CROWD POWER:

Online Marketplaces

POVs and Experience Prototypes

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INITIAL POINT-OF-VIEW

We met Lorena. We were amazed to realize that Facebook was her go-to website for things like event tickets or hard-to-get items. It would be game-changing to facilitate buying & selling of items through Facebook.

Going into testing, we started with Lorena's POV, which we developed during the Crowd Power studio. We were interested in directing further needfinding to expand, confirm, or debunk our existing questions and insights and create more POVs for a more comprehensive view of online marketplaces.

ADDITIONAL NEEDFINDING RESULTS

In addition to our three interviews from the previous week (with Daniel, Matt, and Lorena), we conducted additional needfinding by interviewing Bayian and Miji. We looked for candidates that would represent an even wider range of potential users, from the standpoint of both age and varied usage of online marketplaces.

Bayian, *an electrical engineering student at Stanford and an avid user of social networks.*

*Phone interview with **Miji**, mom of three kids and a fan of large online marketplaces like Amazon.*

The new needfinding results helped us confirm some of our existing insights; for example, how friends' recommendations and reviews increased the sense of reliability, and how a trustworthy interface could help users feel secure when making online purchases. We also covered a number of new insights, as well as a few tensions and contradictions. Bayian told us a story about a terrible experience he had purchasing soccer cleats, and the importance of reviews as well as good customer service. Miji related a story that revealed that while reviews and recommendations may be helpful, some sellers may try to artificially boost their ratings through other means. Hence, we found a need for more honest, unbiased ratings.

REVISED POINT-OF-VIEWS

POV 1: We met Miji. We were amazed to realize how far people and 3rd party sellers were willing to go to keep their ratings up. It would be game-changing to design a new rating system that reflects the quality of products/sellers accurately.

Sample HMW statements (see Appendix for a full list of HMWs):
- How might we normalize buyers' expectations so that ratings will be consistent?
- How might we help the users so that they can write high quality reviews and put each review in a certain context?

POV 2: We met Lorena. We were amazed to realize that Facebook was her go-to website for things like event tickets or hard-to-get items. It would be game-changing to leverage people's social networks to facilitate buying & selling of items without frustration.

Sample HMW statements:
- How might we connect users with friends who are selling what they need?
- How might we provide users with a way to sell and purchase time-sensitive products?

POV 3: We met Bayian. We were amazed to realize that he deemed secure arrival of items as one of the most important aspects of online marketplaces. It would be game-changing for an online marketplace to offer the advantages of crowdsourcing while guaranteeing reliable shipping and delivery of orders.

Sample HMW statements:
- How might we improve the user experience of obtaining purchases?
- How might we track customer needs?

SOLUTIONS

3 BEST HOW-MIGHT-WE'S	3 BEST SOLUTIONS
How might we provide users with a way to sell and purchase time-sensitive products? (Lorena)	Ticket Market
How might we help the users so that they can write high quality reviews and put each review in a certain context? (Miji)	Five Favorites
How might we improve the user experience of obtaining purchases? (Bayian)	Yard Sale

PROTOTYPE #1: Ticket Market

Tester: Jeff K.

What it is:

A platform devoted to buying and selling tickets for shows, concerts, and festivals

Assumptions:

- The time-sensitive nature of tickets require a different form of online marketplace platform
- There is enough interest for people to buy and sell tickets last minute
- People want a different platform for time-sensitive items in general

How did you make the prototype?

First we put ourselves in the shoes of a ticket buyer and a seller using our own experiences, and wrote down features that might be essential in this platform; for instance, the prototype would need a way for ticket buyers to search for specific events, view detailed information for each listing (including price and details of the event). The prototype would also need ways for ticket sellers to interact with different buyers and to upload information about the tickets they are selling.
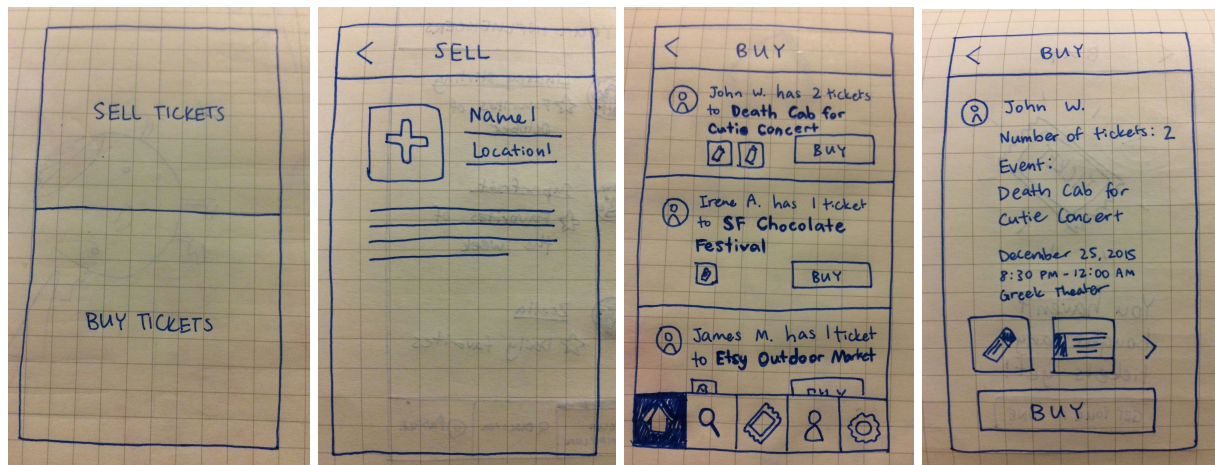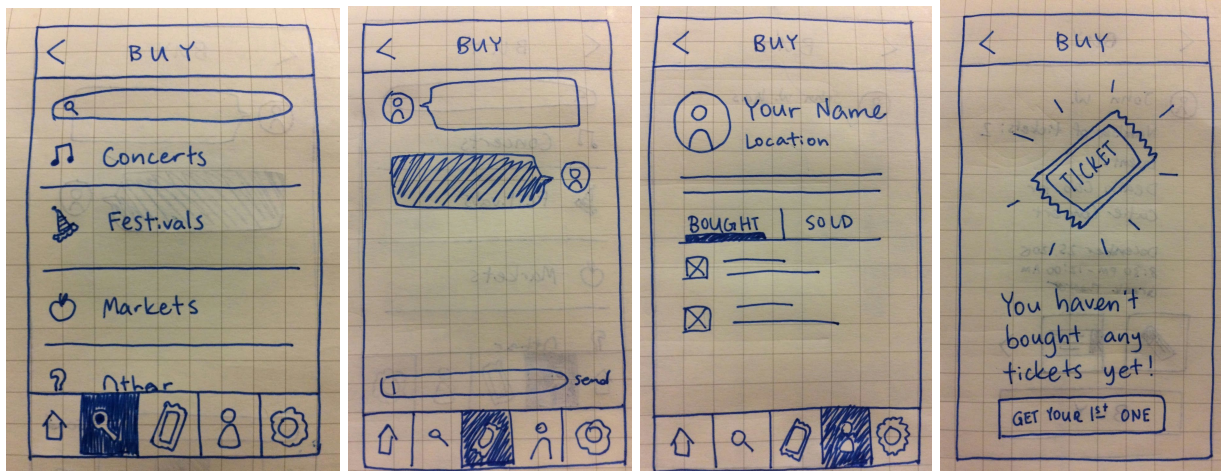
How did you test the prototype?

For this prototype, we set the scene for Jeff as a student who bought tickets for an EDM festival months ago, but decided not to go because he had an assignment due very soon. We first asked some questions and recorded his answers in a situation without introducing him to our prototype; then we put him in the same situation, and asked him to walk us through his interaction with the prototype. As he tested it, we put him in various possible situations within the context of the prototype to test the assumptions we highlighted above. Please refer to Appendix B for an example of a testing script, and Appendix C for a sample of questions we asked outside the script to explicitly test our assumptions.

What worked? What didn't? What did you learn?

- **Worked:** People already post this kind of content – but they are sending out mass emails and posting in Facebook groups where it could get lost
- **Didn't work:** More brainstorming around privacy is needed; Ensure that people will be reached out to within a trusted network – don't want it to turn into a Craigslist-like community
- **Surprises:** Being able to sort by time-sensitive event (examples: concerts, festivals) is a huge plus – "On social media, I can't find the events I want to go to. Everything is up to chance."
- **Learnings:** Having a way to more easily enter the ticket information would be a plus; Sorting is good, but search would be even more helpful – for example, finding an extra ticket for "Taylor Swift concert"

Was the assumption valid? Why or why not? Any new assumptions that emerged?

Our assumption was valid! From our interview with Jeff, we found users are looking for a way to purchase time-sensitive items like tickets from other people without the awkwardness of asking publically on Facebook.

PROTOTYPE #2: 5 Favorites

Tester: Sarah K.

What it is:

A platform where users can share their five favorite products each month and see trending items; like existing social media paradigms such as LinkedIn influencers and power bloggers, users would be allowed to follow others so that people would begin to develop trust for avid users.

Assumptions:

- People are interested in other people's favorites.
- People don't have a good platform where they can see trending items.
- People are interested in products/"things" that are trending right now: people want the latest "it" items.
- People enjoy sharing their favorites.
- People will develop trust for other people who consistently recommend great items or have many followers.
- The platform won't be induced to companies "spamming" with their items.

How did you make the prototype?

This prototype touches on a slightly different aspect of online marketplace, namely the reviewing and rating system. Based on the interviews and the assumptions, we concluded that people want a more personalized and detailed rating platform. This means the platform needs to be able to focus on allowing users to get more information that is specific to the user and has much more context than a typical online marketplace review system. Being able to discover new things would also be useful. Also, we would need to regulate the quality of the reviews by restricting each user to only post 5 items per month so that users will post things that they truly liked.
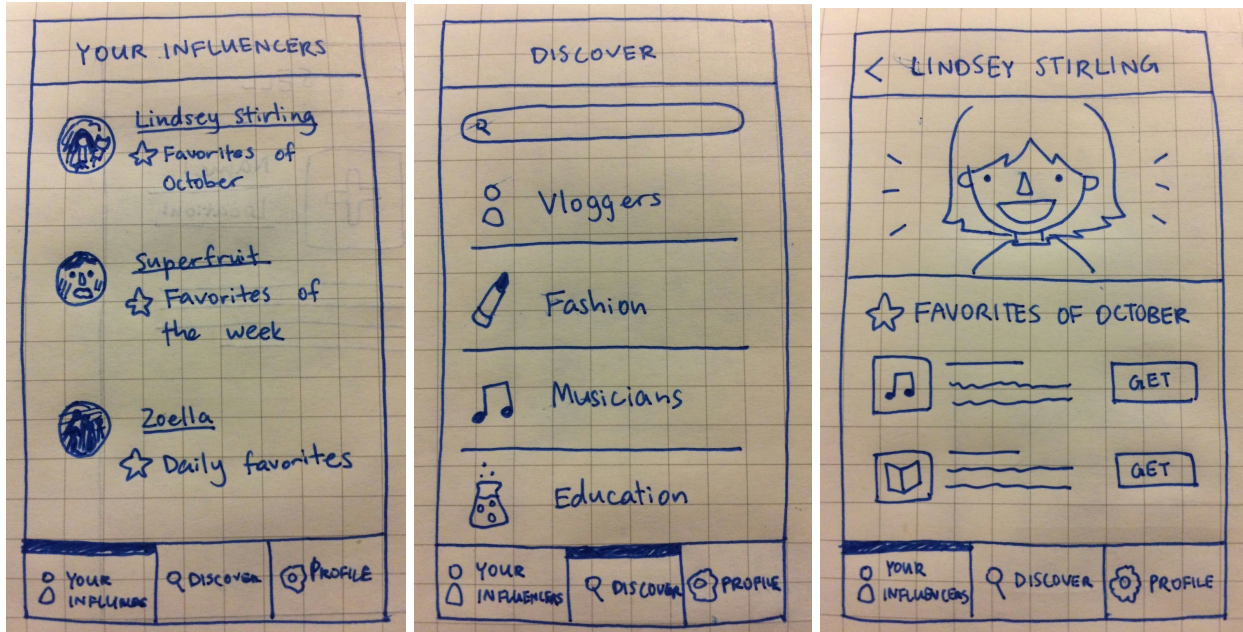
How did you test the prototype?

We put Sarah in the role of a college student looking to replace her go-to eyeliner. We first asked her to tell us what she would do without revealing the stereotype, trying to find out how much she relies on her friends, beauty bloggers, web magazine articles online, etc. Then we placed her in a situation where she knew of some popular Youtube stars who vlog about beauty products and fashion, and introduced her to the prototype. We asked her to walk us through her interaction

with the prototype, posing different hypotheticals related to the assumptions we wanted to test.

What worked? What didn't? What did you learn?
- **Worked:** She is interested in knowing what the trending or the latest "it" items are and wouldn't mind sharing her favorites with strangers
- **Didn't work:** People need to rate a lot of things for platform to be effective; Not everyone cares about YouTuber recommendations
- **Surprises:** "There is something like this in Korea called Pikicast"; while she doesn't really care about other people's recommendations, if she by chance finds someone she really likes, she would follow the person and trust that the person will post great reviews
- **Learnings:** This could be a platform useful as a trend but not necessary as a necessity

Was the assumption valid? Why or why not? Any new assumptions that emerged?

The assumption wasn't as valid as we had expected. We thought people would find it useful to hear about other people's top favorites, but we found in our interview with Sarah that not everyone finds this concept interesting. Sarah didn't care what other people thought -- even if the recommendations are from famous people. All she wanted was affordable, good products. However, our assumption that people like seeing the trending items turned out to be valid and would search for the latest "it" items. Our new assumption therefore is that people aren't necessarily curious about seeing what other people like, but may be more inclined to traditional text reviews.

PROTOTYPE #3: Yard Sale

Tester: Cindy W.

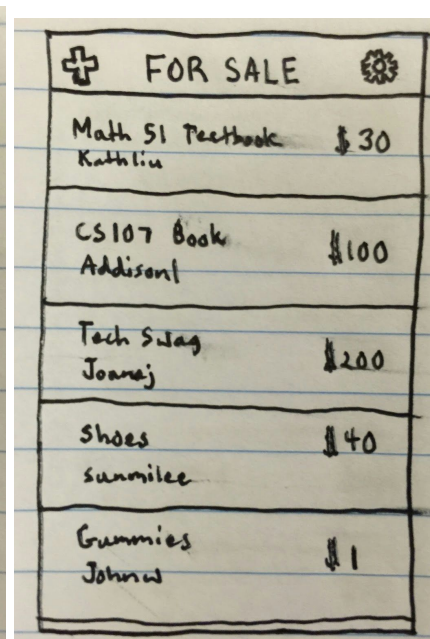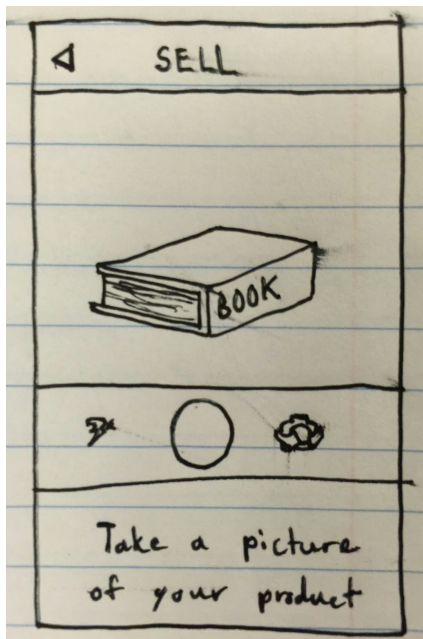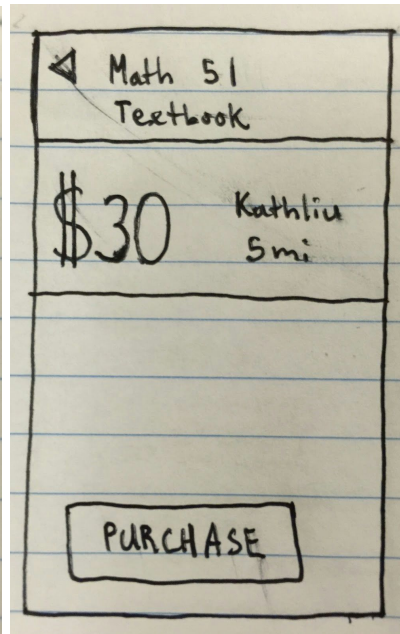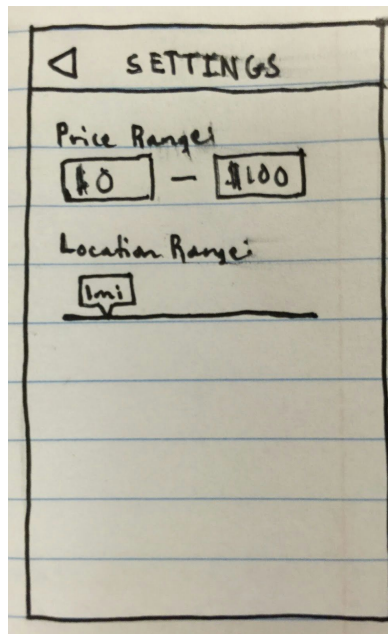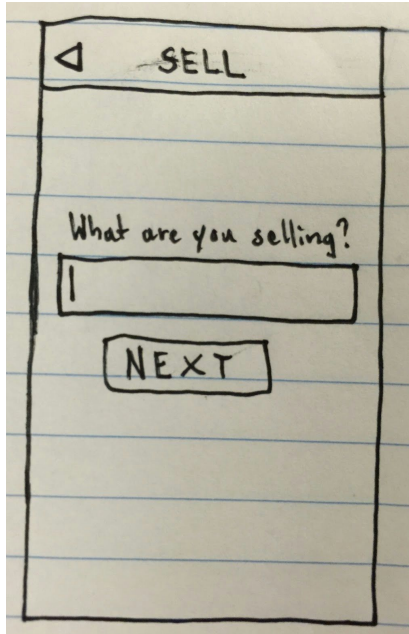## What it is:

A location-based buying and selling platform where users can only see products that are within a certain proximity to make the customer-seller interaction more efficient.

Assumptions:

- People will want to buy from people around them, even if it means having their selections limited, because they prefer convenience
- People would prefer meeting up to shipping
- People trust others more when they are close to them
- A ten minute driving distance is considered as close

How did you make the prototype?

We first used our past experiences to craft a functional prototype that would enable its users to list and purchase used items, such as clothes and textbooks. One aspect that distinguishes this prototype from other buying/selling platforms, however, is that it is location-based. Since one of our biggest assumptions we wanted to test was that people will want to buy from people near them, we chose not to highlight the location aspect both in making and testing the prototype.

SELL

◁ SELL

What are you selling?

| |

NEXT

SETTINGS

◁ SETTINGS

Price Range:

[$0] — [$100]

Location Range:

[1mi]

Math 51 Textbook

◁ Math 51 Textbook

$30   Kathliu
5mi

PURCHASE

SELL (second)

◁ SELL

BOOK

3x   ◯   ✿

Take a picture
of your product

FOR SALE

✚ FOR SALE ✿

Math 51 Textbook $30
Kathliu

CS107 Book $100
Addisonl

Tech Swag $200
Joanaj

Shoes $40
sunmilee

Gummies $1
Johnw

How did you test the prototype?

In the script for this prototype, we put Cindy in a situation where she is sitting in her dorm room, shocked by the price of the textbooks listed in the Stanford Bookstore's website. We first asked her what she would do without introducing her to our prototype; after recording her response, we asked her to walk us through her interaction with the prototype, posing different hypotheticals related to our assumptions about distance, delivery methods, and buyer/seller communication.

What worked? What didn't? What did you learn?
- **Worked:** Could be a better Craigslist; Might be useful for students who want to sell
- **Didn't work:** Maybe useful in college but not afterwards; Location matters less to seller than to buyer
- **Surprises:** Any distance over 10 miles, especially to college students, is equivalent to 100 miles or more
- **Learnings:** While it could be useful to some, this is not a necessary service; There are too many platforms – the market is saturated

Was the assumption valid? Why or why not? Any new assumptions that emerged?

The assumption was somewhat valid. We assumed that a location-based market would make sales easier for both the buyer and the seller. In reality, our interview with Cindy revealed that most of the time the buyer goes to the seller, so this platform would benefit the sellers only. Our new assumption is that people don't want a new "Craigslist" – online marketplaces like Amazon, especially with Amazon Prime, are just as effective.

BEST PROTOTYPE

Explain which prototype you found was the most successful in achieving a desired solution.

Overall, we found the first prototype, Ticket Market, to be the most successful in achieving a desired solution. Unlike the other two prototypes, Ticket Market actually fulfilled the assumptions we had and was considered by testers to be a useful product that they could actually see a need for. 5 Favorites was more fun, but not all users seemed excited about it, as they didn't care as strongly about what YouTubers thought. Yard Sale provided a solution that wasn't needed – there already is Craigslist and what can't be gotten on Craigslist can usually be found on Amazon for an affordable price. With Amazon Prime, Amazon is even more attractive. Hence, Ticket Market was our most successful prototype because it inspired the desired response and achieved the most interest.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: POVs and HMW's

POV: We met Miji. We were amazed to realize how far people and 3rd party sellers were willing to go to keep their ratings up. It would be game-changing to design a new rating system that reflects the quality of products/sellers accurately.

- How might we ensure that reviews are based upon products/transactions rather than customer service or other factors?
- How might we normalize buyers' expectations so that ratings will be consistent?
- How might we account for cultural or geolocational differences that might affect users' perceptions of the quality of the item bought?
- How might we prevent sellers from paying people or hiring people to keep their ratings up?
- How might we help the users so that they can write high quality reviews and put each review in a certain context?
- How might we encourage the users to submit their reviews in the first place?
- How might we design rating systems such that both buyers and sellers will care about them?
- How might we prevent the sellers from attempting to influence their ratings in ways other than providing quality items?
- How might we make the rating system more informative with minimal hassle on the reviewer's part?
- How might we emphasize qualitative reviews and de-emphasize quantitative reviews?

POV: We met Lorena. We were amazed to realize that Facebook was her go-to website for things like event tickets or hard-to-get items. It would be game-changing to leverage people's social networks to facilitate buying & selling of items without frustration.

- How might we connect users with friends who are selling what they need?
- How might we provide users with a way to sell and purchase time-sensitive products?
- How might we facilitate the correspondences between sellers and potential buyers?
- How might we improve the user experience of obtaining purchases? (picking up the item)
- How might we help users feel secure in purchases?
- How might we establish trust among users?
- How might we leverage Facebook or other social networks to populate a platform?
- How might we keep provide privacy (on an as-needed basis) to the user's friends in the social network?

- How might we centralize a social marketplace to make it more efficient and accessible?
- How might we facilitate faster buying/selling with fewer steps?
- How might we make the marketplace like a yard sale?
- How might we keep the familiarity and the universality of Facebook in designing a new marketplace?
- How might we narrow down features from Facebook that are needed for transactions?

POV: We met Bayian. We were amazed to realize that he deemed secure arrival of items as one of the most important aspects of online marketplaces. It would be game-changing for an online marketplace to offer the advantages of crowdsourcing while guaranteeing reliable shipping and delivery of orders.

- How might we provide more robust customer service?
- How might we track customer needs?
- How might we resolve issues with deliverable items?
- How might we compensate customers in the case of current service failure?
- How might we make sure we provide the right customer service?
- How might we make users feel valued?
- How might we ensure customer service is fast?
- How might we make sure users don't take advantage of customer service?
- How might we give users the ability to give us their expectations?
- How might we interpret user needs?

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF A TESTING SCRIPT

<u>Hypothetical #1: Jeff as a Ticket Seller</u>

Pre-prototype

SunMi: "Hey, isn't Beyond Wonderland this Friday, which is in two days? How are you going to finish your heap allocator due Saturday?

Jeff: "I know right, I don't know if I can go anymore… I'm so bummed."

SunMi: "What are you going to do with the ticket then? Are you planning on selling it?"

Jeff: "Yeah, that would be ideal."

SunMi: "But how? It's in two days."

Jeff will probably suggest a couple things. We expect one of the answers to be a social networking site, such as asking his Facebook friends or posting in a group.

SunMi: "Which group?" *(If Jeff suggests listing his ticket in a Facebook page or a group)*

We expect Jeff to suggest groups within closed communities such as Stanford's Free and For Sale Facebook group or Summer 2015 Bay Area Interns Facebook group. We continue, assuming that he listed it on a social networking website. For the following questions, we observe and record his answers.

SunMi: "Has anyone bought your ticket?"

Jeff: "No.. I think it's too last minute. No one has responded."

SunMi: "What are you going to do now?"

Record his responses.

SunMi: "What would you have done if you weren't a university student?"

Jeff might be at a loss, or might suggest location-based groups. We observe and record his answers.

<div align="center">

Post-prototype
</div>

SunMi: "Hey, isn't Beyond Wonderland this Friday, which is in two days? How are you going to finish your heap allocator due Saturday?

Jeff: "I know right, I don't know if I can go anymore... I'm so bummed."

SunMi: "What are you going to do with the ticket then? Are you planning on selling it?"

Jeff: "Yeah, that would be ideal."

SunMi: "But how? It's in two days. Oh! I actually heard that there's an app that serves as a platform for last-minute ticket selling. It's called Ticket Market-- you should give it a try."

Hand him the prototype.

SunMi: "Hey I've never used this app before either, how is it? I want to see it as well."

Sit next to him and record his reaction as he walks us through his interaction. Ask him to verbalize his thoughts and use his fingers to track his eyes.

Throw him into the following situation right after he "posts" on the prototype.

SunMi: "Oh look, Stanley messaged you! He lives 10 miles away, and he asked you how much you're selling it for. How much are you charging for the ticket?"

Record response.

SunMi: "Stanley thinks that your price is too high and suggests a lower price. Do you agree to lower the price?"

Record response.

SunMi: "Looks like he wants to buy it! Where do you propose to meet up?"

Record response.

<div align="center">

Hypothetical #2: Jeff as a Ticket Buyer
</div>

SunMi: "Hey, did you hear that Lorde is performing tomorrow night at the Warsaw?"

Jeff: "Of course I know, but it's sold out on her website."

SunMi: "Well, have you heard of Ticket Market? Apparently it's some sort of a platform where people can buy or sell tickets last-minute. You should see if any of her concert tickets are listed there."
Hand him the prototype.
SunMi: "Hey I've never used this app before either, how is it? I want to see it as well."
Sit next to him and record his reaction as he walks us through his interaction. Ask him to verbalize his thoughts and use his fingers to track his eyes.

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONS WE ASKED OUTSIDE THE SCRIPT (TICKET MARKET)

● What did you think? Would you ever use it again? Why or why not?
● Would you feel comfortable meeting up with the person?
● Why would you prefer this app over posting on your social network?
● Say you WERE in a Facebook group with a ton of people in it-- would you still post in the group or use this app?
● Would you actually buy the ticket, provided that the price was at or below the market price?
● What would make you trust this app?
● Do you foresee yourself bored on a weekend night and browsing through the app's feed for events near you?
● What if you had to pick up the tickets yourself as opposed to getting it e-mailed/delivered? How would that change things?