

Nudging Cleaner App Behaviour on Airbnb

COMM302

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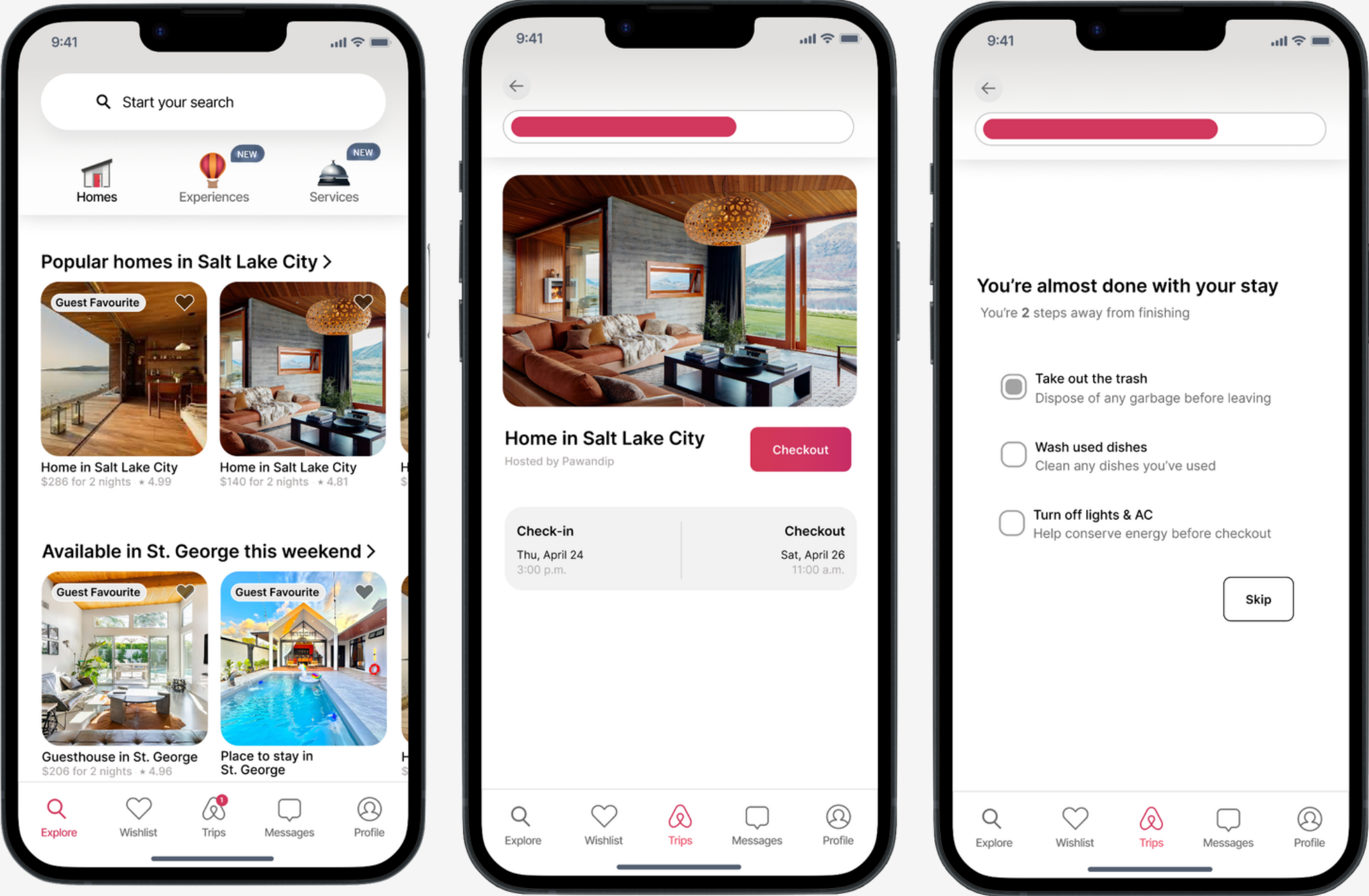
Date

26 April 2026

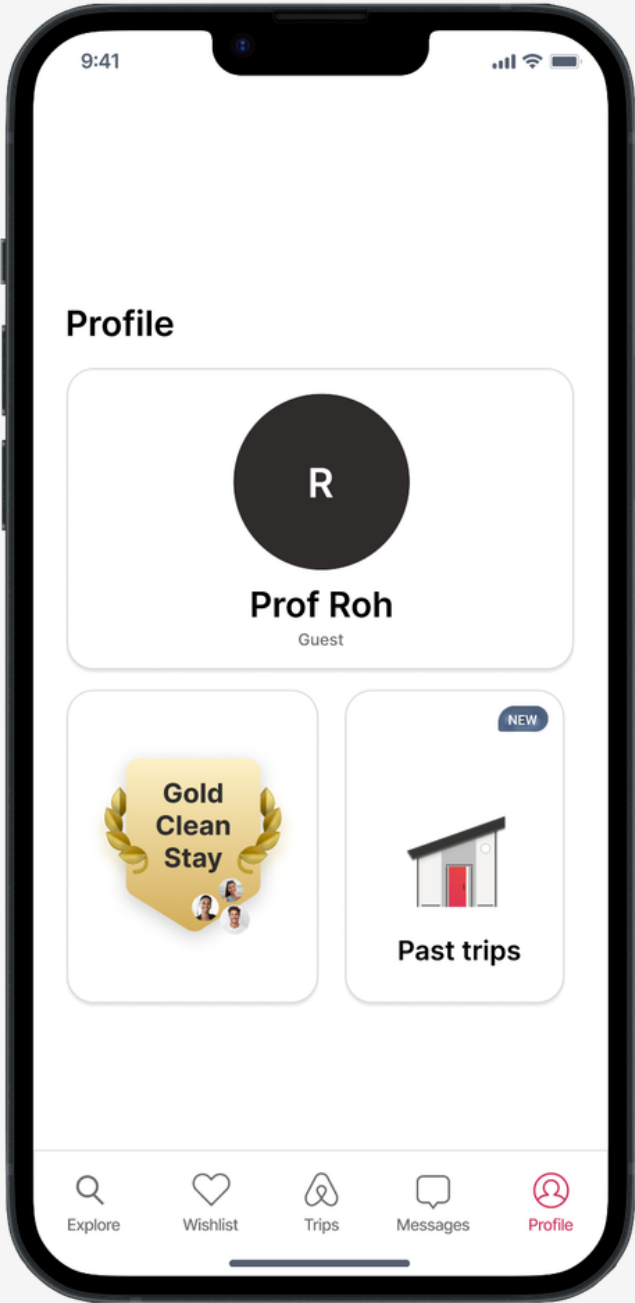
The Product



How to nudge cleaner guest behaviour



Checkout Process



Gamification

Behavioural Strategy



54%

of respondents in a 2017 survey would choose not to book AirBnb compared to hotels because of worries the property may be dirty



Behavioural strategy outcomes

- Higher percentage of guests leaving spaces tidy
- Lower cleaning time for hosts
- Improved satisfaction and ratings
- Broader shift of AirBnb culture towards **shared responsibility**

Key Benefit

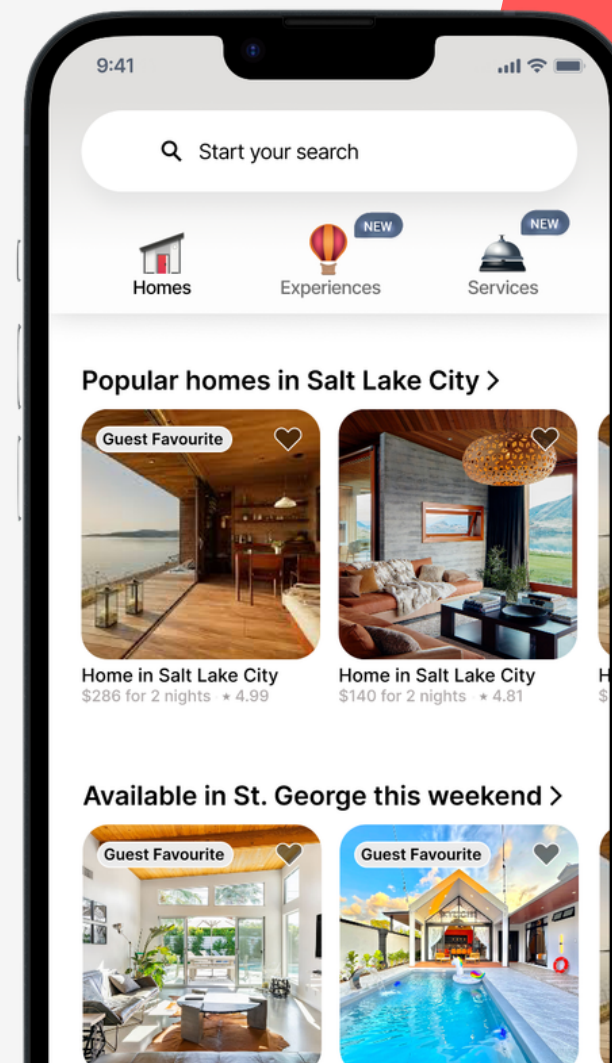


Value Gained to Guests

- Removes ambiguity in cleaning expectations → reduces cognitive load
- Clear checklist → higher task completion
- Avoids negative reviews & host disputes
- Builds confidence + sense of responsibility

If not adopted

- Continued uncertainty around cleaning expectations
- Higher cognitive load → decision avoidance
- Inconsistent behaviour across stays
- Increased risk of negative reviews
- Lower trust vs hotels (perceived reliability gap)



Airbnb Origins & Business Model



Q How did AirBnb begin

What is Airbnb

- Online marketplace for short-term home rentals
- Founded in 2008 (started with air mattresses)
- Now a global leader in the sharing economy

How it creates value

- Connects hosts and guests (two-sided platform)
- Provides variety + price flexibility vs hotels
- Earns revenue via service fees on each booking



**Comparable
marketplace
platforms**

Joe Gebbia
Co-founder &
Chief
Executive
Officer



Nathan Blecharczyk
Co-founder & Chief
Strategy Officer



Brian Chesky
Co-founder &
Chairman

Target Persona



Alex | 24 - 35 | Time Pressed Traveller

Young student/professional

Current Airbnb User



User Characteristics

- Time-constrained during checkout
- Convenience-driven decision making
- Skips detailed instructions
- Low motivation for extra effort

Pain Points

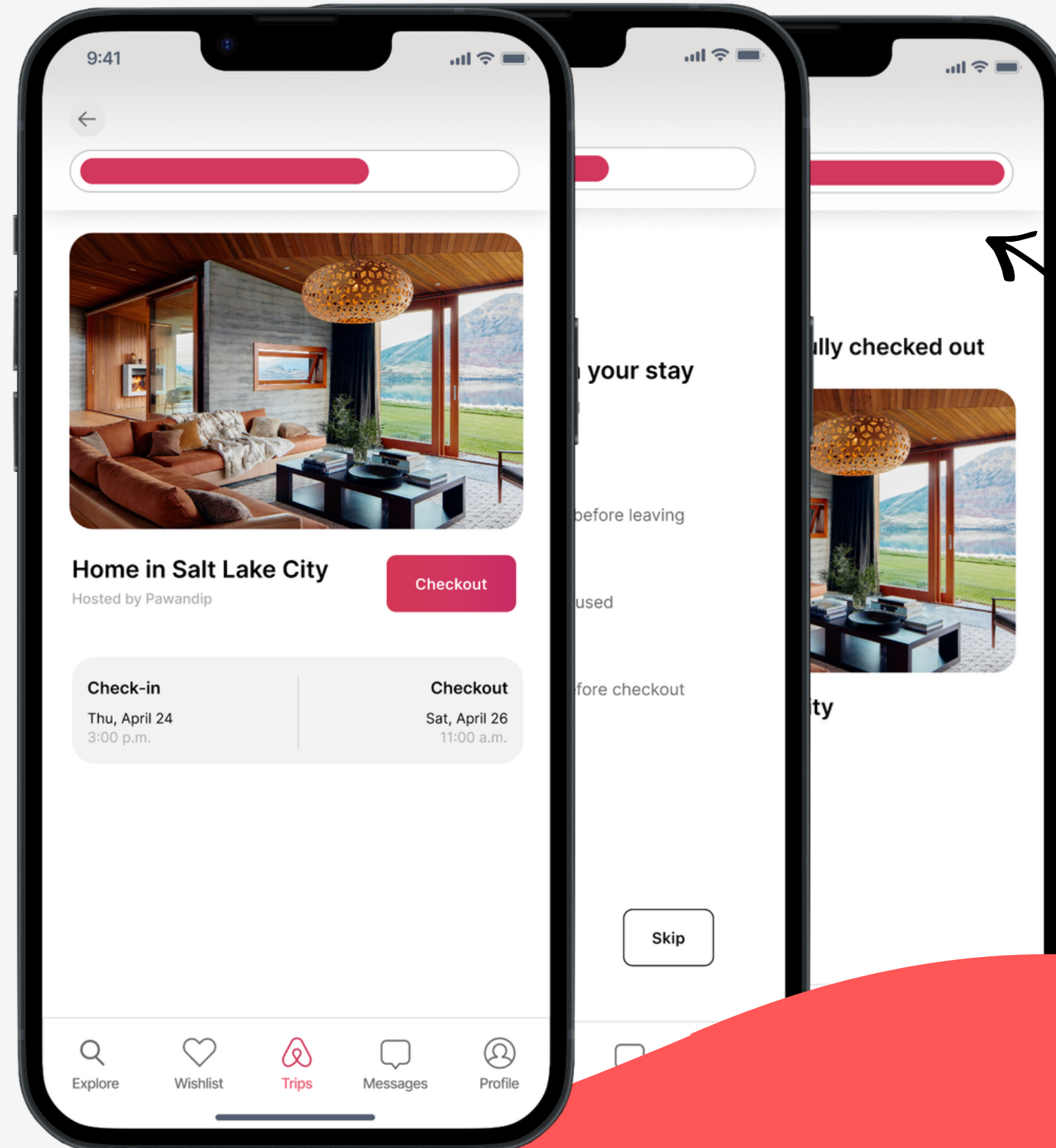
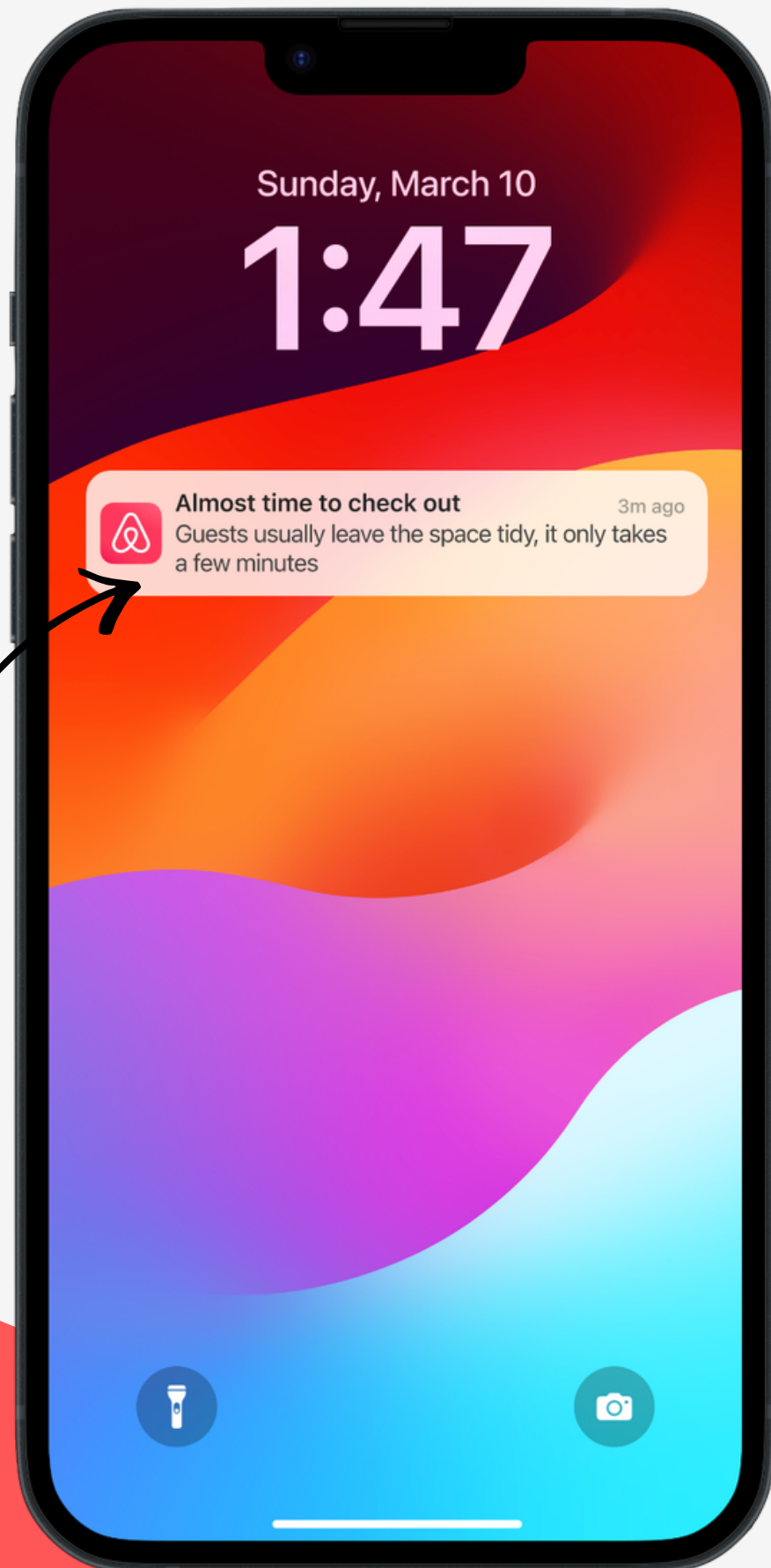
- Unclear expectations of “clean”
- Too many tasks at checkout
- Low sense of responsibility
- Avoids effort without reward

“I just want to leave on time without worrying if I’ve done enough”

Message Characteristics



Showcases
**descriptive
social norms**
of what other
guests do



Progress bar
showcasing
**goal gradient
effect**, as its
halfway during
checkout

Source Characteristics



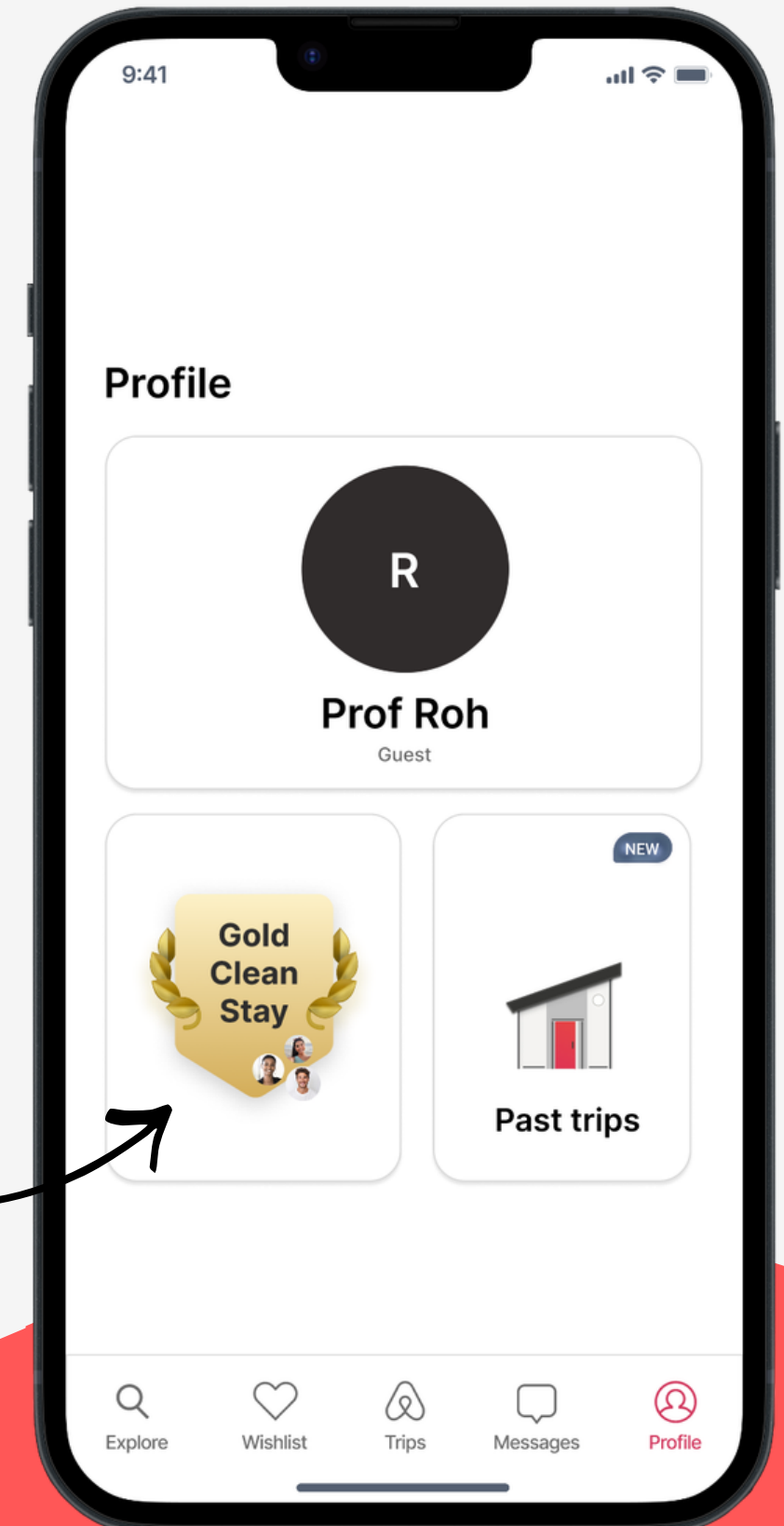
Aspirational Sources

- High-status / influential Airbnb users
- Badges signal desirable behaviour
- Drive aspirational imitation

Peer Sources

- Other guests on the platform
- Visible badges create social norms
- Reduce uncertainty around expectations

Badge visibility in
profile → drives
social norms



Placement of Strategies

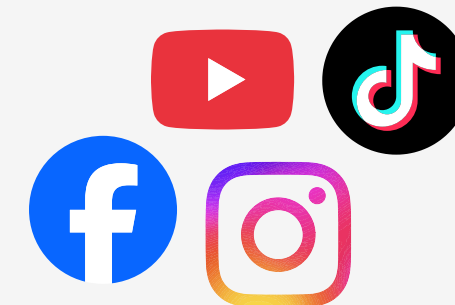


Q Most suitable ad channels on the internet



Google Ads

- Search-based prompts when browsing stays
- Highlight clean, well-maintained spaces
- Positions Airbnb as top-of-mind option
- Leverages accessibility + cognitive ease



Social Media Ads

- Platforms: Instagram, TikTok, YouTube
- Showcase clean spaces as the norm
- Use influencers/celebrities (e.g. Airbnb experiences)
- Reinforces descriptive + injunctive norms

Unintended Consequences

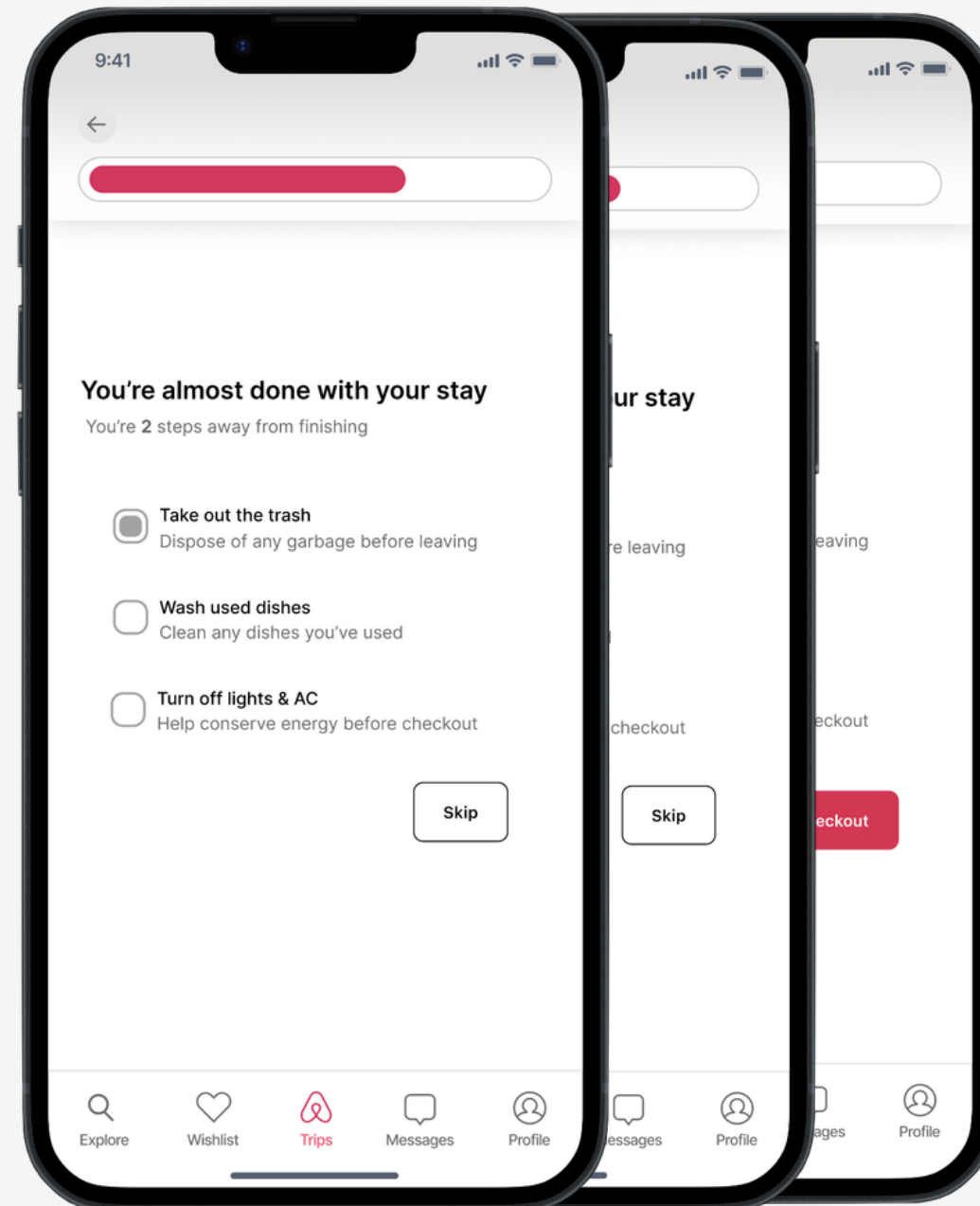


Nudge Fatigue

Repeated prompts → users ignore checklist over time

To mitigate:

- Tailored, context specific tasks
- Ensure checklist remains optional



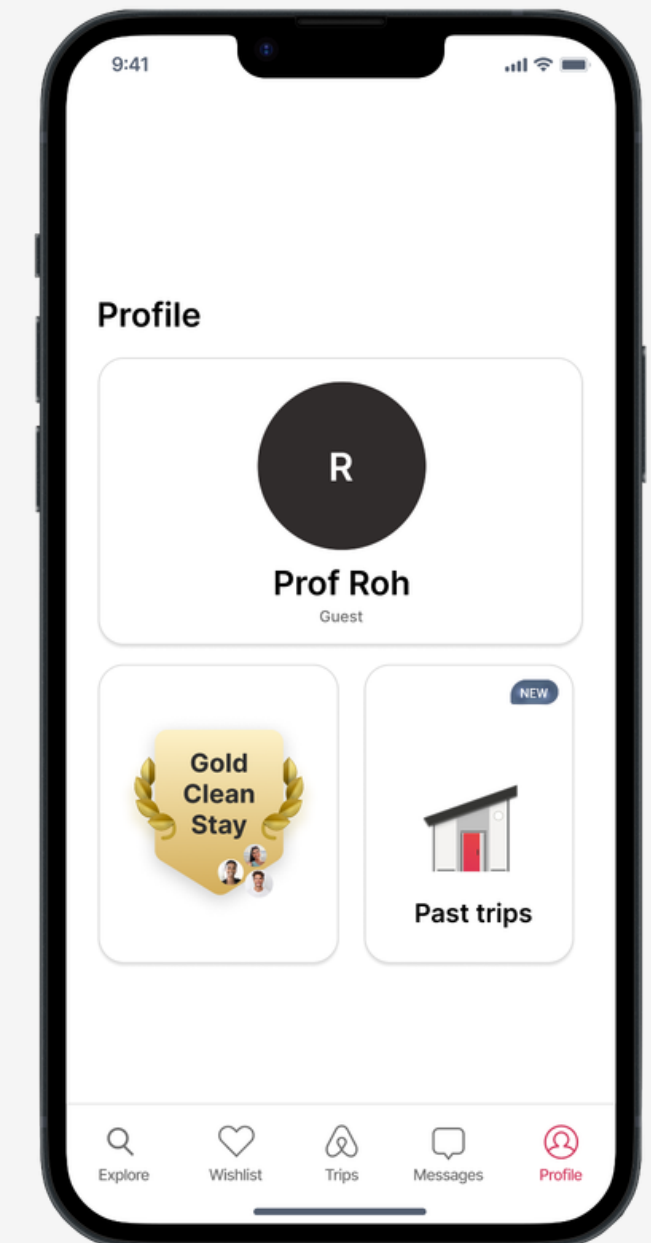
Checkout Screen

Magnetic Middle

Seeing peers with lower badges reduces motivation to clean

To mitigate:

- Highlight Gold Clean Stay as the norm
- Make use of **injunctive norms** (eg. "top guests maintain gold")



Gamification

Cultural Issues



Q How does strategy differ across cultures



Individualistic

- Weaker response to social norms
- Behaviour driven by personal benefit
- Nudges need individual incentives



Collectivist

- Strong response to social norms
- “Guests usually leave the property clean”
- Badges (Gold Clean Stay) reinforce conformity
- Behaviour driven by group expectations

Theoretical Basis



Q What drives cleaning behaviour



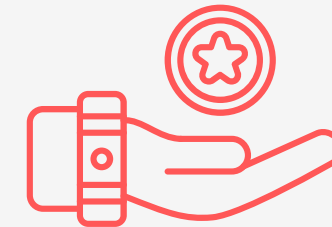
Cognitive Ease

- System 1 vs System 2
- Processing Fluency
- Accessibility
- Nudges



Goal-Based Behaviour

- Goals
- Goal Visibility
- Goal Gradient Effect
- Bite-Sized Goals



Incentives & Behavioural Biases

- Gamification
- Loss Aversion
- Endowment Effect



Social Influence

- Social Feedback
- Social Norms (Descriptive)
- Market Norms

Theoretical Basis

Processing fluency, which refers to how easily information is processed, effects:

Social Consensus

Individuals are highly influenced by social norms, we are influenced by things that are popular. We tend to assume that things that are familiar are also popular.

Truth

Familiar statements are perceived as more credible.

Future expectations

The easier it is to imagine completing a task, the more likely you are to engage with it.

Expected effort

Easier to read information reduces the amount of perceived effort.

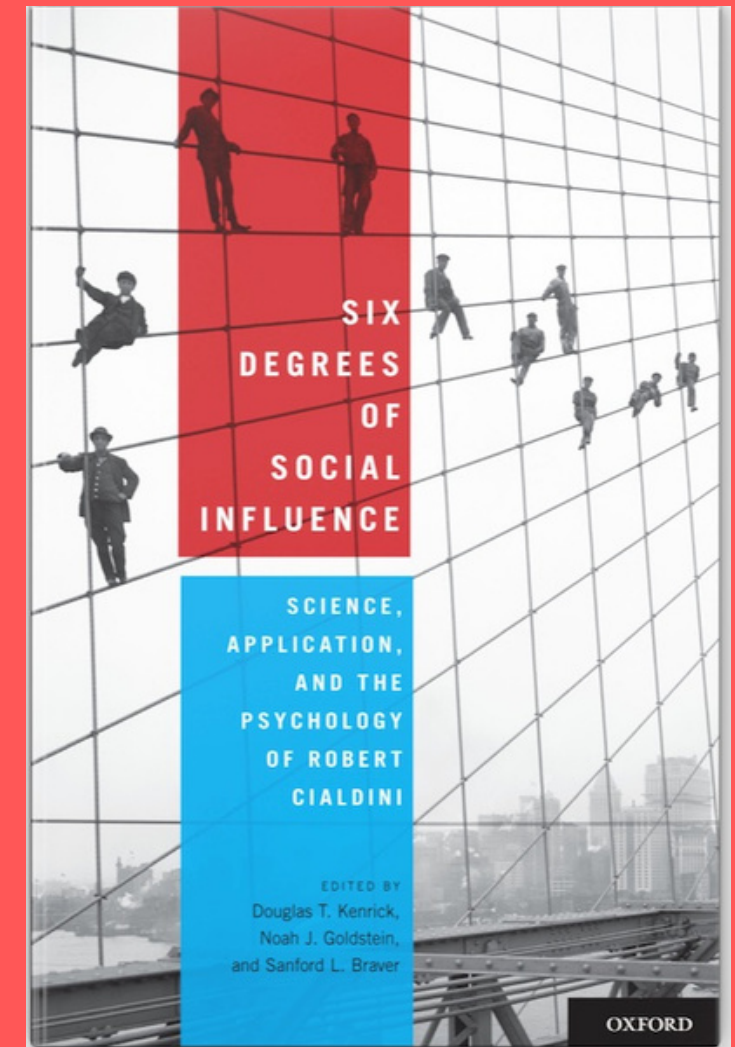
Commitment

Excessive choice can lead to decision paralysis and ultimately dissatisfaction since there are a higher number of opportunity costs.

Liking

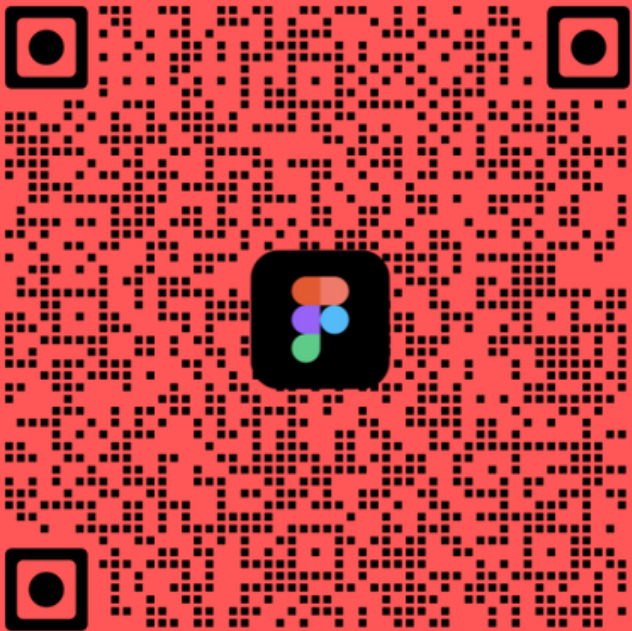
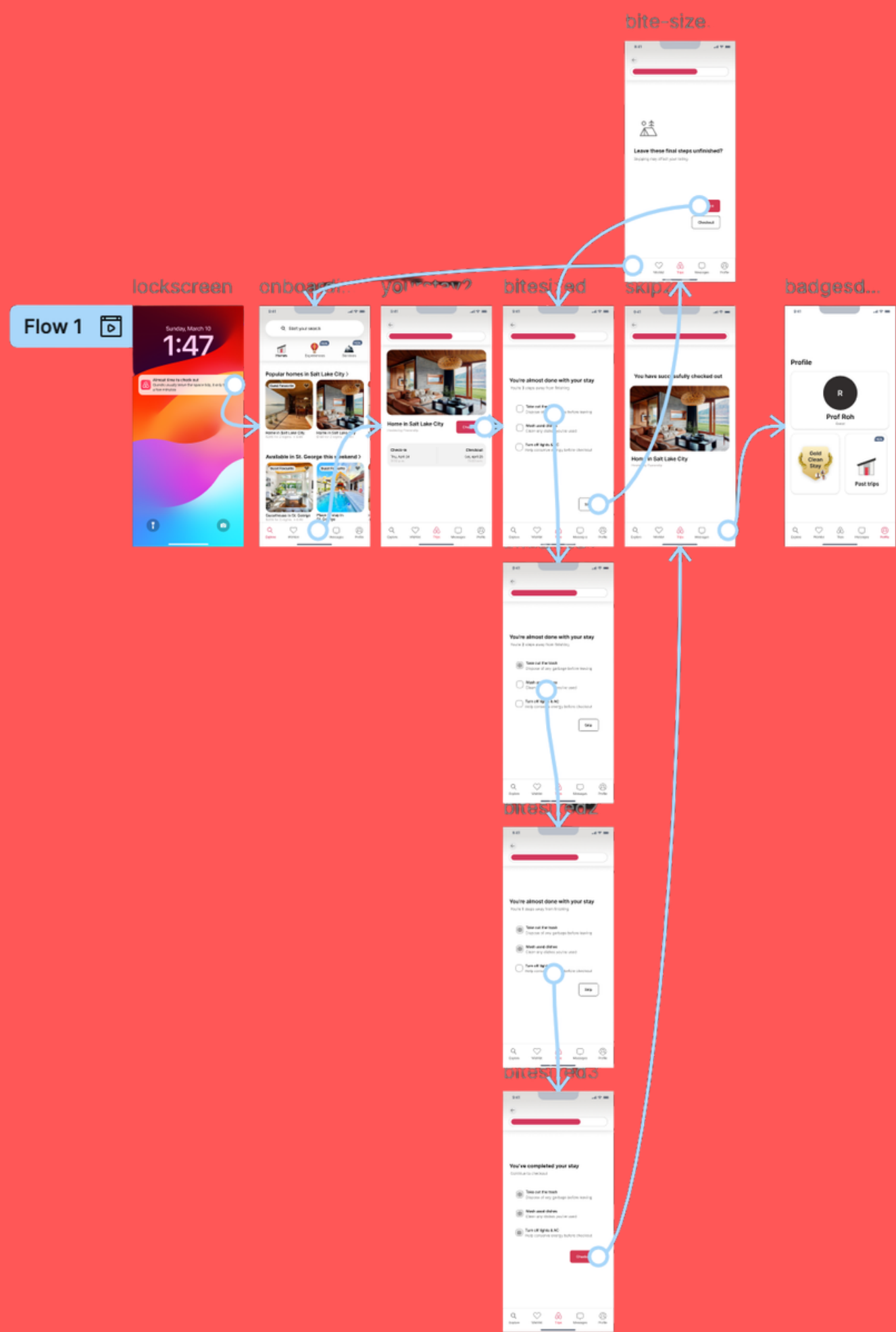
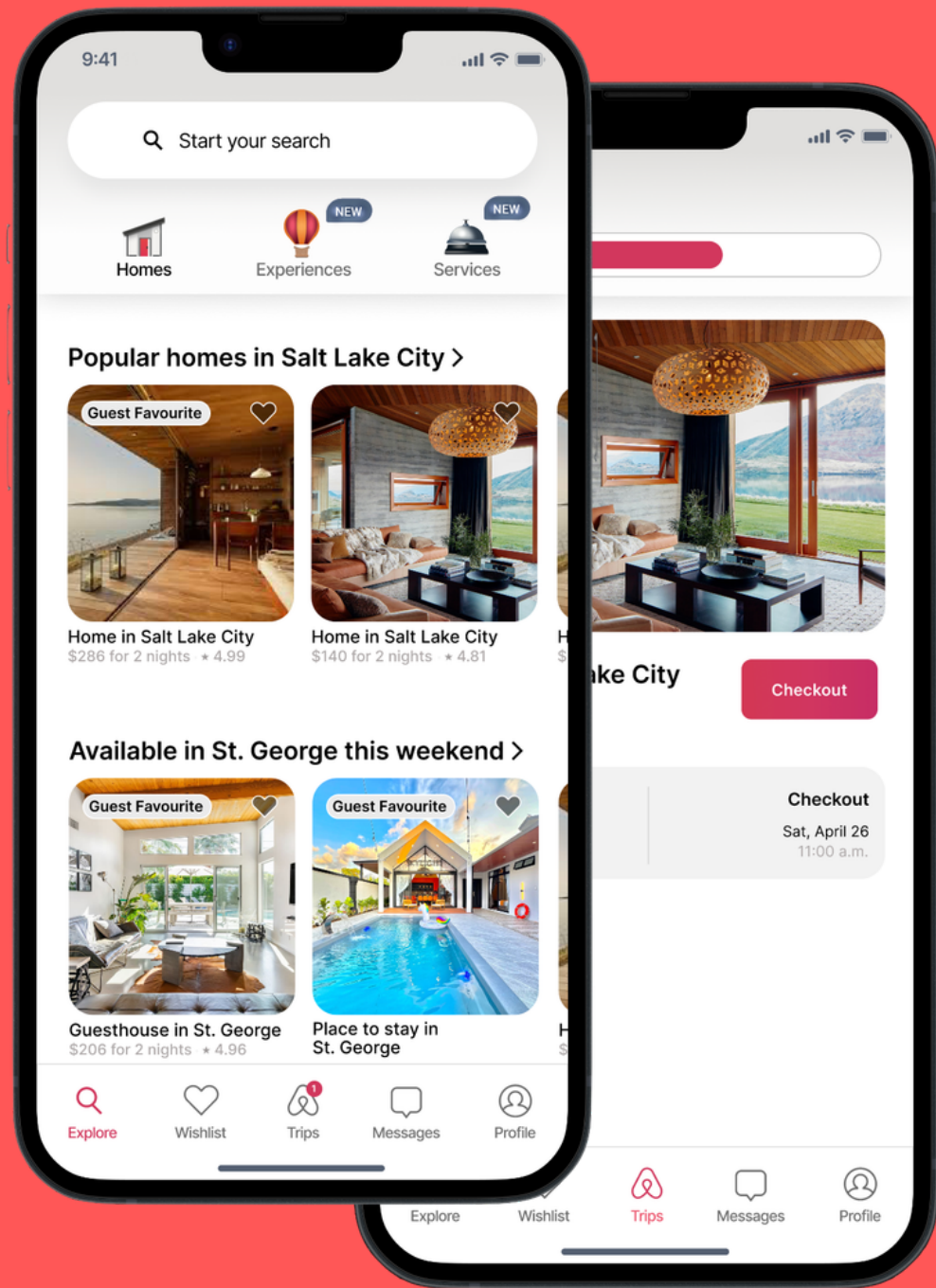
According to the mere exposure effect, the more we are exposed to something the greater our perceived affection towards it.

Clear, simple checklists make cleaning feel easy → increases compliance



Six Degrees of Social Influence,
Chapter 4: **Fluency and Social Influence** by Douglas T. Kenrick,
Noah J. Goldstein, & Sanford L. Braver

Prototype



Scan here to view
prototype

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