DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Protection or Punishment?
Relating the Design Space of Parental Control Apps and Perceptions About Them to Support Parenting for Online Safety

RQ1: How parental control apps support different parental mediation strategies through different design of features?
RQ2: How the design of features influence children's and parents' perceptions of them?
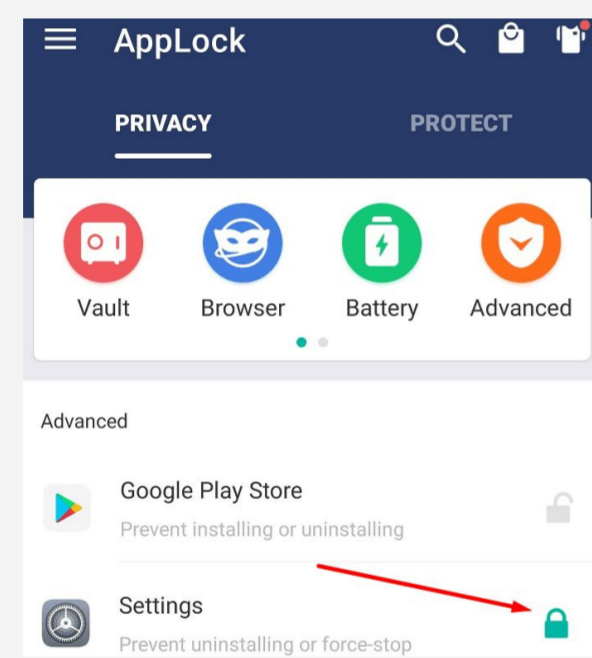
Methodology:
Feature Analysis of 58 parental control apps +
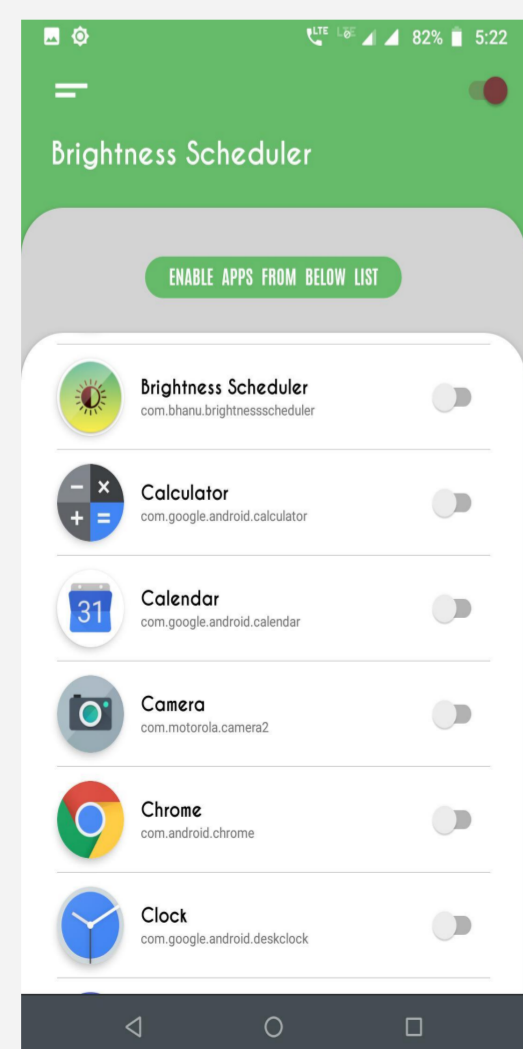Content Analysis of 3264 app review

Granularity

The level of control an app enables parents to do or the level of information given to the parents

"We don't want to know everything"
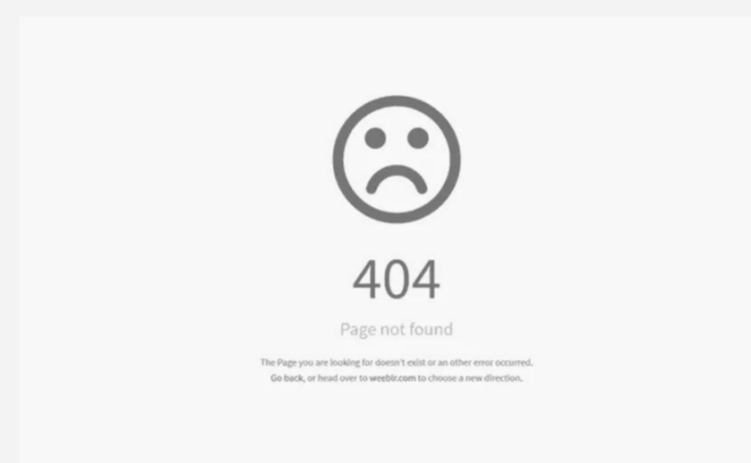

Coarse

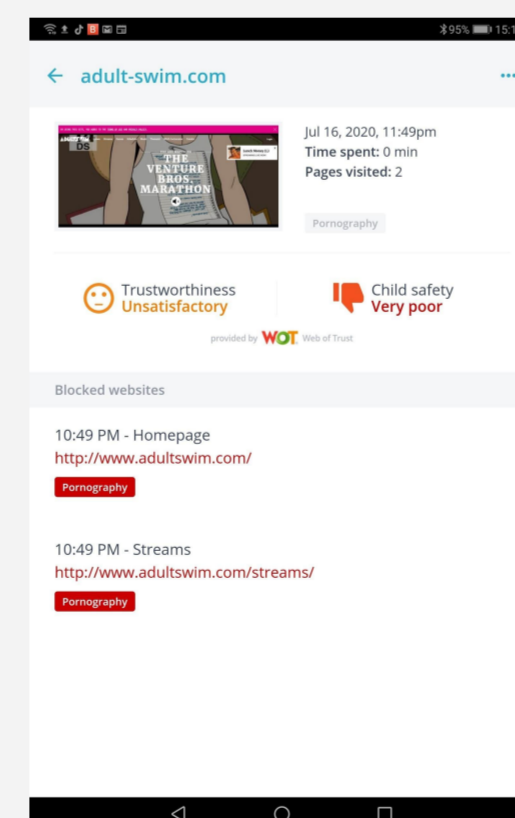*"Lost in choices"*

High

Feedback/Transparency

The different designs that support varied level of information given to the children

"Insecure, and not respected"

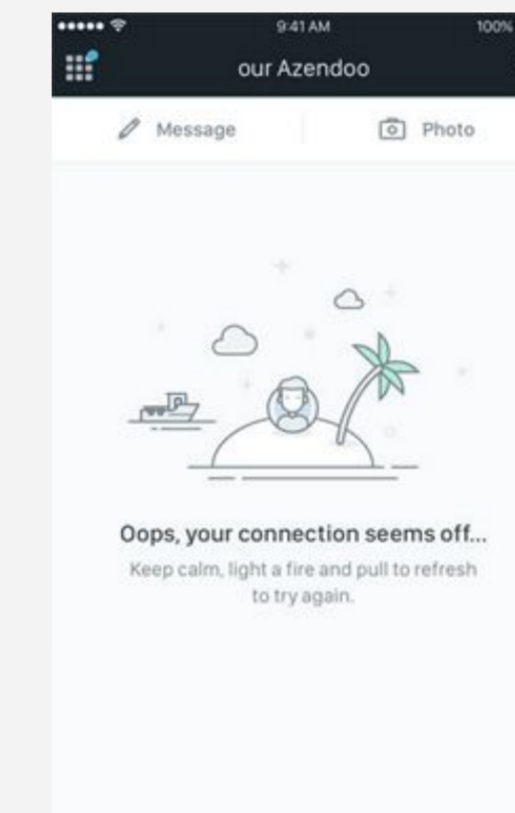**Low**

"Keeping them safe and productive"
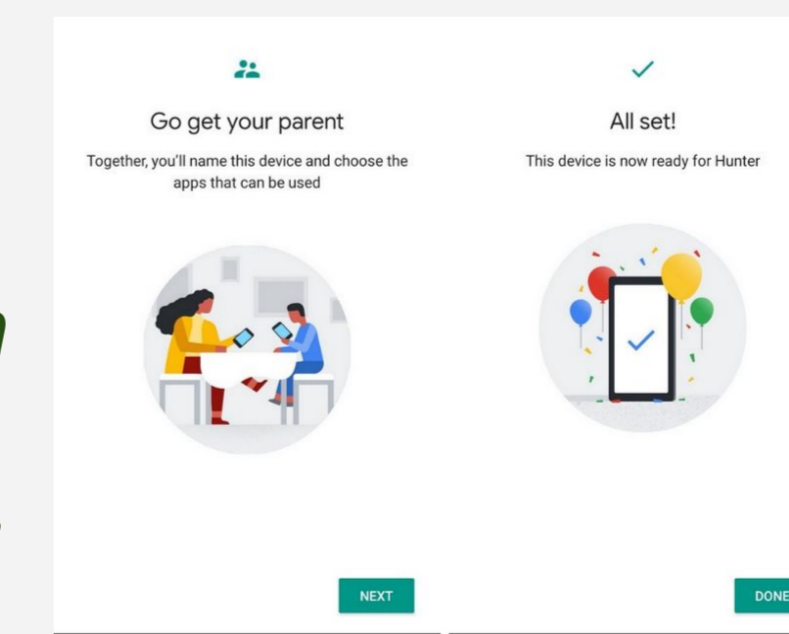

High

Communications Support

The different designs that support varied level of communication between parents and children

"Unnecessary, punishment, and lazy parenting"

Low

"Supports, rather than enacts parenting"

High

Implications for more autonomy-supportive designs

"zone of best practice" - designs perceived most positively by both parents and children

Complementing and pairing restrictions and monitoring features in an age and skill-appropriate manner.