DH 110
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Assignment 6b: Usability Evaluation / Feedback & design revisions

Using the script and protocol from the previous assignment, we sought out some prospective participants for our usability testing. We ended up gathering results from 5 UCLA undergraduates, all who are new to hiking. The testing was done mostly over Zoom. Here are the responses from our interviewees, organized by question:

<u>**Structured Interviews Part 1**</u>
General Questions
How do you typically discover new hiking trails or locations to explore?
> *Interviewee #1:* TikTok or Youtube
> *Interviewee #2:* Friends or Google search it up
> *Interviewee #3:*
> - Google or Apple maps, read their short instructions on what the hike is
> - Other websites that has pictures of what they look like
>
> *Interviewee #4:* Typically, I would go on Google
> *Interviewee #5:* Usually my friends would share those locations with me, I really go hiking with all my friends. So basically, I get all of those locations from my friends. I barely search those myself on the internet, but sometimes I do by using Google Map and that's it.

Have you ever previously used an app or website to learn about hiking or find hiking trails? If so, which ones?
> *Interviewee #1:* No, doesn't go hiking often/doesn't have a lot of interest in hiking
> *Interviewee #2:* No
> *Interviewee #3:* Nike running app to track hike, but not for finding new trails
> *Interviewee #4:* No, I haven't. I've only used Google to find locations, and I'll go there to see it myself. I'm pretty new to hiking, and Google has always been my gateway into all sorts of stores and locations, and I use the ratings as well as reviews on Google as a sort of guideline. So I've never thought about getting or using another platform.
> *Interviewee #5:* I have never actually used an app nor a website to learn about hiking stuff.

Would an app that contains detailed hiking guides and general beginner hiking tips motivate you to start hiking?
> *Interviewee #1:* Probably not, is more motivated by videos of cool areas/nice views
> *Interviewee #2:* If there was no, bc not an avid hiker
> *Interviewee #3:* Yes
> *Interviewee #4:* Yeah, I think hiking is a great form of exercise and is a great form of cardio, I think hiking sort of relaxes your mind and overall. I think it's a great activity to do in your spare time. so I would love to enroll in a platform that makes it more convenient for me to partake in this activity.

Interviewee #5: I think it definitely would, because to some extent, one of the reasons why I'm only hiking with my friends is because I don't really find myself interested in hiking alone. Doing research on my own about all of those scattered hiking places is confusing. An app that's only for hiking around UCLA will be really helpful for me to, at least, have more interest in hiking.

Structured Interviews Part 2
Hikes Feature Questions

What are your thoughts on how the information is laid out in the detailed hike guide? Is there anything you would change?

Interviewee #1:
- Could add info on parking
- Could add warnings for specific hikes (e.g. bear warning, rockslide warning, snake warning)

Interviewee #2:
- Prefer to understand how it's initially sorted, usually would tell if sorted by recommendation, ratings, etc.

Interviewee #3:
- Layout is clear, aesthetic, naturey, will appeal to people who enjoy hiking
- Symbols and logos are useful and easy to spot
- A lot of introduction information that's necessary and important, for very beginner hikers
- Text can be less dense to read through

Interviewee #4:
- I think the UI is pretty clean. It's pretty straightforward. I think the style is pretty minimalistic overall.
- Good impressions

Interviewee #5:
- I really like how the information is being laid out
- I really like how you can get everything within a page
- Really liked the rating system

Is there any information you think is missing or is unnecessary?

Interviewee #1:
- What to wear/bring section might not be necessary? Could be added in guides section instead
  - Or could make it customizable
- Could add review system where users submit reviews of hikes
  - Isn't sure where the ratings for the hikes are coming from

Interviewee #2:
- Estimated time for one way vs whole duration?
- Would be nice to know why I need different things to bring for different trails (i.e. is there something special about that trail?)

Interviewee #3:
- N/A, all suitable

Interviewee #4:
- All of the information presented to me seems to be essential

- I don't see any information that I consider to be excessive, as I am aware that there are many guidelines that the platform has to follow as well.
  - *Interviewee #5:*
    - More detailed description about whether it's safe, or whether it's suitable for hikers to go hiking on that specific day
      - I don't really know how to differentiate whether it's too hot or cold to go hiking

Guides Feature Questions
What are your thoughts on how the information is laid out in the general hiking guide? Is there anything you would change?
- *Interviewee #1:*
  - Guides are too wordy - make it as simple & easy to digest as possible
    - Same for guide description in preview
    - Thinks that guide description in preview might not be necessary to include & thinks it sounds like its marketing a product rather than explaining/giving short preview to guide content
  - Add more images/visual aspects in guide content
  - Could change icons for guides - give more contrast between the different icons
    - Could make them different colors?
- *Interviewee #2:*
  - Just word dense
  - Make the descriptions on guide page shorter and straightforward
- *Interviewee #3:*
  - Based on first review, a lot of information → good and bad
    - For people in a rush, reduce the text
- *Interviewee #4:*
  - Not really. I think all of them are pretty compact
  - All of the key information that I need is there at a glance. It's pretty accessible.
- *Interviewee #5:*
  - Way too wordy
  - Not convenient for internationals/ non native speakers who want quick access.
    - I feel like I will not have the interest to finish reading all this stuff. There aren't enough images to provide or maintain my interest to finish reading this text.
  - I would say if you guys could delete some of the words or delete some of the information, or try to simplify that will probably be the best solution.

Is there any information you think is missing or is unnecessary?
- *Interviewee #1:*
  - Sort & filter options for guides section might not be necessary
- *Interviewee #2:* N/A
- *Interviewee #3:* All good
- *Interviewee #4:*
  - There nothing that I would remove but at the same time nothing I want to have
- *Interviewee #5:*
  - I feel like they should all be there. But again, it's just too much.

- Maybe get rid of some bullet points

Profile Feature Questions

How do you feel about how the information is laid out in the profiles page?

Interviewee #1: Could combine completed trails & journal (add journal into completed trails option so that users can add notes/pics to hikes they finished)

Interviewee #2:
- I don't know what journal is, I'm assuming it's to take notes on trails

Interviewee #3:
- Journal (personal preference), other apps would say "my journey" or "my history", but also there's a completed trails tab

Interviewee #4:
- I think it's pretty good. I think it's pretty clean. There isn't that much information for me to put in the profile page, so it's pretty normal I'd say.

Interviewee #5:
- I like how the information is laid out
- Likes freedom to customize their own profile

Is there anything you would change or add/take away?

Interviewee #1: N/A

Interviewee #2: N/A

Interviewee #3: For profile, can create a task bar from 0-100 how far user has gone, personal rewarding experience

Interviewee #4: No

Interviewee #5: Add a login as guest feature

General Questions

How difficult did you think it was to navigate the app?

Interviewee #1: Not difficult at all

Interviewee #2: Not hard

Interviewee #3: Not difficult at all

Interviewee #4: It wasn't very difficult like I've said it's pretty straightforward. Everything you'd expect to be there is there.

Interviewee #5: Really easy, app is well-structured and well-designed

How likely are you to use this app to learn about hiking or find hiking trails?

Interviewee #1:
- Somewhat likely
- Would rather use this one app than try to spend a lot of time researching and using many different websites/material
- However, thinks that guides are too wordy, would rather watch short videos/something more engaging

Interviewee #2:
- If I was a hiker and this app held a lot of trails, then yes

Interviewee #3:
- I would use it and recommend to friends

Interviewee #4: I would give this app a shot and use it to hike. It's very useful, provides lots of information and has a lot of utilities.

Interviewee #5: High possibility that I'm gonna use this app for hiking trails. Because again, it was really easy for me to look up the information in the app instead of googling every single part of it

How well do you think this app caters to beginner hikers?

Interviewee #1: Thinks it caters well to beginner hikers, especially because it has guides

Interviewee #2: Pretty good, a lot of beginner guides

Interviewee #3: User friendly, layout is appealing and peaceful, geared towards beginner hikers, they'd enjoy using it too

Interviewee #4: I think as a beginner hiker myself, this seems to be quite accommodating, so I would say that it is pretty friendly towards new hikers.

Interviewee #5: Suitable for beginner hikers because the information is being laid out very specifically

How do you feel about the visual design and overall aesthetics of the app? Does it contribute to a positive user experience?

Interviewee #1:
- Overall, likes the design of the app
  - Likes the green
  - Likes how simple it is

Interviewee #2:
- Overall yes
- Information architecture is laid out well
- Drop shadow on search bar should be more blurred out
- Text, capitalization is inconsistent for titles and subheadings
- These days brands just do "Abc def ghi" vs "Abc Def Ghi"
- The way pages are displayed is inconsistent with visual treatment (icons vs pics vs overlay)

Interviewee #3: Agree

Interviewee #4: Yeah, the color scheme is very natural, very comfortable. The layout is pretty clean overall. It suits the theme of hiking. The size of the fonts are acceptable, I think maybe an option to turn off the size of the font would be nice.

Interviewee #5: Way too many words in the guides section, otherwise well-designed.

Do you have any other feedback for us?

Interviewee #1: No

Interviewee #2:
- Make profile picture a face - was confused and thought maple tree was the name of the app
- Make typography more consistent (big and bold vs big and not bold) and with sizing

Interviewee #3: No

Interviewee #4: No

Interviewee #5: Well-designed, perfect for beginners

[SUMMARY OF FINDINGS]

To start off our interviews, we asked some general questions about the participants' experiences with hiking and hiking apps. We found that most of them don't really use a hiking specific platform to discover new trails or locations to explore, they either search on Google, TikTok, Youtube, or hear from friends. All of them have never used an app or website to learn about hiking or trails as well. When asked if they would use such platform that also contains detailed hike guides, those who are actually interested in hiking said yes. Having an app like this would make it easier for them, as "doing research on my own and all of those scattered hiking places are confusing. An app that's only for hiking around UCLA will be really helpful… to have more interest in hiking." The participants would love to engage in this platform since it would be "more convenient to partake in this activity" as well.

Next, we asked the participants to interact with our prototype and provided some user tasks for them to perform to gain an understanding of the general flow. These tasks included signing up, exploring hikes in the home page, exploring the general hiking guides, and viewing the profile page. We followed up with the participants by asking questions specifically about the hikes, guides, and profiles pages. Through their answers, we were able to gain valuable insight on ways to improve our app.

For the hikes page, there were mostly positive reactions on how the information was laid out and how detailed it was. One small suggestion was to add wildlife warnings (bears, snakes, etc.) and more detail on whether the weather is suitable for hiking (too hot or too cold).

For the guides page, the overall consensus was that the guides were way too dense, making it hard to read, especially for international or non-native speaker users. One possible solution would be to just cut down on the text, and only convey basic information. Another solution would be to break up the text with images or interactive elements.

For the profile page, most of the participants liked how the information was presented, and appreciated the ability to customize the profile section with saved hikes. One participant raised a valid point that the journal was confusing, as it wasn't made clear what it was used for. A solution that another participant suggested that would solve this issue would be to combine the completed hikes section with the journal section, and allow users to optionally add notes and images to their completed hikes.

After the participants interacted with our prototype, we again asked them some general questions concerning their experiences. They all thought that the app was very easy to navigate, as it was well structured and had an appealing layout. This led us to find that they themselves would use this app to discover new hikes as it contains all the information in one platform already, and since it contains the guides, it is very accomodating to beginner hikers.

Concerning the visual design and overall aesthetics of the app, the participants all liked how it is very simple, comfortable, and clean. One concern was the dense wording of the guides, and how text heavy it was. They would've liked to have images or short videos, something more engaging rather than having to read such a long article.

Feedback from class:
- warning/suggestions → warnings

- Icon on top is confusing, take away unless its real time