

## A1. Finding problems: background research

A typical design thinking process starts with an empathize stage, where you try to find the needs of potential users. Empathy is crucial to a human-centred design process because it allows you to set aside your own assumptions about the world and gain real insight into users and their needs.

In this assignment, you are asked to find some problems you want to solve, perform background research, and finally, state a few sentences about your potential solution ideas based on your hypothesis and literature review. It could be a specific user interface component of an existing app that can be improved, or a totally new idea of web/mobile application to solve everyday problems.

You may find usability problems in the existing mobile apps or web applications. You may start by finding problems that your parents, friends, or people (online friends, too) mentioned before. You will need to state a clear set of core problems (or a single problem, user pain points). Then, your task is to perform background research. It can be a set of existing solutions or similar ideas which can be used as a benchmark or even a novel idea based on academic theories of UI/UX. You must describe your analysis based on your research and how the selected problems may be tackled. It is expected to provide well-structured reasoning for your solution. The grading will focus on how sound and well-grounded your problem space selection is.

## Submission Requirements

You will submit a report either in .docx or .pdf format. Remember, a direct Wikipedia link would not be considered as a proper academic reference. Please try your best to find reasonable literature to support your idea. Images need to be cited properly unless it is something you have sketched or drawn. The maximum soft limitation is **2-page excluding the reference list**. It is strongly recommended to use the font style for the body text with high readability (for example, Arial, Verdana, Helvetica family, etc.) in size no larger than 12 pt. The line spacing must not exceed double spaced. Always remember that the quality is better than quantity.

## Grading Scheme

Please use this grading scheme to guide your submissions.

Breakdown	
Description of the problem space	/3
Reasoning	/3
Literature review quality	/3
Technicals (citation, grammar, typo, etc.)	/1
Total	/10