Interview Script (Austin - Master Student at UQ)

Q: Can you briefly introduce yourself?

A: My name is Austin, I’m a master student at UQ. I like exploring new places with friends whenever I can, especially short trips that don’t need too much planning.

Q: When you travel with others, how does the idea usually come about?

A: Usually someone casually brings it up in our group chat, like “let’s do something this weekend.” If enough people seem interested, then we start checking tickets or accommodation.

Q: How long does it usually take your group to plan a trip?

A: For small weekend getaways, it’s usually a week or two to sort things out. But for anything longer or more complicated, it can stretch into a month because of schedules.

Q: How satisfied are you with the way your group currently plans travel together?

A: Honestly, I think it could be much better. Things often feel unorganized, and we waste a lot of time going back and forth.

Q: What are the biggest challenges you face when organizing travel with others?

A: The hardest part is syncing everyone’s schedule since we all have different classes or work. Budget differences also make it tricky because not everyone can afford the same things.

Q: How do you usually coordinate schedules, budgets, and preferences?

A: We try using group chats, and sometimes someone sets up a shared calendar or spreadsheet. But people often forget to update them, so it doesn’t always work well.

Q: How do you deal with disagreements (e.g., different interests, activity choices)?

A: We normally try to compromise and pick something in between. Sometimes we just split up for part of the day, so everyone gets to do at least one thing they enjoy.

Q: What parts of traveling together are most important to you (shared experiences, convenience, discovery, safety, flexibility)?

A: Shared experiences matter the most to me because that’s what we remember afterwards. I also really value flexibility, since rigid plans can make the trip stressful.

Q: How do you balance your personal preferences with the group’s?

A: Most of the time I go along with what the group wants. But if there’s something I’m really excited about, I’ll speak up and suggest it.

Q: Are there particular things you wish were easier about planning or traveling with others?

A: I wish decision-making could be more straightforward. Too many people say “I don’t mind,” and it slows everything down.

Q: What kinds of trips do you usually do with others (weekend getaways, long overseas travel, family holidays, group tours)?

A: Mostly weekend getaways or short domestic trips, since they’re affordable and easy to arrange. Longer overseas travel is rare because of time and money.

Q: In which situations does it feel most frustrating or inconvenient?

A: The most frustrating moment is when someone cancels at the last minute. It suddenly changes the costs and sometimes forces us to cancel bookings.

Q: What do you value most about traveling together (bonding, discovery, safety, efficiency)?

A: I value the bonding most, because you get to know your friends in new ways. Discovery is also important—I like finding new places and experiences together.

Q: How do you think group travel affects your relationships with others?

A: Most of the time it strengthens friendships, since we share unique memories. But occasionally small conflicts about money or planning can carry over afterwards.

Q: What feelings or emotions do you want from group travel (relaxation, adventure, closeness, fun)?

A: I mainly want fun and a sense of closeness with my friends. Adventure is also great, because it makes the trip more exciting and memorable.

1. Fundamental challenges in designing a collaborative travel

Dickinson, J. E., Cherrett, T., Hibbert, J. F., Winstanley, C., Shingleton, D., Davies, N., ... & Speed, C. (2015). Fundamental challenges in designing a collaborative travel app. *Transport Policy*, *44*, 28-36.

Key Findings

Through field trials and interviews, this paper examines the fundamental challenges of using collaborative travel apps in settings such as rural areas, urban fringes, and campgrounds in the UK. Key findings include:

User Adoption Difficulties

Attracting users to these apps is inherently challenging. Many feel they don't need or are unwilling to adjust their itineraries to accommodate others' journeys.

Community size, the number of existing members in the network, and trust are crucial. Small communities are more likely to build trust, but larger ones may face challenges with trusting strangers.

Reciprocity Issues

While many users are willing to offer help (e.g., by giving rides or sharing items), they are less willing to request or accept help because it creates a sense of indebtedness, potentially impacting personal freedom, status, or psychological burden.

The inability to reciprocate also discourages some users, such as travelers, temporary visitors, or those with limited resources, from participating.

Time Pressure and Sense of Control

Users are generally sensitive to time flexibility (such as travel time, activity duration, and traffic delays) and dislike rigid plans; they value flexibility. If an app requires someone to provide a ride or assistance at a fixed time and location, they may be reluctant to participate due to the sacrifice of their freedom.

Arrangement details (when, where, cost sharing, etc.) often cause people to abandon their app because they are complex to negotiate and the process is unintuitive.

Incentives and Community Type

The presence of rewards or feedback, reputation mechanisms, and credit records in the app can influence user participation. Different communities (e.g., tourist camps vs. residential communities) have different expectations for these mechanisms.

Most experiments involved limited communities, geographical proximity, or pre-existing social networks, making these scenarios more likely to succeed. Collaboration between distant individuals or strangers is more challenging.

App Design Details and User Experience

Visualizing exchange examples (showing which assistance has already occurred) and visualizing "potential sources of help" (who can help and when) can boost user confidence. It also allows "lurkers" (those who only watch but don't participate) to see the system in action, potentially turning them into participants.

Future Technologies/Possibilities and Risks of the Internet of Things (IoT)

The IoT can make systems more predictive, automatically detecting who might have a parking space available, who might be out, and when assistance is available, thereby reducing the burden on users to proactively request or provide assistance.

However, this also raises issues of privacy, security, and the pressure of passively accepting advice or assistance. Frequent or mandatory system prompts can make users feel monitored or out of control.

1. How do young Chinese friendship groups make travel decisions? A content and interaction process analysis

Song, H., Wang, Y., & Sparks, B. A. (2018). How do young Chinese friendship groups make travel decisions? A content and interaction process analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *35*(6), 772-785.

Song, Wang, and Sparks (2018) focused on travel decisions among young Chinese friendship groups, using content analysis and interaction process analysis to explore how groups reach travel decisions through discussion.

Decision Content Level

Group discussions focused on key factors such as activity arrangements (what to do), budget and cost, time, transportation, weather, and safety.

Members typically made trade-offs based on personal interests and practical constraints.

Interaction Process Level

Verbal interaction: Decisions are driven through proposals, support, opposition, and compromise. Who speaks more and whose opinions are adopted directly influences the direction of the group.

Non-verbal interaction: Behaviors such as nodding, facial expressions, and silence are also imbued with meaning. For example, silence can indicate agreement or dissatisfaction.

Group Dynamics and Outcomes

Decisions are often reached through negotiation and compromise, rather than through clear agreement from the outset. There's a tension between individual preferences and group dynamics. Sometimes, powerful speakers dominate, leaving less powerful members to defer or remain silent.

The final decision often reflects the collective group atmosphere rather than a purely rational choice.

The paper shows that young people struggle primarily over topics like activities, budget, time, transportation, and safety.

Implications for our project: Wearable devices to enhance collaborative travel

The system can provide features for collecting and visualizing preferences around these dimensions, such as quick rating or ranking interfaces, to prevent discussions from becoming chaotic.

Wearable devices can capture "silent opinions" through anonymous voting, emoji feedback, and simple gestures, allowing everyone to express their opinions, rather than relying solely on those who speak most.

Because powerful speakers often dominate the outcome, tools can indicate which members' opinions have not been considered, helping to maintain fairness in group discussions.