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CSCI 5839 User-Centered Design & Development
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Project Pitch

Project Name

BusyCooker

Team Members

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Elevator Pitch

BusyCooker is a mobile application that helps busy people who spend a lot of money eating out with low-effort, quick, and healthy recipes, and track how much money they save by not eating out.

Target User Group

The user group I am targeting is people who are often busy with other responsibilities and do not have time to cook. A lot of my friends are new graduates who are currently working their first full time job and they face a problem of not having enough time to cook because they are having a hard time finding a work-life balance, and as such, they spend a lot of money eating out. I also faced this when I had an internship over the summer, so I often did UberEats for my meals. I also have friends who are students and also work on the side, so they skip meals because it takes too much time to make or get food. I will get these friends to test out my application.

Versions

I am not working with a partner, so I will only have one version of my project to ideate throughout the semester. The project will be in the form of a mobile application.
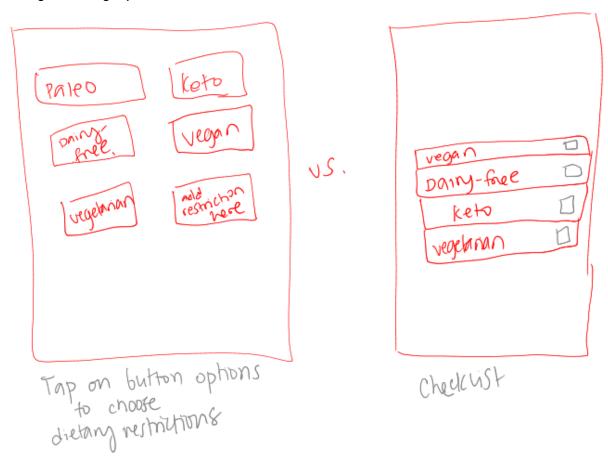
How this project meets the theme

The personal data that users will need to input is an approximation of how much they spend eating out. A part of this app serves as a tracking app to hold people accountable for saving money by making meals themselves. By allowing users to track how much money they spend eating out vs. making meals themselves from recipes on the application or elsewhere, this information can be best represented in a line chart or bar chart to visually show the user that they are saving money.

If a person decides to eat out for a meal, we will prompt the user to input the amount of money spent on that meal. This will go into the calculation of how much money they spend by eating out. If a user decides to cook a meal, then they will explicitly mark how much money they spent on that meal. This app will track the food expenses one makes and show their savings over time.

Another type of personal data that will be factored in the app is the personalization of what type of recipes the user wants. For example, as a person joins the app for the first time, they will be given a prompt of what kind of dietary restrictions/diet they have (e.g. paleo, keto, vegetarian, etc.) and how much time they'd like to spend making a meal. This user-inputted data will filter down the list of recipes given the specific criteria.

3 Interaction Design Challenges

1. An interesting design challenge is how to best represent a list of predefined dietary restrictions or diets that users can choose from to choose recipes matching their restrictions. Do these lists need to be pre-defined or should the user just manually input/type their dietary restrictions? What should managing the dietary restrictions (deleting or adding to) look like?

Tap on button options to choose dietary restrictions

Checklist

2. Another interesting design challenge is how to represent user input of the price of the meals they cook. One design direction that I could take is to have the user manually input the individual cost of each item of the recipe, which would be tedious, but looking at a breakdown cost of each ingredient could allow the user to visually see which items they are saving money on. Another design direction is to just let the user input their estimate of what they think the meal costs or have the application give a predetermined rough price estimate of the recipe and save that number as the total cost of the meal.

Example screen of the cost breakdown for a scrambled eggs recipe. It lists out the basic ingredients for scrambled eggs and the boxes on the screen are areas where users must input how many ingredients they used and the price of each.

3. The ultimate goal of this application is to save money by cooking cheap and healthy meals at home and to help busy people save time. A crucial aspect of this app is tracking to help keep people accountable. An interesting design challenge is how to best design the tracking element to keep it as minimal as possible but also allows users to get necessary information in. Tracking applications do not work for me because of the amount of information and steps it takes to manually input information.