ConverStation

ConverStation:
Meet new people, find new perspectives

Everyday we are surrounded by so many people with a variety of background, interests, and life stories. We could learn so much from talking to these people, but we often times find it awkward to just approach a stranger and start a conversation, especially if we're not sure if they're busy or available. Our solution is ConverStation, which connects users who are both available in the same immediate area, prompting them to start a conversation and meet someone they would have otherwise passed right by.

TASKS

Meetup! (Simple)

Jack has some free time at the park but doesn't have anyone to hang out with or anything to do, so he decides to turn on ConverStation. After a few minutes, he gets a notification that another ConverStation user, Jill, is in the same area. The two were matched based on their shared interest in CS. ConverStation gives them each other's photo so they can recognize each other, names and pronouns to get that out of the way, a list of topics each is interested in, and a closeby public ConverStation point for them to meet. Jack and Jill introduce themselves and have a nice 15 minute conversation. Jack learns about Jill's work in machine learning AI and Jill learns about Jack's struggles finding a CS internship. Each gains a new perspective through their conversation as well as a new friend. The two exchange contact information so that they can keep in touch before parting ways.

Task 1 Changes

This task didn’t change much as our low-fi prototype testers found it pretty straightforward and self explanatory. The one change I made to this description was to emphasize that users are matched based on shared interests, since the desire to chat about shared interests was brought up in the feedback from 2 out of 3 of our low-fi testers.

Plan your Conversation Time (Medium)

Mike has a pocket of free time between classes tomorrow from 3:00pm to 3:30pm, so he adds this time period to his ConverStation calendar. When the time comes, ConverStation asks Mike if he's still available, and Mike confirms that he is. ConverStation then matches Mike with Ike, who is visiting from abroad and is using ConverStation in the same area. Just like in the "Meetup" task, ConverStation give Mike and Ike each other's info and navigates them to a ConverStation point to meet up at. Mike and Ike have a 20 minute conversation, and Mike learns all about life in Ike's home country of Yugoslavia. Though their conversation was short, Mike was introduced to a new culture and made a friend on the other side of the world.

Task 2 Changes

The original version of this task description implied that the matching was done ahead of the user's scheduled free time. So, in our low-fi prototype, users were simply taken directly to navigation when the designated time arrived.

After some discussion, we decided to clarify that the user would simply be prompted to search for a conversation at the designated time as opposed to already being matched ahead of time. This was done in order to confirm that the user is still available and wants to find a conversation. So, when the designated time arrives, if the user decides they still want an conversation, only then does ConverStation begin searching for a match.

Start a Group Conversation (Complex)

Right now, Don and Gilda are hosting a flash fiction reading and discussion at the cafe, but nobody showed up! They decide to move to a ConverStation point and start a group conversation using ConverStation. ConverStation notifies nearby active users Norman, Emma, and Ray of the group conversation happening now, and they decide to join in. Norman, Emma, and Ray bring interesting ideas and perspectives to the reading that Don and Gilda wouldn’t have found on their own, and the five decide to make their Flash Fiction meetings a regular occurence.

Task 3 Changed

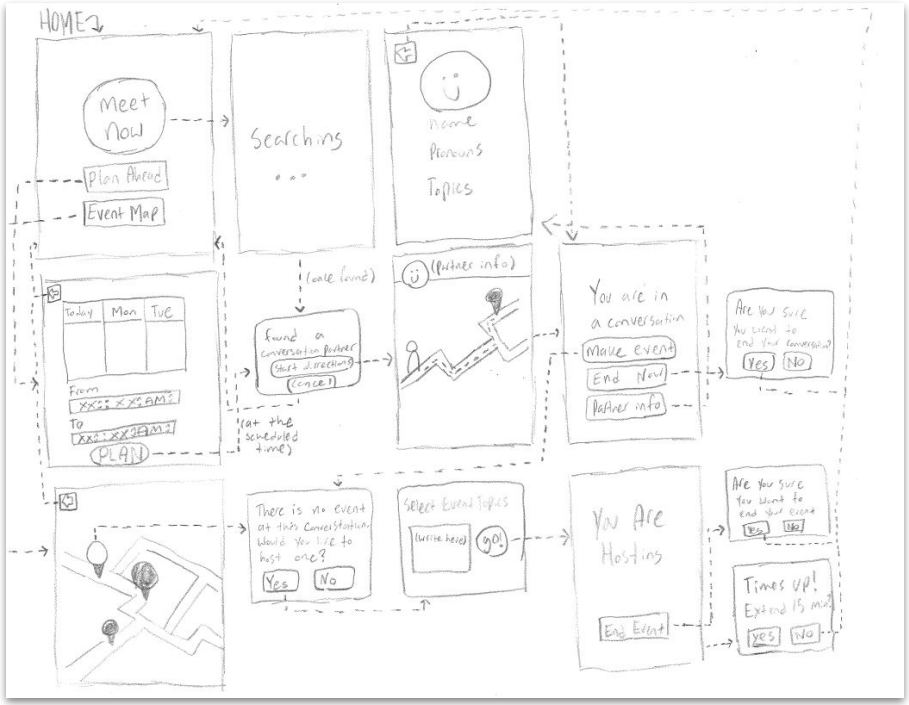
Our first change to this task was changing “events” to “group conversations” in order to better convey to the user what their purpose is, which is a problem that came up in our low-fi prototype tests.

We also changed group conversations from having a single host to everyone joining as equal members. This was done to avoid potential problems with hosts leaving and needing to transfer the hosting role. Instead, all members simply join the group, and the group conversation ends once all members have left. No need to a host to constantly extend the time limit as in our initial low-fi prototype.

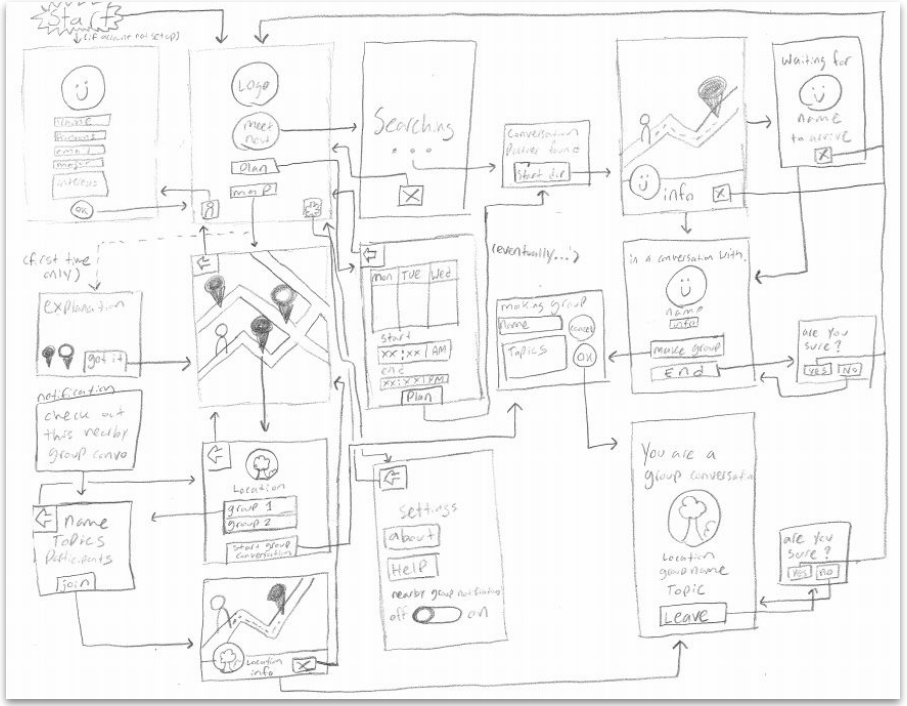
DESIGN CHANGES

Storyboard Sketches

Old



New



Separated Logo and Meet Now Button

Our original design combined the logo and the “meet now” button for finding a conversation. Although everyone in the low-fi prototype figured out which button to press on the first try, one tester hesitated since he thought it might just be a logo. To avoid any confusion, we decided to separate the two.

Moreover, in general we clarified our phrasing so it would be clear and direct what was being communicated to the user. So “meet now” became “start a conversation,” “finding passengers” became “finding you someone to chat with,” etc.

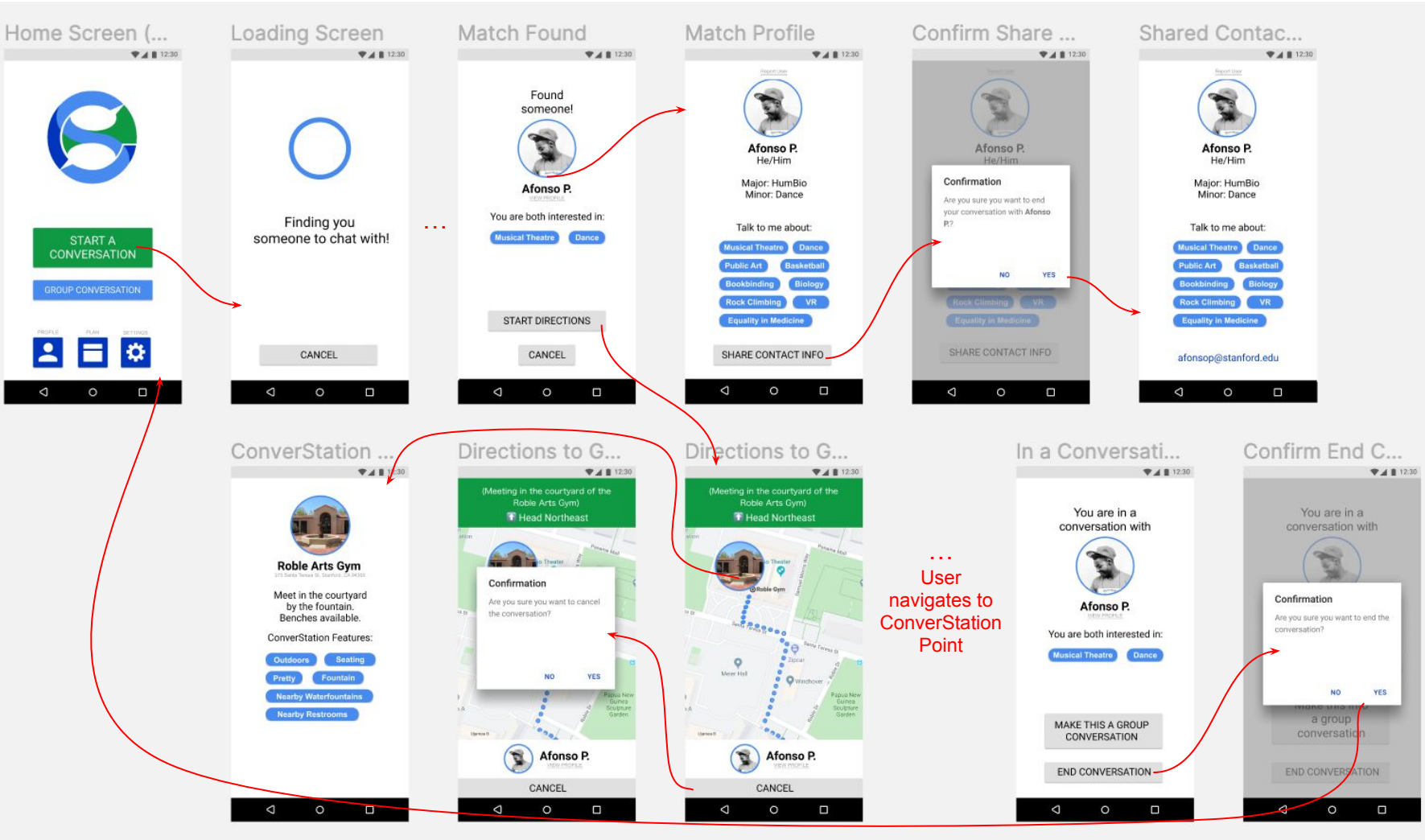
Revamped Group Conversation Map

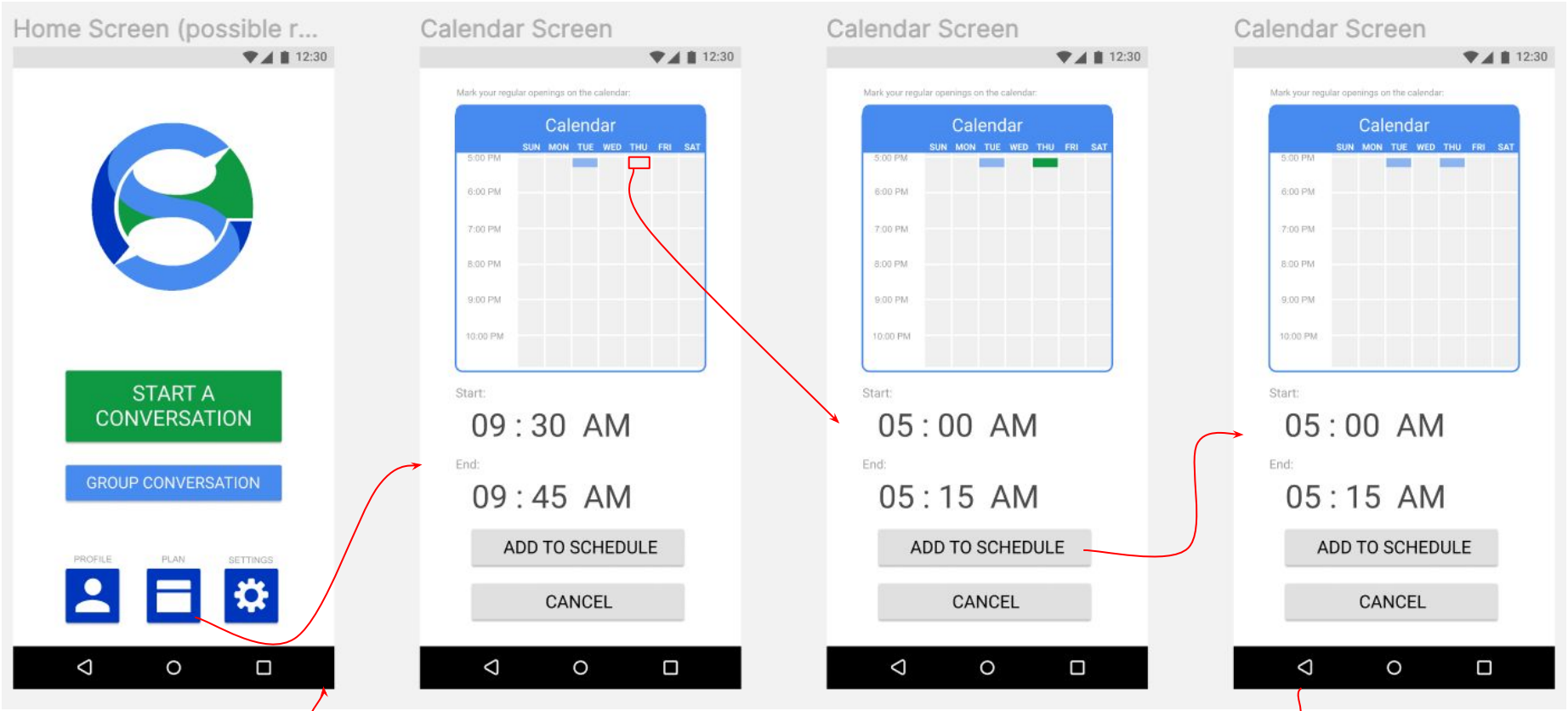
Users had a lot of trouble navigating our event map in the low-fi prototype, so we changed a lot about this screen for the med-fi prototype. The non-descript location markers from the low-fi prototype have been replaced with large images of the ConverStation location. Hopefully these are more obviously clickable. We also added a short text explanation at the bottom of the screen telling the user they can tap on the ConverStation to see more, which should help users who are still unsure of what to do.

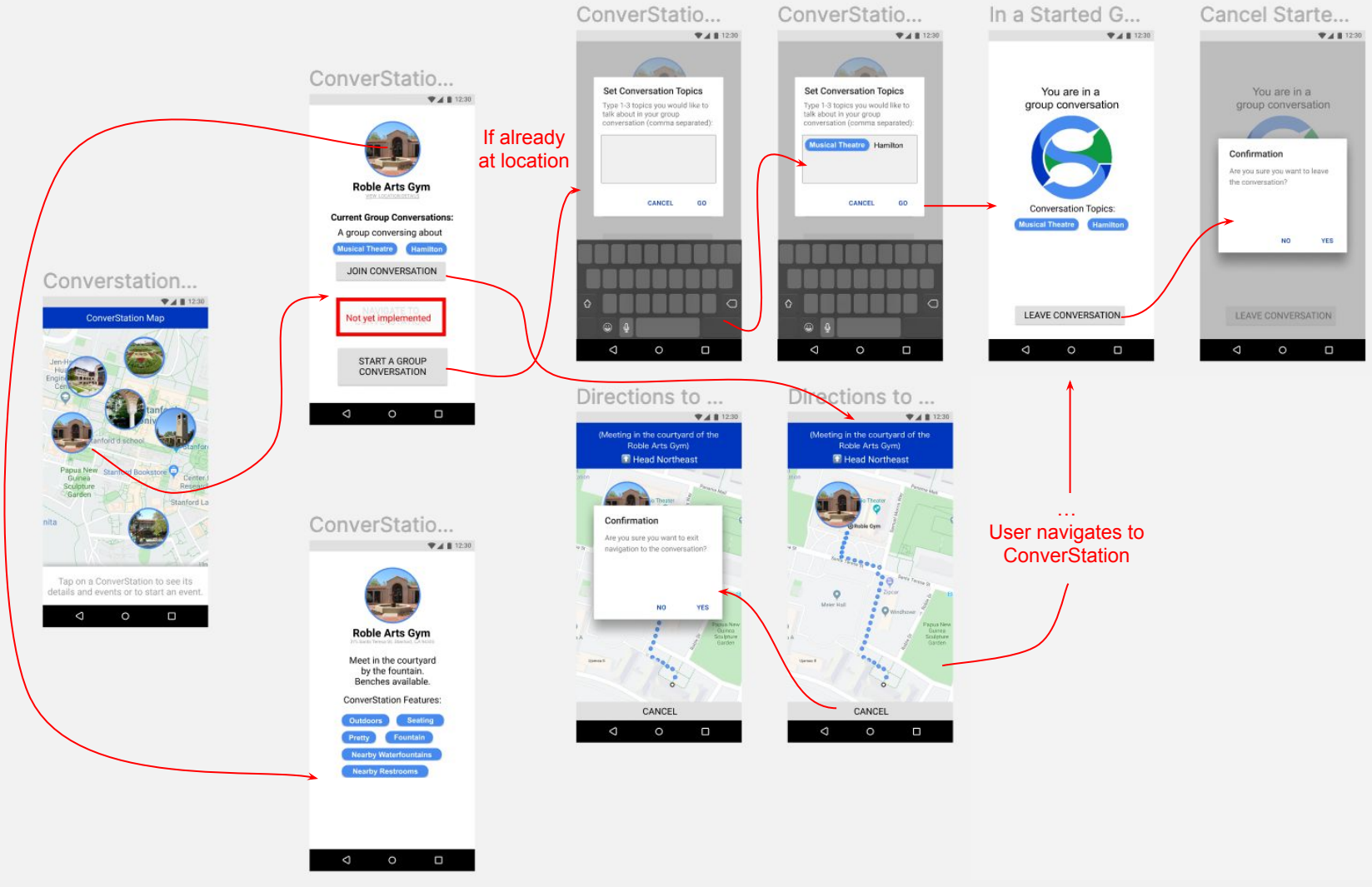
ConverStation Pages

In addition to all the changes we made to the map, we also gave each ConverStation their own page with details such as the location name, possible meeting places, location features, and even an address. Our intention was to give the user more information on each space so they can choose one they like. This page also features a list of current group conversations as well as a button for starting a new conversation. Our low-fi prototype testers found it difficult to start a group conversation from the map, so hopefully these button prompts make it clear to the user how to join and start group conversations

TASK FLOWS


Home Screen (...
START A CONVERSATION
GROUP CONVERSATION
Loading Screen
Finding you someone to chat with!
CANCEL
Match Found
Found someone!
Afonso P.
You are both interested in:
Musical Theatre
Dance
START DIRECTIONS
CANCEL
Match Profile
Afonso P.
He/Him
Major: HumBio
Minor: Dance
Talk to me about:
Musical Theatre
Dance
Public Art
Basketball
Bookbinding
Biology
Rock Climbing
VR
Equality in Medicine
SHARE CONTACT INFO
Confirm Share ...
Confirmation
Are you sure you want to end your conversation with Afonso P.?
NO
YES
Shared Contac...
afonsop@stanford.edu
ConverStation ...
Roble Arts Gym
Meet in the courtyard by the fountain. Benches available.
ConverStation Features:
Outdoors
Seating
Pretty
Fountain
Nearby Waterfountains
Nearby Restrooms
Directions to G...
(Meeting in the courtyard of the Roble Arts Gym)
Head Northeast
Confirmation
Are you sure you want to cancel the conversation?
NO
YES
CANCEL
Directions to G...
(Meeting in the courtyard of the Roble Arts Gym)
Head Northeast
CANCEL
User navigates to ConverStation Point
In a Conversati...
You are in a conversation with
Afonso P.
You are both interested in:
Musical Theatre
Dance
MAKE THIS A GROUP CONVERSATION
END CONVERSATION
Confirm End C...
You are in a conversation with
Confirmation
Are you sure you want to end the conversation?
NO
YES
END CONVERSATION


Home Screen (possible r...
12:30
START A CONVERSATION
GROUP CONVERSATION
PROFILE
PLAN
SETTINGS
Calendar Screen
12:30
Mark your regular openings on the calendar:
Calendar
SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT
5:00 PM
6:00 PM
7:00 PM
8:00 PM
9:00 PM
10:00 PM
Start:
09 : 30 AM
End:
09 : 45 AM
ADD TO SCHEDULE
CANCEL
Calendar Screen
12:30
Mark your regular openings on the calendar:
Calendar
SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT
5:00 PM
6:00 PM
7:00 PM
8:00 PM
9:00 PM
10:00 PM
Start:
05 : 00 AM
End:
05 : 15 AM
ADD TO SCHEDULE
CANCEL
Calendar Screen
12:30
Mark your regular openings on the calendar:
Calendar
SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT
5:00 PM
6:00 PM
7:00 PM
8:00 PM
9:00 PM
10:00 PM
Start:
05 : 00 AM
End:
05 : 15 AM
ADD TO SCHEDULE
CANCEL


Converstation...
ConverStation Map
Tap on a ConverStation to see its details and events or to start an event.
ConverStatio...
Roble Arts Gym
Current Group Conversations:
A group conversing about
Musical Theatre
Hamilton
JOIN CONVERSATION
NAVIGATE TO
Not yet implemented
START A GROUP CONVERSATION
If already at location
ConverStatio...
Roble Arts Gym
Meet in the courtyard by the fountain.
Benches available.
ConverStation Features:
Outdoors
Seating
Pretty
Fountain
Nearby Waterfountains
Nearby Restrooms
ConverStatio...
Set Conversation Topics
Type 1-3 topics you would like to talk about in your group conversation (comma separated):
CANCEL
GO
ConverStatio...
Set Conversation Topics
Type 1-3 topics you would like to talk about in your group conversation (comma separated):
Musical Theatre
Hamilton
CANCEL
GO
In a Started G...
You are in a group conversation
Conversation Topics:
Musical Theatre
Hamilton
LEAVE CONVERSATION
Cancel Starte...
You are in a group conversation
Confirmation
Are you sure you want to leave the conversation?
NO
YES
LEAVE CONVERSATION
Directions to ...
(Meeting in the courtyard of the Roble Arts Gym)
Head Northeast
Confirmation
Are you sure you want to exit navigation to the conversation?
NO
YES
CANCEL
Directions to ...
(Meeting in the courtyard of the Roble Arts Gym)
Head Northeast
CANCEL
...
User navigates to ConverStation

PROTOTYPE

Tools Used

- Sketch
  - Used for initial visual design
  - Mac Only
  - Limited Collaboration

- Figma
  - Easy Collaboration
  - Android Templates

Limitations

The biggest limitation is that the user isn't actually moving around and meeting up with anyone. The navigation map is simply a static image which the user taps to advance through as if they've walked to their destination. The group conversation map is similarly a static image, not the user's actual location. This is because the prototype is meant to be used by only one person, and moving around while using the prototype would place constraints on our ability to test. Moreover, a functioning map would be too high fidelity for this stage in the prototyping process.

For the same reason of fidelity, the calendar is not fully implemented. Currently the user can only select one pre-specified date and time. Also, because this prototype is meant to be used for only one sitting, the real time features such as calendar and group conversation notifications have not been implemented.

Currently, there is only one working ConverStation point (the Roble Arts Gym). Other locations will say they are "too far away." Also, navigation to a ConverStation is limited to creating/joining group conversations. This was done to limit the amount of repeated content we would have to make for the prototype.

Wizard of Oz / Hard Coded Data

Since the prototype doesn’t feature the ability to type, the info that the user would type in (profile info, conversation topics, etc.) has all been hardcoded, and the user simply taps the keyboard to advance.

Since there aren’t any other users on the app, the user gets matched with a preset user who’s hard coded in. The matching process is all Wizard of Oz. Since both the user profile and match profile are hard coded, the matching interests are guaranteed; there isn’t any complex matching algorithm in play. We plan on doing the same for the hi-fi prototype; the app would dynamically generate matches with interests taken from the user’s profile. Actually developing a matching algorithm would take too long and would require making a large number of hard coded users to ensure the user has someone to match with.