

Design Research Check-In

CSE 440 | Augustina Liu, Bill Phung, Celeste Cayetano, Ethan Cui

Participant Background

Our first participant was Reuben(pseudonym), a friend of a parent from Tacoma. He does various jobs such as Uber Eats, announcing for local sports, and freelance writing for local newspapers. Though relying on the internet for much of his work, he finds himself confused and frustrated with how difficult it can be for him to interact with computers. The interview was conducted in a local coffee shop.

What We Learned

In the interview, we found that Reuben had a fundamental distrust of the internet, yet did not take any measures to protect his accounts. For instance, he stated that he would not make any purchases on the internet because he felt insecure, yet he also used the same password for everything, despite knowing that that is not a secure habit. In his case, a desire for convenience and frustration with computers outweighed his fear of being attacked.

We also discovered that Reuben relies solely on each company to track suspicious activities and notify him if there are problems. When his credit union account was compromised, for instance, he only found out and recovered it because the credit union called him and gave him steps to take. He even stated that he thinks it would be helpful to have something like that for his other accounts.

Tasks, Problems, Opportunities

The result of the interview poses an interesting design challenge for our group. Given that many seniors, including our participant, feel significantly more comfortable by writing passwords down on sticky notes than using a digital keychain. We think there may be a lack of interest in using forms that appear too “high-tech”. The participant also stated that he used the same password for everything because it was convenient, which prompts us to design something that focuses on simplicity and convenience; something that is automated or running in the background that the consumer doesn't have to think about actively using if they do not want to. We should explore designs that are rooted in items seniors are more likely to feel comfortable using that are in the physical world.

Reuben said he was concerned about keeping his data private. A problem that might arise is that the participant might like something that tracks his technology even it is beneficial. To some tracking activity to search for compromises or such might be counter-intuitive.

We did not have any trouble establishing rapport and gathering information. The participant explicitly said that we can ask all the information we want in the interview and he would love to answer them.

Adapting Our Research Plan

When being asked habits of tracking online accounts, Reuben became quite embarrassed about telling us his process because he thought that the way he tracked online accounts was wrong or not secure enough. Hence, in our future research, it is important for us to make sure that our participants are comfortable in the interview. We will also emphasize that the purpose of the interview is not to judge their habits for tracking their online account but to collect the information we want.

In our interview, we found that we tended to guide the conversation in a certain direction. To avoid this, we would add a question to let them introduce themselves and some open-ended questions to make them think more diversely rather than being constrained on our topic. Then, we will narrow down our questions to collect data we want. In addition, since we noticed that our participant may prefer to use physical forms to record their accounts, we will add one question in our research plan to explore what tools they are comfortable to use in the real world to explore more about this.

Interview notes link: <https://tinyurl.com/y9hv7lok>