

# Clothing Tracking: Design Research Plan

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## Stakeholders and Participants

The group of people who would benefit most from Clothing Tracking are those who want to be more conscious of the contents in their closet. More specifically, we want to focus on those who are consumers of the fast fashion industry. Fast fashion is characterised by inexpensive clothing that are mass produced by retailers in response to the latest fashion trend. Fast fashion encourages shoppers to buy new clothing frequently, which often creates the dilemma of an overcrowded closet and forgotten pieces from last season. Some leading retailers of fast fashion are Forever 21, JC Penny, and H&M. Since it is not realistic to follow people to their closets, we plan to locate and study our participants at these retailers. We believe that their shopping habits are good indications of what they have at home.

## Research Methods and Procedure

We believe that an interview would be very helpful for our research because it is generally faster and more efficient to get answers from our participants. We would ask participants about the details of what they currently own and what problems arise as they accumulate clothes over time. In particular, we could focus on the extent to which they take into consideration the clothing that they already own--styles, colors, etc.--and how that affects what they decide to buy. While the answers we get may not be a detailed description of everything they actually own, the more participants we survey, the closer the result will will reveal a common pattern among our stakeholders.

We also want to consider contextual inquiry for our research as it works well for observing a shopper's habits while they go to look for new clothing. As noted above, we would observe their process in going to stores, looking at clothing that they're interested in buying, and deciding what to actually buy.

Another approach would be a diary study, which might be more broadly applicable (i.e., not just to people who often shop for new clothing). We could have participants write down the clothing that they decide to wear each day, and try to justify why they chose the clothing that they did (e.g., weather, formal occasions, etc.). It may also be useful to have them write down how well the clothing choices worked out at the

end of the day, as a reflection on what aspects of their process for picking things out might be improved.

## Detailed Methods

### **Contextual Inquiry/Contextual Interviews**

Although Contextual Inquiry and Contextual Interviews are technically different methods of research, the team believes it is best to do a combination of both. For each researcher, we plan to visit clothing stores such as Forever 21, JCPenney, and H&M. We would begin by asking general questions about shopping habits (i.e., the interview portion). We could focus on the problems that our participants have when they get home. For example, we can ask about buyer's remorse: "Do you usually regret your purchases later? Why?" or "Do you find it hard to keep track of new/old items in your closet?"

After the interview portion, we would move on to contextually observe how their customers make decisions based on what they have at home. We would be interested in whether participants go to the store to just buy stuff they like? Or, do they think about clothing that they don't yet own and go with a specific goal in mind? The researcher, for instance, could ask "I see that you are buying this black shirt, do you have anything similar at home?" We could enquire about pricing for specific pieces of clothing that the shopper finds, and ask about how often they intend to wear a piece of clothing. Based on these details and the thorough nature of contextual inquiries, we believe this should be our primary research method to discover the customer needs and behavior patterns. While performing this research, we could help develop a partnership by offering opinions (if asked) about the clothing that the shopper decides to try, so that we actually participate in the process as opposed to just being a hindrance. The discussion from trying on different articles of clothing and exchanging opinions may also benefit our research by giving a closer perspective on how the shopper thinks.