**Interviewee**: Jack Wang (26, postgraduate student in Brisbane, enjoys weekend road trips with friends)

**Interviewer (me)**: Who do you usually travel with, and how do these trip ideas come about?  
**Jack**: Mostly with three to five friends, all international students at UQ. Sometimes we plan something during semester breaks or long weekends when we want to relax. Other times, the idea comes from Facebook groups or WeChat chats where someone shares a post about places like the Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast.

**Interviewer**: How do you usually decide on destinations and activities? How much time do you spend planning?  
**Jack**: We usually discuss options in WeChat or Messenger groups. Common choices are Byron Bay, Noosa, Tamborine Mountain, or Sunshine Coast. Someone suggests a place, then we vote. Planning usually takes about a week, since trips like surfing or hiking don’t need complicated arrangements.

**Interviewer**: What’s the biggest challenge when organizing group trips? Could you give me a recent example?  
**Jack**: Transportation is the biggest issue. Public transport from Brisbane doesn’t reach many spots, so we need to rent or share cars. Recently, when we went to Springbrook National Park, only two people could drive, which made things tiring. Accommodation is also tricky—Airbnbs sometimes don’t have enough beds, so we had to adjust plans last minute.

**Interviewer**: How do you coordinate schedules, budgets, and preferences? What happens when there are disagreements?  
**Jack**: We use Google Sheets to track budgets and assign tasks, like who books the car or accommodation. When preferences differ, we often split into smaller groups. For example, some wake up early to hike, while others sleep in, then we meet up later.

**Interviewer**: How do you deal with unexpected problems during trips, like delays or getting separated? Have you ever felt excluded?  
**Jack**: Once my phone died while waiting at South Bank, and I couldn’t contact anyone. Luckily, we usually use Snap Map or WeChat location sharing, so they found me. Feeling excluded sometimes happens—for example, when the schedule is too tight, and someone wants to stay longer for coffee but the group moves on quickly.

**Interviewer**: If you could describe your ideal tool for group travel, what would it look like?  
**Jack**: I’d like a platform that combines maps, schedules, and budgeting. Everyone could mark their available times, and the system would suggest the best weekend. It should split costs automatically and send reminders. Ideally, it would also recommend short 1–2 day trips around Brisbane that fit our group’s preferences.

**Literature Insights and Implications for Product Design**

1. Arif & Du (2019) – Collaborative Tourism Information Searching (ColTIS)

This study examined a system supporting real-time collaborative search for group travel planning. They found that features like query reformulation, task distribution, and shared result spaces significantly improved decision-making compared to traditional single-user tools.  
Implication: A group travel app should integrate a shared workspace for trip ideas, where users can comment, vote, and bookmark destinations collectively.

2. Gretzel et al. (2015) – Smart Tourism and Social Media Integration

This research highlights how social media platforms influence trip planning by offering user-generated content and inspiration. Collaborative filtering and personalization help align group preferences.  
Implication: The product should integrate social inspiration (e.g., pulling posts/photos of Brisbane weekend trips from social media) and turn them into actionable itineraries.

3. Amerson & Miller (2020) – Group Decision-Making in Travel Contexts

The authors discuss the challenges of balancing individual preferences, budget constraints, and scheduling conflicts. They emphasize the usefulness of decision support tools like voting systems and fairness algorithms.  
Implication: Include built-in voting features for destinations and activities, and budget visualizations that show trade-offs clearly.

4. Luo et al. (2021) – Mobile CSCW (Computer-Supported Cooperative Work) in Tourism

The study explores how mobile apps can support coordination on the go, such as real-time notifications, location sharing, and contingency planning.  
Implication: The product should enable live updates, alternative plan suggestions when disruptions occur, and location tracking to prevent people from getting lost in unfamiliar areas.

5. Wang & Fesenmaier (2019) – The Role of Trust and Inclusion in Group Travel Planning

This paper shows that feelings of exclusion or dominance in group planning reduce satisfaction. Tools that increase transparency and inclusivity improve the group experience.  
Implication: Ensure every member’s input is visible and weighted fairly, reducing the risk of someone feeling ignored.

**Reference List**

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