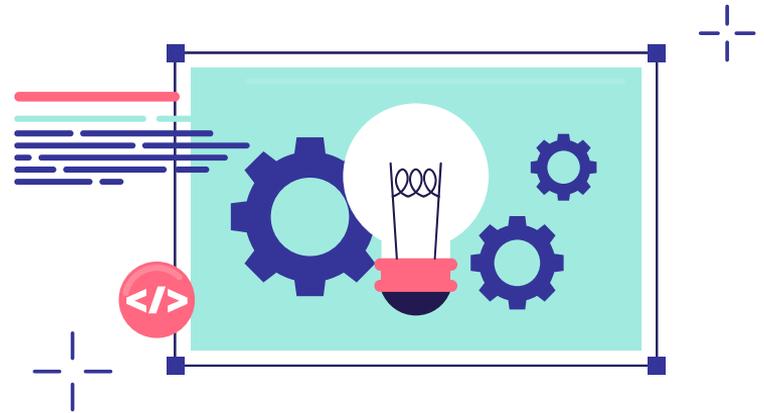


# Let <sup>em</sup> Cook!

POVs, HMWs,  
& Experience Prototypes



Mayowa A.

Butch N.

Esaw A.

**Tina Z.**

# Problem Domain



individuals living independently for the first time + finance/food/budgeting



# Additional Interviews



## “NATHAN”

Conducted remote interview

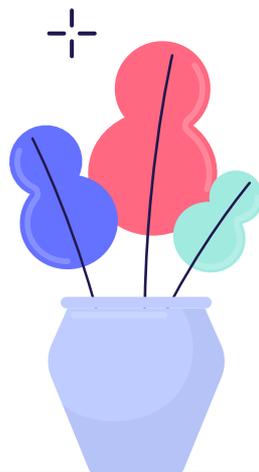
- > 21 y/o, living in own apt.
- > Withdrew from college
- > Lives in rural WA area

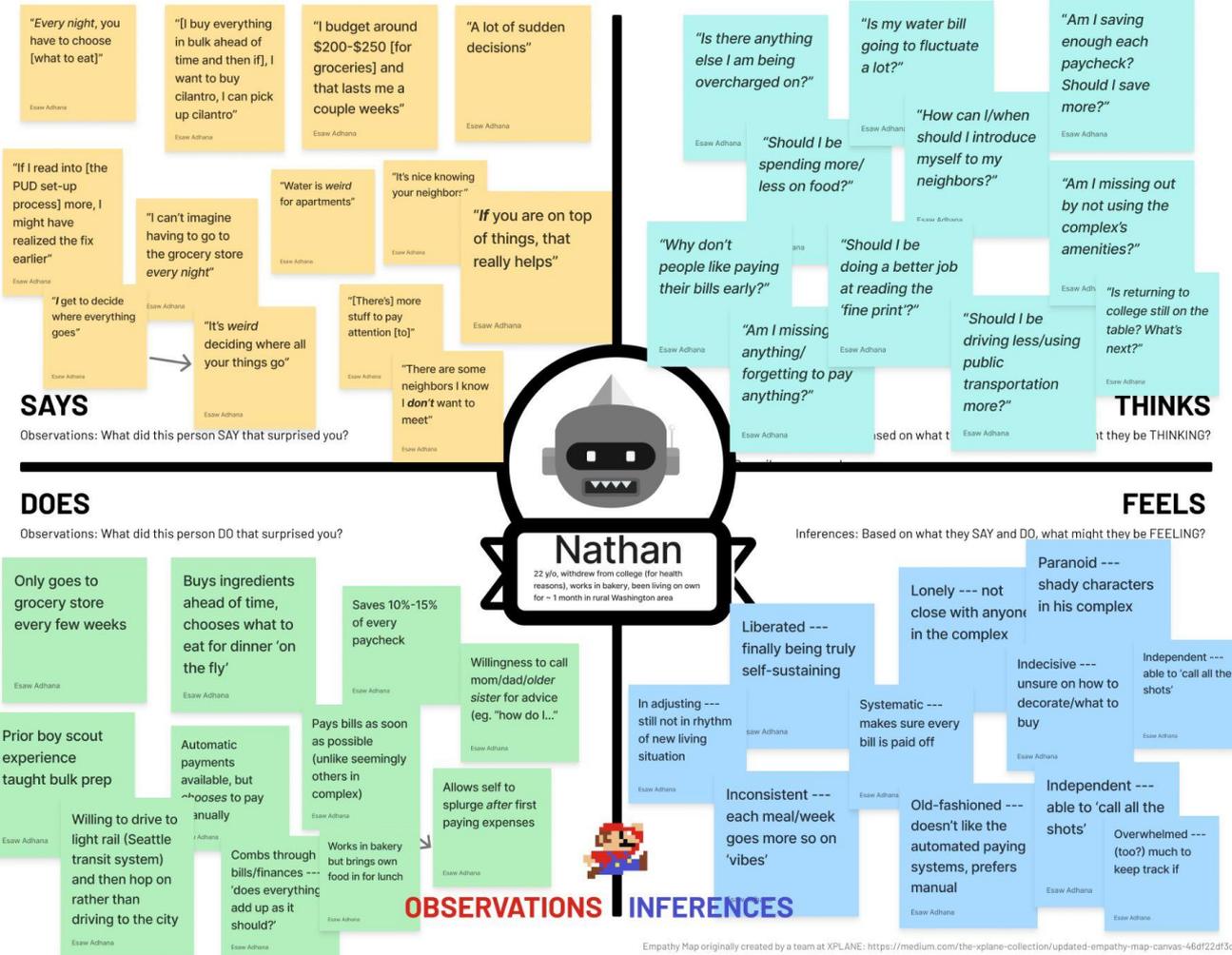


## “RACHEL”

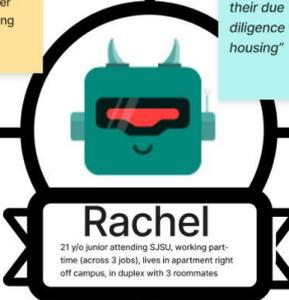
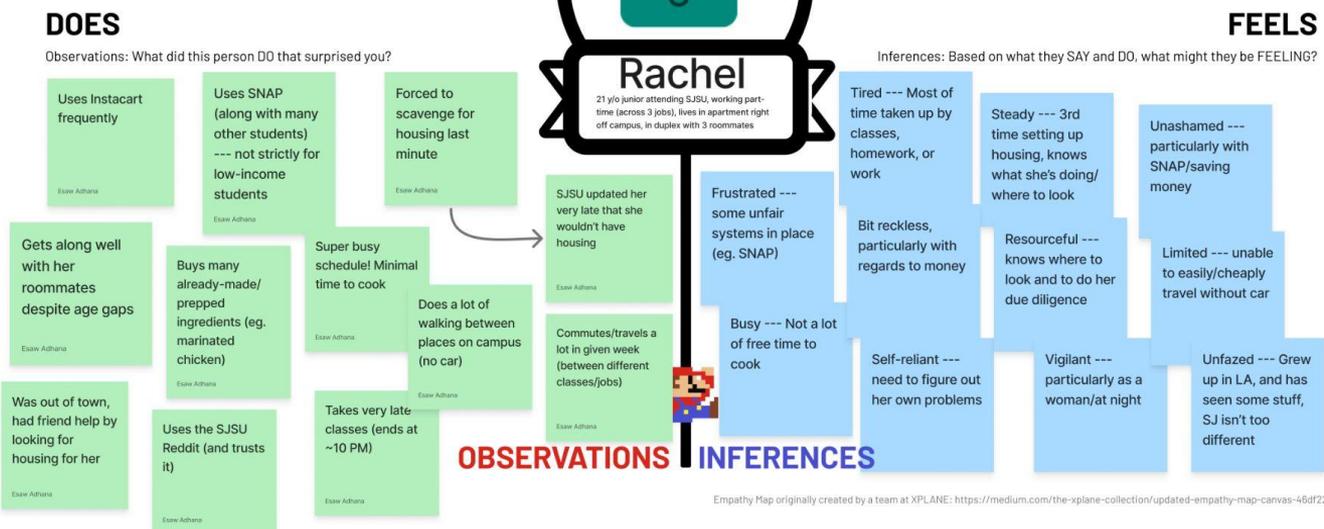
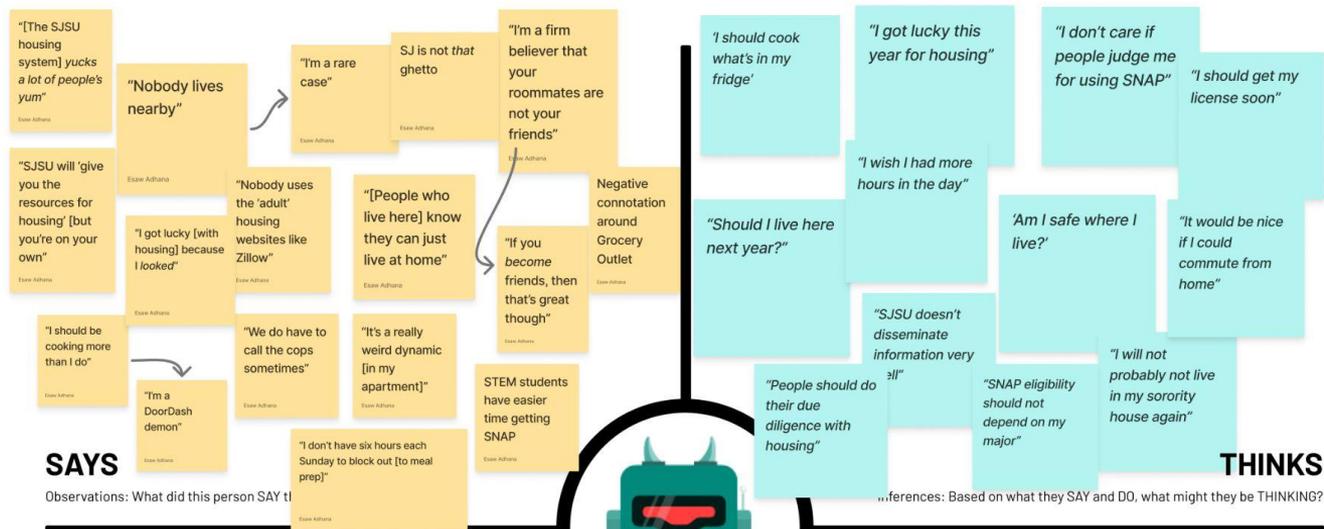
Conducted interview @ SJSU

- > 21 y/o, living in duplex
- > Has 3 other roommates
- > Current junior at SJSU

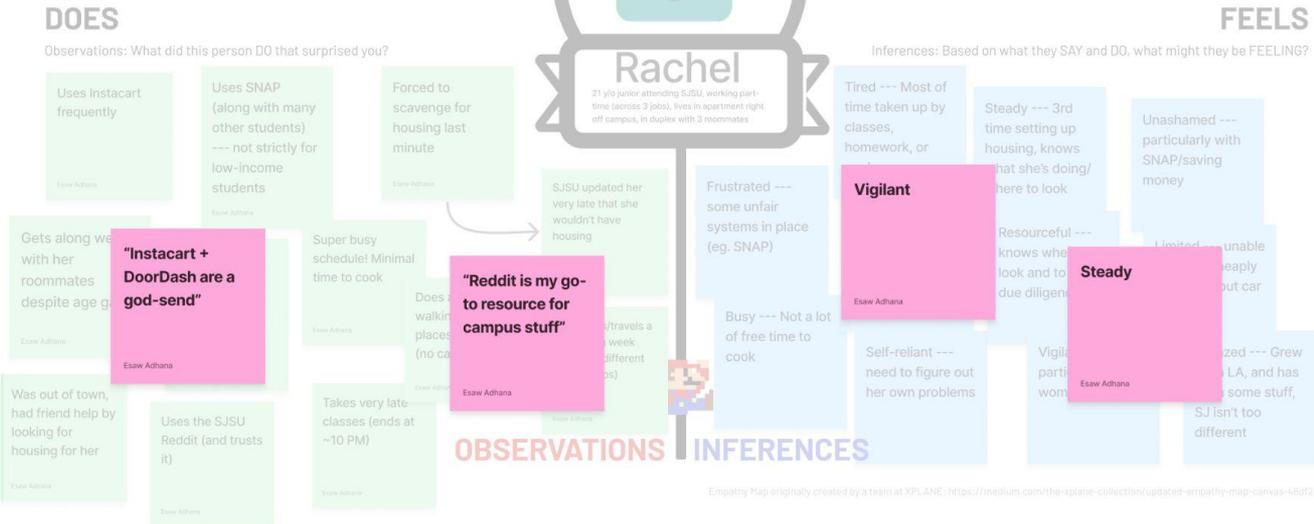








**OBSERVATIONS INFERENCES**

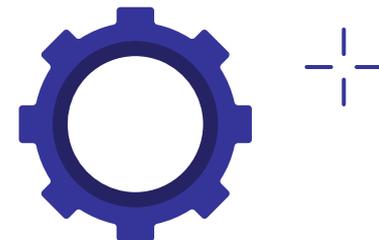


**Rachel**  
21 y/o junior attending SJSU, working part-time (scaevola 3 jobs), lives in apartment right off campus, in duplex with 3 roommates

**OBSERVATIONS INFERENCES**

Empathy Map originally created by a team at XP.LANE: <https://medium.com/the-splase-collection/updated-empathy-map-canvas-4bf22d13c6a>

# POVs - Nathan



## **WE MET...**

Nathan, a 22-year-old who recently moved into a new apartment and is handling his own finances for the first time.

## **WE WERE SURPRISED TO NOTICE...**

although he worries about missing bill payments, he chooses to pay each bill manually (rather than automating payments).

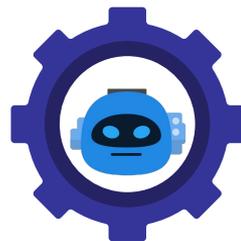
## **WE WONDER IF THIS MEANS...**

he values reinforcing his sense of responsibility and control by exercising financial agency.

## **IT WOULD BE GAME-CHANGING TO...**

maintain Nathan's sense of autonomy and self-trust while reducing the anxiety and risk that come with managing payments manually.

# POVs - Samantha



## **WE MET...**

Samantha, a 24-year-old full-time software engineer at Pinterest who lives alone in an apartment in San Francisco.

## **WE WERE SURPRISED TO NOTICE...**

she complains that her company's food has gotten less elaborate, yet she only cooks simple meals for herself using nearby groceries.

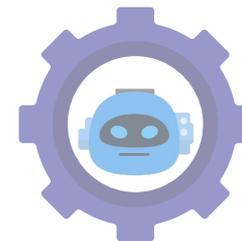
## **WE WONDER IF THIS MEANS...**

for her, dedicating time and energy to effortful dishes feels draining—like another tiresome work task—rather than satisfying.

## **IT WOULD BE GAME-CHANGING TO...**

make preparing a complex meal a source of fun, pride, and/or relaxation for Samantha.

# POVs - Samantha



## WE MET...

Samantha, a 24-year-old software engineer at Pinterest who lives alone in an apartment in San Francisco.

## WE WERE SURPRISED...

she complains that her cooking has gotten less elaborate, yet she only cooks simple meals because of the lack of nearby groceries.

## WE WONDER IF THIS...

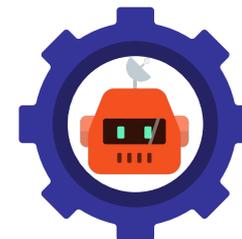
for her, dedicating time to preparing delicious dishes feels draining—like another tiresome work task—rather than satisfying.

## IT WOULD BE GAME-CHANGING TO...

make preparing a complex meal a source of fun, pride, and/or relaxation for Samantha.

HMW make cooking not feel like a chore?

# POVs - Lillian



## **WE MET...**

Lillian, a 22-year-old who had a sheltered childhood but studied abroad in Italy for a year and now loves to explore new cuisines.

## **WE WERE SURPRISED TO NOTICE...**

her first visit to an Italian farmer's market was overwhelming, but she continued to shop there instead of at a predictable supermarket.

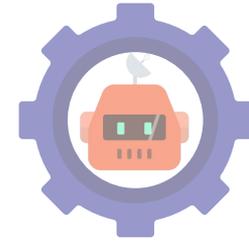
## **WE WONDER IF THIS MEANS...**

she sees unfamiliar food as an avenue for "healthy discomfort" and growth.

## **IT WOULD BE GAME-CHANGING TO...**

reduce the uncertainty that makes food exploration feel overly intimidating, making her feel supported as she tries new things.

# POVs - Lillian



## WE MET...

Lillian  
abroad

HMW  
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adulting  
knowledge to  
new adults more  
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## IT WOULD BE GAME-CHANGING TO...

reduce the uncertainty that makes food exploration feel overly intimidating, making her feel supported as she tries new things.

# HMWs → Solutions

HMW make cooking not feel like a chore?

Competitive cooking:  
“same prompt; same ingredients”  
then post photos

HMW disseminate adulting knowledge to new adults more widely?

Scan item to get tailored, digestible information on unfamiliar ingredients

HMW habitualize exploration of food?

Daily adulting “trivia” with reward system involving accessorizing parasocial pal

# Solutions → Experience Prototypes



## Competitive/Social Cooking App

2+ participants are given same ingredients. Prep same meal (or same vibe of meal), judged by other users.



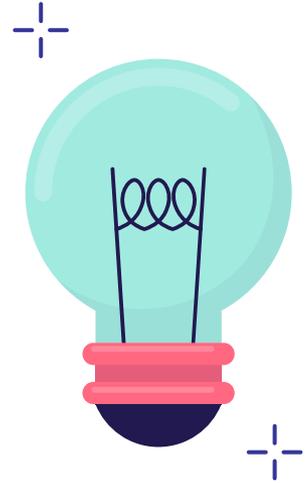
## Scan + Learn App

Participant judges books by their covers, deciding interest. Then, presented curated information decides interest and confidence with the additional information.



## Trivia + Parasocial Pal

Participant attempts trivia questions. They can opt-in to additional trivia questions in attempts to obtain a specific, aesthetic reward.

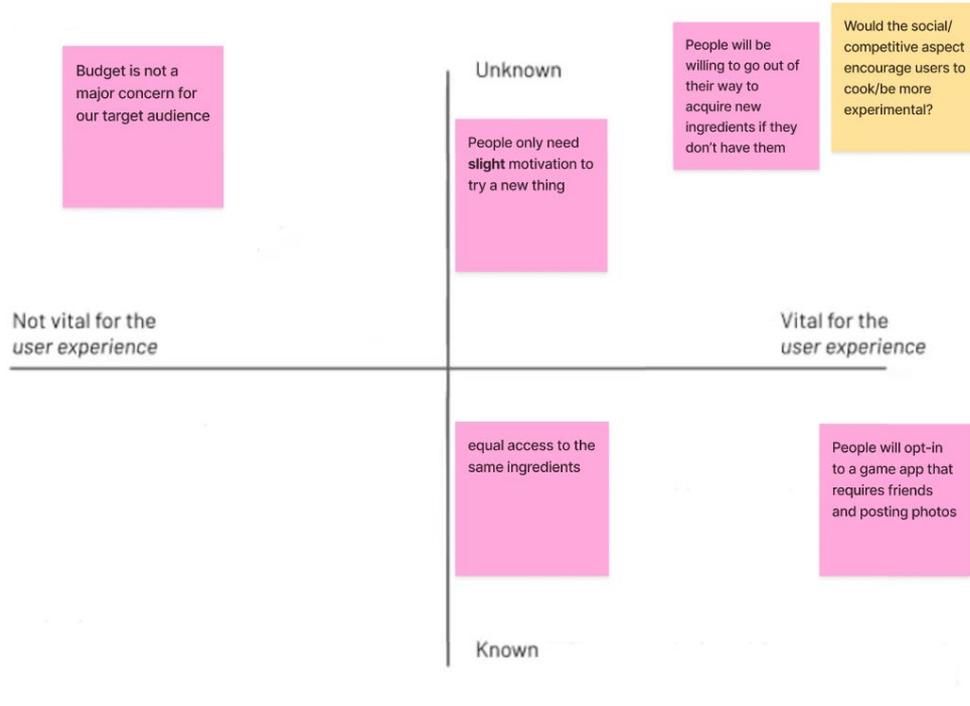


# Prototype 1: Competitive Cooking

# Prototype 1: Competitive Cooking

2

Which of these assumptions, if false, would cause the idea to fail?



# Prototype 1: Competitive Cooking

2

Which of these assumptions, if false, would cause the idea to fail?

Assumption:  
Would the social/competitive aspect adequately encourage users to cook/be more experimental

Budget is not a major concern for

Unknown

People will be willing to go out of their way to acquire new ingredients if they don't have them

Would the social/competitive aspect encourage users to cook/be more experimental?

People only need a little motivation to try a new thing

Vital for the user experience

Easy access to the ingredients

People will opt-in to a game app that requires friends and posting photos

Known

# Prototype 1: Competitive Cooking

## Assumption:

Adding the social/competitive aspect would encourage users to be more willing to cook (and maybe more experimental?)

## Ingredients at their disposal:

Dried mango/apricot,  
Lucky Charms/Cinnamon Toast Crunch,  
yogurt, honey, peanut butter, granola,  
walnuts, milk

## Description:

- 1v1 cooking competition
- Gave both competitors access to same ingredients
- Told them to “Make the best tasting dish” in 4 minutes
- Told them their meal would be judged by us
  - \*No incentive provided\*

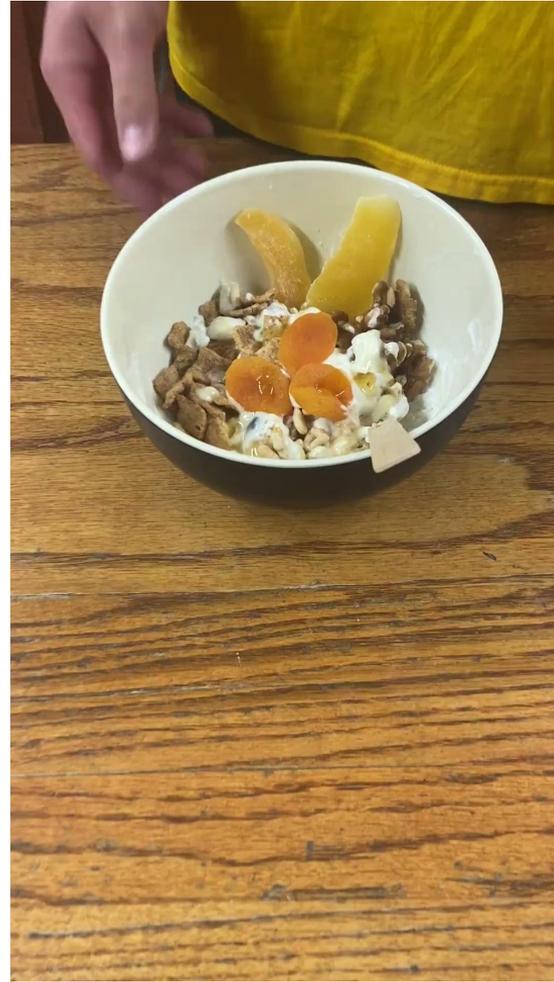
## The competitors:

Two young adults who are also **friends** (important since social app would be vs friends, not strangers)





**Final creations!**



# Prototype 1 Results

## Assumption:

Adding the social/competitive aspect would encourage users to be more willing to cook (and maybe more experimental?)

## Results:

### Assumption = Correct?

BIG yes on willingness.

Even without incentive, competitors had fun + were **actually trying to win.**

Iffy on whether will make them more experimental:

One competitor mentioned they would probably ***stick to what they knew, or use new things sparingly at best.***

# Prototype 1 Results

## Assumption:

Adding the social/competitive aspect would encourage users to be more willing to cook (and maybe more experimental?)

## Limitations:

- Not enough variance in ingredients
  - (ie. too simple)
- Competitors got biased from each other's creations (vs online)

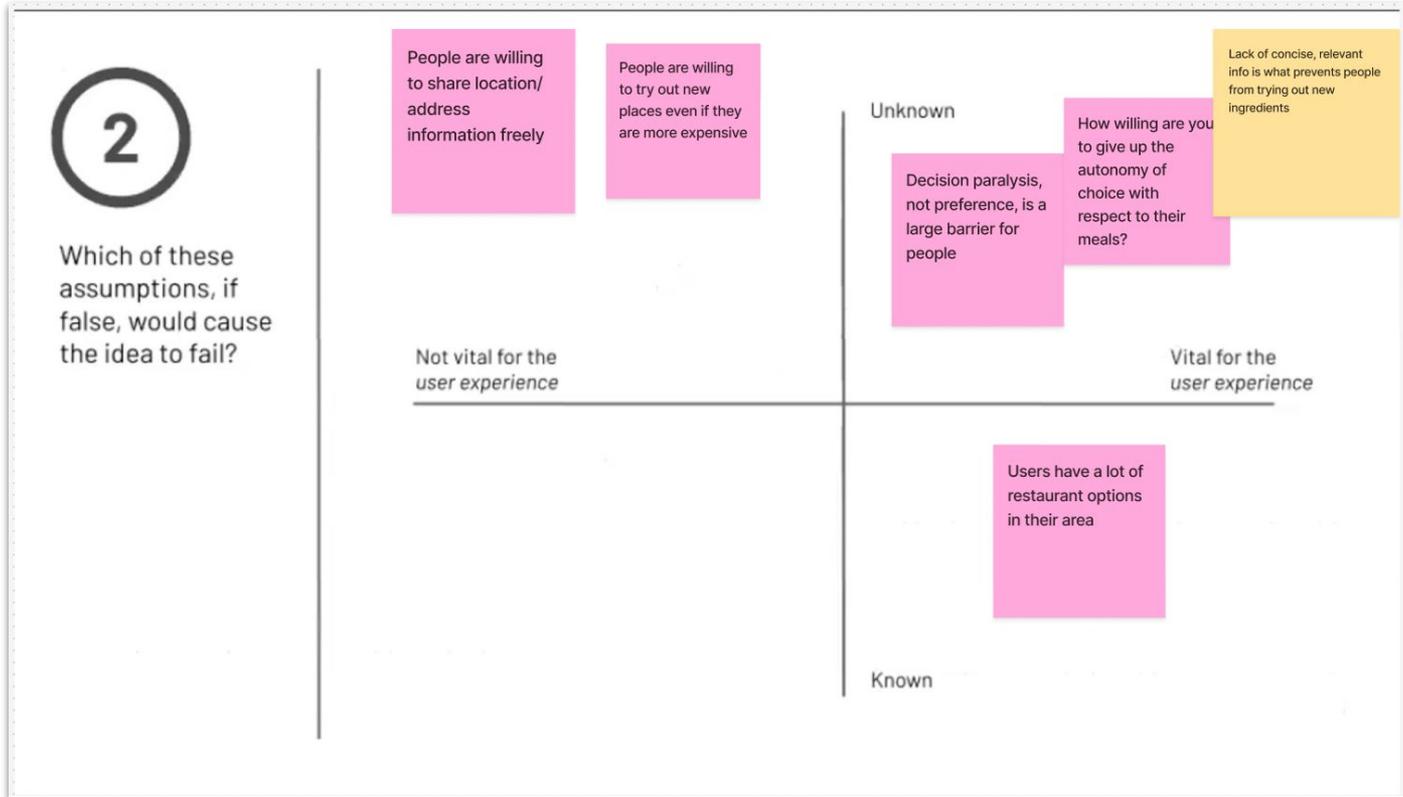


- Ensure menus/recipes are unique
- Don't allow users of app to see the majority of other creations (until they submit?)

**Conclusion:** Solution worth exploring further

# Prototype 2: Scan + Learn

# Prototype 2: Scan + Learn



# Prototype 2: Scan + Learn

2

Which of these assumptions, if false, would cause the idea to fail?

People are willing to share location/address information freely

People are willing to try out new places even if they are more expensive

Unknown

Decision paralysis, not preference, is a large barrier for people

How willing are you to give up the autonomy of choice with respect to their meals?

Lack of concise, relevant info is what prevents people from trying out new ingredients

Assumption:  
Lack of concise, relevant information is what prevents people from trying out new ingredients

Vital for the user experience

Users have a lot of restaurant options in their area

Known

# Prototype 2: (Analogous) Scan + Learn

## Assumption:

Lack of concise, relevant information is what prevents people from trying out new ingredients.

**Analogous Testing:** New Ingredients of which you lack knowledge analogous to new books

## Books Available

Mix of different genres: Historical Fiction, Romance, Dark Comedy, Epic Sci-Fi/Fantasy, Historical Documents, Historical Scientific Journals, Biography, Self-Help

## Description:

- Participant judges books by their covers, with minimal additional information
- Decides interest + confidence of knowledge.
- Presented curated information from AI overviews and GoodReads reviews. Scrolls at own leisure.
- Re-decides interest and confidence with the additional information.

## The Participant:

A young adult who is not an avid reader, prefers Sci-Fi/Fantasy genre.

# Prototype 2: Scan + Learn

The screenshot shows a digital reading application. On the left is a sidebar with a back arrow at the top and a 'Document tabs' section with a plus sign. Below this are ten document entries, each with a book icon and a title. The 'Inferno' entry is highlighted with a blue background and a vertical ellipsis icon to its right. The main content area on the right displays the text of the 'Inferno' document. It starts with the title 'Inferno: The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri', followed by the genre 'Epic Narrative Poem' and an 'AI Overview' section. The overview text describes Dante's journey through Hell. Below this is a 'Goodreads reviews' section with a list of reviews. The first review is partially visible, starting with 'whoa this book is wild.' and mentioning 'in place of a review of this whole book, i'm just going to write about this single line in Inferno that i full on cannot stop thinking about. warning: this is completely nasty. blame Dante. also: all credit goes out to my literary foundations professor. i'm essentially regurgitating his argument.' The second review is partially visible, starting with 'in Canto XXXIII, the pilgrim encounters Count Ugolino. Ugolino, a former governor of Pisa, is feasting on the neck of Archbishop Ruggieri. in life, Ruggieri betrayed him, leading to his imprisonment. Ugolino was trapped in a tower along with his four sons. as days passed and Ugolino and his sons began to hunger, Ugolino bit into his own hands. his children had him to eat them before he'd eat himself: "Father it would be far less

←

Document tabs +

- Mudbound
- Ugly Feelings
- Chant and Be Happy
- Inferno** ⋮
- The Prince of Shadow
- Senate Intelligence Commi...
- 100 Great Fantasy Short Sh...
- Beasts of a Little Land
- Journals of Gilbert White
- Nixon in the World

**Inferno: The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri**

**Genre:** Epic Narrative Poem

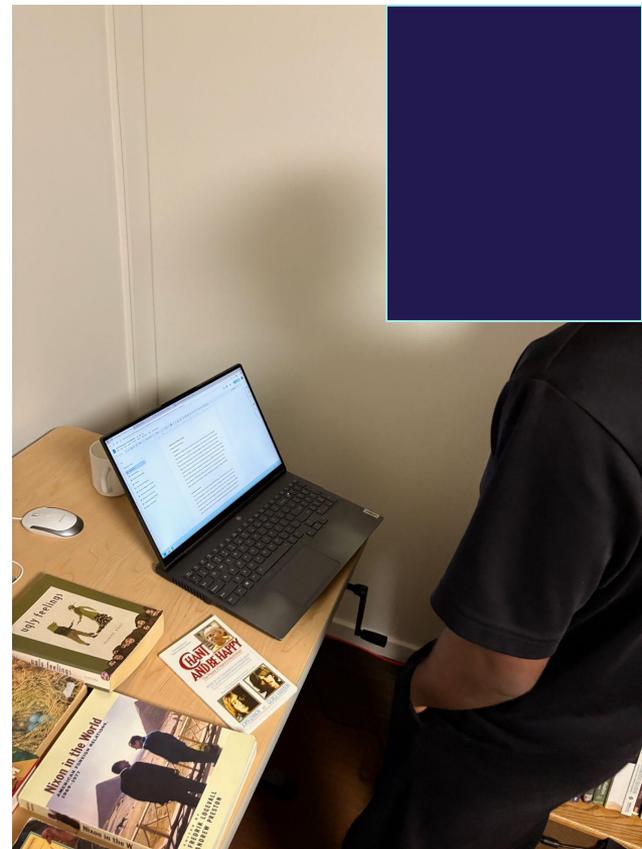
**AI Overview:**

Dante's Inferno describes the protagonist Dante's journey through the nine circles of Hell, guided by the Roman poet Virgil, to witness the eternal punishments of various sins. The poem functions as a critique of political corruption, a demonstration of divine justice, and a symbolic representation of the soul's path toward redemption, culminating with the vision of Lucifer at the core of Hell

**Goodreads reviews:**

- "whoa this book is wild. [in place](#) of a review of this whole book, [i'm](#) just going to write about this single line in Inferno that [i full on](#) cannot stop thinking about. warning: this is completely nasty. blame Dante. also: all credit goes out to my literary foundations professor. [i'm](#) essentially regurgitating his argument.
- [in Canto XXXIII](#), the pilgrim encounters Count Ugolino. Ugolino, a former governor of Pisa, is feasting on the neck of Archbishop [Ruggieri](#). [in](#) life, Ruggieri betrayed him, leading to his imprisonment. Ugolino was trapped in a tower along with his four sons. [as](#) days passed and Ugolino and his sons began to hunger, Ugolino bit into his own hands. his children had him to eat them before he'd eat himself: "Father it would be far less

# Prototype 2: Scan + Learn



# Prototype 2 Results

## Assumption:

Lack of concise, relevant information is what prevents people from trying out new ingredients (or in this case, new things in general).

## Results:

### Assumption = Incorrect

Participant showed minimal increases (1 pt on scale of 10) to desire to try out new book based on additional information.

Stated desire to stick to first impression; **wouldn't put themselves in a position surrounded by books of unfamiliar genre** and wanting to learn about them

Despite stating the curated information was good to have, **dissatisfied with taking extra time/effort to read curated information** compared to making a decision on the spot.

# Prototype 2 Results

## Assumption:

Lack of concise, relevant information is what prevents people from trying out new ingredients (or in this case, new things in general).

## Limitations:

- Unconfident if preconceived notions of willingness perfectly map to ingredients/cooking
- ***Participant held steadfast opinions on certain genres and didn't research books of that genre at all.***



**Conclusion:** Concise, relevant information did not push participant to try out a new thing.

# Prototype 3: Trivia w/ Parasocial Pal

# Prototype 3: Trivia w/ Parasocial Pal

2

Which of these assumptions, if false, would cause the idea to fail?

Not vital for the user experience

Vital for the user experience

Unkn

Trivia is conducive to long-term memory of important topics

Virtual/cosmetic rewards are incentive enough for people to learn about something (attempt answering questions)

People typically will not self-research important knowledge in advance

Know

General Knowledge on assorted topics are beneficial for new adults

People like mascots/digital creatures/ parasocial pals

# Prototype 3: Trivia w/ Parasocial Pal

2

Which of these assumptions, if false, would cause the idea to fail?

Assumption:  
Virtual/cosmetic  
rewards are  
incentive enough for  
people to learn  
about something  
(attempt answering  
questions)

Not  
use

knowledge in  
advance

Unkno

Trivia is conducive  
to long-term  
memory of  
important topics

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General  
Knowledge on  
assorted topics are  
beneficial for new  
adults

Vital for the  
user experience

People like  
mascots/digital  
creatures/  
parasocial pals

Virtual/cosmetic  
rewards are  
incentive enough  
for people to learn  
about something  
(attempt  
answering  
questions)

# Prototype 3: Trivia w/ Parasocial Pal



# Prototype 3: Trivia w/ Parasocial Pal

## Assumption:

Virtual/cosmetic rewards are incentive enough for people to learn about something (attempt answering questions)

## Rewards / Questions:

- Small Mouse - How many weeks should you give notice if quitting job?
- Dachshund - What weighs the largest for your FICO score?
- Mouse with Hat - Explain a mortgage?

## Description:

- Participant is presented with a breadth of stickers and is told they can earn each sticker by answering the corresponding questions
- Decides what stickers they would like to go for
- The higher cosmetic 'value' of the sticker, the harder the questions were

## The Participant:

A young adult who has experience living alone, but has not yet left university

# Prototype 3 Results

## Assumption:

Virtual/cosmetic rewards are incentive enough for people to learn about something (attempt answering questions)

## Results:

### **Assumption = Correct!**

Perceived value of stickers was enough to drive participant to answer questions

***"I'm a highly sticker motivated person"***

Specifically targeted questions associated with high value stickers, and ignored easier questions with unwanted stickers

Would not have looked up questions on her own, but when things come up she would look them up if possible

**Would choose answering questions with no aid for a sticker vs. with aid but no sticker**

# Prototype 3 Results

## Assumption:

Virtual/cosmetic rewards are incentive enough for people to learn about something (attempt answering questions)

## Limitations:

- Stickers were drawn, which decreased their perceived value - “y’all need better stickers”
- Stickers didn’t hold value past activity :(



Ensure more permanent, value-maintaining cosmetics

**Conclusion:** Cosmetics are enough to incentivize learning!  
Solution worth exploring further

# What's Next?

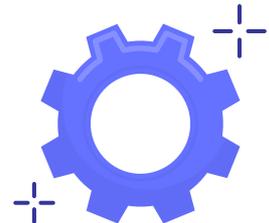


## Solution— Social cooking app:

- gamify cooking with mix of familiar/unfamiliar ingredients
- potentially **include rewards**, more interested in cooking rather than life facts and trivia (solution 3 showed promise, but the premise was a hard buy-in)

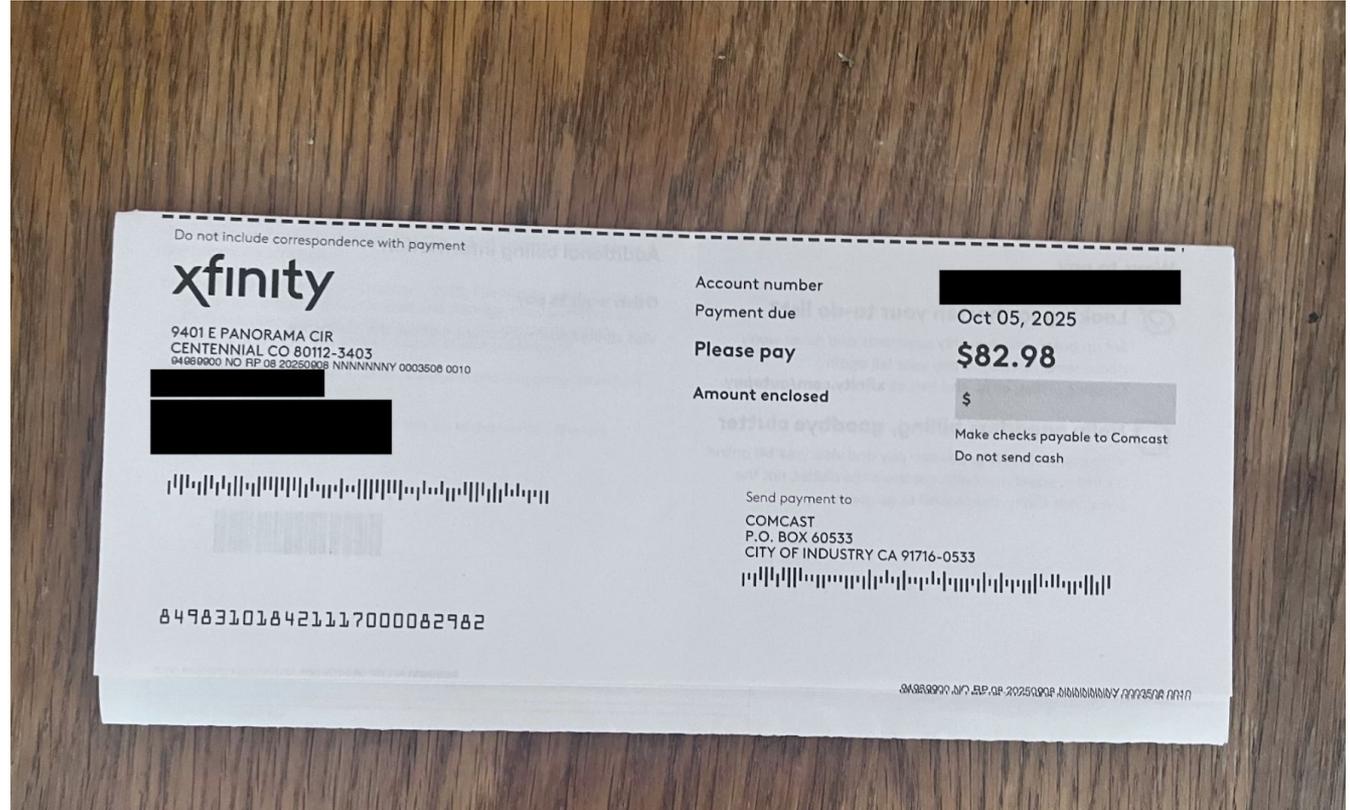
## Ethics and Other Considerations:

- not focused on budget
- no friends, no money— left out
- People in food deserts have hard time engaging
- How might we cater to vegans/dietary restrictions in competition?
- Safety
  - distracted cooking?
  - Perhaps utilize voice call, speaker = no need to hold phone



# Artifacts!

As stated in the empathy map, Nathan opts for all of his bills to be sent and paid MANUALLY.



# Artifacts!

Nathan sent us this picture and said specifically this is his fridge *before* he goes grocery shopping.

Pretty full! (Goes against 'bare-bones-fridge while-living-independently' stereotype)





# Artifacts!

Rachel showed us this map and explained that the SJSU campus is a quite neat rectangle.

We started the (general) area she mentioned she lives – *just* off campus as stated.

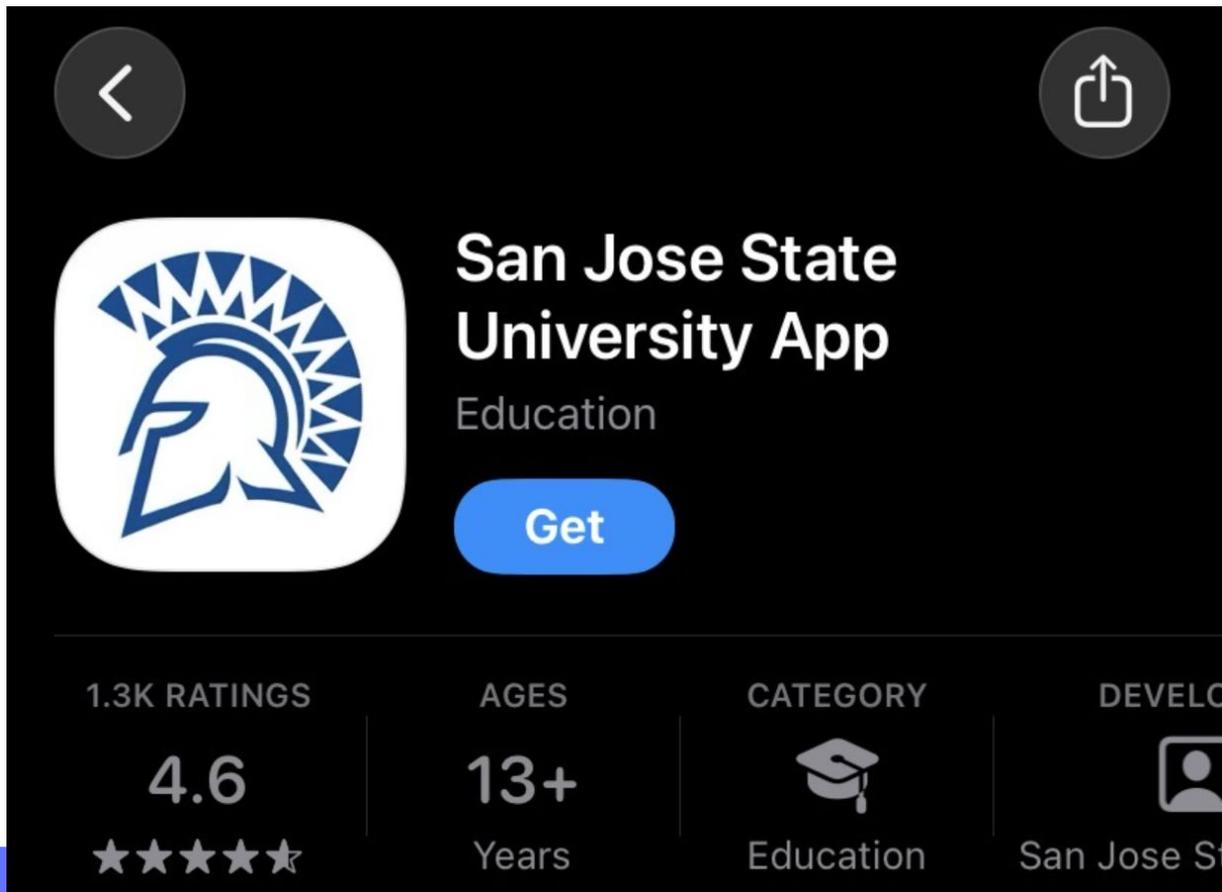


# Artifacts!

Rachel showed us the SJSU app (more colloquially known as the "Sammy" app).

She compared it to a Reddit/FB Marketplace.

Lots of people get housing this way (+++ trust since SJSU specific).



# Artifacts!

This bus happened to pass by while we were interviewing, and Rachel mentioned that this bus stops right next to her house conveniently!

SJSU-specific, a little like the Marguerite.



# Appendix

# Appendix

Nathan	Samantha	Lillian
<p><b>We met Nathan</b>, a 22-year-old who recently moved into a new apartment and is handling his own finances for the first time.</p>	<p><b>We met Samantha</b>, a 24-year-old who now lives alone in an apartment in San Francisco, where she works full-time as a software engineer at Pinterest.</p>	<p><b>We met Lillian</b>, who graduated from USF as class of '25 and had a transformative experience traveling abroad to Italy during her undergrad.</p>
<p><b>We were surprised to notice</b> that despite being worried about missing a potential bill payment, he chooses to pay each bill manually (rather than opting for automated payments).</p>	<p><b>We were surprised to notice</b> that despite complaining that her company's office food has gotten less elaborate, she tends to only cook simple meals for herself using nearby groceries.</p>	<p><b>We were surprised to notice</b> that both in Italy and now back home, even though she frequently finds herself gravitating back towards comfort meals, she expresses a deep love for exploring different foods/cuisines.</p>
<p><b>We wonder if this means</b> that he inherently values his financial agency, particularly when it comes to paying bills.</p>	<p><b>We wonder if this means</b> that she enjoys eating food that requires more preparation, but she chooses to prioritize convenience because cooking/sourcing ingredients feels too effortful and like additional work.</p>	<p><b>We wonder if this means</b> she's seeking growth of her food palette via experimentation, but finds it challenging to find the right opportunities to do so.</p>
<p><b>It would be game changing</b> if Nathan could continue to feel that sense of autonomy and self-reliance, without the looming anxiety and risk of human error that comes with manual bill paying.</p>	<p><b>It would be game-changing</b> to make cooking meals feel less arduous</p>	<p><b>It would be game-changing</b> to help her discover new ways to experience this 'healthy discomfort' more consistently/naturally and with adequate guidance.</p>

<p>HMW reduce the stress that comes with paying bills?</p>	<p>HMW make paying bills feel satisfying?</p>	<p>HMW increase the level of transparency in automated payment systems?</p>	<p>HMW reduce the time it takes to cook?</p>	<p>HMW make cooking like a game?</p>	<p>HMW make cooking less of a chore?</p>	<p>HMW push people out of their 'cuisine comfort zone'?</p>	<p>HMW make it easier to find new foods to try?</p>	<p>HMW bring other food cultures to the US?</p>
<p>HMW entirely remove the idea of paying bills (on a scheduled basis)?</p>	<p>HMW allow individuals with similar billing deadlines/dues help each other?</p>	<p>HMW make paying bills feel like the grocery store?</p>	<p>HMW make cooking not feel effortful?</p>	<p>HMW get community members to provide elaborate meals?</p>	<p>HMW make SWE work less draining?</p>	<p>HMW make every meal a 'comfort meal'?</p>	<p>HMW provide mentors/experts to advise trying new foods?</p>	<p>HMW create organic ways to try new foods?</p>
<p>HMW make paying bills feel like a video game?</p>	<p>HMW reduce the desire of financial agency?</p>	<p>HMW boost confidence and self-reliance when it comes to paying bills?</p>	<p>HMW improve Pinterest's provided breakfast and lunch?</p>	<p>HMW make getting groceries fun?</p>	<p>HMW engage apartment neighbors in providing meals?</p>	<p>HMW make trying new foods feel like a late night show?</p>	<p>HMW make trying new foods feel less than disconcerting?</p>	<p>HMW reduce barriers in finding foods to experiment with?</p>
<p>HMW make paying bills entirely automated?</p>	<p>HMW remove repercussions of paying one's bills late?</p>	<p>HMW make paying bills harder to forget?</p>	<p>HMW make cooking something to look forward to?</p>	<p>HMW make eating out alone less awkward?</p>	<p>HMW remove the need to cook meals altogether?</p>	<p>HMW incentivize trying new foods?</p>	<p>HMW make trying new foods feel like a science experiment?</p>	<p>HMW make all foods feel comfortable?</p>
<p>HMW make paying one's bill something memorable/interesting?</p>	<p>HMW reduce the fear of missing a bill payment?</p>	<p>HMW reduce the possibility of human error in paying bills manually?</p>	<p>HMW make 'simple' meals more attractive?</p>	<p>HMW make getting unique ingredients easier?</p>	<p>HMW make it help easier to get help cooking/preparing meals?</p>	<p>HMW make exploration/experimentation of food a scheduled activity?</p>	<p>HMW better educate people in new foods/cultures?</p>	<p>HMW traveling abroad for food more accessible?</p>
<p>HMW provide options to bolster agency without stressing people out?</p>	<p>HMW introduce safer finance habits that reduce risk of missing a bill?</p>	<p>HMW introduce budgeting as a skill earlier in life?</p>	<p>HMW discover new foods in a local area?</p>	<p>HMW increase cooking complexity in an approachable manner?</p>	<p>HMW remove the emotional pressure of high-prep meals?</p>	<p>HMW frame food exploration as self-care/healthy habit?</p>	<p>HMW make common cooking/meals more accessible/feasible?</p>	<p>HMW get guidance from other people when buying unfamiliar groceries?</p>

# Appendix

1. HMM make paying bills feel satisfying?

2. HMM make paying tabs (saving money?) feel like a video game?

3. HMM make paying one's bill something memorable/interesting?

4. HMM provide before to boiler agency without stressing people out?

5. HMM increase the level of transparency in automash-payment systems?

6. HMM reduce the possibility of human error in paying bills manually?

7. HMM introduce budgeting as a side-exer in life?

8. HMM make cooking like a game?

9. HMM get community members to provide elaborate meals?

10. HMM make getting groceries fun?

11. HMM make eating out alone less awkward?

12. HMM make "hoping" something to look forward to?

13. HMM make "simple" meats more attractive?

14. HMM make it easier to get help cooking/preparing meals?

15. HMM create a bank of life advice from other people?

16. HMM increase cooking complexity in an approachable manner?

17. HMM push people out of their "cuisine comfort" zone?

18. HMM make every meal a "comfort meal"?

19. HMM make trying new foods feel like a late night show?

20. HMM incentivize trying new foods?

21. HMM frame food experimentation as self-care/healthy habit?

22. HMM make it easier to find "new foods to try"?

23. HMM provide mentors/experts to advise trying new foods?

24. HMM reduce "quarers in finding foods to experiment with"?

25. HMM make "trying new foods feel like a science experiment"?

26. HMM get guidance from other people when buying unfamiliar "groceries"?

15

DOTTED IDEAS

# Appendix

8. HMW make cooking not feel like a chore?

Leaderboard/ paint-based "bounty" board (cook X meal, score Y points)

Social app where you share/track your creations to your friends

CV/AR cook-with-me game

Timing/rhythm game while preparing a meal

Social app/game, cooking under constraint (eg. price, ingredient)

Make the most tasty looking meal (voted online)

Explore different countries (cross off different cuisines off a map/ list) tracker

App that rewards coupon collecting/ discount finding

Cook and get "grilled" (look while being quizzed for comprehension)

Habit tracker (keep up your streak)

Two people cook same meal individuals, submit picture online, others review which meal looks tastier (contest)

Competitive "everybody make same thing with same ingredients" and post photos

## SOLUTIONS

15. HMW disseminate knowledge (about adulting) to new adults more widely?

"Leave a Note" social media app

Video call center connections

tagged audio recordings guiding how to do something

Talk to AI-trained "experts" that can guide you through a question/task

App that allows user to search for talks/seminars in their given interest/ niche

"Learn from other's mistakes" concept where scenario presented, including author's, and takeaway/ learning

Daily short-form video content ("tip of the day")

feed of personal posts about guidance/advice (including narratives)

"Communal Cookbook" of people sharing recipes as a unified group

"Everything you need to know before becoming an adult" --- very nicely organized + easy to search encyclopedia;

search engine for info about unfamiliar groceries (e.g. common uses, ratings/reviews, what it can substitute)

21. HMW habitualize exploration of food?

social planner app for scheduling communal cuisine exploration meals

"expert"/mentor advising on what unfamiliar ingredient one can add to familiar dishes

game-like app that challenges users to use new ingredients in cooking

roulette/fun activity to determine next place to eat out

Daily reminder app that rewards for check-ins

notifies you about good food deals (from different cultures) in your area

"Fusion" recommendations that mixes familiar and new cuisines

Friction-reducing randomization of weekly meals so person doesn't have to think themselves

"Your friend [who also likes X food] tried and loved Y, come check it out" --- social app

Daily learning app which expands user's horizons on foods

App that shows 'restaurants near me' but only ones user has not been to before

Scan item to get tailored, digestible information on new ingredients

# Appendix

