User Research

1. What problem does your application address? Aim for 1-2 sentences.

   Our website is for organizing and creating itineraries when travelling

2. How does your application address the problem above? Aim for one sentence. The next question is a better place for elaborate explanations.

   Our website allows people to essentially bookmark all of the information they find on their trip and save confirmations from flights and buses etc… into one nice and organized location.

3. What are the killer features of your application?

   We plan to allow people to create new trips with multiple location subcategories and folders for different "days" of the trip or grouping of activities. We want to have a bookmarklet for saving links to external websites. We also will let people enter in information and comments in our site. We plan to have a calendar and map view of all of the saved activities. If we have time we want to be able to save emails to a trip by forwarding them to the site.
   If we can find a good travel api we will also let people search for activities

4. Identify and briefly describe your target demographic. Who do you envision using your site?

   I imagine that any person who regularly researches trips online before going on them would benefit from this site. It would also help if the user were a smartphone user so they could access their information during the trip.

5. Identify at least one user characteristic (technical expertise, familiarity with site topic, frequency of visits) that you believe will cause users to use your site differently or require different features from your site. Briefly explain why your chosen characteristic is important.

   People who tend to use printed travel guides would have less use for this website since to transfer the information from a printed source to digital

would be annoying and not really embrace all of the convenient features of the site.

6. Use the above to help you find three users from different attitude/behavior sets within your target audience. Sit down with these people and conduct **user research interviews** on each of them. You might ask your users how they currently deal with the problem that your site aims to solve, or you might ask what features they'd want in a website such as yours. You might try to explore their general attitude toward the problem. The information you collect will guide your site's design and the features you chose to include. Briefly summarize these interviews and what you learned from them.

Interview 1:
Currently my general approach is to wing it – check out reviews on the internet before going (ex. TripAdvisor), and use Lonely Planet or another guidebook to get around once I get there.
I'd like to see a website that incorporates budgeting, as well as distance and time. It would be helpful if it could suggest methods of travel between places I want to go.
I prefer not to plan too many specifics when I travel – I'll choose one main activity to do in a day, or one particular area to go, and then wander after that.

Interview 2:
Currently I will make sure to find hotels/hostels before I go, and then ask other travelers or locals about what to do when I arrive.
I'd like a website that will display interesting locations on a map, and recommend itineraries based on these, or maybe on other people's itineraries. I'd like to get to know the general feel of a city more quickly, based on other people's opinions (ex. one area is more edgy and urban, another is historical, etc.).

Interview 3:
Currently I start my travel planning by googling the basics, saving links, getting opinions via email, and remembering information.
I'd like a website that allows me to add people that I'm planning a trip with, so that they all can enter links, and have surveys to see who wants to do what. An automated pricing system would be nice – for example, adding up prices of activities you have entered. Also some kind of algorithm optimizing your itinerary based on what amount of time an activity would

take and what hours it is open. Also basic helpful links, like Yelp reviews, TripAdvisor, and Wikipedia pages. Maybe could pull up info you'd find in normal guidebooks, like common words to know in the local language, currency exchange rate, weather conditions etc.
What if you don't have wifi where you're going? Should be able to download a pdf.
I would use this website – even though many college students use the Lonely Planet method and just see what they can do when they get there, most other people like to have a good idea of what they are doing when.

7. Explain any modifications to your initial idea or your initial feature set based on your user interviews.

   We'd like to incorporate a more social aspect, allowing people to search for others' itineraries or suggesting similar itineraries. Budgeting is a concern that we had not considered and should integrate. There is a lot of information that users would like to know that we could develop a database of, based on ratings and information gleaned from other websites.

8. Use these interviews to develop at least two different **user personas**.

   Persona 1:
   College student who does not have much money, and prefers not to make a strict plan, instead planning things on the go. Probably has more flexibility in terms of time. Would like a website that allows for flexible planning, and collection of basic ideas.

   Persona 2:
   Middle-aged person with a tight schedule. Wants a tool to narrow down ideas and plan an optimized schedule that includes timing, modes of travel, and specific locations.

9. Develop at least one **use case** for your site. This should be a list or table demonstrating a sequence of user actions and website responses that occur when a user attempts to complete a core task on your site. Make sure to indicate the task the user is trying to complete.

Site Design

1. Draw out, by hand, three different designs for this page. Scan these for your submission.

2. Make a list of pros and cons for each design (3 pros and 3 cons for each).

   Design 1:
   Pros: Immediately provides suggestions, focuses on your profile for users that are interested primarily in their trips, provides lots of information on the main page
   Cons: Minimizes social aspect of the site, too busy, you don't really need all profile info on the home page

   Design 2:
   Pros: Search bar is obvious, shows your friends' trips,
   Cons: A little busier than design 3, the trips it shows are not necessarily useful to you, too many horizontal lines

   Design 3:
   Pros: Very clean, shows your friends, shows trips you are following
   Cons: It's not clear how to get to your trips, it's not very easy to get to your profile, no obvious search functionality

3. Pick the best design and mock it up using a program such as Photoshop, Inkscape, Gimp. Submit a screenshot of this mockup.

Additional Questions

1. Who is on your team? You may list at most 3 people. For each member list the full legal name, .edu e-mail, school, major(s), year, and graduate/undergraduate status.

   Cristina Lozano, clozano@mit.edu, MIT, 6.3, undergrad
   Sara Brockmueller, sarab609@mit.edu, MIT, 6.3, undergrad

2. Would your team like to participate in the **Rookie Division**?

   No

3. Which of the themes does your application match? Your answer should be one sentence if the match is reasonably obvious. Be as brief as you can. If your application matches both themes, list the one where the matching is more obvious.

   The vacation theme

4. What technology do you plan to use for your server-side programming (e.g. PHP, Ruby on Rails, etc)?

   Ruby on Rails

5. What risks do you envision preventing you from successfully implementing your idea? Consider this an exercise of imagination, not a test of confidence.

   Lack of time

6. Are you planning to participate in the competition? Your answer will solely be used for planning purposes.

   Yes