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Favoriting is evolving. What used to be stars and thumbs up are now hearts and checkmarks. Two specific redesigns caught my attention recently: Spotify and Trulia. Both companies offer what I believe to be a premium user experience, yet they have changed their users' mental model around favoriting – a move that left me first asking “Why?” and second asking “Was it worth it?”

Spotify got a facelift in April, which received a lot of praise. The darker and flatter feel drastically improved the app's appearance. The downside: they completely changed the way you save music and provided no indication that the change had occurred.

## Spotify

Spotify Desktop

Before the redesign, users would click a star to favorite a song and go to “Starred” to see all their favorites. After the redesign, users click a plus sign that turns into a checkmark and go to “Songs,” a subsection of Your Music, to see all their favorites. Note: creating a new playlist is also represented with a plus sign, potentially causing confusion about content curation vs. content creation.

When I asked other Blinkers about how they save songs using the new Spotify, most didn't know that the plus sign had replaced the star – something that could have been prevented through the use of notifications. To make matters worse, the actions and icons associated with favoriting a song on the mobile app are different from the desktop app. Users tap three dots to see options to save or add a song to a playlist.

## Spotify Mobile App

Spotify Mobile

It turns out that changing the way users favorite items is not uncommon: Cue Trulia. Unlike Spotify, Trulia has made many incremental changes over time. The latest batch included a switch from stars to hearts for favoriting homes. Not a drastic change, however the Trulia mobile app still uses stars. To access the same list of homes, users go to My Saves on the mobile app and My Homes on the desktop website. This failure to recognize the cross-platform experience could cause unnecessary confusion for users who use the app on their morning commute and the desktop website at home.

## Trulia Desktop

Trulia Desktop

## Trulia Mobile App

Trulia Mobile

Changing users' mental model around favoriting is a phenomenal misstep. Visual appeal overshadowed usability in both cases, especially in the absence of user assistance. The app makers have introduced a learning curve where there previously wasn't. If there is a strong reason to make such a major change to the way people use your product, ensure that they are made well aware that the change has occurred with notifications and contextual help. Also, be consistent across all devices as more and more people are accomplishing tasks using multiple devices.