CookShare crowdsourcing recipes, instructions, shopping lists, resources, and ingredients

Food brings people together
Ethnocentrism and cultural misunderstanding can have a negative effect upon our society. Giving, eating, and sharing food with others is inherently social and allows us to see and communicate our differences in a safe and enjoyable environment.

People often do not have time or money to cook and share
Our research discovered that a major reason why people do not cook and share is that cooking takes a lot of time and money. In addition, some people are less likely to cook new types of food they haven’t made before because it is difficult and intimidating.

CookShare helps people help each other to share food
Despite the prevalence of food-related websites, the majority of the knowledge about what recipes to use, where to find ingredients, and how to cook meals is still embedded in people. CookShare helps the user harness this knowledge to save time and facilitates reciprocity to save money.

Connecting people through food
“I love cooking, but it’s so intimidating and difficult to try cooking new meals. This app would help me get help from my friends and give me the confidence to share what I make with them!”

Design Process
(Contextual Inquiry)
Conducted twelve interviews and identified the motivations and barriers for people when cooking for themselves and others.

(Participant Observation)
Recorded observations made while we participated in cooking events and attempted to make new meals and share them with others.

(Personas & Scenarios)
Created two primary personas based on salient goals, motivations, and barriers faced by users.

(Prototypes)
Sketched initial ideas and created low-fi wireframes and hi-fi mockups with features that support the main functions desired by users.

(Usability Tests)
Conducted five usability tests on prospective users as they performed a number of tasks centered around the main functionalities of the hi-fi prototype.

(Final Design)
Incorporated the main feedback into the design of our hi-fi prototype, while retaining the overall look and feel which users really enjoyed.

Authenticity Matters
From our interviews we found that authenticity in food is very important to people. In particular, interviewees desire authenticity when they know a lot about a certain type of food, and want to know what is authentic when they do not.

What makes food authentic, however, is quixotic. Each interviewee offered different definitions for authenticity, and our own attempts to coral it fumbled. But by iteratively ideating on the concept of authenticity, we discovered some important insights.

We found that the notion of authenticity is embodied in people themselves. Individuals create meaning in the act of cooking and sharing food, which is a process learned on their own and from their diverse backgrounds.

As a result, instead of trying to define authenticity for people, it is much more powerful to create a platform on which people can negotiate authenticity in communication with each other. This allows people to teach each other what authentic food is to them, and this is what CookShare does.

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