

I2: USER RESEARCH

TEAM: **UX-MEN**

TEAM MEMBERS: Emily Readey, Satvik Vats, Victoria (Tori) Teng

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Team UX-Men aims to understand the experiences of immigrants that have recently moved to the United States – we limit our investigation to those whom have been living in the United States for at least one month. Through our user research, we aim to listen to their stories and identify their motivations, goals, and problems faced with their move to this new country. Following our preliminary research, we hope to address one aspect of their experience and design something tangible to improve their experience.

TARGET USERS

Our target users are immigrants who have recently moved to the United States, particularly those who are non-native English speakers. This encompasses international students, as well as members of various community centers around Seattle.

USER INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Hi, my name is Victoria Teng. I'm a student at the University of Washington studying Human Centered Design and Engineering. We're doing a project to find out more about the experiences of immigrants or non-citizens in the United States.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your background.
2. When did you first come to USA, and if you don't mind sharing, why?
3. How has your experience here been so far?
4. Walk me through an average day in your life.
5. What are some inconveniences or problems you face with basic necessities?

6. Do you feel like you have a community here?
 1. If yes, how would you describe your community?
 2. If no, why do you feel like you don't have one?
7. Is there any part of coming to the USA that was particularly challenging?
8. What is your native language? Did you speak English before coming to America? Tell me about any language barriers you faced.
9. What are some of the challenges you or others with a similar background have faced assimilating into American culture?
10. Do you own a smartphone?
 1. What are your favorite apps?
 2. Are you on social media?
 3. What other screen-based technology do you use?
11. If you had to give some advice to new immigrants coming into America today, what would you tell them?

USER RESPONSE

Tell me about your background and why you first came to the United States.

I moved to the States from Indonesia first to pursue my undergraduate degree, when I came to the states my intention was to stay here – hopefully to apply for an H-1B visa or green card, but at least for the foreseeable future was for me to stay here after my undergraduate degree.

How has your experience here been so far?

It was a culture shock in a certain way, but I did grow up in a pretty openminded international school so a lot of the American culture is reflected in the student body in my school, and a lot of things are already seen there. Plus media plays a really big role, so that kind of eased me in to American culture. Also having like an open mindset can prevent me from being completely blown away. But there are also culture shocks in which there are some things that I'm not used to – small things, but they don't hinder me from my day to day activities.

What kind of small things, if you don't mind sharing?

Oh let's see, ummm, like coming to the States, Washington is a very liberal state where – for example recreational marijuana. That's something like for me, it's like at first it was one of my biggest culture shock, because if you're found in possession of marijuana in my home country, you would face jail time. If you sell marijuana, it would be a life sentence in prison, capital punishment. But here its pretty free, so that's one of the culture shocks I've had.

Thank you, do you mind walking me through an average day in your life?

An average day in my life would be awaking up at 8.30, I'd take 30 mins to get ready, then go to work. How detailed do you want it to be?

Just a rough description would be fine.

Umm, I would work from around 9 to 5 or 6, then head back and either cook, hit the gym or have dinner with someone. Other than that just relax and pass out. That's man average weekday. The weekends would be different. I usually go to Seattle, meet friends, or family – my sister also lives in Seattle. So yeah that's my average week.

How is an average day here different from an average day where you are from?

So on the more superficial level, I would spend more time commuting back home in Indonesia. Traffic back home is a pain. And I feel like since in the states you can do a lot more stuff that's not related to shopping malls, like for example when I want to go for a leisurely activity with my friends, I can go to a park, I can go to a dog park, take my dog for a walk, there's a lot of fun and weird stuff that you can do that's less common where I'm from. You can go on hikes here and everything, but back home you pretty much just eat if you want to hang out or watch a movie. So there' smore flexibility there in terms of how I spend my leisurely activities.

Do you feel like you have a community here?

I do have a community here. When I first came to the states, I wasn't sure If I'd be staying for a long time or not. I purposely forced myself to be more, my community was more non-Indonesian, or non-Chinese. I took this time to make friends with

people outside my comfort zone. That made me have different friend groups and communities. Like right now I'm friends with a lot of people who are in the same state as me – recently graduated and recently working.

Would you say it's more beneficial to stick to people with a similar background to you or branch out to other people?

I feel like each community has its perks and is beneficial to you in different aspects. Like regardless if you are associating with people from the same background with you, you're definitely going to learn something more by gaining new perspectives on life or getting a taste of their culture. But people who have the same background as you feel like home. So when you're homesick, hanging out with these communities would help with that.

What is your native language?

Indonesian and English.

What was your level of English before you came to the states?

Pretty much the same. I would say it's my first language.

Have you faced any language barriers?

Not that I can recall. I think in the first few weeks, I found it really exhausting constantly speaking English, but I got used to it really quickly.

Do you feel like there is a need to fit into the culture here?

In a way yes. I feel like Seattle is a very liberal state – there are some things that you have to, like I know people of my culture who are forced to accept things that they otherwise would not have accepted due to their culture.

Are there particular things that you can speak about? Examples of that?

Like for example, free sex and premarital sex. Here it's a widely accepted thing, but back home it's not publicly accepted. Here if you don't do that, you're the weird one, if that makes sense.

Are there any other challenges, inconveniences, or problems that you face here?

Yeah, I think the US visa stuff gives you a lot of difficulty doing a lot of things. Like I can't do my masters and work simultaneously because of my visa status. The uncertainty – now I'm on OPT, which means I'm applying for H-1B but I don't know if I'll get to stay in the states for a long time, because it's a lottery system. How you plan your future is definitely affected, and I have to live with that uncertainty that one day I might have to go back if things don't go well for me.

One last question - If you had to give some advice to new immigrants coming into America today, what would you tell them?

I think one piece of advice would be to be open minded and not just think that your way is the right way. It's a mix of standing up for your beliefs but also being open minded and accepting the culture here. After all, you *are* the immigrant, if that makes sense. Kind of like, "when you're in Rome do as the romans do."

That's all. Thank you!

INSIGHTS

- The participant had problems reconciling their conservative upbringing with the liberalism of Seattle.
- The participant has enjoyed living in a place where there are a lot of activities to do in their spare time.
- The participant has found it helpful being a part of different kinds of communities, as they are beneficial in different aspects.
- When feeling homesick, the participant cited the value of having ties to people with the same cultural background as them.
- The participant still feels like an 'immigrant' and acknowledges the divide between locals and themselves.