

# Finding Volunteer Opportunities

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# Executive Summary

The objective of this study is to help volunteers find opportunities that fit their interests, that have the kind of impact they want, and that are positive, worthwhile experiences. Our research team seeks to understand the behaviors of volunteers, including motivations and ulterior motives, how they find the activities, how time requirements factor into the scenario and what role technology plays.

We will use the findings to recommend improvements on how organizations attract future volunteers. We hope to advise them on how to streamline the process of signing up, how to provide information on specific activities, and how to appeal to high quality volunteers. We also want to help volunteers find engaging experiences.

We began our study with user observations. We recruited four participants to demonstrate how they would search for volunteer work online. We asked each participant to find three volunteer events for which they would want to sign up. We recorded our observations in notebooks. Observation notes included: actions, comments, environments, and difficulties.

After we completed the observations, we used our notes to create an affinity diagram. We then organized these notes based on similar content, and found trends in our observations. These trends describe the thought processes of our users as they look for volunteer opportunities. We then grouped the trends into categories that corresponded with a phase of the participants' searches. The users started by brainstorming search methods. They then began the research process and when they found an opportunity that sparked their interest they took the next step to investigate further before signing up.

The search methods consisted of how the users brainstormed search terms and what device they used to search. For instance, one observed user stated that she would like to attend more marketing events, feed the homeless or have an opportunity to give back to the Raleigh community. The research process shows how the users browsed for the concepts they created during the search methods phase, such as the search terms used or how users filtered the results. Once the users expressed an interest in volunteer opportunities, they then entered the phase we called taking the next step. This phase included a more linear process of signing up for the opportunity and fitting it into their schedule. We theorized that most users will go through a similar process when looking for volunteer work online.

Based on the observation findings, we wanted to explore what motivates people to volunteer. We conducted face-to-face interviews to find more information about why individuals were interested in the opportunities for which signed up. We also wanted to assess if social media influences the activation threshold for users; we wondered if people would be more likely to volunteer if they see others on social media volunteering. We investigated these themes further by conducting in-depth interviews with users.

In the interviews, we noted several themes:

- Users sometimes volunteer for reasons unrelated to supporting a cause.
- Time requirements and scheduling concerns factor into users' interest in volunteer activities.
- Users rely on various technologies to find volunteer opportunities.

Most of the volunteers we interviewed are motivated, not by the goals organization itself; instead they are motivated by their interests and emotional responses to the opportunity. Some other reasons we received were: they were more interested in receiving job experience; they had a desire to aid pets; and they wanted to feel a part of a community by helping a credible organization.

During the interviews, all interviewees explained their concerns about the time requirements of volunteering. One interviewee mentioned that she shies away from large time commitments. Participants also said that they tended to volunteer if the opportunity was something they felt strongly about. Additionally, several volunteers stated they were willing to devote more time to volunteering if they learned skills for personal growth in return.

After analyzing the observations, we had felt that technology played a larger role in finding volunteer opportunities. However, the findings from our interviews suggest that technology may play a smaller role than we hypothesized. Technology did not appear to be the main tool for signing up for or finding opportunities; only two of the four interviewees said they use technology to find opportunities.

Based on the findings from our field observations and interviews, we felt that our research could benefit from further analysis of a broader view of our users. We distributed a survey that let us gather a wider view of why people volunteer, what motivates them, and how often they are willing to participate in volunteer activities.

We tested two hypotheses with this interview data. The first hypothesis was that participants would be more likely to volunteer for opportunities that matched their interests. The second hypothesis was that users would be more likely to volunteer for opportunities that were presented in more detail. We performed statistical analyses on the survey data, and we found that none of our results were significant, so we concluded that neither of our hypotheses can be accepted.

The qualitative data that we gathered points to six design recommendations for organizations trying to attract more and higher quality volunteers:

Design Recommendations	
1	Place Opportunity Details Up Front in the Information Architecture
2	Build Scheduling and Calendaring into your volunteer sign up interface
3	Advertise other benefits to volunteers (skills to learn, reasons volunteering with make a difference)
4	Offer Flexible hours for opportunities
5	Have Social Presence so people can tell their friends about their volunteer experiences
6	Email Marketing represents an easy, but only mildly effective way to attract volunteers

## I. Introduction

A number of studies note a decline in the number of volunteers in the last decade (Painter and Paxton 2014, Hooghe and Stolle 2005). Not only have the numbers decreased, but those that do participate are more likely to donate money rather than donate their time to an organization's cause. Volunteers who only donate money tend to add less total value to the organization they support. (Painter and Paxton, 2014). Currently, users seeking volunteer opportunities can find details on organizations' websites, but not all users have a specific organization in mind. Alternatively, users can search on third party sites that provide databases of organizations such as VolunteerMatch.org or AllForGood.org. However, the databases do not incorporate filters that allow users to sort results based on factors important to the users, such as their interests, schedules, or skills. The output of information provided is overwhelming. Locating worthwhile volunteer opportunities using these databases is time consuming and therefore discouraging to users willing to volunteer their time and efforts (Al-Ani Harmon, and Volda 2012). Even after finding a potential opportunity, committing to volunteer depends on the user's schedule, which can be hard to align with the opportunity, and their ability to enroll in the activity, which is often difficult to navigate (Kane and Klasnja 2009).

Organizations need to commit considerable resources in order to make a participant's experience worthwhile for both parties (Chen and Wang 2010). They must consider the diverse factors that are important to users: acquiring and maintaining adequate technology, the ethics surrounding security and legalities, the structure of responsibility and authority, scheduling, maintaining a sense of community, and saying "thank you" (Butgereit 2011). As Bernstein writes, there seem to be patterns to volunteers that organizations can use to compel them to effective action (2015). Our study should help us to develop recommendations for organizations looking to make effective use of their time and money when they recruit volunteers.

When a volunteer opportunity is a success, everyone involved benefits: those in need receive adequate assistance, the organizations receive valuable support, and the volunteers receive positive experiences by giving back to their communities. However, every successful opportunity begins when an individual finds a cause for which they feel passionate and are able to contribute (Butgereit 2011, Chen and Wang 2010). Although the Internet provides

seemingly endless resources for finding volunteer opportunities, methods for finding an opportunity that matches an individual's interests and schedule are not common. Therefore, the objective of our study is to better understand what users are looking for out of opportunities, how current technology is used in researching volunteer opportunities, and how these findings could help organizations find volunteers to help support their missions.

The goal of this study is to understand how volunteers find opportunities. The primary target users are individuals of any age, demographic, or socioeconomic status with an interest in volunteering. The secondary target users are the organizations in need of volunteers. We first conducted four observations to understanding the process of finding opportunities. We analyzed these observations by creating an affinity diagram and identifying major themes. Next we interviewed four participants who had experience volunteering. We transcribed and analyzed these interviews with open coding. Finally we distributed a survey that tested two hypotheses. The first is that participants would be more likely to volunteer for opportunities that matched their interests. The second hypothesis was that users would be more likely to volunteer for opportunities that were presented in more detail. We performed a statistical analysis on that survey. In the following sections, we will present the methods, analysis, and findings from our observations, interviews, and surveys.

## II. Methods

### Observations

To better understand how potential and current volunteers find new opportunities, we recruited participants who stated they have an interest in volunteering and that they have volunteered in the last two years. For this qualitative study, we began observing participants as they located three volunteer opportunities that fit their interests, have the kind of impact they want, and are positive, worthwhile experiences. We placed field notes for each observation into an affinity diagram.

### Recruitment

We recruited participants by asking family or friends if they have an interest in volunteering. We screened the interested participants by asking if they had interest in volunteering and only proceeded with the observations if they did. We also asked if they have volunteered in the last six months to get an idea for how frequent they volunteer. The individuals were then asked if they were willing to participate in the observation.

Each observer gave a brief introduction to the study. We explained the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) and answered any questions. All participants understood the expectations and provided written consent to participate in the observation.

### Participants

The participant group was made up of four individuals with the following demographics; One male and three females; two were located in Chicago, IL, one in Raleigh, NC, and one in Tucson, AZ. The participants ranged from 26 - 42 years of age.

We conducted four independent observations at various times of the day. Participants performed their tasks without interruption from the researcher. Three of the interviews were conducted in the participants' home while one was conducted at a coffee shop.

Participant	Location	Sex	Age	Time of Day
Observation 1	Starbucks, Tucson, AZ	Female	42	Early Evening
Observation 2	Living Room, Raleigh, NC	Female	26	Late Evening
Observation 3	Living Room, Chicago, IL	Female	30	Afternoon
Observation 4	Living Room, Chicago, IL	Male	31	Early Evening

## Procedure

We asked the participants to find three volunteer opportunities that interested them. The participants could use any method they would normally use. Each observer used a pen and a notebook to record details of the observation and later typed up all raw data. The observations lasted an average of 30 minutes.

## Analysis

After recording the observation field notes onto sticky notes in Stormboard, we moved similar sticky notes together to create 15 groups. We then labeled each group, which determined the common themes of our volunteer search observations. We were then able to group those themes into three larger categories, "Search Methods", "Research process", and "Taking the next step", as well as pain points encountered during each category. The categories that emerged outline the overall process of searching for volunteer opportunities. In the following section, we describe each category, and provide examples from the observations.

## Search Methods

Location based searches
• She enters: arts, within 5 miles of 85743
• searches "soup kitchen opportunities zip codes"
• fills in information in the forms to narrow her search results for "Volunteer work in Raleigh, NC"
• searches "Roscoe Village volunteer"
• searches north center chicago volunteer
• She searches "read with me" and a zip code
• Search term: volunteer chicago
• searches animal shelters zipcode
• She does a search from www.google.com to search the term "volunteering in tucson"
• She types in "tucson volunteer opportunities"
• searched animal shelters volunteer chicago
• searches list of children's charities in Chicago

Devices
• User opens computer then launches Chrome.
• user puts iPad on sleep mode
• The Siri function on her iPad led her to the website idealist.org
• user presses and holds the iPad home button down to talk to the "Siri" voice applicaiton
• Google is the app's homepage
• She open google chrome app on the iPad.
• user uses iPad instead
• user sits on couch turns on laptop, laptop is doing an automatic update.
• uses cell phone to text asking the name of organization that volunteers coats
• Laptop
• she gets her phone to check emergency contact information that is asked for in the form
• She goes into the other room and returns with a laptop in response to the task
• User excuses her old laptop

Pain Points – logging in
• says "I don't know what I want to do"
• She says, "that is annoying", but continues to log-in
• She subvocalizes "I might actually have one"
• she says "maybe I won't log in"
• She says "I don't know if Whiskey [her dog] would actually be go..."
• says "mmmm, this website sucks"
• she says "Oh I have to add a resume. I hadn't looked at that in a ..."
• she says "I thought I had signed up on here before, but ..."

Organizations
• site "greatnonprofits.org" gives over 1,200 nonprofits
• she searches in her browser bar for "planned parenthood chicago"
• she clicks back to Chicago Cares; clicks volunteers
• She searcher in browser bar for Henderson elementary school
• she goes back to Chicago Cares
• She searches in her browser bar for "Paws Chicago Volunteering"
• She finds Volunteer Center (www.volunteersoaz.org) and clicks the link
• clicks on "Mad Scientists at Henderson"
• taps on a link titled "Canines for Therapy. A comprehensive training program for people and their dogs".
• Searches North Center Chamber of commerce
• She sees that tucson.craigslist.org is on the results.
• She says " Henderson elementary school"
• she enters marrillacstvincent.org

Past experience/Memories
• She has not done any volunteer work in the past six months
• user had interest in volunteering in the past.
• User says that she has volunteered in the last six months
• User has little experience searching for volunteer work on her own. Is usually invited.
• User answers that she has interest in volunteering
• User says that she is not sure if she volunteered in the last six months
• She recalls a similar experience with an international exchange program
• User answers that she has interest in volunteering
• user asks "May I use the volunteer work that I have already signed up for as my third option?"



# Research Process

<div><div>Browsing</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>She scrolled right past the paid listings returned</li><li>browses through the various options available on the site</li><li>she scrolls the table</li><li>She scrolls back up the page clicks on home.</li><li>she scrolls the time/date form</li><li>She scrolls the table of opportunities</li><li>taps on the link</li><li>She scrolls the page</li><li>scrolls quickly through the site without reading each thing</li><li>She scrolls the opportunities</li><li>She scrolls the page</li><li>finds first opportunity</li><li>She then scrolls down the page.</li><li>She reads through the results, then clicks on page 2</li><li>She then starts scrolling down the page.</li><li>she scrolls the calendar</li><li>browses through a list of potential opportunities.</li><li>Then she scrolls all the way to the top and selects Tucson Volunteer Opportunities (www.volunteermatch.org)</li><li>Continues to browse through options, nothing seems to interest her</li><li>skims the details of the program.</li><li>She scrolls down the page. This time finding buttons for different categories of volunteering and clicks on "Education".</li><li>Her search returned no results. She then clicks on events from the navigation.</li><li>she scrolls the page</li><li>She scrolls down the page until seeing "Find a Volunteer Opportunity!" search</li><li>She clicks the link, reads a few, laughs and hits the back button.</li><li>As she scrolls down page 2, she finds one "Are you and your pet certified to make visits?"</li><li>she browses through the first page of results and clicked on a link which led her to www.volunteermatch.org</li><li>reads description of the organization out loud after skimming the page and looking at the photos posted.</li></ul></div></div>	
<div><div>Searching</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>searches volunteering for the elderly zipcode</li><li>User opens a web browser (Firefox) she uses the browser's search bar to search the term "volunteering in ch.</li><li>Google/search engine</li><li>user said "Siri, find me volunteer opportunities"</li><li>searches "worthwhile charities to donate to" and says "It's like volunteering for my money"</li><li>She taps on the search bar and types "volunteers". then presses the search button.</li><li>She goes back to google.com</li><li>continues to search for more volunteer results</li><li>clicks search for volunteer opportunities</li></ul></div></div>	<div><div>filtering/ Search Tools</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Map of shelters in area</li><li>She cleared the category of education to see all opportunities.</li><li>she filters availability to weekends and afternoons</li><li>she filters the table of opportunities to show only weekends and evenings</li><li>She clicks on pet therapy</li><li>all orgs on site have 4-5 stars</li><li>list of neighborhood committees</li><li>clicks on "How can I help?" link on Greater Chicago Food Depository site</li><li>list of nonprofits has a 5 star rating system</li><li>She clicks Categories: any</li><li>She clicks the "read with me" program</li></ul></div></div>
<div><div>Showing Interest/ Affirmation</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Says "well how can I give back?"</li><li>"I like this page, so this would be the first volunteer activity I would do"</li><li>She says "hmm, I would maybe do that"</li><li>says "Ahh! Soup Kitchens! I can cook good stuff!"</li><li>she says "OK" to indicate she has found her third opportunity.</li><li>She comments, "that would be fun", then clicks on I want to help.</li><li>she says "OK, Whiskey [her dog] I signed you up"</li><li>She scrolls down the page. She makes comment out loud that nothing looked like volunteer opportunities.</li><li>Says "I wish I could do something in the neighborhood"</li><li>She says out loud "I can bring my favorite book"</li><li>User finds mailing list with occasional opportunities throughout the year, says "This is perfect for me!"</li><li>She says found one.</li><li>says "This one is great because I can do this with my dog Charlie".</li><li>she says "I've wanted to do this in the past, but they haven't had opportunities"</li><li>She stops at "Help retired greyhounds find forever homes using social media skills" and says, "this one is awesome"</li><li>She comments that she likes this site saying, "it has results on the homepage."</li></ul></div></div>	

## Taking the Next Step

<b>Finding Further Detail</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She clicks to respond to need.</li> <li>She clicks title to see more details.</li> <li>She finds – "Love of Reading Week"</li> <li>Opens link to "volunteer" section of website</li> <li>She clicks "Search Chicago Cares Opportunities"</li> <li>finds a link called "Brides against Breast Cancer"</li> <li>clicks read with me at Henderson</li> <li>Chooses "Clean and Green Committee"</li> <li>she clicks "become a volunteer"</li> <li>When she clicks to respond to need.</li> <li>She clicks "Featured Projects"</li> <li>She looks at an entry: Lakeview Pantry</li> <li>clicks "contact" on Chicago Canine Rescue page</li> <li>Finds digital flier with charity information for donating coats</li> <li>reads the details of what is required for the volunteer work</li> <li>finds a link that gives information on international exchange programs</li> </ul>	<b>Logging in</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She is prompted to sign back in to register.</li> <li>site asks user to sign in to profile</li> <li>She continues to create her log-in and signs up.</li> <li>She tries to login to Chicago Cares</li> <li>After completing her log-in she says, "lets find a new site"</li> <li>she clicks "sign up for the adoption center"</li> <li>She resets her password</li> <li>she signs into Yahoo mail</li> <li>she chooses social media</li> <li>She then says, "I hate having to log-in."</li> <li>she tries several passwords</li> <li>she fills in the name and address form</li> <li>Then she clicks on "sign in with FaceBook"</li> </ul>
<b>Scheduling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She says "I will take a look at my calendar"</li> <li>she schedules a time</li> <li>she adds the date to her google calendar</li> <li>she chooses a date and clicks sign up</li> <li>She compares dates on the website with dates on her calendar</li> <li>she checks the Windows OS calendar</li> <li>She scrolls the calendar</li> <li>She clicks "Chicago Cares opportunity calendar" - the calendar is all a very light grey</li> <li>she selects a date</li> <li>She opens her calendar on her phone.</li> <li>She opens google calendar</li> <li>She compares dates on the website with dates on her google calendar</li> <li>Greater Chicago Food Depository has calendar of events</li> </ul>	<b>Pain Points - logging in</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>says "I don't know what I want to do"</li> <li>She says, "that is annoying", but continues to log-in</li> <li>She subvocalizes "I might actually have one"</li> <li>she says "maybe I won't log in"</li> <li>She says "I don't know if Whiskey [her dog] would actually be go..."</li> <li>says "mmmm, this website sucks"</li> <li>she says "Oh I have to add a resume. I hadn't looked at that in a ..."</li> <li>she says "I thought I had signed up on here before, but ..."</li> </ul>
<b>Signing Up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>she fills in her volunteering experience. She is succinct.</li> <li>She stops when prompted with another sign up form.</li> <li>user interprets getting a profile as needing to joining a membership/pau</li> <li>She signs in</li> <li>Stops scrolling when sees "join a distribution list"</li> <li>she clicks on the "willing to travel" dropdown she chooses "national" (I am not sure that I saw this correctly)</li> <li>She fills out a new user registration form</li> <li>She registers</li> <li>joins mailing list</li> <li>user exits site because can't find how to make profile</li> <li>she clicks sign up</li> <li>Quickly sign up and shares the opportunity on her FaceBook.</li> <li>She attempts to submit the form several times</li> </ul>	

## Interviews

In order to explore how people find volunteer opportunities and what motivates them to commit to them, we interviewed people who have volunteered in the last two years.

## Recruitment

We recruited participants by asking colleagues and friends if they had volunteered in the last two years. We wanted participants that had volunteer experience so that we could explore what made them choose those specific experiences. We asked if the participants were comfortable participating, explained the research project, and obtained consent from all participants. All participants understood the expectations and provided written consent to participate in the observation.

## Participants

Our participant group consists of four individuals with the following demographics: four females: two located in Chicago, IL, one in Sahuarita, AZ, and one in Raleigh, NC. They are between 23 and 41 years of age.

Participant	Code	Location	Sex	Age	Time of Day
Participant 1	P1	Chase Bank Cafeteria, Chicago, IL	Female	25	Early Afternoon
Participant 2	P2	Starbucks, Sahuarita, AZ	Female	41	Early Evening
Participant 3	P3	Barnes and Noble, Raleigh, NC	Female	26	Early Evening
Participant 4	P4	Living Room, Chicago, IL	Female	23	Early Evening

## Procedure

We conducted four interviews in the afternoon and evenings: three in public places and one in an interviewer's living room.

We read to each participant a brief statement about our research project, explaining that we are interested in how people discover volunteer opportunities. This statement explained their rights as participants, then asked for consent to interview and record them. We then asked participants a series of questions read from a script. We decided, before the interview process began, that we would follow a semi-scripted interview structure, allowing us to deviate from the script if we felt that the participant touched on an interesting point. Interviewers took sparse notes while they talked with the participants. We recorded each interview and transcribed the recordings using InqScribe.

## Analysis

Once we transcribed the interviews, we loaded each of them into Dedoose. We decided to use inductive, open coding. On our first pass at organizing the data, we each coded an interview that we hadn't conducted. Then we grouped the codes that we had created on that first pass into categories. We used that outline of categories to code each interview a second time, this time each researcher coded the ones that they had conducted. We then looked at where themes emerged from the coded excerpts. We will discuss some of these themes in the findings section.



Category/Code	Definition	Sample Excerpts
How opportunities are found	The ways our users searched for opportunities such as location-based searches, names of organizations, tools used, our volunteer topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I do research into the organization"</li> <li>● "We had a huge database at the Ball State University volunteer center has a massive database"</li> <li>● "Coaching students on their Shakespeare units"</li> </ul>
Signing Up	The methods and experiences of participants signing up for research activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "Filled out a form"</li> <li>● "Yeah, they have like sign up sheets in the lobby"</li> <li>● "It wasn't necessary to have a resume"</li> </ul>
Feelings about Volunteering	The participant's interests, motivations, likes, dislikes, and difficulties when volunteering or searching for opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "It was good. (pauses) Rewarding"</li> <li>● "I do not like working with the elderly"</li> <li>● "I volunteered at Habitat for Humanity for a build to learn more about house maintenance and care"</li> </ul>
Training	The training required by activities in which the participants researched or participated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I went through about eight hours of training"</li> <li>● "Power tool training"</li> <li>● "You have to go through a training and certification program first"</li> </ul>
Volunteer frequency	We asked our participants how frequently they volunteered within the last year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "Sometimes it would actually be more than that and than other months"</li> <li>● "I have not done any volunteer activities in the last year"</li> <li>● "A dozen times"</li> </ul>
Scheduling	How our participants talked about scheduling activities including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I finally had the time in my schedule, because that's a long term commitment"</li> </ul>

	conflicts, availability, and time requirements of activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can't do it during the week day and I don't wake early on the weekends</li> <li>● "It's really for students who can commit for months at a time"</li> </ul>
Technology	The ways our users utilized technology including search engine results, use of online resources, social media posts, and frustrations with technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "A website that like tells you whether it is a legit, like, charity or not"</li> <li>● "So now I get emails for volunteer opportunities"</li> <li>● "I look up the location for events"</li> </ul>

## Survey

Using the themes we identified from our observations and interviews, we determined two hypotheses that we wanted to further explore.

Our hypotheses were:

- Users that find activities that align with their interests will commit to volunteering more frequently than users that find activities that they are not interested in.
- Users that find organizations that present detailed opportunities via the internet are more like to commit to activities than those who find organizations online that do not have details about the opportunities.

In addition to the two themes of "motivations" and "clarity of volunteer opportunities" covered by our hypotheses, we also included survey questions that aligned with the themes of "time," "use of technology," and "social influence."

## Recruitment

We distributed our survey link through email and Facebook posts to our personal accounts; therefore, the participants of our survey were recruited from within our personal social networks.

## Procedure

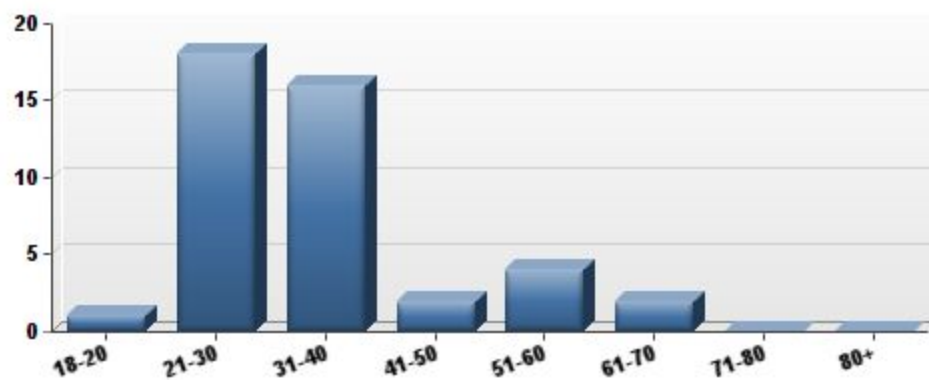
After designing our survey questions using a shared Google Docs, we entered our survey questions into Qualtrics. We created 14 questions that included a mix of multiple choice, matrixes, Likert scales, one open-ended questions, and one randomly distributed question that presented one of three descriptions to our participants; the descriptions ranged from high details of information about a volunteer opportunity to little details to the effect test clarity in opportunities. The participants ranked their desire to sign up for the opportunity on a Likert scale.

The data we collected came from the responses of 39 individuals who completed our survey via our social networks.

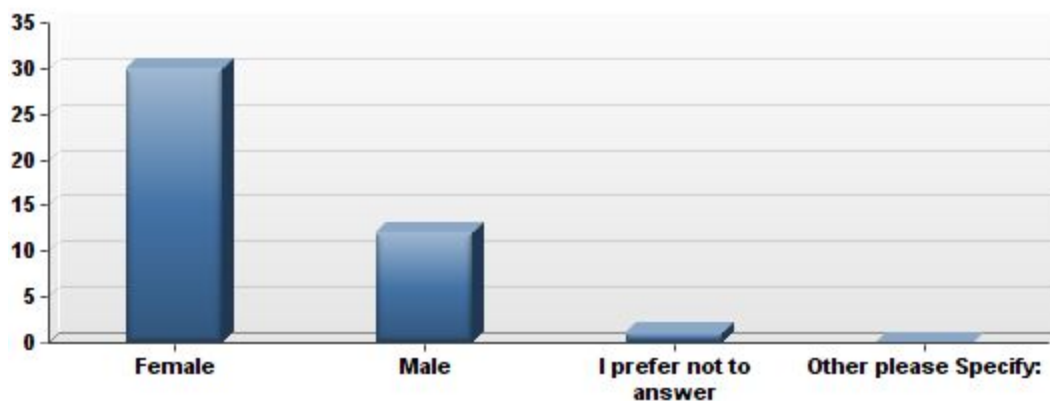
## Participants

The participants of our survey included 30 females, 12 males, and one “I prefer not to answer”; ages ranged from 18 to 70. Additionally, we asked participants in the survey to indicate how often they’ve volunteered within the last year, which ranged from less than one time to more than five times.

**Participants Age:**

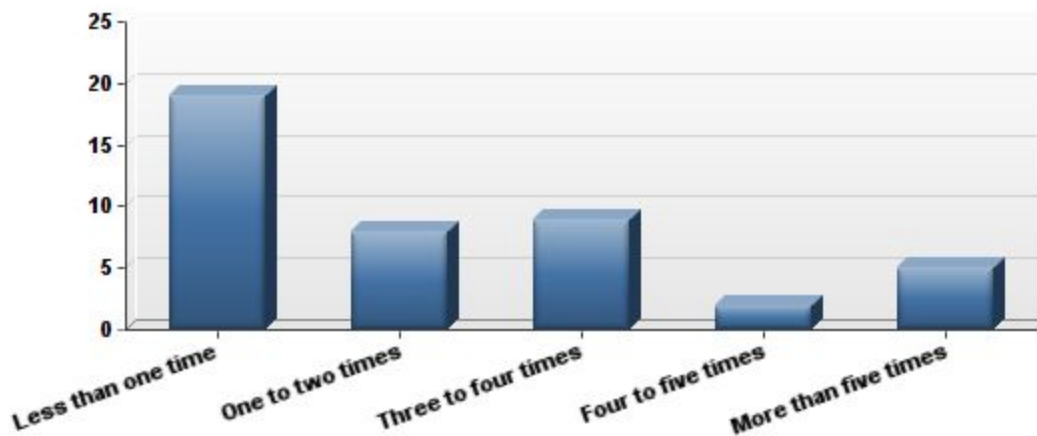


**Participants Gender:**



**Participants Volunteer Activities:**





## Analysis

After 39 surveys were completed, we closed the survey. We then statistically analyzed our data to test the validity of our two hypotheses; we ran chi-squared and cross tabulation tests. We also analysed the data from our other themes to see if those areas produced results that could provide significant information or merit further investigation. We extracted the histograms from the results of these question areas.

## III. Findings

### Observations

With the help of our affinity diagram, we were able to find similarities in our observations. As stated in the analysis we categorized our observations into three groups:

- Search Methods
- Research process
- Taking the next step

### Search Methods

The first major theme, "Search Methods," describes how users began their searches for a volunteer opportunities, which included picking what device to search on and choosing keywords. The devices all had online access and were picked based on user preference. For instance P2 used an iPad for her search, and used the Siri voice function for her last search. The keywords users chose were titles of organizations (e.g., P3 typed in "Paws Chicago"), subjects from past experiences or memories (such as a search for a school P3 attended), and location-based searches (e.g., P1 searched for "Tucson Volunteer opportunities"). The pain points our observation subjects experienced during the section were either technical difficulties (P2 had to use her iPad because her laptop had to update and reset), or

they received unwanted search results (P1's original search for art within 5 miles of 85743 gave her no leads).

## Research Process

Once users decided how they would search, they began a process of filtering and browsing to find opportunities. They would filter the results and investigate further into promising leads. For example, P2 picked "Brides against Breast Cancer" from a list of potential opportunities and proceeded to read the organization description. In addition, some participants used tools in order to browse the result; P4 used a pinpointed map on the web to find nearby animal shelters. The research process ended when the user was either unsatisfied and decided to try a new keyword—returning to the Search Methods phase—or until they affirmed their interest in a specific opportunity. We observed that high enthusiasm and interest indicated that the user successfully completed the research process. Otherwise, our participants would show frustration, such as how P2 did when browsing through volunteer opportunities that did not interest her by giving up on her search.

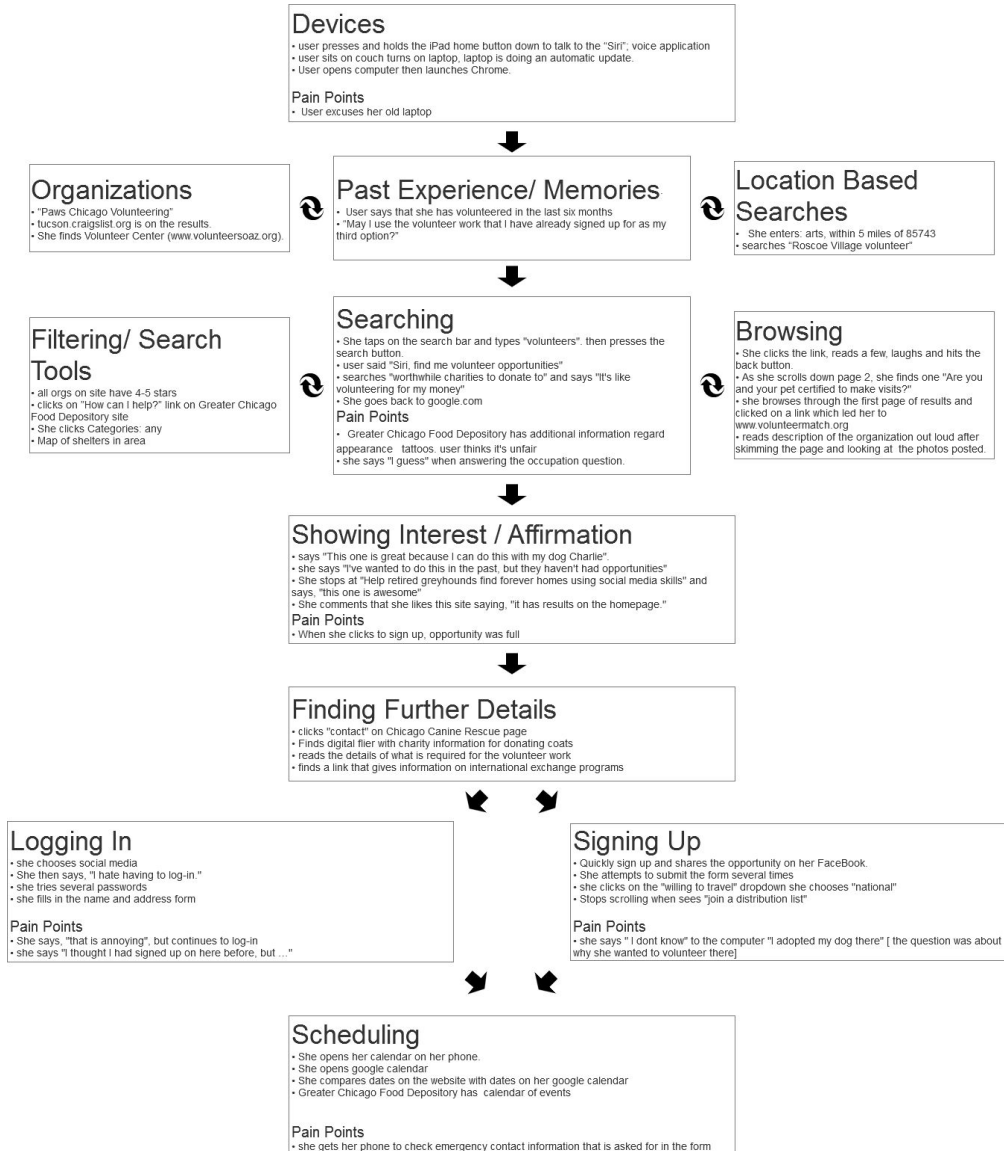
## Taking the Next Step

Once users found an opportunity that fit their interest and availability, they started the processes of signing up to participate. This step included either creating a login or signing in with existing login information. Logging in and signing up was where our users experienced most of the pain points. During our observations, P3 had confusion about whether or not she previously registered for the site. Similarly, P4 had to sign in a second time to register for an additional opportunity within the same organization. One method that seemed to streamline the process of signing up was when organizations leverage the Facebook sign in API. Using a standard interface made the process easy, and the users did not have to attempt to login multiple times without knowing if they had previously registered.

## Task Analysis and User Journey

After organizing our observation notes, we developed a task analysis and user journey to understand the thought process of our participants. The diagrams below show a semi-linear sequence of tasks based on the participant's devices, experience, methods of search, interests, site design, and other factors. This diagrams also help us compartmentalize the steps for further investigation.





# Volunteer Research Process (1 of 3)

1

## PICK DEVICE

### ACTIONS

- User presses and holds the iPad home button down to talk to "Siri" voice application
- User sits on couch, turns on laptop
- User opens computer and lunches Chrome

2

## BRAINSTORM

### QUOTES



### Past experiences/memories

- "May I use the volunteer work that I have already signed up for?"

### PAIN POINTS



## Volunteer Research Process (2 of 3)

3

### SEARCH

#### Filtering Tools

- All organizations on site have 4-5 stars
- Map of shelters in area

#### Search Methods

- Taps on search bar and types "volunteers", then presses the search button

#### Browsing

- She browses through the first page of results and clicked on a link

ACTIONS

4

### SHOW INTEREST



QUOTES

#### Search Methods

- User said, "Siri, find me volunteer opportunities"



- Says, "This one is great because I can do it wit my dog Charlie"
- She says, "I have wanted to do this in the past, but they have not had opportunities"
- "This one is awesome"

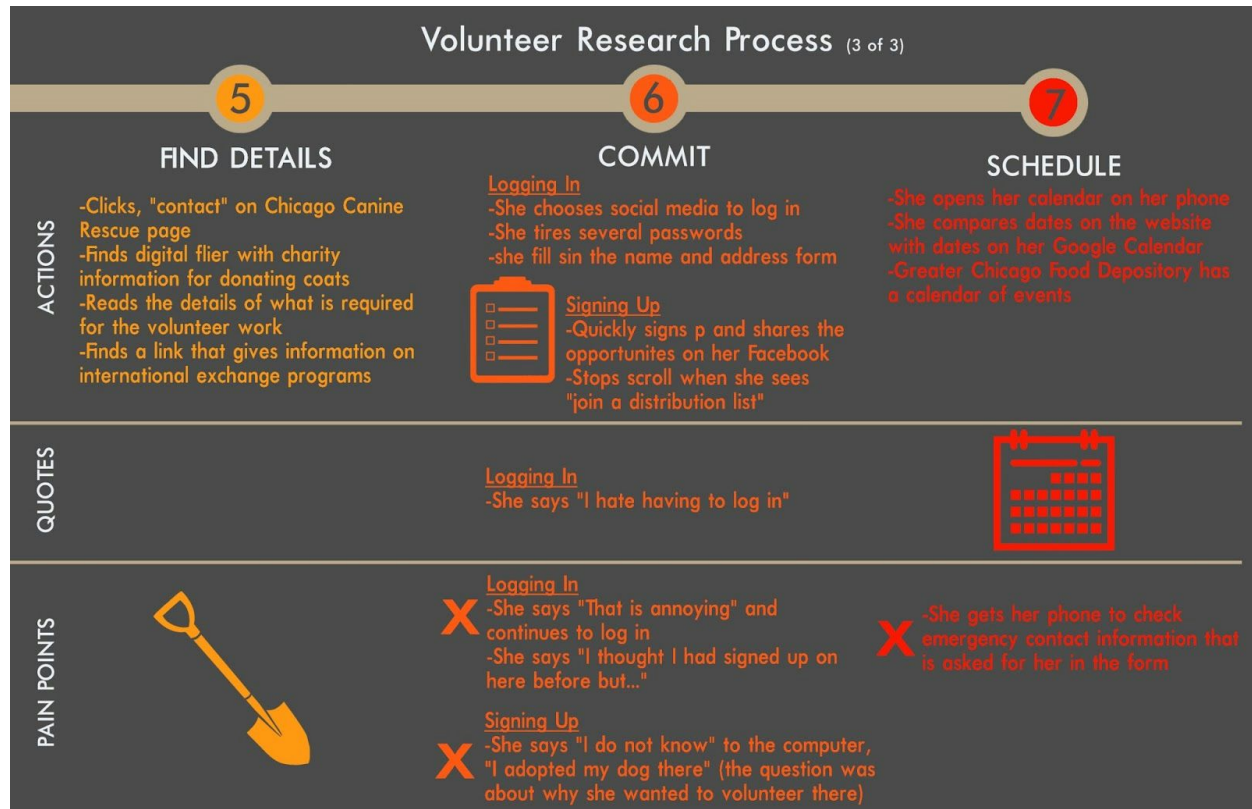
PAIN POINTS



Greater Good Depository has additional information regarding tattoos, thinks its unfair



When she clicks to sign up, opportunity was full



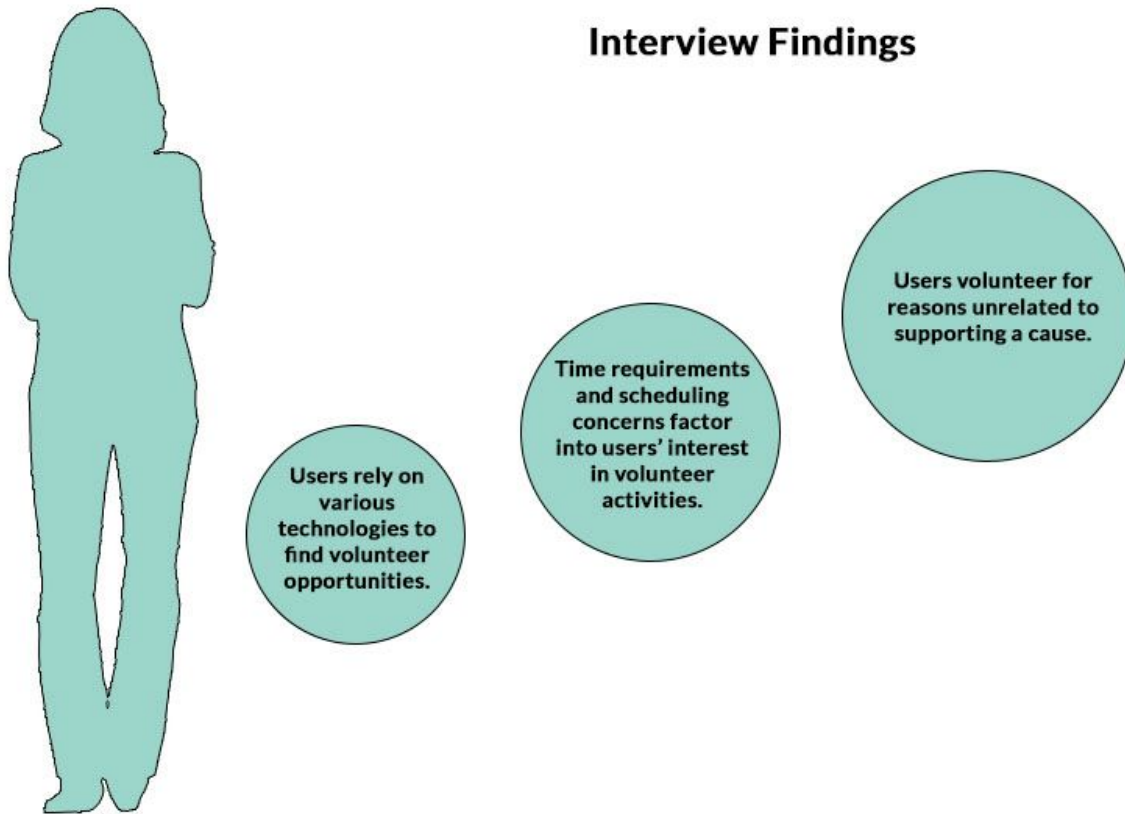
Photos: [Grey shovel 51](#) by [imgkid.com](#) is licensed under license: [Basic license](#)  
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[device\\_monitor\\_screen\\_ipad\\_tablet\\_responsive\\_display\\_iphone\\_phone\\_smart\\_7-512](#) by [Linh Pham Thi Dieu](#) is licensed under license: [Creative Commons](#)

## Interviews

Based on our interviews, we identified three themes:

- Users sometimes volunteer for reasons unrelated to supporting a cause.
- Time requirements and scheduling concerns factor into users' interest in volunteer activities.
- Users rely on technology to find volunteer opportunities.



## Users Volunteer for Reasons Unrelated to Supporting a Cause

One theme we found from our interviews was that users are often motivated to volunteer for reasons other than accomplishing the goals of the organization. Instead, we found that their reasons related to their interests, emotional fulfillment, and the career experience or skills received from the activities. When asked how they choose organizations to volunteer for, participants interviewed explained that they look for activities in which they were interested. P1 stated that she searched for opportunities based on her “personal interest” and therefore “found opportunities working with animals.” P4 explained that her past opportunities have “been arts related” because “it was what [her] major” was in, giving an example that she coached students on their Shakespeare units. Users also *avoided* opportunities that did not interest them. P3 said that she did not like “volunteering at hospitals because they smell funny. And people dying makes [her] sad.” Similarly, P1 expressed that working with the elderly makes her “uncomfortable.”

Another motivation for volunteering was receiving positive feelings from the activity. P1 stated that she volunteers for “the feeling it gives [her]” and that it is her “Catholic obligation to do it.” P3 said, “[If] you can put a smile on someone’s face then I think that can be a good volunteering opportunity.”

Participants also explained that they volunteer because of the skills and experience gained from the activity. P2 said, "I volunteered at Habitat for Humanity for a build to learn more about house maintenance and care." Additionally, P4 stated that some of the opportunities she found were "sort of self-serving" because she is "in the process of applying for a Fulbright application." For that reason, she has "chosen to volunteer for and work with" organizations that would benefit her Fulbright application.

In these examples, the participants did not reference that accomplishing the goals of the organization was what motivated them to choose organizations. Their reasons for volunteering relate to their own interests, emotional fulfillment, and the skills and experience gained from the activity.

## Time Requirements and Scheduling Concerns Factor into Users' Interest in Volunteer Activities

Another theme we noticed from our interviews was that time and scheduling conflicts affected users' consideration of volunteer opportunities. Specifically, this issue applied to opportunities with significant time requirements, availability in users' schedules, and the time needed for training.

First, we identified that users considered time requirements when committing to opportunities. When asked if she ever donated instead of volunteering, P4 said, "I've given to Heffer International [rather than volunteering] because to volunteer with Heffer requires like six months of time commitment on a ranch." However, when P2 was asked if time requirements of volunteer opportunities ever impacted her decision to volunteer, she responded, "No, I have plenty of leave at work and would just request the time off." Although P2 stated that she is able to volunteer, her ability to take off work allowed her the time needed to participate.

Weekly schedules or major life events also affected users' ability to commit to opportunities. P1 and P3 cited their workweek schedules as limiting their volunteer time. P1 said, "I can't do it during the week day and I don't wake up early on the weekends (laughs). So it really needs to be an opportunity that is in the afternoon or evenings." P3 said that she is able to "volunteer after work, just a couple of days out of the week." However, P3 also explained that major life events have prevented her from volunteering because she has "had a lot going in the past year between working different jobs, and planning a wedding and needing to financially support [herself] and [her] family."

Users also encountered issues with committing the time required for training. For example, P1 said, "I signed up to volunteer at PAWS and I skipped my training session because it was early on a Saturday."

## Users Rely on Technology to Find Volunteer Opportunities

The final theme identified from our interviews is the use of technology to support users' research for volunteer opportunities. When asked if she uses any online resources to help find volunteer opportunities, P1 said, "I just use Google." Additionally, P1 described her reliance on online search engines stating, "I do want to give my time but if it doesn't come up, like in Google, then I quit [looking]." When answering the same question, P4 referred to an online system that s/he had access to at their university: "We had a huge database at the Ball State University Volunteer Center."

In addition to search engines and databases, P1 referenced her subscription to an email for "the American Heart Association... they email me all the time to volunteer for their like, 5Ks and stuff." P1 also explained that she used a "website that like tells you whether it is a legit, like, charity or not."

However, two of the interviewed users responded saying that they do not use technology to find opportunities. P3 and P2 reported volunteering because of an opportunity in which their family participated. P1 said that they found most of their opportunities through their church. They mentioned that the signup process was decidedly low key — it was a printed sign up sheet in the lobby of their church.

## Personas

We developed spectrums using our data (see Appendix for Spectrums). We then identified patterns in how our participants were grouped along these spectrums. Based on these patterns, we developed the following two personas that represent potential volunteers.

**Name:** Kate Donnager



**Age:** 33

**Occupation:** Public Health

**Education Level:** Masters Degree

**Level of computer comfort:** Kate is comfortable using the internet and some programs that she has learned as part of her job. She is also comfortable using her phone to access and search the internet.

**Quote:** "I really need... I need to volunteer and I want to volunteer...but i was usually at maximum course load..."

**Goals/Motivations:**

- Volunteer as much as her schedule will allow
- Find a "Home Organization"
- Learn how to use a circular saw

**Frustrations/Pain points:**

- It is hard for her to find time in her intricate schedule
- Doesn't know that her friends and family are volunteering

**Narrative:** Think of Kate a "power user" of volunteering. She has tons of experience volunteering for organizations over both long and short durations. She has been a tremendous asset to these organizations. Lately, she has not volunteered as much as she used to. She wants to find organizations where she can really dig deep and help transform the organization with the skill she learned from her graduate program. However, she has a busy schedule. Also, she is totally unaware of the hard work her friends and extended family are doing, she just never hears about it.

Photo: [Kate Busby at Under The Stars festival, Cawthorne](#) by [Bryan Ledgard](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)



**Name:** Sean Bennett



**Age:** 32

**Occupation:** Civil Engineer

**Education Level:** Bachelor's Degree

**Level of computer comfort:** Sean is comfortable with using technology. He uses a computer to design projects at work, but otherwise he does not use his computer. He instead does most of his personal computing on his smartphone, like checking email and social media.

Photo: IMG\_0324.JPG By akolich on <http://www.morguefile.com/archive/display/920522>

**Quote:** "It'd be nice to find worthwhile opportunities that I could do with my family."

**Goals/Motivations:**

- Wants to find a volunteer opportunity that won't be a waste of his time if he didn't like it
- Interested in volunteering with family
- Needs to have details of what will be expected of him if he commits to an activity.

**Frustrations/Pain points:**

- He is not around a computer when he thinks about looking for opportunities, so he searches on his smartphone. He hasn't found a good app and it is hard to search on his phone's web browser. He doesn't have time to look on his computer when he is working.

**Narrative:** Sean is a husband and a father of two that works full time as a civil engineer. He and his family recently purchased a house in St. Louis, Missouri and looking for ways to become more engaged in the community. Sean thinks that volunteering with his family would be a great way to meet like-minded people and build a social sphere for his children while giving back to their new community. However, his children are too young to be useful to an organization, and he does not want to commit to volunteering every weekend; his wife also works full time, and they want to spend time with their kids and visit with their extended family. Therefore, when he looks for volunteer opportunities, he needs to understand what he will be doing, how long, and how often to know if he can commit to the activity.

## Scenarios

### Scenario 1: Kate Donnager

Kate is inspired to look for new volunteering opportunities during her break. She is ready to get her hands dirty again and wants to develop a few new skills she has learned in her graduate program. Kate texts her sister-in-law Joan, a frequent volunteer, about what opportunities are available. Joan returns the text, suggesting for her to look up the "Earth Day 2015" event at the science museum. Kate turns her laptop on and searches Google using the term "Earth Day 2015 Science museum volunteering". After briefly looking at the results page she clicks the top link and skims the page. She finds the organization's official volunteer sign-up page. It describes the various duties needed with an emphasis on assistance with handing out T-shirts, setting up booths and cleaning up afterward. However, she has a hard time finding when the event actually occurs and where. Finally, she finds a calendar and realizes that the event won't happen for another three months. Not only did Kate find the duties a bit underwhelming, the opportunity didn't fit well into her schedule. She makes a mental note to email the volunteer coordinator later in the afternoon to get the details.

She was looking for something a bit more hands on than what was offered by the museum, so she tries another Google search. She uses the term "Volunteer opportunities near 60640" and skims the results page. A site that focused on different opportunities within the next two weeks caught her eye so she clicked on it. The site highlighted an event called "Mark's Mission" where every Saturday morning people could contribute to making houses more



accessible for the handicapped and disabled. Saturday mornings fits perfectly into Kate schedule, so it raises her interests. The details of the event are right on the front page. After clicking on the link and reading for a bit, she was pleased with the opportunity to work in teams and saw that they might even train her on how to properly use a circular saw. She finds the sign up section and submits her information, she has additional questions, but will e-mail whoever she needs to when her workday is over. She closes her laptop and leaves her cubicle.

## Scenario 2: Sean Bennett

Sean has had a busy week. He has been assigned to a new project at work. During his lunch break on Thursday Sean started thinking ahead to the weekend. Sean's wife, Alice, works full time and they have two small children that they like to do new activities with on the weekends. Sean and his family are new to the St. Louis area and Sean is wanting his children to have a sense of community. Sean starts searching on his iPhone to find a volunteer opportunity for his family to participate in this weekend. He cannot find a centralized app for volunteer opportunities in the app store so he does a browser search to find a website where he can search by interest. Sean finds a few activities for Saturday that sound like they could be family-friendly, but when he clicks through to the details he cannot find enough information about what the activity is and how long the activity would last. He goes back and looks through a few more opportunities, and he finally finds one with the local food bank. He clicks through to view the details and signs up his family for a two hour volunteer slot. As Sean walked back to work he felt excited about the volunteer opportunity he signed to participate in, and he was looking forward to Saturday.

## Survey

We hoped our survey data would help deepen our understanding of how organizations can utilize technology to present opportunities that will appeal to users' motivations and their concerns about time commitments. We also hoped our results would help us to further explore the themes from our observations and interviews.

## Hypothesis Testing

For our first hypothesis, we had theorized that users who find activities that align with their interests will commit to volunteering more frequently than users that find activities that they are not interested in. In order to test this, we asked our participants to think of the last time they had volunteered and rate how motivated they were by six different factors: 1-the goals of the organization, 2-a friend suggested it or inspired me to volunteer, 3-I saw an advertisement, 4-I was interested in learning skills offered by the opportunity, 5-it was a good career opportunity, and 6-other. After we collected the data, we tested the correlation between how each of the six factors affected the participant's level of motivation and how many times the participant volunteered in the last year.

x = motivation factor

y = number of times volunteer in the last year.

We rated the level of motivation from 0 = “very unmotivated” to 6 = “very motivated.” We rated the number of times the participant volunteer from 0 = “less than one time” to 4 = “more than five times.” We excluded the “non-applicable” responses from these tests, and therefore the sample size was different for each factor.

By testing the motivation factor against the number of times the individual volunteered in the last year, we hoped that some of the factors would have positive and strong correlation with the individuals who volunteer the most frequently, or our “super users”. From there we wanted to be able to say that our data supports that individuals volunteer for motivations other than their interests. However, as seen in the figure below, there were neither strong positive or strong negative correlations between any of the six motivation factors and the amount individuals volunteered within the last year. We therefore failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Think back to the last time you volunteered, how did these factors influence your interest in volunteering?	correlation coefficient and p-value	Direction	Strength
Goals of the organization	$r(39) = .18, p = 0.27$	positive	weak to no relationship
A friend suggested it or inspired me to volunteer	$r(35) = -.18, p = 0.30$	negative	weak to no relationship
I saw an advertisement	$r(32) = -.06, p = 0.74$	negative	weak to no relationship
I was interested in learning skills offered by the opportunity would teach me	$r(37) = .17, p = 0.33$	positive	weak to no relationship
It was a good career opportunity	$r(38) = .02, p = 0.88$	positive	weak to no relationship
Other	$r(19) = .10, p = 0.69$	positive	weak to no relationship

Our second hypothesis is that users that find organizations that present detailed opportunities via the internet are more like to commit to activities than those who find organizations online that do not have details about the opportunities. The chi-square tests showed that there is a relationship between the amount of detail provided about an opportunity and the participants’ willingness to commit. Our results showed that individuals who had received the most detailed opportunity description stated they were more likely to commit to the activity than those who had received the medium description. However, we believe that because this question was randomly distributed to our participants, the low

sample size for each description lead to the results not being statistically significant, as seen in the tables below. Additionally, we distributed the description with the least explanation to only six individuals, whereas we distributed the high description to 14, and the medium description to 17. This led to the results of the low descriptions chi-square test to be inconsistent with those of high and medium.

Due to the inconsistency in these results, we believe that this questions needs further investigation. We recommend that the survey be ran again with a larger sample size and additional questions with similar randomly distributed descriptions.

#### Likelihood of participation in opportunity vs. amount of activity description provided

High	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Total
Actual	5	1	8	14
Expected	4.67	4.67	4.67	

$$\chi^2 (2, N = 14) = .07, p < .07$$

Medium	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Total
Actual	10	3	4	17
Expected	8.67	8.67	8.67	

$$\chi^2 (2, N = 17) = .04, p < .98$$

Low	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Total
Actual	1	0	5	6
Expected	2	2	2	

$$\chi^2 (2, N = 8) = .03, p < .99$$

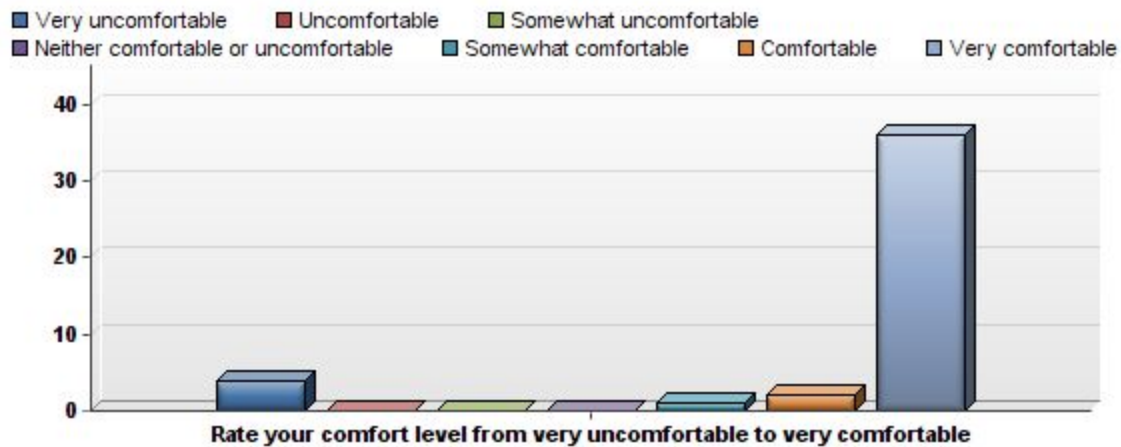
## Other notable results

### Technology

Our survey reached 39 participants. Of those participants we had 19 reveal that they only volunteered one time in the last year. We had 36 participants state that they are very comfortable with technology. However, it didn't prove to be significant when comparing comfort level with technology and how people find opportunities. It should be noted that the survey was distributed electronically to a group of people that are acquaintances of the

researchers. This may bias this sample toward being more comfortable with technology.

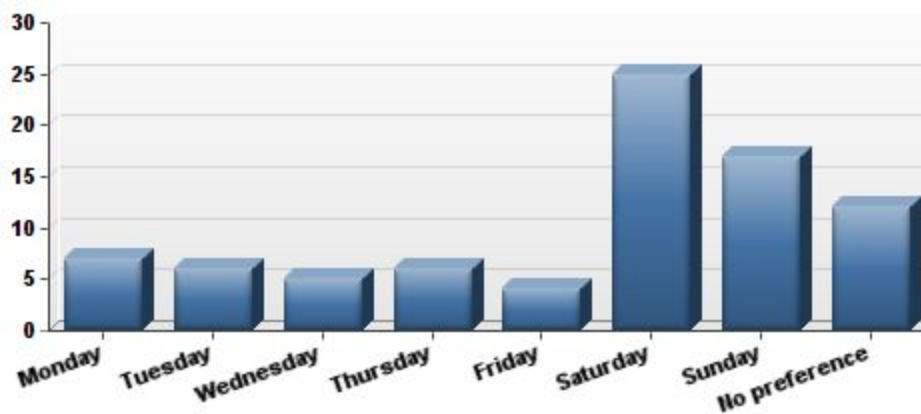
### Comfort with Technology



### Time

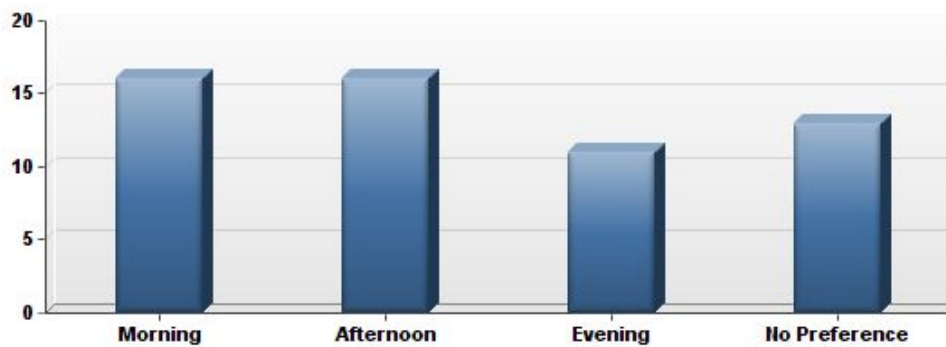
Preference for volunteering on Saturday and Sunday was double the rate other days of the week; however there was not a significant preference for the time of day that participants would choose to volunteer.

### Preference on Day of Week



One participant mentioned in her interview that she missed her volunteer opportunity because it was too early in the morning. Having only performed a limited number of interviews, we expected a higher amount of volunteers also would prefer volunteer opportunities in the afternoon or later in the day.

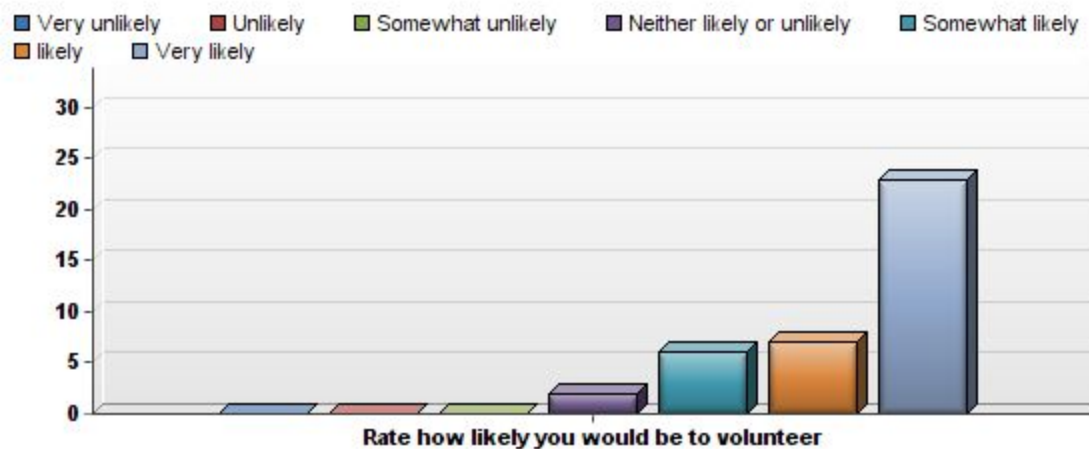
### Preference of Time of Day



## Social Relationships and Motivation

When asking if participants would be more likely to volunteer if they had friends or family participating in the same opportunity, the chi-square test showed a relationship, yet the p-value was not significant. Due to the inconsistency in these results, we believe that this questions merits further investigation. We would recommend that the survey be ran again with a larger sample size and additional questions focused on how participants use and are influenced by social networks.

### Likelihood of Participation in the Most Descriptive Opportunity



Likelihood of participation in opportunity vs.  
if friends and family are participating

	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Total
Actual	0	2	36	38
Expected	12.67	12.67	12.67	

$\chi^2 (2, N = 38) = .000000000000000925, p < 1$

We also included an open-ended question in our survey to allow the participants to provide feedback about their experiences with volunteering in general. One individual stated, "Both times that I moved to a new big city I used volunteering to make new potential friends that might have similar values to myself." This comment was notable because we had approached exploring social aspects of volunteering from the perspective of how individuals volunteer with people they know instead of how participants might use volunteering to meet people.

Another participant submitted in their open-ended question that "getting good feedback from the organization after the experience is very helpful." Although our literature reviews included information on what makes volunteers return to organizations, one of the goals of our research was to help volunteers find opportunities that fit their interests. It is noteworthy that one of our participants expressed that they would benefit from feedback on their volunteer contributions; we think that it would be important to explore what else individuals feel is important to their volunteer experiences.

## Survey Limitations

Our survey results had 19 of the 39 of the participants stating that they only volunteered one time in the past year, we feel that further investigation was needed of people who volunteer more often. We ran some tests of the results excluding the Less than one time in the last year answers for the how often did you volunteer from the results. In these tests of the data we did not see a significant change to the results.

We also found some discrepancies with the number of participants that responded to each question as well as the total participants had taken the survey. For instance, the total of our participant's genders is 42, but our results indicate that 39 participants completed the survey. We suspect some individuals exited the survey before reaching the final question.

## IV. Discussion

The themes that emerge from the analysis of the interview, observations and survey data suggest that personal motives, time requirements, and information about events/organizations were the key factors in how an individual chooses a volunteer opportunity. Both the participants we observed and the participants we interviewed were looking for opportunities that benefit their own interests, rather than the causes and missions behind these volunteer opportunities, which seem to play a lesser role in their decisions. Perhaps a volunteer organization would have higher turnout rates if they could better advertise the benefits a volunteer would receive. We also discussed ideas that perhaps donations and awareness (social media, word of mouth) could operate as healthy alternatives to physical volunteering.

Another theme from our observations that our interviews supported was that users were more interested in opportunities that listed more details about the activities. We identified

this topic when we observed users' frustration with not finding details. And we saw it again in the interviews: P1 described her aggravation in the following account of her research:

"United Way... was really hard to figure out the opportunities. Umm, they kind of like talked about what they do: they like provide assistance to people who need it. Umm. But that is just like a general overview of the organization. They were like 'oh if you give this money, and you're on this team, like you can like, volunteer.' But it didn't tell you (laughs) what you would be volunteering for. Super annoying."

P1 explained that she was initially interested in this organization but then was no longer because "it was too much work" trying to find the volunteer details.

Early in our study, the research team hypothesized that the pain points related to technology usage could be a hurdle that keeps people from discovering volunteering experiences for their needs. We were also curious about the effects of social media on volunteering and how it may influence an individual's opinion on a volunteer opportunity. After analyzing our interview responses, we found that technology usage related to the success of searching for opportunities varied greatly.

## Design Recommendation

The surveys, interviews, and observations that we conducted allowed us to better understand the behaviors and motives of potential volunteers. Using this data we created a chart of design recommendations for organizations who want to implement technology to create higher turnout for volunteer work.

Our research suggests that designers placing opportunity details "up front" in the information architecture. Participants seemed drawn to opportunities that contained more detail. Also, designers should advertise other benefits of the volunteer opportunity. Most of our subjects were motivated by seeking a form of accomplishment with their volunteer work, so advertising potential achievements could raise interest. We learned that potential volunteers have a variety of different schedules, so we also recommend that organizations offer flexible hours for opportunities. Designers can also help by building schedules and calendars into sign-up interfaces and creating opportunity-detail pages. We recommend that organizations have a social media presence because our participants responded positively to the social influence of their friends and family. Our research results gave us a low turnout on the effectiveness of email based marketing; we only recommend this method as a quicker alternative to having a developed social media presence.

Design Recommendation		Priority	Impact	Source
1	Place Opportunity Details Up Front in the Information Architecture	High	This was a major factor will all of our interview and observation participants. This differentiated between users	Observations: P2, P4
				Interviews: P1

			exploring opportunities further, "Taking the next step"	Survey: C1, C2, C3
2	Build Scheduling and Calendaring into your volunteer sign up interface	Medium	In observations and interviews participants demonstrated or spoke of scheduling difficulty, often having to use multiple devices or programs to negotiate their time commitments. However, users expected to be flexible in their own schedule, so this one wasn't as much of a deal breaker.	Observations: P1, P2 Interviews: P1, P3
3	Advertise other benefits to volunteers (skills to learn, reasons volunteering with make a difference)	High	Few of the resources that participants visited advertised how a volunteer opportunity might benefit the participant. This provides a place for organizations to distinguish themselves from other organizations. This is especially true if the organization seeks to find long term, high quality volunteers.	Observations: P3, P4 Interviews: P4, P2 Survey: M1
4	Offer Flexible hours for opportunities	Medium	Participants spoke of difficulty finding time in their schedules. Again, this might be something that is nice to have if the organization has the capacity. Users expected their schedules to be flexible rather than the organizations.	Observations: P1, P2 Interviews: P1, P3
5	Have Social Presence so people can tell their friends about their volunteer experiences	Medium	Participants reported that they learned of opportunities through both traditional relationships and social networks. Having a social media presence will allow users a space to communicate with their social media networks about their experience and inspire others.	Interviews: P3, P4 Survey: S1
6	Email Marketing represents an easy, but only mildly effective way to attract volunteers	Low	Participants reported as being pretty ambivalent about email marketing, though some found opportunities through it or kept in contact with organizations through email. Though the effort needed is low, the impact might not be as strong as a social media presence, but is probably worthwhile.	Interviews: P1, P3 Survey: M3, U1, U2

## Future Work

After discussing our findings, the research group has put together a list of potential survey questions. In this upcoming survey, our intent is to focus on the themes uncovered during our interviews: motives, time requirements, scheduling, technology, experience, alternatives, and training. Our target audience for this survey will be adults who have volunteered within the past two years.

We hypothesize that the outcome of our survey will suggest that:

- Users will be more likely to volunteer for opportunities that can further their career.
- Users with more volunteer experience and higher volunteer frequency have less difficulty finding volunteer opportunities.



- Users that find activities that align with their interests will commit to volunteering more frequently than users that find activities that they are not interested in.
- Users that find organizations that present detailed opportunities via the internet are more likely to commit to activities than those who find organizations online that do not have details about the opportunities.

## V. Appendix

### A. Bibliography

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### B. Consent Forms

## Observations

### **ADULT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

#### Finding Volunteer Opportunities

#### **Principal Investigator:**

**Institution:** DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Department (School, College):** College of Computing and Digital Media

**Faculty Advisor:** Sheena Erete

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

We are asking you to be in a research study because we are trying to learn more about how people find and attend volunteer opportunities. This study is being conducted by Nathan Petts, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain their Masters degree. This research is being supervised by their faculty advisor, Sheena Erete. There may be other people on the research team assisting with the study.

We hope to include about 50 people in the research.

#### **Why are you being asked to be in the research?**

You are invited to participate in this study because you are interested in finding volunteer opportunities, and you are familiar with the Internet. You must be age 18 or older to be in this study. This study is not approved for the enrollment of people under the age of 18.

#### **What is involved in being in the research study?**

If you agree to be in this study, being in the research involves :

- We will ask you a few questions to get a feel for how you use technology and your experience if any with volunteering.
  - We will ask you to find 3 volunteer opportunities in which you participate.
  - We may ask you a few questions after you have finished to clarify anything that happened
- We will be taking notes while you complete these tasks. The notes will be shared among the research team, but will be kept confidential.

#### **How much time will this take?**

This study will take about 20-30 minutes of your time.

#### **Are there any risks involved in participating in this study?**

Being in this study does not involve any risks other than what you would encounter in daily life. If you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed about answering certain questions, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to.

**Are there any benefits to participating in this study?**

You may benefit from the research by volunteering for an organization you admire. You will not personally benefit from being in this study. We hope that what we learn will help other people in the future find more rewarding volunteer opportunities.

**Can you decide not to participate?**

Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences, penalties, or loss of benefits if you decide not to participate or change your mind later and withdraw from the research after you begin participating.

**Who will see my study information and how will the confidentiality of the information collected for the research be protected?**

The research records will be kept and stored securely. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study or publish a paper to share the research with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. We will not include your name or any information that will directly identify you. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. However, some people might review or copy our records that may identify you in order to make sure we are following the required rules, laws, and regulations. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board and/or the Data and Safety Monitoring Board may review your information. If they look at our records, they will keep your information confidential.

**Who should be contacted for more information about the research?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, you can contact the researcher, Nathan Petts, nbpetts@gmail.com

***You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

**Statement of Consent from the Subject:**

I have read the above information. I have had all my questions and concerns answered. By signing below, I indicate my consent to be in the research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Interviews

### **Adult Interview Consent Form**

#### Finding Volunteer Opportunities

#### **Principal Investigators:**

**Institution:** DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Department (School, College):** College of Computing and Digital Media

**Faculty Advisor:** Sheena Erete

#### **A. Purpose and Background**

We are asking you to be in a research study to help us learn more about how people find and attend volunteer opportunities. Nathan Petts, a graduate student at DePaul University will conduct an interview as a requirement for this study. The purpose of this interview will be collect information concerning your past experiences with volunteer work. This research is being supervised by faculty advisor, Sheena Erete.

#### **B. Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this interview, the following will occur:

1. The interviewer will ask you a series of questions concerning your past experiences with volunteer work. Additional questions may be asked depending on how you answered. There are no correct or incorrect answers to any of these questions. Participation in this interview is intended to last between 20-30 minutes.
2. The interviewer has the choice to record this interview with either written notes, voice recorder, video camera, or a device that can perform one of those functions.

#### **C. Risks**

There will be minimal risks involved with this interview. If you experience discomfort with answering the questions, please notify the interviewer.

Confidentiality: The research records will be kept and stored securely. Your information will be combined with information from other interviews. We will not include your name or any information that will directly identify you. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. However, some people might review or copy our records that may identify you in order to make sure we are following the required rules, laws and regulations. For example, the DePaul University Institutional Review Board and/or the Data and Safety Monitoring Board may review your information. If they look at our records they will keep your information confidential.

#### **D. Benefits**

There are no guaranteed benefits in this interview.

#### **E. Alternatives**

Your participation is voluntary, which means you can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences, penalties, or loss of benefit if you decide not to participate or change your mind later and withdraw from the research after you begin participating.

#### **F. Questions**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in this interview, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns or complaints about the study or you want to get additional information or provide input about this research, you can contact the researcher, Nathan Petts, nbpetts@gmail.com.

#### **G. Consent**

I have read the above information. I have had all my questions and concerns answered. By signing below, I indicate my consent to be in the interview and that I am over the age of 18 years.

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Printed name:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## C. Interview Script

### Finding Volunteer Opportunities Interview

[Preselection Criteria]

We will only interview people interested in volunteering and who have volunteered in the past.

[Introduction]

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is Elaina Boytor and I'm a graduate student at DePaul University, currently taking an Inquiry Methods class in the HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) program. I'm part of a team investigating how to help people who are interested in volunteering find opportunities to volunteer that fit their interests, have the kind of impact they want to have, and are positive experiences worth having.

This interview is intended to last 20 – 30 minutes. As stated in the consent form I will ask you to sign at the beginning of this process, your identity and answers are completely anonymous. I have a few specific questions I would like to ask you about volunteering. There are no right or wrong answers. If you have questions feel free to ask them at any time during the interview. Feel free to refrain from answering any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. If you would like to stop the interview at any time, I will stop the recording and all of your answers will be discarded. I will now turn on the recorder and ask for consent to record you.

Do you consent to be interviewed and have that interview recorded?

The objective of this study is to help volunteers find opportunities that fit their interests, have the kind of impact they want, and are positive, worthwhile experiences.

[Warm Up]

1. How do you define volunteer?
2. How do you choose organizations to volunteer for?

[Past Experience]

3. Can you describe some of the volunteer opportunities have you done in the last year?
4. How often have you volunteered in the past 5 years? Once a month? Twice a year?
5. What motivated you to volunteer the last time that you did?

6. The last time that you volunteered, how did you find the opportunity?

Probe: How did you sign up for the opportunity?

Probe: How did you feel about the experience?

Probe: Where was the opportunity?

[Interest]

7. Have you ever tried to avoid certain types of volunteer opportunities?

Could you describe the last time you avoided a volunteer activity and why?

8. Think about the last time you searched for a volunteer opportunity. What types of activities did you find? Were you interested in them?

If yes - Why did they interest you?

If no - Why didn't they interest you?

[Time]

9. Have time requirements of volunteer opportunities ever impacted your decision to volunteer?

Probe: If so, how have time requirements of volunteer opportunities impacted your decision to volunteer in the past?

Probe: What were these opportunities?

Probe: Say more about how the time requirements affected your ability to participate in the opportunity?

10. Have you ever had any training related to volunteer work?

If yes - what training have you had?

[Social]

11. Do you use any online resources (i.e. review sites, mobile applications, etc...) to help you find volunteer opportunities?

If yes - what resources did you use?

12. Tell me about the last time you saw a post or email about volunteering in the past year.

Probe:When was the last time you saw a post or an email about volunteering?

Probe:What type of volunteering event was it?

Probe:Did you volunteer for it?

If yes - why did you volunteer for it?

13. When you volunteer is it with friends or people you know?

Probe: If yes, then who?

[Wrap-up]

14. Have you opted to make a donation instead of volunteering time?

Probe: If so, tell me more about that decision. What was the volunteer activity? Why did you choose donating instead? What was the donation?

15. What is your age?

16. Where do you live?

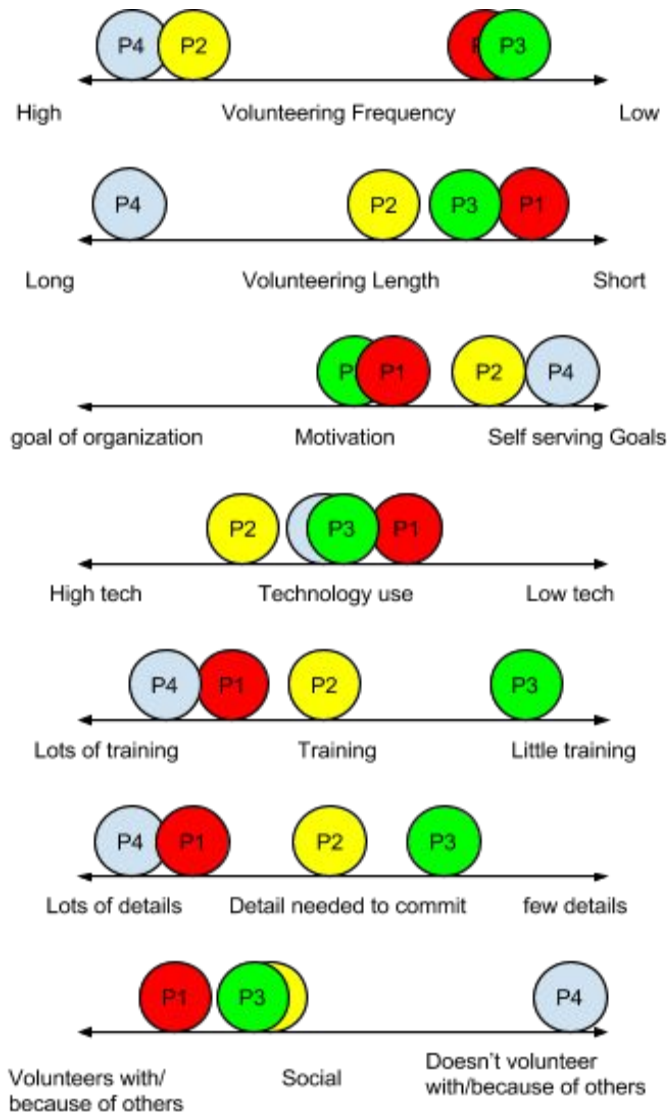
17 Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how you choose volunteer opportunities?

[Closing Statements]

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me today. Your time and answers to our interview questions are greatly appreciated. Have a great day.

## D. Persona Spectra





## E. Survey Questionnaire

### Finding Volunteer Opportunities

[Intro]

Thank you for taking time to complete our survey. Your participation in the survey is very important to us. This will help understand what motivates volunteers and how time requirements, scheduling, technology, experience, alternatives, and training factor into volunteers committing to an opportunity. This survey consists of 16 questions and will take no more than 20 minutes to complete. All of your answers are confidential and will be strictly used for in-class research. There will be no sales or marketing follow-up because of your participation in this survey. If you have any questions or comments, about this survey, you may enter them in the additional comments section located at the bottom of the survey

or you can contact me at [eboytor@gmail.com](mailto:eboytor@gmail.com), [lemer@comcast.net](mailto:lemer@comcast.net), [rowe2d@gmail.com](mailto:rowe2d@gmail.com), or [nbpetts@gmail.com](mailto:nbpetts@gmail.com).

#### SECTION: DEMOGRAPHIC

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
D1	What is your age?	Select one	18-20 (1) 21-30 (2) 31-40 (3) 41-50 (4) 51-60 (5) 61-70 (6) 71-80 (7) 80+ (8)	Obtain profile of survey sample
D2	In the last year, how often did you volunteer?	Select any	Less than one time (1) One to two times (2) Three to four times (3) Four to five times (4) More than five times (5)	Obtain profile of survey sample
D3	What is your gender?	Select one	Female (1) Male (2) I prefer not to answer (3) Other please Specify: (4)	Obtain profile of survey sample
D4	How comfortable are you using the Internet to find information?	Select one	Very uncomfortable (1) Uncomfortable (2) Somewhat uncomfortable (3) Neither comfortable or uncomfortable (4) Somewhat comfortable (5) Comfortable (6) Very comfortable (7)	Obtain profile of survey sample

#### SECTION: TIME

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
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T1	Which days of the week do you prefer to volunteer?	select all that apply	Monday (1) Tuesday (2) Wednesday (3) Thursday (4) Friday (5) Saturday (6) Sunday (7) No preference (8)	To look for patterns in time preference
T2	What time of day would you prefer to volunteer?	select all that apply	Morning (1) Afternoon (2) Evening (3) No Preference (4)	To look for patterns in time preference
T3	Thinking back to the last time you volunteered, when you have volunteered in the past, how much time did you volunteer?	Select one	Less than one hour (1) One to two hours (2) Two to three hours (3) Three to four hours (4) One day (5) Multiple days (6) I have never volunteered (7)	To look for patterns in time preference

#### SECTION: MOTIVATION

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
M1	Think back to the last time you volunteered, how did these factors influence your interest in volunteering:			To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M1a	The goals of the organization (1)	Choose one	I was unmotivated by this factor (1) I was much less motivated by this factor (2) I was less motivated by this factor (3) I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

			<p>I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5)</p> <p>I was motivated by this factor (6)</p> <p>I was very motivated by this factor(7)</p> <p>N/A (8)</p>	
M1b	A friend suggested it or inspired me to volunteer (2)	Choose one	<p>I was unmotivated by this factor (1)</p> <p>I was much less motivated by this factor (2)</p> <p>I was less motivated by this factor (3)</p> <p>I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4)</p> <p>I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5)</p> <p>I was motivated by this factor (6)</p> <p>I was very motivated by this factor(7)</p> <p>N/A (8)</p>	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M1c	I saw an advertisement (3)	Choose one	<p>I was unmotivated by this factor (1)</p> <p>I was much less motivated by this factor (2)</p> <p>I was less motivated by this factor (3)</p> <p>I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4)</p> <p>I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5)</p>	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

			<p>I was motivated by this factor (6)</p> <p>I was very motivated by this factor(7)</p> <p>N/A (8)</p>	
M1d	<p>I was interested in learning skills offered by the opportunity would teach me (4)</p>	Choose one	<p>I was unmotivated by this factor (1)</p> <p>I was much less motivated by this factor (2)</p> <p>I was less motivated by this factor (3)</p> <p>I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4)</p> <p>I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5)</p> <p>I was motivated by this factor (6)</p> <p>I was very motivated by this factor(7)</p> <p>N/A (8)</p>	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M1e	<p>It was a good career opportunity (5)</p>	Choose one	<p>I was unmotivated by this factor (1)</p> <p>I was much less motivated by this factor (2)</p> <p>I was less motivated by this factor (3)</p> <p>I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4)</p> <p>I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5)</p> <p>I was motivated by this factor (6)</p> <p>I was very motivated by this factor(7)</p>	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

			N/A (8)	
M1f	Other (6)	Choose one	I was unmotivated by this factor (1) I was much less motivated by this factor (2) I was less motivated by this factor (3) I was neither motivated or unmotivated by this factor (4) I was somewhat motivated by this factor (5) I was motivated by this factor (6) I was very motivated by this factor (7) N/A (8)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2	Consider this list of volunteer topics and rate your interest level from not interest to very interested:			To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2a	Animals	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2b	Arts and Culture	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

			Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	
M2c	Children and Youth	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2d	Community	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2e	Education and Literacy	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2f	Employment	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

M2g	Faith-Based	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2h	Health and Medicine	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2i	Homeless and Housing	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2j	Hunger	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2k	People with disabilities	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2)	To find why did the user



			Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	commit to volunteering
M2l	Seniors	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M2m	Sports and Recreation	Choose one	Very uninterested (1) Uninterested (2) Somewhat uninterested (3) Neither interested or uninterested (4) Somewhat interested (5) Very interested (6) N/A (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering
M3	Have you ever found a volunteer opportunity from the following	Select all that apply	Email Marketing (1) Social Network (2) Print Advertising (3) Television Advertising (4) Faith-Based Organization (5) School Database (6) None of the above (7)	To find why did the user commit to volunteering

## SECTION: USE OF TECHNOLOGY

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
U1	Choose some technologies you have used to find volunteer opportunities	select all that apply	Email (1) Organization's Websites e.g. SalvationArmyUSA.org (2) Search Engines e.g. Google, Bing (3) Databases e.g. VolunteerMatch.org (4) Social Networks e.g. Twitter, Facebook (5) I haven't used any (6) Other (7)	To determine what technologies if any participants used
U2	Which if any of the means have you used to stay connected with the organization you have volunteered with?	select all that apply	email newsletter (1) social media feeds (2) organizations website (3) direct mail (4) none of the above (5) some other way (If other, please specify here): (6)	

## SECTION: SOCIAL

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
S1	Would you be more likely to volunteer for an opportunity if you had friends or family participating for the same opportunity?	Rate how likely you would be to volunteer	Very unlikely (1) Unlikely (2) Somewhat unlikely (3) Neither likely or unlikely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Very likely (7) n/a (8)	To see if users are affected by their social groups

## SECTION: CLARITY

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
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C1	<p>Please consider the following volunteer opportunity:</p> <p>SitStayRead programs are ongoing throughout Chicago in over 30 at-risk classrooms in ten different schools, as well as five community center sites. Become a Dog Team - A Dog Team is a volunteer and their SitStayRead Certified Reading Assistance dog, who are assigned to one of three small groups of children in a program each week. They will work with one to three kids at a time, for five to seven minutes each. A Dog Team is ideal for a person who prefers a more one-on-one approach, can multi-task easily, and is able to reinforce Dog Safety, while their dog can easily adapt to sudden environmental changes, has great coping skills, and comprehends basic manners and commands.</p> <p>Commitment: 1 hour and 15 minutes per week for up to 8 weeks.</p> <p>Training Required: Volunteer Orientation &amp; Literacy Training,</p>	How likely are you to volunteer for this opportunity	<p>Very unlikely (1)</p> <p>Unlikely (2)</p> <p>Somewhat unlikely (3)</p> <p>Neither likely or unlikely (4)</p> <p>Somewhat likely (5)</p> <p>likely (6)</p> <p>Very likely (7)</p> <p>n/a (8)</p>	We want to gauge interest in opportunities with more and less detail
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	Shadow a SitStayRead Program in action, volunteer as a Book Buddy for a minimum of 3 sessions, attend a Dog Team Information Session, & pass the Dog Team Test			
C2	Please consider the following volunteer opportunity: SitStayRead programs are ongoing throughout Chicago in over 30 at-risk classrooms in ten different schools, as well as five community center sites. Become a Dog Team - A Dog Team is a volunteer and a SitStayRead Certified Reading Assistance dog, who are assigned to groups of children in a program. A Dog Team is ideal for a person wants to volunteer with their dog. Commitment: Up to 8 weeks. Training Required: Attend an information session, an orientation, training, and pass a Dog Team test.	How likely are you to volunteer for this opportunity	Very unlikely (1) Unlikely (2) Somewhat unlikely (3) Neither likely or unlikely (4) Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Very likely (7) n/a (8)	We want to gauge interest in opportunities with more and less detail
C3	Please consider the following volunteer opportunity: SitStayRead programs are ongoing throughout	How likely are you to volunteer for this opportunity	Very unlikely (1) Unlikely (2) Somewhat unlikely (3) Neither likely or unlikely (4)	We want to gauge interest in opportunities with more

	Chicago in over 30 at-risk classrooms in ten different schools, as well as five community center sites. Become a Dog Team - You and your dog will read to children		Somewhat likely (5) likely (6) Very likely (7) n/a (8)	and less detail
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\*In questions C1 -C3 users were randomly given one question to answer.

#### SECTION: WRAP-UP

#	Question	Instruction	Answers	Reason
W1	If you have any additional comments about your experience here or with volunteering in general, please let us know.		Text input	