Task 2.2 | UX Immersion

User Interviews

Expert App

Goal is to provide an App that helps users find and conveniently connect directly to a qualified and trusted expert to answer user questions in different but specific fields of expertise which otherwise are difficult or expensive to obtain.

The App shall provide all means necessary for communication needed to solve the problem and to facilitate expert payment.

Problem Statement

Summary: Insights & Learnings

Insights & important fields for further review:

- **Categories:** Subject should not be too sensitive, private or complex in nature (e.g. big legal cases, private sensitive info) to pass the trust barrier

- **Type of problems:** middle ground between urgency (not too high or low) vs. importance (not too high)

- **Trust element in expert identification & connection**: different thoughts on how to find & connect with a person trusted to solve my answer adequately

- **Urgency & scheduling**: convenient scheduling more important than immediacy or "connect now"

- **Pricing**: should be transparent, proportional to work load and matching expertise levels

- Typical **Skype functionalities** cover requirements for exchanging are good enough

- Typical **payment schemes** (PayPal, credit card, google or apple pay) are suitable

My Learnings:

- Hard to **set the right scope** and starting point: from where on shall I diverge and start the discovery? How close to the expert "app" case should I start, compared to a more general "seek online advice" problem?

- Its **easy to be a step ahead towards solution** finding already every time when asking a question – it takes a lot of focus to stay open minded

- Need to narrow down field of questions of expert app to a niche to satisfy expertise is given for each question – can't be too broad -> **Expert App for Entrepreneurs?**

- **Further I will focus on designing an expert advise network App for Entrepreneurs, Freelancers and Startup ups**

Research Goals

1. Understand **behavior, nature & context** of questions when consulting experts

2. Record the **use-cases** and **pain points** of existing online tools.

3. Understand **what determines trust** in a qualified expert?

4. Understand the **time dimension** better (urgencies, scheduling)

5. Discern **needs for connecting** with **and paying** experts (e.g., flows & channels)

Interview Questions

(1/2)

1. **When was the last time** you had any question and wanted to consult with an expert remotely? **What** was it? (Specific example, behaviors)

2. **What are typical scenarios** for remote expert help? **How to you go about it**? (problem spaces, context, categories, time horizon)

3. **Did you use any online tools** to consult experts? Which, Why (not)? What do you **like/dislike**? (types of Q's, features, situations)

4. **How do you establish trust** to find a qualified expert online? (Trust, Qualifications, Screening, Payment schemes)

Interview Questions

(2/2)

1. **How do you like to engage and establish contact** with an expert in a way that facilitate trust? (Flows, channels)
2. **How urgent** do your questions need answering? How would you like to **schedule**? (scheduling, urgency)
3. **How** do you think about a **fair way to pay** for the advise?
4. **What means are needed to** exchange all relevant information of your Q&A, once connected with an expert? (Features)

Participant Selection

- Age group 20-45

- Avg. to high mobile and web affinity

- Living independently

- Working professionals w. a busy life

- Used to look online for advice

- Sense of saving (money)

Research Plan

Interview Candidates:

- Sven, 33, Automotive Engineer & Consultant, Berlin based, technical and hobby enthusiast

- Flo, 33, IT Product Manager, Berlin based, online nomad and introverted with few hobbies

- Vera P, 40, Country Manager China, Berlin based, frequent traveler and mother of two kids

Schedule:

- Two days of interviews, 45-60 min each

- All interviews over the phone

Interview Responses

Quotes

„*Trust is key. I must get the feeling that I found an expert I can trust with my problems and who's capable and trustworthy enough to find a good solution for me*"

Sven G.
Engineer & Consultant

Flo W.
Product Manager

„*I want advise on things that bring real value or cost me otherwise. The right expert should come to me - I don't want to waste time reaching out and be disappointed.*

„*I came across many problems during my early phase start-up that required one-off expert advise that would have saved hours of work and potential failures*"

Vera P.
Engineer & Consultant

Sven G.
Autom. Engineer & Consultant

BIO
- **Bio**: Male, German, 33
- **Ed'**: Engineering and Economics
- **Job**: Consultant in Automotive industry

- Has many passionate hobbies
- Loves building things
- Engages actively online

1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)
- Last weekend, mechanical design question on light switches
- Google or browsing through forums didn't help (too specific)
- Solutions: going to a hardware shop or electric expert visit

2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)
- Urgency: not too low (use Forums, I can wait), not too high (emergency call)
- Importance: nothing too critical (would seek out a trusted expert personally)
- Examples: Admin work (Tax advice), legal questions (dispute at work) or local leisure advice (recommended bike tours in Berlin)
- An Expert app is somewhere between online forums and real expert agencies

3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)
- During E-Com purchase needed advice on product details (custom post-its): engaged w. chat-bot who categorized my request & connected me to expert
- I liked the chat bot engagement that helped me specify my question in the right category – felt very engaged which and created trust (get the right help)
- Forums has experts deep into subjects. Direct exchange helps build trust, but its hard to identify sharlatans that shout loud opinions but have no real clue

4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)
- Avoid pretenders, best by expert (user) reviews, tiered pricing (pay more for more qualification) or certified trust backgrounds (car mechanic -> car expert)
- I want to choose the expert myself after assessing their qualifications
- Platform transparency is key: how did he become expert? Clear pricing?

5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?
- Platform recommendations or options **of "tagging" my questions while typing questions** give feeling of engagement and "active processing of my input"
- Want to understand **how the platform recommends experts** based on my input: Transparency on „Why is this expert good for me"?
- Want **more insights on the expert for my review** before selecting them: trust he is qualified, has good ratings, has relevant background.
- Experts should **first *apply* to my questions w. proof that they can solve** it (e.g., draft proposal), only then would I assign the mandate to speak with expert

6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?
- Depends on problem, but between 0.5-2 weeks is enough. Not super urgent (emergency), not too unimportant either (> weeks)
- Don't need to be connected *now,* but scheduling support would be great

7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?
- Price should be proportional to work or effort, but transparently
- Price depends on scope of work, complexity and type of problem
- Payment via credit card, PayPal etc. – the usual suspects

8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?
- Text (email, sms, chat), Data (images, documents), and speaking (audio, video)
- Skype would cover all essential features

Flo W.
IT Product Manager

BIO

- **Bio**: Male, German, 32
- **Ed'**: Engineering and Economics
- **Job**: IT Product Manager

- Doesn't have many hobbies
- Spends a lot of time online
- Is rather lazy, also online

1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)

- Never consulted with experts directly. Barely connects to anyone for his questions but rather reads-up on issues himself to solve problems.
- Only memory: after desperately looking for complicated details on an insurance plan he consulted with a trusted insurance advisor via friends
- Does not like direct peer-to-peer engagement or phone calls unless he really knows its worth the time and energy (doesn't like calls)

2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)

- General: anything where I can save money or get real value out of a call, e.g. gain tax refunds w. advice, enable to fix something w/o having to find and seek out a professional – **Opportunity Cost principle**
- Professional (Start-Ups): Anything that causes high work load once, but could be shortened with an experienced advisor (e.g. tax declaration)

3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)

- None really except Quora & Gute Frage etc. but only for reading up and redirected from google searches
- Stackoverflow & Github for real tech expert advise – own microcos,

4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)

- Absolutely crucial. Want to know advisor is qualified before calling; time (and money) invested for disappointment is total downer
- Sources of trust: references of people I know, linkedIn Profiles & Reviews, history with or references from companies he knows

5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?

- I want to stay passive as long as I have the right expert matching guarantieed"
- Advisor should come to me (and apply), not me to advisor
- Don't want to write to people and get no answers – good pre-selection is MUST
- I want to know that I really WANT to speak with this person, best would be 3-4 chat messages to exchange and confirm suitability

6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?

- Nothing too urgent, never ad-hoc
- Roundabout 1 week ahead scheduling

7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?

- Payment only when satisfied
- A subscription tariff could work if quality is high throughout
- I'm willing to pay a lot for difficult and costly questions that could impact my start-up success significiantly

8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?

- The usual vide conferencing features should suffice

Vera P.
Entrepreneur

BIO

- **Bio**: Female, German, 40
- **Ed'**: Chinese and Economics
- **Job**: Co-Founder in Start-Up

- Hustles a lot with start-up issues
- Doesn't like networking too much

1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)

- Not that she can remember, but she had a lot of questions throughout her start-up career where she relied on expert input to overcome problems
- Typically activates her network to identify and connect to experts in fields for specific problems in her start-up development, mostly early stage

2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)

- Anything really that needs to be done 80/20 in a pragmatic way that I have never done before and only need a nudge or starting point to begin with
- There are many one-off issues in the beginning: setting up pricing, managing an office, filing employee taxes, starting up customer service etc.
- These issues rely on experience rather than knowledge. An experienced advisor could add a lot of value within an hour

3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)

- Mostly using linked in to screen and see where I or my direct peers know people that I could connect to and who bring the required expertise

4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)

- I mostly rely on peer-to-peer reviews or direct referrals
- Also the LinkedIn Bio or work history (careers, exits, successes etc.) helps me form a picture of a person I trust or don't trust

5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?

- I'd like to see a proposed list of people that should be suitable for my problem and transparency on WHY the App suggests these
- Transparency on pricing and the expert bio gives me insights to form my own opinion. I need to double check the system recommendations before connecting
- I need proof that the expert can add value on my particular problem, this often only can be clarified in a direct exchange, chat or phone or any other

6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?

- Somewhat urgent but never the same day
- Should be scheduled conveniently, maybe 1-7 days ahead

7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?

- Should pay only for success and satisfactory answers
- Could imaging a base-rate and a second half success fraction that is paid only or in shares of my satisfaction

8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?

- Phone typically is enough, but sometimes I need to share documents and information
- Any of the usual video conferencing systems and software should suffice

Survey ideas

- Categories for App & Advise:
  - Startups, Entrepreneurs and Freelancers as target users
- How much time typically spend for searching for answers?
- How many questions where you'd seek out an expert? Per week, months ...
- Timeframe and urgency (4 categories)
- Relevance of TRUST
- Willingness to pay? Ballpark figure
- Relevant channels to connect for exchange
- Willingness to pay
- Payment mechanisms

Backup

Interview Script

SYNTHESIZE | Reorganize Answers

⬈ DOING | I [**verb**] ... I always check online reviews

- A
- B

💬 THINKING | I **believe** ... I believe learning vocabulary isn't as important now that we have the internet

- A
- B

♥ FEELING | I **feel** ... I feel frustrated when I can't remember a word I've studied before

- A
- B