

Doing Research

App Idea

Last Resort

Getting Ready for Research

Write Elevator Pitch

Document Assumptions

Write Your Problem Statement

Examples

Survey Design

Screening question

Qualitative questions

Quantitative questions

Recruiting and Participation

Analysis & Reporting Results

How to Turn in Your Assignment

Further Study

Software Conceptualization

Doing Research



App Idea

First, you’ll need an app idea that you’re passionate about. It’s difficult to conduct user research if you’re not excited about the product, so focus on choosing something that will be exciting and motivating for you.

An app can be as simple as a small static tool, such as a budget calculator, or as large as as social network. For this exercise, you won’t be doing any coding, so it’s okay to think big.

- Is there an app that you’ve always wished existed?
- Is there a tool that you think would be really useful for a friend or family member in your life?
- Is there an app you use on a daily or weekly basis that you feel could be improved or expanded in some way?

Last Resort

If nothing has come to mind yet, choose an app idea from this list.

- A photo journaling app that prompts users to create a daily journal entry using photos from their phone as inspiration
- A plant watering reminder tool for people who need help learning how often to water each of their house plants
- An app to help people decide what to watch on Netflix and what to make for dinner all in one place
- 💡 Any other idea that these ideas may have helped you think of

Before you go on, make sure you have decided on your app idea.

Getting Ready for Research

Write Elevator Pitch

The elevator pitch is a short description of an app that could be given to a person you meet in an elevator, before they need to get out at their floor.

Create a new document (using Google docs or your preferred document editor). Write a 2-3 sentence description of your app idea. This description should be easy to remember and it should help people immediately understand what you are building, in less than 60 seconds.

Document Assumptions

Think of at least 3 assumptions that you are making about the app that you want to build and document them below your elevator pitch.

For example, if I’m building an app for dog walkers to connect with people who need dog walking services, I am assuming:

- Dog walkers have difficulty finding clients
- People who need dog walkers are okay with hiring someone they met on an app
- People who need dog walkers can’t always find their preferred dog walker on existing networks, such as Facebook or a Google search

Write Your Problem Statement

Using one of the assumptions that you identified in the previous section, decide on a problem statement for your user research. Remember to begin with “Identify”, “Describe” or some similar action word.

Your research might be aimed at validating one of the assumptions you identified in the previous section. Alternatively, you might have some open questions in your mind about any of the following:

- What features (functionality) should your app have?
- What will ensure users continue using your app past their first interaction?
- Do people actually need this app?
- Are there other people that need an app like this that you’re not thinking of?

Examples

Here are some example problem statements for the dog-walking app:

- Identify the motivations of people looking for a new dog walker
- Identify the expectations that a dog walker has when they take on a new client
- Identify the questions that people who are hiring a new dog walker have about candidates
- Describe the primary concerns of someone when they hire a dog walker for the first time

Survey Design

Using Google forms (or your preferred survey tool), design a survey with at least 5 but no more than 10 questions that are aimed at your problem statement.

Be sure to also include your survey questions in your document.

Screening question

The first question on your survey should be a question that screens your survey participants. This question should allow you to determine whether the participant is in your key demographic.

For the dog walking app, the screening question would likely be:

- Do you own a dog? (Yes/No)

Qualitative questions

Ask some open-ended questions that require survey participants to give you text responses.

- Ask about their needs, pain points, frustrations.
- Ask biographical questions that help you categorize them among the other participants

For the dog walking app, some qualitative questions would be:

- What kind of dog do you own?
- What are the main things you would want to know about a potential dog walker?
- What are the pain points you have with walking your dog?
- Describe any experience you have with hiring or employing a dog walker.

Quantitative questions

Ask some questions that require the participant to provide a numeric response. Again- these should help you address your problem statement, so let that guide you.

- Include assumptions you have and ask them to agree/disagree with your assumption.
- Include your elevator pitch and ask them to rate their interest in an app like that.
- List out different needs you think they might have, and ask how well they are currently being addressed.

For the dog walking app, some quantitative questions would be:

- *On a scale of 1-10, how likely would you be to hire a dog walker you discovered on an app?*
- *How many dog walkers have you hired? (0-5+)*
- *How much would you pay for a dog walker per hour? (\$10, \$15, \$20, \$25 hourly)*

Recruiting and Participation

Time to recruit participants! Obtain the sharing link for your survey and post it in Discord for others to fill out.

!! IMPORTANT: While you wait, participate in **at least 5 other surveys. !!**

Analysis & Reporting Results

Once you have at least 5 responses, read them carefully.

In your document, complete the following tasks:

1. Summarize at least **3 key findings** from your survey results. Include screenshots of any helpful graphs for your survey.
2. Document any results that were surprising to you.
3. Address your problem statement. Were you able to answer your problem statement?
If not, why not? Do you need more responses? Do you need to modify your survey?
If so, what did you learn?

How to Turn in Your Assignment

1. Turn your document into a PDF and download it if necessary.
2. Go to Github and create a new repository. (Click the little + in the upper right hand corner.)
3. Name your repository “user-research”.
4. Click “uploading an existing file” under the “Quick setup heading”.
5. Choose your PDF to upload.
6. Add “commit message” under the heading “Commit changes”. A good commit message would be “Adding user research notes”.
7. Click commit changes.

Further Study

Using the notes in the today’s lecture, create 3 user personas for your app.

Add these to the Github repository you used above using the same steps.