

PERSONA 1: Sarah the Student

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age: 20
- Occupation: 2nd year Computer Science student, part-time barista
- Location: Student accommodation, 15-minute walk to campus
- Tech Comfort: High
- Living Situation: Shared flat with 3 other students
- Income Level: £8,000/year student loan + £4,000 part-time work

BACKGROUND

Sarah is an international student from Spain studying Computer Science at Roehampton. She works 15 hours per week at a local coffee shop to supplement her student loan. Money is always tight, especially after paying rent. She's tech-savvy and comfortable using apps for everything from banking to food delivery, but she feels isolated and hasn't built a strong friend network yet.

GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Save money on expensive textbooks and equipment (£200+ per semester)
- Find study partners for difficult modules like Algorithms and Statistics
- Meet other students and build a social network
- Access items needed occasionally (toolkit for flat repairs, camping gear)
- Feel part of a community rather than isolated

FRUSTRATIONS & PAIN POINTS

- Textbooks cost more than she can afford, but she needs them to succeed
- Doesn't know anyone in her accommodation building despite living there 6 months
- Existing platforms like Facebook Marketplace feel unsafe for meeting strangers
- Course-required software licenses are expensive
- Feels embarrassed to ask for help from classmates she barely knows

TECH USAGE

- Devices: iPhone 12, Lenovo laptop
- Apps Used Daily: WhatsApp, Instagram, Canvas (LMS), Spotify, Deliveroo
- Online Behavior: Checks phone 50+ times/day, prefers apps to websites, expects instant responses, watches YouTube tutorials

SPECIFIC NEEDS FROM OUR PLATFORM

- Find textbooks by ISBN or course code
- Filter by distance (within walking/bus distance)

- See verified student status for safety
- Quick in-app messaging to arrange meetups
- Save favorite users/listings
- Ratings visible to build trust

USER JOURNEY WITH OUR PLATFORM

Discovery

"Sarah sees a poster in the library advertising the platform with a QR code. She scans it while waiting for her friend."

Sign-up

"Signs up with university email, gets instant verification. Creates profile mentioning she studies Computer Science, has first-year textbooks to share, and is looking for study partners and items to borrow."

First Use

"Immediately searches 'statistics textbook' - needs it by next week for exam prep. Finds one listed by Marcus, a 3rd year student 0.8km away. Sends request: 'Hi! Need this for stats exam revision next month. Can pick up anytime this week!'"

Marcus accepts within 2 hours. They arrange to meet at the library. Exchange goes smoothly.

Regular Use

After successful exchange, Sarah:

- Lists her 3 first-year CS textbooks
- Posts offering Spanish conversation practice
- Browses weekly for items she needs
- Joins as study buddy for other CS students
- Earns points for helping others
- Feels more connected to university community

Three Months Later

Sarah has borrowed 5 items, lent 7, done 3 tutoring sessions, and made 2 new friends through the platform. She checks it every few days and feels much more part of the community.

QUOTES

"I hate buying textbooks I'll use for 12 weeks then never look at again. It's such a waste of money and space!"

"I wish I knew people in my building. We all just pass each other in the corridor without speaking."

"I'm good at Spanish and could teach someone, but I don't know how to find people who want to learn."

PERSONA 2: David the Retired Handyman

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age: 67
- Occupation: Retired carpenter
- Location: Suburban neighborhood near the university
- Tech Comfort: Medium
- Living Situation: Owns a family home, lives with spouse
- Income Level: State pension + small private pension

BACKGROUND

David is a retired carpenter who spent over 40 years working in construction and home renovation. Since retiring, he has struggled with the sudden lack of routine and social interaction he once had through work. Many of his practical skills are no longer used day-to-day, and while he enjoys helping people, he finds it difficult to connect with younger neighbors in an increasingly digital community.

GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Share practical skills such as basic carpentry, furniture repair, and DIY maintenance
- Stay mentally and physically active after retirement
- Feel useful and valued by the local community
- Meet people outside his immediate age group
- Pass on skills and experience to younger generations

FRUSTRATIONS & PAIN POINTS

- Feels isolated since retiring and no longer seeing colleagues daily
- Doesn't know how to offer help without feeling like he is "getting in the way"
- Community groups he used to attend have shut down or moved online
- Many platforms feel too complicated or not designed for older users
- Finds it awkward to advertise his skills informally to strangers

TECH USAGE

- Devices: Android smartphone, Windows desktop PC
- Apps Used: WhatsApp, Facebook, Google Maps, YouTube
- Online Behavior: Uses phone daily but prefers simple, clear interfaces; watches YouTube tutorials; avoids complex sign-up processes

SPECIFIC NEEDS FROM OUR PLATFORM

- Simple way to list skills he can offer (eg. small repairs, advice, mentoring)
- Clear explanations of how exchanges work (skills-for-skills, no money)
- Trust indicators such as verified users and ratings
- Ability to set boundaries (availability, types of help offered)
- Messaging that feels safe and straightforward

USER JOURNEY WITH OUR PLATFORM

Discovery

“David hears about the platform from a leaflet at the local community centre advertising skill sharing and neighbourhood support.”

Sign-up

“He signs up using his email address and completes a short profile listing his background in carpentry and the kinds of help he can offer.”

First Use

“He browses requests and finds a student asking for help fixing a loose desk and learning basic tool safety. He sends a friendly message offering help.”

Regular Use

“After a positive first experience, David:

- Lists additional skills like shelving installation and furniture repair
- Starts offering short DIY advice sessions
- Gains confidence using the platform
- Receives positive ratings that encourage him to stay active”

Three Months Later

David has helped several students and young families, feels more socially connected, and enjoys having a renewed sense of purpose through sharing his skills.

QUOTES

“I’ve got decades of experience, but no one really knows what I can help with anymore.”

“I don’t want money. I just want to feel useful and keep busy.”

PERSONA 3: Maya the Working Parent

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age: 35
- Occupation: Marketing executive, full-time
- Location: Residential area close to primary school
- Tech Comfort: High
- Living Situation: Lives with partner and two children (ages 3 and 6)
- Income Level: Dual-income household, tightly budgeted

BACKGROUND

Maya is a full-time working mother juggling her job, childcare, and household responsibilities. Her schedule is tightly packed, leaving little time for socializing or community involvement. She has many useful skills - from professional expertise to parenting knowledge - but struggles to find time-efficient ways to connect with others or exchange help without financial cost.

GOALS & MOTIVATIONS

- Exchange skills with other parents (childcare swaps, school run help)
- Share professional skills like CV advice, social media help, or marketing basics
- Reduce costs by trading skills instead of paying for services
- Build a trusted local support network
- Model community-minded behavior for her children

FRUSTRATIONS & PAIN POINTS

- Limited time to organize help or meet new people
- Paying for services that could be exchanged informally feels wasteful
- Doesn't know other parents outside her immediate circle
- Existing platforms are cluttered and time-consuming
- Trust and safety are major concerns when involving children

TECH USAGE

- Devices: iPhone, MacBook laptop
- Apps Used Daily: WhatsApp, Google Calendar, Instagram, Slack, Deliveroo
- Online Behavior: Uses phone in short bursts; prefers fast, efficient interactions; abandons apps that take too long to understand

SPECIFIC NEEDS FROM OUR PLATFORM

- Quick posting of skill requests or offers
- Clear visibility of who is local and available
- Strong trust signals (verified users, reviews)
- Ability to coordinate schedules easily
- Private, secure messaging

USER JOURNEY WITH OUR PLATFORM

Discovery

“Maya hears about the platform through a school WhatsApp group discussing skill-sharing among parents.”

Sign-up

“She signs up quickly using email, selects interests such as childcare swaps and professional skills, and sets availability preferences.”

First Use

“She posts a request for occasional school pickup help and offers CV review support in exchange.”

Regular Use

“After successful exchanges, Maya:

- Regularly checks the platform for local skill swaps
- Builds trust with a small group of parents
- Uses the platform as a go-to support system
- Feels less pressure managing work and family alone”

Three Months Later

Maya has established a small, reliable community network, reduced costs, and feels more confident balancing work and parenting responsibilities.

QUOTES

“I don’t need more apps - I need something that actually saves me time.”

“If we all shared what we’re good at, life would be so much easier.”