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WAITING EXPERIENCE
DIARY STUDY

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OVERVIEW OF DIARY STUDY

A LOOK INTO USERS' ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIOURS IN CONTEXT

As part of completing our understanding of Empathetic Research Frameworks, our team conducted a DIARY STUDY to explore the experiences of participants in their natural environments. Data was collected and synthesized, uncovering insights on wait time, productivity, stress factors, and level of enjoyment.

SCENARIO

CLIENT: EDUCATIONAL MEDIA COMPANY

USER-CRITERIA: YOUNG ADULT (AGE 18-30)

Organization Y creates educational media for children. They've recently decided to expand their user base by creating short educational media for young adults. We've been hired by the company to help them understand people's current behavior, emotions, and experiences of waiting (e.g., waiting for a bus, waiting for food, waiting for a friend, etc.). The findings from this research will help them identify ways to improve people's wait experiences and will help inform both the type of media they create as well as how it's consumed (e.g., interactive, games, video, articles, etc.)

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do participants choose their activities that they engage in while waiting?

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

Plan: Refine Research Question, Create Prompts for participants, Launch Study

We wanted to study how people chose the activity they engaged in while waiting.

We used Google Forms and asked our participants:

1. What are you waiting for?
2. What did you choose to do while waiting?
3. Explain why you chose to do this? (How do you feel emotionally/mentally? How do you feel physically? What are you hoping to get out of the activity?)
   a. Option to upload a picture of the task they chose.

The form was sent out to our participants and they were given the instructions to fill out the form 2-3 times a day as they found themselves waiting over a 3 day period.

Run Study: Monitor data, provide feedback to participant, write notes with observations and questions.

Using Slack and an initial instruction email the link to the form we contacted our participants. We used slack to set up daily reminders throughout the day to help remind them to fill out the form. We did have issues with this as not all the reminders came through on slack.

Most people provided 2-3 entries a day but there was one participant that only provided four. All in all, we received a satisfactory amount of data.

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS CONT'D
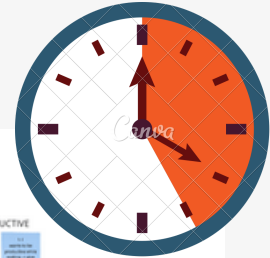
Analyze: Data analysis and synthesis

We used affinity diagrams to help analysis and synthesis of our data. We put our data on sticky notes and just started sorting in themes that we started to see. Talking out loud amongst our group really helped us during this project. We aimed to identify any patterns in behaviour, tasks, and barriers/problems encountered.

Link to Affinity Mapping on Miro

INSIGHTS
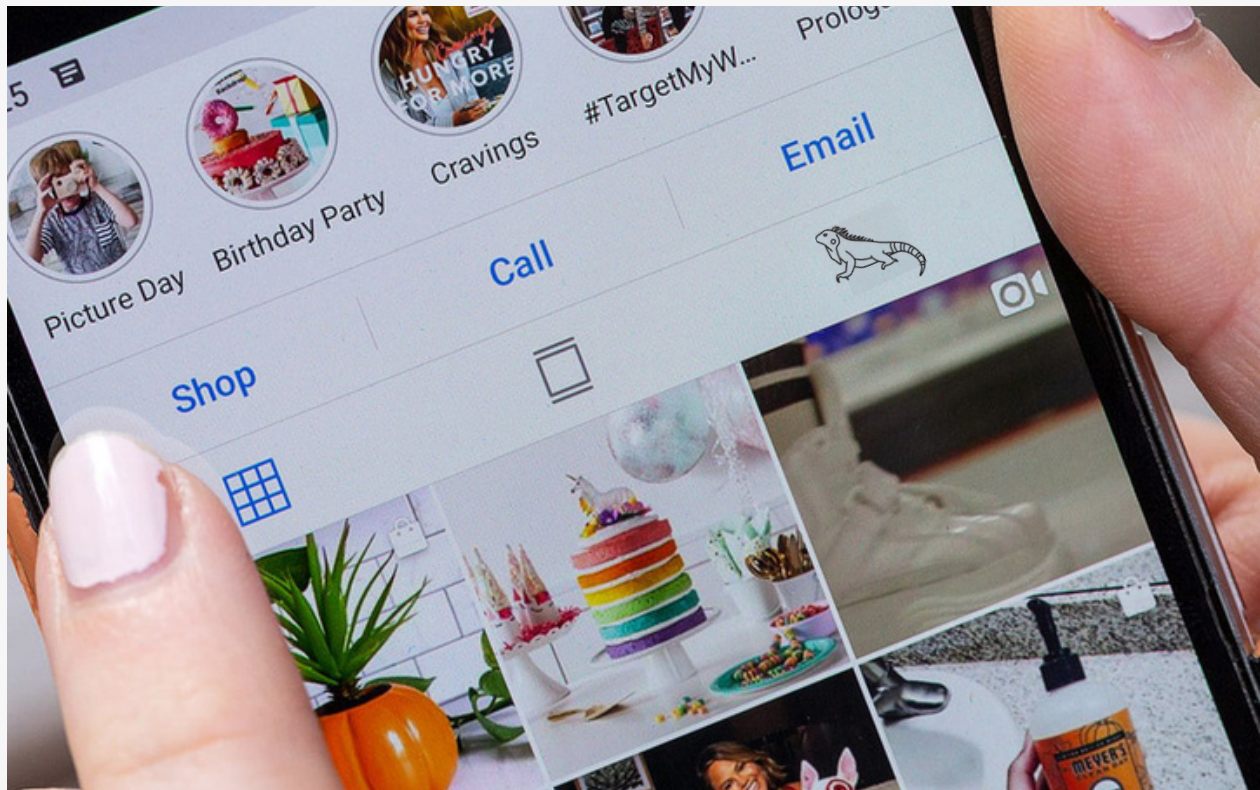
- **WAIT TIME:** PEOPLE CHOOSE TASKS THEY CAN QUICKLY START/WALK AWAY FROM WHEN THEY HAVE A SHORT WAIT TIME (TASKS WITH LOW INVESTMENT).

- **STRESS FACTOR:** PEOPLE ENJOY USING WAITING TIME AS A CHANCE TO REST AND DECOMPRESS VIA NAPPING, SOCIAL MEDIA, SOCIALIZING ("ACTION FOR DISTRACTION")

- **CHANCE TO BE PRODUCTIVE:** PEOPLE USE WAITING TIME AS A CHANCE TO BE PRODUCTIVE VIA WORKING, CHORES (TASKS DRIVEN BY A FEELING OF ACCOMPLISHMENT)

- **ENJOYMENT:** PEOPLE USE WAITING PERIODS AS A CHANCE TO DO AN ACTIVITY THEY ENJOY LIKE CATCHING UP ON SHOWS, GAMING.

REFLECTIONS

The participants that we looked at to examine their waiting experiences were all students sharing the common motivator of project and assignment deadlines while attending virtual classes. This along with the current pandemic situation provided an especially unique lens for our study.

We found that stress was a factor in the choice of waiting behaviour as well as the estimated time for waiting Many chose napping, gaming, and social media as activities to engage in to help them relax.

Interestingly, social media has been linked to higher levels of depression and anxiety. Having an alternative option that users can quickly start and walk away from could be a healthier alternative.

Our team was hoping for more insights on exactly how young adults choose waiting activities based on their physical and emotional state at the time. While participants were prompted to write about this, they did not.

Due to COVID, there were not many instances of participants waiting outside their home. This would be a good opportunity for further study in the future.