

L2: User Research

Peter Yim
Team MVPL

OVERVIEW

Background

Crime rate have been rampant in most parts of Seattle and especially in U-District around the University of Washington Seattle. Students should not have to fear going out at night of being confronted by malicious people every time they go out. The area around the campus should be a safe enough environment where any student can walk out and come back home safely. As of 2018, there has been a total of 1,762 crimes in just the U-District alone [1].

Project Description

Team MVLP will focus on solving the issues of night safety at University District. We want to deliver a technological solution to increase safety of students as they walk at night around or near campus. Our main goal is to make students feel safe and be welcomed to exit their homes at night without any fear.

Target Group

We will focus on UW students of all gender, race, and ethnicity who are out and about at night frequently.

USER INTERVIEW

Questions

1. How often do you find yourself walking around/on campus outside when it's dark?
 - a. Why are you out walking?
 - b. Where do you walk?
 - i. Do you avoid certain places? If so, Why?
 - c. Do you walk by yourself or in groups?
 - i. What affects your decision?
 - d. Tell me about a time you had to walk at night?
 - e. How do you feel walking when it's dark
2. What factors affect your night walking schedule? ** dumb question no one liked it**
 - a. Do safety concerns prevent you from doing things that you want to do?
3. How do you feel as a (gender) walking at night?
 - a. Why do you feel this way?
4. Have you been in/heard of dangerous situations near campus?
 - a. Tell me about that dangerous situation

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- b. How does that change the way you walk about at night?
 - c. Why do you think walking at night in the U-District is unsafe?
- 5. What methods are you currently using to stay safe when walking around in the dark?
 - a. Have you ever used night safety services here at UW?
 - b. Do UW alerts change your night walking?
- 6. What would help you feel better walking at night?
 - a. Is there anything you would like to add or ask?

Response

Age: 20

Gender: M

Q: How often do you find yourself walking around/on campus outside when it's dark?

A: Probably Everyday. 2 - 3 times per day. Pretty often

Q: Why are you out walking?

A: I need to either eat food or study at a library or meet up with some friends.

Q: Where do you walk?

A: On the Avenue, 42nd street, and on school campus.

Q: Do you avoid certain places? If so, Why?

A: I am sure to avoid the alleyways. The alleyways on the ave. There is actually a place where hobos gather. Sometimes when they're intoxicated they get hostile. Also on 42nd street there are places where people sleep. I tend to avoid dimly lit areas and stick to places with frequent traffic.

Q: Do you walk by yourself or in groups?

A: 8/10 times im by myself. I am a lone wolf

Q: Is there a reason why you walk by yourself?

A: Not a lot of people have to go the way I have to go but if there ever is a chance to walk in a group I would walk with them.

Q: Tell me about a time you had to walk at night?

A: I was walking home from campus and encountered a homeless person. I waved and smiled and the homeless man responded with "Hey, what are you smiling at". He also said some profane words and so I just left

Q: How do you feel when it's dark?

A: Sometimes im scared. Mostly tense. I try to be more vigilant and look out for threats

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Q: What factors affect your night walking schedule?

A: I walk out at night to eat dinner. Studying till midnight everyday

Q: Do safety concerns prevent you from doing things that you want to do?

A: I think they should but not really because I don't care too much. I do to some degree but if I get robbed I get robbed.

Q: How do you feel as a guy walking at night?

A: More alert to how I am approaching other people at night. I don't want other people to feel scared and give off the wrong emotions.

Q: Have you been in/heard of dangerous situations near campus?

A: Yeah Yeah. Right outside my window there have been 2 or 3 incidents where cops have called and hear people talking about stabbing people and when you get a UW alert about stabbed victims then you get a little cautious about what is going on.

Q: How does that change the way you walk about at night?

A: I would say if I get an alert or see a cop I would refrain from going out at night.

Q: Why do you think walking at night in the U-District is so unsafe?

A: I think the lack of surveillance either from police or lack of safety routes for kids who live off campus. Maybe gentrification

Q: What methods are you currently using to stay safe when walking around in the dark?

A: Sometimes I carry a self defense weapon or other times I carry a flashlight to see where I am going. I will wear my hat to look more mean.

Q: Have you ever used night safety services here at UW?

A: I have used the night ride at IMA. I think it is very helpful.

Q: Have you ever used any other night safety services that UW provides?

A: I don't either 911 but I know that you can call the police. I don't know if they reach my residential area.

Q: Do UW alerts change your night walking?

A: They do. Ain't no ones gonna go outside if they are suspicious packages outside.

Q: What would help you feel better walking at night?

A: If I had a gun. A weapon or a bigger police presence. I think a police station near the north side so they can respond faster.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add or ask?

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A: Stay safe. Human trafficking is real.

INSIGHT

What I Learned:

- There is a lack of surveillance or police safety. Outside of school campus zones, there is no consistent form of security for students walking out at night and the levels of danger only grow the farther you walk away from the school.
- Homelessness is a big issue as they pose potential threats to students walking out at night. There has been a large number of homeless people near the ave and many students are fearful of them. They can be unpredictable mentally and can pose threats physically. As my friend suggested, he was verbally attacked by one and it could have escalated to something more dangerous.
- Many areas are not well lit and not safe for traveling alone. It is common for students to take paths that are more lit than others and so having a lit path would boost walkers confidence
- UW provides some services but needs a wider presence for off campus living students. Besides UW alerts, night rides, and safety walks, there isn't much that UW provides. Even with these current resources available, my interviewer is still tense walking from campus.

REFERENCES

[1] 60 Day Log | UW Police. (2019). Retrieved 8 October 2019, from

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