

## Table of Contents

<b>Results Summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Introduction and Summary of Background Research.....	2
Summary of User Research and Insights .....	2
Conclusion.....	3
References .....	4
<b>Raw Data .....</b>	<b>4-12</b>

## Results Summary

### Kevin Huang

#### Introduction and Summary of Background Research

Community is something that we can all appreciate as being important to us, as human beings. As social creatures we need to be relevant to others – to be able to say and do things that are relevant to others—in order to live truly meaningful lives (Vervaeke and Ferraro, 2012, p. 29).

The Web 2.0 era has changed how it is that communities operate, making it increasingly necessary for real-world communities to have an online presence. With this in mind, I conducted my background research on online crowdfunding communities (Hui et al, 2014). Crowdfunding is a prime example of the power of Web 2.0, and of how once strictly real-world domains – commerce, education, entrepreneurship – are steadily moving online. The research I did underscored the growing importance and power of online collaboration and community, and of the importance of having effective user interfaces to support these communities.

My group set off to do our user research to gain an understanding of the nature and structure of communities at U of T, how it is that U of T students go about finding their respective communities, and what challenges they may face in doing so. Is finding a sense of community as important to them as we believe it to be? How do students identify with and integrate into their desired communities? Are there problems in this space that are crying out for HCI-based solutions? These are some of the motivating questions I had as I began to conduct my user research.

The semi-structured interviews I ended up conducting were highly illuminating. I tried to interview as diverse a group of people as I could, to try to get a sample that, while small, was as representative of the U of T student body as possible. My conversations with these students led to some interesting findings.

#### Summary of User Research and Insights

The students interviewed largely shared the belief that it was difficult to find a sense of community at U of T, as well as the belief that the average U of T student was too isolated. Some students said that they personally found it difficult to join and integrate into student groups, and that it was hard for them to meet new people in general. These findings squared with our initial hypothesis that Finding Communities is a legitimate problem at U of T that is very much worth looking into.

Time was a barrier that students cited as getting in the way of their involvement in student communities. This is not surprising considering that U of T is certainly a school with high academic standards and pressure, and that students lead generally busy lives with their coursework, part-time work, or other personal commitments.

I had the good fortune of interviewing some students who were involved as former or current executives of some student communities. These “community organizers” provided unique insights into the problem space, on top of what was shared by regular “community members”. I found it useful to view these “community organizers” and “community members” as two unique camps, and to then see what problems each camp experienced, and what issues overlapped. I identify two such issues: the U of T Clubs Fair, and online community presences.

The U of T Clubs Fair was a subject that was brought up repeatedly by both camps—students expressed a general dissatisfaction with the Clubs Fair. Member-hopefuls who had gone to past Clubs Fairs in search of clubs expressed that they found it too disorganized, that it was simply too large and crowded for them to find what they were looking for. Community organizers agreed that the Clubs Fair was too disorganized, and also brought up the issue of the high cost of renting a table at the Fair. One organizer brought up the fact that a table at the Clubs Fair took up half of their club’s budget. Both camps noted that this made it hard for smaller clubs to participate, as they had to contend with both the financial cost as well as the difficulty of standing out in such a vast ocean of participating clubs and student groups.

Both camps of students complained about what I termed the “online presences” of student communities. Organizers brought up the difficulties involved with maintaining and updating their club’s online presence. One organizer mentioned that it was difficult for them to maintain and update their club website, as they had limited experience with web design. Another struggled to find someone who could design their website. Members and organizers alike complained about ULife, U of T’s existing online interface for finding student clubs and organizations. ULife is supposed to cleanly centralize each community’s online presence, but it is extremely awkward to navigate. ULife has no “search” feature – students must instead manually scroll through long lists of campus communities. One student complained about the site being slow and prone to timing-out.

## Conclusion

The top-level theme that has emerged from my interviews is that of the difficulty in bringing together community organizers and members. This could be viewed as an interface problem – the existing real-world and online interfaces that are supposed to bring organizers and members together are clunky, unwieldy, and uncoordinated. Times have changed, and with the new Web 2.0 tools available to us, something can and should be done about this.

## References

- Hui, J., Greenberg, M., Gerber, E. (2014) Understanding the Role of Community in Crowdfunding Work. Proceedings of SIGCHI Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing. Baltimore, USA. CSCW '14. ACM Press, pp. 62-74.
- Vervaeke, J. A. & Ferraro, L. (2012). Relevance, meaning, and the cognitive science of wisdom. In M. Ferrari & N. M. Weststrate, The Scientific Study of Personal Wisdom. Netherlands: Springer.

## Raw Data

**Table 1.1 – Breakdown of Students Interviewed**

	Gender	Domestic/International	Year of Study	Program of Study
Student 1	Male	Domestic	4 <sup>th</sup>	Rotman Commerce
Student 2	Female	Domestic	4 <sup>th</sup>	English and Political Science
Student 3	Male	International	4 <sup>th</sup>	Financial Economics
Student 4	Female	Domestic	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Computer Science and Physics
Student 5	Male	Domestic	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Mathematical Applications in Economics and Finance

### Student 1:

#### Part 1: General Questions

- 4<sup>th</sup> year student in Rotman Commerce
- Domestic student

#### Part 2: Questions about club/group involvement and feelings of community

- the student is not currently involved in any student clubs or groups
- reasons cited for their lack of involvement:
  - Time constraints since they are enrolled in 6 courses, no express interest in existing clubs, difficulty of talking to new people and integrating into clubs
- student said that they once tried to start a Foosball club with friends, but had trouble getting approval from the Rotman Commerce department (Rotman did not respond to their email request, and the students did not follow up with the department)
- student found the U of T Clubs Fair to be too large and disorganized, expressed feeling that it was difficult to “find what they were looking for”
  - however, the student could not think of a better alternative to the existing system
- student expressed general feelings of difficulty in getting to know people and integrating into groups

#### Part 3: Club/group involvement motivating other personal projects

- none shared

**Student 2:**Part 1: General Questions

- 4<sup>th</sup> year student studying English and Political Science
- domestic student
- currently abroad on exchange for a semester, but was at U of T for the most recent semester (Fall 2018)

Part 2: Questions about club/group involvement and feelings of community

- the student was involved with a Mahjong club, they were one of the execs who was involved since the conception of the club
  - student was therefore familiar with/had experience with the process of starting a club: writing emails to get approval, drafting a constitution, etc.
- the student once tried to start a Running Club on their own, but was rejected since a Running Club already existed. The student was aware of this club, but did not want to join since they did not like the some of the people involved in that club
- the student shared belief that there are problems with student involvement at U of T: that many students seem isolated and that it is difficult to get involved
- the student brought up the fact that clubs need to pay to get a table at the Clubs Fair as an issue... this makes it hard for smaller clubs to participate
- the student contrasted this to the similarly-sized university they are currently at on exchange, where they reported that students seem much more involved
  - the student proposed that this could be due to how the student body is divided at their exchange school: students can become members of student-run “nations” which host events and socials consistently throughout the year... students can even get jobs at their respective nations
  - nation membership is not compulsory but the vast majority of students belong to nations
- the student brought up the “clunkiness” of ULife

Part 3: Club/group involvement motivating other personal projects

- none shared

**Student 3:**Part 1: General Questions

- 4<sup>th</sup> year student studying Financial Economics
- International

Part 2: Questions about club/group involvement and feelings of community

- the student founded the Behavioural Economics Student Group (BESG)
  - the student said this club was very important to them, since they started it and they want to be successful and not fail
  - the student was motivated to start this group because they wanted to create a community of likeminded people to hangout and talk about behavioural economics, a subject that the student is interested in

- the student believes that they are a mentor to others in their club
- when starting BESG, the student scouted out people to do website design, without success – the BESG does not yet have a website
- the student would like to become involved with more clubs/groups on campus, but cites time is a barrier getting in their way
- having started their own club, the student is very familiar with the process of starting a club and believes that they have had plenty of opportunities to join different clubs on campus
- the student identifies with the following communities on campus: Middle Eastern students, Victoria College students, Economics Students

### Part 3: Club/group involvement motivating other personal projects

- the student felt that their involvement with BESG motivated them to manage their time better in general

### **Student 4:**

#### Part 1: General Questions

- 2<sup>nd</sup> year student studying Computer Science and Physics
- Domestic student

#### Part 2: Questions about club/group involvement and feelings of community

- the student is involved with a Neurotech club and the Computer Science Second Year Learning Community (SLC)
  - they were motivated to join these clubs because they wanted to get involved in campus, and those two clubs seemed “pretty cool”
  - the student believes the SLC to be the more important of the two clubs, as they feel more involved in the SLC than with the Neurotech club
- the student noted that there was a prof and 2 mentors in the SLC, who had those roles in an official capacity
- the student listed the president of the Neurotech club as a mentor

#### Part 3:

No

**Student 5:**Part 1: General Questions

- 3<sup>rd</sup> year student studying Mathematical Applications in Economics and Finance
- Domestic

Part 2: Questions about club/group involvement and feelings of community

- the student is highly involved: they are co-president of the Math Club, the marketing director of the Stats Union, and a member of DECA
- the student brought up the technological difficulties facing them as an executive of those clubs:
  - they were responsible for updating a club website, and they found it difficult to do this
  - they found it hard to navigate between the online interfaces of the different clubs
  - the student suggested an idea: that there might be a separate Dashboard on Quercus for clubs instead of courses, with clicking on a club taking you to the club's page
- student also brought up displeasure with Clubs Fair: cited that the fee to have a table at the Fair took up 50% of club budget
  - the student suggested having multiple clubs fairs separated by "theme" as an alternative to having one large Clubs Fair
- the student dislikes ULife, complained about it timing out on them and crashing
- student believed that there was space for "some kind of app" that would make it easier for them to manage their responsibilities for different clubs

Part 3: Club/group involvement motivating other personal projects

- None

WIX

### Consent Form: A Study of Student Communities at U of T

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Kevin Huang, Dennis Markovchyn, Roshan Ravishankar, Ryan Young, and Utkarsh Agarwal for an assignment in the University of Toronto Computer Science course *CSC318 The Design of Interactive Computation Media*.

I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to better understand student involvement in clubs and groups at the U of T St. George and Scarborough campuses, and to shed light on the nature of student communities at U of T.

I understand that:

- The procedure to be used is a semi-structured interview.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.


### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print) Kyle Tran

Signature 

Date Wed. Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019

### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name Kevin Huang Signature 

Kevin Huang  
Formative Research Instruments

Kevin Huang  
Study Results



### Consent Form: A Study of Student Communities at U of T

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Kevin Huang, Dennis Markovchyn, Roshan Ravishankar, Ryan Young, and Utkarsh Agarwal for an assignment in the University of Toronto Computer Science course *CSC318 The Design of Interactive Computation Media*.

I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to better understand student involvement in clubs and groups at the U of T St. George and Scarborough campuses, and to shed light on the nature of student communities at U of T.

I understand that:

- The procedure to be used is a semi-structured interview.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.

### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print) Aslesha Pokhrel

Signature Aslesha

Date 2019-01-23

### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name Kevin Huang Signature Kevin Huang

Kevin Huang  
Formative Research Instruments

4

### Consent Form: A Study of Student Communities at U of T

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Kevin Huang, Dennis Markovchyn, Roshan Ravishankar, Ryan Young, and Utkarsh Agarwal for an assignment in the University of Toronto Computer Science course CSC318 *The Design of Interactive Computation Media*.

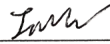
I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to better understand student involvement in clubs and groups at the U of T St. George and Scarborough campuses, and to shed light on the nature of student communities at U of T.

I understand that:

- The procedure to be used is a semi-structured interview.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.


### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print) Ian Ho

Signature 

Date Sun 23rd, 2014

### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name Kevin Huang Signature 

Kevin Huang  
Formative Research Instruments

4

### Consent Form: A Study of Student Communities at U of T

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Kevin Huang, Dennis Markovchyn, Roshan Ravishankar, Ryan Young, and Utkarsh Agarwal for an assignment in the University of Toronto Computer Science course CSC318 *The Design of Interactive Computation Media*.

I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to better understand student involvement in clubs and groups at the U of T St. George and Scarborough campuses, and to shed light on the nature of student communities at U of T.

I understand that:

- The procedure to be used is a semi-structured interview.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.

### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print) MARK KHALIL

Signature Mark Khalil

Date 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan

### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name Kevin Huang Signature K. Huang

Kevin Huang  
Formative Research Instruments

4

### Consent Form: A Study of Student Communities at U of T

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Kevin Huang, Dennis Markovchyn, Roshan Ravishankar, Ryan Young, and Utkarsh Agarwal for an assignment in the University of Toronto Computer Science course CSC318 *The Design of Interactive Computation Media*.

I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to better understand student involvement in clubs and groups at the U of T St. George and Scarborough campuses, and to shed light on the nature of student communities at U of T.

I understand that:

- The procedure to be used is a semi-structured interview.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- All materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.

#### PARTICIPANT

Name (please print) Joyce Yang

Signature 

Date 2019 - January - 23

#### INVESTIGATOR(s)

Name Kevin Huang Signature 