

Assignment 4b - Understanding the Problem Space for our Project

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DH 110

Context

- Facilitating UCLA students' involvement in natural environment & outdoor recreation opportunities of LA

Actors

- UCLA students
- Outdoor activity clubs at UCLA
- Gear rental organizations/businesses

Issues

- Main issues = difficult to find peers to do outdoor activities with & access gear

Research Techniques & Process


In order to address these challenges, our team found it highly important to research the ways in which we could better cater to the needs and wants of our potential users.

Literature Review

- **“Successful Community Building Using Social Media Platforms”**
 - Need low barrier of entry for new members
 - Important to find new ways to engage users
 - Must have several moderators to help monitor user engagement
- **“Beyond ‘Because It’s There’”**
 - 3 main factors of motivation = social, sensation-seeking, self-image
 - Social factor = strongest predictor of group membership
- **“Creating Access to Outdoor Gear in Your Community”**
 - Ways to access gear = gear libraries, rental and lease options, gear collectives, donations
 - Important factors = storage, maintenance, gear repair, sustainability

Surveys Questions

- The process of generating survey questions involved using ChatGPT.
- We modified our questions to suit the specific needs of UCLA students.
- This approach saved time and greatly facilitated the formatting and brainstorming of questions to ask.



User Experience Survey

Introduction:
Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on your experience with our product/service. Your input is important to us.

Section 1: User Satisfaction

1. On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with our product/service? [1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied]

Section 2: Usability


2. How easy is it to use our product/service? [1 = Very Difficult, 5 = Very Easy]

Section 3: Suggestions

3. Do you have any suggestions for improvement or comments about your experience?


Conclusion:
Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Your feedback is valuable to us and will help us enhance your experience.

This shorter survey focuses on the most critical aspects of user experience and allows for a quicker response. It can be particularly useful for users who may not have much time to spare but still want to provide feedback.

 Regenerate


Interviews - UCLA Students


- Sent a Google survey out to UCLA undergraduates
- Majority of respondents engage in outdoor activity ranging from either a couple times a week to once a month
- Never used an app or platform for finding outdoor activity partners or renting outdoor gear
- 80% of our interviewees communicate through group chats to do so
- Find a different resource for gear rentals amongst students, all while allowing them to enjoy recreational activities with peers.
- Fieldwork observations → more understanding of current process students undergo



Outdoor Recreation and Natural Ecologies Engagement

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback will help us understand how to enable undergraduate students at UCLA to engage with the natural ecologies, socialize, and facilitate gear rental in Los Angeles. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts and experiences. ***You must be a current UCLA undergraduate student to participate in this survey.***

islee0220@g.ucla.edu [Switch account](#) 

 Not shared

What types of outdoor activities do you enjoy, and how frequently do you participate in them?

Your answer

Have you ever used an app or platform for finding outdoor activity partners or renting outdoor gear? If yes, please specify which ones.

Your answer

How do you prefer to find/connect with potential outdoor activity communities? (Select all that apply)

☐ In app messaging

☐ Group chats

☐ User profiles with activity preferences

☐ Matchmaking algorithms based on interests

☐ Other: _____

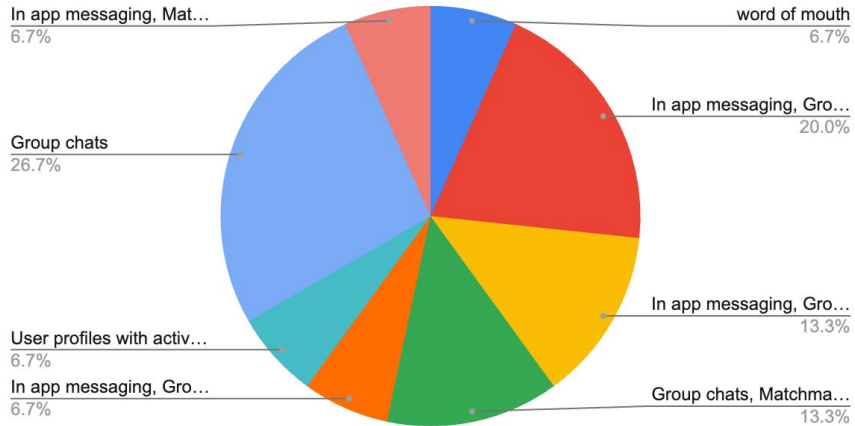
Have you ever rented outdoor gear/equipment through an app? If you own outdoor gear/equipment, would you be willing to loan your equipment to another student through an app?

Your answer

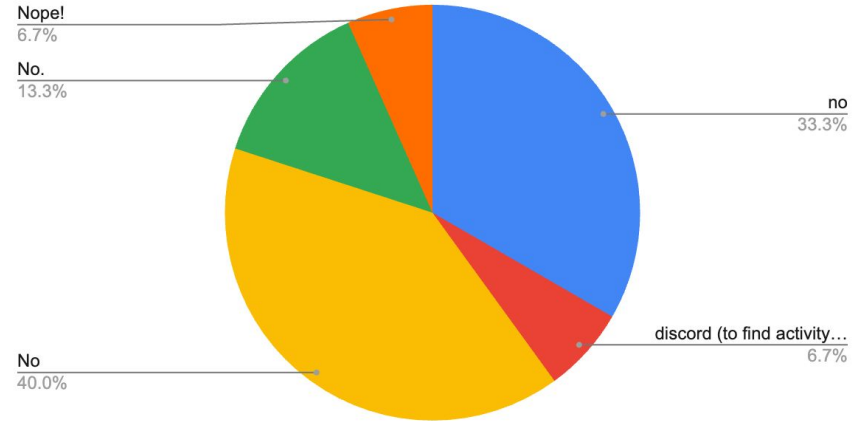
[Submit](#) [Clear form](#)

Survey Data

Count of How do you prefer to find/connect with potential outdoor activity communities? (Select all that apply)

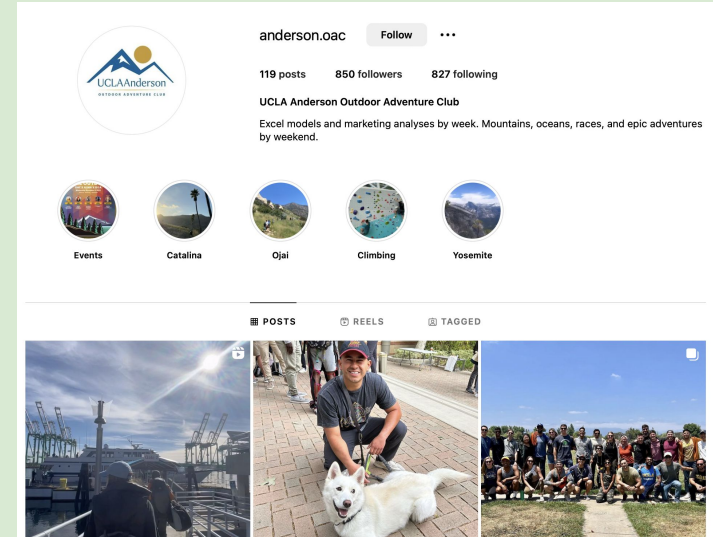


Count of Have you ever used an app or platform for finding outdoor activity partners or renting outdoor gear? If yes, plea...



Interviews - UCLA Organizations

- Sent a list of questions to UCLA organizations → response from Outdoor Adventure Club
- They don't rent/organize outdoor gear, they have some and members are able to borrow for club activities.
- Don't partner with any other orgs for gear rental, but often partner up with other student clubs.
- Don't provide members with additional resources
 - Have members sign a waiver when necessary



Fieldwork

- [UCLA Rec/John Wooden Center](#)

Equipment (listed alphabetically)	Equipment notes	Rental Fees			Replacement Cost for Destroyed/ Stolen/Lost Equipment
		1-4 days (e.g., Friday to Tuesday)	5-8 days (e.g., Thursday to Friday)	Break*	
Backpack	70-85 liters	\$20	\$28	\$44	\$350
Bear Can	3-gallon bin to keep food from wildlife	\$5	\$7	\$11	\$100
Cookset	Pot, skillet/lid, spatula, spoon, hot pad, cutting board	\$10	\$14	\$22	\$80
Cooler	33 quart	\$10	\$14	\$22	\$60
Ground Pad	Required in addition to sleeping bag for maximum warmth	\$8	\$11	\$18	\$60
Headlamp	Batteries *not* included; three AAAs required	\$8	\$11	\$18	\$40
Kettle	1 quart	\$8	\$11	\$18	\$40
Sleeping Bag (0°)	Mummy shape, warmest	\$18	\$25	\$40	\$150
Sleeping Bag (20°)	Mummy shape, warm	\$18	\$25	\$40	\$150
Snowshoes	MSR Evo	\$15	\$21	\$33	\$150
Tarp	Water resistant or water proof	\$8	\$11	\$18	\$20
Tent (2 person)	ALPS Lynx 2	\$15	\$21	\$33	\$160

- [REI](#)
 - Closest one available for rentals is in Tustin

Rental Center

The Rental Center is currently closed until further notice. Rentals are not available while closed. This webpage will be updated with the planned reopening date and hours of operation as soon as that information is available.

Hours

TEMPORARILY CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Location

Northwestern corner of the Wooden Center

The Outdoor Adventures Rental Center offers a variety of outdoor equipment available for Members of UCLA Recreation to rent. For our selection of gear and prices, please see our [pricing sheet](#).

The Rental Center is located in the northwestern corner of the Wooden Center. During business hours, it may be accessed via the main entrance to the Wooden Center.

2131 John Wooden Center
Los Angeles, CA 90095

310.206.7219

REI Co-op Rentals: Tustin

SEARCH OUR STORE

Q

CATEGORIES

All Categories

Snowshoes

Cycling Gear

Climbing Gear

Camping & Hiking Gear

Bear Canisters

SNOWSHOES

CAMPING & HIKING GEAR

CYCLING GEAR

BEAR CANISTERS

CLIMBING GEAR

Conclusion

- Many students are actively engaged in outdoor activities through existing UCLA outdoor interest clubs and groups
- Most clubs lack centralized apps for finding outdoor activity partners or renting gear, or only allow access to club members
- Some clubs partner with others to support each other's outdoor activities
- Most direct way to engage UCLA undergrads with outdoor recreational activities = provide access to groups and communities to do these activities with
- Moving forward -> **focusing on finding & building groups to engage in outdoor activities with**
 - Since both UCLA Recreation and REI Santa Monica are unavailable for rentals & most students were unwilling to rent out their own equipment
 - Makes our process more consistent when addressing design problems and corresponding solutions in the future

Competitor Analysis

In order to better understand the landscape of our project and strategize our approach to solving the problem of engaging UCLA students with the outdoors, we analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of several competitors: Meetup, AllTrails, iNaturalist, and Outdoor Project.

Competitor Analysis: *Meetup*

Social media platform that allows users to find and join groups related to their personal interests, as well as host events and activities.

Pros:

- Easy to find events, groups, interests
 - Filtered by location, distance, and category
- Social groups, career groups, and creative groups
- User reviews and ratings for events

Cons:

- Membership fees to organize events and create groups
- Organizers play the most important role in a group, without organizers the group falls apart
- Inconsistencies in event attendance

Competitor Analysis: AllTrails

Mobile app used for trail maps, including crowdsourced images, reviews, and difficulty ratings.

Pros:

- Huge database of trails, makes it easy for beginners to find a manageable trail
- Detailed data about trails (elevation, difficulty, distance, routes, reviews)
- Users can create custom trails for their own adventures

Cons:

- Limited to Hiking
- Lack Gear Rentals
- Advanced features (i.e. offline maps) require a subscription
- The platform's trail database may have limitations in terms of global/ local coverage.

Competitor Analysis: iNaturalist

It's a platform in the naturalist and outdoor recreation space. It offers online community for outdoor enthusiasts, focusing on environmental education and fostering a love for nature.

Pros:

- Facilitates connections and group formation for outdoor enthusiasts.
- Their Education Hub offers extensive resources on nature and sustainability.
- Provides access to outdoor equipment through a network of providers.

Cons:

- May not cater specifically to UCLA or Southern California.
- Potential for misclassification since it relies on user-generated content
- Must be connected to internet to access core features (may not be practical when out in nature)

Competitor Analysis: outdoor project

This platform offers information on outdoor activities and destinations. It provides details about outdoor adventures, such as hiking, biking, climbing.

Pros:

- Provides information and guides for a wide range of outdoor activities.
- Contains User-Generated Content, it allows users to contribute their own adventure reports, photos, and recommendations.
- Includes maps and navigation tools for trip planning and on-trail use.
- Offers a user-friendly app for convenient access to outdoor information.

Cons

- It may not have specific features catering to a single campus (club, campus popup events) such as UCLA or a highly localized user base.
- May Not Include Gear Rentals: The platform might not address the gear rental needs of students.
- Existing Rental facilities in UCLA.