Anakin: Interaction Design User Study

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Problem Overview

Dog owners are increasingly too busy to walk their pet dogs, but they find it hard to source for trusted and reliable dog walkers to walk their dogs. We would like to make dog walking a hassle free task for busy owners by allowing them to find trusted dog walkers around their vicinity.

Data Gathering

To gather data, we decided to use interviews with our target users. We interviewed 4 people in total: 3 dog owners and 1 dog walker. We chose to interview more dog owners as they will be the primary target user of our app and it is their needs that we are solving.

Target Users

We chose to interview 2 dog owners in their 20s who were also students living away from home, as we felt that they were more likely to have a need to hire dog walkers, as they do not have the time to walk their dogs.

We also chose to interview a dog owner in her 50s, as older folk tend to be physically weaker or less active, which might be an obstacle to walking their dog frequently. We felt that such a user would also have a need for someone else to walk their dog for them.

For the dog walker, we picked someone who had a few years of experience providing a dog walking service, as we felt that she would have enough experience to generalise the processes behind finding clients and walking dogs. We also thought that she would have a need to find more clients.

Interview: Dog Owner 1 (DO1)

Interviewee

Age	21
Gender	Female
Job Title	Student
User Type	Dog Owner
Location	College of Alice & Peter Tan, University Town, NUS
Interviewer	Sadhika Billa
Note Taker	Michelle Tan
Duration	6 minutes 33 seconds

Details

Likes	• Someone else to walk the dog for them, as it helps them do their job • Meet other dog owners • Fun features

Dislikes	-
Priorities	• Trust in the dog walker is important • Safety

Summary

She owns 1 dog that is extremely active. She does not walk her dog regularly as she lives away from home, it is her family that takes care of walking the dog. She has never hired a dog walker before but would be open to doing so, as it would help her 'do her job'. She is concerned about trust and safety when hiring dog walkers, and would like to use a mobile app to track her dog as it is being walked. She would like a rating system and photos of dog walkers. She would also like to meet other dog owners via a mobile app.

Interview: Dog Owner 2 (DO2)

Interviewee

Age	53
Gender	Female
Job Title	Housewife
User Type	Dog Owner
Location	Singapore
Interviewer	Leong Wei Ming
Note Taker	Leong Wei Ming
Duration	5 minutes 20 seconds

Details

Likes	• Likes her dog to lead a healthy lifestyle • Likes her dog to keep clean
Dislikes	• Other people from approaching her dog as her dog will bark
Priorities	• Trustworthiness of the dog walker • Ease of use as she is not very tech-savvy • Pricing of the walks

Summary

Dog Owner 2 (DO2) thinks that dog walking is the responsibility of the owner. She is not receptive to the idea of a dog walker app as she might not be tech-savvy enough. She also felt that trust from the dog walker is very important.

Interview: Dog Owner 3 (DO3)

Interviewee

Age	21
Gender	Female
Job Title	NUS Student
User Type	Dog Owner
Location	College of Alice & Peter Tan, University Town, NUS
Interviewer	Sadhika Billa
Note Taker	Manmeet Singh Saluja
Duration	9 minutes 17 seconds

Details

Likes	- A dog walker who is trustworthy - A dog walker who can get comfortable with the dog easily - Is playful and engaging when it comes to engaging with dogs and other walkers during dog walking.
Dislikes	A stranger to take care of the dog inside her home
Priorities	- Certification/Referral for the dog owner is important - Prefers if she obtains 2-3 different dog walkers rather than the same person every time.

Summary

DO3 owns a dog that is very active and requires the need to be taken for regular walks. Her parents take the dog regularly on walks, almost everyday. She has made use of dog walker service before when she and her parents have been really busy, mostly during weekends or when she is on campus. She prefers dog walkers who are trustworthy, her parents are fine with and at the same time playful with the dog. She wants to have 2-3 different dog walkers when choosing walkers to ensure that her dog gets to play with different types of dogs. She would also want to track the dog while it's on a walk.

Interview: Dog Walker 1 (DW1)

Interviewee

Age	20
Gender	Female
Job Title	NUS Student
User Type	Dog Walker
Location	College of Alice & Peter Tan, University Town, NUS
Interviewer	Sadhika Billa
Note Taker	Sadhika Billa

Duration	12 minutes 38 seconds

Details

Likes	- Does not have a preference for walking particular breeds - Neutral towards all breeds of dogs
Dislikes	- Dislikes having to negotiate rates with clients - Prefers a fixed rate based on time spent
Priorities	- Location of the client is a major concern - Prefers if the client lives in the same vicinity as her

Summary

DW1 is very open to the idea of having an app that allows her to find dog owners who live around the vicinity. DW1 prefers not to travel long distances to have to find a dog owner who requires his/her dog to be walked. DW1 is also tech savvy and prefers to have a mobile application. DW1 would also like to have a fixed rate agreed upon by the owner and walker instead of having to negotiate rates. DW1 only concern is the temperament of the dog. she would like to know what the dog likes to do and/or if there are any special considerations that the owner has while walking the dog.

Data Analysis

To analyse the problem of people not having enough time to walk their dogs, we have conducted interviews and contextual inquiry with three dog owners and one dog walker. The key observations derived from each interviewee have been summarized and can be seen from the following Work Models.
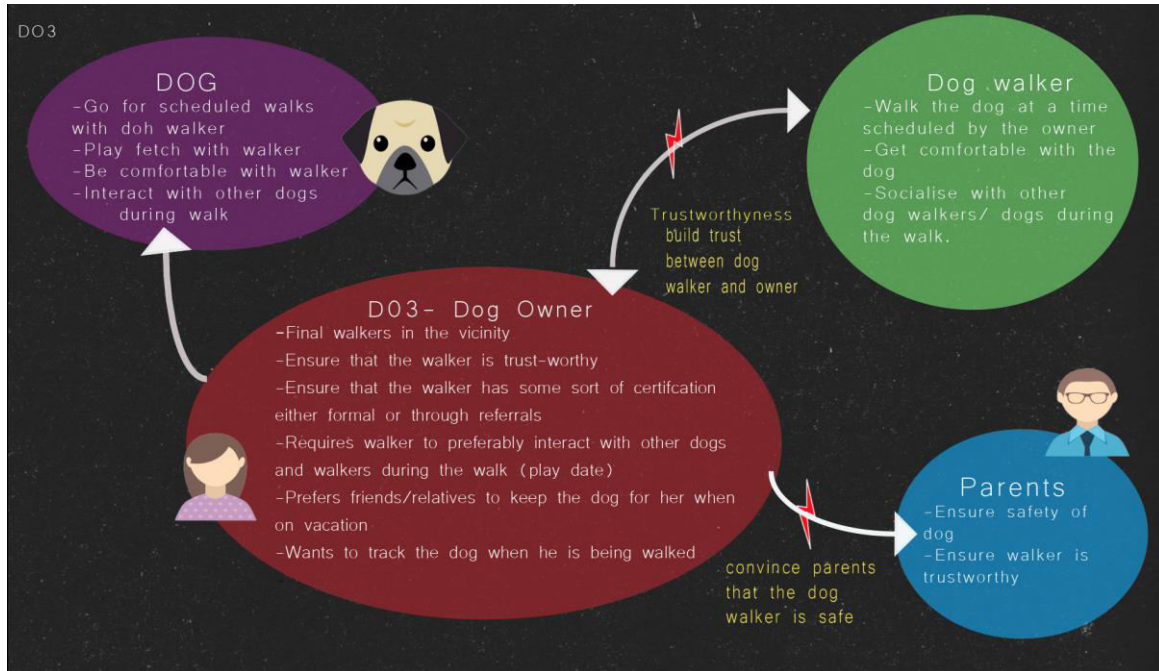

Sequence flow model based on Dog Owner 2's contextual inquiry

Conclusion from DO2:

- DO2 feels that dog walking is a dog owner's responsibility
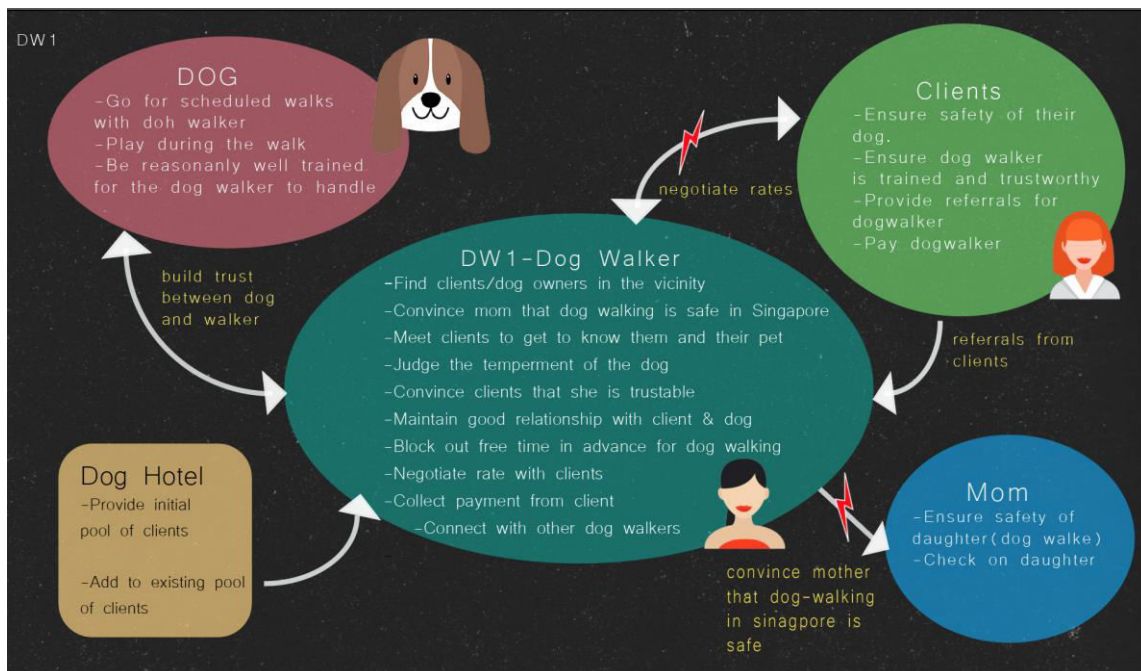- DO2 requires the dog walker to be trustworthy

- DO2 does not like the idea of dogs socializing during walks

Flow chart based on Dog Owner 3's interview

Conclusion from DO3:
- DO3 wants to know where the dog is during the walk
- DO3 requires the dog walker to be trustworthy
- DO3 would like the dog to socialise with other dogs during walks

Flow chart based on Dog Walker 1's interview

Conclusion from DW1:
- DW1 conducts initial meeting with Dog Owners to build trust
- DW1 finds clients in the vicinity
- DW1 blocks out free time for dog walking in advance

Findings

Similarities:

Based on both DO2 and DO3's response, trustworthiness of the dog walker is a common issue that needs to be addressed in our solution. From the contextual inquiry conducted on DO2, we can see that the dog's safety is in high regards as DO2 do not allow the dog to get dirty. In addition, from DO3's interview, it is noted that he/she would like to be updated on the dog's location during the walk.

All of this allude to the fact that the dog's safety during the walk is of high priority. Thus on top of being trustworthy, the dog walker should also be adequate in dog handling as well.

Differences:

Both DO2 and DO3's response differs slightly in regards to the perspective of having someone to walk their dogs. In DO2's case, he/she felt that dog walking is a responsibility of a dog owner and is not very receptive to the idea of letting someone walk the dog for him/her. However DO3 is more receptive towards the idea so long as the dog walker is trustworthy.

A possible reason for this difference in receptiveness is because of a generational gap between DO2 and DO3 (53 and 21). As DO3 is younger and perhaps more tech-savvy than DO2, DO3 might be more willing to try our solution than DO2. Another piece of evidence that might support this would be DO3 having to convince his/her parents, from an older generation, that the dog walker is safe.

What this entails for our solution might be to target only the younger generations that are more tech-savvy and more inclined to our idea of a dog walking application.

Contradictions:

One contradiction discovered was that DO2 is not open to the idea of dogs socializing while DO3 is. Socializing dogs is beneficial because it creates opportunities for the dogs to play around and releases excessive energies in them. However it is not without its dangers. Dogs can growl or even hurt one another if care is not taken during socialising. Thus this might have been a reason why DO2 is not willing to let his/her dog socialize during the walks.

Some form of dog handling certification or credential from the dog walker should allay such fears from users similar to DO2 as they will feel that their dogs are in safe hands.

Assumptions:

We assumed that our users would be tech-savvy and receptive towards an on-demand dog walking service to solve their problems. However more evaluation would have to be conducted to find out if this is a good solution to our users' problem.

Task Analysis

The task that we are analysing is walking a dog.

1. Who are the primary actors?

A dog owner and a dog walker.

2. What tasks do they now perform?

The main task is to walk a dog, but it is performed differently by dog owners and dog walkers.

Dog Owner

Phase 1: Preparation before a walk

> Find plastic bag and newspaper

> Bring both items when leaving for the walk

> Attach a leash on the dog

> Leave for the walk

Phase 2: Walk the dog

> Keep the dog close

> Do not allow dog to sniff dirty items on floor

> Pick up poop with newspaper and put it into plastic bag if dog excretes

> Allow dog to urinate on grassy area

> Depending on the person walking the dog, there are two types of actions:

> A: Keep the dog away from other dogs

> B: Allow the dog to socialise with other dogs

> Return home

Phase 3: After the walk

> Throw away the used plastic bag

> Remove leash from dog

Dog Walker

Phase 1: Preparation before a walk

> Find plastic bag and newspaper

> Bring both items when leaving for the walk

> Travel to the dog owner's house

> Contact the dog owner and retrieve the dog

> Attach a leash on the dog

Phase 2: Walk the dog

> Keep the dog close

> Do not allow dog to sniff dirty items on floor

> Pick up poop with newspaper and put it into plastic bag if dog excretes

> Allow dog to urinate on grassy area

> Depending on the person walking the dog, there are two types of actions:

> A: Keep the dog away from other dogs

> B: Allow the dog to socialise with other dogs

> Return to dog owner's house

Phase 3: After the walk

> Throw away the used plastic bag

> Remove leash from dog

> Pass the dog back to dog owner

3. Where are the tasks performed?
Dog owners and dog walkers generally take the dog for a walk near the dog owner's house. For dog walkers, they may travel further than their own neighbourhood to walk a dog.

4. How do users communicate with each other?
For the first contact between dog owners and dog walkers, the dog walker can post an ad for their services in specific periodicals like Club Pets, which is a magazine for pet owners. The dog owner then contacts the dog walker using contact details from the ad.

The dog owner tends to set some rules regarding what they want the walker to do with the dog, like allowing the dog to urinate or poop, or play with other dogs. They also have rules regarding whether the dog walker is allowed to give treats to the dog.

For further scheduling of walks, the dog owner then uses either SMS or Whatsapp to contact the dog walker and they negotiate a schedule.

5. How often are the tasks performed?
The frequency of walks does not depend on how active the dog is, but is more dependent on how free the user is to bring the dog out on walks.

In general, the users we interviewed had varied frequencies of walks, although most owned dogs that were very active. DO3 walked their dog almost every day, while DO2 walked their dog once or twice a week. DO1 did not bring their dog for walks at all.

6. What are the time constraints on the task?
DO1 preferred 20-30 mins for a walk, while DO3 preferred 30-45 mins.

The length of the walk desired depends on the person who is carrying out the walk, or the person who is paying for the walk.

Requirement Analysis

Based on the task analysis and contextual inquiry, we propose the use of a mobile app, an Uber for dog walkers to help dog owners and walkers connect with each other so that owners can ensure that their dogs get their walks and stay healthy as well as providing an opportunity for walkers to walk different kind of dogs as well as earn money in their free time.

Here are the main features we propose:
1. **Matching of dog owners and dog walkers by distance**
   a. DW1 doesn't prefer to travel long distances to find a dog to be walked. The dog owners also would ideally want to find a dog walker living closeby.
   b. Dog owners can request for a dog walker, and a nearby dog walker is then alerted to the request and can accept it.
   c. A Google maps interface embedded within the app to allow owners to set their location when they are making a request.
2. **Reviews and ratings**
   a. Both DO1 and DO3 mentioned that they would preferably want some sort of certification/referral to ensure that their dog is in the right hands and decently trained to walk their dog.
   b. A review page of dog walkers on the app, together with a ratings system, can help owners get a clearer picture on the credibility of the walkers and know more about the experiences that past owners have had with the walker.
3. **Live tracking of dog**
   a. DO3 mentioned that she would love to see the dog in real time being walked around by the walker. DO1 and DO3 were both concerned about the safety of their dogs too.
   b. A map interface within the app coupled with GPS can help dog owners track their dog in real time as the walk is in progress.
4. **In-app messaging**
   a. As DO3 and DO1 want to ensure they remain in the knowhow of how their dog is doing during the walk, enabling seamless communication between the dog owner and the walker is essential. Walkers might also need to connect to the owners to convey information about dog leash, poop etc.
   b. There would be an in-app messaging feature within the app that would enable the walker and the owner to chat seamlessly with each other.
5. **Payments**
   a. This is a new design opportunity that we find is important to address since payment is an inevitable part of the entire service that Anakin would provide.
   b. On checkout, the dog owner would be able to enter his/her credit card details or login through Paypal to pay the dog walker. Those payment details would then be saved in the app to facilitate ease of use in the future.

Reflections

We prepared a set of questions for dog owners at the start, and managed to get answers to most of the questions. After the interviews, we expected that the information would be sufficient for our user study. However, during the analysis stage, we realised that we were missing some parts of the information needed to make a strong conclusion about some user needs.

It seemed like we did prepare enough questions, but that we needed to prepare to ask more spontaneous questions when the user brings up interesting points that could lead to better understanding of the user's needs. However, time was another consideration that we had to adhere strictly to, and we could not finish all that we asked in some interviews. It seems that multiple rounds of interviews are needed as well as constant feedback from our target users.

We also had preconceptions about our target users, and that led to us picking the target users we wanted to interview. However, almost all of them gave answers that surprised us and differed from our assumptions. We also realised the importance of conducting user studies and getting to know our users.

During the contextual inquiry for DO2, the interviewer had trouble recording and taking down notes at the same time as the camera had to be held at all times since the dog owner was not stationary at one spot. A second person would have helped with the inquiry process.

We also attempted to carry out a contextual inquiry for DO1 by showing her a website for dog owners to meet up with dog service providers. However, DO1 did not show much reaction aside from saying that the website was 'okay'. We could have phrased our questions more precisely and probed deeper, or asked her to attempt to use the website. However, we ran out of time as DO1 had limited time to meet with us. We need to make full use of the time we have allotted for each meeting with the target users.

For the work models, the sequence one was the easiest to produce, as the interviewer had written notes for the contextual inquiry that were in a similar format. The flow work model was a little harder to create, as it required extra analysis of the relationships between the user and other actors, sometimes based on data that is implicit in the user's words.

Overall, carrying out the interviews and contextual inquiry, as well as the analysis afterwards, was an eyeopening experience. While it seemed easy to come up with an idea for an app or website, we sometimes forget that the actual goal is for the new idea to serve users. Through interacting with these users and getting to know more about the problems that they face and that we are trying to solve, we realised that it is not as straightforward as we thought, and how the techniques learned in CS3240 help with building up our idea.

Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent Form:

Interviews and Observations of Dog Owners

I hereby consent to participate in a research study conducted by Leong Wei Ming, Tan Jia Min Michelle, Sadhika Billa, and Manmeet Singh Saluja for an assignment in National University of Singapore Computer Science 3240, Interaction Design.

I agree to participate in this study the purpose of which is to determine the habits of dog owners.

I understand that

- the procedure to be used is interviewing.
- I will receive no compensation for my participation.
- I am free to withdraw before or any time during the study without the need to give any explanation.
- all materials and results will be kept confidential, and, in particular, that my name and any identifying or identified information will not be associated with the data.

Participant

Name (please print)_____

Signature_____ Place and Date_____

Investigator(s)

Name (please print)_____

Signature_____ Place and Date_____
_____

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Participant

Name (please print)_____

Signature_____ Place and Date_____

Investigator(s)

Name (please print)_____

Signature_____ Place and Date_____

Appendix B: Questionnaire

This questionnaire was not shown to users, but was used as a guide for the interviewer during the interview.

Basic details:
age, gender, occupation, geographic location

Dog owner details:
- how many dogs do you own?
- what breeds? ages? genders?

Dog details (per dog if possible, otherwise for just one dog):
- activity level? (very active, not active)
- how many walks in a week?
- how long does each walk last?
- what kind of activities do you do with your dog on the walks?

Dog walker experience details:
- have you ever hired a dog walker before?

YES
- how did you find the dog walker? friends? recommendations? website? community?
- how was your experience with the walker? good? bad?
- what could be improved?
- how did you hand over your dog to the dog walker?
- what do you want the dog walker to do on the walks?
- is your dog happy to walk with a dog walker?
- do you want to know what happens on the walk?
- when do you schedule walks? (on vacation? lazy? busy?)
- how often did you schedule walks?
- do you use other pet services? eg: dog sitter, grooming, showering

NO
- why not?
- would you hire a dog walker in the future?
- would you hire one from an app? why/why not?
- what details would you need to know to trust a dog walker from an app?
- how do you expect the dog to be transferred to the dog walker
- do you use other pet services? eg: dog sitter, grooming, showering

Appendix C: Interview Transcripts

Dog Owner 1 (DO1)

> Hi I'm 21 this year, I'm a student, and I stay in CAPT.

Note: CAPT stands for College of Alice and Peter Tan, a residential college in the National University of Singapore

Interviewer: Ok, so how many dogs do you own?

> I have 1 dog only.

Interviewer: And what breed is your dog?

> He's a maltese

Interviewer: Age and gender?

> Male, 6, going 7 soon.

Interviewer: Ok so is your dog extremely active?

> Yeah he's very active, he liked to play ball that time.

Interviewer: How many walks does he go on for a week?

> He doesn't goes for walks, he just runs around at home.

Interviewer: Oh I see, ok, so if he doesn't go for a walk, what other kind of activities would you like to do?

> Usually we'll play fetch with him at home, and he'll just run around the house.
> So most of the time he spends his time running.

Interviewer: Ok but since you're not at home, most often, who- let's say, takes him for a walk or plays with him when you're not there?

> Uhh... Like, my parents are working, so usually it's my brother after school. My brothers will help, if not it'll be our maid. Yeah.

Interviewer: Ok so if it was possible for you to have someone who could like, take him for a walk, would that be helpful?

> Yeah I think that'd be helpful.

Interviewer: Ok i see, so have you ever hired a dog walker before?

> No I've never tried because we don't know whether we can trust them or not.

Interviewer: Ok I see, so your main issue is like trust, is it?

> Yeah you can't just put your dog into another person's-
> Like, put your- like can they take care of your dog or not, then you don't know whether they will like take good care of it.

Interviewer: Ok so let's say if i told you that um, you have like, if you hired a dog walker and the person agrees to walk your dog, you could track your dog like, track the movements of your dog

> I think tracking would be helpful, like you know where your dog is and then like if you're worried, you can just check your phone or something.

Interviewer: Yeah.

> I think it'll be quite useful.

Interviewer: So you prefer something that's like a mobile app where you can-

> Yeah, on a phone it'll be much easier, maybe like something like Uber.

Interviewer: Ok cool nice, so ok. So let's say um, hold on ah, I forgot my question, ok so um if you have like, trust is your biggest problem, what if you had someone who let's say was a certified walker like, they had a certificate or someone who was referenced by somebody that you know, would you feel more comfortable like that?

> Yeah I think i'd be comfortable 'cause I know that since he, that person's certified like I know my dog will be in good hands, so I don't think I'll be as worried as like, some random person walking my dog.

Interviewer: Ok but let's say what details, let's say what details would you like to know about the person from the application if you needed to trust that person?

> Maybe like opinions and reviews from other people and then maybe like how many years she has been a certified dog walker or experience she has with dogs that kind of thing?

Interviewer: Ok, would you like any other services if I asked you...

> Services?

Interviewer: Like it's for the dog, [laughs] not for-

> [laughs] Uhhh... walk my dog, play with my dog, uhh feed my dog, groom my dog...

Interviewer: [laughs] oh my god- [laughs] let's go back to walking… So how long, how many like,

for instance if you knew someone who was near you and then the person agreed to walk your dog, so you would be ok with that, right? Like if the person was trustworthy enough?

> Yeah I would be happy like he helped, he helped me do my job what

Interviewer: Ok so, how long would you like your- a walk to last for?

> Maybe about… 20 to 30 minutes?

Interviewer: Ok, and how much would you like to pay for, let's say, your dog [walker] or someone was asking?

> I don't know the normal rate eh… so…

Interviewer: Okay-

> But... for 30 minutes maybe like… I really don't know, 15 maybe?

Interviewer: Okay.

> About there.

Interviewer: About there, so I guess- basically you'd like like a 20 to 30 minute walk.

> Yeah.

Interviewer: Preferably. Ok. What else do I have… [pause]

Interviewer: What else would you normally like, let's say in a dog walking application? If I make a dog walking application for you and tell you that you can track your dog and you can hire a walker. What else would you like? In the application. Like, would you like to be able to reference the walker? And stuff like…

> Uhhh maybe meet other dog owners.

Interviewer: Meet other dog owners?

> Yeah that'd be quite cute, or maybe your dog has his own page, like a Facebook page.

Interviewer: Ok, that's not a bad idea. I see.

> Maybe tips! Dog tips! That'd be useful.

Interviewer: Oh dog tips, so ok, something like that. I see ok. What else can I ask you? Umm ok hold on-

> Ok.

Interviewer: Hold on hold on hold on… [shows the Pawshake website] Play around with this website, what do you like about it? Like do you-

> A dog walker in my pocket?

Interviewer: Yup. Like if you can use the app to… like for instance there's this background check on the dog walker and if there's… like what else would you like?

> Umm…. I think it's ok eh.

Interviewer: Also would you trust somebody like, for instance, with your house keys or something, like how would you give your dog to them? let's say you're on vacation or something and you need your dog to be walked. what would be the most convenient way for you to-

> As in I don't think I would trust- and like give someone my house keys… no but even if I'm awaaay… Maybe I would pass my dog to someone else and then like the dog walker would pick him, like at that someone's house instead of passing the dog walker my keys.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, that makes sense. Ok would you also like a feature to be able to rate the person who's walked your dog?

> Yes.

Interviewer: Like a rating feature-

> Yeah that would be quite fun.

Interviewer: Quite fun-

> Maybe a photo of them too.

Interviewer: Ok a photo of them too, got it! Ok thanks!

> No problem.

Dog Owner 2 (DO2)

Interview

Basic details
Age: 53
Gender: Female
Occupation: Housewife
Geographic location: Singapore

Dog details

Number of dogs: 1

Name: Coco
Breed: Jack Russell Terrier
Age: 10
Gender: Female

How active is your dog?
Very active

How many walks do you bring your dog out to in a week?
1 to 2

What kind of activities do you do with your dog during the walks:
I'll bring her to the open grass patch under my block and walk her until she finish all her businesses. Then we'll sit under the block and enjoy the scenery. She is easily fascinated by the things around her. Occasionally we'll play with her ball too.

Have you ever hired a dog walker before?
No.

Why not?
I think since she's my dog, I should take responsibility and walk it

Would you hire a dog walker in the future?
No

Would you hire one from an app?
No

Why not?
It's my dog, I should take care of it. I would be more comfortable with the idea if dog walker is acquainted or someone that I know.

What details would you need to know to trust a dog walker from an app?
If he/she can handle the dog properly because my dog is very active

How do you expect the dog to be transferred to the dog walker
We should set a fix time and date, and the walker can come to my house to collect my dog.

Do you use other pet services? Eg: Dog sitter, grooming, shower

I bring my dog to the dog sitter on several occasion when the family isn't around. The dog sitter will provide the grooming and showering while my dog is there.

Contextual Inquiry

Time	Notable events
00:15	

Observation : Dog owner prepares plastic bag and newspaper

01:33

Interviewer: What is your purpose for walking Coco?

Response: So that Coco is not bored at home and let it take a walk

01:58

Observation: Dog owner do not allow dog to sniff dirty stuff

03:33

Observation: Coco mark spot with urine and kick grass

03:55

Observation: Coco poop and dog owner cleans up after her

05:38

Interviewer : Does Coco always poop when you take her out for a walk?

Response: Yes, she poops and pees during her walks

Interviewer: If someone is to assist you in dog walking, do you think that the house will be cleaner as Coco will be doing her businesses outside

Response: No, I prefer to bring Coco out myself

06:34

Interviewer: Does Coco fight with other animals?

Response: Nope, I refrain from letting Coco go in contact with other dogs

07:22

Interviewer: If someone were to walk Coco, would you prefer Coco to be taken to a far away place, or just nearby?

Response: I wouldn't be comfortable with someone bringing Coco to a far place, unless that someone is close to me and Coco

Interviewer: Since your dog isn't very sociable, if someone were to bring Coco to socialize with other dogs as part of the walk, would you be agreeable?

Response: I would prefer someone close to me and Coco to bring her out or unless I go along too

09:00

Interviewer: In the event of a bad weather and someone is walking your dog, do you want Coco to be cleaned up after the walk?

Response: In the event of bad weather, I wouldn't want my dog to be walked

Interviewer: Even if the walk is sheltered?

Response: Still no

10:25

Interviewer: If Coco is out on a walk and misbehave, can the dog walker discipline your dog? Or would you prefer a softer approach such as giving treats?

Response: Scolding is fine, even if it's loud but no hitting.

Interviewer: What about treats?

Response: Treats are fine

Dog Owner 3 (DO3)

Dog owner details

Age: 21
Gender: Female
Occupation: NUS Student
Geographic location: Home in Pasir Ris, Singapore. Stays in CAPT, Utown on campus.
- Walks dog regularly
- Has hired a dog walker before

Dog details

Number of dogs: 1
Breed: Shetland Sheepdog
Age: 2
Gender: Female

How active is your dog?
Quite active. It kind of falls in the breed of working dogs.

How many walks do you bring your dog out to in a week?
Every day almost. Sometimes weekends are busy so she is not able to take her on walks.

How long does each walk last?
Half an hour to 45 minutes per day.

What kind of activities do you do with your dog during the walks:
Sometimes play fetch and use sticks. Randomly throw them for the dog to catch. Nice size sticks. Also depends on where they are.

Have you ever hired a dog walker before?
Yes, a few times. I subscribed to Club Pets, which is a magazine for pet owners in Singapore.

Professional dog walkers who have certain certifications.

How was your experience with the walker? good? bad?
The experience was good.

What could be improved?
Sometimes the walker is busy. The walker has a lot of dogs to walk. If the walkers are around the area, it's convenient. Wants flexibility with the people walking the dog. Maybe rotate 2-3 people walking the dog rather than the same person walking the dog all the time.

What do you want the dog walker to do on the walks?
Just walk her and throw sticks for her to catch. The usual stuff.

Is your dog happy to walk with a dog walker?
The dog liked the walker a lot.

When do you schedule walks? (on vacation? lazy? busy?)
Most of the time when she goes on holidays. If her parents are busy few days in a row, then the walker is useful too.

How often did you schedule walks?

She tries not to schedule walks often. They like walking her. Only if they really don't have the time to walk the dog like if her parents are not home and if she's in campus, they would call the walker. Once a month maximum.

Where do you keep the dog on vacation?
Friends or relatives to walk the dog when they are away on vacation.

Let's say there's a person who could take care of the dog in your house a few hours a day when you're out on vacation. Would you trust the person to take care of the dog?

She would need to meet him/her in person first and get to know the person better.

Would you hire a dog walker from an app?
Yes, I would definitely.

Would you like to see the walker live in the app? Any other features that you would like in the app?
Yup, I would definitely like to see the walker live. But it would be even more interesting for the walker to able to find other walkers in the app. There could be a community of walkers who can track each other and could arrange a playdate in a park or something. Same goes for dog owners. It would be fun that way.

What is more important to you in a dog walker, trust? Comfort with the dog?
Trust is of course super important for her. She wouldn't want the dog walker to steal her dog way. But the dog walker being comfortable with the dog is also important her.

Let's say the dog walker isn't professionally certified per say but has references to affirm his experience. Would you be okay with that?
Yup, that's fine by me. I know it's hard to find a trained professional. If the dog walker has had experience working with different kind of dogs before, that should be okay for me.

Dog Walker 1 (DW1)

Interviewee
Age: 21
Gender: Female
Occupation: Student/Part time dog walker
Nationality: Indonesian, but has lived in Singapore for 6.5 years now.
Resides in: College Of Alice and Peter Tan (CAPT)

Interviewer: So what got you started on Dog Walking?

Oh, I started out by walking my friends' dog. So during that period she was super busy with her university work and her parents were working. So I used to go play with her dog and then eventually started walking her Lab. Then, because I liked dogs so much I went to work at a pet hotel in summer. So there I met dog owners and they were my first few clients.

Interviewer: How long have you been doing it?

3 years

Interviewer: Do you have any formal training or certification?

Nope. Just got good at it because I worked at the pet hotel.

Interviewer: Did you have any concerns when you first started out as an official Dog Walker?

I think my mom was a bit more worried than me, actually. She was just concerned about what will happen if the dog bit me or something. But I think in Singapore they are quite well trained so it's quite safe.

Interviewer: Do people prefer leaving their pets in a hotel or at home when they are away or busy?

I think cause like the hotel is not very cheap so most will be happy to leave the dog at home, provided someone can come over to feed, play and take the dog for a walk when they are away.

Interviewer: How do you usually find your clients?

Mostly online and by referrals.

Interviewer: Oh I see, so how many clients do you have now?

Around 50

Interviewer: Do your clients have any concerns about entrusting their dog to a stranger?

I meet my clients in person before I can agree to walk or take care of their dog. So once they meet me they are quite comfortable. Also a lot of them are through referrals so it's quite ok.

Interviewer: When do you normally walk their dogs? Example, weekends/free time?

Uhh.. I used to do it very often earlier in the hols when I had more time. But now it's mostly on my availability or when I know I don't have a lot of work.

Interviewer: What do you think your clients look out for most in a dog walker?

I think experience and profile. They determine if I'm trustworthy during the meet and greet session. Then I show them my IC etc.

Interviewer: Ok i see, so do you have a particular breed of dog that you prefer walking?

Not a breed as such. I walk all kinds of breeds. Just need to know the temperament of the dog.

Interviewer: How much do you charge your clients?

I actually charge variably. The further the distance from my place to the clients place the higher I will charge them. And also depends on how much time I need to spend with the dog.

Interviewer: Have you ever had any problems with your clients?

Hmm...not as such. I think the only problem sometimes is like the negotiating the charge. So a fixed charge may actually be better…

Interviewer: Oh, so distance from the clients place is a concern for you?

Yeah, of course. I prefer nearer to my place.

Interviewer: Do you any other Dog walkers?

Like official certified dog walkers? Then no. Not really. But like I think even you can do it, cause you already volunteer at SPCA right. Also Jen and Peter *(not real names)* sometimes come over and help me so they are also getting quite good..

Interviewer: Do you think you would like to have a platform where people could hire you to walk their dog so it will be easier for you to find clients?

Yeah, sure! Like I said before, since I'm also not free all the time, this will help me find clients whenever I'm free to walk the dogs.

Interviewer: What would you like to have in such an app?

Yeah, sure! Like I said before, since I'm also not free all the time, this will help me find clients whenever I'm free to walk the dogs.

Interviewer: What would you like to have in such an app?

I think knowing a bit about the client and the dog is good. For amateur dog walkers, I think location of clients is the most important as they usually base their preference based on whether the clients stay near / far from their houses, hence they're able to charge accordingly.
Also for amateur dog walkers, they may have certain preference of breeds of dogs they want to walk i.e. prefer smaller sized dogs, limit the number of dogs max to 2 for one walking.

Interviewer: What details would you like to know about the owner from app?

Just the basic – like age, gender and what dog they have and if the dog needs any special attention or something like that.

Interviewer: Would you like to be able to meet other dog walkers?

Eh, that's quite a good idea. Like then I can walk the dogs with other people also.

Interviewer: Ok! Thank you for your time!

Appendix D: Group Meeting Notes

Meeting #1
Time: Tuesday, 16th February 2016, 12pm to 2pm
Location: COM1, outside SR1
Participants:
- Leong Wei Ming
- Manmeet Singh Saluja
- Sadhika Billa
- Tan Jia Min Michelle

Discussions

Topic	Decision

Dog owner/dog walker interfaces	- Do we need 2 separate interfaces for a dog owner and a dog walker, like Uber has?
	   - Yes!
	- Should we put the 2 interfaces in separate apps?
	   - It's fine to put both in the same app
	   - We'll let dog owners and walkers have separate accounts and toggle the view based on their account

Social aspect of app	- Some of the dog owners we interviewed mentioned that they wanted social features in the app, although we didn't prompt them with questions about social aspects - They mentioned that they wanted to meet other dog owners - However we have 1 user who did not want their dog to socialise with other dogs while on a walk - Rationale? Would social aspects be useful to this user? Need to interview the user again
Generation gap issue	- The owner who did not want their dog to socialise with other dogs while on a walk was in her 50s, while the dog owners who wanted social aspects were in their 20s - Is there a difference in the features wanted by users when their ages differ? - Should we target younger users with the social aspect?
Scope of current user study	- How far do we analyse this? - As far as the data presented - Avoid using the context of an app and think of the user's needs
Tasks assignment	All tasks to be completed by **Wednesday, 17th February 2016, 10pm**. Each person - Fill in likes/dislikes, etc. of target users (under contextual inquiry) - Summarise contextual inquiry - Reflections at the end Manmeet - Flow model of dog owner

	- Data analysis
	
	Sadhika
	  - Problem overview
	  - Flow model of dog walker
	  - Requirement Analysis
	
	Kyle
	  - Sequence model of dog walk
	  - Data analysis
	
	Michelle
	  - Target user rationale
	  - Task analysis
	  - Appendices

Next meeting	- Thursday, 8am for editing - Online over Google Hangouts

Meeting #2
Time: Thursday, 18th February 2016, 8am to 10am
Location: Online, Google Hangouts
Participants:
- Leong Wei Ming
- Manmeet Singh Saluja
- Sadhika Billa
- Tan Jia Min Michelle

Discussions

Topic	Decision
Reflections	- Each person to share their reflections and one person to edit them together to form a shared reflection -> Michelle
Looking over the document for final changes	- Each person to make minor changes if necessary
Final edit	- Everything looks okay
Submission	- Submitted to IVLE
Next meeting	- Sunday, 10am for next step in prototyping