offer another dimension to the filters. The user is able to check news that are local, but communicate about every subjects.

Thoses categories are the only way to navigate more precisely into the content.

Videos and audios pages

On "Videos" and "Audios" pages, it is not possible to filter the content by category. The user can filter by tv, radio or podcast programs. This is a structural navigation. The programs filter is included in an horizontal scroll, on top of the page.

"Plus" navigation

The "plus" page contains different features/content that are not directly related to the main content.

We can see here a utility navigation here: profile, search tool, weather, traffic information, settings, etc.

Cost of navigation

The sub navigation (categories, tv or radio programs) take a role in the interaction cost. As there is 18 categories, 14 tv programs, 13 radio programs and 11 original podcasts, the interaction cost can increase quickly if the user want to access the last program of the tv programs for example (~2-3 horizontal scrolls on the screen, or 1 huge and quick scroll).

But the RTS Info try to reduce this interaction cost by allowing the user to change the order of the filters wherever possible.

The main navigation is easily reachable by fingers. But as soon as we are in one of the 3 main content page, the navigation is at the top of the screen, which make them less easily accessible.

Interaction choices

Navigation

Navigation tabs

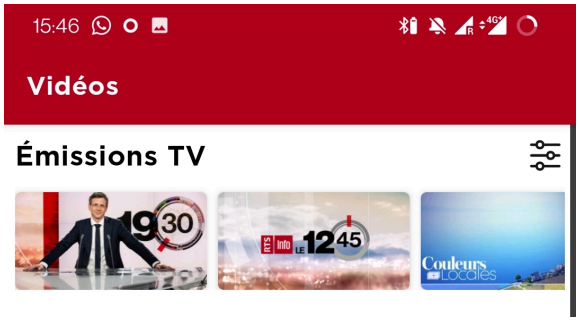
In order to make the interaction of the user easier, the app provides multiple navigation tabs on each pages.

Notifications

In the plus page, we can find a element called "Notifications", which allows the user to jump into the hierarchy and access directly the content.

Cards

On the videos and audios pages, the tv/radio/podcast programs are listed as cards at the top of the page. This is a way to show the visual presentation of the program.

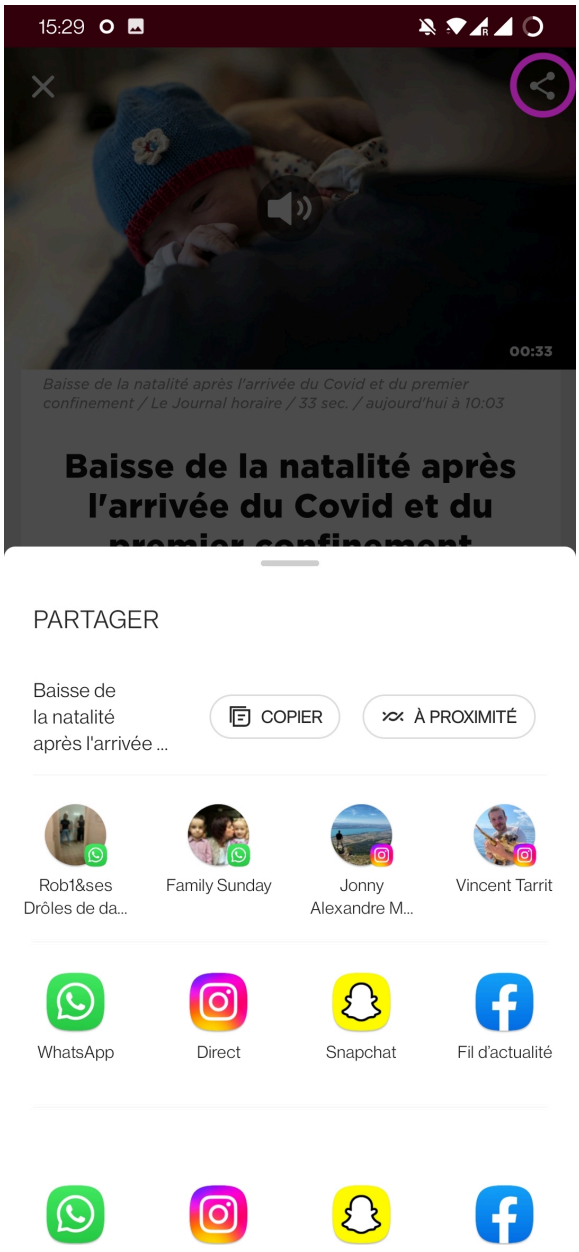


Categorization

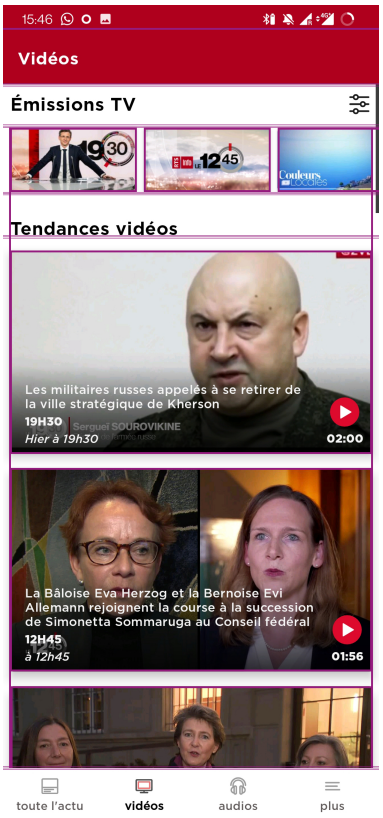
With categories/programs filter, the user is able to refine the results.

Social

A button on each article propose the user to share the article on the most used plateform such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, etc.



Screen & Layout

All news	Specific article	Videos page
		

The layout of the application is quite simple. The bottom menu is separated in 4 columns. On top of each main pages, we can see the title in the red part. On each main page, the content take the whole width of the screen. We can see thin margins on the left and the right of the content.

Basically, the content is organized in one column, and the application ask the user to scroll down and to the right/left. We also see that the content (articles, filter, etc.) are displayed as cards.

VISUAL DESIGN

The application uses the visual identity of the SRG SSR Group. This visual identity is very sober and represents the seriousness of the company. The visual identity is inspired by an international typographic style (also known as the Swiss Style). It emphasises cleanness, readability, and objectivity. 3 things that we can also see in SRG SSR Group values.

App Icons

Application icon

The application icon in the play store is very simple, and is loyal to the RTS graphic identity.

Menu icon

The icon of "All news" is a repesentation of thumbnail article on the main page:

It is not an icon known to the general public, but it refers to an element of the application. It does not need to be known, as the user will be able to recognize it.

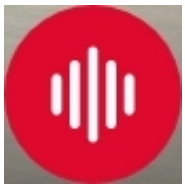
The videos icon is a screen, which describes the support needed for this page content. This is the same concept for the audio page : we need headphones/speakers, in order to consume the content. Those 2 icons are common in mental models.

The plus button icon indicates that we will find a list behind it.

All of the icons of the menu follow the same design : round lines.

Audio-visual icons

The audiovisuals icons are commons. The first one is for the audio content, and it reprensents sounds waves. The second one is a play button. RTS Info has decided to choose solid values to differentiate its content. As the nature of the content is important in this app, those icons are on a red circle. This red element goes on the thumbnail of the article and is visible.



Filter icon

The filter icon is also common, it is known to most people.

Layout

As showed before (screens & layout), the layout is presented in one column, with thin margins. The contents often have a drop shadow to stand out against the white background.

Color harmony

The RTS Info uses the famous red of the SRG SSR (#af001d).

The colour palette consists of red, white, grey and black. The predominant colour is red. This is a very simple but efficient harmony. [10]

In the plus menu, we can see 3 more colors : cyan, yellow and salmon. As it is not a main part of the application, it does not interfer with the sober harmony of RTS Info.

Typography

A typeface was developed especially for SRG SSR developed by a Swiss typographer especially for SRG SSR. by a Swiss typographer. [10]

AaAa

SRGSSR Type Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

SRGSSR Type Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

The font size of the application adapts to the user's chosen phone settings. This way, the font is readable for everyone.

Most of the time, images are chosen to make the text stand out, but not every time.

The RTS Info application always aligns the text to the left, except for article's title, which is centered.

STANDARDISED DESIGN GUIDELINES (PATTERNS)

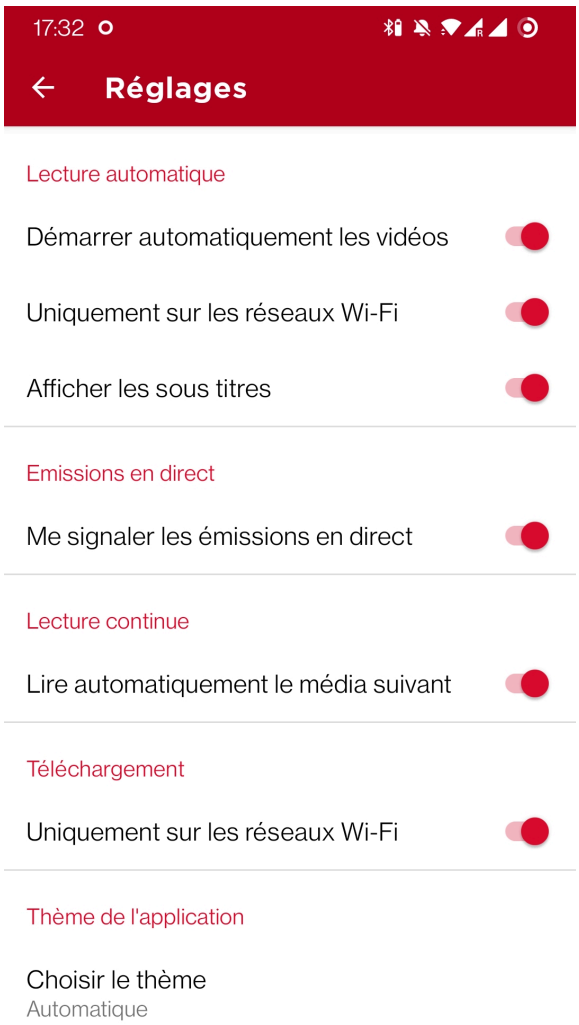
The application has indeed implemented the guidelines well. For the basics here are 3 examples.

Tabs

> *Tabs are useful for switching between views of distinct and related groups of information. There are two types of tabs: primary and secondary.* [11]

Switch

RTS Info uses switch buttons to toggle the settings of the app. For example, in the first parameter, the user can choose if he·she wants the automatic start of videos.



> *There's one type of switch in Material. Use this selection control when the user needs to toggle a single item on or off.* [12]

Navigation bar

> *Navigation bars offer a persistent and convenient way to switch between primary destinations in an app.* [13]

More of material design

In order to communicate the progress of a video or audio, the app uses the snackbar and progress indicator elements.

It also uses the icon button in the video frame and for the filter for example :

CONCLUSION

The deconstruction of the RTS Info application allowed me to have justifications and reasons behind certain graphic, structural or architectural choices.

The content and information architecture part was much more interesting and complex than I would have imagined. RTS Info application focus a lot on context of use, which may not be the same for other news application.

I would say that the main negative point of this application is the lack of persistence in the filters: not being able to filter by theme in the audio page for example.

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RTS_Info ↩

2. https://www.srgssr.ch/de/wer-wir-sind ↩

3. https://www.rts.ch/decouverte/monde-et-societe/economie-et-politique/le-service-public/7677551-quels-modeles-economiques-pour-laudiovisuel-public-et-prive.html ↩

4. https://www.rts.ch/entreprise/notre-role/9021877.html/BINARY/Charte%20des%20valeurs%20des%20m%C3%A9dias%20de%20service%20public%20romands, Charter of values of the French-speaking public audiovisual service ↩

5. https://www.rts.ch/entreprise/espace-pro/communiques-de-presse/12820042-audiences-rts-une-bonne-annee-2021-pour-le-digital-et-la-tv.html ↩

6. https://www.rts.ch/entreprise/l-offre-rts/couts-des-emissions/9520183-films-et-series-le-soutien-a-la-creation.html#timeline-anchor-1554989355422 ↩

7. https://www.similarweb.com/fr/apps/top/google/store-rank/ch/news-magazines/top-free/ ↩

8. https://www.similarweb.com/fr/apps/top/apple/store-rank/ch/news/top-free/iphone/ ↩

9. https://psyarxiv.com/xynwg/ ↩

10. https://ssrsr.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Mediatic_220_web.pdf ↩ ↩

11. https://m3.material.io/components/tabs/overview ↩

12. https://m3.material.io/components/switch/overview ↩

13. https://m3.material.io/components/navigation-bar/overview ↩