

# Test Plan: Mobile Search Contextual Inquiry

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## Objectives:

Explore users' goals when performing searches on their mobile devices to discover their wants and needs.

## Questions:

What do they usually search for on their mobile devices?

- How detailed are their search queries?
  - Are they specific questions or general topics?
- How do they go about searching for these things?

Do they have specific apps (or methods) they use to do their searches?

- "Can you tell me about those apps on your phone that does these things?"
  - What was their reasoning behind choosing this/these particular app(s) or method(s) to do their search?
  - How do they compare the things they're using with others that would accomplish the same task?
- What are some experiences they've had with these apps?
  - Did they accomplish their goal in a timely manner?
    - What helped? What hindered?
      - Interface - is it intuitive?
      - Was the app too slow?
      - Was the internet too?
      - Are their apps addressing ALL of their search needs?
  - What do they like about the apps they're using?
  - What makes a good mobile search experience?
- How do they approach a scenario where they would need to search multiple things at once?
  - What are their thoughts on multitasking between apps?

How often do they find themselves using the internet on their phones?

- When does this usually happen?
- How long are these intervals?
- Surroundings? While socializing?

## Interview: Franklin

Franklin is a 26 year-old male who is currently a senior in college majoring in graphic design, and currently resides in Irvine. Franklin just recently purchased his first smart phone two months ago (a Motorola Droid) and reflects on his excitement for finally being able to access information online no matter where he is because of his cell phone — something he has never experienced before with his old basic cell phones. When he does use the internet on his Droid, Franklin says he is usually looking up “locations, GPS, and then random stuff like branch locations, restaurant times, recipes, whatever.” He seems to prefer utilizing built in functions and features, rather than downloading third party apps that specialize in a specific function. As such, he explains that the only apps that he uses in terms of search are the Google Maps App and the Facebook app. For everything else, he uses the built in mobile browser. His search engine he uses to perform all of his searches is Google.

A major part of why he favors built in apps as opposed to third party ones is because he doesn't like having to sift through all the different apps that would otherwise do the same thing; this is apparent when I see his phone's screen with only a handful of utility apps and a few games as he plays around with the cell phone during the interview. This suggests that he is very conscious about the time he spends on the phone performing these searches. He confirms this when I ask when he usually performs these searches, to which he responded: “When I'm with my fiancée or friends, so I don't exactly want to spend our hang-out time on the phone.”

For the most part, Franklin is content with turning to the browser to get answers for his eclectic inquiries, citing only minor quibbles with his preferred method of search. The first con he states doesn't even have to do with the browser itself, but rather the Android operating system on his phone. He said it freezes up during his search, and during normal usage as well. The other con, he explained with not much certainty, is that it could use a better user interface. “The Google search results look cluttered, and the on-screen keyboard takes up too much space,” he says.

## Interview: Daniel

Daniel is a 22 year-old male who is a recent graduate and is now working full time on campus. Daniel has owned his MyTouch 3g for around 2 years, which is an Android OS device. He spoke of how this is his first smartphone and how he once used it a lot to search for information, but has since decreased his mobile searches on his cell phone in the past few months because of poor battery life. Because of this, he uses his iPod for most of his searches instead of his MyTouch 3g.

Daniel's methods of searching for things vary between his MyTouch and his iPod. But as he explains his routine of how he generally performs a search, he expresses similar preferences between the two devices in terms of what he wants from his search experience—mainly integration of different functions. He took the time to fully explain that “The Google apps, especially Google maps, work much better and smoother on [his] phone” as opposed to his iPod because it's better integrated. An example he provides is how he makes use of the Yelp app on his MyTouch: “The yelp app can help me search for a restaurant, call the restaurant, and map it out by using the full potential of my Google phone, the yelp app, and the Google maps app.” Even when he searches for things such as random facts or to answer questions, his phone already has a Google search bar on the home page ready to search, removing extra time to flip through apps and wait for the right one to load. “There were a few times when I actually forgot what I wanted to look up because I had to find the right app or wait for it to load or something 'cause I was also talking to my friends.”

Searches on his iPod (that he uses more frequently than his phone in terms of searching for things) are apparently a whole different species, given how it's practically the opposite of his MyTouch. Daniel prefers to have an assortment of apps that specialize in one particular search just because he prefers it over the built in native Safari browser. He explains that he often times searches the App store to find an app that has what he wants such that the browser is becoming less and less relevant. But sometimes he forgets he has an app for a certain type of search and ends up using the browser anyways, and he “end[s] up wasting time sorting through the results or waiting for a page to load because it wasn't built for mobile devices.”

## Interview: Yvonne

Yvonne is a 23 year-old female who works full-time at a hospital doing research in New York City. The cell phone she currently own is an Apple iPhone 3G, which she's had for more than two years now. She tells me that she considers herself a light cell phone user in that she tries not to be so dependent on it. As result, her search activity is kept to a minimum. Her usual inquiries involve restaurants/eateries, directions, and occasionally she searches for random facts. She has an app for each of her common searches and doesn't express any displeasure in having to switch between them while she talks about the specific apps she uses.

When Yvonne is searching for a place to eat (or a good place to do something), she uses the Yelp app. And when she needs directions, she uses the Maps app. For random facts, she just uses her browser to get to Google and/or Wikipedia. Reliability is what Yvonne points out is the main reason why she sticks to these specific apps. For instance, she claims the Yelp app is reliable for New York given the app's popularity and the vast amount of people who use it to write reviews; or according to her, "plenty of food snobs."

For Yvonne, the phone's ability to run a multitude of apps doesn't really appeal to her: "I don't bother looking for [other apps]. Their iPhone web[browser] is pretty easy to use. The Wikipedia page is actually pretty intuitive." This was reinforced when she managed to perform a search on her phone quickly when I asked her to walk me through a normal search is for her. Large readable text and the intuitive navigation in all of her apps helped in making her not mind having to switch between her apps.

Upon answering more questions that would hopefully reveal some discontent with how her apps she uses work, I was surprised to find that there are none. Yvonne took a few seconds to pause and think of an instance where she couldn't find something she searched for because of her tools she was using but couldn't think of anything. She eventually said the push notifications for the Facebook app are annoying, but given that the Facebook app isn't a search tool, it appears she was really digging deep to uncover negative aspects.

## Persona: Jeff Peterson

### Background:

- 24 years old
- Grew up in Yuba City, California
- Recently moved to Los Angeles and lives alone in an apartment
- Works full-time as Junior Web Developer
- Owns an iPhone 3GS

Jeff is a 24 year-old Junior Web Developer at a small company in Burbank. He lives alone in an apartment in Los Angeles and so he often gets lonely after work. As such, he often enjoys going out with his girlfriend and their group of friends a few times during the week, as well as on the weekends, to explore the city. Jeff has grown into the role of deciding what to do among his group of friends since he's still relatively new to the city, and often searches on his phone for ideas. But since he and his group of friends typically don't plan ahead, he's usually finding things to do or places to eat based on reviews when he's actually with his friends, so he tries to speed through the search process as quickly as possible.<sup>1</sup> Jeff and his friends talk about topics of all kinds, and they would occasionally get into intense debates about who is right about a fact. To settle the debate, Jeff takes out his phone and proceeds to search while his friends wait anxiously for him to say the answer. After about a minute, the thrill of the topic dies down and Jeff is still looking for the answer.<sup>2</sup>

Other times, Jeff and his friends discuss weekend getaways while they hang out. Jeff would often check his phone search for things to do in certain nearby cities they propose visiting using a specific app, and would then check the weather forecast to see how welcoming it will be in a different app. Jeff also checks hotel rates on his phone so he and his friends can discuss the plausibility of the trip in the built in web browser, forgetting because of the excitement of planning, that he downloaded an app just for travel searches. When the giant list of results show up, he gets a little overwhelmed and remembers he has the travel app and turns to that instead.<sup>3</sup>

### Goals:

- *Answer a question right when he gets it.* Jeff needs answers quickly to keep the group's conversation going.
- *Being able to focus on his surroundings.* Jeff wants to enjoy the company of his friends and use his phone to supplement his conversation with them, not spend all his time on his phone. He needs to be able to access information as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- *Get the most information possible.* Jeff doesn't want to sacrifice speed for the quality of his search results.

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<sup>1</sup> **Franklin:** "When I'm with my fiancée or friends, so I don't exactly want to spend our hang-out time on the phone."

<sup>2</sup> **Daniel:** "There were a few times when I actually forgot what I wanted to look up because I had to find the right app or wait for it to load or something 'cause I was also talking to my friends."

<sup>3</sup> **Daniel:** "end[s] up wasting time sorting through the results or waiting for a page to load because it wasn't built for mobile devices."