

1. Product Requirements Document

Feature: Mood Meter | Mood-First Content Discovery

MOR 499: Product Management II | April 2, 2026

Executive Summary

Primary Problem: Netflix subscribers, oftentimes, get stuck on deciding what to watch. Genre browsing and percentage match scores are content-first tools that help the user choose what to watch, but they are missing a key component: asking the user how they feel. By building upon this context, existing content tools can be utilized more effectively.

Proposed Solution: The Mood Meter is a mood-first content discovery feature that addresses passive browsing with a more structured and expressive start to any session. Users are able to "pick their vibe" from the home screen, selecting how they feel, tune preferences, and receive a personalized results page included with a top recommendation. This flow is able to be completed within 90 seconds.

1.1 Description

The Mood Meter is a Netflix homepage feature that invites Netflix subscribers to describe their mood prior to selecting the content. Users are able to choose from eight distinct mood tiles (Chill, Hyped, Laugh, Emotional, Scared, Romantic, Mind-Bending, Action), in addition to being able to tune sliders for watch length and content familiarity, ending with choosing the viewing context (Solo, with others, family). After taking in the preferences, a results page will surface with a featured recommendation with a brief explanation connecting the recommendation to the selected mood. This is accompanied by two additionally curated rows. Entry to feature is via the consistent presence on the homepage (through banner), requiring no additional setup time for account information.

1.2 Problem

Within the United States alone, Netflix's library exceeds 7,500 titles, creating difficulty in choosing what to watch, leading to decision fatigue and session abandonment. In 2024, Netflix retired its "Play Something" shuffling feature, creating a gap in passive discovery for subscribers. As it stands, recommendation algorithms are reactive, and surface content based on viewing history rather than present emotional state. Netflix currently does not offer a recommendation tool prior to the session start.

1.3 Why: Evidence & Strategic Rationale

- Decision fatigue is measurable and growing. U.S. streaming viewers now spend an average of 12 minutes per session searching for content, up from 10.5 minutes in mid-2023 (TV Technology, 2024). Globally, viewers spend 110 hours per year deciding what to watch.

- Session abandonment is a direct revenue risk. 19% of viewers abandon a viewing session when content search is unsuccessful, rising to 29% among 18-24 year olds. 49% of subscribers report willingness to cancel a service based on difficulty finding content (Stream TV Insider; UserTesting, 2023).
- Netflix's own shuffle experiment confirms that random discovery is not the answer. Netflix retired its "Play Something" / "Surprise Me" feature in January 2023 due to low usage. The failure of passive randomization validates that users need structured, intention-aware discovery.
- Netflix's OpenAI partnership (April 2025) confirms internal investment in mood and interest-based discovery. The partnership enables natural language queries such as "I want something scary, but not too scary." Mood Meter is differentiated by its visual, structured interface — lowering the cognitive load of open-ended text prompts and making discovery accessible to a broader audience (CNBC; MacRumors, 2025).
- Morning Consult (2023) found that half of all streaming subscribers report regularly being unable to decide what to watch, directly sizing the addressable user base for a feature like Mood Meter.

1.4 Goals & Success Metrics

Metric	SMART Target	Measurement & Timeframe
Mood Meter Entry Rate	20% of homepage sessions enter Mood Meter within 90 days of launch	Homepage funnel analytics: Month 3
Playback Conversion Rate	65% of Mood Meter sessions result in title playback	Session event log: Month 2
Watch Time Uplift	+12% avg watch time for Mood Meter users vs. control group	A/B cohort comparison: Month 4
Return Usage Rate	40% of first-time Mood Meter users return to the feature within 14 days	Retention cohort analysis: Month 3

1.5 Target Audience

Primary: Netflix subscribers aged 18-45 in multi-person households and casual evening viewers who open Netflix without a clear intent. These users are most vulnerable to decision fatigue and most likely to benefit from a structured, mood-first start.

Secondary: Family subscribers on shared profiles who need contextual filtering. Mood Meter's viewing context toggle (Family mode) surfaces age-appropriate content without manual profile switching, reducing friction for household viewing sessions.

1.6 Solution Summary

The Mood Meter consists of three core screens, with the first presenting eight distinct mood tiles, paired alongside optional preference sliders (for watch length and familiarity) as well as viewing context (solo, with others, family). The Results Page presents a featured recommendation with a two to three sentence description tied to the user's mood inputs, in addition to two secondary rows displaying thematically similar options with direct play actions. The Home Entry Point is a constant banner displayed above the first content row within the homepage, directly accessible on all devices without navigation.

1.7 Product Details & Design

Component	Description
Mood Picker (8 tiles)	Chill, Hyped, Laugh, Emotional, Scared, Romantic, Mind-Bending, Action. One tile selectable at a time. Each has a distinct color and icon.
Preference Sliders	Watch Length (Short / Medium / Long). Familiarity (New Discovery / Old Favorite). Both optional.
Viewing Context Toggle	Solo / With Others / Family. Family mode filters by maturity rating. No account changes required.
Results Page	Featured pick with AI reasoning (2-3 sentences referencing mood and preferences). Two curated secondary rows with Play and Add to List actions.
Homepage Entry Point	Persistent banner above first content row. Prompt: "What's your mood tonight?" Visible on mobile, tablet, and desktop.

1.8 Experiment Plan

- Phase 1 — Observe (Weeks 1-8): Deploy Mood Meter to 5% of US subscribers. Track entry rate, session completion, and playback rate with no A/B split. Establish baseline metrics.
- Phase 2 - A/B Test (Weeks 9-20): Mood Meter cohort vs. standard homepage control. Primary metrics: playback conversion and average watch time. Secondary: return usage rate. Test two entry point variants → banner above hero vs. below hero.

- Phase 3 — Iterate (Weeks 21-28): Structured interviews with 20 participants across mood segments. Identify underperforming mood tiles and reasoning quality issues. Iterate before full rollout.

1.9 Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities
Sprint 1: Core Build	Weeks 1-2	Mood picker, preference sliders, results page, homepage entry point
Sprint 2: Instrumentation	Weeks 3-4	Session analytics, mood-to-completion tracking, session memory
Phase 1: Soft Launch	Weeks 5-12	5% rollout to US subscribers. Baseline metric collection.
Phase 2: A/B Test	Weeks 13-24	Full A/B test. Iterate on mood tiles, reasoning quality, entry point placement.
Full Rollout	Week 25+	Pending: 65% playback conversion and +12% watch time uplift thresholds met.

1.10 Future Expansions

- Mood History: Allow users to view their mood patterns over time, generating personalized collections such as "Your Friday Night Mood" or "Your Chill Picks" based on historical selections.
- Social Mood Match: For households with multiple active profiles, surface a shared mood recommendation based on overlapping preferences across two users.
- Mood-Aware Percentage Match: Integrate session mood context into Netflix's existing percentage match scoring to produce a dynamic "Mood Match" score alongside the standard fit score.

Sources.

TV Technology (2024). New Data: Streaming Service Users Are Wasting More Time Looking for Something to Watch. [tvtechnology.com](https://www.tvtechnology.com)

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UserTesting (2023). Stream Fatigue Goes Global: Streaming Media Survey. [usertesting.com](https://www.usertesting.com)

Morning Consult (2023). Half of Streaming Subscribers Can't Decide What to Watch. pro.morningconsult.com

Fast Company (2023). Netflix killed its Surprise Me button. fastcompany.com/90851139

MacRumors (2025, April 18). Netflix's New AI Search Feature Will Understand Your Viewing Moods. macrumors.com

CNBC (2025, May 7). Netflix unveils revamped homepage and app with OpenAI-powered search tool. cnbc.com

What's on Netflix (2024). Netflix Library by the Numbers 2024: Library Swells to Over 7,000 Titles. whats-on-netflix.com

2. Lean Canvas

LEAN CANVAS — Netflix Mood Meter		Mats Mahattanakul · USC Marshall · MOR-499 Product Management		
2 PROBLEM	4 SOLUTION	3 UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION	9 UNFAIR ADVANTAGE	1 CUSTOMER SEGMENTS
<p>CORE PROBLEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision fatigue is severe. Research suggests users spend 15 to 20 min browsing before watching or giving up, with some estimates placing 20% of total streaming time in the browse state Netflix's algorithm is backward-looking. It models what you have enjoyed historically, not how you feel right now. A relaxed Thursday-night mood is invisible to the system Passive solutions have failed. The "Play Something" shuffle was retired in 2024 after users reported distrust in fully random picks with no personal input Unsatisfying picks drive silent churn. Users who settle on content they do not enjoy are less likely to return, even if they never formally cancel <p>EXISTING ALTERNATIVES AND WHY THEY FAIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual scrolling is the dominant behavior, carrying the highest friction and leading to choice paralysis Google and Reddit searches ("what should I watch tonight?") require leaving the app entirely, breaking the session and handing engagement to competitors JustWatch and Letterboxd are third-party tools that require separate logins and do not integrate with Netflix playback Asking friends is asynchronous and unreliable, especially late at night 	<p>NETFLIX MOOD METER: CORE FLOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A "How are you feeling tonight?" entry point lives persistently on the Netflix homepage with no mandatory onboarding required Step 1: User selects one of 8 mood tiles: Chill, Hyped, Emotional, Scared, Romantic, Laugh, Mind-Bending, or Action Step 2: Three sliders refine the session by setting watch length (quick or long-form), familiarity (comfort rewatch or new discovery), and focus level (background-friendly or fully engaged) Step 3: A viewing context toggle lets users specify Solo, With Others, or Family and Kids Output: A curated Mood Session featuring one title with a Mood Match <p>KEY METRICS</p> <p>NORTH STAR Mood Meter Session Start Rate: the percentage of weekly active users who initiate at least one Mood Meter session per week</p> <p>INPUT AND OUTPUT METRICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-to-play: minutes from app open to content start (baseline 18 min, target under 4 min for Mood Meter sessions) Mood Meter banner click-through rate and full flow completion rate (step 1 through step 3) 30, 60, and 90-day retention lift versus matched control group Session completion rate for Mood Meter picks versus non-Mood Meter picks Churn rate delta comparing Mood Meter users against non-users at 90 days <p>GUARDRAIL METRICS <i>Must not increase time-to-play for users who by</i></p>	<p>Mood Meter is the first Netflix feature that asks how you feel right now.</p> <p>For 60 to 70% of Netflix sessions, users open without a title in mind. Mood Meter turns 18 min of browsing into a 30-second intentional choice. Unlike generic "Top Picks" rows, it puts your current emotional state at the center of every session.</p> <p>MOOD METER BY NETFLIX</p> <p>HIGH LEVEL CONCEPT</p> <p>X FOR Y ANALOGY "Spotify Mood Playlists, applied to your entire Netflix evening."</p> <p>As Spotify learns your musical mood to build the perfect playlist, Mood Meter learns your emotional state to build the perfect session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Netflix holds the complete watch histories of 300M+ subscribers, making it the richest mood-to-content behavioral dataset in existence and unavailable to any third party Content metadata already exists. Netflix's algorithm team applies tone, pacing, and emotional tags to every title. Mood Meter is a UI layer on top of infrastructure that is already built Native homepage placement removes all friction. No app switching, no separate account, and no additional onboarding cost for the user In April 2025, Netflix announced an AI-powered natural language search feature built with OpenAI. Mood Meter serves as the structured visual <p>CHANNELS</p> <p>IN-PRODUCT (ZERO MARGINAL COST)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homepage banner featuring "How are you feeling tonight?" is persistent, dismissible, and A/B tested for optimal placement Post-scroll trigger surfaces automatically after 2 or more minutes of browsing when standard row CTR is low Onboarding tooltip introduces Mood Meter to new subscribers during profile setup as a core discovery feature <p>EXTERNAL CHANNELS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Push notification: "It's Friday night. Tell us how you're feeling." Opt-in and sent weekly Email campaign titled "Your Mood Session This Week" targets re-engagement for lapsed users Shareable Mood Session recap card designed for social posting to drive organic word-of-mouth 	<p>PRIMARY MARKET Netflix subscribers aged 18–40; the ~60–70% who open the app without a specific title in mind. Across ~301M global subscribers this represents an addressable base of 180–210M sessions per day.</p> <p>EARLY ADOPTER PROFILES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scroller spends 15 or more minutes choosing before watching. They carry the highest frustration and churn risk, making them Mood Meter's most direct beneficiary The Couple Negotiator represents two people on one account with no easy consensus. Mood Meter provides neutral AI arbitration through a shared mood input flow The Mood Viewer already selects content based on how they feel, but does so manually through genre filters. Mood Meter formalizes a habit they already have The Churned User left Netflix citing "nothing to watch." Mood Meter reframes the issue from catalog size to discovery quality <p>WHO THIS IS NOT FOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Users who open Netflix with a specific title in mind (they go straight to search) Active series watchers (they hit "Continue Watching" immediately)
7 COST STRUCTURE		6 REVENUE STREAMS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ML development & inference: mood-to-content mapping at 300M-user scale; est. \$3–6M initial build, ~\$0.001/session at steady state UX engineering & A/B testing infrastructure for mood picker and session UI Content metadata enrichment: mood/tone tagging of new releases (partially exists; needs Mood Meter taxonomy applied) Model monitoring, retraining & compliance review (GDPR, CCPA) for mood data collection 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subscription retention (primary): 0.5% churn reduction across 301M subs = ~1.5M subscribers saved = ~\$23M/month; even 0.1% = ~\$4.6M/month "Mood Meter Pro" add-on (\$3–5/mo): multi-profile mood memory & offline planning; 5% adoption (~15M users) = \$48–75M/month incremental Studio data licensing: mood preference data guides greenlight & acquisition; est. \$50–150M/year across 3–5 major studio partners Branded mood categories: native sponsorships (e.g., "Cozy Night In, presented by Häagen-Dazs") — revenue without disrupting UX 		

3. Product Backlog + ICE Scores/Explanations

Kaitlyn: **Netflix Social Review Layer**, consisting of an internal review and rating system for all shows. This solves the issue of going to other social media platforms to see the general public's opinions. The target audience is those who are easily swayed by public opinions.

ICE: 5, 0.1, 8 = 4

Impact – This feature will contribute to higher engagement for current Netflix users, as there will be less friction and they will not turn to external apps to help them decide what to watch. However, compared to the other features, I felt that the overall impact on Netflix's metrics as a whole would be less.

Confidence – I placed the confidence quite low because reviews and ratings previously did exist in Netflix but were ultimately removed due to low usage, so there is some concern on whether user interest will convert to use.

Ease – The feature itself is fairly easy to implement, other than concerns about spamming or harmful reviews. Since ratings and review systems are fairly simple, the large concern would be ensuring that reviews are safe and relate to the content through moderation.

Eton: A. **Netflix Movie of the week**, looks to solve the issue of not knowing what to watch, serving users who don't know what to watch. Advantages of this include old films garnering spotlight, synthesis with users creating content on other platforms leading to higher engagement, and people being able to choose a film in a timely manner.

ICE: 7, .3, 8 = 16.8

Impact – If successful, this feature would have a large impact on the goals of Netflix to increase user engagement and watch time. This would also lead to a larger cultural moment around Netflix.

Confidence – I have placed this at a .3 success rate, because there is little to no data that supports this being successful, but through word of mouth, we have seen that it would be a useful feature.

Ease – This feature would be quite simple to implement. The only things that need to be considered are creating a new window to showcase the film of the week, and it would also need consistent support each week. I placed this at an 8 of ease, because building would take ideally less than a month/

Mats: **Netflix Mood Meter** - Asks user how they feel and the vibe they are feeling, and suggests a recommended movie to them.

ICE: 8, 0.5, 7 = 28

Impact - If successfully implemented, this feature will be the first to proactively ask users for the type of show/movie they would like to watch. Being the first of its kind, Netflix will have new technology that is proactive in understanding the user rather than

remaining reactive. This can be key in lowering user time spent picking what they want to watch, reducing the number of cancelled subscriptions month to month.

Confidence - Confidence has been placed at 0.5 largely due to no significant usage of existing or new market data to justify the need. It was a matter of collecting the opinions of peers that struggle to find content to consume, and that a proactive approach would benefit Netflix much more than a reactive approach. The reason this is a 0.5 and not a 0.1 is due to the feasibility in structuring how this feature can be prototyped, implemented, and launched.

Ease - This feature is not the most difficult to implement and see impact. This feature is simply wrapping an AI recommendation tool with Netflix's existing recommendation features. The biggest change would be to demonstrate the existence of this feature on Netflix's homepage. The way to generate impact is relatively easy, as users will see and click on this feature (prominently shown on the homepage), and follow a three step flow to access their recommended series.

Overall, based on the final ICE scores and the creativity of the features themselves, we decided to go with the Netflix Mood Meter feature. We felt that its high ICE score and unique proposition would be most beneficial to Netflix's metrics.

4. Negotiation and Decision-making reflection

How your team negotiated between competing ideas

We initially proposed each feature and provided a detailed description alongside our prototypes. We asked each presenting team member various questions, and quickly and amicably agreed that Mats's Mood Meter feature was the most robust and creative.

Key challenges and disagreements

There were not many challenges or disagreements as all of our team members were content with Mats's feature, although we did ensure that all concerns were addressed prior to ultimately deciding. The majority of our time was spent discussing each feature so that we were all aware of what the feature entailed and how it worked. We did have some minor disagreement about some of the user stories and their sizing, but it was easily fixed.

Compromises made

In terms of compromises, as mentioned earlier, we did so for some of the user stories. Some of us felt that some of the user stories were too broad and covered too much, while others felt they were generally properly sized. To compromise, we changed some of the larger user stories by either adding additional details to prevent loss of information, or broke some down into smaller stories.

Final decision-making process

We ultimately had a cooperative process where we each discussed our ideas or perspectives and were open to adjusting if there were concerns.

Lessons learned about teamwork and prioritization

We learned that open communication was helpful in creating an encouraging environment. Because of this, we were able to comfortably agree and disagree with one another, and come to a final decision.

5. User Stories

Mood Picker Sprint 1

US-01

As a Netflix viewer who doesn't know what to watch, I want to select my current mood from a visual tile interface so that I can communicate how I feel rather than search for a genre.

ACCEPTS

- 8 mood tiles are displayed, each with a distinct icon, label, and color. (Chill, Hyped, Make Me Laugh, Emotional, Scare Me, Romantic, Mind-bending, Action Packed)
- Only one tile can be selected at a time. Selection is visually confirmed before advancing by making tile darker than others.
- Tile labels use natural language (e.g. Chill, Mind-Bending) rather than genre terms.
- No two tiles share the same color or emotional register.
- Each tile includes a short descriptor beneath the label to reinforce its meaning.

Preference Tuning Sprint 1

US-02

As a viewer with limited time, I want to set how long I want to watch so that I am not recommended a three-hour film when I only have 45 minutes.

ACCEPTS

- Watch length slider has a continuous slider ranging from Quick Watch (<30 minutes) to Deep Dive (>3 hrs)
- Results are filtered to match the selected range.

US-03

As a viewer, I want to indicate whether I want something new or a familiar rewatch so that recommendations honor my familiarity preference.

ACCEPTS

- Familiarity slider ranges from Familiar Favorite to Surprise Me.
- Setting impacts whether results skew toward unseen titles or previously watched content.

US-04

As a viewer watching with my family, I want to set my viewing context so that the recommendations are appropriate for everyone in the room.

ACCEPTS

- Viewing context toggle offers three options: Solo, With Others, and Family.
- Family mode suppresses content above a defined maturity rating.
- Can only choose one toggle at a time, when chosen the tile is darker color

Results Page Sprint 1

US-05

As a viewer, I want to see a clearly featured top recommendation with a brief explanation of why it was chosen for my mood so that I trust the pick and feel understood.

ACCEPTS

- Featured card displays title, thumbnail, and 2 to 3 sentence reasoning.
- Reasoning references the selected mood and at least one preference input.
- A Play CTA is visible without scrolling.

US-06

As a viewer, I want to see additional curated rows beyond the top pick so that I have real choices and don't feel locked in.

ACCEPTS

- At minimum two thematic rows appear below the featured card.
- Rows are horizontally scrollable. Each card shows a title and mood or genre tag.

US-07

As a viewer, I want to play content directly from the results page so that there is no extra navigation between finding something and watching it.

ACCEPTS

- Play and Add to List actions are available on the featured card and on row items.
- Neither action requires navigating away from the results screen.

Homepage Entry Point Sprint 1**US-08**

As a viewer landing on the Netflix homepage, I want a visible and inviting entry point into Mood Meter so that I know the feature exists and can access it in one tap.

ACCEPTS

- A Mood Meter banner appears within the first scroll of the homepage.
- Banner includes a short prompt and a single CTA button.
- Entry point is visible on both mobile and desktop breakpoints.

Feedback and Retention Sprint 2+

The following stories are scoped to Sprint 2 and beyond. They depend on core Mood Meter functionality being shipped and stable.

US-09

As a returning Mood Meter user, I want the app to remember my last mood and preferences so that I don't have to reconfigure from scratch on repeat visits.

ACCEPTS

- Previous session mood is pre-selected on re-entry but remains editable.
- Sliders restore to last-used positions.

US-10

As a Netflix product team member, I want to track whether users who enter through Mood Meter complete a viewing session so that we can measure the feature's actual impact on watch time.

ACCEPTS

- Analytics capture Mood Meter entry events, mood selected, and whether a title was played.
- Data is queryable by mood segment.
- A session is considered complete when a title is played for more than two minutes.

6. AI Reflection:

Our group used Claude (Anthropic) as a supplementary tool during this project. The primary prompt we used was asking it to research current data on streaming discovery behavior, which surfaced statistics we referenced in the PRD (TV Technology 2024, UserTesting 2023, Morning Consult 2023). We also used it for general formatting and document structure assistance.

AI was most useful for quickly pulling cited data points and producing clean document templates we could work from. It reduced time spent on formatting so we could focus on the actual product thinking.

Its main limitation was that outputs required significant revision to reflect our actual decisions. The feature concept, strategic framing, user stories, and prioritization were all developed by our group independently. AI contributed scaffolding, not thinking.

Going forward, we'd use it more deliberately as a research and formatting tool while keeping ideation and decision-making within the team. It is essential that ideation and innovation remains human, and we use AI to help bring that thinking forward.