

POVs and Experience Prototypes

Our team, Bernardo V., Bronwyn E., Clark P., and Hilary S., focused on the domain of creating new connections through shared in-person experiences within the studio theme of “Sharing.”

Initially, we focused on how people formed connections through sharing meals. One guiding POV was “We met Susan. We were amazed to realize that she craved the shared interactions that come with sharing food, whether it be with friends or complete strangers. It would be game-changing for us to recreate those interactions regularly.” This idea of forming connections through sharing food led us into additional needfinding.

Needfinding

We interviewed additional people and did more unpacking on David. We focused more on the human connections meals were fostering rather than sharing food itself.



David, one of our previous interviewees

We had previously interviewed a David, a Stanford employee from Singapore. His stories had surprised us the most, so we decided to do a little more unpacking. On a trip to Portugal, frustrated with his unadventurous friends, he tried to divert them from a carefully planned itinerary, but they refused his spontaneous suggestions of untourist-y destinations. While on the beach, he met a woman who had very similar view on spontaneous adventure, so he

left his group and traveled with her. His complete willingness to trust and travel with a stranger he just met startled us.

Our first new interviewee was an energetic barista at Starbucks, Jacqui. We chose to interview her because of the interactions her job requires. She told us about Mike (nicknamed “Prince Masoud”), who comes in for six hours a day to work, and about Karise and how she always has his veranda-on-the-clover ready when he walks in. These interactions, she says, are the most rewarding part of being a barista--she’s like a friend giving them a stress-relieving “coffee for the soul” experience, which she wished she could extend to the busier customers. She told us about how her love for coffee went beyond Starbucks in the Philippines when she met up with the owner of the local Craft Coffee shop. They talked for hours about coffee; it was the most meaningful experience she had while traveling, she said, simply because she connected with a stranger through their mutual passion.



Jacqui, a Starbucks barista

Our second interviewee was Helen, a sophomore studying psychology. She described herself as very outgoing, but then when we began to discuss her interactions with strangers, we discovered her experiences were the polar opposite of David’s. While on the Caltrain one day, Helen “hit it off” with a man traveling in the area. After talking for a long time, they exchanged information and began talking. After a while, he began to send her aggressive texts to meet, and she felt uncomfortable and ceased contact. The messages became more aggressive and threatening until she told the police. She told us she “didn’t feel safe going out at night” during this time.

POVs/HMWs

Our final POVs and HMWs samples are below, with our chosen HMWs in orange:

We met Jacqui, an energetic young barista at Starbucks. We were amazed to realize that even though she does form lasting friendships with regulars and at slow hours, she feels limited and wants to be able to provide a “coffee for the soul” experience to her busier and stressed customers. It would be game-changing to allow her to give TLC to everyone.

- HMW connect stressed people with people who are willing to provide TLC?
- HMW adapt the “coffee for the soul” experience into something more accessible for busy people?
- **HMW provide another way besides the coffee shop for Jacqui to give others the “coffee for the soul” experience?**

- HMW make it easier for baristas to interact with customers in busy hours?

We met Helen, a 20-year-old psychology major who loves to meet new people. We were amazed to realize that she had experienced a situation where she was stalked by a stranger she “hit it off with” on the Caltrain and felt “scared to go anywhere” during that time. It would be game-changing to provide a safer way to interact with strangers.

- HMW make women feel safer when talking to new people?
- HMW verify the reliability of strangers in public spaces?
- HMW make interactions with strangers less high-risk?
- HMW allow online interactions to go only as far as a hesitant participant wishes?

We met David, a sociable and worldly employee at Stanford’s Public Affairs office. We were amazed to hear that he ditched the unadventurous group of friends he set out with, and took a spontaneous trip to Portugal with a complete stranger. It would be game-changing to connect adventurous people like David through spontaneous, genuine interactions.

- HMW provide an escape for those who are dissatisfied with their current travel group?
- HMW facilitate communication between groups of travellers who want to intermingle?
- HMW make it easier for people to step outside their comfort zone and try new things?
- HMW create planned spontaneity so that others who aren’t as naturally sociable can also engage like David?

Prototyping

We brainstormed solutions, and ended up choosing these solutions for each HMW:

1. HMW facilitate communication between groups of travelers who want to intermingle?

App that allows you to geolocate other travel groups on a map, meet up, and make plans together.

2. HMW provide another way besides the coffee shop for Jacqui to give other people the “coffee for the soul” experience?

Connect nearby people based on their passions through search and meetup

3. HMW create planned spontaneity so others who aren’t as naturally sociable can also engage like David?

Create a map-based community “bulletin board” in which people can post about events, which others can join and make further plans through private messaging.

We built prototypes: prototype 1 (geolocation app), 2 (connecting people based on passions), and 3 (map-based community “bulletin board”).

Prototype 1: Tested on Arjun

Assumptions: We assumed travellers have a certain set of interests; therefore, it wouldn't be necessary to include every interest people have. We assumed most people using the app would have good intentions, are interested in meeting new people, and are accustomed to using apps.



Building of Prototype 1

Making: We illustrated the user interface on notecards, placing them sequentially to indicate the transitions step-by-step. We utilized a Twister mat as a visual representation of a map and board game cards to simulate positions of other users.

Testing: We had Arjun go from one “station” to the next based on his interaction with the card interfaces. We played the role of fellow travellers using the app.

What worked: The transition from one stage of the process to the next was smooth and intuitive for Arjun. He found it easy to use.

What didn't: He wasn't sure how to add interests specific to him besides those listed. Also, he wasn't sure what “how adventurous are you” meant and was worried about intentional mischief such as illegal solicitation.



Arjun testing the prototype.

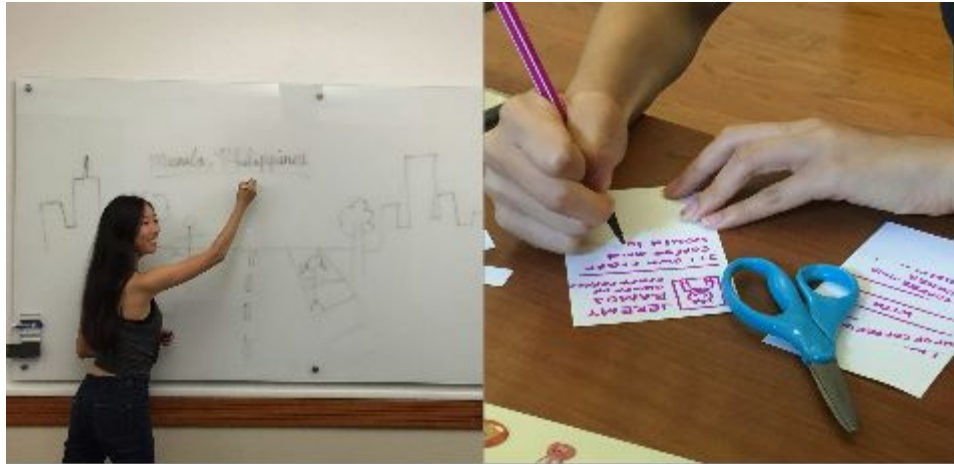
Lessons: We learned that users might wish to break out of the limits of the app's suggestions and that the “adventure” scale can be a strange interface. Our assumption that travellers have limited interests was wrong. Our assumption that most users would use the app bona-fide was wrong; we would need to take special precautions to prevent misconduct to protect users.

Prototype 2: Tested on Sophia

Assumptions: We assumed people would state their interests within a “normal” realm. We assumed that users would know to view a profile to background check, and that every user would easily know what interests to enter.

Making: We used index cards as cues, a whiteboard as a backdrop, and conversation to roleplay interactions.

Testing: We asked Sophia to interact with the index card cues just as she would an app. Hilary verbally interacted with Sophia to simulate the communication within the app.



Building of Prototype 2

What worked: Sophia felt comfortable using our interface and had no trouble transitioning from one process to the next. She liked that she had the ability to background-check people.

What didn't: She was confused about the purpose of the “share with” option. She also felt it was strange to receive a message from the notified person since the app didn't warn her ahead of time.



Sophia testing the prototype

Lessons: We learned that there should be some filter on submissions to keep them within reason, in case users put in “abnormal” requests. Our assumption that background checks are intuitive was invalid since it did not occur to Sophia. We learned that it would be better to tell the user how they will be interacting with others and make sure they understand what they’re getting into. Finally, she didn’t know what interests to enter (our final assumption was also wrong). We learned that it might be helpful to suggest the most popular things that people do with the app as recommendations.

Prototype 3: Tested on Stephanie

Assumptions: We assumed users would find it easy to dive in head-first given a familiar navigation bar with simple icons and a map view they are already used to. We assumed that creating events and expressing interest in events would be an intuitive process.

Making: We treated this prototype as a one-to-one mimicry of a mobile app interface directly on index cards, each representing a possible view or activity.



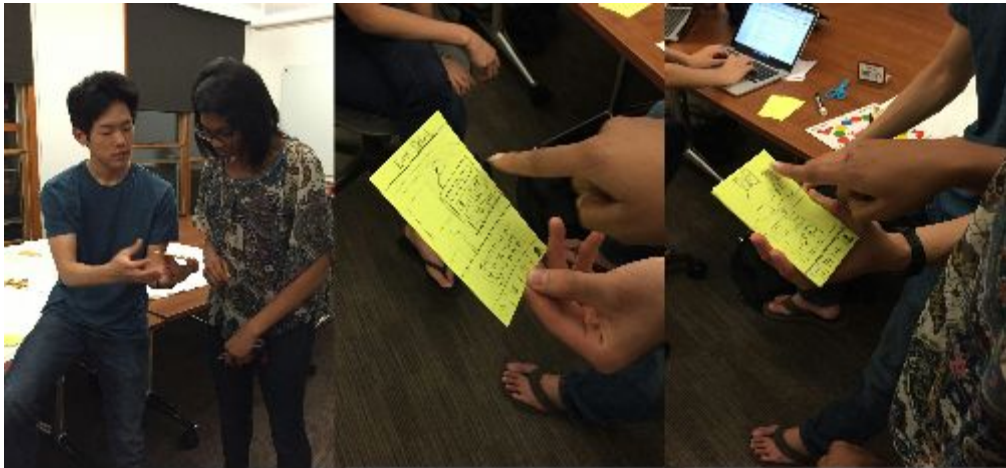
Building of Prototype 3

Testing: We gave Stephanie the first card and had her interact with it as she would an app, handing her the appropriate next card depending on her actions.

What worked: Allowing Stephanie to find her way around the app worked well. She mentioned how the familiar interface with only four simple buttons was very approachable, and that the zoom function of the map was cool.

What didn't: She had trouble discerning the difference between expressing interest in others' events and adding an event herself.

Lessons: The difference between adding and expressing interest in events was too subtle for a first-time user to pick up naturally, so we were wrong. However, our assumption that the interface would be easily accessible was confirmed and we learned that combining elements from other popular apps (such as Google Maps and Instagram) makes it easy for a user to understand navigation.



Stephanie testing the prototype

The third prototype was the most successful because it received little critical feedback compared to the rest. Stephanie found the interface to be straightforward and familiar compared to what Arjun and Sophia felt were somewhat strange experiences. After Stephanie was done interacting with the app, we asked about its practicality and compared to Facebook events. She mentioned that the app made the event sharing process more open and streamlined, which indicates that our prototype communicated its objective well.

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