



Digital Democracy: Needfinding II + Ideation

Team Generation-G
Garrick F. | Gen S. | Grace W.



Garrick

Coterm, CompSci
*only looking for
trouble*



Gen

Senior, SymSys
*audible from a mile
away*



Grace

Senior, Econ
*hates hard-boiled
eggs*

Problem Domain

Our problem domain is focusing on improving online political discourse and information sharing.

Initial POV

We met S, a recent Berkeley graduate and volunteer at a free health clinic.

We were surprised to find that in political discussions, he **enjoys playing devil's advocate** but **does not often change his mind**.

It would be game-changing to enable him to participate in **more well-rounded discussions** with others.



Needfinding II

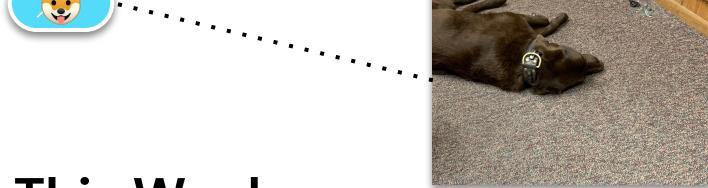
Goal: with focused insights, broaden audience

S K M I

Last Week:

4 people
2 M | 2 F (& 1 dog)
21-29

A D L C J



This Week:

5 people & less letters to choose from
3 M | 2 F
17-69

Needfinding II

Goal: with focused insights, broaden audience



Last Week:

- Consuming news
- Voting behaviors
- Political involvement
- Discussing the news



This Week:

- Issue of political discourse
- Communities and sharing information within them
- Online/offline convos

L, a Polish grandmother from Southern California

Initially rejected her mixed-race grandchildren until she “held [her first grandchild] in my arms.”

Disowned by her extended family; sends annual Christmas cards to them.



D, a Democratic Socialist and veteran from the Bay Area

Became interested in
Marxist and anarchist ideas
in the military.

Dislikes the “one-up” culture
of online forums like Reddit.



A, a radio show host
and math Ph.D.
candidate from
Northern California

Considers issues from
different perspectives;
reads books to inform self.

Uses Facebook primarily as
a personal memory bank,
instead of an ad platform
(for consumption goods).



A on using social media:

“

Well, I try to do **positive things** and have an honest **perspective** that might actually help people instead of just trying to like, **post just happy things** to make your life look great. I think that's hurting us more than helping us. I'm probably not your average social media user...I use it more as like what it's actually is, which is **an advertising platform** for **happy and uplifting things**.

”



C, a tennis shop employee from Hungary:
did not feel knowledgeable enough to
talk to us about digital democracy;
believes keeping up with the news is
“not healthy” for him.

J, 17 year old freshman at Stanford from
Oregon: stopped listening to NPR / reading
the newspaper since Stanford.

Point of View #1

We met D, a Democratic Socialist and veteran from the Bay Area.

We were surprised to realize that he stopped engaging on Reddit once he was proven wrong or “one-upped” in an online argument.

It would be game-changing to remove **personal stakes** from online political engagement.

Point of View #1

We met Doug Democratic Socialist and veteran from
the Bay Area.

HMW situate political debates in a

human context?

We were engaged in a “one-on-one” debate.
“one-on-one” debate

HMW make political debates fun and

not stressful?

It would be good to have a stakeholder
HMW give gentler online feedback?

Point of View #2

We met L, a grandmother and nurse from Southern California.

We were surprised to realize that she **sends letters each year** to her estranged family to **try and change their minds** on race, particularly around her mixed-race grandchildren.

It would be game-changing to **bridge the gap** between her old family and her new one.

Point of View #2

HMW remove insularity from
homogeneous communities?

HMW create new traditions to build
gaps between family?

HMW connect politics and humanity
in high stakes environment?

Point of View #3

We met K, a student moving from Tacoma to the Bay Area.

We were surprised to realize that she feels **guilt** from going from **actively participating** in activist circles in Tacoma to just “**keeping up**” with the news in California.

It would be game-changing to help her **realize** the community that she wants.

Point of View #3

**HMW remove feelings of guilt over
one's level of engagement?**

**HMW make keeping up with news like
Netflix?**

**HMW bridge communities across
space?**

Top 3 HMW's

HMW situate political debates in a human context? (D's POV)

HMW remove insularity from homogeneous communities? (L's POV)

HMW remove feelings of guilt over one's level of engagement? (K's POV)

Top 3 HMW's

HMW situate political debates in a human context? (D's POV)

 **Solution #1:** Enable users to hold a political conversation with people who are geographically close by.

HMW remove insularity from homogeneous communities? (L's POV)

 **Solution #2:** Create intelligently-matched groups of people that have (1) similar levels of engagement and (2) different political views.

HMW remove feelings of guilt over one's level of engagement? (K's POV)

 **Solution #3:** Celebrate small acts of political engagement.

Experience Prototypes

Experience Prototype #1: Map

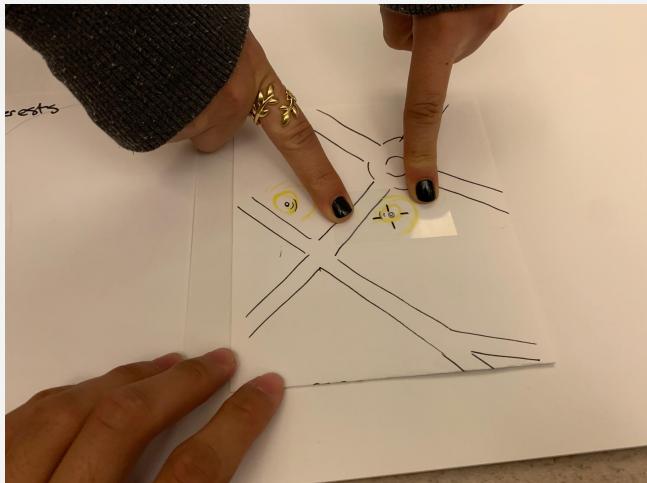
HMW situate political debates in a human context?

Solution #1: Enable users to hold a political conversation with people who are close by.

Assumption: knowing you are close-by to others who are willing to talk about politics reduces the activation energy of reaching out.

Experience Prototype #1: Map

Method:



Result:

3 participants

Users weren't necessarily willing to meet the people (assumption wrong), but willing to consider People would prefer lower-energy and safer features: IRL conversations are taxing

Hidden assumption: face-to-face dialogue should be encouraged.

“If I wanted to have an argument, I’d go on Twitter.”

“Yikes moments IRL are 10x worse.”

“I’m worried about my information—
are [the nearby people] screened?”

“Would’ve preferred a chatroom.”



Experience Prototype #2: Conversation

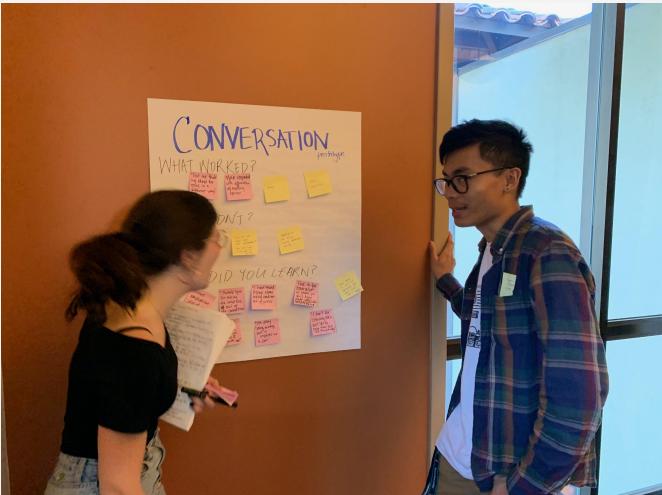
HMW remove insularity from homogenous communities?

Solution #2: Create intelligently-matched groups of people that have (1) similar levels of engagement and (2) different perspectives or political affiliations.

Assumption: people want to engage with different perspectives on political issues that they are interested in.

Experience Prototype #2: Conversation

Method:



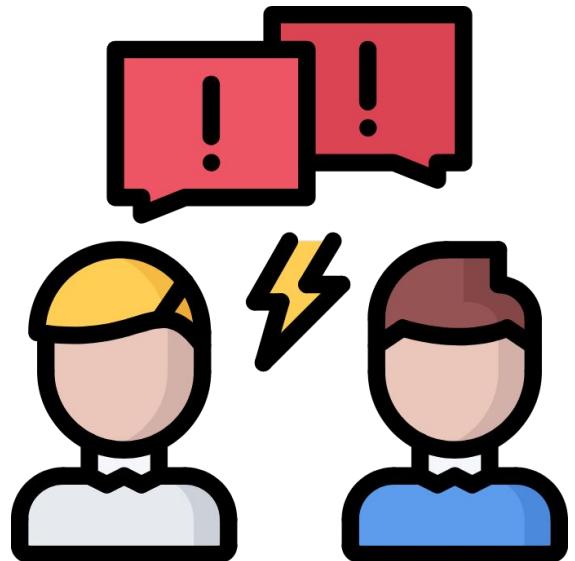
Results:

4 participants

Neutral to positive feedback

Didn't provide anything beyond what one could already get on the Internet

Assumption neither right or wrong; participants seemed open and willing to engage with differing perspectives, but also didn't see great value in having these conversations.



"This got me thinking about the issue in a different way."

"I don't like offending folks...don't like to make them feel like they're wrong"

Experience Prototype #3: Slider

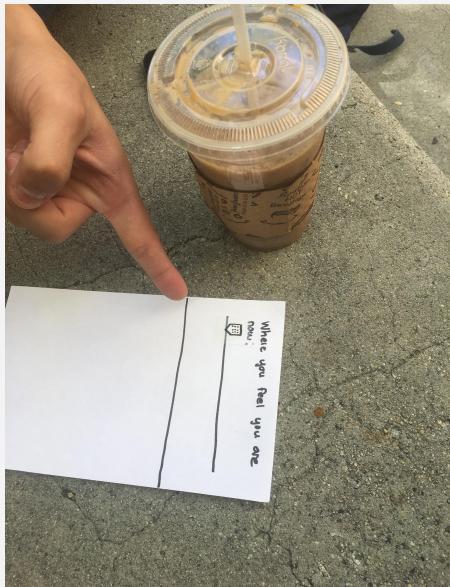
HMW remove feelings of
guilt over one's level of
engagement?

Solution #3: Celebrate
small acts of political
engagement.

Assumption: recognizing and validating small
acts of political engagement makes people
feel happier with their level of engagement.

Experience Prototype #3: Slider

Method:



Results:

5 participants

Assumption was valid: validation of political engagements resulted in a higher scoring.

Hidden assumption: people feel guilty about their existing level of political engagement

Extreme user: rated engagement as 0 but was content with that level; didn't change his scoring after the experience

“When I listed my engagements,
even if it wasn’t influential...I feel
more active.”



Most Successful Prototype(s)

Slider Prototype

- + Positive feedback
- + Assumption correct
- + Easy to understand for users

? Is alleviating guilt over levels of political engagement a worthwhile goal?

Map Prototype

- Assumption wrong
 - People don't prefer in-person discussions
- ? What is the point of political discussion? To get to know people? To organize? To build community?
- ? Is connecting online or IRL better?

Any questions?

Appendix: See written report for
more pictures!