

# Understanding Users

## **INFO 643 Group 3**

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# User Research Brief

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## User Group

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Although a wide array of people may visit the NYC Parks website, this particular research is focused on how to effectively redesign it for a specific user group i.e. young adults (18-35) who are new to the city. This group is significant for three key reasons. Firstly, they have a variety of needs they might seek to meet - be it places to congregate, events to attend, or facilities to use. Secondly, they typically lack cultural knowledge of the parks system, meaning they are more likely to seek out knowledge via alternate channels. Lastly, this group consists of a large intersection of other demographics, including gender, ethnicity, nationality, and occupation.

## Methodology

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Data was gathered for this study using a semi-structured interview method. Participants were selected from a pool of users the researchers knew personally, and chosen based on several metrics. These included willingness to participate in the study, age group (18-35), if they have lived in NYC, and if they were not local to the region. In total, 14 users participated in this study. Interviews were conducted via zoom or in person, and lasted 10-20 minutes each. Participants were asked questions around (1) Demographic information (2) Their general experience with parks (3) Their experience with NYC Parks and (4) Their experience with the NYCParks.org website. Interview notes were then compiled by the researchers, and the results were discussed internally.

## Key Insights

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### 1. Location was the primary decision point in choosing a park

This could be a park that is next to their house, close to a friend's place when socialising, or nearby another attraction participants found themselves visiting. A mechanism for users to find resources based on their location is recommended.

### 2. Participants would travel to a park, but only if given a reason to

Such reasons would include attending a social event near other friends, seeing an interesting location shared by a friend via social media, or attending a cultural event. Finding a way to signal boost various points of interest and events should be considered.

### 3. Search engines were a vital source of information

Google Maps was used to look for green spaces near their current location, or to find specific attractions within the park. Google Search was used to find out about an event they wished to attend, or more information about a park in general. Tying into these resources should be a priority.

### 4. Safety and comfort were always on participants' minds

Comfort in the park is hard to measure, but participants indicated that they wanted a park to be well designed, represent nature, and be well lit. On the other hand, homeless populations, drug use, and squirrels stealing food all contributed to a sense of discomfort. Information about specific parks should highlight these positive (or reassure against the negative) aspects whenever possible.

# Personas

## Persona 1



### Alyssa Chan

Quiet Spontaneous Nature Lover

Age	29
Occupation	Business Analyst
Place of Origin	Seattle, USA
Household	Living alone
Location	Manhattan, NY
Time in NYC	2 months

“In NYC, city parks seem the most healing place for me to rest and recharge.”

### Biography

Alyssa moved to Manhattan two months ago for her new job as a business analyst. She has a tight budget for relaxing activities and finds being in nature a good way to release stress. However, she does not have much time for it because of her busy schedule. After moving to NYC, she spends some time in a small park on her way home after work. During weekends, she re-energises herself in parks near her apartment. She always sits on the grass and wanders around the park on her way to the grocery store.

### Hobbies

- Reading
- Sleeping
- Watching TV series
- Listening to music

### Website Preferences

- Text — Visual
- Classic — Modern
- Static — Dynamic

### Goals

#### Experience Goal

- To feel relaxed from busy life

#### End Goal

- To find parks for daily relaxation near her home and workplace
- To learn about park facilities efficiently

#### Life Goal

- To escape from the city
- To find the self in nature

### Frustrations

- Always uncomfortable with the environment in NYC parks
- Particularly worried about her safety in NYC parks
- Difficult to find facilities information when visiting parks
- Overloading and hard-to-filter information found on search engines

## Persona 2



### Nicola Taverone

Playful Active Social Butterfly

Age	25
Occupation	Student
Place of Origin	Bologna, Italy
Household	Living with 2 roommates
Location	Brooklyn, NY
Time in NYC	4 weeks

“Let me know when you are available. This park would be a perfect place to hang out!”

### Biography

Nicola just moved to Brooklyn to attend grad school majoring in computer science. While she lives a little further away from Manhattan, she enjoys taking trips into the city for all sorts of activities and events. She spends a lot of time on Instagram in her free time, sharing her adventures with her friends. She often goes to parks for events and social gatherings.

### Goals

#### Experience Goal

- To have a great time with friends
- To feel less alone in the city

#### End Goal

- To find events to go to and socialize
- To connect with interesting people
- To strengthen her relationship with friends

#### Life Goal

- To live life to it's fullest
- To build strong bonds with her friends

### Hobbies

- Going to bars
- Going to the gym
- Partying
- Socializing

### Website Preferences

- Small Posts — Long articles
- Text — Visuals
- Browsing — Searching

### Frustrations

- Some events were shown online but no longer exist when she got to the venue.
- Pictures on social media are sometimes misleading.



# Storyboard

**01** George is an international student who just got done with class and is now out exploring the city.



**02** While walking around, he spots a sign pointing to a park nearby.



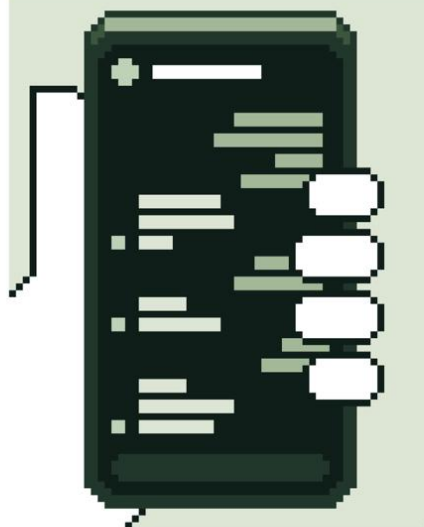
**03** George visits the park and enjoys his time there. He takes some pictures and goes about his day.



**04** George posts one of the pictures he took at the park to his Instagram account.



**05** One of his friends messages him asking about the park. Unfortunately, George doesn't remember the exact name or location.



**06** While searching for more info, he finds the NYC Parks website, where he also learns of fun events and activities happening at the park.



**07** Now that he has more information, George has an idea. He invites his friend to the park for a game of basketball.



**08** George and his friend meet up at the park and enjoy their game of basketball together. They continue to visit regularly.

