



UW IT DEPARTMENT CULTURAL PROBE KIT ANALYSIS

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PROCESS

As a group, we created and designed a cultural probe kit to gain a better understanding of the University of Washington, Bothell's staff culture, behavior, and attitudes about their job. We carefully selected items that we thought are enjoyable and quick to complete during their job. They were given the kit to take home for 7 days and the data found in the cultural probe kit was used to redefine the checkout process.

BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS

We made a total of 7 kits and gave them to the IT Department to distribute to staff members who were interested in participating.

- 3 / 4 participants fully completed the cultural probe kits
- Only able to interview 2 / 4 participants after they finished the kit due to time constraint

INSIDE THE CULTURAL PROBES KITS



CULTURAL PROBES KITS FINDINGS



Word Bubble

Purpose: Identify their personalities and feelings

Findings: We got positive responses, but some of the choices were negative. We interpreted the negative sense of words as emotions that our app should not evoke.



"Dumb" IT Questions

Purpose: Identify their pain points and questions they get asked

Findings: The reactions of people were not that strong as we expected. We found that many people did not find any questions as "dumb" but one staff left a sketch that implies that they deal with the stress of the job through humor.



Emoji Tracker

Purpose: To find out how the staff feel about IT related items

Findings: Most people used more than one emoji sticker in each section to express their level of emotions. People showed some mixed feelings on some items, but we interpreted more dominating emotions for it.

- We discovered that students enjoyed their job in the IT department.
- They had mixed feelings about Canvas (Learning Management System used by UW).
- All of them felt frustrated and hated the current IT equipment checkout system.
- 3/4 staff loves video games and the one person who disliked video games also didn't like their job as much as the staff.



Campus Map

Purpose: Identify their study and hang out spots on campus

Findings:

- IT employees spend a lot of time on campus between eating and studying.
- We learned that many IT employees commonly visit the library for more reasons than just work. Most people visited the library to study, and the other half studied at the ARC.
- Most staff get to work through car and bus which tells us that most of them do not live on campus.
- We also learned that Food for Thought is a favorite place for them to eat and socialize.



Mood Chart

Purpose: Identify their stress levels throughout the day for 7-days

Findings: Only one person fully completed the full seven days of mood charts. It implies that not all the staff works full time, and the empty pages help identify how many days a week they work.

- We assumed that IT employees would not get that much sleep since they worked and also went to school full-time. We found that they got between 8 to 10 hours of sleep and they exercise frequently. This routine tells us they have a healthy day to day schedule.
- We also found that stress doesn't correlate with their work. The stress correlated with time as the staff was a lot more stressed towards the end of the week.



Postcard

Purpose: Identify their hobbies outside of the IT Department

Findings: We found that the staff had various hobbies ranging from photography, guitar, and basketballs. We also found that almost all of them like Milky Way Midnight candy, which we planned to reward staff who completed the kit.

REVISED DESIGN FOCUS

- Based on our research, we wanted to focus on reducing repetitive task with our design. We noticed that the 7 day mood chart was a bit repetitive, which is why only 1 / 4 participants fully completed it.
- We wanted to focus on reducing miscommunication with students and professors based on our research with the dumb it questions. We noticed that the staff used that section humorously with a sketch and wrote things such as no dumb questions.

KEY ASPECTS OF LEARNING

I learned that cultural probes are a real power tool to extrapolate information about your users. In our kit, we got a lot of insights about the staff's day to day that wouldn't be possible otherwise. I would look for more opportunities to include cultural probe kits in my user research activities.