

BeReal RealTalk: Master Specification Document

Feature: RealTalk (Text-Based Discovery & Connection) **Document Type:** Combined PRD, Design Spec, and Engineering Handoff **Platform:** iOS & Android (Mobile Native)

Part 1: Product Requirements Document (PRD)

1. Executive Summary & Vision

- RealTalk is a text-only, anti-vanity feature designed to bridge the gap between BeReal's spontaneous photo moments and meaningful, ongoing discourse.
- By pivoting from visual-only performance to text-based intimacy, RealTalk addresses user retention through a new daily engagement hook.
- It solves the problem of algorithmic echo chambers, performative posting, and social media anxiety.
- It enforces strict physical time constraints and restricts editing capabilities to guarantee that every post is a raw, authentic human thought.
- The resulting feed relies solely on chronological relevance, abstract timestamps, and niche topic tags, completely removing engagement metrics from the visual hierarchy.
- Furthermore, it introduces a frictionless monetization pathway via micro-transactions, allowing users to reward high-quality, authentic thoughts.

2. Core Philosophy & Anti-Vanity Constraints

- To adhere to BeReal's DNA, RealTalk strips away the performative aspects of traditional social media text platforms (like X/Twitter or Threads).
- **Zero Vanity Metrics:** No visible like counts, no follower counts, and timestamps are abstract (e.g., "Earlier today" rather than "12:04 PM"). By stripping away vanity metrics and enforcing a time-limited, uneditable typing canvas, it lowers the stakes of participation and forces unfiltered spontaneity.
- **Raw Input:** Thoughts must be typed in the moment. Pre-meditated, perfectly crafted essays defeat the purpose.

3. Feature Mechanics & Core Logic

- **The 5-Minute Window:** Upon opening the prompt, the user has exactly 5 minutes to draft and submit their response. The duration is exactly 300,000 milliseconds (5 minutes).
- **Copy-Paste Block:** System-level prevention of clipboard pasting to ensure the text is

generated in the moment. Copy-paste actions are hard-blocked at the OS clipboard level.

- **Text Constraints:** The system allows a 500 characters maximum limit. Restrictions enforce 100% text and native emojis only. No rich media, no image attachments, and no URLs are allowed (links auto-convert to plain text).
- **Auto-Formatting:** The system automatically applies **Bold** weight to the first sentence (ending at the first period, question mark, or exclamation point) or the first 50 characters, whichever comes first, to act as a dynamic heading.
- **Visibility States:** Posts tagged *Close Friends* render with a distinct green border and are invisible to non-approved connections.
- **Abstract Timestamps:** Granular timestamps (e.g., "11:42 PM") are hidden. The system calculates and displays abstract strings: *Just now*, *Within the hour*, *Today's Stream*, or *Last Night*.
- **The 60-Second Grace Period:** Once submitted, users have a 1-minute window to "Undo" or delete their post for quality control or immediate regret.
- **Monetization (\$1 Tip):** A frictionless tipping endpoint allows users to send exactly \$1 to creators of compelling RealTalk posts.

Part 2: Design Specification (Design Spec)

1. Visual Aesthetics & UI Guidelines

- **Theme:** Brutalist and Dark Mode-first. The UI utilizes a brutalist, dark-mode-only aesthetic. The canvas should feel like a stark, distraction-free terminal.
- **Background:** True Black (#000000).
- **Typography:** High-contrast White (#FFFFFF) sans-serif. The system uses white monospace text (#FFFFFF). Heavy font weights are used for headers, with highly legible tracking for body text.
- **Components:** Flat UI. No drop shadows, no gradients, and no rounded corners on primary action buttons. The UI utilizes sharp red accents (#FF3B30).
- **Visual Hierarchy:** The primary visual focus is the typing canvas, followed by the progress bar. Vanity metrics (likes, views, retweets) are completely omitted from the DOM.

2. User Journey & Wireframe Flow (11 Screens)

1. **OS Push Notification (The Trigger):** Standard native push. Copy reads: "⚠️ RealTalk: 5 mins to drop a thought 🗣️". Users receive a notification to drop a thought.
2. **App Home / Entry Point (First Contact):** The camera feed is slightly dimmed; a prominent, brutalist RealTalk CTA sits at the top of the feed. Entry can also be triggered by tapping the floating RealTalk icon in the main BeReal feed. Tapping the notification lands the user on a purely rule-based intro screen displaying: "Say it raw. 5 minutes. No edits. No pasting. No clout.". The user taps **[I'm in]**.
3. **Composition Canvas (Empty State & Audience Selection):** The screen reveals a

distraction-free text input area. A large, monospaced **5:00** countdown timer is pinned to the top right. Additionally, a minimalist progress bar at the top of the screen begins shrinking. Before typing, the user toggles their audience via a selector above the keyboard: [ **Global**] or [ **Close Friends**].

4. **Composition Canvas (Active State):** Native keyboard is open. Character count (if capped) displays at the bottom left. The timer is actively ticking down. The user types their thoughts. If they attempt to paste pre-written text, a system toast appears blocking the action. Users gotta lock in text in 5 minutes. Swiping down during composition triggers a destructive modal: *"Discard thought? You can't come back to this."* If confirmed, the draft is instantly wiped.
5. **Categorization:** Before submitting, the user selects a single Niche Tag from a horizontal scrolling carousel of 7 main topics: **1. The Daily Grind** (Focus: Work, school, and professional routines), **2. Arts & Entertainment** (Focus: Media consumption and culture), **3. Passions & Hobbies** (Focus: Things people geek out over and collect), **4. Vibes & Venting** (Focus: Emotional states, times of day, and situational thoughts), **5. Creatures & Companions** (Focus: Pets, animals, and relationships), **6. Health, Sports & Fuel** (Focus: Physical activity, teams, and dining) and **7. Other**. After, users can type in a sub-tag to be more specific (e.g., if you choose #Arts & Entertainment from the carousel you can type in specific **Subtopics**: #Metalcore, #Gaming, #LiveShows, #Movies, #PopCulture). From this page there's no going back to typing.
6. **Submission Trigger:** User hits the stark [**Send it**] button. The screen transitions to a Success Toast reading *"Thought dropped. 🙌"*.
7. **The Grace Period (Screen 6):** The canvas locks. A progress bar or circular timer visually counts down 60 seconds. A large "UNDO" button is the only available interaction. This functions as an [**Undo / Delete**] button to catch immediate, critical typos.
8. **Niche-Specific Discovery Feed:** After 60 seconds, the post goes live. This is the global/niche feed. The user is routed to the chronological Niche Feed, where their post appears with the first sentence auto-bolded and an abstract timestamp (e.g., *"Just now"*). Text blocks are staggered algorithmically. No vanity metrics are visible on the cards. There's gonna be a search bar on the top of the feed, for search of specific topics or subtopics.
9. **Detail View (Deep-Dive):** Expanding a specific user's RealTalk post to read it in full screen. The user taps another person's post to enter the Thread View.
10. **Interaction State:** The bottom drawer offers two actions: "Reply" (which triggers its own timer) or "Tip". From here, they can read anonymous replies, tap the [**+**] **Add Friend** button (The Friendship Bridge), or tap [ **Drop a Tip**] to send a frictionless \$1 creator tip via a bottom sheet.
11. **Tipping Endpoint (\$1 Tip) & Confirmation:** Triggering the tip opens the native iOS Apple Pay / Android Google Pay bottom sheet for a frictionless, 1-click transaction. A brutalist, flashing success toast (e.g., *"Tip Sent."*) appears before reverting to the Discovery Feed.

Part 3: Engineering Handoff

1. Component States & Behaviors

The Timer (NTP-Synced)

- 05:00 to 01:00 -> Default color (White). The progress bar is white during default typing.
- 00:59 to 00:15 -> Warning color (Yellow/Orange).
- 00:14 to 00:00 -> Critical color (Red) and subtle pulsing animation. The progress bar turns #FF3B30 (Red) in its expiring phase (last 15%).
- *Visibility Configuration*: Display as a smooth, continuous horizontal progress bar anchored to the top safe area. No digital ticking clock to prevent panic, though the monospaced timer exists as the primary UI element.
- *Interaction/Expiration*: When the timer hits 00:00, the keyboard automatically dismisses, the text field disables, and a modal forces the user to either "Publish As Is" or "Discard". At exactly 0ms, the keyboard forcefully dismisses and input is disabled. If the text field is empty, the user is routed to a "Timeout" screen. If text exists, a bottom sheet prompts: "Time's up. Send as is, or scrap it?". The disabled canvas darkens, the keyboard dismisses, and a red 0:00 placeholder flashes once.

The Text Canvas

- *Clipboard Event*: If a user attempts to paste text, intercept the onPaste event. The OS-level React Native / Swift / Kotlin framework must grant the app explicit permission to disable clipboard paste events specifically within the RealTalk TextInput component.
- *Error Toast*: Fire an error message stating, "RealTalk means real typing. Pasting is disabled.". Visually, the screen shakes slightly, and a secondary toast format appears: "Paste blocked. Say it raw.".

The Tipping Button

- *State 1*: Default (Outline button, text: "\$1 Tip").
- *State 2*: Loading (Spinner while Native Pay sheet is open).
- *State 3*: Success (Filled button, green text: "Tipped!").

Additional Dynamic Notifications & Alerts

- *Loading (System Processing)*: Screen dims, text reads "Locking it in..." with a pulsing 3-dot animation.
- *Time Warning*: Toast appears at 30 seconds remaining: "30 seconds. Wrap it up.".
- *Topic Mute*: Long-pressing a tag triggers a bottom sheet. Upon selection, a toast confirms: "Topic muted. Feed refreshed.".

2. Edge Cases & Error Handling

- **App Backgrounding & Crashes**: If the user sends the app to the background while drafting, the timer *must continue running* in the background. The system logs the exit timestamp. Upon returning, the system calculates the delta. If they return after 5 minutes have elapsed, they are met with the "Time Expired" locked screen. The session is killed,

routing to the "Timeout" screen. If the app crashes, the draft is permanently lost (no persistent disk caching for drafts).

- **Network Loss During Submission:** If connection drops during the 5-minute typing window, the timer continues relying on the device's local delta time. If the user attempts to publish with no internet connection, cache the text locally with an encrypted timestamp. Display a banner: *"No connection. Draft will wipe in [X:XX] if not reconnected"*. Upload immediately upon reconnection. If connection is not restored within 5 minutes, the draft is wiped to maintain the real-time integrity of the feed.
- **Payment Failure:** If the native payment sheet returns an error, the tip button reverts to State 1. Display a subtle snackbar: *"Transaction failed. Try again."*. Alternately display: *"Card declined. Creator wasn't tipped."*
- **Empty States:** If a Niche Feed (e.g., #Vibes & Venting) has no posts from the last 24 hours, the screen displays: *"Dead quiet in here. Be the first to drop a thought."*. If a thread has no replies, the input box placeholder reads: *"Nobody's said anything yet. Say something."*
- **API Failure Messages:** On submission failure, display: *"Network hiccup. Tap to retry."*

3. Security, Moderation & Compliance

- **Automated Moderation:** Natural Language Processing must instantly scan text submissions for hate speech, self-harm, or severe community guideline violations before the post hits the discovery feeds. All text payloads pass through an automated NLP content moderation API (scanning for hate speech, self-harm, and CSAM) during the "Locking it in..." loading state *before* database insertion. Flagged payloads are shadow-banned (visible only to the author).
- **In-Line Reporting:** Users can double-tap any post to trigger a "Report Post" bottom sheet. Accumulating 3 unique reports temporarily hides the post pending manual human review.
- **Data Retention:** To align with BeReal's ephemeral philosophy, posts automatically expire and are purged from the front-end Global Feed after 24 hours. The data is temporarily cached in secure backend cold storage for exactly 30 days for legal/compliance auditing, after which it is permanently destroyed via automated cron jobs.

4. Technical Architecture & Dependencies

- **Time Synchronization:** The application relies on Network Time Protocol (NTP) syncing on app initialization. The 5-minute countdown must be tied to Network Time Protocol, meaning users cannot manipulate their device's local clock to gain more time. The 5-minute timer logic must validate against the server timestamp (not the local device clock) to prevent users from manipulating their OS time settings to gain infinite typing time.
- **Real-Time Architecture:** The Global and Niche Feeds require WebSockets or Server-Sent Events (SSE) to ensure that posts, abstract timestamps, and anonymous

replies populate in real-time without requiring a manual pull-to-refresh.

- **Backend Throughput:** The infrastructure assumes the use of an in-memory data structure store (e.g., Redis) to handle high-throughput, read-heavy chronological feeds and automated 24-hour TTL (Time-To-Live) data expiration natively.

5. Telemetry & Success Metrics (Analytics Tracking)

- Since there are no vanity metrics for the user, internal tracking is paramount for product health. Engineering must implement event hooks for:
 - `realtalk_canvas_opened`: Tracks top-of-funnel conversion from the push notification.
 - `realtalk_timer_expired`: Tracks how many users fail to complete their thought in 5 minutes.
 - `realtalk_undo_triggered`: Tracks usage of the 60-second grace period.
 - `realtalk_paste_attempt`: Tracks how often users try to cheat the system.
 - `realtalk_tip_successful`: Tracks monetization volume per day.