What'sNEU

Group Kiwi

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Our Promise

In this project, we will show how What'sNEU develops friendships by making connection on and off campus more natural, accessible, and low-pressure.

Significance

Genuine connections and personal discovery

Intimidation to reach out

Over-curation of socials

Disorganized information flows

According to research by the National Library of Medicine, those in university affected by loneliness the most are women, freshmans, those with poor economic status, and smokers.
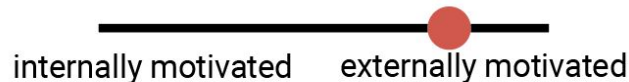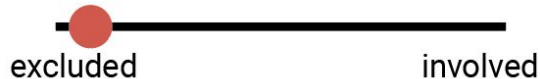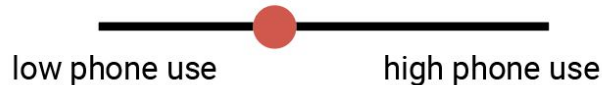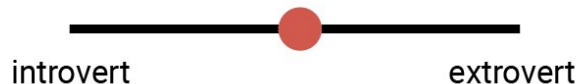
By addressing the loneliness epidemic, we can improve the wellbeing of our peers and improve their life quality and happiness.

Persona: Lilly Zhang

The late newcomer

"It's just hard to find friends when everyone seems to already have their group and I don't know where to start"

introvert ———————●——————— extrovert

low phone use ————●———————— high phone use

excluded ●——————————————— involved

internally motivated ————————————●——— externally motivated

Persona: Lilly Zhang

Goals

- Making genuine friendships
- Finding campus involvement
- Discovering Boston

Frustrations

- Lack of social opportunities
- Poor communication about offerings
- Pressure to initiate
- Over-curation
- Lack of personalized content

Interviews

Our participants

Interviewee 1:
- At Rehearsal
- Ryder Hall
- 02/08/25 at 4:00PM
- 25 mins

Interviewee 2:
- Through a Friend
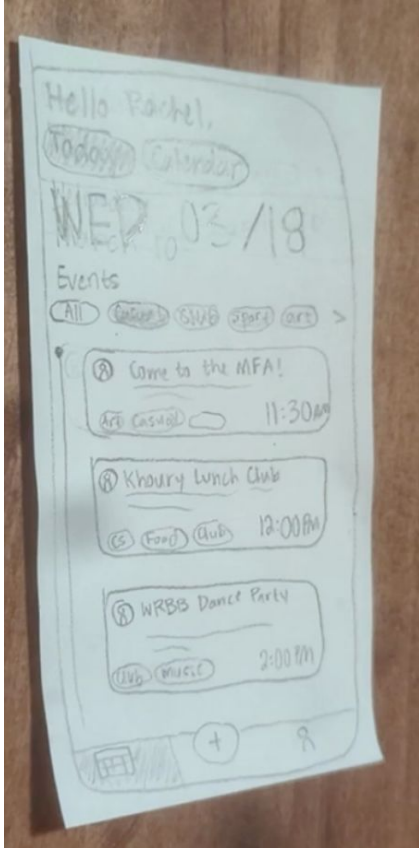- Curry Student Center
- 02/08/25 8:00PM
- 23 mins

Description: What'sNEU

What'sNEU is a calendar-based social app that helps college students build real friendships through in-person interactions. Students can join open events based on their interests, and profiles are shared only in person, unlike traditional social media.
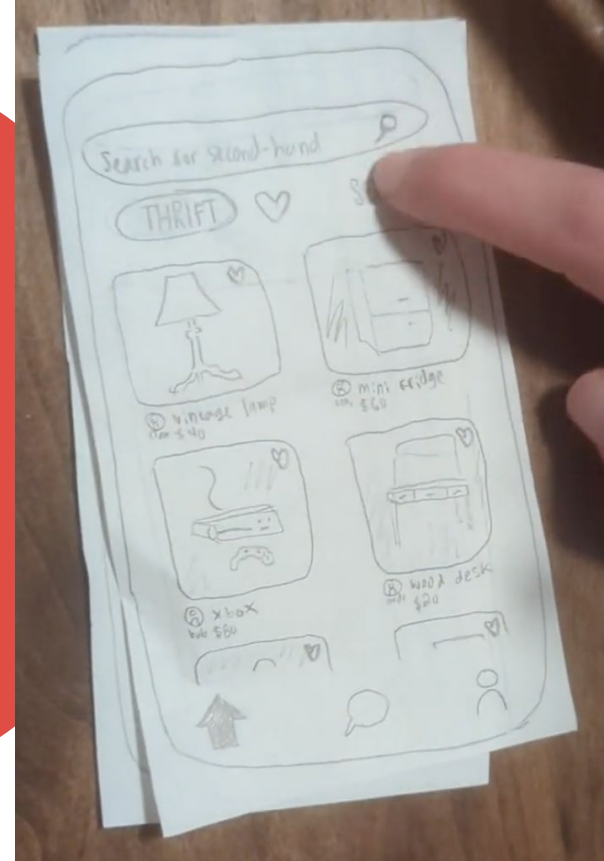
Paper Prototypes

What'sNEU

Northeastern Marketplace

Paper Prototype Evaluation

1. We have learned that users value consistency of navigation and easy backward recovery more than we initially expected.

2. Users value a helpful home page that immediately gives them the information they need.

3. We learned that users have a high value for familiarity, intuitive design, and recognition rather than

Functional Requirements

1. Filters that make the most sense for user needs, are easily accessible, and easily recognized.
2. Users must be able to view simplified profiles of all other users and relevant information such as conversion starters and shared interests must be quickly accessible.
3. Users must be able to customize their own experience as much as is possible.

Functional Requirements

1. This requirement is primarily a response to user feedback on the paper prototype and addresses pain points over lack of personalized content and information dissemination.
2. Easily accessible conversation starters would address pain points around pressure to initiate social interactions and create identifiable promotion of belonging, not present in user tests.
3. This addresses pain points around over-curation on social media and user concerns around expectation and recognition

Nonfunctional Requirements

- Following others while meeting in person must be simple and fast device to device interaction

- Location, personal calendar integration, music, etc. must be delegated to external services.

- Navigation should rely on familiarity with other, similar platforms.

Nonfunctional Requirements

1. The app's social environment is one that prioritizes conversation over use of technology when interacting in person at an event.
2. This is a complexity requirement, decreasing the overall complexity of the app by deprioritizing certain key features. Also, low phone use.
3. User concerns regarding simplicity and adherence to expectations. The layout of the app should mimic other calendar/ social media apps in order to play off of recognition rather than recall.

Innovation Design Hypothesis

What'sNEU helps students like Lilly achieve a stronger sense of belonging and build **genuine in-person connections**, by mitigating constraints like the **over-curation** of social media, the **intimidation** of reaching out, and the **disorganized** flow of campus event/club information, and amplifying strengths like **in-person** interaction, **spontaneous** meetups, and **personalized discovery** of events.

Innovation Design Hypothesis

We came up with the idea of What'sNEU after noticing a trend of people struggling to reach out to others. It can be a daunting task and we wanted to make it as accessible and comfortable as possible.

What'sNEU is innovative because it focuses on real-life connections instead of social media algorithms, helping friendships form naturally through shared activities rather than just passive online interactions, personalizing discovery in a natural way.
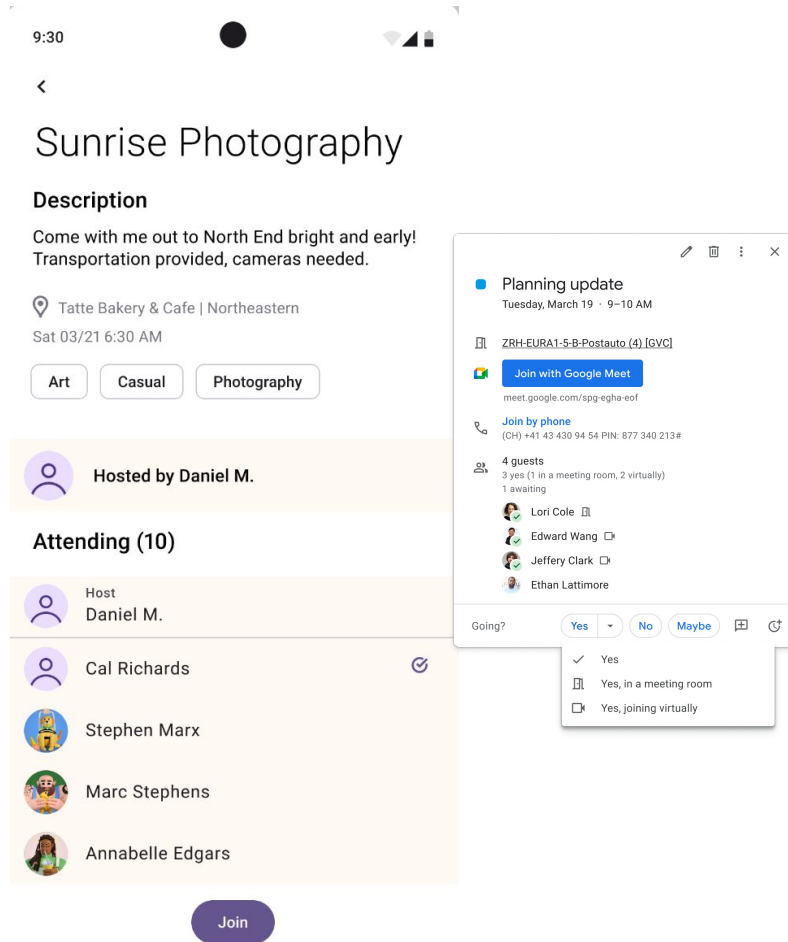
Interface in Detail

Users are able to see outing postings which create identifiable promotion of belonging, especially with the use of tags. Students can also join in on an event they're slightly interested in.
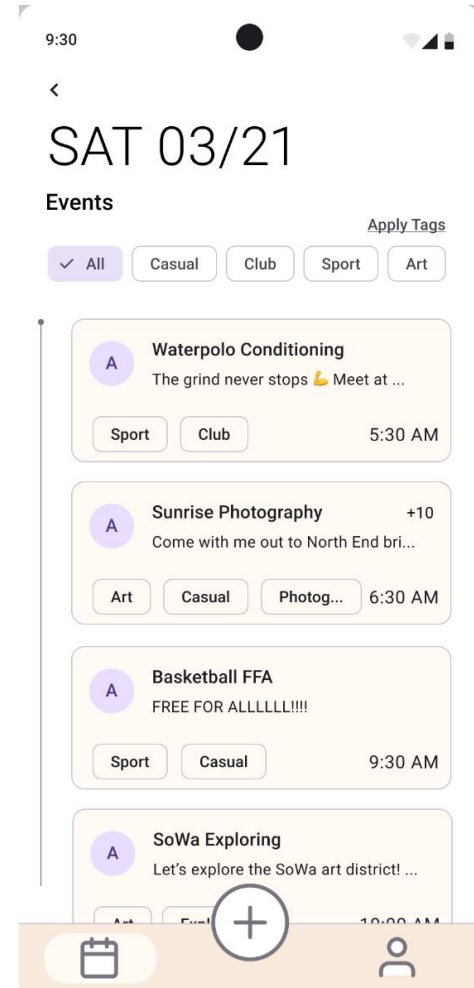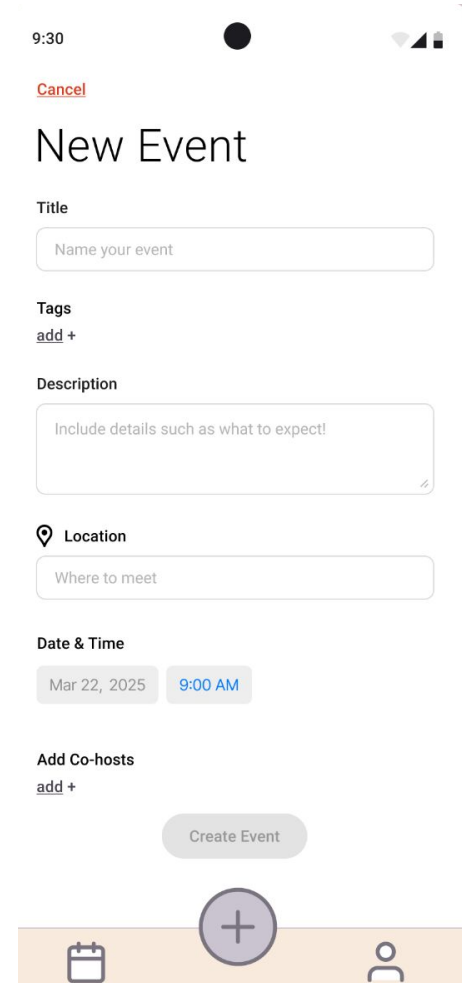
Interface in Detail

Want to see if anyone you know is attending? The app's layout mimic the google calendar invites in order to play off of recognition rather than recall.

Interface in Detail

Using the usability heuristic of **Aesthetic & Minimalistic Design**. We wanted to prioritize key features/info over others in order to decrease the overall complexity.

Real Life Use:

A new freshmen is feeling lonely and wants to meet others to hang out in person in order to make friends!
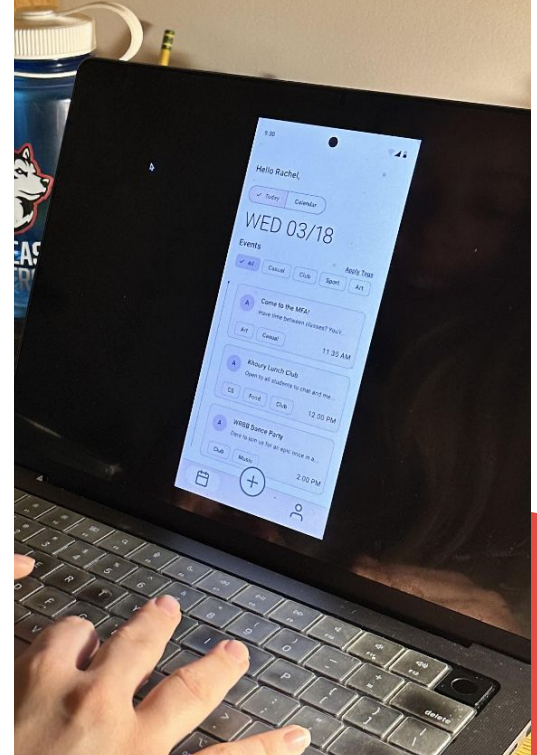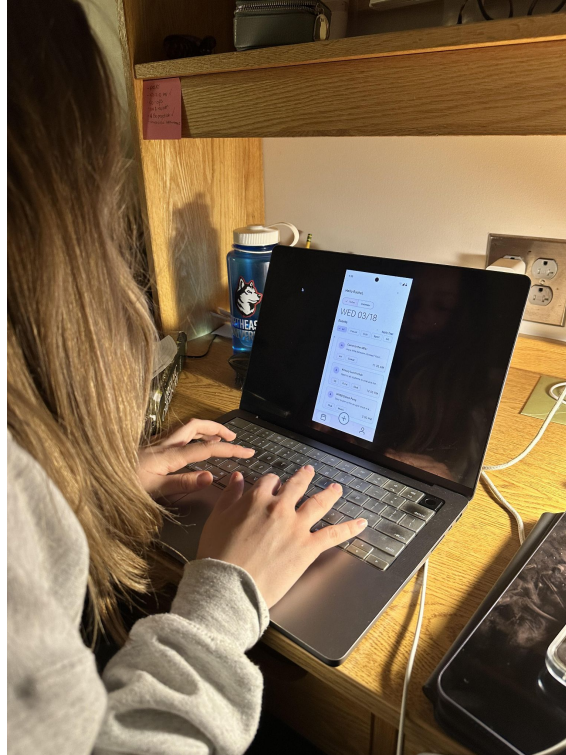
Demo time!

https://www.figma.com/proto/9H6Y2V
xZUiCjKU4Wd6ixGd/HCI-G5-Mid-Fidelit
y-Prototype?node-id=1-65&t=VypNgIey
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g-point-node-id=1%3A65&show-proto-s
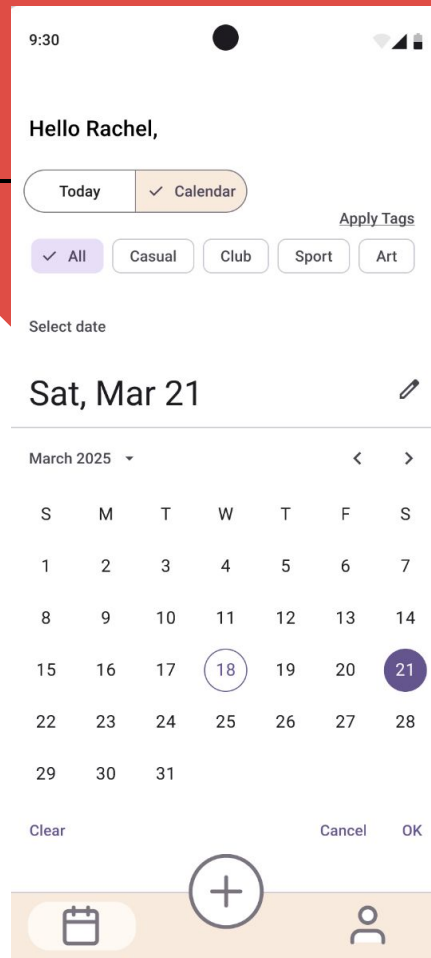idebar=1

Surprises

Social behaviors/needs

Users' preconceived notions

Users' doubts & trust
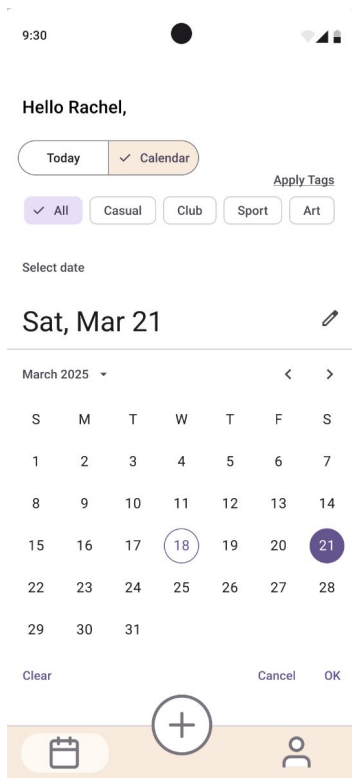
A Design Challenge

We were originally planning on doing one calendar screen and not the daily screen.
When testing internally, we found it was too complicated and overwhelming and decided to opt for an additional daily calender to split the info.
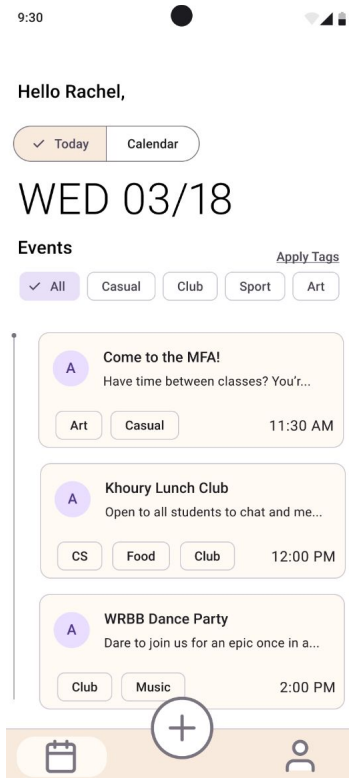
A Design Challenge

The Future: Improvements

More specific filtering

Better profile exchange

Enhanced safety features

The Future: Impact

Negatives
Personal promotion
Social pressures
Privacy vs freedom of use

Positives
Campus connection
Diverse friend groups
Influence other schools

Stakeholders
Northeastern students
University Event Organizers
Businesses

Interface Crit
Add more colors
Higher contrast
Include a logo for branding

Our Future Process

Prototype usability testing

Analyze frustrations + accessibility

Beta Testing

Qualitative + quantitative analysis

Key Takeaways

- In developing relationships, prioritize in-person interaction
- Low-pressure, low-barrier connection

Acknowledgements

- Slide Deck: Canva
- Figma: Prototypes
- Google Workspace Updates: Calendar Invite Image

Thank you!