Enabling newcomers to a community to better discover their surroundings through a personalized series of activities.
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As an anthropologist turned UX designer, I love creating designs that are engaging, human centered, and fun. Design is all about taking insights from user research and applying them to create meaningful designs.

When I’m not designing I’m hiking, reading, cooking, or hanging out with my cat.

I will be starting my career this summer at BNY Mellon in Pittsburgh as a Senior UX Analyst.

I would like to thank my parents Mark and Angela Peterson for being ever supportive in my attempts to adult, my boyfriend Ace Howard for forcing me to have fun even when I don’t feel like it, and my cat Juniper for being a cat and doing cat stuff.
Design Overview
Problem Space

Those who are new to a community frequently want to discover things to do, but apps like Yelp and Google can feel impersonal and overwhelming. Reviews are helpful, but are not always trusted, and a multitude of options can be just too much. Suggestions from friends and coworkers are the best option, but if a person is new to a community this may not be feasible.

My Solution

Tiny Adventures gives users an itinerary of activities based on their interests. The app encourages users to go on adventure and follow the app’s directions, but also allows for users to determine their own schedule of activities.
Design Process
For me, design funnels from inspiration and research down to a final design solution.

A plan with goals, waypoints, and a timeline should be created at the beginning of a project. This design plan shows my design plan as it unfolded.
Travel was the initial inspiration for this project. The sense of adventure and exploration that one often encounters can be exhilarating. As the project evolved I chose to apply the excitement of travel to one’s own community.

Key Exemplars

Geocache
Geocaching is an activity where users use an app that alerts them to the approximate location of a cache. The user then has to find the hidden container. The sense of adventure and discovery with a connection to the digital environment was fascinating to me.

Pokemon Go
Pokemon Go is an augmented reality game where the player catches Pokemon that are located around the physical world. This sense of whimsy and connection between a digital world and a physical one was an inspiration for my design.

Travel Photos
I reviewed a series of photo taken by Jessica Barlow on a solo backpacking trip she took through Spain and Portugal. By reviewing these photos I was inspired to further discover how photography plays a role in discovery and exploration.

Photo-Based Diary Study
I conducted a photo based diary study in which I collected the photos taken by participants that were traveling to Finland for approximately a week. The participants were about 15 design masters students. They were requested to take photos as they normally would and asked if a later interview discussing the photos would be alright. I collected the photos from a communal Google Photos album and printed out small versions. I used affinity diagramming to categorize the photos and extract insights. I discovered that people are often a focus of travel, not just the act of traveling or the discovery of new places.
How To Design Happiness

Experts from Lippincott, Disney, and SoulCycle weigh in on how they create joyful experiences.
“I do use forums, like the local subreddit (to find things to do)... It’s more personal. I don’t feel like there’s any hidden agenda.”

Ben
Moved to North Carolina
From Chicago 4 months ago

Insights Gained

People are important. Recommendations from individuals rather than websites can improve an experience.

Walking is the best way to explore - but if you don’t really know an area well you might not feel safe and worry about stumbling into the wrong neighborhood.

Money can be tight. It can be incredibly disappointing to spend money on something that doesn’t meet expectations.
First Round Evaluation

The prototype is a minimal paper prototype that shows the jist of the design. It was left purposely vague, to allow participants to use their imaginations in order to give different perspectives on how it might work. The rough quality also allows for greater freedom of criticism by the participants.

Participants who were going to be moving to a new community within the year were chosen to review the prototype. This criteria was chosen because these participants will be able to easily visualize how an application such as this one will be able to fit into the experiences they are soon to have.

I discovered that:

- Users want more personalization when it comes to the types of activities provided.
- The application needs to be able to handle when/if a user diverges from the given itinerary.
- A “black box” approach to adventuring could be an exiting addition.
- Incentive systems for the creation of the suggestions/itineraries may need to be considered.
Second Round Evaluation

My second round prototype consisted of an interactive InVision prototype with a predetermined course of action. I wanted to test the re-imagined app before investing too much time in the production of the prototype so changes could still be easily made. As I lead the participants through the prototype, I asked them questions not only about the usability of the prototype, but their own thoughts and opinions about the practicality, and desirability of the final outcome.

Two participants were recruited from acquaintances, and were invited to my apartment to participate in the usability test. Participants were between the ages of 25-30 years old, and had varying experiences with moving to a new area.

I discovered that:

- The fact that the app creates an itinerary for you was not obvious until the end.
- Some icons were not intuitive.
- Tapping the activity bubbles past the first tap was not an obvious next step.
Final Design

1. **Splash**

   The initial screen upon opening the app. Sets up the look and feel of the app and its sense of whimsy.

2. **Picking Activities**

   Users are prompted to choose their favorite activities.

3. **Picking Activities 2**

   Tapping on the different activity circles increases their size and indicates how interested in that item or activity the user is. More taps increases the size/interest level.

4. **Choosing Length**

   After choosing activities the user is prompted to choose how long their itinerary is.

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Discover a series of new things to do within your own community.

Let's get started!
After choosing activities the user is prompted to choose how much money they are willing to spend on their adventure.

The user is then given the option to either be guided through their itinerary by the application, or explore their itinerary and potentially make changes.

After choosing activities the user is prompted to choose how long their itinerary is.
Other Design Considerations
How does the app guide users through the itinerary?

Ideally, the user would be guided by a connected smart watch app with a compass like feature. This would minimize phone usage during the walk allowing the user to be more aware of their environment and community.

If a user did not own a smart watch, a similar screen would be used on the smart phone.

Can users change the itinerary?

Being able to delete an event that a user doesn’t like is important. This would take place after a user views the detailed itinerary.

If an event is tapped, more screens appear to allow for customization.

Where do itineraries come from?

Users trust people. Itineraries would come from other users. This aspect of the design would be best explored through an additional service design project.
Reflection
Adjust project goals and plans as the project evolves.

For the first month of the project, I anticipated that the final deliverable would be about travel. However, as the project evolved it became apparent that this focus was shifting. Once I realized this, I should have spent time readjusting my research plan and timeline.

Documentation and reflection upon that documentation is key.

Poor documentation and reflection habits produced less than desirable results from research. In the future documentation and reflection towards actionable insights should be emphasized.

Constantly ask for feedback from peers, potential users, and profs.

Feedback is crucial in order to iterate. I could have gotten more feedback on research plans, designs, and other aspects of the capstone process.