

An Observational Look and Analysis of UCI's Outdoor Spaces

Michael Orlanes - Discussion Session 1

Methods:

The first observation session happened on Monday, October 11th starting at 11:15am while the second observation occurred on Wednesday October 10th, starting at 5pm. I chose a morning/afternoon time for the first observation and an evening time for the second observation to see if different activities happen at different times, mainly attracting students during school hours and typically post-school hours. The first observation was held on the Northwestern side of Aldrich Park near the big tree, while the second observation was at the Arroyo Vista small park-like area on the North side. Both sessions were aimed to observe all users of the park which would include mainly students, and some visitors and staff. I focused on all the different and unique activities people would engage in and how the structure of the park and social surroundings affected their behavior.

Themes:

Personal Recreation and Relaxation:

People who tend to use the parks' space and utilities to engage in activities that involve fun, personal recreation (sometimes social) activities or as a space to relax and unwind. People in this group tend to stay in the park for long periods of time, with some observed people being present when I arrived and still staying after the observation concluded. Another noted factor is that these people tend to do their recreational or relaxational activities in provided shaded areas, typically trees or out in the open in cooler hours.

Evidence:

- A person under the shade near but not under the big tree relaxing and browsing their phone while laying down; does not have mask on (Day 1 – Line 4)
- A person using a public drinking fountain found in the park (Day 1 – Line 24)
- 3 boys, 1 girl playing with what seems to be a hacky sack and a trampoline in a game (Day 2 – Line 5)

A Place of Commerce and Communication

The Parks and outdoor space can be used as a way of social interaction, gathering, and often as a hangout spot for most college students. Directly observed cases of social interactions were for an outdoor game gathering, for promoting what seems to be sorority or organization and for providing shade to those who just want to stop and chat for a bit without getting too hot. Some people walk and talk which utilizes the outdoor space as a location to get from place to place while talking to others.

Evidence:

- Two people sitting under the shade but not directly under the big tree talking to each other (Day 1 – Line 7)
- A guy, girl, then another girl pull up to the 2 girls sitting under the tree with chips seem to ask what they are doing (Day 2 – Line 20)
- A man in a hat goes to stop and observe the guys playing in the middle with the hacky sack and trampoline and talks to them (Day 2 – Line 22)

Moving from place to place

A majority of the people observed fall into this group where they mainly use the parks' space as a shortcut to get from location to location. Although most people tend to walk there are a handful of people who use vehicular transport, which includes scooters, bikes, skateboards, and even golf carts for some of the staff. The starship food delivery robots frequently use the parks' (mainly Aldrich's) as a path to deliver the food. People who walk tend to mind their own business when walking, not talking and interacting with others. Some people also walk with others in which case they usually talk in the groups they came with or sometimes go out of their way to talk to people they pass by.

Evidence:

- A food robot going uphill on the inner ring road on the left side (Day 1 – Line 6)
- A person long boarding from the right side and then picks it up to walk on the dirt path (Day 1 – Line 36)
- A girl walks from the community center side walks to the upper dorms with no mask on while having a phone conversation (Day 2 – Line 34)

Persona:

Dennis Kuo



"I really do hope the Starship robots are able to deliver their food on time without issues"

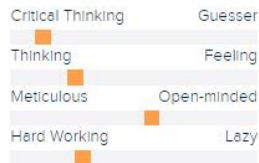
Age: 37

Work: Starship Engineer

Location: Irvine, California

Character: Strategically Careful Designer

Personality



Careful

Smart

Strategic

Optimizer

Bio

Dennis is a 37 year old engineer working for the Starship program as a designer for the Starship Robots that will deliver food, and the school of focus for the robots is UCI. He is intelligent and a hard working engineer who works relentlessly to make sure the Robots are optimized in any way possible. He wants to work with the civil engineers of the parks and outdoor spaces of UCI to find a compromise between the robots and the students/staff of UCI who also use these outdoor spaces frequently.

Tech Skills

Food Delivery Apps

Google Maps

Starship Tech

Civil Engineering

Goals

- Create and improve the Starship robots so that they can help to deliver people's food on time
- Have the robot be able to traverse most terrain and around crowds
- The Starship service receives high praise so that this project can prove to be successful and lucrative

Frustrations

- When the robot has to go through crowded areas full of people because it has a bit of trouble navigating through the crowd
- When the paths are not wheel/roller friendly as even though the robot tries to overcome this terrain, it would be much easier to avoid it entirely
- The robot having to deal with cars because unlike people, some drivers won't see or pay attention to the robot when it crosses the street

Needs

- * Wide walkways or segregated walk areas like bike lanes so that the robot can easily deal with large crowds of people
- * More paved paths so the robot can traverse terrain easier or adding more paved paths altogether so it can take as much of a linear path as possible to the destination
- * Signs around the parks and especially around streets to be careful and aware of any passing robots

Appendix 1 (In-field Observation Notes)

Observation 1:

Where: Aldrich Park near the big tree

When: Monday, October 11th at 11:15am

Who: College students and staff

Focus: What they do in a day-to-day basis in the park and how it could relate to COVID circumstances

1. Someone biking up hill on ring road on the left side
2. A person on their phone under a tree by ring road but not under shade
3. *A person coming from the outer ring like the student center then taking the dirt path to somewhere
4. A person under the shade near but not under the big tree relaxing and browsing their phone while laying down; does not have mask on
5. *A person with a hat cutting through the grass wearing a hat instead of taking the conventional path walking while browsing their phone
6. A food robot going uphill on the inner ring road on the left side
7. Two people sitting under the shade but not directly under the big tree talking to each other
8. A person on the right side sitting under the shade in the park chairs
9. A person walking their dog walking to the left from the right; no mask
10. A person walking with a hydroflask going upward toward sslh area; wearing no mask
11. *The people under the shade tree moved to the benches
12. *Person with the dog is walking the dog through the grass
13. *A person walking down inner ring road moves aside to let the food robot pass by her
14. *Two people walking with each other one with and one without as mask on talking to each other
15. A person walking with what seems to be a mini cooler in their hand
16. *Two people walking through the grass holding what seems to be a plastic bag of groceries
17. People walking on the both sides of ring road with people wearing masks walking across from people without their masks on
18. A group of 3 people walking from the left side onto ring road all not wearing masks and one of them holding food talking to each other
19. A golf cart from the left driving up ring road
20. Two guys talking with one another wearing his mask while the other talking to the other while his mask is on but pulled down
21. A person with a scooter coming from the left side going downward on ring road but stops and walks the scooter because the hills seems too steep
22. *A man in a trench coat holding his backpack in his hand instead of on his back
23. A person with another dog letting them use the bathroom on the grass
24. A person using a public drinking fountain found in the park; does not have a mask on

25. A person sitting on the benches on the right side with his head in the palms in a bent over position (sleeping?)
26. *A person with airpods walking while browsing her phone wearing a mask but only covering the mouth and not the nose
27. A person walking with what seems to be a wrapped up portrait in their hands walking down the right side
28. A guy and a girl walking on the right side talking to each other without their masks on
29. A person going uphill using their motorized skateboard
30. A person walking from the left side holding what seems to be a long pole that is maybe an instrument or tool of some sort
31. A person walking with their longboard in their hand from the left side ring road downwards
32. person from the far left up ring road goes to the Langson Library area riding their scooter up
33. *A white cart on the left holding what seems to be maintenance tools stopping on the left side for ring road to check phone
34. A person riding their beach bike down the left side
35. A person walking past me walking with her mask down below her chin
36. A person wearing their backpack on the front side of their body walking from the left side of ring road
37. A person long boarding from the right side and then picks it up to walk on the dirt path
38. A person walking through the park with a white umbrella to most likely block off the sun for shade

Reflection:

The observation went well but some improvements that can be made is the stakeout location because I sat in an area with benches but surrounded by bushes on my left, right, and back side so I only had a front peripheral view but the area I sat in provided shade from the heat. Maybe pick a more eventful area because most of the observations here were just people walking and in terms of picking up data that will improve COVID areas, a more populated place can be better or at a time when more people come, such as the 50 minute mark when people leave classes

Observation 2:

Where: Arroyo Vista's park

When: Wednesday, October 10th at 5:00pm

Who: College dorm students and staff

Focus: What they do in a day-to-day basis in the park and how it could relate to COVID circumstances

1. A person walking through the grass no mask on carrying an amazon package
2. A person running across a dorm into another dorm that was being opened by another person
3. 2 girls sitting under the shade on some blankets with a lot of chips talking to each other
4. 1 girl talking to the 2 girls and taking a chip bag

5. 3 boys, 1 girl playing with what seems to be a hacky sack and a trampoline in a game; no masks on any of them
6. A person sitting on the outdoor patio looking at her phone; no mask
7. A person walking with a grocery bag looking at her phone ; mask on
8. A person on a motorized skateboard from the left dorms going to the upper dorms, no mask
9. A person jogging from the community center to the parking structure; no mask
10. *A person walking from the left parking lot walking to the upper dorms while eating what seems to be a sandwich; mask pulled down
11. 1 of the girls sitting under the shade with chips, goes to a nearby dorm to get another item
12. A golf cart of sorts carrying supplies drives from the community center to the upper dorms
13. *A girl and a guy both looking at a phone while walking from the ARC area to the community center; masks on
14. 2 guys walking and talking from the community center go to the left side dorms
15. A person briefly stops to open their backpack and take out a mask to wear as soon they approach the busier areas of the park coming from the ARC
16. A person from the ARC taking their bike towards the community center
17. *A girl from the upper dorms walks through the grass to the community center; mask on
18. A person from the parking lots skating up to the upper dorms on the left side
19. A food bot from the community center side going to the left side dorms
20. A guy, girl, then another girl pull up to the 2 girls sitting under the tree with chips seem to ask what they are doing; all people walking up have no masks while the 2 girls sitting down do
21. *Everyone leaves with the 1 girl who asked leaving in a hurry
22. A man in a hat goes to stop and observe the guys playing in the middle with the hacky sack and trampoline and talks to them; no mask
23. A person from the upper dorms scooters down to the left dorms; no mask
24. 1 of the girls sitting down goes to do a sitting down stretch for her back
25. *A person from the left dorms carrying a grocery bag walks to the upper dorms; no mask on
26. A person walks out from the left side dorms with no mask, goes to sit down with 2 girls sitting down under the tree with the chips and talks with them
27. 2 people walking somewhat close to each other with the person in the front with no mask on and the person behind him following a few feet away from the front person with a mask on
28. *A person from the upper dorms cuts through the grass to go to the community center area; no mask
29. 1 of the 3 girls sitting down pulls down her mask to talk and eat
30. A guy and a girl walking with each other from the community center side walk next to each other with 1 wearing a mask, and the other not wearing a mask
31. A person on a balcony goes to watch the people over the park briefly then walks back in; no mask
32. The same 2 people stop at the amphitheater to observe everyone else at the park in what they are doing and are now cutting the grass to continue their conversation
33. A girl with red hair and mask talk to the 3 girls sitting down to probably ask what they are doing

34. A girl walks from the community center side walks to the upper dorms with no mask on while having a phone conversation

Reflection:

This observation went better than the first in how it was conducted with the exception of picking a better location because the area is not very busy. Other than that, the observation went well with what I believe little to no changes.

Appendix 2 (Organizing Observations)

Personal Recreation and Relaxation

- A person on their phone under a tree by ring road but not under shade
- A person under the shade near but not under the big tree relaxing and browsing their phone while laying down
- A person on the right side sitting under the shade in the park chairs
- A person with another dog letting them use the bathroom on the grass
- A person using a public drinking fountain fount in the park
- A person sitting on the benches on the right side with his head in a bent over position (sleeping?)
- A person sitting on the outdoor patio looking at her phone
- 1 of the girls sitting down goes to do a sitting down stretch for her back
- A person on a balcony goes to watch the people over the park briefly then walks back in

A Place of Commerce and Communication

- Two people sitting under the shade but not directly under the big tree talking to each other
- Two guys talking with one another wearing his mask while the other talking to the other while his mask is on but pulled down
- 2 girls sitting under the shade on some blankets with a lot of chips talking to each other
- 1 girl talking to the 2 girls and taking a chip bag
- A guy, girl, then another girl pull up to the 2 girls sitting under the tree with chips seem to ask what they are doing
- A man in a hat goes to stop and observe the guys playing in the middle with the hacky sack and trampoline and talks to them
- 3 boys, 1 girl playing with what seems to be a hacky sack and a trampoline in a game
- A person walks out from the left side dorms with no mask, goes to sit down with 2 girls sitting down under the tree with the chips and talks with them
- A girl with red hair and mask talk to the 3 girls sitting down to probably ask what they are doing

Moving from place to place

- A person walking their dog walking to the left from the right,
- A person jogging from the community center to the parking structure
- Someone biking up hill on ring road on the left side
- A food robot going uphill on the inner ring road on the left side
- A person walking with a hydroflask going upward toward ssllh area
- A person walking down inner ring road moves aside to let the food robot pass by her
- A person walking with what seems to be a mini cooler in their hand
- People walking on ring road with people wearing masks walking across from people without their masks on
- Two people walking with each other one with and one without a mask on talking to each other
- A group of 3 people walking from the left side onto ring road all not wearing masks and one of them holding food talking to each other
- 2 guys walking and talking from the community center go to the left side dorms
- 2 people stop at the amphitheater to observe everyone else at the park in what they are doing and are now cutting the grass to continue their conversation
- A golf cart from the left driving up ring road
- A person with a scooter coming from the left side going downward on ring road but stops and walks the scooter because the hills seems too steep
- A person walking with what seems to be a wrapped up portrait in their hands walking down the right side
- A person going uphill using their motorized skateboard
- A person walking with their longboard in their hand from the left side ring road downwards
- A person from the far left up ring road goes to the Langston Library area riding their scooter up
- A person riding their beach bike down the left side
- A person long boarding from the right side and then picks it up to walk on the dirt path
- A person walking through the park with a white umbrella to most likely block off the sun for shade
- A person walking through the grass no mask on carrying an amazon package
- A person walking with a grocery bag looking at her phone
- A person on a motorized skateboard from the left dorms going to the upper dorms
- 1 of the girls sitting under the shade with chips, goes to a nearby dorm to get another item
- A golf cart of sorts carrying supplies drives from the community center to the upper dorms
- A person briefly stops to open their backpack and take out a mask to wear as soon they approach the busier areas of the park coming from the ARC
- A person from the ARC taking their bike towards the community center
- A person from the parking lots skating up to the upper dorms on the left side
- A food but from the community center side going to the left side dorms
- A person from the upper dorms scooters down to the left dorms
- 2 people walking somewhat close to each other with the person in the front with no mask on and the person behind him following a few feet away from the front person with a mask on
- A girl walks from the community center side walks to the upper dorms while having a phone conversation