

Needfinding

Alissa, Uma, & Olivia

Our Team



**Alissa
Vuillier**
CS + POLISCI



Olivia Otto
CS + DATA
SCIENCE



Uma Phatak
CS + SPANISH

Exploring domains

Access to benefits?

Political tech?

Self-representation?

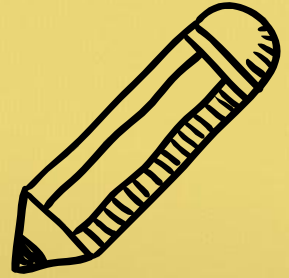
Housing injustice?



**SYSTEMIC JUSTICE &
EQUITY**

Questions

- Tell us about your background as an organizer or researcher in your field.
- What are some of the best tools you have used in this area, and why?
- Why did you choose to focus on this space?



Interviewees



Kwesi



Amelie



Sophie



Sheena



Interviews

Kwesi

#Case4Reparations
Campaigns Advisor at the
Decolonizing Wealth Project

Senior Political Director at
Color of Change

30 minute Zoom



“People [have been] so mad about the tech in the progressive movement... data costs too much, and tools just weren’t hitting.”
-Kwesi



Amelie

Founder of Formally, a tech startup improving access to legal resources

30 minute Zoom



“If a product doesn’t have recommendations on what next steps you need to take, it can only take you so far.”
-Amelie



Sophie

Former co-leader of the
Stanford Prison Education
Project

30 minute Zoom



“People rack up twelve FTAs
without even knowing they
have court.” -Sophie



Sheena

Director of Resource
Mobilization at the
Decolonizing Wealth Project

30 minute Zoom



“My ability as a fundraiser, to appeal to you, should not be a determiner of how much money you choose to give to [my] organization.”

-Sheena

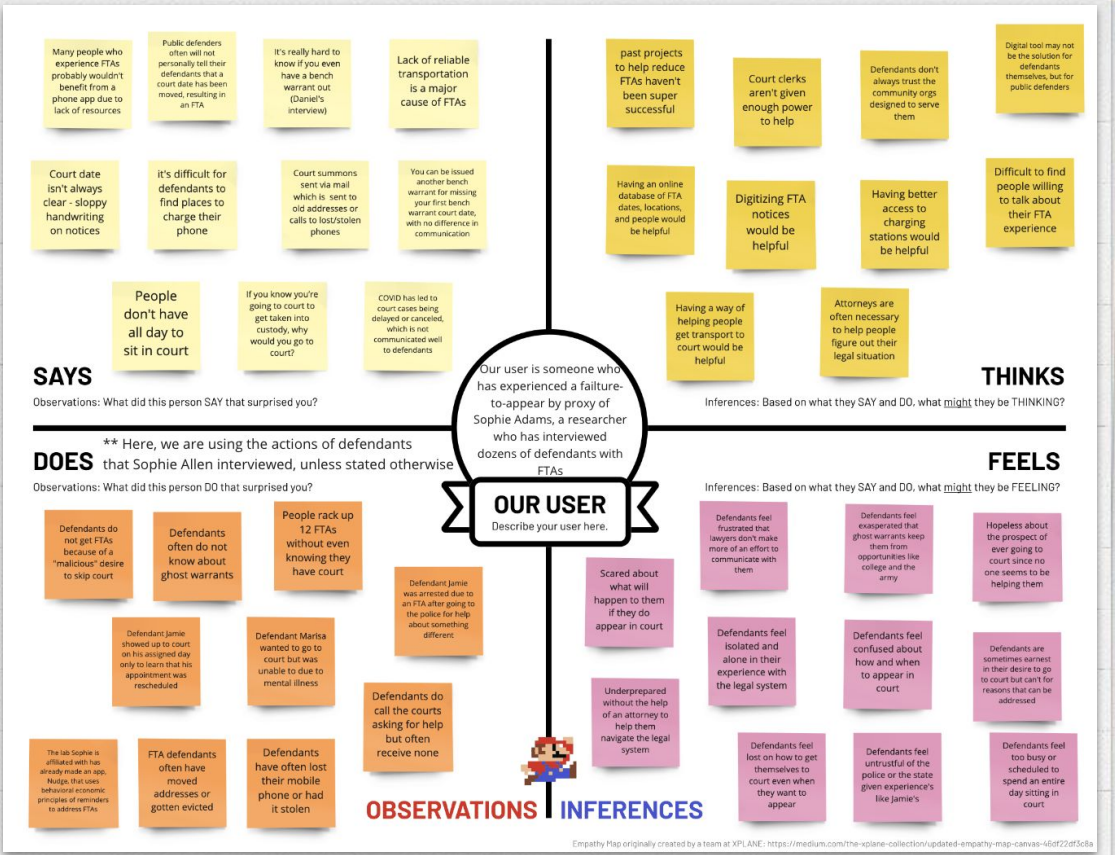




FAILURE- TO- APPEARS

defn. When a criminal defendant is required to appear in court for a mandatory hearing, but they do not show up.

Sophie's Empathy Map





Analysis

SAYS



“Lack of reliable transportation is a major cause of FTAs”

“The court date isn't always clear due to sloppy handwriting on notices”

“Reminder calls are useless if people have dead or stolen phones”

“I showed up on the fifteenth and they said I had no court.”

“[Colleges did] a background check... and it came up that I had a warrant out for my arrest. And so I was like, I have a warrant? ”

DOES



People can rack up 12 FTAs without even knowing they have court

Defendants do call the courts asking for help, but often receive none

Defendants often do not know about "ghost warrants"

One defendant was arrested due to an FTA, after going to the police for help about something different

**** We are analyzing the actions of defendants that Sophie interviewed**

THINKS



Past projects to help reduce FTAs haven't been super successful – what's to say future projects will?

If only there were an easy way to get to court, many of these related barriers might feel less overwhelming.

Defendants don't always trust the community organizations designed to serve them

Digitizing FTA notices would be extremely helpful

FEELS



Scared about what
will happen to them if
they do appear in
court

Confused about how
and when to appear
in court

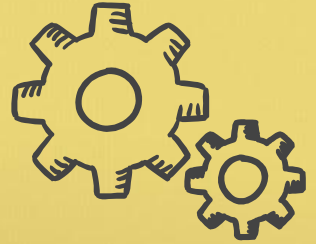
Frustrated that
lawyers and clerks
don't make more of
an effort to
communicate with
them

Mistrustful of the police or
the state

** We are analyzing the feelings of
defendants that Sophie interviewed

Tensions

- Defendants would benefit from notifications, but often lack reliable phone access
- Court dates are mailed to defendants, but can be so sloppy that they aren't even legible





Contradictions

- People appear in court and are turned away, but then are later issued a fail-to-appear because their court date was changed without notice
- A FTA is a crime committed usually without intent

Surprises

- The biggest problem is people not knowing they have a court date
- Lack of access to mobile chargers is a large problem as well



Insights



Needs

Even when a defendant is motivated to get to court, getting there is hard.

People need a reliable and flexible mode of transportation to court.

It's extremely hard to know or confirm when your court date is.

People need a real-time, updating tool to look up when their court date is.

It's easy to forget when to appear in court – it's just another task.

People need reminders to appear in court.

Illegibility of forms giving court dates seems like a trivial issue but is a huge problem.

Defendants need clearer forms and courts need better methods of giving out forms.



Final thoughts

- Hard to meaningfully address problems in the space of systemic justice & equity using tech, due to lack of resources
- Super hard to get end-users to interview (working on this right now!)
- + **How can we design for a specific subset of people who might find an app helpful?**

Summary

Domain finding: We talked to four experts about access to justice ecosystems

End-user focus: We narrowed in on failure to appears and empathy mapped for Sophie

Insights: We learned that...

- failures-to-appear are rarely intentional
- barriers include lack of transportation, reliable phone or internet access, and communication channels
- even with internet access problems, there are still ways to help



Questions?