CS352 Group 14
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Description of the usability problem:

When traveling to a new location, it can be difficult to plan a fun, interesting, and unique itinerary without doing a lot of reading and research. Our product solves this problem by allowing travelers to hire the perfect concierge for their trip: an experienced local willing to show the user around, give advice, make recommendations, and answer questions.

For a concierge, current methods for locating new clients are: word of mouth, advertisements, and local firms. However, none of these are efficient, nor do they necessarily have an international reach. The amount of potential customers is limited due to this almost 1:1 referral system. Concierges will benefit from a better flow of customers through a more tailored and direct means of referral.

Both user bases desire trust and safety. They want to know they are doing business with reputable counterparts, regardless of their nationality.

Why this is a good/interesting product:

Traveling can be stressful and scary. Yet every day, millions of people all across the world travel to destinations to have experiences. But it can be difficult to find the best experience. Our product would link those who know with those who want to know.

The current alternative for an internet savvy traveller is to comb blogs and wikis. This can be a tiring process. But more importantly, it is a flawed process. In order to find the answer, you need to know the question. And travellers often do not know the question. This is where locals guides are often used offline; they fill in the gaps that travel sites cannot possibly cover.

This is an opportunity for a website or app that makes it easy for travelers to connect directly with guides prior to and during their travels, and an opportunity for us to demonstrate the usability techniques we learn in this class in designing an experience to facilitate this interaction. We will need to think carefully about the effectiveness of the service. It should be quick and straightforward for users to access the information they require. *Travellers* may not use the service very frequently and so, for them, learnability will be more important than memorability. *Concierges* will use the service much more frequently than travellers, so for this group of users memorability will have greater importance so that it is easy for them to use all features provided. Safety, whilst important, will not be one of the greater usability concerns, since the service will mainly be used to connect the two sets of users and to help them to communicate, in which there is little scope for serious user error.

Brief description of target users:

1. **Travellers**
   a. 20+ year-old travellers.
   b. Busy travellers who don't have the time to read guides, reviews, and do their own research when planning a trip.
   c. New travellers who aren't familiar with the usual resources for planning a trip.
   d. Experienced travellers who want local knowledge so they can find "off-the-beaten-path" experiences.
   e. Those comfortable making contact with a guide and paying via the internet.
2. **Concierges**
   a. 20+ year-old local experts.
   b. Locals looking to make some extra money.
   c. Experienced locals excited about sharing their knowledge.
   d. Those comfortable selling their services on the internet.

Potential users we have access to:

1. Ourselves
2. Friends and family who travel
3. Members of online travel forums

Reasons why our team is best for this:

Our team is best suited for this task because we are diverse. Our group is spread between China, Korea, Japan, and the United States. We are well-travelled and understand the desire of the common traveller to experience a foreign location from a richer, more vibrant perspective than just the usual experience offered by a packaged group tour.

Conversely, many of us have lived abroad long enough that we may believe ourselves to be knowledgeable in our new homes. We ourselves want to share those experiences with others in a meaningful way.

Reasons why we'll be able to complete this before term:

We will be able to complete this project because we are aiming to design a "minimum viable product" which includes only the essential features for this application. Any unnecessary features will be stripped from our product specifications. In addition, the idea is based on familiar and proven models like AirBnb and Uber, and the features of the application are standard for many interactive web-based tools. The product idea is straightforward and there is not a high likelihood for unforeseen problems with our design decisions.

Predispositions: What do we know:

1. The "networked" model connecting users with local service providers has worked well for AirBnb/Uber.
2. Most users will have had experience with one of these services, or similar, which makes the concept of our site easy to understand and learn.

3. Travellers who plan to visit a location intending to use a social concierge may need guiding to a choice rather than convincing to use.
4. Travellers will want a trustworthy guide, and will want to feel safe using the service.
5. Concierges want more money, more publicity and more business.
6. Concierges want to know that their clients will be responsible, reputable, and pay on time.

Predispositions: What do we <u>not</u> know:

1. Should this be a web-based app or a mobile application?
2. Is there widespread demand for local concierges?
3. Are there enough concierges to satisfy the demand?
4. What level of service will users want from their concierge?
5. What level of service will concierges want to offer?
6. How often will users use the service?
7. Do concierges have an idea of how much they should charge, or do they need to be given a suggestion?
8. Are there any other services like this already out there, and what is the quality of their usability?
9. What kind of information would both concierges and travellers want to share?
10. What will be the process of connecting a traveller with a concierge?