

In our first contextual inquiry, we interviewed a female senior in Foster School of Business at UW. The interview was set up in participant's apartment after she finished her classes in the evening. The inquiry was planned to follow the plan, in which we should first observe participants communicating on any social media without interference, then go through participants' contacts and end with interview questions.

The observation was difficult to conduct because our participant couldn't ignore us and felt uncomfortable acting normally while being observed. Since she didn't want to initiate conversations with others and no one was contacting her, the observation became awkward. A lesson to learn here is that it will be hard to observe current communication and a more interesting focus can be previous communication history.

After she went through her phone contacts, we summarized her contacts into categories. Some examples were co-workers from her internship, recruiters and company representatives from career fairs, professors, college classmates, roommates, friends who introduced by her friends and families etc. Among these groups, she wants to keep in touch with classmates (especially the ones she is in a group project with), friends who she hung out together before, and recruiters and company representatives from career fairs. From here, we found that there might be different kind of purposes when users want to keep in touch with different groups of people. She intentionally desired to keep connection with recruiters and people from dream company to get a job while she wanted to contact friends hung out together before just for hanging out next time.

We also asked her to go through her recent contacts on Facebook and explain to us the reason they contacted this person, the duration, who initiated the conversation and how. One conversation drew our greatest attention. The contact is her friends in college that she knew from student association and the conversation was initiated by our participant about whether to go to an event together. She didn't hang out with this contact very often, but after she found out this contact would also go to the event, she invited this contact to go together. What we learned here is that same events to go, common hobbies (as our participant mentioned in interview), maybe books/movies or even websites viewed by both people could be a good chance to connect people.

For interview questions, some facts about her made us think more about what re-connection really means. She defined being "still in touch" to be still hanging out together and knowing recent events in their life. Her previous roommate is in California and they always share links to each other on Facebook. She said although they don't reply each other frequently, but she believed they're still close. What we want to do should not just be a reminder to let users say hi frequently, but to highlight information about people they lose contact that users can make use of to make conversation interesting.

While in another case, reminders can also be helpful. She mentioned that she still have a 3-year-old email from her important friend in her inbox that she always wanted to reply but would be weird to reply after 3 years. When asked about when she would contact her parents, she told us that she would only remember to reply her parents when she was bored or walking home. In these cases, the task to solve is not topics, but remembering to contact people users value in a reasonable frequency.

Considering what information we get and the problems we have in the first inquiry, we will change or add our inquiry by these questions:

- Observation part is hard, but we can let participants summarize their conversation later, by asking them “who did you talk with today, how did you start your conversation, what was your topic and how did the conversation end?”
- Since it’s hard to go through all contacts, besides recent contacts and conversations, we may also want to focus on contacts and conversations that our participants enjoy or value recently
- Begin with open-ended questions may lead to awkward quiet. We may lead participants think and sometimes they may inspire themselves to more information. For instance, we may also want to ask what participants desire and what they think can connect people together. They may not be able to come up with mature ideas and go silence. Although we still want them to think, we can also provide what we come up with so far and ask whether they’ll like and they may be inspired to have some other good ideas that we haven’t thought of.
- Other questions to ask:
  - Thinking of their familiar social connecting ways, what features do they think are so far so good to keep people close and what kinds of things do they want to have?
  - What methods, eg. app reminders, do they want to be reminded? And how, eg. reminder app pop out of the screen when user is looking at Facebook?
  - Do they feel comfortable if others are able to look at their viewed websites, movies, books track?