UW IT DEPARTMENT

INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

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SUMMARY

We interviewed three student IT workers that completed our cultural probe kits. Our interview questions were aimed to be fun, while being related to IT. The ultimate goal was to learn more about the individuals on a personal level, learn more about the day to day schedule of an IT worker, and fill in the gaps from the cultural probe kits.

ANALYSIS: WHAT WE LEARNED

Through open and general questions, we learned more about the backgrounds and personalities of our interviewees. Then, through more targeted and more directly related interview questions regarding their jobs, we gathered direct responses and sentiments on their jobs.

Even though all the interviewees were interested in computers and technology which lead them to take the IT position, their current majors are not directly linked to IT. The interviewees are majoring in media communication, biology, and mathematics but their hobbies and interests are in computers and computer science. Interviewees work relatively long hours (average of 16.2 hours/week)

considering the maximum allowed work hours on campus is 19.5 hours, which means they spend a lot of time on campus.

Also, they have been working the same position for a while with an average duration of 1.9 years. In one of our interviewees, he only worked for 5 months but he had nothing but positive things to say about his job that he will hold his job for a longer period of time and have worked in numerous IT jobs beforehand. These figures suggest that all of our interviewees have enough experience with their IT jobs to provide us with meaningful responses and data. We noticed that all interviewees have a similar way to de-stress from their job by talking to either to their coworkers or someone they know during or after work. They all enjoy working with their peers and boss, as they talked really fondly of them. We also learned from our interview that they had similar motivations as they craved freedom/stability. We got that the users' motivation from the question about what they would do with a million dollars question. We got that people craved freedom/stability form their responses, "move out of their parents' house', 'pay off student loans', and 'investing'. We also got a sense that two out of three interviewees are decisive and have some leadership role outside of IT. For example, one of the interviewees worked as a host fort UWave and one of our interviewees is the chair for STF.

Another thing that we noticed that all of the IT workers liked helping people at their jobs and that would have explained why in our cultural probe kit that many people did not give many responses in the Dumb IT section.

"I just talk about the issue with co-workers, laugh about it, and get over it" - Caitlyn
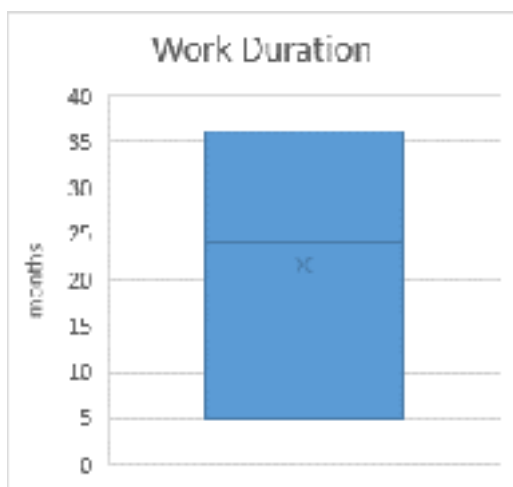

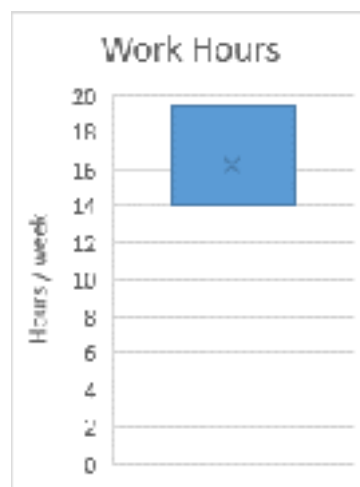Figure 1: Work duration (months)

Figure 2: Work hours (hours/week)

Their duties can be categorized into two: doing technical support in help desk and setting up equipment needed for classes. During the interview, they showed both negative feelings and positive

feelings towards those duties. Noticeably, they are getting satisfaction from helping others, solving problems, and working with technology. On the other hand, they do not like getting lots of phone calls, miscommunication and repetitive work (Figure 3: What interviewees like and don't like).

WHAT INTERVIEWEES LIKE	WHAT INTERVIEWEES DO NOT LIKE
■ Working with technology ■ Helping people ■ Solving problems ■ Being productive ■ Socializing ■ Games ■ Exercising ■ Music	■ Miscommunication ■ Repetitive tasks ■ Documentation ■ Lots of phone calls ■ Current website tools (not mobile friendly) ■ Stubborn people

Figure 3: What interviewees like and don't like

"I like the smile people get when I fix their computer" - Caitlyn

"Miscommunication happens sometimes. It can be a little frustrating because professors request help about equipment, but in fact that's not in our records so we don't know anything about it. But we need to quickly respond because they need it for their classes. That's a little frustrating" - John

"Answering calls and writing emails are the most stressful part of the job because you have to do stuff right in the moment, figure out what is wrong and document them" - Zach

Based on the positive attitudes, it seems that all the interviewees enjoy their job at the IT department, but they expressed mixed feelings toward some tasks. We collected all the terms they used to respond to questions relating to their duties. Then we categorized those terms into three groups: positive, negative and neutral. We generated a Word Cloud from the collected positive and negative terms (Figure 4: Positive and negative word cloud) which shows a strong sense of feeling towards certain aspects of their tasks.
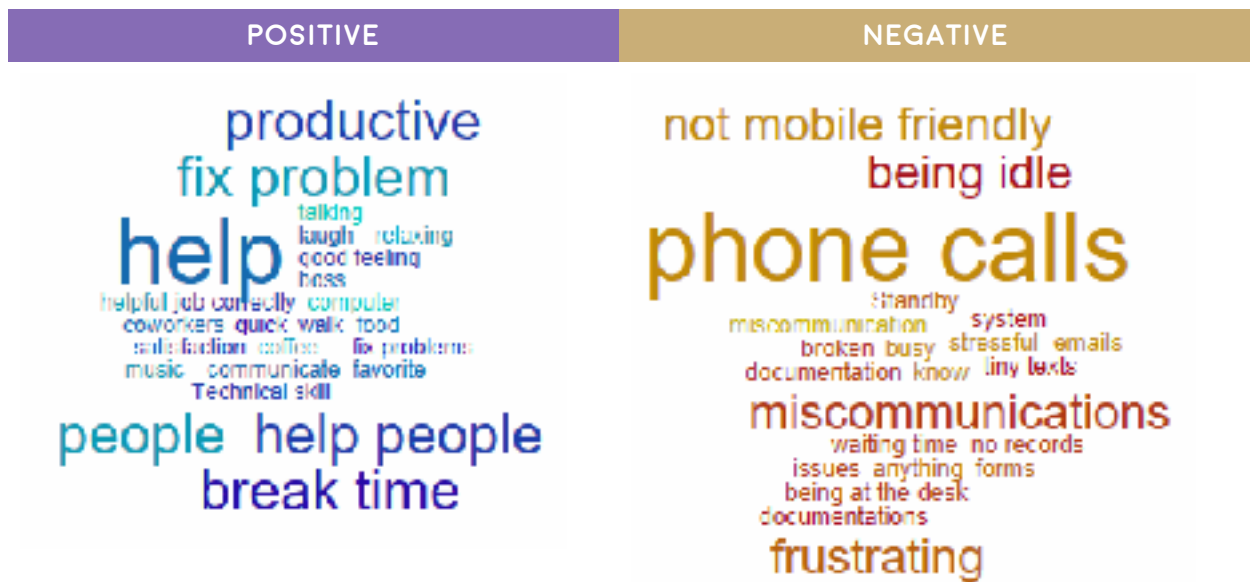
| POSITIVE | NEGATIVE |

Figure 4: Positive and negative word cloud

CONCLUSION

The themes in our interviews tell us a lot about the personas, pain points, and motivations of an IT worker. The interviews helped us figure out the gaps in our cultural probes. Some of the holes we had with the cultural probes were that we didn't gather a lot about the IT worker's behavior, personas, and motivations as we were too focused on gathering information on their pain point which is problematic when trying to build a human-centered application for them. We gathered some information that might not be as useful for this project, such as sleep level versus exercise, which is useful in creating a picture of their day but not helpful in understanding our demographic. The main themes in our interview: Our users really enjoy helping people, they enjoy their jobs and enjoy being good at their jobs, and they are interested in IT but aren't necessarily from an IT major.

After conducting our interviews, we feel that we missed out on an opportunity to get to know our user group on a more personal level. Our interview questions, while still useful, felt a little too analytical. If we were to do this section of the project again, we would have gathered more thoughtful information on our users and really got to know their personalities to allow us to compare what information we know from the cultural probe kit with the interviews.

We learned a lot more about what they do during their jobs in depth and got to know what they liked and don't love in IT. We came into this project assuming that IT just sat at the desk all day and

waited for people to come in and check out equipment, or wait for people to call in and ask stupid questions about how to use computers. We were half correct with our hypothesis as they did wait for people to call in and ask questions, but many of these questions were not dumb and they were genuine in wanting to help people. We also realize that IT's workflow comes in waves when there are times where they have some downtime but most of the time they are productive. Most of them feel that they are productive in their work and feel fulfilled if they helped someone.