

Assignment 2c: Design Research Check-in

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All participants include:

2 female and 2 male students, relatively fashion/style-aware.

First Design Research Participant:

Clarissa. She is a senior college student in UW studying Computer Science. She originally came from China and spent her high school in the U.S. We approached Clarissa in her apartment, and completed our research with her in her bedroom.

We started the research with an observational study by looking at her wardrobe inventory. Her storage included a closet with boxes on the top; some clothes hanging from the clothesline poles; some dresses and bottoms folded on top of the closet. The inventory was overall organized by type in different places, and then the thickness of each individual item. We estimated 4 pairs of shoes in different style, around 15 T-shirts, 25-30 tops, around 10 bottoms and 4-5 outwears.

The research then proceeded with a contextual inquiry – She emulated the process of picking her outfit in the morning in her bedroom as we observed and questioned. The overall decision making process took less than two minutes. She first picked up a top that was the most accessible and then considered a bottom to match it, which ended up to be leggings because she thought it would be easier to put shoes on. She proceeded with the outerwear and socks in the similar fashion as the top. Finally she decided on the shoes which was a pair of boots because she already had a pair of pink socks, which seemed ugly to her so she wanted something to cover them up. Overall, several factors were considered in her decision: weather, comfort, matching in styles and then the occasion. In terms of placement, she grabbed the top from laundry basket and jacket from closet. And she mentioned that she normally keeps clothes that she wears more often in a smaller closet near her bed. She did not chose any accessory, however she said it depended on her choice of outfit, and sometimes she just forgets to put one on. It took her a little while to recall the last time she wore those outfits, which ranged from 3 days to 3 weeks.

We finished the research with an interview. We asked her whether she was satisfied with her picks, to which she responded positively. But shortly after that, she mentioned a small Dogeared necklace would definitely make this look better. All items she picked today were worn pretty frequently recently except for the socks. Clarissa has owned these socks for four years. And she described them as too ugly to wear. Then we asked whether she had any other idle clothes. According to her response, she regularly organizes and cleans up her closet. Normally she would put away all clothes she doesn't feel like wearing anymore and later send them to Goodwill. She never thinks about selling her idle clothes but she would consider giving some of them to a friend who's willing to take. Then we followed up by asking her to think about all those clothes she donated or gave away, what was the thinking process when she purchased them. She gave me several situations. Some of them were too small(in size) for her, but she still bought them because she thought she would soon be skinnier and could fit into those cute but small outfits. Some clothes were really cheap but they were also cheap in quality so they won't last long. Another case is some clothes are in short trendings but they soon go out of style or got uncomfortable over time. The I asked questions about her wardrobe. She said she really cares about the organization of her closet. She tries to make it organized, because it makes it easier to find clothes and easier for her to keep track of what clothes she owns. The last but most important question about what she thought could help her to improve this process. She gave several ideas: 1. Have a way to keep track of all clothes she has/visualized inventory. 2. Suggest some completed looks every morning based on her calendar for the day(occasion) and the weather of the day. 3. Label(Tag) each item to enable search. 4. How I much money I have spent on clothing. 5. Instructions on how to wash each piece.

The entire research went smoothly, with the only problem being our ability to effectively communicate and record information concurrently. The problem was mitigated by our detailed research plan which contained a large number of questions and guidelines. Still, we planned to carry out remaining researches in a bigger group, as this time we only had one interviewer.

We were able to gain a relatively comprehensive insight on how Clarissa picks her daily outfits, her opinions on clothing and fashion and her perspectives on how information technology can address some of the problems in the subject. Since some of the ideas contrast those of the interviewer, we believe we have developed a more neutral standpoint on our prospect of people's wardrobe management. We have also discovered some new influential factors such as brandings and different shopping approaches, which we think could be interesting to explore in the upcoming studies.

For the remainder of the researches, we still need opinions and ideas from potential users other than students, and stakeholders including salespeople and stylists. We planned to add what we discovered into researches with potential users, and modify it (such as cutting out the contextual inquiry and adding more fashion-related questions) with stakeholders, in order to learn more with their professionalism and experience in a different perspective.