

# Barkipedia

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## *Project Description*

**Barkipedia** is an informational app that caters to Calgarian Dog owners and lovers! With our app, we expect it to be used as way to find vital information about dog care, discover dog-friendly events around Calgary, find dog services around them, and interact with other users through forum posts and reviews.

## Stakeholders

The Barkipedia's target audience will encompass people who are curious about dogs but have a limited knowledge on them, long-time dog owners who would consider themselves experts, and everyone else in between. Barkipedia's target audience will encompass people who are long time / short time dog-owners, future dog-owners, dog enthusiasts, and the Calgary community overall.

These are the expected stakeholders we have identified.

Experienced Dog-Owners

Inexperienced Dog-Owners

Future Dog-Owners

Calgary Community

Influencers / Dog Enthusiasts

Experienced and inexperienced dog-owners are the expected central stakeholders for Barkipedia. The way they will use the app will be through asking and answering questions on Barkipedia's forum - Bark Overflow, set up online profiles for themselves and their dogs, browse through services and events around Calgary, and leave reviews for other users who are interested in getting feedback from the community.

Future dog-owners are another stakeholder we believe will be part of Barkipedia's user base. We expect that these users will use the app in exactly like the experience and inexperienced users, but with more of a focus on searching for more basic information that is typical of those that are looking into getting a dog. This information includes searches about tips and tricks, finances, home environment, energy levels, and amount of time required to care for that certain dog. These users and the inexperienced dog-owners are what we expect to be the main bulk of contributors of the Bark-Overflow forum in form of asking questions.

The community at large entails individuals and groups who would not normally be using our app directly but would still be benefiting from the app's features as a stakeholder. For example, dog service business would certainly have the potential to benefit from our 'reviews' feature as their business would be listed and rated by our users. Event coordinators may benefit as well from the features such as the review functionality, and the events and Bark-Overflow features. Being able to get any sort of attention on platforms where users are looking for events are huge for coordinators, along with being able to communicate to potential and current attendees via the forum can benefit event popularity greatly.

Furthermore, 'influencers' should also be considered as stakeholders for our project. These are the people with a large following and are trusted by many to provide reliable, accurate information. They can include businesses that provide dog services, community centers, cafes and restaurants, organizations, etc. The way they relate to the design of our system is through reviews and Bark-Overflow. Due to their popularity they would be able to give advice through reviews and through forum responses. Dog enthusiasts can fall into this category as well as stakeholders, as dog enthusiasts can be either a current dog owner or prospective dog owner.

## User Research

The first research method that our group conducted was the Extreme User Interview. Given that our app targets individuals that hope to adopt their first dog as well as long time dog owners; it was clear we needed to gather information from both ends of the spectrum. The ability to cater our interview questions so that we can find out exactly what sources of information are utilized currently; as well as how seriously the advice of other dog owners in an online forum would be taken was of utmost importance to us. We found that this method of research was appropriate because we want Barkipedia to be the go-to for top tier experience when it comes to doing research on dogs, whether you are just starting, or have had a dog for years.

Matt interviewed 2 long time dog owners and 1 person who wholly intends to get a dog in the future. Shanty interviewed 1 long time dog owner and 2 people who intend to get a dog in the future. Through their interviews, they've summarized a few things. It turns out the research done by both extremes are quite similar. This research method revealed an in-depth insight on how effective the methods of research they used were, as well as information about how much value they give to advice given to them from other dog owners about behavioral/medicinal/equipment, etc., and the likelihood of them interacting with other dog owners in the community through a forum. Barkipedia is centered around interaction between members of online communities related to the points. . Most topics searched were behavioral, where breed specific searches were the most common. The importance of user reviews throughout all interviewees were evident and advice from other dog-owners with the same breed was held in high regard. The importance of peer reviews with relevant experience was very important to both extremes.

What went well:

- Obtained in depth answers about what pieces of advice the interviewees would take more seriously over other advice given to them by other dog owners.
- Good insight as to what questions people would be asking online communities, why they would ask on a forum, and which problems they would just generally research on their own.
- Information about how ratings influenced decisions for services.

What went poorly:

- Some questions didn't consider some people who would have done both general searches and look for advice from experienced dog owners, and just assumed it was one or the other.
- Our evaluation of past experiences was hard to define as most of the "preexisting solutions" are just google searches.

What would I do differently?

- Try and define more specific pre-existing solutions to evaluate.
- Target users who have used dog related apps as opposed to people who have just done research via google.

## Secondary Research

The second research method that was selected was Secondary Research. Regarding our project's context, it is a fitting method to aid in our investigation phase because our project idea combines functionalities present in well-known applications into one. Throughout our secondary research, we continuously reminded ourselves that our users include people looking for a very convenient way to finding information that will help maximize their current or future dog's well-being. With that in mind we investigated systems that were directly related to Barkipedia's main features : Reviews, Forums, and Event Information.

Marela did research on popular sites that focused on reviews, forums, event information, and basic information. These included Google Reviews, Yelp, Reddit, StackOverflow, Facebook Events, and Eventbrite. Using Secondary Research for Barkipedia was incredibly useful for identifying the necessities of the functionalities our features must have. Through researching two apps for each feature, we were able to compare what was well done, and what one app may have done better than the other. Through conducting this research, we were able to figure out what design characteristics we would incorporate into our application based on the user experience we had personally from doing this research.

What went well:

- Easy to find applications to research because Barkipedia combines a lot of them into one

What went poorly:

- Nothing went poorly because these applications were typically ones that were used by our members frequently

What would I do differently?

- Next time, I would perform searches using these applications that would be like the searches that we expect to be done on Barkipedia. With this I would be able to zone in on the user experience from these other applications and use that data to make the user experience on Barkipedia better

## Tasks

1. Sophia is an avid dog lover with two dogs named Rosie and Sunny. She has recently downloaded the Barkipedia app on her phone and uses it to create a profile for herself and each of her dogs. Now when people visit her profile, they'll also be able to view some basic info on her pets.
2. Pablo is hoping to adopt a dog soon. He questions whether he has the time and resources necessary for raising a new dog as he a full-time student and part-time worker at a minimum wage job. He has limited knowledge on dogs so, he decided to sign up for Barkipedia. He then conducts research to find out which dog breeds suits his lifestyle the most. Based on the information he had read, Pablo discovers that due to his academic and work commitments, he is unable to own a dog until he graduates.
3. Shanty notices a bump on her dog's left eye. She is a new dog owner, so she is slightly panicked. Using Bark Overflow, an online forum on Barkipedia, she expresses her concerns regarding the bump and attaches a picture of it. An expert in dogs, Dr. Barksly, comments on the forum and asks for further details. The two exchange back and forth for a bit and eventually, Dr. Barksly concludes that the bump is probably benign. Another dog expert, Professor Peanut Butter, expresses the same sentiment. Relieved, Shanty thanks the two experts for their expertise and closes the app.
4. Daniel loves taking his dog to events but knows that there are events that are not dog friendly. He's had his dog for 2 years and has taken him to events a couple times and has gotten in trouble because the event was not dog friendly. Daniel goes on Barkipedia and checks the events that are happening in Calgary and finds one that is happening in a week. Daniel sets a reminder on his phone the night before the event so that he can prepare for it the next day.
5. Marela just got a new dog, Rufus. This is Marela's first dog and she knows that she must get core vaccinations for him. She goes on Barkipedia and does a search for vets that offer the vaccinations and finds a vet that has good ratings. She calls them and sets up an appointment for the following weekend.
6. Matt found a really good dog groomer for his dog Barkimus, on Barkipedia. He decides that he should probably leave a good review because he'll be returning and using their services in the future. Matt gets onto Barkipedia and searches for the dog groomer and leaves a five-star review. Other people have read his review and commented that his review was helpful.