In our research, we didn’t find much evidence that people have issues with buying and keeping track of their clothing; furthermore, solutions to these problems have been proposed in the past (including in past offerings of CSE 440!) However, we did find that many of the people we spoke to--particularly those living in dorms, or in apartment buildings with shared laundry--were frustrated with the cumbersome process of doing their laundry. In particular, figuring out when a machine is free to use and aligning that with the point at which laundry needs to be done presents a challenge. We chose this design in particular because it is space-efficient: the ball is small and serves multiple purposes, while the scale fits neatly under a laundry basket. The ball is also a physical object, which makes it more difficult to ignore when it pulses to tell you to do laundry. This also allows us to use the ball as a sensor for when the washer and dryer are finished, and give immediate notifications to the client that their clothes are ready to be moved.

Panels 1-3 show the task of determining when to start laundry. The ball communicates to the client that their laundry basket is full, and that a machine is empty, meaning that it’s a good time to start laundry. In panel 4, the ball figures out when to notify the client that there is an empty dryer for them to use.
After the ball detects that the clothing is dry, it notifies the client that the laundry is finished (task 2) and that they can come to get it.