

Assignment 2 Written Report

Problem Domain

Our studio theme is mobility and travel. Our initial problem domain was the tourist experience, and we later narrowed our domain to focus on how tourists interact with new spaces.

Initial POV

Before the last studio, we interviewed three different groups of travellers (a student, a tour guide, and a family). While their individual stories were quite different, common elements in every story included the difficulties that arose from being in a foreign place. Some of these difficulties included asking for directions, reading transportation schedules, and finding places to eat. From these findings, we generated the following initial point of view: We met some travellers, we were amazed to realize that it is often more difficult to understand where you are in reference to everything around you while travelling. It would be game changing to make this easier.

Additional Needfinding Results

Using the results and feedback from last week, we revised a few questions in order to encourage the interviewees to tell us more about the issues they faced during their travels and how they would deal with them. The results we obtained from these interviews helped us develop three new POVs.

We interviewed two additional groups in the Stanford visitor center. The first group was a family of three (husband, wife, and child) from Beijing, China. We found out that they try to avoid any issues while travelling by excessively planning for all contingencies. Despite excessive planning, however, unexpected events can still occur, inducing anxiety.

The second group we interviewed was a group of 5 work colleagues, a few years out of college, also from China. They told us that one of their greatest inconveniences during their travels was the loss of cell phone signal. While it is often much more convenient to use modern technology to plan a trip, the group felt that not having a fail-safe option was a big mistake.



Interview Location - Stanford Visitor Center

We also re-interviewed Julien the tour guide, as we felt that our last interview focused a bit too much on being a tour guide, and less on actual travel experiences.



Julien the tour guide

Finally we observed some tourists around the Main Quad at Stanford in action. One interesting thing we picked up on was the prevalent use of paper maps (obtained from the Visitor Center) instead of cell phones.



Our tour group at the main quad

Revised POVs

From our interviews, we came up with a list of three POVs. The POVs and a few sample HMWs are listed below:

1. We met a college student that embarked on a long backpacking trip. We were amazed to realize that she was suffering from “travel burnout” after visiting one famous sight after another. It would be game changing for her to experience something different or find hidden gems during her travel that perhaps only the locals have knowledge about.
 - How might we help inspire wanderlust?
 - How might we help travelers plan a trip that wasn’t “typical”?

2. We met a family of four with young children. On a trip overseas, they missed the last flight home, necessitating an overnight stay and jeopardizing plans. We were amazed to realize how stressful it was to balance the needs of their children with the need to figure out how to get home. It would be game changing to assist with the process of re-booking travel plans to alleviate the family’s troubles.
 - How might we turn the stressful situation of missing a flight into an welcome extended vacation?
 - How might we lower the probability of situations like this from occurring?

3. We met a group of five work colleagues aged around 30 from Shanghai and Guangzhou. We were amazed to realize that unexpected events coupled with lack of access to communication evoked feelings of paralysis and anxiety. It would be game changing to alleviate their anxiety issues during “loss of control” situations.
 - How might we help people who don't speak a common language communicate?
 - How might we give travellers access to constant information without internet?

3 Best HMWs

From our list of HMWs, we settled on the following three:

1. How might we help travelers plan a trip that wasn't “typical”?
2. How might we help organize trips to minimize traveller's fatigue while also minimizing the fear of missing out?
3. How might we help people who don't speak a common language communicate?

The first two HMW statements were generated from the first POV listed above. The final HMW statement was generated from the third POV listed above.

Each of the HMW statements gave rise to a solution that was ultimately used as the basis for one of our experience prototypes. These solutions are listed below:

1. Provide a service that plans out a complete day based on a travellers' mood. This can provide a very “spontaneous” feel.
2. Create a service that changes a user's itinerary based on what the user wants to do. This can help alleviate travel burnout.
3. Provide an offline interface that translates common traveller questions into the local language as well as images/animations that are universally understood.

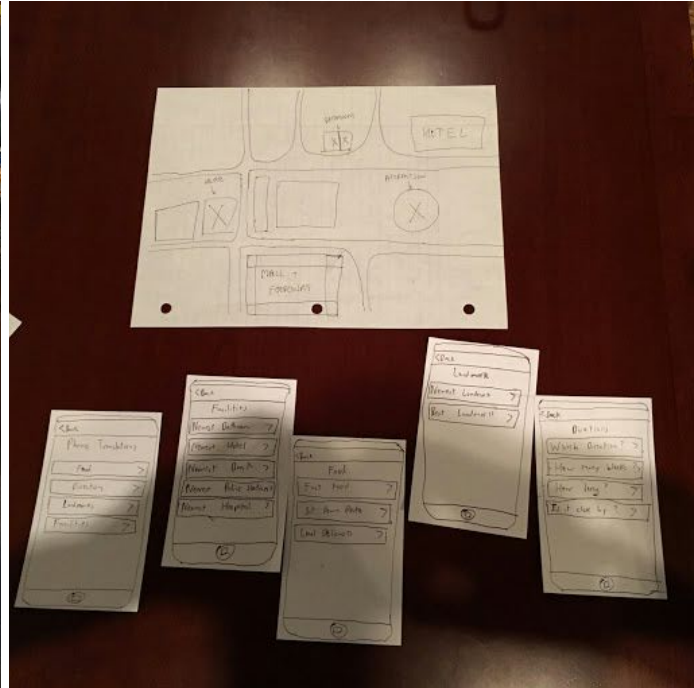
Experience Prototypes

Our first experience prototype was designed to test the following assumption: that travellers could benefit from an offline translation service which translated certain pre-selected phrases between two languages. We assumed that this tool would prove to be much more efficient than simply using hand gestures when communicating with a language barrier constraint. In our prototype, we told the user (a Stanford student named Tiara) to imagine that she was travelling to a location where she did not speak the language. One of the group members (Ben) played a local that was willing to help. We drew a crude representation of a mobile phone application that provided a list of phrases in English available for translation, and gave the user a set of tasks such as finding the nearest bathroom, hotel, and attraction. Our user found that while the translation of phrases was certainly helpful, it was often necessary to combine other resources, such as a map, in order to obtain clearer instructions. Furthermore, our user found it hard to believe that a traveller would find him or herself in such a helpless situation, as most people

would bring several travel resources to assist with communication. While our initial assumption was valid, in order to pursue this solution, we would have to further assume that it is common for travellers to visit foreign places without accounting for the language barrier issue.



Tiara, our first experience prototype tester

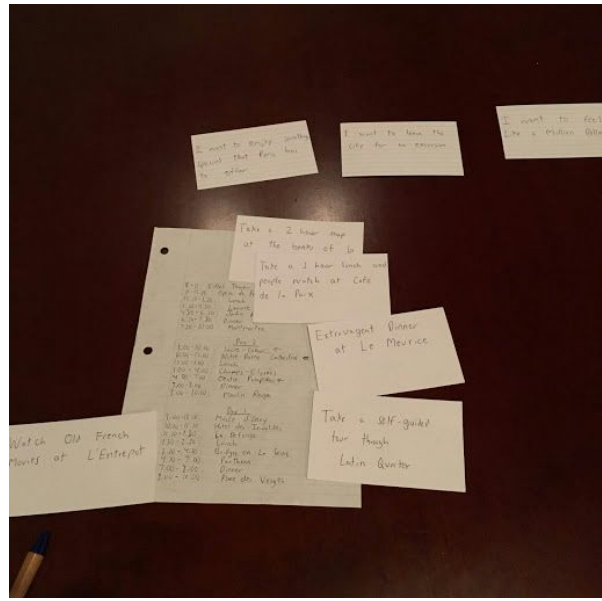


Some props used for the first experience prototype

Our second solution sought to help travellers plan a trip with a unique and spontaneous feel by providing a service that planned out a full day based on a travellers' mood. Our experience prototype tested the assumption that users would be willing completely cede control and leave the trip planning partially up to chance. We set the scene for this experience by telling our user, Alona, that she was in Paris and had just woken up, but had yet to plan out her day. Instead of using traditional travel guides, Alona engaged with our service, choosing one of many "mood" cards, prompting the service (our team members holding premade activity cards) to suggest an activity for her based on her mood. At the end of each activity, Alona chose a new "mood" card and the service continued to suggest mood-sensitive activities. Our props included cue cards with various moods as well as a set of cue cards with various locations and activities throughout Paris. Alona reacted positively to using mood as the guiding metric to plan one's day. We realized, however, one's mood and one's desires don't always match up, making it difficult to offer helpful suggestions. We learned that this could be a fun, dynamic way to plan a trip. Our assumption that users would cede control and leave trip planning up to a service was mostly valid because Alona openly accepted most of the suggestions made by the service.



India, our third experience prototype tester



Some props used for the third experience prototype

Analysis of Experience Prototype Results

We found our second prototype to be the most effective at achieving its solution. Because a person's moods are so variable, there exists a vast array of travel experiences to be had based on these moods. This prototype received the most positive emotional response from the participants and also served to validate our assumptions about users being willing to cede control of planning in order to foster unique and spontaneous travel experiences. While testing this prototype, we found something interesting about travel. The best travel experiences are often the ones that elicit a profound emotional response from the traveller. However, prospective travellers often do not consider their emotional needs when planning a trip.