

RecoMedia

Media that matches your moments.

CS147 Fall 2024

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Project Name and Value Proposition

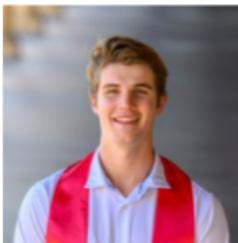
Project Name: **RecoMedia**

Value Proposition: **Media that matches your moments**

Team Members



Whayden Dhamcho
Developer



Chris Kelly
Developer



Calvin Laughlin
Developer



Jack Ryan
Designer

Problem/Solution Overview

Experiences are better when you are prepared for them, but planning isn't enjoyable for everybody.

RecoMedia is designed for the spontaneous, and to fit to spur of the moment. We make planning feel unobtrusive and easy. Watching media related to an upcoming trip/event is a great way to hype yourself up, learn about your destination, or inspire the next excursion. We aim to provide users with inspiration, cultural relevance, and education so that they can better enjoy their approaching experience.

Needfinding

For our studio's topic of "movement", we chose the domain of spontaneity for our interviews. What challenges do spontaneous people face when they are traveling? When they are planning to travel? We hoped to find a problem that could directly benefit the "go with the flow" approach to experiences.

Interviews

Participant Selection:

We hoped to interview people who represented both sides of the "planning" and "spontaneous" spectrum in order to compare and contrast different views and experiences.

We acquired our participants from a post on Nextdoor (image below). Although we did not state in the advertisement that we were looking for "planners" or "improvisers", we asked these individuals who responded to the post which group they felt more associated with before we scheduled the meeting.

Posts



Jack Michael Ryan

Stanford Campus · 29 Sep · Edited ·

...

Hi Neighbors,

Ever wanted to be part of something that could shape future technology or improve the way we interact with the world? My name is Jack Ryan and I'm a Senior at Stanford studying Symbolic Systems. Along with my team of three Co-term students in Computer Science, we're working on a research project for Professor James Landay that explores finding solutions to real-world needs.

We're looking for thoughtful community members who are open to sharing their experiences and perspectives in a ≈ 45-minute conversation over coffee or a bite to eat (our treat!). Your insights could directly influence the direction of our research and potentially lead to impactful innovations in the future.

Whether you're passionate about technology, community issues, or simply curious about how your unique perspective could help, please feel free to message me! We'd love to arrange something at your convenience.

Jack

For our first round of interviews, we found three people that we thought could provide interesting perspectives on planning¹:

Liam, an ex-collegiate athlete. (Self-described planner)

Sam, who is an employee at a local technology company and an avid traveler. (Self-described mix, half planner half improviser)

Carina, a customer service representative who loves live music. (Self-described improviser)

We learned a lot about our domain from these initial interviews, and came away with a few key insights on what is important to people during and before an event. Firstly, Liam spoke about some of the challenges of planning for everyday life, especially for fitness. Life is unpredictable, and there are always setbacks or other challenges that arise that can make even the best laid plans go awry. Sam described his dislike of “overplanning”, which he experienced during many of his journeys around Asia. Sam spoke about how a tightly scheduled day can add a stuffy or rigid feeling to a trip. He found that overly structured travel plans can lead to stress and disappointment, and that it was important to keep some aspects of travel unplanned and open to improvisation.

Our last interview in this first round was with Carina, who admitted to doing almost no planning ahead for any of her recent excursions to see live music. She told us a story about going to a concert in San Francisco that inspired our problem focus. Throughout her telling us this story she only reflected upon how the night was ruined by one mistake. She had forgotten where she parked her car and by the time she found it in the parking lot and got in, she had to wait bumper to bumper for several hours just to escape the lot. She said it made the experience so bad that she “blocked it out of her memory”

After this first round of interviews, we realized that our solution, whatever it may be, would have to walk a fine line between leaving room for spontaneity, which can leave people feeling unprepared, and overplanning, which can make an experience feel forced. Our solution would have to honor both of these concerns, and allow users to plan without feeling like they are planning.

For our second round of interviews, we wanted to find people that represented extreme users for overplanning. We again messaged people back who responded to our Nextdoor post and

¹Some names are changed to anonymize participants at their request.

looked for strong responses to the question: "Do you feel like you are more of an improviser or a planner?" as well as making some assumptions based off the person's profession or interests. We found two interviewees that we thought would fit the overplanner archetype.

Justin - a computer scientist in HCI, world traveler, and recreational pilot.

When prompted with the topic of spontaneity versus planning, Justin immediately started talking about his experience as a pilot. His main point was that being a pilot requires planning in order to be spontaneous, so that you can be ready and quick to react to any possible scenario that may occur. When Justin is planning for an event, he likes to have every basis covered, but not every event deserves that level of attention. Specifically when it came to travel, Justin spoke about how his trips around the world were improved when he purposefully did not plan, which allowed him to find hidden gems and other parts of the experience that he would have never known about.

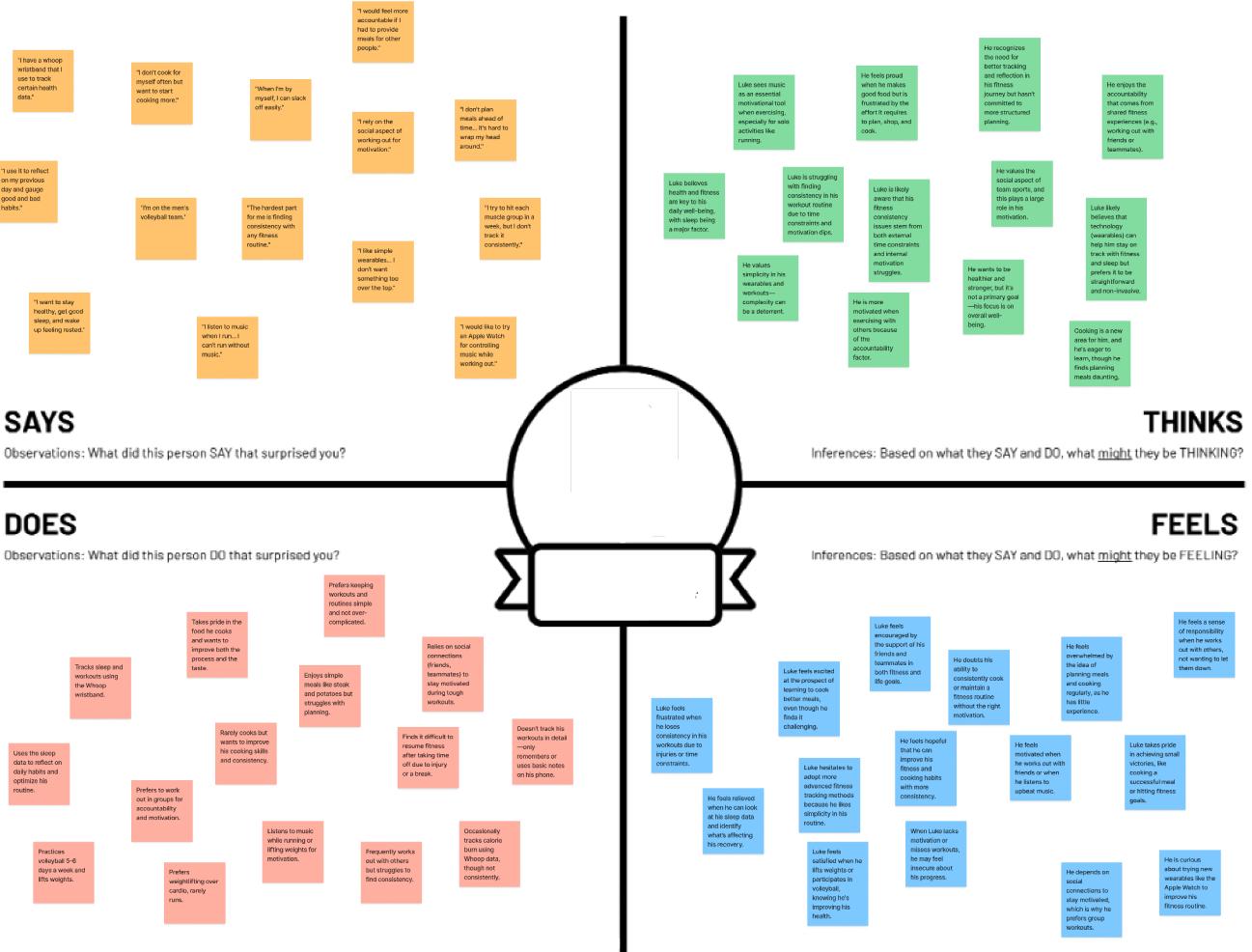
Sajin - a team manager at several large technology companies.

Sajin also gave us a very interesting perspective on planning, specifically using technology to plan. Although his job requires him to lead and organize many people to accomplish complicated goals, he tries to remove technology from his life outside of the office. He prefers more traditional organizational techniques for his everyday life rather than relying too heavily on technology.

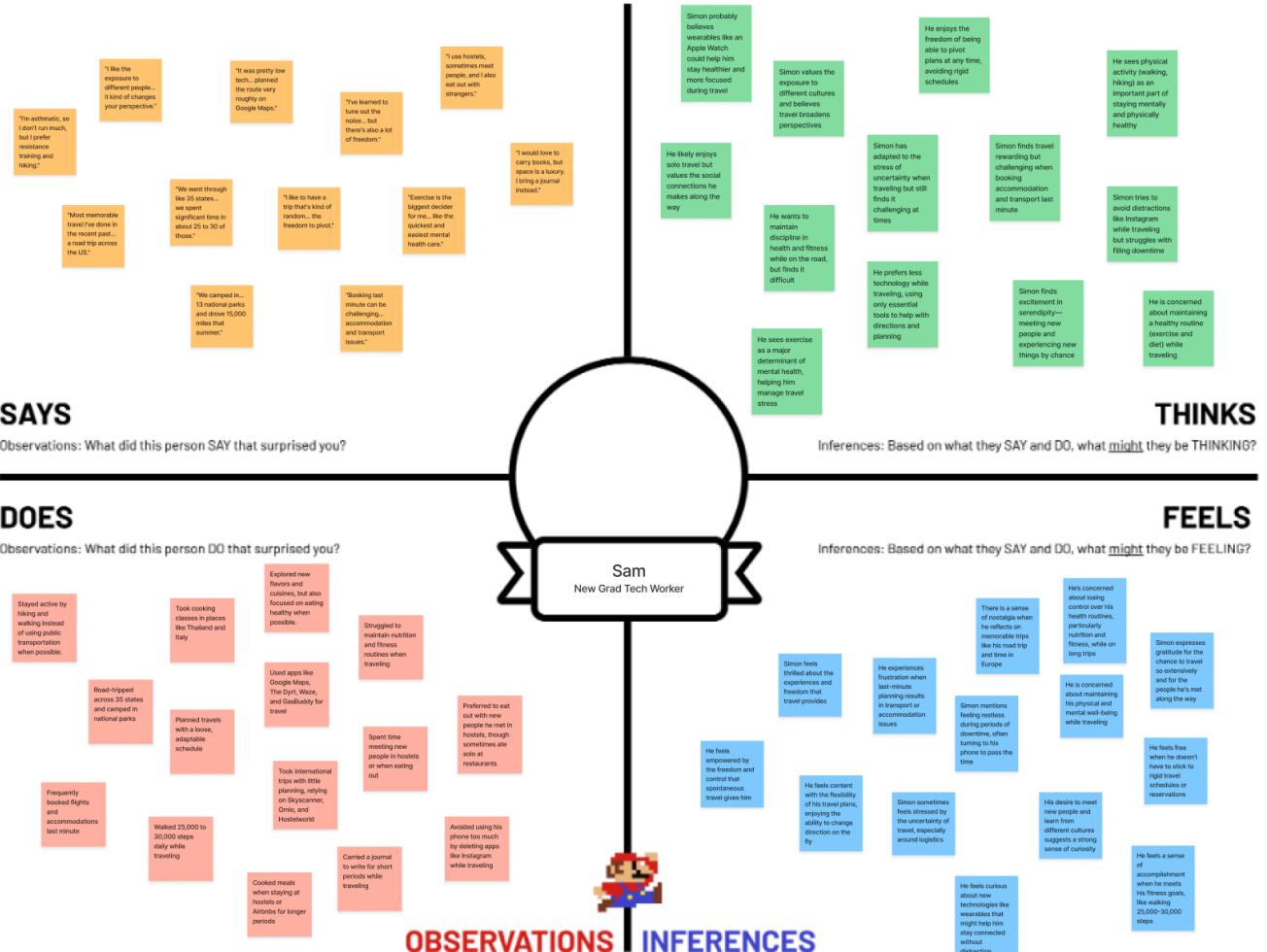
Synthesis

We used empathy maps to better structure and organize what we learned from our interview process. Here are the maps for our more interesting interviews:

Liam:



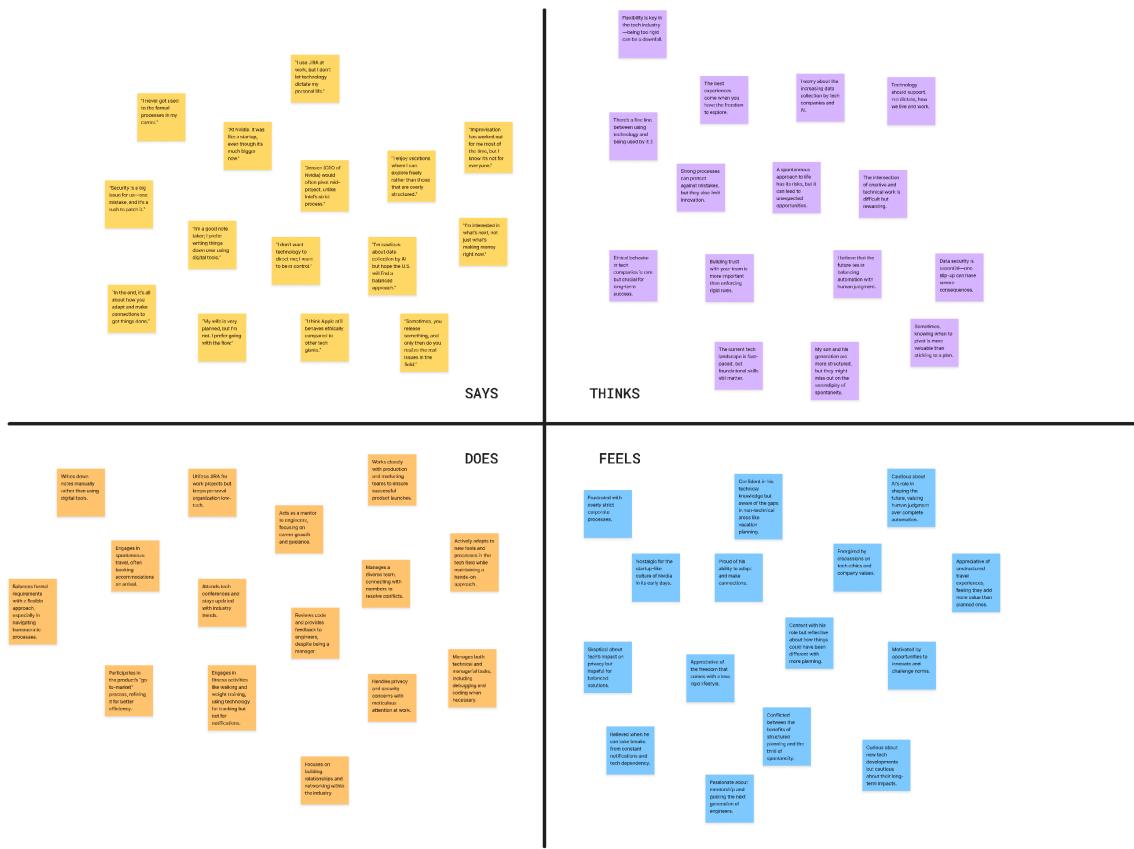
Sam:



Justin:



Sajin:



POVs & Experience Prototypes

With the new insights and direction we gained from our interviews, we crafted POV statements for each interview. After each POV, we quickly devised as many HMW statements as possible within 15 minutes. We had no restrictions on what counted as “good” ideas and just aimed for quantity over quality during the creative process. We then spent another 15 minutes cutting these HMW statements until we were left with our favorites, and from there brainstormed solutions using a similar quantity over quality approach.

Here some of the POVs we created for each interviewee:

Carina

We met Carina, an IT support worker who enjoys spontaneity but is often surrounded by structured planning when attending events or managing her daily routines.

We were surprised to notice that while Carina prefers going with the flow, she often finds herself frustrated by the challenges of parking and long waits after concerts or events, despite her desire to enjoy these experiences more spontaneously.

We wonder if that means Carina seeks a way to combine her spontaneous approach to outings with practical planning tools that can alleviate the logistical challenges of events, allowing her to focus on the enjoyment rather than the hassle.

It would be game-changing to create a solution that helps Carina plan just enough to make her event experiences seamless, while still preserving the freedom of spontaneity she enjoys

Sam

We met Sam, a new grad tech worker who feels more comfortable abroad than at home

We were surprised to notice that when he is traveling, he says he doesn't like to use his phone, but claimed that it was “crucial” for him to be using certain apps while he was on the go.

We wonder if that means there is an optimal amount of technology for travel so that it doesn't diminish from the experience.

It would be game changing to consolidate his travel technologies to maximize planning without inhibiting his spontaneity.

Justin

We met Justin, a meticulous computer graphics expert who enjoys exploration and values spontaneous moments, especially during his travels.

We were surprised to notice that while Justin enjoys immersing himself in new cities without a set plan, he often prepares for potential obstacles in advance, applying his pilot training mindset of anticipating a range of possible outcomes.

We wonder if this reflects a deeper tension within Justin—between his love for unstructured experiences and the precise, calculated nature of his work and hobbies, allowing him to confidently handle unexpected situations while still embracing the freedom of spontaneity.

It would be game-changing if Justin was able to keep navigating new environments freely while having access to just-in-time resources if unexpected challenges arise, ensuring both spontaneity and preparedness

Sajin

We met Sajin, a senior tech manager who values flexibility but works within a highly structured environment.

We were surprised to notice that despite managing large teams and relying on JIRA for work, Shrikant prefers handwritten notes and avoids using digital tools in his personal life, even disabling notifications on his phone and smartwatch.

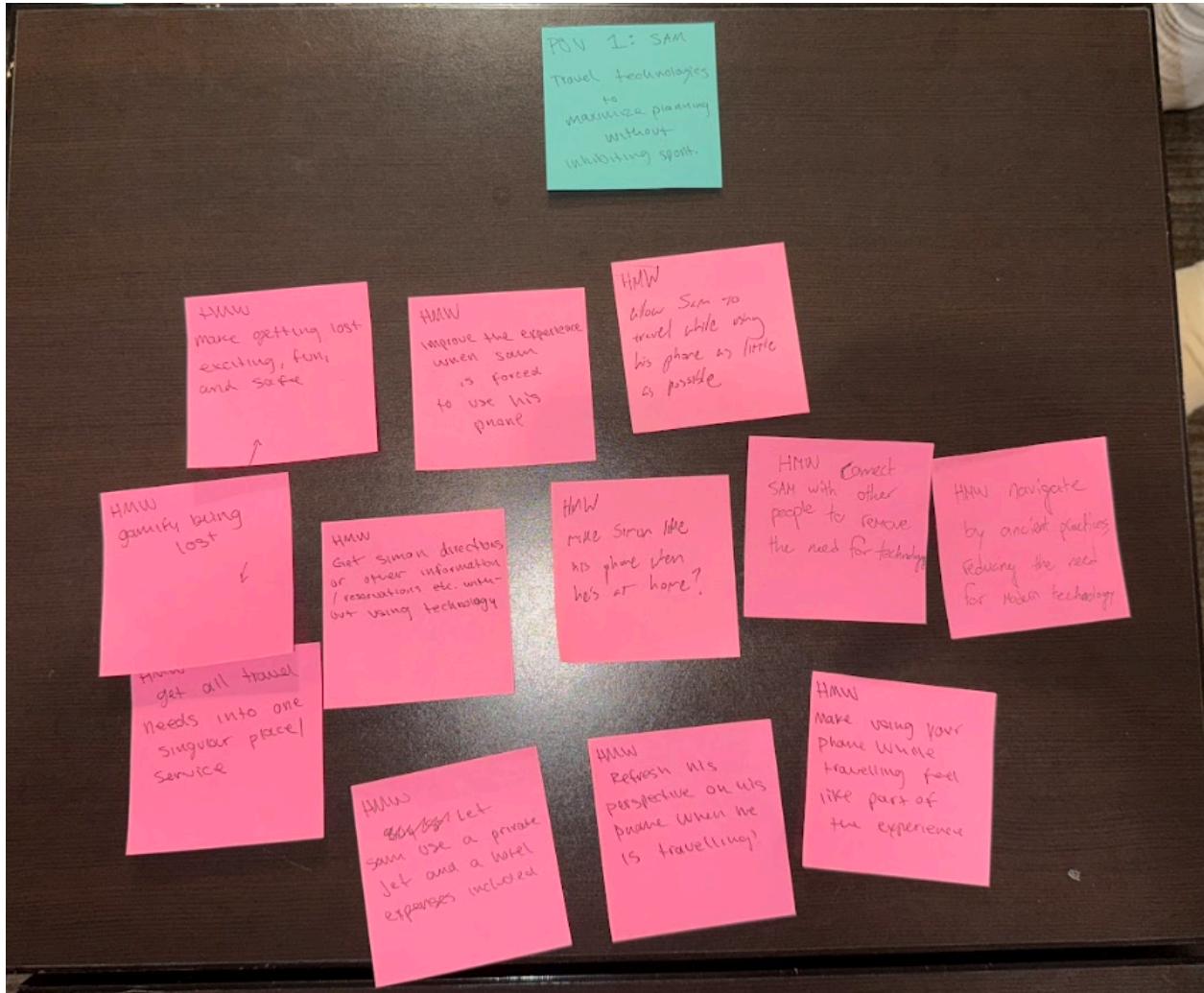
We wonder if that means Sajin seeks the ability to have more control over his use of technology without letting his technology “control” him such that it enhances his productivity instead of being overwhelming.

It would be game-changing if Sajin could streamline his workflow, giving him the benefits of digital organization while preserving his preference for minimal technological interference.

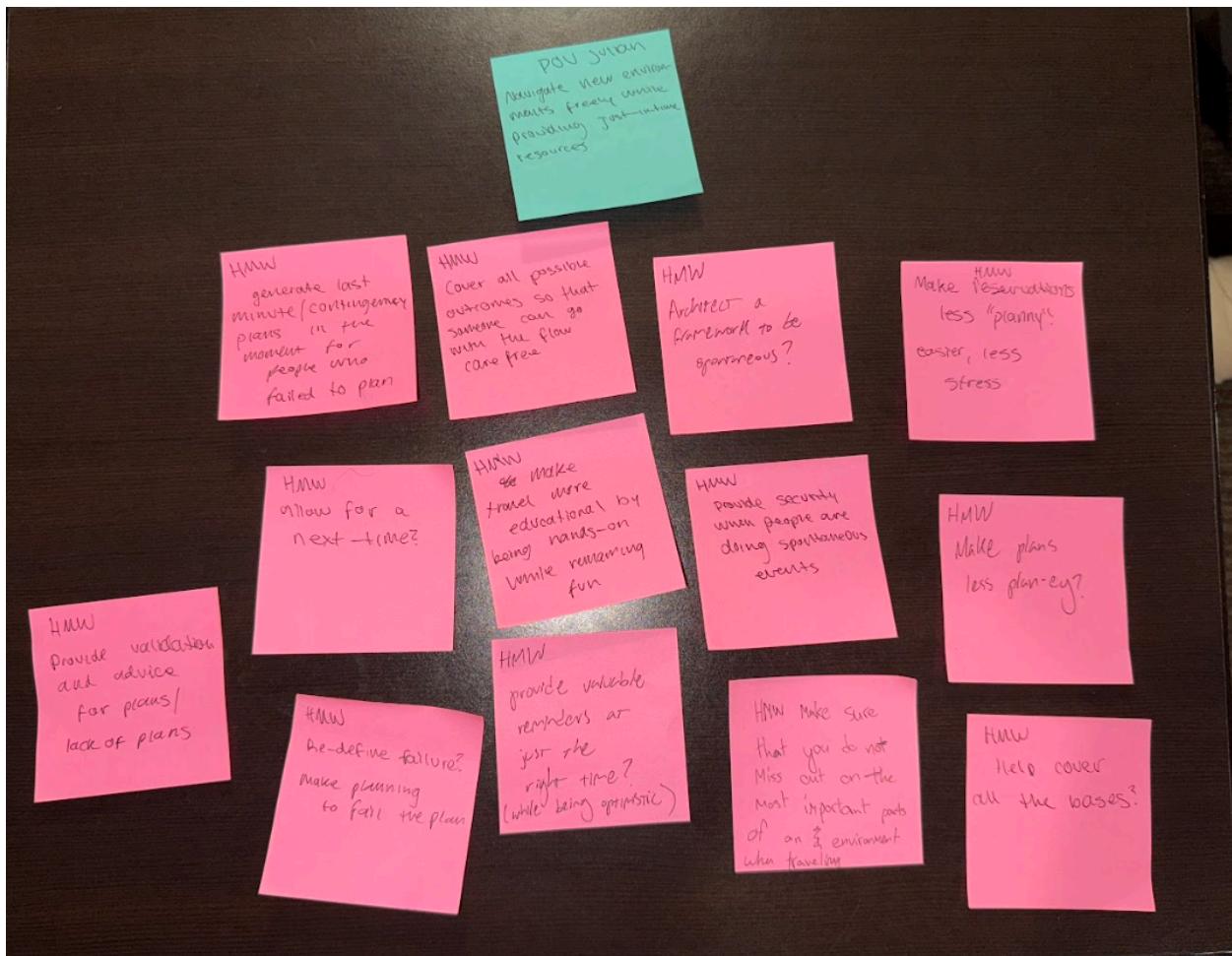
HMWs

Here are some images of a few of the “how might we’s” that we generated from these POV statements. These are the raw results of the brainstorming sessions.

Sam's HMW



Justin's HMW



Top HMWs from all brainstorming sessions:

1. **How might we allow for a next time?**
2. **How might we make getting lost exciting, fun, and safe?**
3. **How might we re-define failure? Make planning to fail the plan?**

Top solutions:

1. “Fire-Sale” Reservations

- a. Restaurants can offer last minute reservations to nearby customers at a discounted rate.

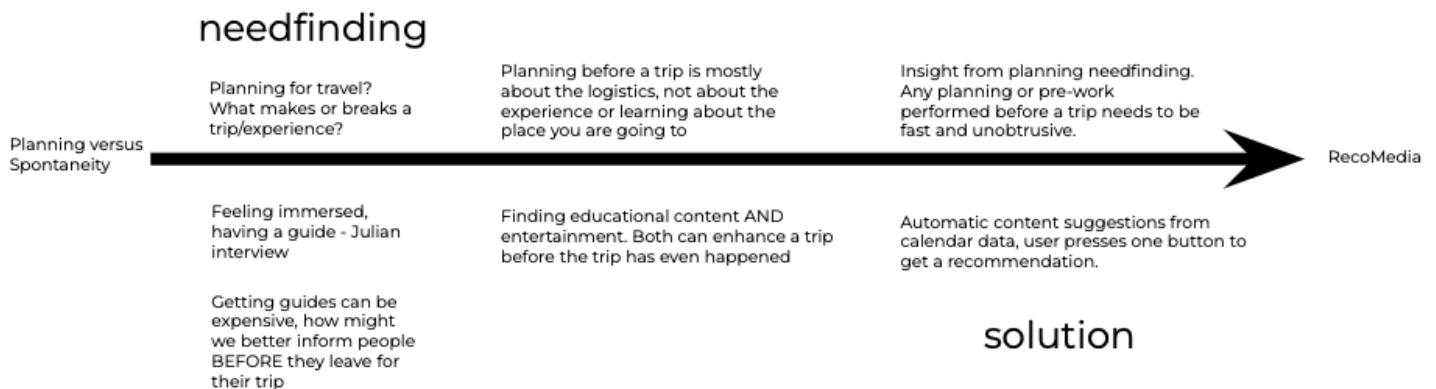
2. Nearby Event Notifications

- a. Notify users who are near high-density areas, points of interest, or live events.

3. Calendar-Based Media Recommendations

- a. Enhance travel experiences through personalized media recommendations related to upcoming trips.

In order to demystify some of the jumps that we made in brainstorming, here is a small diagram that more specifically details how we arrived at our calendar based recommendation solution. We created this diagram after receiving some feedback that it may not be entirely clear how this solution came about from our brainstorming.



Experience Prototypes:

We created a brief experience test for each solution to see if our assumptions were correct and to see which one we should continue developing.

“Fire-Sale” Reservations

Our assumption: People are willing to book a reservation for a restaurant at the last minute.

We tested this assumption by asking people to pick a fake reservation from a lo-fi reservation system. The page showed the current time and the upcoming reservations. The leftmost screenshot below was our control, with the nearest reservation time occurring two hours in the future for a very early dinner. Each restaurant has the same price rating to remove any bias. To preserve some sense of realism, we made most of the very high density dinner times unavailable to reserve (6 - 8pm). Most of our subjects selected one of the 9pm dinner reservations that were available. The page on the right is where we tested our assumption, we then asked the participants to select another reservation, this time noting that the “time” had been changed to 6pm. Even though there was a new, cheaper, reservation at 6:15, which is a more standard time to have dinner, participants did not select this new option, stating that they “did not want to feel rushed” or “would have no way of preparing to get there in time” despite of the new drop in price. With these results in mind, we decided not to continue working on firesale.

Current Time: 2:00 PM Thursday, Oct. 10 th		Current Time: 6:00 PM Thursday, Oct. 10 th	
AVAILABLE RESERVATIONS		AVAILABLE RESERVATIONS	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ferin, \$\$\$	6:00pm 6:30pm 5:00pm 9:00pm 10:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Ferin, \$\$\$	9:00pm 10:00pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Italico, \$\$	5:00pm 9:00pm 10:30pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Italico, \$\$	7:45pm 9:00pm 10:30pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Taverna, \$\$\$	5:15pm 11:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Taverna, \$\$	6:15pm 11:00pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Teleferic, \$\$	9:00pm 9:30pm 10:00pm 11:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Teleferic, \$\$	9:00pm 9:30pm 10:00pm 11:00pm
<input type="checkbox"/> Reposado, \$\$	4:45pm	<input type="checkbox"/> Reposado, \$\$	6:30pm

Nearby Event Notifications

Our assumption: People would be willing to spontaneously deviate from their daily plans/routine to attend a nearby event.

For this experience prototype, our testing method was quite simple. We ourselves would act as a “notification” for a nearby event. We randomly approached several people at main quad and invited them to a fictitious coffee and doughnut event. We selected people that looked like they were going somewhere with a degree of purpose rather than just wandering around so that we would catch them in-between their activities. We found that almost none of the people we spoke to were interested in deviating from their walk to class or other activity in order to attend our fictitious event. We admit that this could be a reflection of the busy lives of those walking around main quad, but we still decided to abandon this solution due to the lack of people who agreed to follow us.



Calendar-Based Media Recommendations

Our assumption: People want to consume media that is related to upcoming events in their life.

We knew of a group of people that we were tangentially friends with that were all planning to go to Las Vegas the following week. For this experience prototype, we asked the individuals in this group, as well as a control group, to pick a movie, TV show, and song from a list of options that they would like to watch/listen to in the near future, with one option from each having a clear relation to Las Vegas. We did not instruct the participants to choose media that was related to their upcoming events, just to pick one that they would like to watch/listen to.

	Test	Control
<u>MOVIES</u>		<u>MOVIES</u>
<i>The Hangover: 3</i> La La Land: 1 Parasite: 0		La La Land: 2 Parasite: 1 <i>The Hangover: 1</i>
<u>TV SHOWS</u>		<u>TV SHOWS</u>
<i>Pawn Stars: 2</i> Deadliest Catch: 2 Gator Boys: 0		<i>Pawn Stars: 2</i> Deadliest Catch: 1 Gator Boys: 1
<u>SONGS</u>		<u>SONGS</u>
<i>"Viva Las Vegas" by Elvis Presley: 2</i> "Blinding Lights" by The Weekend: 2 "Dreams" by The Cranberries: 0		"Dreams" by The Cranberries: 4 <i>"Viva Las Vegas" by Elvis Presley: 0</i> "Blinding Lights" by The Weekend: 0

We found that media that was related to Las Vegas was more commonly selected by the test group, although our sample size was quite small, we were encouraged by comments made during the testing procedure about their upcoming trip. We decided that media recommendations would be the solution that we would pursue further into development based on these positive results.