

GROUP

20



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HOW MIGHT WE  
HELP CONSUMERS  
DECODE FOOD  
LABELS?

# design challenge

To the every-day grocery shopper, reading food labels can be a challenge. The long list of incomprehensible ingredients in tiny black font and use of **scientific jargon** can be overwhelming and difficult to understand. We're told that terms like "cage-free" and "USDA organic" are good, but what do they actually mean? Not everyone possesses comprehensive nutritional knowledge nor do they have the patience to research everything they eat. How might we help consumers decode food labels?

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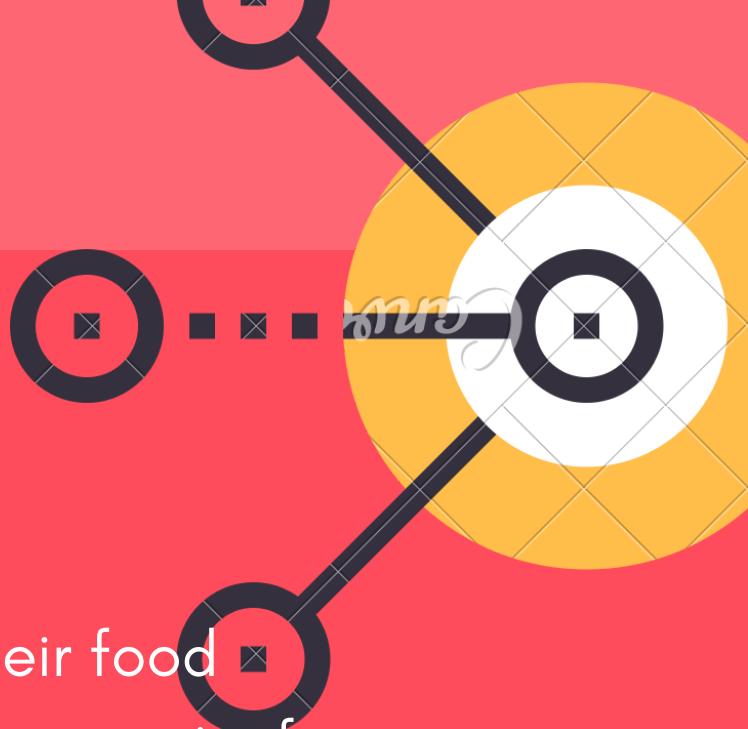
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decode

# Defining the Pain Points

*Shoppers dislike...*

- Ignorance as to what ingredients are in their food
- Not knowing what certain terms mean, eg. organic, free-range, certified organic, preservatives
- Not knowing credibility of company
- Not understanding the nutrition fact jargon / science-y terminology
- Ingredients are in too small of print
- Spending longer than anticipated at the grocery store





## USER NEEDS

Access to information about food: Food is a huge part of our everyday lives. Everyone deserve to understand what they're buying and putting in their body, as well as what benefits and/or risks those foods carry



## HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & safety: Many of the foods available at grocery stores today contain all types of chemical additives, preservatives, pesticides, etc. With a better understanding of food labels, they can avoid those that may be detrimental to their health.

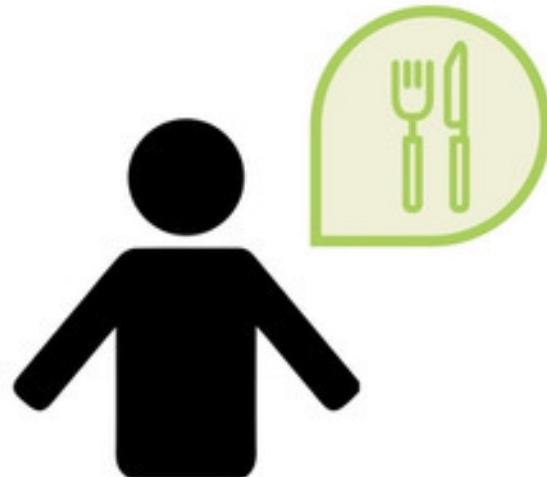


## INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Food companies often intentionally obscure or sensationalize information about their products which can be very confusing. However, with more information consumers can make smarter decisions.

# MEET ALEX

alex, like most other humans, needs to eat food in order to survive



alex tends to eat out often but knows that cooking at home can be healthier & less expensive

that's why alex is making an effort to regularly go grocery shopping





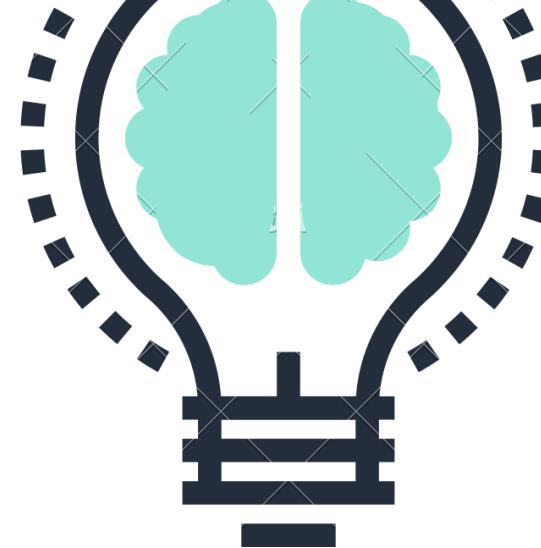
however, when alex goes to the grocery store they get overwhelmed by the huge amount of information on food labels



alex is left confused and unsure of which food products to buy and eat.



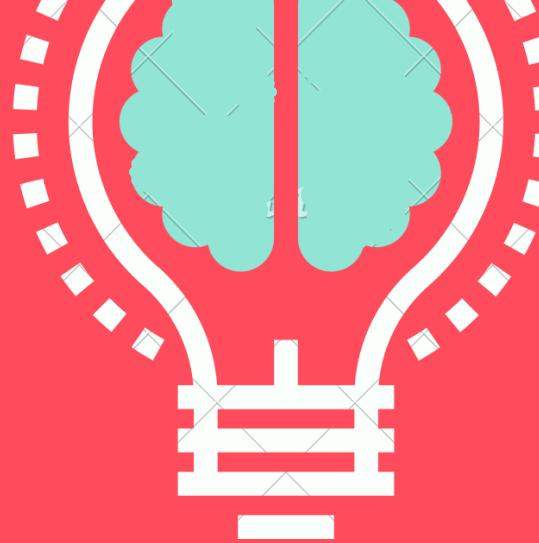
# SECONDARY RESEARCH



**“Technology is reshaping how consumers discover, evaluate and select food..[making consumers] keener and more able to express their individuality through consumption”**

- 90% of all shoppers still prefer brick-and-mortar grocery stores
- How do consumers research? In 2017
- 53% of grocery shoppers tend to research their purchases in-store before buying
- 30% do their research online, and broken down, we see that 16% of these people do so on a computer, 8% on a smartphone and 5% on a tablet.
- Sites like Pinterest and Instagram yield inspiration to eat healthy, quality food

# RESEARCH GOALS



- The role and extent of knowledge of food plays in consumers' life
- What the consumer wants to know about their food, whether it be for...
  - Health concerns
  - Sustainability concerns
  - Fresh, Organic, USDA Approved, etc.
- What consumers are already doing to inform themselves
- What information streams they would prefer



# Brooke

## Persona 1- Meal Prepper

Age: 20

Current Job: Copywriter at Blue & Gold Yearbook

Hobbies: meal prepping, journaling, planning out her days, likes to keep up to speed with the political sphere

Grocery shops: bi-weekly

Q: What grocery stores do you shop at?

A: I shop at Safeway, Costco, Trader Joes, or at any nearby market.

Q: What factors do you consider when buying food at a grocery store?

A: I consider price, quantity, taste, and amount of sodium & sugar in the food product.

Q: What kind of information would you like to better understand about food?

A: Label of ingredients, the kind of fat in the food, calories, types of protein

Q: What factors/information would make you less likely to buy a specific food product?

A: If it has too many artificial ingredients, if it contains high amounts of glucose or fat, and if it is expensive.

Q: How much time do you spend researching a food item?

A: 2 seconds during my shopping, I'll look at the food label once I'm there

Q: Can you recall a time when you felt confused about terms used on food labels?

A: What is "monosaturated" vs "polysaturated"? Like I always forget the difference.

# USER PERSONAS



## AVID MEAL PREPPER

Thinks: I want to be healthy and buy organic, nutritious food without breaking the bank

Needs: I need to buy food that will last me a week and will not go bad. I need fresh food with good amount of fiber and protein.

Does: Buys foods that are certified organic, Fair Trade, B corp etc. (fitness junkie)



## EVERY-DAY GROCERY SHOPPER

Thinks: I want to get in and out of the store without going through a maze, but I want to buy cheap, quality, and sometimes healthy food

Needs: I need essential food for the week or month or for special occasion,

Does: Buys food ranging from unhealthy to healthy



## LOYAL DINING HALL ATTENDEE (FRESHMEN)

Thinks: I don't need to grocery shop very often because I don't have a place to cook, but I buy snacks on occasion. I look for healthy food at a cheap price.

Needs: I need to buy healthy snack foods for late night studying sessions.

Does: Buys healthy and unhealthy snacks, top ramen, microwavable food. Eats most meals at dining hall

PERSONA A

PERSONA B

PERSONA C

# Synthesis

A	buying and researching food at grocery store
E	aisles, phone, crowded and rushed, Shopping cart blocks aisles
I	talks to cashier, walks through store and talks to other customers, put things in cart, ask employee for help if needed
O	Food (processed/ packaged & produce), Shopping Cart, Shelves, Money, Receipt, Bags
U	Customers, Cashier, employee who stocks Shelves, people who make food (factory/farm)

# *Research Methodology*



## Individual Interviews:

Conducted 12 individual interviews from a wide age range (17-40)



## Qualitative research method (Observation):

We went to Berkeley Bowl and Trader Joe's one afternoon and observed consumers as they took food products off the shelves. Both pools of consumers did not spend much time perusing food labels, rather, they glanced the front of the boxes. At Trader Joe's though, it was more common to see consumers spend additional time inspecting nutrition facts and ingredients.

# INFORMATIVE QUOTES

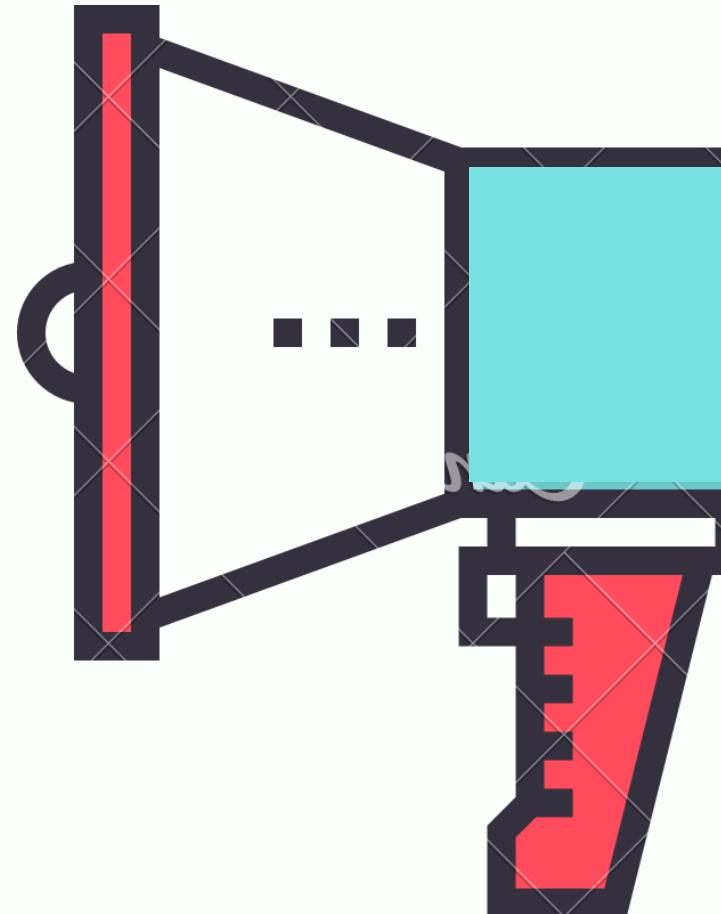
"Dietary restrictions are hard to decode from food labels"

"The big words are so confusing"

"Sometimes I Google things if I have time"

"I feel overwhelmed at grocery stores"

"I really want to buy foods that are supporting a better, healthier food system"



# *ideation*

1



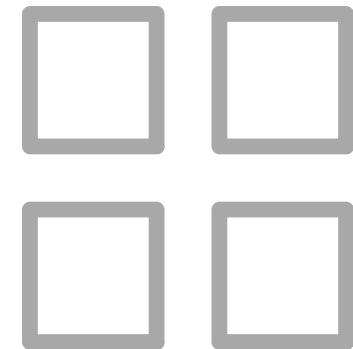
an app that warns people of companies' ethical violators

2



word-a-day calendar learning tool

3



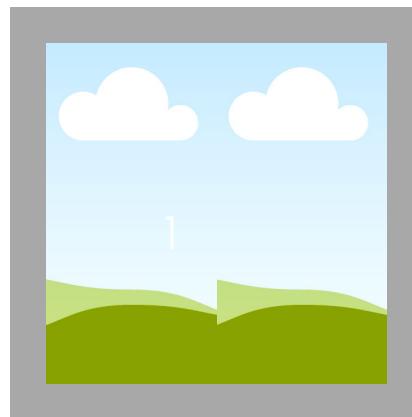
art installation and tells people who made their food

4



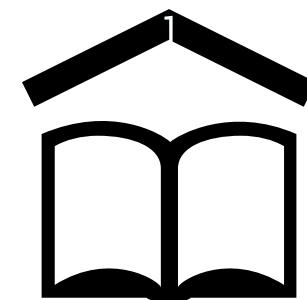
an app that tells people who made their food

5



art installation that tells people effects of different foods have

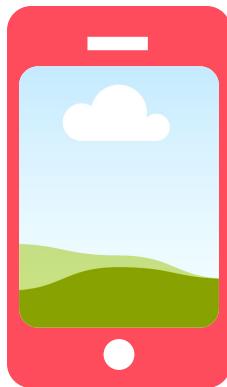
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schools incorporates a nutrition curriculum into science lessons

# top 3 [ideation]

1



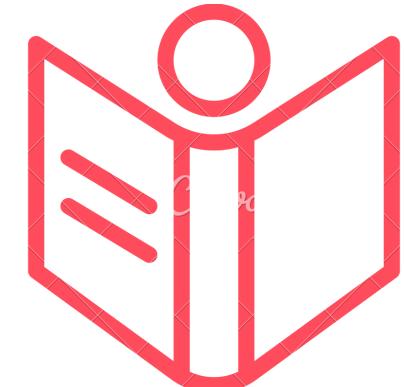
an app that scans ingredients and marketing terminology

2



grocery store consulting service  
(to manage food waste and educate)

3



leaflet campaign to educate shoppers

## PROS:

- allows people to understand what is in their food easily
- debunks common myths about foods that are “organic” or “cruelty free”
- Niche that is not yet solved
- Fast and accessible to phone users
- Scans for allergens

## CONS:

- less of a social experience
- might be annoying to do for each item

- integrate ourselves into the shopping experience
- easy to get exposed to many people
- help supermarkets reduce waste while helping consumers become more educated about expiration dates and ingredients

## CONS:

- hard to get grocery stores involved at the beginning
- high cost to start

## PROS:

- easy to implement
- low cost
- reach many people

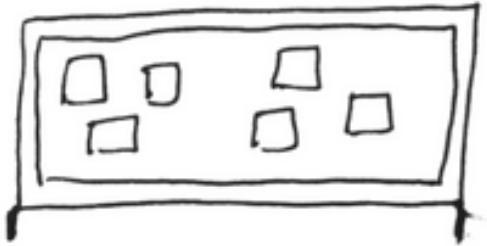
## CONS:

- low impact
- no revenue
- limited information able to be disseminated

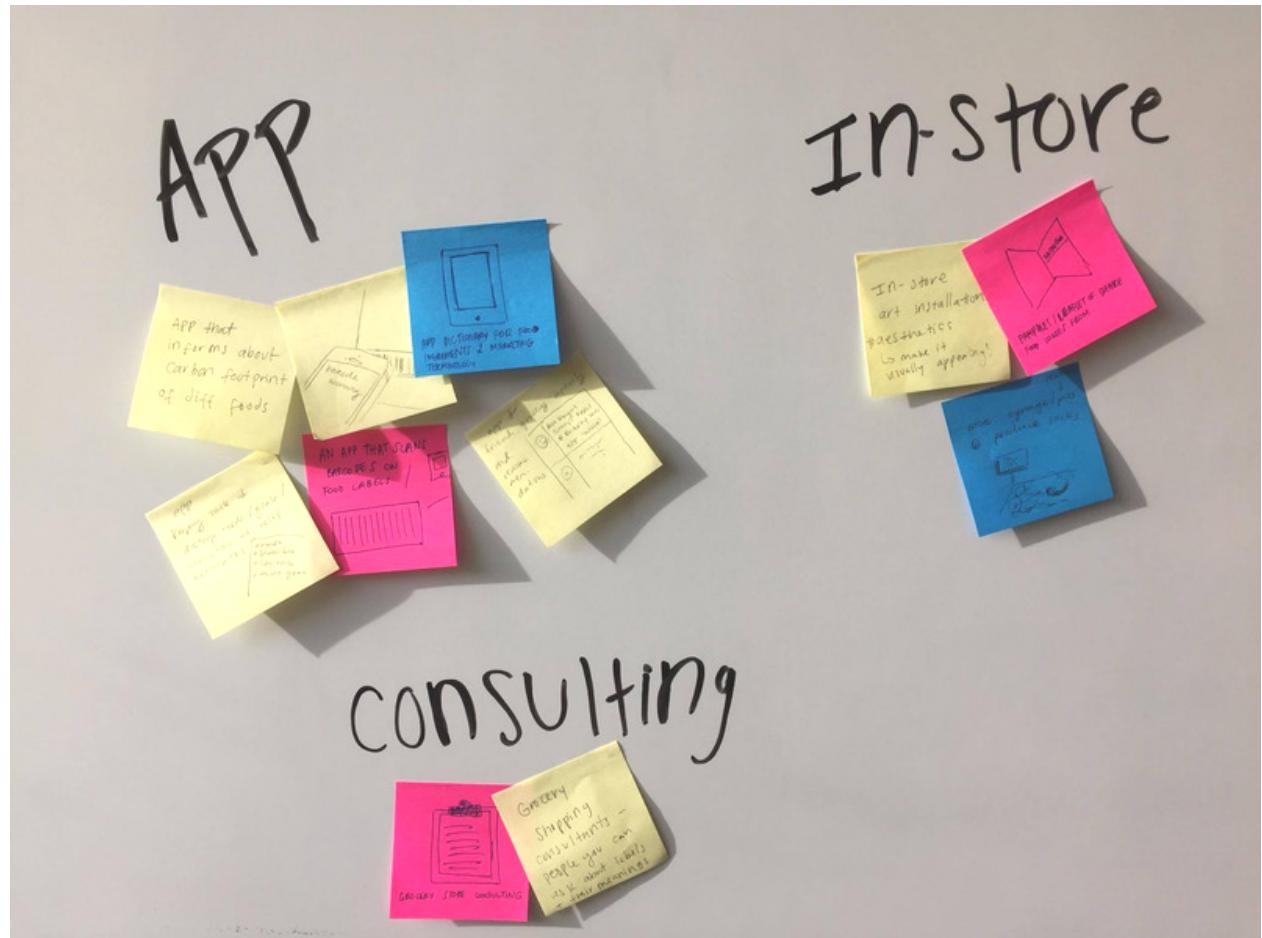
# ideation methods



## ① Post it Notes



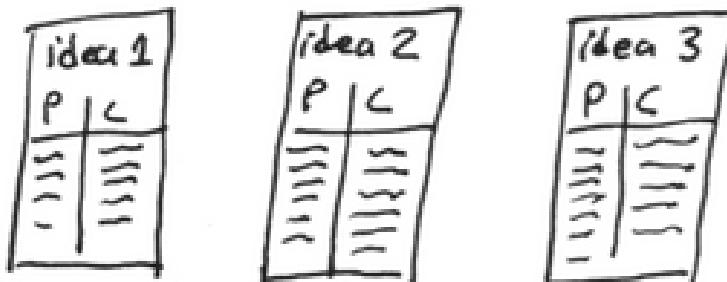
We used post-it notes to group and organize our ideas



# ideation methods



② Pros & Cons Lists



we picked a few top  
ideas and evaluated  
them for their pros &  
cons

# ideation methods

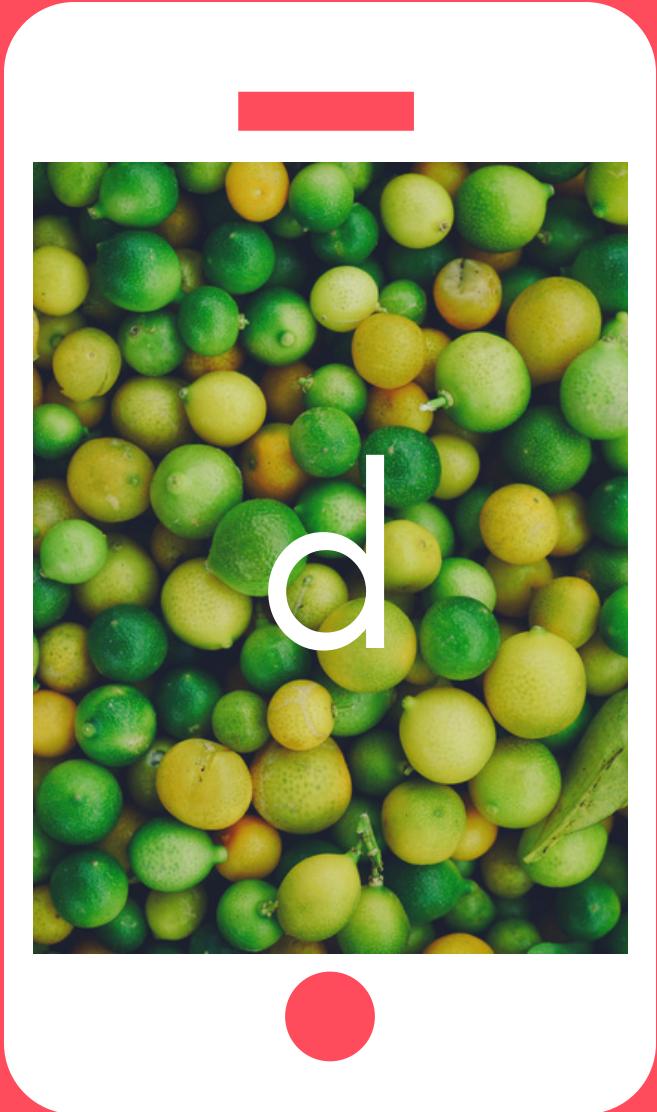


## ③ Free Discussion



we talked about our top ideas as a group to eliminate some and refine our final idea

- An app for Ecological Footprint tracking already exists so we need to differentiate ourselves
- Many people want to learn what all the terms mean but they do not have time
- Most of the research to figure out what to buy happens on-site at grocery stores, not at home in front of a computer
- We can make a difference in what people eat and their power to choose what they put in their body
- Because of the last reason, an app might be the best option
- Interesting that some people rest on familial and social influence in choosing what food to buy
- The best idea might be to create an app that scans the food labels for two things:
  - Ingredients
  - Sustainability marketing (meaning of terms like organic or cage free)
- Make it easier for people to see what their friends are buying, and the products and locations that they recommend?



# decode

digest more than food.  
digest information.

# What is decode?

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Decode is a mobile app that aims to define food ingredients, sustainability marketing terms, and scientific jargon in a way that the every-day consumer can easily understand and digest. Simply take a photo of the ingredients list, the app scans the words, and decode defines it for you. Information is not limited to just definitions, but also broader implications like planetary health.



## 1. Take Photo

Take a photo of the ingredients.



## 2. Scan

We scan the words and define them.



## 3. Healthy decisions

With your new knowledge, go make healthy decisions!

# 10 Key Insights

- 
- People care about the health effects that their food has
  - Some individuals who do not go grocery shopping very often, especially freshman living in dorms, do not care as much about what the food labels say
  - Dietary restrictions are one of the main reasons for reading food labels, perhaps even for roommates / family members, and keeping track is a pain point
  - People want to know if their food was made in a sustainable way
  - People trust but don't always understand third-party certifications like organic and Fair Trade
  - Non-students with stable income care more about their food - where it comes from, how it was made, what's in it, etc.
  - Price point is a very important determining factor of food choices/purchases for many people
  - Many consumers just buy brands they are familiar with, whether it's due to family or advertising influence
  - Most customers do their research in-store, only 8% do so on smartphones
  - Customers increasingly want to see the opinions and evaluations of other consumers, including that of experts, strangers and perhaps friends
    - Social media
    - Crowdsource rating services
  - Most customers only glance at food labels
    - Pictures
    - Calorie count
    - Carbohydrate count
    - Sodium count
    - Protein count

How did this change your direction? Did you need to redefine your problem?

- Broaden question into -- how might we help inform consumers in making decisions buying food?
- Not just food labels anymore
- Also about external influences, like family and social influence

# THANKS!

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