

Assignment 2: POVs and Experience Prototypes

AUTUMN 2019

CS 147: Design Thinking for User Experience Design, Prototyping & Evaluation

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What Problem Are We Engaging With?

Our Studio focused on Assistive Technologies and Accessibility, on communities with accessibility needs that aren't being met in the current day. We worked at the intersection of technology, design, and accessibility issues.

The accessibility issue we decided to work on focuses on the lens of class and housing, more specifically the struggles that first generation and/or low income (FLI) college students and recent college graduates go through when looking for housing that is accessible to them.

There is also a particular focus on the intersection between class and disability, with a lens of perspective on how these two intersect as well.

Where We Started

We did three initial interviews:



Megan Carbajal



Paulina Nava



Katie Lan

From our initial interviews, we discovered the following issues:

1. Lack of Support

- a. Trying to find housing is really hard when the institution you attend doesn't offer the adequate resources to help you
- b. Having a network or safety net (community) of people with capacity can be beneficial for people looking for housing and that needs to be reached
- c. Fear to reach out or not knowing of certain resources can keep someone from entering those spaces

2. Accessibility Needs

- a. Physical accessibility needs are important, but not always obtained, such as elevator access
- b. There are important accessibility concerns outside physical needs - safety regarding mental health, and racial sensitivity
- c. Appreciated the structures in place such as DisGo

3. Networks and Connections

- a. Many networks were used to search for housing, such as Facebook, Craigslist, Twitter
- b. Social capital was important in negotiating spaces as many opportunities were through word of mouth
- c. Institutions often lacked structure to provide housing networks

New Perspectives



Betty Nguyen



Teri Adams



Lisa Ng

We met...

Betty, a recent graduate living in San Francisco

Teri, Director of the Office of Accessible Education

Lisa, who currently lives in Berkeley and has experienced the housing market in many cities

We were surprised to find that...

Betty feels uncomfortable in her own backyard because of the judgement of her neighbours.

Teri has experienced in the real world, finding affordable housing that also allows affordable accommodation is extremely difficult, especially in the bay area.

Lisa was able to have a very easy housing search because of the resources made available to them through their community.

It would be game-changing to....

Allow Betty to feel comfortable in her own space regardless of who is around

Connect the disabled low income community more easily with resources available to them

Leverage these resources across other communities, lending their utility to people like Betty and Teri, who may find it harder

How might we

Learning from Betty's Interview:

stop neighbours from being judgemental
foster community throughout the neighbourhood
make Betty's neighbourhood more noisy and fun
we remove all the neighbours from Betty's space
we filter out affordable options for those who need it
we communicate Betty's experiences to others like her
fill Betty's neighbourhood with people she loves
connect communities to each other
move Betty's house to a neighbourhood that accepts young POC
give Betty a greater feeling of control in the housing process

Learning from Teri's interview:

aggregate all this information that we need
communicate with full transparency the options for disabled people/people with certain needs
make all houses built with accessibility needs in mind (so they don't have to be modified)
prioritize housing for those who most need it within the disabled/low income communities
better connect people looking for resources to potential sources of funding/networks
provide support to those with disabilities who are trying to find housing
find every possible option for wheelchair accessibility

Learning from Lisa's interview:

ask people like Lisa to empower others
aggregate Lisa's skills as part of our service
create communities like Lisa's
organize housing by pricing so Lisa could've had an easier time
share Lisa's resources with others
centralise the resources Lisa used
connect the friendship networks Lisa utilised
standardize community building
How might we standardise the housing process such that Lisa is not the only one who has luck finding housing that fits her needs

consider the intersection
between class and disability
structure housing
accessibility to support low
income and disabled people
in a way that isn't a first come
first served basis
help low income students
with disability transition into
real world searches

How might we ensure only
those who need our service
are using it

The three ideas that we feel can best develop into a solution that would everyone are:

**How might we give Betty a greater feeling of control in the housing process?
(Betty)**

**How might we prioritize housing for those who most need it within the
disabled/low income communities? (Teri)**

How might we create communities like Lisa's? (Lisa)

We chose these three as they span different insights to the topic that we narrowed to after the initial interviews. Betty's HMW discusses the idea of gaining autonomy and control in an often times confusing process (especially for FLI students/grads). Teri's HMW discusses the problem with finding low income accessible housing. Lisa's HMW discusses the concept of creating a community or "network" that anyone who needs it can join in order to not only help with the process, but also create a community for those with similar identities.

Where We're Going

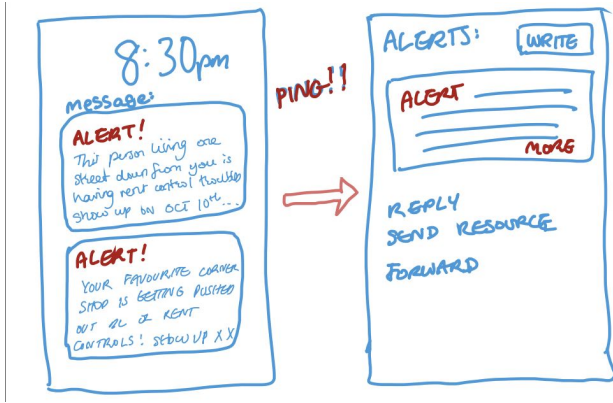
We were able to develop 30 possible solutions from the interviews we did and chose the top 3:

1. find all the accessible places to live in a certain area and it'll just tell you how it accommodates certain needs
2. platform where people can share opinions and experiences about neighborhoods
3. Alert system to give neighbours notifications to alert them of things going on in the neighbourhood, to encourage organising around housing

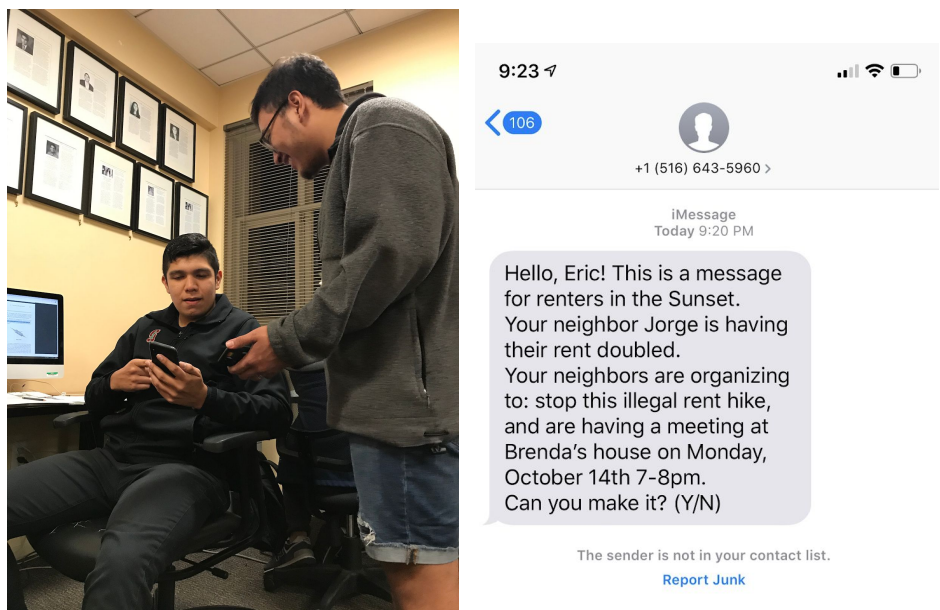
First Prototype: Housing Call to Action Alerts

- a. We tested the assumption that people would want to organize with their community to improve their housing situation and that of others in the community.

- b. We imagined a text alert system in a social network on an app, that would notify people when there was a call to action around a housing issue that affected them and their neighbors.



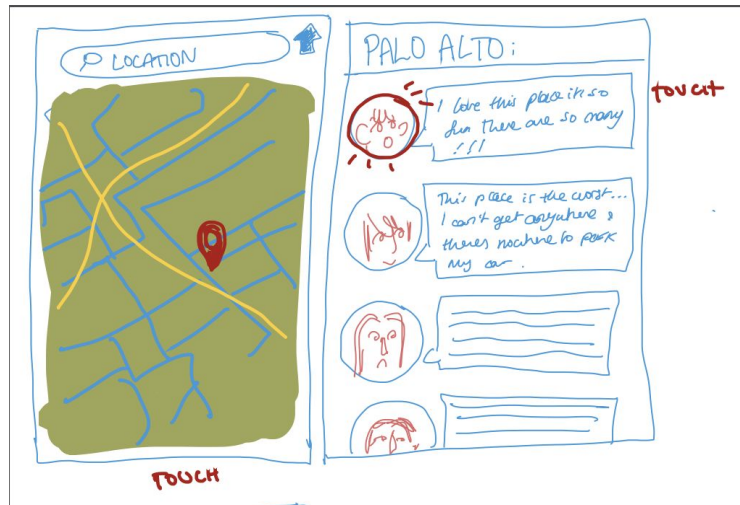
- c. We tested the prototype by sending a text to our test subject, and asking about their reactions. Our text simulated an alert that one might receive from someone in the app.



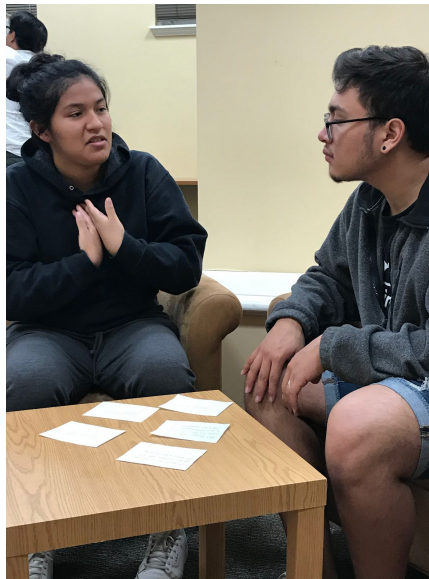
- d. The person responded affirmatively to the text, saying they would show up to support someone who was getting a rent hike. They said that their reaction was, what if my rent is going to go up too? We learned that they wished that they could see who else was going to the event, which our text prototype didn't allow for.
- e. The assumption was valid, because our test subject wanted to support a neighbor in their community dealing with a housing issue, and also connected what was happening to their neighbor to their own housing experience, because now they said they would worry if their rent would go up.

Second Prototype: Neighborhood Reviews

- a. We tested the assumption that people would take more control over their housing situation over ease.
- b. Our prototype came out of our brainstorming about how might we provide our interviewee Betty more control over the housing search process. We created a drawn up interface for what browsing a list of reviews for a neighborhood could look like.



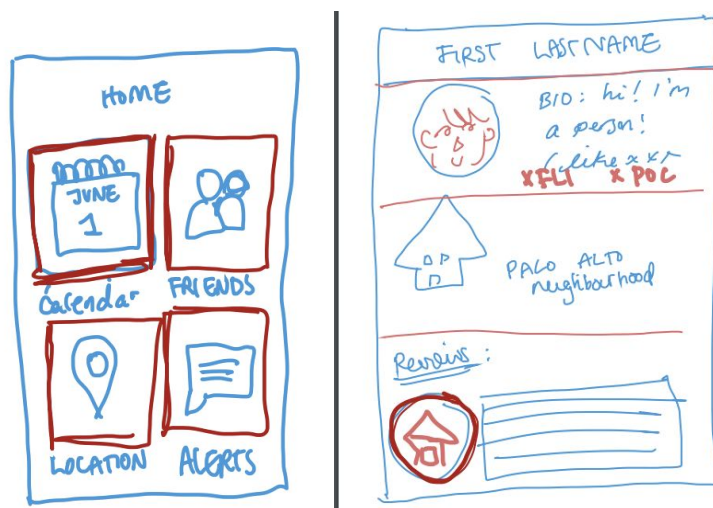
- c. We asked students who lived in a specific dorm to write reviews about the dorm on pieces of paper. Then, we showed the reviews to another student and asked if the reviews were helpful for them in making a housing decision about whether to live there. We asked for their thoughts and reactions.



- d. The student said most of the reviews were helpful, but found one or two not relevant. For example, one of the reviews said that the dorm was nice because of the open kitchen and snacks, but our test subject said she wasn't interested in that because she could just go to the dining hall. However, she also said the other reviews, that talked about how the dorm activities were inaccessible to low-income students, and how there weren't many people of color living there, were helpful to her in making a decision.
- e. Our assumption was valid because the student was happy to be able to learn more about a place that they are considering living in

Third Prototype: Aggregate Accessible houses search

- a. We tested the assumption that having aggregate information about accessible housing in an area will help people make better choices and have more options of places that are accessible and affordable for them.
- b. This prototype came out of our interview with Teri, the director of OAE, as we considered how might we prioritize people with disabilities and accessibility needs in the housing search.



- c. We tested the prototype by presenting housing options to another participant in two different ways. The first time, we presented each option one at a time, and they had to ask us "Is it close to public transportation", which was a need that this person said they had. We responded with either yes or no for each option, which we presented one at a time. The second time around, they asked us to show them all the housing options that were close to public transportation and also affordable, and we presented the three housing options on pieces of paper to them right away. Then, we asked about their experiences in both scenarios, and what was different.



- d. Our interviewee was able to articulate why they preferred the second way of finding housing options. They said that it was faster, and they didn't need to go through individual housing options one by one. We didn't learn more than we assumed going into this experience prototype--we imagined most people would prefer just having all the accessible options presented to them right away, which was the feedback we received.
- e. The assumption was valid. Having the options presented together in the beginning made it easier to look for housing for our interviewee.

In the End....

We have surmised that the prototype that does the best job of achieving our solution(s) is a combination of the first two (alerts regarding organizing around housing issues in your area, and the neighborhood reviews). From here, we have decided that the best direction to move forward is to create a solution that not only aggregates all these resources, but also allows for organizing in these communities in order to strengthen the bonds between those in the network, and to protect these communities from the adverse effects of problems such as gentrification, rent hikes, etc.