



CRIB.

INSY 334 – Midterm Presentation

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CONTENTS.

Introduction	01
Information Gathering	02
Information Synthesis	03
Problem Definition	04
Reflection	05



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INTRODUCTION

01



SUBLEASE FROM HELL



**245,000
Post-Secondary
Students**

rented in Quebec (2021)



**No
Streamlined
Platform**

for student subletting



**Completely
Unregulated
Process**



THE CURRENT MARKET

77%

*Students in Quebec
that are renters. A
good portion of
these students are
participating in the
subleasing process.*

58%

*Students in Quebec that
have experienced at least
one negative rental situation*

15%

*Increase in rental scams
from 2020 - 2021 in Canada*

INFORMATION GATHERING



Survey

- Received a total of 42 responses
- **Demographic:** University students located in Montreal
 - 90.5% of respondents attend McGill
 - 85.7% of respondents were female
- Majority (72%) had sublessor experience



User Interviews

- Conducted a total of **11 user interviews**
- Interviewees were all students who have experienced subletting in Montreal
 - 2 sets of interview questions
 - Sublessee
 - Sublessor



Information Synthesis

- Building empathy via communication
 - Empathy Maps
 - User Persona
 - Customer Journey Map

Human-Centred
Design Stage:
Empathizing

Research Method 1: Survey
Research Method 2: Interviews



INFORMATION SYNTHESIS

03

EMPATHY MAP | SUBLLESSOR



Pain

1. Unserious/**unreliable** sublessees (ghosting/delayed responses)
2. Too much **time** and effort involved in vetting
3. Discomfort with **trusting strangers** to take care of property and spaces

Gain

1. Clear **communication**
2. Detailed profiles and background checks
3. Checking for **responsiveness** and **cleanliness**
3. Better ways to screen **reliable** and **trustworthy** sublessees

EMPATHY MAP | SUBLESSEE



Pain

1. **Scam** listings
2. Unsuitable rental terms (price, stay duration, etc.)
3. **Unreliable** sublessors who disappear/don't follow through
4. Hard to find people with similar **habits** and/or **cleanliness** standards

Gain

1. Finding a sublet that **meets** all **expectations**
2. **Trustworthy** and **reliable** sublessors
3. **Compatible** roommates if not living alone
4. **Flexible, convenient**, short-term arrangements

PERSONA | SUBLESSOR



WARREN

The Out-of-Towner

“Why’s it so hard to find a normal student who needs a place to stay?”

“I hate giving up my place, but I really need the money!”

Warren is a 3rd year student originally from Toronto who is currently studying electrical engineering at McGill. He lives in an off campus apartment with four friends and is going back home over the summer to work an internship and need to sublet his place again.

GOALS

- **Save money** by not having to pay rent for a place he isn't staying in
- Ensure his **roommates are comfortable** with their temporary housemate

BEHAVIOURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Busy** STEM student
- **Nervous** about meeting online strangers in person
- Worried that the stranger will cause **property damage** or not respect their room

FRUSTRATIONS

- Hard to validate if someone is a **viable sublessee**
- Many potential sublessees end up **ghosting** him
- **Self-reported behaviors** aren't always accurate
- Past sublessees have caused **financial burdens**
- **Poor communication**

TASKS

- Preparing a sublessor **listing**
- **Messaging** potential sublessees
- **Vetting** potential sublessees
- **Touring** potential sublessees around the apartment
- Draft and sign a **contract**
- **Handoff keys** when they move in

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP



Scenario

Warren is temporarily moving out for his internship at the end of the term in about two months and is looking to sublet his apartment. He's heard how hard it is to sublet so he's going to start now.

Goals & Expectations

Find a sublessee who the roommates get along with, will respect his room and who is willing to stay for all or most of the time
Warren is gone, and pay his full rent and utilities.

PREPARATION

LOOKING FOR SUBLSEES

LEGALESE

SUBLETTING!

ACTIVITIES

Building the Listing

Messaging Potential Sublessees

Vetting Potential Sublessees

Touring Potential Sublessees

Drafting the Contract

Key Handoff

Acting Landlord

EXPERIENCES

Figuring out what **Facebook groups** to join and post in

"Why would you message me if you'll **never respond again?**"

Taking a bunch of appealing **photos**

Seems like all the sublessees have so many options

Communicating with the **landlord** and **roommates**

"Dude's literally a **bot**"

"In 2024, you're telling me you don't have **social media**?"

"Do I believe that this guy is clean or is he **saying what I want to hear?**"

"Can I **trust** them?"

"Why would you schedule a tour and **not show up?**"

So much time spent giving tours

Have to tell the landlord who he found and hope he's fine with it

"What's the proper way to **draft a contract** for subleasing?"

"What can I do to make sure this person doesn't back out of the contract?"

Coordinating the **key handoff** between his roommates and the subletter

"Have to tell the landlord my subletter broke the fan!"

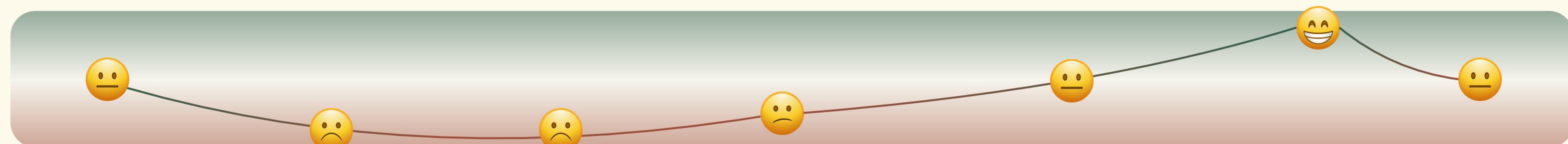
"I really hope my sublessor doesn't just leave"

MOODS

Happy

Neutral

Upset



OPPORTUNITIES

Recommend groups to publish the sublet listing in

Suggest keywords that are more likely to gain listing traction

Prevent non-verified users from messaging

Enforce a maximum number of listings a potential sublessee can talk to at once

Rating system like Uber to verify if users are truthful

Aggregate users social media channels as external verification

Schedule a time when all potential sublessors can come and visit

Virtual tours done online

Provide pre-built contracts where the sublessor just has to fill in values

Facilitate legal deposits from the sublessee to guarantee their spot

Required additional deposits from the sublessee in case they move out early or damage anything

Provide a way to tarnish the sublessee reputation if they are disrespectful

PERSONA | SUBLESSEE



SOPHIE
Social Subletterfly

Sophie is a 3rd-year McGill student who will be off to Barcelona for exchange next winter. Her current one-year lease ends soon and she needs a place to stay for 4 months before she's off. Sophie is outgoing and social, involved on campus, and well-liked by her friends and current roommates. She loves making new friends wherever possible, and hopes she and her next roommate will get along spectacularly.

"If you or anyone you know is looking for a subletter, please let me know!"

"I hate living alone – even if I'm only here for 4 months, I need a friend with me!"

GOALS

- Find a sublet that is **suitable** in terms of duration and budget
- Quickly narrow down sublets that match her **preferences**
- Ensure **safety and legitimacy** of sublet
- Sublet from a student

BEHAVIOURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Prioritizes living with **other women** for **safety**
- Wants **roommates** that she can be friends with
- Values her network, **word-of-mouth**, and opinions from people she **trusts**
- Short on time from all her involvement on campus

FRUSTRATIONS

- Difficult verifying **legitimacy** and **safety** of sublet
- **Hard to trust** sublessors online
- Roommate **incompatibility**
- **Scam** listings
- Unknowingly illegal security deposits or contracts

TASKS

- Ask **friends** for sublets
- Look for sublet listings through student housing **groups**, **Facebook Marketplace**, and other platforms
- **Visit** and **tour** sublets
- Apply to sublease and sign the contract

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP



Scenario

Sophie just received her exchange acceptance letter! Thankfully she'll be in residence abroad, but the end of her current lease means her accommodation for the fall semester (in Montreal) is still up in the air.

Goals & Expectations

Quickly lock in a **legitimate student sublet** that matches her budget, lifestyle and preferences. Live with a compatible roommate with whom she can be friends. Easy move-in and out.

MOTIVATION

INQUIRY

FOLLOW-UP

SUBLETTING

ACTIVITIES

Exchange confirmed

Ask friends if they know of sublets

Consult student housing groups on FB

Check FB Marketplace, Kijiji, etc.

Visit potential sublets

Accept sublease and decline others

Moving in

Moving out

EXPERIENCES

Realizes she must find a sublet

Excited to move and live with someone new

Thinking about sublet **preferences**

Discouraged because friends have no suitable leads

Nervous to sublet from a **stranger**

Disappointed because rental terms don't align

Difficult to **narrow down** by preferences/budget

"Why are there so many groups for the same thing?"

"This is so **sketchy**..."

Concerned by the prevalence of **scam** listings

Annoyed at **unresponsive** sublessors, who are not students

"Did I get... **catfished**?"

Unhappy with how time-consuming it is
Not vibing with potential roommates

"Maybe not the **best fit** for me, but at least it's something..."

Must accept rental terms and pay deposit
Unsure if terms/deposit are legal

"Is that...mold?"
Unsure who to contact for repairs, missing necessities, etc.

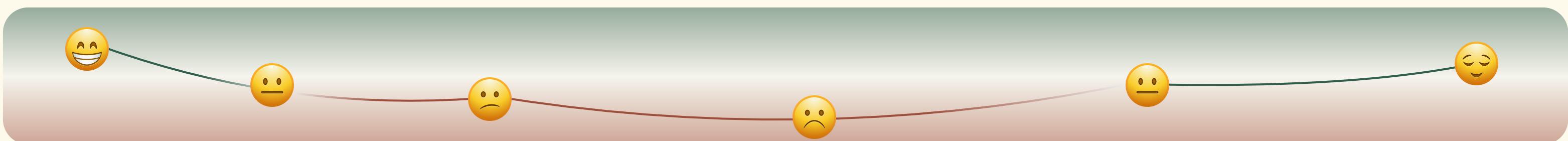
"Thank goodness it worked out!"
Wants to share her thoughts on the experience with others

MOODS

Happy

Neutral

Upset



OPPORTUNITIES

Create profile of subletting or renting preferences (budget, lease duration, location, lifestyle, etc.)

Sublessor trustworthiness rating/reviews
See a sublessor's network to find people you trust

Centralize student sublet listings
Effective filtering of listings by price, location, duration, roommates, etc.

Identity verification using student ID, email address, live selfie, phone #
Listing verification
Message response deadlines

Live virtual room tours and roommate meeting
On-demand VR room tours

Compatibility rating for listing and roommates
Incorporate legal "checklist" and steps to ensure housing laws are respected

Alternate contacts (if sublessor isn't available)
Report form for urgent issues

Rate/review listing after stay, visible to others



PROBLEM DEFINITION

04

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WE'RE TRYING TO SOLVE?

Make it easier for students to find reliable sublessors and sublessees for short-term housing across North America.

HOW CAN WE FRAME IT AS A DESIGN QUESTION?

How might we make it easier for students to find reliable sublessors and sublessees for short-term housing?

WHAT'S THE ULTIMATE IMPACT WE WISH TO HAVE?

-  Transparent Process for All Students
-  Reduce Stress & Uncertainty
-  Ensure Reliable Sublessors and Sublessees
-  Minimize Risk of Scams and Poor Living Conditions
-  Allow Students to Find Affordable Prices

WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? ARE THERE CONSTRAINTS?



Time & Efficiency



Privacy & Security



Rising Prices

REWRITE THE ORIGINAL PROBLEM STATEMENT

How might we streamline finding trustworthy and reliable sublessors and sublessees for students across North America while reducing risk and promoting trust and transparency?

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REFLECTION

05

REFLECTION

Project Evolution

- Applied human-centred design and design thinking
- Began with brainstorming session to:
 - Build creative confidence
 - Generate 10 ideas
- Empathizing:
 - Gathered both quantitative and qualitative data
 - Quickly saw that subletting is a big problem for students
 - Significant gaps in the subletting experience and the ideal one
- Define:
 - Rewriting our original design question

What worked...

- Picking a target audience that is easily accessible to us
 - Ex. University students
- Creative confidence
 - Brainstorming sessions
- In-person meetings

What didn't...

- Having two different types of potential users makes things more difficult
 - Solution needs to fit both a sublessor and sublessee's needs
- Lack of diverse respondents



Moving Forward

- Next steps:
 - Ideate → Prototype → Test
- Implement inclusive design
- Conduct ideation session
 - Ideas must be viable, desirable, and feasible
- Draw from persona and customer journey maps to design from user stories and establish acceptance criteria

THANK YOU!

Questions?



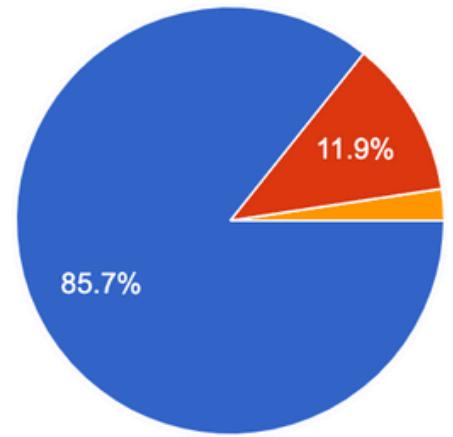
APPENDIX

<https://www.utile.org/en/data-and-research>

<https://shure.international/canadas-housing-crisis-spawns-rental-scams-operators-must-embrace-property-technology-or-lose-tenants#:~:text=And%20from%202021%20to%202022,%241%2C230%20CAD%20lost%20per%20incident>

What is your gender identity?

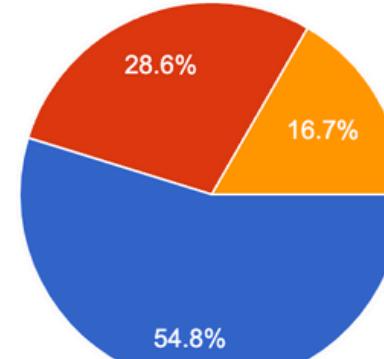
42 responses



- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to disclose

Indicate which situation you have been in:

42 responses



- Sublessor (I am looking for someone to sublet my place)
- Sublessee (I am looking for a sublet to stay in)
- Both

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