

HCDE 518C: USER RESEARCH

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Targeted users: The stakeholders are technically savvy 18-25 year olds. Our demographic includes college students and post-graduates trying to improve their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing with quick, easy fixes with limited time and resources.

Research methods:

1. Survey: We conducted a survey through Catalyst Tools in which we asked 18 questions to get a better gauge of our user mental, physical and emotional health and confidence with cell phone technology. We had 27 young adults complete the survey. We asked questions regarding their mental, physical and emotional well-being as well as their technical abilities. This proved to be the easiest route for obtaining quantitative data. We found it useful for understanding the attitude and characteristics for a wider range of subjects.

2. Interviews: Based on the initial survey results, we created seven advanced interview questions to develop a deeper understanding about app usability and design. We conducted seven interviews asking 10 basic questions about the usability, design and features desired within the app. Three of these seven interviewees had taken the initial survey. These interviews were conducted in person as well as over email.

3. Diary: We conducted two complete diary studies, with four diary participants. We developed 21 identified life hacks and a set of questions to get a closer look at what types of life hacks people were more likely to use (mental, physical or emotional). Each day participants were given three life hacks and asked to pick one to attempt. Participants were asked to complete and describe which hack they chose for seven days, and document the process.

Summary of User Research

We concluded that more than half felt confident using cell phones and apps, and that most were willing and wanting to improve their mental, physical and emotional well-being. In addition, we concluded that over 60 percent of users had heard of life hacks, and over 75 percent would be interested in an easy way to find and use life-hacks.

Our user research is made up of three research techniques: surveys, interviews and diary studies. The research techniques combined both direct and indirect user contact. Each research study provided us with detailed data and allowed us to understand design requirements and users needs. *Each step in our research process helped us focus on different data in an attempt to identify the types of users the app would appeal to, the types of features the app would utilize, and when the app would best be used for efficacy.*

Surveys:

Surveys provided a large set of quantitative data. Our 27 survey responders indicated that more than 80% had completed an undergraduate education, and were confident in cell phone technology. Many surveyed identified their physical fitness as below average, but 75% were keen on finding ways to improve their fitness.

Despite 77% of participants reporting that they already considered themselves at a high mental performance, 89% indicates that they were interested in continuing to improve their mental performance in one way or another, and 80% also want to improve their emotional/coping skills.

Sixty-six percent of participants had heard of life hacks, and 77% want to find a resource that gives them easy access to life hacks.

Interviews:

We found several common trends that could be easily integrated into our design requirements including the popularity of a search bar to find life hacks, a rating system that included users comments and a picture explaining how the app works visually. Participants also indicated that 10-15 minutes is the most they would consider spending to perform a life hack, and they would appreciate the ability to submit their own life hacks.

Diary:

We found that two complete diary studies described the life hacks as easy to complete and valuable. Both participants wrote that life hacks helped enhance their everyday routine, and provided noticeable benefits. We were pleased to see that the participants wrote detailed descriptions of the positive effects of the hacks they tried, with accounts of how they felt their thinking, mood, or physical well-being changed.

Participants were eager to share life hacks with others, as indicated by their commentary, "I would definitely share this life hack with friends, even if it was unsolicited. This is one of the life hacks that easily impresses people and not a lot of people have heard about. It's also applicable on a daily basis." Time was found to be a critical factor in which life hacks were chosen as participants often focused on quick solutions that required minimal effort.

They also indicated that the hacks they wanted to share were non-subtle, snazzy hacks, "I think the ones with the biggest "wow" factors would be fun to share." This helped us predict which types of hacks will become the highest rated, and which ones would be weeded out.

Design Requirements

A variety of key design requirements for a life hack app on mobile devices include a calendar and social forum where users can actively engage by leaving comments and ratings (using a 1-5 rating system). The life hack must include a prevalent search bar. In addition, life hack tutorials must be short and to the point, and images are a necessity. Life hacks should be categorized by subject, popularity and wow factors, and should have time requirements clearly laid out. The design must also include the ability to submit one's own life hacks.

The design should also include an "upvote" system to allow users to rank different hacks, as we want our app to be a meritocracy that filters out useful/useless information and articles. If someone submits an article that others deem irrelevant, users may enjoy the ability to vote that article down so it receives less viewership.

Original Design Question: How can we use technology to guide people in making quick and easy self- improvements to their lives?

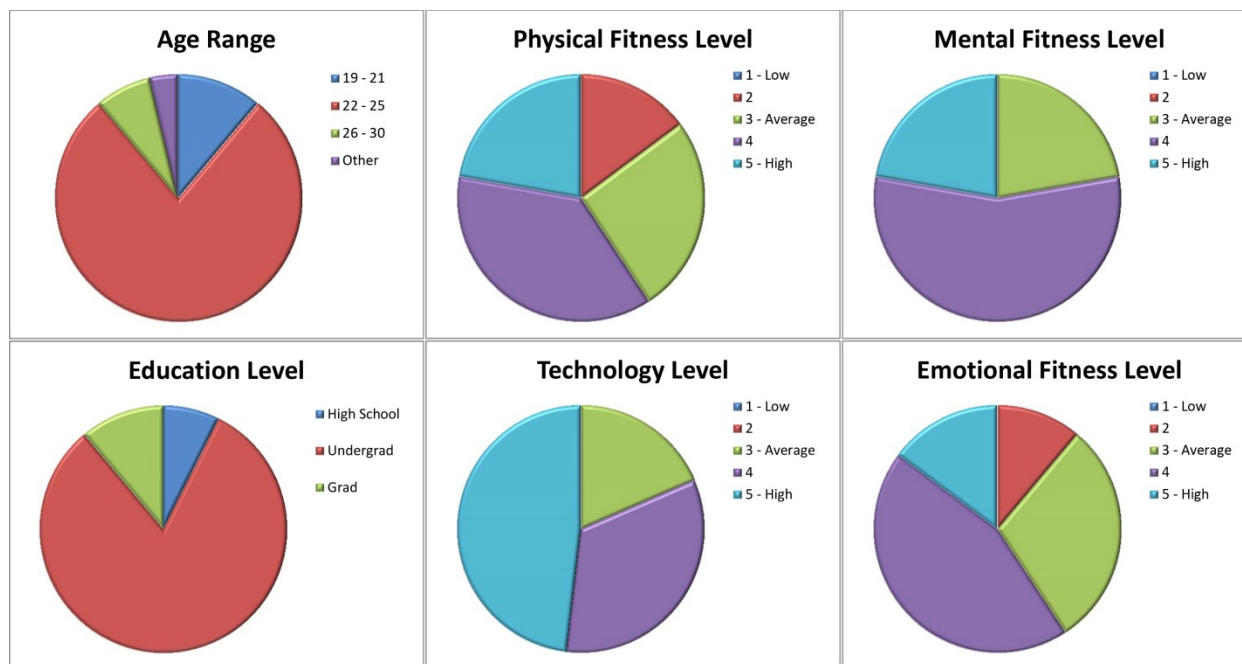
Refined Design Question: How can we guide young adults, ages 18-25, to utilize their time in more efficient ways and make quick and easy self-improvements to their lives?

Our design question proved to be too broad when we initially started due to time constraints. We refined our question to focus on young, collegiate adults, generally between the ages of 18-25. In addition, our design question was answering the question we were trying to ask - we had identified technology as the answer to help make easy self-improvements to their lives. To narrow the definition of life hack, we added “utilize time in more efficient ways.” We also added “utilize time in more efficient ways” to identify that time constraints are an integral part of life hacks.

Appendix:



A life-hack is defined as a strategy, technique, or shortcut that can improve your life in significant ways without taking much effort or time. It's a life-cheat, a hack, a small helpful hint that can have great benefits, if you will.



Survey Questions

What age range best describes you?

19 - 21	11.11%
22 - 25	77.78%
26 - 30	7.41%
Other	3.70%

Highest Level Of education completed?

High School	7.41%
Undergrad	81.48%
Grad	11.11%

What would you rate your experience with technology?

1	0.00%
2	0.00%
3	18.52%
4	33.33%
5	48.15%

What would you rate your experience with cell phone usage?

1	0.00%
2	0.00%
3	22.22%
4	33.33%
5	44.44%

What would you rate your experience using mobile apps?

1	0.00%
2	0.00%
3	29.63%
4	48.15%
5	22.22%

Physical Fitness:

How would you rate your level of fitness?

1	0.00%
2	14.81%
3	25.93%
4	37.04%
5	22.22%

How would you rate your interest to improve your overall fitness?

1	3.70%
2	3.70%
3	18.52%
4	29.63%
5	44.44%

Mental Fitness:

How would you rate your level of brain performance on a daily basis?

1	0.00%
2	0.00%
3	22.22%
4	55.56%
5	22.22%

How would you rate your interest to improve your overall mental performance?

1	0.00%
2	0.00%
3	11.11%
4	40.74%
5	48.15%

Emotional Fitness:

How would you rate your level of emotional / coping skills?

1	0.00%
2	11.11%
3	29.63%
4	44.44%
5	14.81%

How would you rate your interest to improve your overall emotional / coping resilience?

1	0.00%
2	3.70%
3	14.81%
4	37.04%
5	44.44%

Have you heard of a life-hack before?

Yes	66.67%
No	33.33%
Skipped	0.00%

Does a Life Hack sound like something you'd be interested in?"

Yes	85.19%
No	3.70%
Skipped	11.11%

Have you heard of a life-hack before?

Yes	66.67%
No	11.11%
Skipped	11.11%

Would you be interested in an easy way to find and use life-hacks?

Yes	77.78%
No	11.11%
Skipped	0.00%

Would you be interested in a further interview related to our project?

Yes	59.26%
No	40.74%
Skipped	0.00%

Interview Questions

Our life hack definition: *A life-hack is a strategy, technique, or shortcut that can improve your life in significant ways without taking much effort or time.*

Survey Sample - Kelsey Sampson



1. What would you like for life hack features: calendar, social forum, etc?

I would prefer if a mobile app's life hack features were outlined based common use categories.

For example, life hacks could be differentiated in these categories: Home, Work, Education, Parenting, etc.

2. How would they like to search on the app?

A search bar would be the most intuitive option for searching the app.

3. Would you like tutorials on how to use the hack?

Yes, if the apps were laid out in article form, it would be helpful the blog/ article to offer comments/ testimonials.

4. Would you like pictures associated with the hack?

Yes.

5. Would like the life hack to include ratings?

Yes, a scale of 1 to 5 would be helpful.

6. How would you like the life hacks categorized?

I would like for the mobile app's life hacks to be categorized based up scenarios: Home, Work, Education, Parenting, etc.

7. What type of evidence would you like to support the hack?

A testimonial would be helpful.

8. How much time would they like to spend doing the hack?

The time requirement should be up front, and listed in the first sentence explaining the hack. My time preference depends upon who much time the hack would save overall over a year, day, etc.

9. Do you know of any life hacks?

Yes, I am very familiar with life hacks and have worked with my client HTC on several.

<https://plus.google.com/+HTC/posts/B64T15PJRp3>

10. Would you like to submit your own?

<https://plus.google.com/+HTC/posts/B64T15PJRp3>

Diary Questions: Sample: Bryan Yasukawa

De-odorize Your Shoes!

Place your stinky shoes in a Ziploc bag and place them in the freezer overnight to make them not smell.



(above) Put your Shoes in Ziplac Bag. The cold temperature helps reduce the bacteria.

Extend Range & Find / Unlock Your Car



(Below) Point your car remote towards chin

1. Which life hack did you pack and why?

I chose the “point your car remote up towards your chin to extend your range” life hack.

2. Did you complete the hack?

Yes

3. Where were you when the hack was completed?

I was at my parking garage at the Summit and Madison Park apartment complex

4. Did you think you benefitted from the hack?

It actually worked. I forgot to lock my car and remembered when i was about 30 yd away. I pointed my remote at the car and pressed the lock button, but it didn't lock. Then i pointed it towards my chin and it locked. I forget to lock my car at an unsettlingly high rate and then I have to backtrack to lock it, but this saves me a little bit of effort.

5. Would you be willing to share the hack?

I would definitely share this life hack with friends, even if it was unsolicited. This is one of the life hacks that easily impresses people and not a lot of people have heard about. It's also applicable on a daily basis.

6. Would you look for similar hacks?

I would look for similar life hacks that involve my car, since I use my car on most days and I'm sure there are more life hacks for cars that I'm unaware of.

“Daydreamer” Darcy



Darcy is a University of Washington senior studying physiology. She is fulfilling her last class credits and often daydreams about the graduation and her future.

Darcy is often looking for quick tricks and tips on her cell phone to break up time between classes and to show her classmates while studying and hanging out.

Darcy feels that although her brain simulation is up to par, she can improve her mental well-being. She is adept on her iPhone and utilizes apps on a daily basis.

Darcy doesn't have a lot of time to dedicate to physical fitness, but would like quick tips that have time requirements and benefits up front. She also discusses different fitness activities with her friends, and feels the need to share her physical fitness on social network.

Personal Information:

Age: 21

Occupation: UW Senior
Majoring in Physiology

Technical Proficiency: Cell
Phone & Apps Used Daily

Goal:

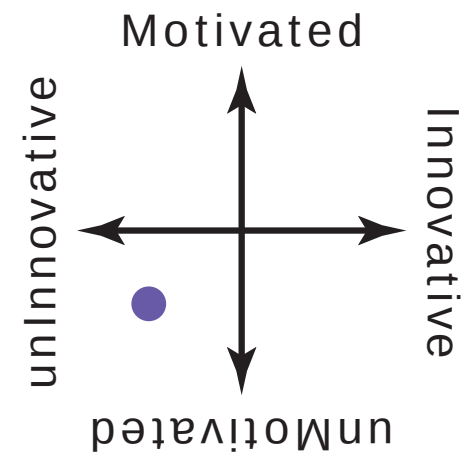
Easily achieve higher fitness and mental fitness without much effort or time

“Optimist is daydreamer translated more elegantly”

Requested Features

- Search
- Hack of the Day
- Social Network
- Reviews

Key Attributes



"Broadway" Bertrude



***B**ertrude has dreamed of making the big stage since she was a little girl. She is the star of her program and lives and breathes singing and dance.*

However, with great power comes great responsibility and everyday Bertrude feels an enormous amount of pressure to fulfill others' absurdly high expectations of her.

Time is a luxury Bertrude cannot afford, as she spends most of her time in practice, class or shows. Bertrude also works part-time at Dicks to support herself, meaning is always stretched for time. She wants to be able to relax herself mentally and emotionally so that she does her personal best every time she hits the dance floor. She is adept on her Android and utilizes apps on a daily basis. She subscribes to Psychology Today, and especially loves the meditation section.

Personal Information:

Age: 21

Occupation: UW Sophomore
Majoring in Theatre & Dance

Technical Proficiency: Cell
Phone & Apps Used Daily

Goals:

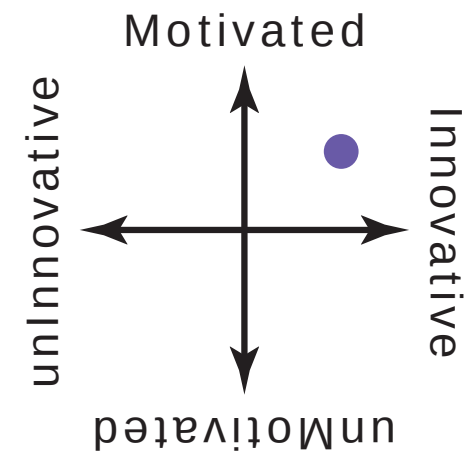
- Increase mental and emotional fitness
- Decompress before intense hours of dance & theatre practice and shows you're a winner like me?"

"Sleep is for the weak, who has the time?"

Requested Features

- Search
- Hack of the Day
- User Account
- Social Network
- Hack Tracking

Key Attributes



“Enterprising” Eric



***H**aving been instilled with a fear of idle hands and laziness at a young age by his father, Eric rarely relaxes and is constantly thinking about his next progressive step in life. Finding a love for efficiency and well-oiled operations, Eric found a passion in the mechanical engineering field.*

He spent much of his time fine-tuning his brain and learning to comprehend complex engineering puzzles. He recognizes that he isn't well equipped to handle social situations and emotional issues.

Through Netflix, Eric discovers life hacks and the short time-frame required to use/learn them instantly appeals to him. He searches his mobile store for similar tools. He finds hacks helpful and continues to gain more skills that he then shows to his father, who is likewise impressed.

Personal Information:

Age: 25

Occupation: Mechanical Engineer

Technical Proficiency: Daily cell-phone usage, prototyping and 3D design for work and machining

Goals:

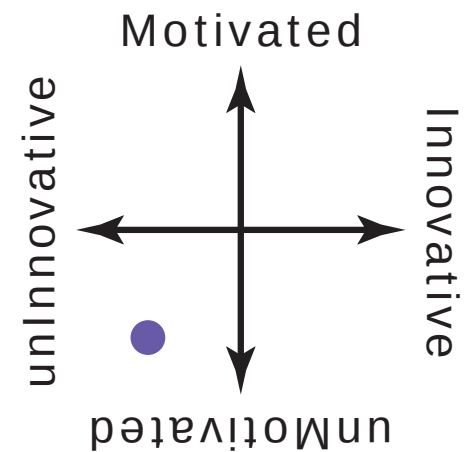
- He wants to increase his skills in as many areas of his life as possible
- Show his father he's better-rounded

“Love is efficiency of well-oiled operations!”

Requested Features

- Search
- Hack of the Day
- Hack Mails
- User Account
- Social Network
- Hack Tracking
- Reviews

Key Attributes



“Menté” Monty



Monty has one goal ... CIO by 40 or sooner. He did head start (he called it running head start) in high school, took his first college courses when he was 16. From that point he knew he had great things ahead of him.

He first heard of Life Hacks from a coworker. The hack was ... can you tell if someone is a liar? The next day he caught a coworker in a lie and he knew that the Life Hacks would help him advance.

Monty soon found Poser Posing (a power stance before an interview or speech), tricks to stay awake in meetings and many others. However, he didn't have a good way to find them and mark them for later use.

Monty is a technical guy, but he lacks the motivation to spend the time to build his own app ... he has a company to run.

Personal Information:

Age: 25

Occupation: Project Manager

Technical Proficiency: Daily cell-phone usage, project planning, software developer

Goals:

- CIO by 40
- Keep his favorite hacks in his hip pocket (aka, his smart phone)

“Love is efficiency of well-oiled operations!”

Requested Features

- Search
- Hack of the Day
- Hack Mails
- User Account
- Social Network
- Hack Tracking
- Reviews
- Bookmarks / Favorites

Key Attributes

