

Team A Project

Interactive Cookbook

Stage Two: User Research Report

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Project Description

Our project is a digital cookbook application that is accessed primarily from the mobile phone, which also has a desktop counterpart. In the application a user can search or log in ingredients in the app to pull out a list of possible recipes with accompanying review scores which they can scroll down and select, popping open a list of ingredients and how they should be prepped and under/on a another tab is the instructions which can be pressed on to open a guide on what the step means as well as a timer option for relevant steps (ex: bake for half an hour, let it stand out and cool for 5 mins.). In addition, there would be a tab for nutritional information and another tab that allows a user to save, edit and share a recipe.

The goal of this app is to help people to cook, from people brand new to cooking to those who are experienced in one style or culture and wanting to try another culture to those that want to share their recipes. Its expected that the app will be able to be used anywhere, from the grocery store to look at recipe ingredient lists and home inventory to cook prep on the table to use during cooking and having buttons big enough that precise presses aren't needed and instructions are readable under a different number of light conditions to users simply sitting in a chair and exploring recipes they are interested in or wish to share. With this it's expected that the system will be used daily to weekly by users.

Stakeholders

Chef/Home cook

- The user that navigates the app while or slightly before cooking in order to perform the given recipe on the application. This stakeholder extends from professional chefs to those wanting to learn cooking skills, and everything in between.

Person acquiring ingredients for a recipe

- The people either prepping or gathering the ingredients for the recipe that they've chosen.

People submitting recipes to the app

- People will add recipes to the app to allow the end users (Chef/Home Cook) to have a wide variety of food to choose from.

App Developers

- Developers of the app who have a vested interest in the success of the app.

User Methods

Five Whys

The Five Whys research method is an effective method because it is a great root cause analysis tool to delve into the underlying reasons behind user opinions. I conducted this research on a frequent user of an already existing cookbook application to understand her motives, likes and dislikes, preferences, and concerns.

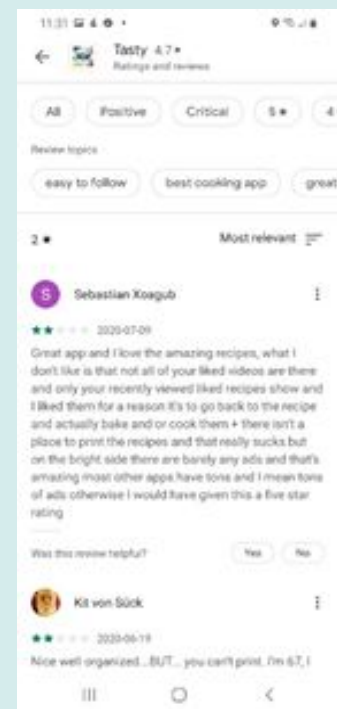
In summary however, I found that the root cause for users utilizing this app (from my research), is the variety of recipes and ability to add some creativity to cooking every night. And while the idea of simplifying complex cooking instructions down with step-by-step explanation, we must be careful not to lengthen the cooking process with drawn-out explanations. Because that can turn people away.

Competitive Survey

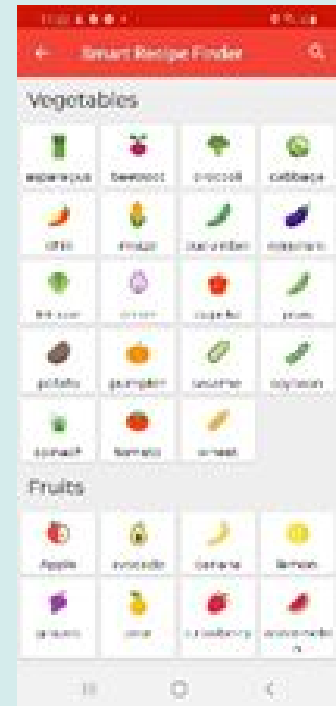
Competitive Surveys was one of our choices when looking at IDEO cards as we needed to find a benchmark on what were the baseline functionalities of any cookbook application.

Using this, we were not only able to find many other interesting functions, but we were also able to look at customers' opinions and their behaviours towards each app we analyzed.

There were many applications that we found and chose the ones that were similar to what we were planning on designing and in the end chose seven mobile applications from different os' to study. From our findings there was a huge range in user ratings on applications, so we chose some of the best and the worst, that were free to use.



We found that while a lot of the features we were planning on implementing were the same as some of the standards, one unique feature that we hoped to implement was focussed mainly on new users in the kitchen. With the function that we will implement it will also teach users and help them understand key terms used in the kitchen. This was not implemented in any of the applications we looked at. From our findings, users want a single application that was simple but had tools needed for all aspects of cooking. The applications we looked at while implementing only a couple features did not implement them all. One example of this was the timer, unit's converter and calculator combination in one application. While the application itself did not stand out compared to other applications it was a working application that had all these tools that users would use in addition to a shopping list. We also found other interesting features that we may think of implementing such as the specialized filters and smart recipe. Smart recipe was only implemented in one of the applications, where users choose what they have as ingredients and choose recipes based on what they already have. With these features, the user would only have to look at one application, not having to switch between other applications and web browsers for tools that would be useful when measuring, converting sizes, servings and cooking.



Scenarios

The scenarios research method was conducted to communicate and test design ideas in its context of use. This method was chosen since it is very useful for evaluating service concepts, in our case, evaluating how the interface of the app would be used in the most common scenarios while cooking. As a summary from

the scenarios method, common interactions were found such as finding specific recipes that fit the user's diet and preferences, the need to find groceries for the recipe, hands free operation while cooking, and finding out what a term means in the recipe. Through describing the scenarios, we have a task flow that would be carried out by the user during the specific scenario, and using that task flow will give us an idea of how best to implement the features into our application.

User Method Reflection

Five Whys

Through the Five Whys IDEO Card Method, I gathered valuable insight into the views of a regular cookbook user. If I were to tackle this method again, I would ask questions that provoke more of an in depth response. I found that my questions resulted in answers that were difficult at times to ask another why question off of.

Competitive Survey

Overall, this method worked very well with our findings, giving us new ideas and helping us understand the functionality standards. In terms of our application, we will be looking at new ways to implement useful functionalities that users want and learn from others mistakes by looking at the reviews that were given to each application.

One issue with this competitive survey is the price of some of the applications. Of course understandable, but to compare competitors it would be best to look at all types instead of just free applications that may not have complete functionality. If I were to use this method again, I would also ask a friend or a family member to look at each application to ask for another perspective.

Scenarios

Overall, conducting the scenario user method allowed us to describe specific scenarios which users would interact with the app, and through describing, we got a sense of how exactly the app would be used. As well, it gave us examples of user tasks. What I would've done differently is revisit these scenarios as development of the app is in progress and I believe it would lead to more revealing insights.

User Tasks

Must be included

- Be provided a simple explanation for a complicated cooking technique
- Be able to open and easily navigate a recipe
- Ability to move between and read steps while cooking

Important

- Utilize as a virtual pantry list and shopping list
- Search for and find recipes
- Add, edit, favorite and share recipes

Could be included

- Watch an instructional video regarding complicated cooking techniques
- Utilize included traditional cooking tools such as unit converter, timer

Appendix

Five Whys

Why do you use a cookbook app?

"Because I am not creative enough to come up with recipes and they have lots of fun new stuff to try."

Why is it fun?

"New recipes I would never think of. It is also very efficient."

Why is it efficient?

"You can make a grocery list in the app and it will take all the ingredients for a recipe and add it to your list. And you can add all your other groceries to the list as well. However, sometimes the recipes are confusing."

Why are the recipes confusing?

"They assume you know all the cooking lingo and they will use words that you do not know."

Why would you / wouldn't you watch a step by step explanation of those complicated cooking terms?

"You don't want to sit there and watch a video explanation of a term but a short, succinct summary describing the main gist of the technique should be enough to make it click in my brain."

Scenarios

Finding specific recipes that fit the user's diet and preferences – The user wants to find a recipe that fits in their low calorie and low sugar diet, as well, they are craving Mediterranean food. They will be able to go to our app, put these preferences into our filters and look for recipes that fit.

Need to find groceries for a recipe – The user has picked out a recipe that they want to cook, however, they have to buy the groceries that they have at home. They will be able to use our checklist for items needed for the recipe that also provide alternatives if they cannot be found at the store.

Hands free operation while cooking – The user is cooking a recipe that requires hands on cooking but wants to navigate the app without getting their phone dirty. They will be able to use gestures to navigate the app to change between steps while cooking.

Don't know what a step/term in the recipe means – The user does not know certain cooking terms while cooking and requires immediate assistance. They will be able to click on a term and get a definition and a video on what the term means and how they would apply it to a recipe.

Competitive Survey

Tasty – Android: Rating: 4.7 rating

Features:

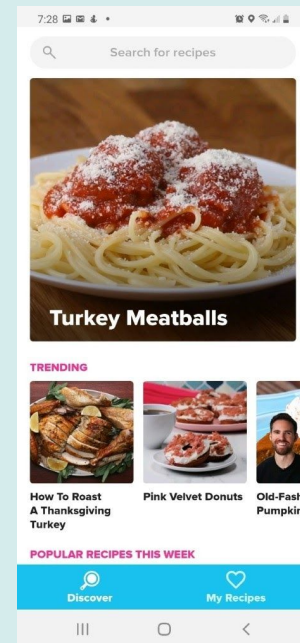
- Nutritional Facts Information
- Adds other tips + photos showing that there involves some social interaction
- When going through directions – there is a gif that show user what to do
- Adds dietary restrictions

Reviews:

- “Can't add new recipes”
- “Notifications turned off because of forceful content”
- “Videos do not contain sound”
- “Apparently Apple and Android applications are different”

Notes:

- What is trending + under 30 min
- No shopping list
- There needs to be a way to add ingredients you wish to use or have
- Adding section for dietary restrictions: Allergies
- Maybe adding a feature to change (substitute) ingredients



All Recipes Cookbook – Android: 4.3 rating

Features:

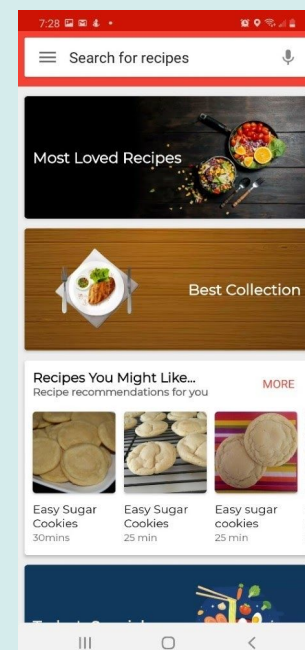
- Does contain shopping list
- Users can add their own recipes
- In multiple languages

Reviews:

- “constant popups make it very frustrating”
- “Not enough types of food”

Opinions:

- recipe finder adding foods you want or already have
- Changeable Unit sizes



- Direction to prepare are terrible with no formatting, no videos
- Contains popular food YouTube videos – Ehh
- The bookmarks should have some sort of filter to them if not even multiple lists

Cookmate – Android: 4.7 rating

Features:

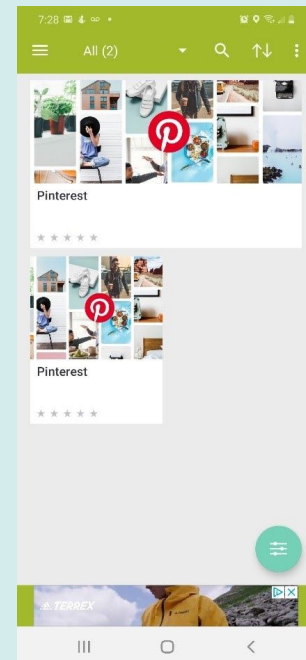
- Create recipes
- Import from websites
- Can import already owned cookbook
- Social – Adding friends to share recipes
- Meal planner

Reviews:

- Import recipes, easy to add
- Turn screen sideways to get split screen, both scrollable for ingredients and instructions

Opinion:

- Big problem: App does not contain any recipes
- Not very much to review on



Cookbook – Apple: 1.0 rating

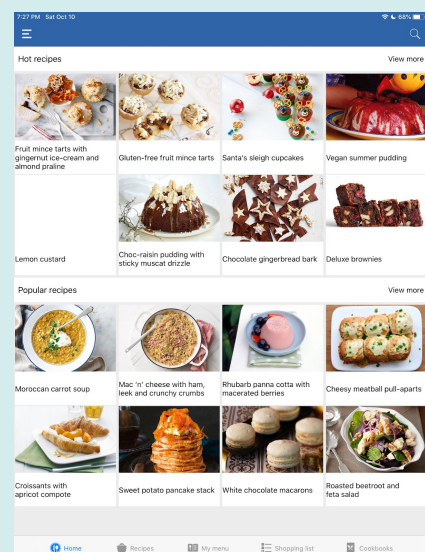
Features:

- Can add favorites into more organized lists
- Shopping list feature
- Check boxes

Reviews: None

Opinion:

- It's a regular design – nothing too unique
- Have many unique categories: Vegan Christmas, Football Finals
- The menus – picking out breakfast, lunch dinner and drinks for each menu



Personal Cookbook II – Apple: 4.6 rating

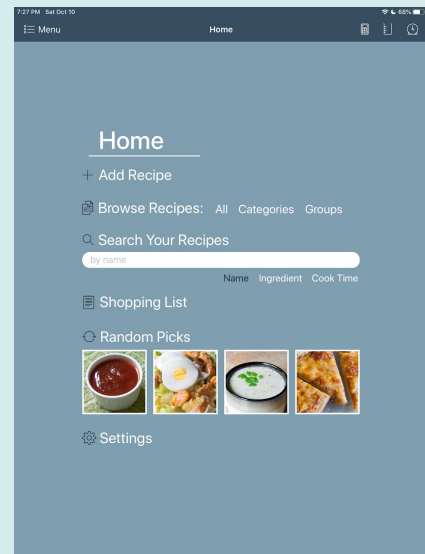
Features:

- Checkboxes
- Only contains 4 recipes, then need to add own
- Subcategories + groups
- Contains timer, Unit conversions (teaspoon to tablespoon) and calculator

Reviews: None

Opinion

- Very cool changeable themes
- Like the extra features (tools)



Cookbook Recipes App – Android: 4.4 rating

Features:

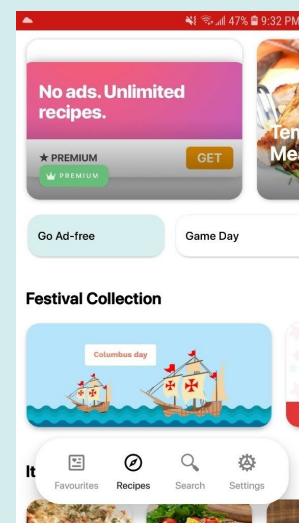
- Try to recommend recipes based on previous ones
- Ability to search based on type of recipe such as dessert/breakfast/vegan or even based on holiday
- Allows you to create a shopping list
- Ability to favorite recipes for easy access later

Reviews:

- "Simple to use"
- "Constant messages to upgrade to premium"
- "Too many adds"
- "not many recipes when buying app"

Opinion:

- Pretty solid design, a lot of customizability
- A LOT of ads and popups to have you subscribe to premium



Overall Features

- Adding Nutritional Facts is a must
- Features such as conversion tools, calculator, timer
- Shopping List checkboxes – Maybe quick adds for user chosen products
- Adding Tips – social
- Filters for search
- Multiple Lists
- Smart Recipe Finder, (substitute) ingredients
- Importing
- Not a single app contains a searching feature on keywords.

References

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Portfolio

Stage 2

The deliverable that encompasses the second stage of the team project is a user research report where we accomplish the following tasks.

- Identify our project idea. Succinctly describe the nature of the project and how we expect our system to be used.
- Identify stakeholders and users.
- Conduct three user research methods selected from the IDEO Method Cards deck.
- Conduct these methods with potential users and/or stakeholders and make notes about the experience.

User Research Report



[The A Team - Portfolio](#)