Exploration & Connection

(un)travel

Ben Gregory, Cooper Reed,
Michelle Huang, Natasha Goh

How can we use technology to **promote exploration/engagement with physical places** and **connect people together?**

Who do we want to hear from?

- Extreme Users
    - Low - **hermits -** low social media/tech
    - Average - **social media user -** access to data
    - High
        - **Pokemon Go / Geocachers,** listen to exploration suggestions
        - **digital community players** like discord, reddit
        - Exploration extreme
            - Adventurous & suggestible
- Professionals / Experts
    - **Google Local Guides**
    - Business owners(?) / People who would benefit

What do we want to hear?

Quarantine experience

Exploration & Engagement

Gamification, Motivation, Rewards

Community Connection & Contribution

Questions We Asked

Why do you like to try new things, and how?

Walk me through the last time you connected with friends.

Tell me about your experience with augmented reality.

Tell me about your favorite game.

Would you consider yourself adventurous?

How has your quarantine experience been? What's missing?

What's an urge that no existing app satisfies?

How do you find out about new places?

Tell me about the last time you travelled.

Is it important to you that something is popular? Unpopular?

How do your digital relationships compare with in-person ones?

Interview Results

"Travelling with family was stressful since we were always trying to hit all the tourist spots."

– KW
tech savvy,
Bay Area new grad

"I especially like it when...you have sort of an experience that not many people have because you went out and you were curious and explored."

– KB

artsy gamer,
state college student

"I felt like I knew [Bangkok] well, but then, recently I found a very good [restaurant] hiding in a corner. It had been open for 10 years already, but I didn't realize it was there."

– AN

*Thailand resident,
avid foodie,
competitive gamer*

"Do you want utility, safety, community or fun? Better get downloading, because you'll never find those all in the same app."

– MR

Pokémon Go enthusiast,
Google local guide,
travel photographer

"I haven't really tried to explore new places recently. It's just philosophically intimidating."

– PF

*non-tech savvy,
early 30s professional,
LA urban explorer*

"I'm a completionist...Honestly, completing the rings in Apple Fitness is probably the main reason I exercise."

- EM

moderate tech user,
collector hobbyist,
Pokémon Go enthusiast

Empathy Maps

SAY

"I like to go for as many things as I can when I'm traveling"

"I have a tendency to move on from trends that have already crested."

"Travelling with family was stressful since we were always trying to hit all the tourist spot.s"

"You should always be able to discover something new and completely different."

"I'll find a place I like and not want to explore as much"

"Not a Gamer" (despite playing Pokemon Go for up to an hour daily)

"I am someone who believes winning is fun and losing is not fun"

"If a place has less than 4 stars on Yelp, I won't even consider it."

"I need not just NOT TripAdvisor, but ANTI-TripAdvisor"

"I enjoy adventure in moderation"

"Sometimes you just prefer chatting at home because you are lazy"

"Even trailblazers shouldn't have to start with a blank slate"

THINK

Google recs are not personal, local guides have varied taste & tastes

"Easter eggs" are rewarding, in games and in real life

Pokemon Go is gimmicky, difficult for sustained effort and ultimately unrewarding

It's important to be able to play a game competitively

Considers gamers to be someone who owns a console or "really intense" about mobile gaming

It's not safe to travel much during quarantine

Being stuck in one place for the rest of your life is terrible

A blank slate is intimidating, an entry questionnaire should establish preferences and recommend

Not sure if he will live in Bay Area forever so wants to see things while here.

There are established places to visit that are safe because he knows the precautions owners take.

Winning is fun and important, and so is improving always

Frustrated by how unconstructed most exploration apps feel

DO

Meeting people for 1:1 walks	Will make a note of recommendations and commit to memory (girlfriend keep pins in map)	**Finds out about new places from internet "research"**	Got bored of simply collecting Pokemon, ended up exploring cities instead
Works out a lot because of "completionism" with Apple Fitness Rings	Seeks out new / interesting places when she has time	Is not motivated to go out unless strictly necessary	**Search for friends and items of interest near her (only so much time to explore)**
Took long bike ride meandering into downtown LA; found two new taco spots	**Focuses on getting from point A to B when pressed for time**	Keeps an eye out when at the shopping mall for new restaurants	Has only been grocery shopping during quarantine

FEEL

Didn't see himself catching up to all the other people who already played Pokemon Go	**Very "check the box" kind of person with responding to challenges**	Believes mental framework of the world isn't expanding because of being in one place	Must have robust safeguards against stalking
Misses the "loose" connections of running into people	In-person interactions are more spontaneous	**Needs better return on effort at all stages of involvement (more and better rewards)**	Privacy concerns with snap map - ie apps constantly tracking your location in the background
Worried about risks of going to new places/being tracked - app must have robust safeguards against stalking	Did not want to explore as much during covid to avoid seeing people (and getting potentially infected)	People have adapted to covid times, (e.g. livestreamed concerts)	**Shocked but also happy when came across a new hidden restaurant**

Needs ○ Insights ○ Analysis

[Insight]
Once people get comfortable in an area, they stop exploring

[Need]
A way to make exploring new areas feel comfortable

" I feel terrible that I've mainly been in one place for most of my life... I feel like my mental framework of the world isn't expanding.

[Insight]

People prefer recommendations from close friends and family

[Need]

A way to create trust networks and relationships with online reviewers

" If a place has less than 4 stars on Yelp, I won't even consider it.

[Insight]
People are concerned with their location data being collected

[Need]
Confidence that they are exploring safely and not being tracked without consent.

"

[I] deleted Snapchat after I found out they were tracking my location even when the app wasn't open - that's so creepy.

[Insight]
People vary in how they like to explore (or not.)

[Need]
Ability to balance efficiency vs entertainment when discovering new places.

> " I enjoy adventure in moderation.

> " It's tough to choose between new and completely different or new and exactly the same.

[Insight]

Once a trend has been established, new users find it hard to gain a foothold among more advanced users.

[Need]

Ability to jump in and out of discovering without feeling pressure to keep up with others.

" I have a tendency to move on from trends that have already crested.

" Square one is terrible on any platform - on most, square 2 and 3 too.

[Insight]

Despite broad appeal, no two users will use this platform with the same priorities, concerns, histories, or preferences.

[Need]

Users should be able to set strong preferences so that this tool suits their needs/use cases.

> " Some days I'm an explorer and an extrovert, wanting to join a movement and raise our voices together. Some days I just wanna eat, and there better not be a crowd.

Summary

People need...

- A trustworthy way to make exploring new areas feel comfortable
- A personable way to create connection with online reviewers
- Confidence in the safety of themselves and their data
- Ability to balance efficiency vs. entertainment when discovering new places
- Ability to jump in and out of discovering without feeling pressure to keep up with others
- A platform with a universal language of usefulness, fun, and trust

Questions?