

USE CASE INTERVIEW

Friday, September 20, 2024

Background

- Name: Jules Jaworowski
- School: Kutztown University, PA
- Major: Dual Major: Vision and Special Education
- Age: 20
- Gender: Female

- How do you compare your seeing eye dog to the cane?
 - “A cane is great but a dog (My dog’s name is Ruby) has 360 degree awareness and full surroundings, whereas a cane can only track 2-3 feet in front of you and only tracks the ground. A dog can scan the whole environment, and anything in her way at face level. For a cane you would have to run into something before it’s there. For a cane you would have to run into something first, but the dog helps me move around that and avoid running into an object.”
- Can you describe your typical routine when navigating familiar and unfamiliar environments?
 - “Ruby picks up a familiar route very fast, and once she knows the route, she knows it really well. When she is unfamiliar with a route, it’s more exploratory so we tend to have more stops just in case. She doesn’t know if you want to go left or right or up the stairs, so she tends to stop more often to navigate better.”
- How would you describe the beginning period when you are training Ruby on a new route?
 - “Usually it takes 2-3 trips before she is fully acclimated to a new route.”
- Are there any days when you still have Ruby but you avert to using other guiding methods?
 - Sighted Guide = Holding onto a sighted person by the elbow to guide
 - A big crowd can hinder Ruby’s ability to guide sometimes.
 - Some guided facilities will have you train with a dog and the cane at the same time so you can have a backup of using the cane at times when the dog isn’t able to perform at its best ability.
- What tools or aids do you currently use to help you navigate? How effective are they?
 - Sighted Guide = Holding onto a sighted person by the elbow to guide
 - Seeing Eye Dog: Ruby

- What types of technology do you use regularly (smartphones, apps)?
 - I also use built in Zoom and voiceover.
 - There is a free app called Seeing AI that I also use. It can identify color and you can use it to read aloud text by placing text under your phone camera.
- Are there any apps or devices that you find particularly helpful or challenging? Why?
 - Apple is fairly accessible, but I also don't have much experience with other brands and their accessibility features, but I use Apple.
- Any apps where accessibility features don't work properly?
 - Pearson is horribility inaccessible. I have to use it a lot for school and assignments. When using Zoom, it jumps around the screen or autoclicks answers that I'm not trying to click. A lot of programs have a built-in audio feature but Pearson doesn't have that. The voiceover on Pearson is really bad too.
 - Also, PDFs and voiceover don't go well together because voiceover views them as a picture and it can't read pictures.
- What are the biggest challenges you encounter when navigating public spaces (e.g., sidewalks, public transport, buildings)?
 - When I'm by myself I have to rely on other people and have to ask others. Other people usually tend to freeze up when I ask them questions about the location of something or which direction something is. People will usually point and say it's over there, and then realize I can't see them.
 - It's a struggle to be able to read signs and room labels because sometimes Braille labels are wrong and haven't been updated.
- What features would you find most valuable in a navigation aid designed specifically for visually impaired individuals? What would best help you?
 - Being descriptive but not overwhelmingly descriptive (don't need to know about irrelevant things, just major things)
 - If it doesn't actually affect the person it's not gonna help them.
 - Think about when you walk into a room, what are the first things you notice?
 - We want to know about the major things in a room that could be a hazard for us to walk into, not every single detail that may be unnecessary.
- People that try to make technologies that replace the current ones have gotten a lot of push back? Do you feel advancements in technology could improve your navigation experience?
 - A lot of other students are a lot like me. The cane is the easiest thing to provide them over a guiding dog because it's much more simple and less expensive. For a lot of students, the cane might not work well especially because of the cognitive factor, but for students who have no cognitive issues, it might work. But a lot of students feel embarrassed using the cane, and would rather use nothing at all. A lot of times it feels like the only option is

using a cane or a guided dog. Having another option would be game changing because it would remove the shame factor and we can have more of a choice to even have another option. A lot of younger visual impaired students are embarrassed to use any mobility aids. And some don't use any at all because of it, so they would be willing to adapt to a newer technology as long as there could be a way to customize or personalize it.