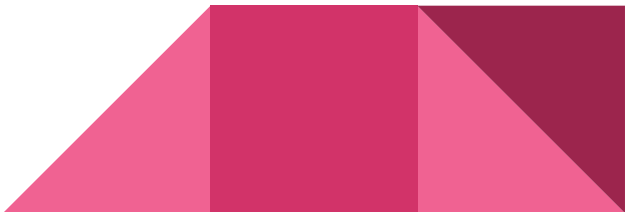# Further Exploration into Home-Buying and Relocation

By Alexei Bastidas, Austin Connelly, and John Valentine

Going In

- Pride/excitement about first home purchase.
- Relocating unnecessarily stressful/complicated.
- Lack of transparency -- nature of business?
- Drawn out process.
- Modern web tools not trustworthy. Word of mouth/open houses/ads most successful.

Delving Deeper

- Wandered the streets of downtown Palo Alto.
- Wanted to focus in on two distinct areas - finding/buying the house, and the actual process of physically relocating.
- Added new questions to our list about things such as commute, experience helping friends/family move, etc.

Lane Wilson

- Former Stanford Graduate Student now working in Maryland.
- Has bought and sold property both for the sake of moving and for property's own sake.
- His girlfriend is a realtor, so he has both the outside and the inside scoop.

Insights from Lane

- Hates losing track of his stuff in the process of moving.
  - Thinks he has too much unnecessary stuff that he takes with him.
- Believes realtors in general have no idea what they are talking about.
  - Can be as far as 10% off on price estimates.
  - Was visiting a home that has "basically a dump in the backyard, and they didn't say a thing"
    - Believes realtor was simply unaware, not dishonest.
  - His girlfriend is a realtor.
- Thinks market is made inefficient due to sellers withholding information.
- Managed to get good deal on land in Maryland by doing research.

Jay P.

- Former business owner in downtown Palo Alto.
- Originally from Paris.
- Lost home and business in a bad breakup 5 years ago.
- Loss of home ruined his credit.
- Struggled very much finding housing (but he's doing fine now!).

Insights from Jay

- Housing and rent prices have skyrocketed in the last few years.
- Due to bad credit it took a very long time to find a place to live.
  - Ended up with an apartment in Mountain View that he was lucky to get for an incredibly good price.
- Is nervous to report regular wear & tear of his apartment for fear of his rent going up.
  - It happened once in the past, now he fixes things himself.
- After losing his home he put all his things in storage, most are still there.

Revised PoVs

- We met David Serpa and Lane Wilson, who need an easier way to get accurate information about for-sale properties so buyers can educate themselves without being misled. It would be game changing if there was a site that made all information available to realtors available to the public.
- We met Lane Wilson, who needs to keep track of his random junk while moving so it doesn't get lost. It would be game changing if we could find a way to organize and catalogue his belongings during a move.

How might we...

- Streamline the process of categorizing and cataloging your stuff.
  - Stemmed from the PoV we got from Lane regarding losing things during the moving process.
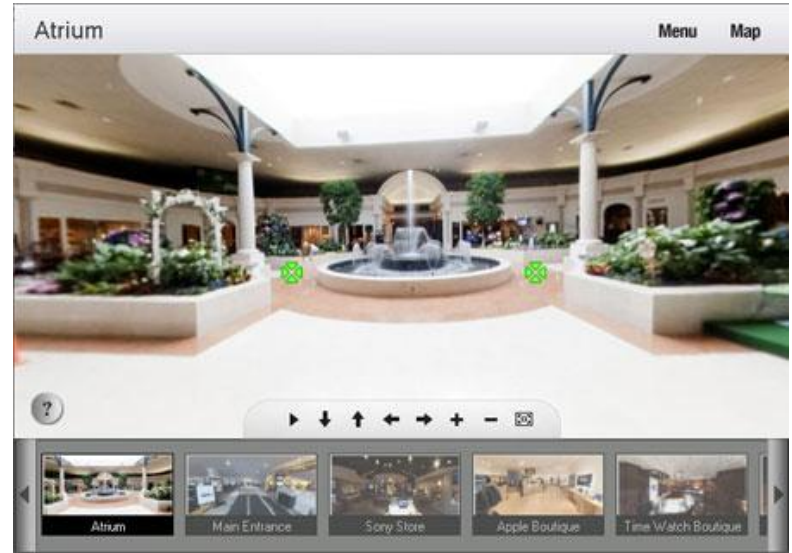
How might we...

- Put together all the government/realtor/seller information into a readily accessible/interactive tool.
  - Stemmed from the PoV we got from David and Lane, regarding how difficult it can be to find accurate information with or without the help of a realtor.

How might we…

- Create an interactive experience that is better than a slideshow.
    - From the PoV we got from Lane about how most "virtual tours" are really just a slideshow of photos and seem insufficient to get a feel for a house.

Testing

The Subject

- Emily Christensen.
- Accountant working in San Jose.
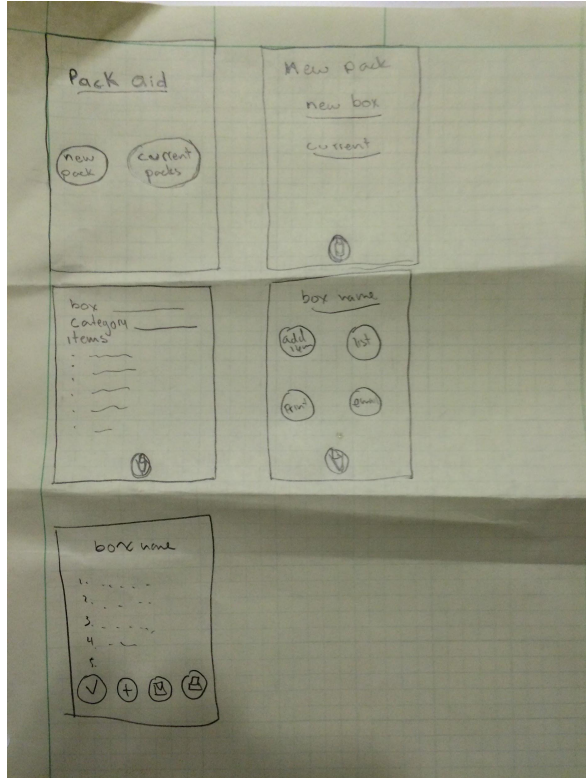- Recently moved from Orange County.

Prototype 1

- Sketched out mock-up of mobile app.
- Designed to be used while packing to catalog what item goes in which box.
  - Information to be entered through voice activation.
- Tested by having our tester go through the motions of packing a box, and using her voice to interact with the app.

Images

Takeaways

- Things that worked:
  - Interface felt intuitive.
  - Voice control.
- Things that didn't:
  - Unclear commands.
- Surprises:
  - How much easier the voice control makes use.
- New Learnings:
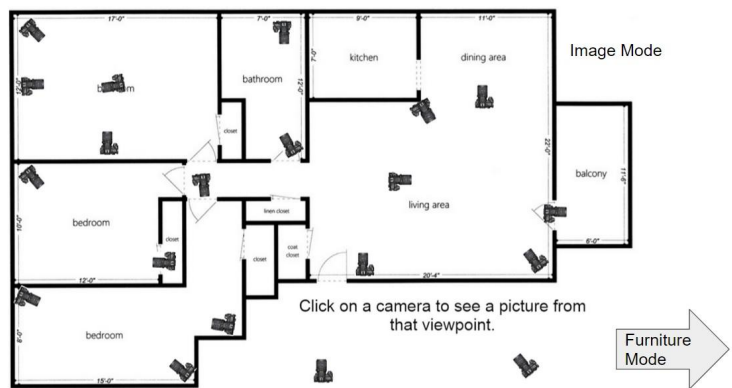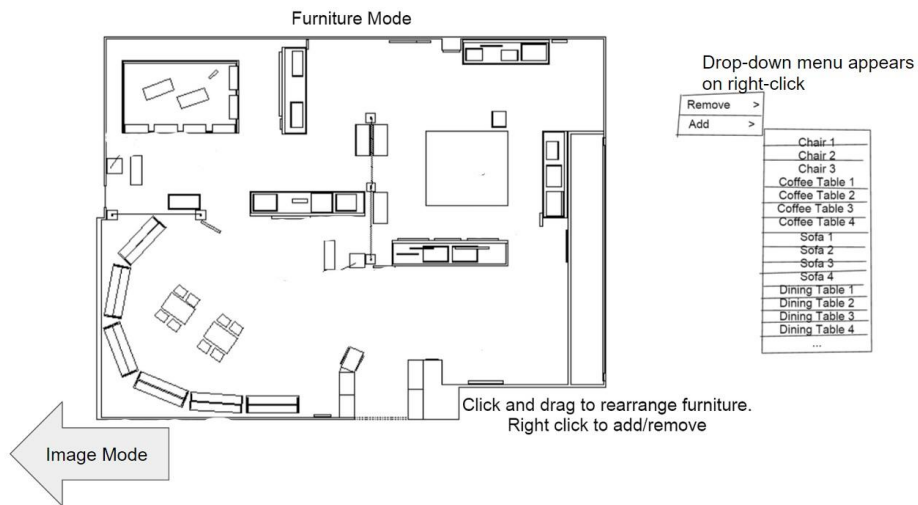 - We possibly need a way to explain which vocal commands to use.

Prototype 2

- Digital mock-up of a web-based interactive floorplan.
- Designed to be used to get a feel for the layout of the house and test furniture configurations.
- Also useful for viewing photos with the knowledge of where in the house each photo is.
- Tested by having user move through the image as if it were a website.

Images

Furniture Mode

Drop-down menu appears on right-click

Remove >
Add >

Chair 1
Chair 2
Chair 3
Coffee Table 1
Coffee Table 2
Coffee Table 3
Coffee Table 4
Sofa 1
Sofa 2
Sofa 3
Sofa 4
Dining Table 1
Dining Table 2
Dining Table 3
Dining Table 4
...

Click and drag to rearrange furniture.
Right click to add/remove

Image Mode

Image Mode

kitchen
dining area
bathroom
closet
closet
balcony
bedroom
linen closet
living area
closet
closet
coat closet
bedroom

Click on a camera to see a picture from that viewpoint.

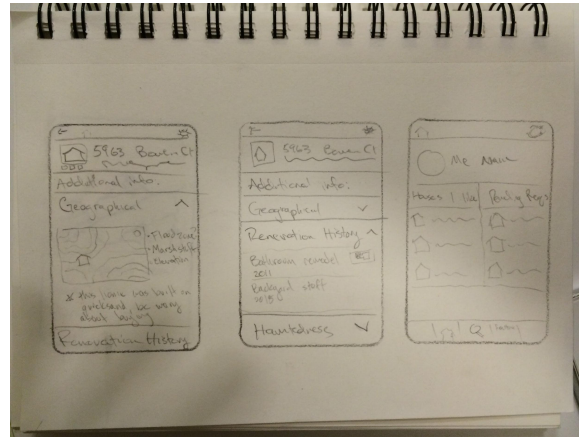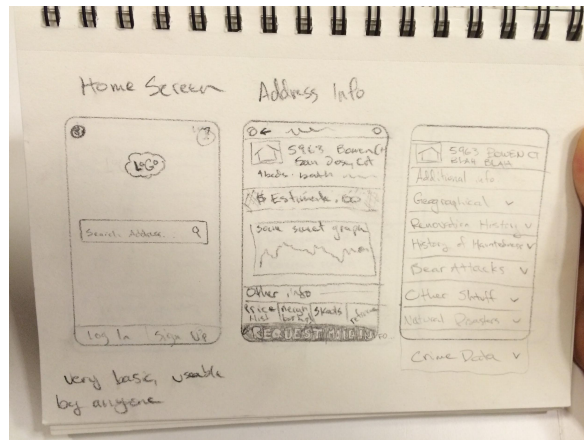Furniture Mode

Takeaways

- Things that worked:
  - Intuitive layout.
- Things that didn't:
  - Confusion over how photos would be different from regular photo tour.
  - Concern photos would have fishbowl filter.
- Surprises:
  - There were several things that Emily came up with which we had not considered, such as ways to add new furniture items to the interface.
- New Learnings:
  - This idea needs some work, but some new features have come to mind.

Prototype 3

- Mock-up of a mobile app.
- Designed to help look up information about for-sale properties.
  - Gets info from reports on crime rates, natural disasters in history/expected future, etc.
- Tested by building scenario in which Emily had already found a home she was interested in, and was looking up anything that might cause trouble.

Images

Takeaways

- Things that worked:
  - Subject felt service would be extremely beneficial while homebuying.
- Things that didn't:
  - Interface felt too cluttered, non-intuitive.
- Surprises:
  - Said a home-search feature would feel more intuitive.
- New Learnings:
  - This application may need to much space for a mobile phone, perhaps would work better on a tablet or computer.