

User Research

Description

For our group project we have decided to focus on users who regularly use bikes in or around the University District. They can be people who bike for recreational or commuting purposes and may vary in age, gender and socioeconomic status. We hope to learn more about their experiences around biking in order to provide a possible solution to any problems that they face.

Insights

- The process of loading bikes onto buses can be cumbersome for elderly users.
- The instructions for loading bikes onto buses are not easily discoverable
- There is no clear indication of whether a bus has available bike racks.
- Despite the use of bike locks, bike theft is still a common problem that users have to account for.

Interview Questions

1. What is your daily routine like?
2. Can you describe your overall biking experience? (For example, how long have you been biking, how often, where, and general thoughts about biking)
3. What information about biking do you have or use currently and what factors influence your biking behaviors?
4. What additional information about biking would be helpful for you?
5. What challenges do you face when looking for this information?
6. What do you use currently to obtain biking information?
7. What would be the most accessible way for you to receive additional information on biking?
8. Are there any additional thoughts on biking you would like to share?

Interview

Date: 4/13/2019 12:30pm

Location: IMA Bike Racks

Duration: 5 minutes

Interviewer: Nadir

Interviewee: Jane (Pseudonym)

Introduction

To get an interview, I waited at the bike racks outside the UW Intra Mural Activities Center and asked rack users if they were willing to spare five minutes to answer some questions for me. Jane, an elderly lady who was locking her bike, agreed to the interview. Prior to obtaining her consent to record the interview, I introduced myself as a student researcher at UW looking into possible solutions to problems that bike users may regularly face.

Transcript

Nadir: Can you describe what your daily routine is like?

Jane: Well most days I wake up and go to work

Nadir: And do you go to work on your bike?

Jane: Yes

Nadir: Can you describe your overall biking experience, for instance how long have you been biking and how often do you bike?

Jane: For most of my life and every day.

Nadir: Do you do it to commute or recreationally or both?

Jane: Both

Nadir: Okay so what factors influence your biking behavior? What information do you need before you actually use your bike?

Jane: The weather, how far do I have to go and what time I have to be there

Nadir: How do you usually get that information?

Jane: Looking out the window. For where I may look at my mobile phone if I have to but I go the same routes most of the time.

Nadir: Okay so is there any additional information that you feel might help as you a commuting biker?

Jane: The bus system. Two things about the bus system. If I would know which buses take bikes and if it would be easier to get the bike on the bus. It is very difficult for me

Nadir: Right, the whole process of doing it you feel is very cumbersome?

Jane: Yeah

Nadir: Aside from that are there any other challenges you face when using your bike for commuting

Jane: Sometimes the car traffic on certain roads is very heavy which can be hard to navigate

Nadir: Are there any additional thoughts you have to share about challenges you face? For instance, do you have trouble finding places to store your belongings?

Jane: No, but I have to say this is a very old, very cheap bike. This is what I use around here and its not a very comfortable bike. The nicer bike I have but I am too worried that it will get stolen

Nadir: Right so bike theft is a big concern of yours?

Jane: Yeah

Nadir: Maybe if there would be a better method for you to secure your bike?

Jane: Yes and without having to carry 5 pounds of equipment you know?

Nadir: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Jane: No, I don't think so.

Nadir: Okay, well I think that is everything I need. Thank you so much for talking to me I really appreciate it.

Jane: You're welcome.

Carl Arenas

Description of Group Project:

Our team will highlight some needs for bikers around the U-District Area. Biking is a common activity in such an urban area like the U-District. Bikers however, have a lot to take into consideration when making decisions about biking. With research through interviews of bikers around the area, we hope to uncover the considerations they face and the factors that might influence a biker's decisions, as well as designing a solution or workaround to support their biking needs.

Insights:

1. Several factors influenced her biking behaviors-weather, time, company, routing, equipment.
2. Even as someone who biked pretty frequently, she still would have liked to have known bike regulations.
3. Consideration for pedestrians can also be taken into account, not just bikers.
4. An app or public advertisement of a sort may be used to display a biker's desired information.

Interview Questions

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5. What challenges do you face when looking for this information?
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8. Are there any additional thoughts on biking you would like to share?
- 9.

Interview and Participant Responses:

Q: So for this interview we want to touch on what it's like to have somewhat of a routine around biking and how we can highlight opportunities to help enhance the biking experience. So what exactly is your daily routine like?

A: Ok well my daily routine, we'd have to get up, get our stuff in the bike rack, go down to Confluence which is the park near a river. We would all get out our bikes and we would start biking around the loop trail.

Q: Awesome, and that sort of leads us into the question of how can you describe your overall biking experience? For example, how long have you been biking, how often, where, and your general thoughts about biking.

A: I've been biking since for as long as i can remember. Always recreational, um. Used to bike pretty often, like every week my family would bike. We would bike around our house, along the roads and also down at the park I mentioned earlier where its an 11 mile loop around. General thoughts, it's very good for the environment but takes a lot of effort.

Q: Ok um, and what information about biking do you have or use currently and what factors influence your biking behaviors?

A: Information about biking if I hear about it through word of mouth or if i'm walking at a park and see signs. Factors which influence my behavior... weather, whether or not I have my bike with me and a helmet, how much time I have, and who I'm with, as well as where I'm living. So in the city or at home.

Q: Does anything else come to mind?

A: Also where I'm going and, hills.a

Q: What additional information about biking would be helpful for you?

A: Bike rules for the city, um how to keep my bike safe so it's not stolen. Safe routes to bike.

Q: Anything else?

A: Um, nope.

Q: What challenges do you face when looking for this information?

A: I wouldn't know where to look for bike rules, so I'd Google it and hope something good comes up. Also i don't know how to keep my bike safe and also about all the stories you hear about losing a tire or a bike.

Q: What do you use currently to obtain biking information?

A: Google

Q: And what would be the most accessible way for you to receive additional information on biking?

A: An app, or posters on public transport.

Q: Are there any additional thoughts on biking you would like to share?

A: I wish there was a way to bike more safely around pedestrians as well as making it safe for the bikers themselves.

Q: Awesome, that's all the questions I have for you, thank you for your time.

Samantha

A: Can you describe your overall biking experience...so like how did you get into biking and what made you start?

I: Sure...uh...I guess like my experience thus far has been pretty positive. I've been biking... I've been pretty involved in like the biking world...like for a little over a year now. It all started when my friend from freshman year kind of introduced me to bikes and the bike shop. And then I guess the mechanical aspect of bikes, so like the different types of bikes and what goes into making a bike. My first bike, I guess my first nice bike, I built it myself and I guess that started the interest and I guess bikes and like bike components and that led to biking. And I guess all that. So it's been pretty positive.

S: Okay....so when did you build your first bike?

I: It was around 2 years ago...around spring quarter two years ago.

S: And what year are you now?

I: I'm a junior

S: So you started getting into biking your freshman year?

I: Freshman year.

S: Ok so when do you bike, where do you bike to?

I: Sure! Most often I'm just biking from school to home and like around campus. So anywhere I need to go around here, I get to with my bike and then for leisure, there is like plenty of good biking roads. There is Lake Washington, which is nice to follow, like go around the water. And toward the coast is also a nice path. I also started mountain biking recently. And this is also a pretty nice area for mountain biking. There are woods in Issaquah and the Cascades.

S: Do you go mountain biking alone or with your friends?

I: Usually with friends.

S: Ok

I: yeah

S: And how often do you bike?

I: Everyday

S: Everyday?

I: yeah

S: wow!

I: hahaha yeah

S: I think you already covered this a little earlier

I: Sure

S: What are your reasons for biking? Some examples include commuting, recreational, exercise, for the environment, etc...

I: Top is commute and recreational. Yeah. And then I guess where I live right now. It's ether 10 minutes by bike or by driving. I guess for me biking just seems like the better option: you get exercise and it's good for the environment. And there is a little more flexibility. Bikes are easier to carry around and there are bike locks around the buildings and that's really nice. And as far as recreation, the biking community...there are some pretty cool people in the biking community, especially around here. So that's a really good group to be a part of.

S: Cool...and what factors influence your decision to bike or not bike? I guess you bike everyday... but when you're going to bike, what are things that you care considering?

I: So I guess the only times I won't bike is if I'm injured, but that usually doesn't last very long because biking is pretty low impact so biking is pretty not difficult. So I guess I'm like always biking. Sometimes when it's super crappy weather out or if I'm super tired I'll consider not biking. Except the benefits of biking usually outweigh walking or other forms of transportation

S: Ok...so if you don't bike, how do you get around?

I: That's a good question...usually just like...ok I guess my first option if I don't bike is I try to hitch a ride from someone or I'll walk.

S: Does the geography of Seattle ever deter you from biking in Seattle?

I: Yeah some times. So yeah I guess at the start of the year, for commuting purposes, I road along a bunch of different routes and found the flattest route. So I usually always take that route. But when I'm biking recreationally, like going into Seattle, there is some super steep hills in Seattle as you probably know...

S: wait like downtown?

I: Downtown yeah. And I generally try to avoid those on my bike. But like sometimes it's inevitable and it generally ends up being an experience. I guess terrain doesn't really deter me from biking it just influences what path I take.

S: Ah that's really interesting. What biking information do you have and use now? ...so like routes, bike locks, bike knowledge, public pumps, etc.

I: Sure...I think I'm pretty well educated on the biking environment on this area and I think that information spreads pretty quickly among bicyclists. And this area is pretty good about promoting biking. There are usually bike accessible paths everywhere and bike locks next to buildings.

S: And when you say "here" do you mean U District or Seattle?

I: I'd say Seattle

S: Okay and what additional biking information would be helpful for you to have? And make you more inclined to bike? I mean you bike everyday so if not for you, what do you think would be helpful for other people to have?

I: Sure. So I think one big deterrent for people is bike theft. I think that's a really real problem but if you take the right precaution it's something that you don't really have to worry about. From my experience, usually the only time things are stolen is when I made decisions that would make you think, "oh of course it got stolen"

S: Can you give me an example of that?

I: So like leaving bikes in the same place for extended periods with like easy to remove parts. So there are a lot of bikes with quick release parts, so it's basically a lever and if you flip a lever you can basically take off anything that you want...whether it be a wheel or a seat. So even with quick release bikes are usually fine for like a day, so that's not really a concern. And with the right type of lock you're usually pretty safe. I guess like the weather plays a pretty big factor in a lot of people's decisions in whether or not they want to bike. I guess there's not a whole lot to say about that.

S: Okay and I guess what challenges/barriers do you face when receiving/looking for this information?

I: Sure...umm

S: Unless you don't think there are?

I: I definitely think there are...um I think for one biking is...I would say it's male dominated so it can be somewhat difficult for women to come in and feel comfortable and like the environment. Especially like working on bikes, and I think that's a big part of bikes is general maintenance

and that can seem pretty difficult. Especially there is a lot of terminology and biking jargon, it shouldn't but it does intimidate people. And I know I was intimidated in the beginning. I guess just like the community as a whole can be somewhat elitist too when like some groups are like "ohh my bike is like super cool and it's like better than your bike or whatever". So that can be kind of a hostile environment too. I think a lot of it is that the cultural can be hostile sometimes.

S: Okay and do you think that the information that you have now, about like resources for bikers around here, do you think that that is easy for people to get access to? I know you said that you got a lot of your information from other bikers?

I: Sure. So I think right now, what the status is, if anyone wanted the information they would have to seek it out and if they sought it out, it wouldn't be that difficult to find but that's like coming from someone who is around that information everyday. But yeah there could be better all around promotion and awareness of resources because I guess just like walking around there is a lot of things that is not entirely obvious that biking is a very valid thing to do.

S: Ok...because I know I have had trouble looking for bike pumps in the past. I think there are a couple around campus that are broken and I was told that there was a pump in the bike shop but when I went it was closed.

I: Oh yeah totally... that's totally a thing. Yeah there's a lot of...exactly what you said. There are bike pumps around but the things sitting around for the public aren't usually well taken care of.

S: Ok second to last question: What is the most accessible way for you to receive additional information on biking?

I: Sure....um is this for people trying to seek out biking?

S: Yeah just bikers in general...new and experienced. Do you feel like you need more information on biking?

I: I think I'm pretty good on my own.

S: Mmm then for like someone who is just starting to get into biking?

I: But like someone who is trying to get into biking?

S: Yeah...so like if it was you, freshman year, just starting to get into biking?

I: I think a big thing is finding a good local community so finding something that would promote a good community. Biking is a really positive thing. And there is a big positive community and if that was exposed and easier to find it would be much...people would be much more inclined to get into it. So I don't know...I think just more exposure for these local communities.

S: Cool and what are your additional/final thoughts on biking? Do you have any questions/comments that you want to add/share?

I: Sure. I think...not like a forum... but like something that would allow people to share enthusiasm for biking. I think maybe like better infrastructure. I think there is already pretty good infrastructure around here for biking...but like working pumps but also more transparency. Because there are bike lockers around campus but even I still don't know how they work and who gets to use them or like I know there are some bike rooms in some buildings on campus and I don't know who can use those. So I guess just like having information more readily available would be nice.

Travis Neils

Project Description:

Our team want to gain insight into the experience of cyclists who use trails and roads around the University of Washington. We are looking for users who bike on a regular basis (at least 3 times a month). We are open to recreational and commuting bikers. We hope to use this insight to provide a solution or a workaround.

Insights:

- Biking is more fun with Friends
- Locking up a bike is a hassle
- A scenic route can lead to a memorable/great experience
- Users have learned to deal with weather
- Users feel there is a safety vs. speed tradeoff

Questions:

- How often do you bike?
- Where do you go biking?
- How often do you bike?
- What biking information do you have/use now?
- What are your reasons for biking?
- What have been your best biking experiences?
- What have been your worst biking experiences?
- What aspects of biking do you dislike?
- What aspects of biking do you like?
- What challenges do you face?
- How do you decide if you go biking that day?
- Are there any additional thoughts on biking you would like to share?

Interview Transcript:

Interviewer: How long have you been biking for?

Respondent: For quite a while now, I think I started biking when I was two.

Interviewer: Wow

Respondent: What is that 18 years,

Interviewer: You were an early starter

Respondent: Yeah, yeah

Interviewer: What do you like about biking?

Respondent: I guess at first it was like a new found freedom, like you could go places super-fast compared to walking. Now I have gotten more into mountain biking, so I guess it is more the adrenaline rush that comes with it. So, it is kind of a rating feeling a guess

Interviewer: Where do you go biking?

Respondent: There are quite a few places east of here like into the mountains and stuff, but the big place I like to go, when it opens up is Whistler, they have sweet bike park there for some downhill biking there.

Interviewer: Do you also have to go uphill and stuff?

Respondent: So with downhill biking at a park like whistler, they have lifts so that normally skiing, whistler is like a skiing place, so in the summer time they will take off some of the ski chairs, and put on bike racks, so that you can come on down., but otherwise when I go biking on the weekends with my friends here, we just drive out to the trails, they will have a parking lot, we will meet up there and we will just ride up, then we will ride down. there are climbing trails you can do and also climbing roads that you can take up to the top of the mountain, then decide which trails you want to take back down. Just do that like a couple times.

Interviewer: Sounds like a lot of fun

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: What do you dislike about biking?

Respondent: I don't think there is much, I think that maybe your bum gets a bit sore sat on the saddle a long time, and I guess the other thing is I like biking a lot and commuting by bike, but having to lock up your bike and trying to find a safe space for it is a bit of a hassle, I mean like I know people enjoy running, but I feel like that doesn't have the extra piece of equipment type deal like you can run anywhere and then not worry about it, but when you bike you have to worry about your bike. It's kind of scary leaving a bike out.

Interviewer: Yes, it must be scary leaving a bike, especially an expensive one outdoors all day.

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: Have you ever had one stolen?

Respondent: I have had stolen when I was younger as a kid. Somebody stole my little bike, that was a while back though, but after that I have never had a bike stolen. Recently, just last year I've had my rear wheel and pedal stolen -

Interviewer - Oh no,

Respondent: So, I kind of have had my bike stolen. Cause a good majority of it that made it function was gone.

Interviewer: Aw, that's really sad.

Interviewer: What has been your best biking experience?

Respondent. There is a few, I guess category wise, the most fun I have had is at whistler with my friends like riding down, a lot of fun. Most scenic route that I have ever taken, I did an exchange in France. and this was near Switzerland. And this was like on the French countryside. and my like exchange partner went to school every day in Geneva, so when the weather got nicer my friend and I rode our bikes into Geneva every day.

Interviewer: How far is that? I don't know the geography

Respondent: It was like, it's not that far because Europe is kind of small, but it was still a decent route. I think on the bike it takes around 40 minutes each way on a road bike going pretty fast. So still pretty substantial.

Interviewer: How do you decide if you go biking that day?

Respondent: Normally with events like mountain biking it's a lot more fun to go with friends, so with stuff like that it will be preplanned, and we will have an ideas as a group, that we want to: weekends coming up, so we will send out a text and be like how is every one feeling about going on a ride Saturday or something like that. Otherwise, like I commute to school every day on a bike so it's just like a transportation kind of deal. And if the weather is kind of nice, and I don't feel like doing homework I will just get on my bike and go out on spontaneous ride.

Interviewer: So, you don't mind weather or anything?

Respondent: No weather I have gotten used to it I guess is the best way to put it. Like it used to be, oh it's raining, that's not that great. but after a few wet rides, it's like whatever.

Interviewer: When you are commuting do you go on the trails or do you go on the streets.

Respondent: I know a lot of people feel safer on the trails, and the trails are nice, but I tend to find the route of least distance to get around

Interviewer Well that makes sense. Well I'll let you get back to work, do you have any other comments?

Respondent: No, just; yeah biking is awesome!

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time.

500 points between 0 and 50.