Chronicling Life, Creating Memories
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Problem Domain & Studio Theme

We are in the creation studio, exploring the domain of how people chronicle their daily lives.

Initial POVs

1 **We met** Rahim and Marie, two power users.
We were amazed to realize that they journaled so extensively.
It would be game-changing to allow them to easily look back on their lives by giving them the ability to organize and search their vast amounts of content.

2 **We met** several intermediate users in their 30s-40s.
We were amazed to realize that they enjoy looking back on memories but don't put in the effort to chronicle their lives each day.
It would be game-changing to enhance their enjoyment of journaling and make it faster and easier.

3 **We met** non-users.
We were amazed to realize that they thought journaling detracted from their lives.
It would be game-changing to change their perception of what journaling entails and the time investment necessary to journal.

Additional Interviews

When conducting our second round of interviews, we wanted to incorporate the feedback we received. We focused on going a level deeper in order to understand our potential users' deeper seeded needs. We also wanted to see if we could garner insights connecting our different groups of users. During interviews with Laura (18), Kat (21), Kim (45), and Joyce (22), we shed new light on our users. They were excited by storing journals on the cloud to protect from loss. They felt most connected to the events and thoughts about which they wrote when being able to express those things in multiple ways (video, audio, etc). They reaffirmed that looking back at old entries was a huge part of the motivation for journaling; they wanted a place to go that they could connect to specifically and spatially.

Deeper-Seeded Needs

1 **Optimism** to put perspective on the day: finding the good things that happened, acknowledging and releasing the bad things to move forward

2 Self-Improvement   to solidify thoughts and make them concrete, to better understand your genuine self and be true to your identity, to learn from the past, to achieve personal goals

3 Nostalgia   to eternalize memories to be able to reminisce and reflect on change to evoke good feelings of nostalgia

Revised POVs

1 We met Kat
We were amazed to realize there are implicit aspects of expression (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) that she is unable to convey in written words in her diary/letters
It would be game-changing to capture these feelings by creating a more multi-sensory journaling experience

2 We met Rahim
We were amazed to realize that he has written more than 1,000 journal entries in one Pages document.
It would be game changing to enable Rahim to eternalize and reflect on his memories with greater organization and ease but still retain the flexibility that his Pages document affords.

Sample HMWs

POV1   **HMW** make Kat feel more emotionally connected to the written words in her journal?
HMW make the journaling experience feel like she is talking to a friend?
HMW capture the realness of live expression through a mobile device?
HMW allow Kat to express herself without using words at all?

POV 2   **HMW** give Rahim an easy way to call up any entry?
HMW give Rahim a way to see all entries at once?
HMW assign a spatial relation to each journal entry?
HMW get Rahim to journal less?
HMW show Rahim patterns and changes in his entries' content and frequency?

Top HMWs

1   **HMW** organize and make sense of existing content? **(POV 2)**
2   **HMW** integrate journaling with various daily habits? **(POV 2)**
3   **HMW** capture the realness of live expression through a mobile device? **(POV 1)**

Experience Prototypes

EP 1: Automatically analyze trends in the user's content, sort entries based on content type and sentiment, and display it intuitively. (Addresses HMW 1)

This prototype tested the assumption that people want a visceral and physical means of expressing their emotions. We created an iPhone screen shape and gave it to users and asked them to pretend that they were looking at the application for the first time. The concept prompts the user to do an action based on how they feel e.g., shake for stress. We tested on Kenaba (18) and Anthony (20), both of whom do not regularly journal. Kenaba did not feel particularly stressed during the interview, but shaked the phone moderately for fun. Anthony also did not feel particularly stressed during the interview. Interestingly, he associated a more vigorous shake with low stress.
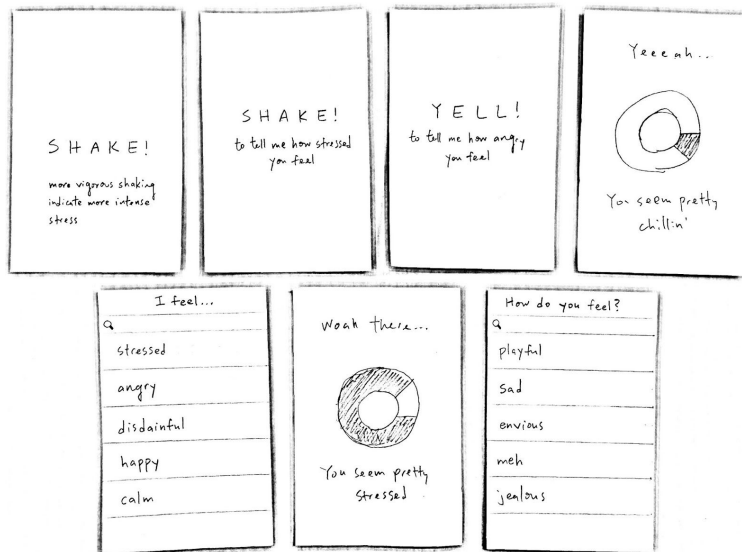

We learned that different people associate feelings with different intensities of different physical actions. We also learned that people would use the application for fun and imagined that it would "cheer them up" if they were stressed. They said they would be more likely to use it as an entry point for a journal entry i.e. if we prompted them to write an entry about "why they were stressed," they would be more likely to answer that question after shaking the phone. Overall, we found that the assumption was valid. The physical means of expressing their emotions offers an effective entry point to convey emotions.

EP 2: Automatic content generation based on the person's use of the phone that day. (Addresses HMW 2)

We assumed that people want to easily understand what their daily activities are like and how they change over time. In order to make the prototype, we created an iPad screen shape and

gave it to users, asking them to pretend that they were writing a journal entry. We fed them various sample inputs of their usage of different apps that day (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Fitbit, etc.) to give to users to understand which, if any, they would be interested in pinning to their journal entry. We talked to 5 people between the ages of 18 to 28, some intermediate journalers and some avid journalers, and asked them which of the inputs if any they would be interested in pinning to their journal entry.
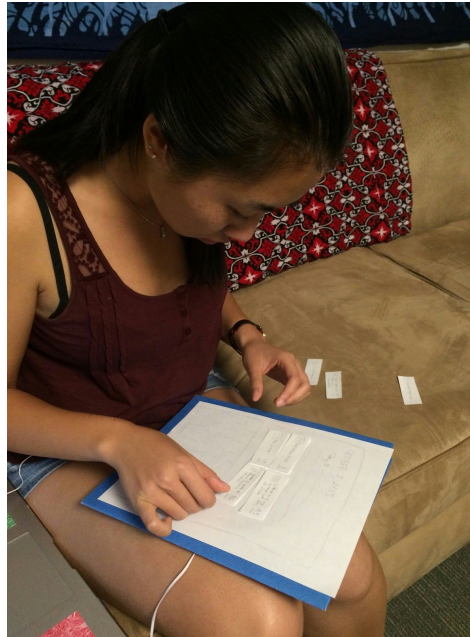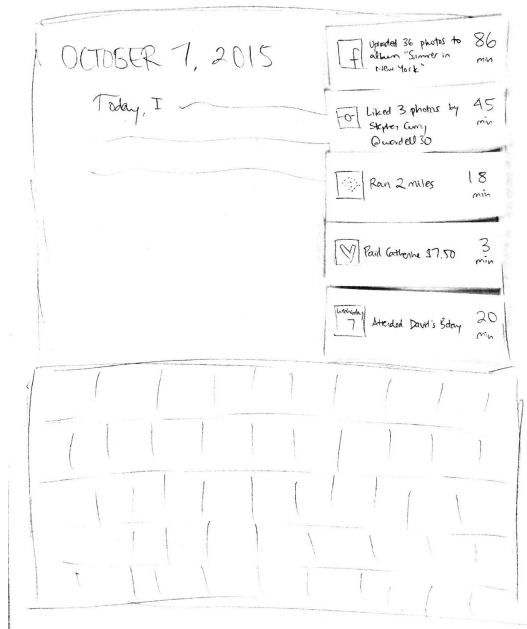

The response we received was polarizing; while one person we talked to hated the idea, everyone else loved it. Adrienne (28), an avid journaler, did not appreciate any form of digital journal at all, feeling that any journaling app added an unnecessary technological layer between her physical journal and her thoughts. However, Jazzy (18), a freshman who has been on a weight loss program for two years, said she would be interested in better understanding her daily fitness progress. Senior Jessica (21) said she was an active Facebook user and would be interested in pinning that to her journal entry and seeing how her Facebook usage changed over time. We learned that people have different daily habits and thus would require a personalized means of choosing which apps they may want to pin to their journal entry.
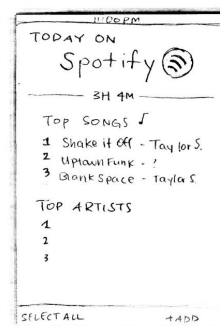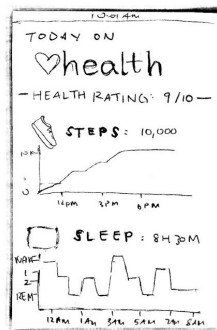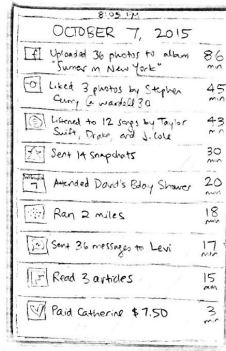
Thus, we found that the idea of viewing your daily digital footprint was indeed valuable, but to a younger user base that used technology more often.

EP 3: Automatically analyze trends in the user's content, sort entries based on content type and sentiment, and display it intuitively. (Addresses HMW 3)

Our core assumption here is that a spatial representation is more intuitive and therefore preferable to a written representation. In order to test it, we cut out a smartphone screen shape to create the correct size interface because the visual part was crucial. Then, we grouped the entries based on different factors (chronology, related content, and search query) and made a journal "look" for each. The user can toggle through the different looks and explore each by dragging a finger across the screen to reach more and more entries. We tested with Nico Sanchez (20), an intermediate user. For the text, we told him that he had several journal entries with titles and that his task was to look back through them. As he did this, he told us how the task made him feel and think. He was very pleased overall with the feeling that his journal was in a 'place' that he could look through. He experimented with the "Storylines" mode and the "Chronology" mode and liked Storylines much better. When telling him to search a keyword he wanted, "Mary," he didn't understand at first that the view had changed to show entries most related to his query.
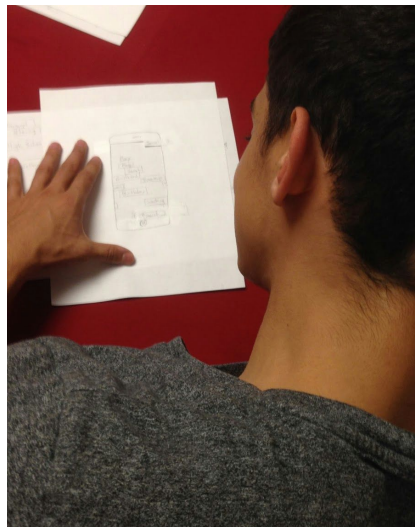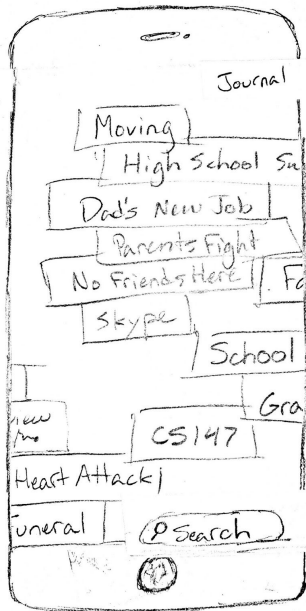
The visualization of the entries seemed to work well. Nico referred to it as "free, because there's an actual space here that I can move around in." He also thought it was fun to "run around" this spatial map and look for storylines. He found the "Search" feature to be intuitive as well, and we learned that the clusters can reveal connections between entries. However, we note that the chronological structure was less appealing than expected; Nico said it best when he stated, "a line with numbers kills my appreciation of it." The assumption seems valid since our user was completely engrossed in the "world" of entries the entire time. A new insight emerged here: that people want to connect to a physical journal, regardless of the medium of entry; Nico, for example, thought that the app might be more compelling in a "book" format.

Most Successful Prototype

The most successful prototype was prototype #2, which provided automatic content generation based on the person's daily digital footprint. Although we encountered one user who was strongly opposed to the concept of a mobile journal in any capacity, several others loved the idea of having a consolidated place to view their daily digital activity and optionally add it to a daily journal entry. One of our key insights was that different users find information about different apps to be valuable; one user may find health apps to be most interesting to add to a daily journal entry while another user may find time spent on social media to be most interesting to add to a journal entry. For the intermediate users who may not have something in particular they want to write about on a given day, this automatic content generation would be especially useful. However, it would also make sense to give users the option to just have a blank canvas for the cases in which creativity strikes and they know exactly what they want to write about.