

## **Team MVPL**

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User Research Interview

### **Target User Group:**

For our project, our target user group is college students who walk on or near the UW campus during dusk or at night at least 4 times a month. We are focusing on both females and males of all races, backgrounds, and years of college. As a result, most of the interviewed users will be in between the ages of 18 – 22 years old (young adult demographic). Participants will be students who walk alone or in groups in the dark. We will find the participants through friends and acquaintances at the University of Washington.

### **Project Description:**

The safety around the University of Washington (UW) is a concern for its students. The UW's campus is located near the University District (U District); this is an area that is highly used by students to eat, study, live, hangout, and exercise. According to College Factual, the UW and its surrounding areas' average crime rating is a C; this is one of the lowest scores based on on-campus and surrounding area crimes [1]. This is a safety and comfortability concern for students wanting or needing to walk on and around campus when it starts getting dark. Many students are very aware of crimes near UW because of UW Alert system, an information hotline. This causes some to be uncomfortable walking around campus in the dark. Our project tackles the question of how to help students be more comfortable walking on or near campus during dusk or night. This project is still in its early phases, but options for the technical platform are an interactive app, website, or wearable technology.

### **Guideline of Initial Questions:**

1. How often do you find yourself walking around/on campus outside when it's dark?
  - a. Why are you out walking?
  - b. Where do you walk?
    - i. Do you avoid certain places? If so, why?
  - c. Who do you walk with, if anybody?
    - i. What factors affect your decision?
  - d. How do you feel walking when it's dark outside?
  - e. Tell me about a time you had to walk at night?
2. What factors affect your night walking schedule?

- a. How does safety concerns affect the things you want to do and do?
3. How do you feel as a (insert gender) walking at night?
  - a. Why do you think you feel this way?
4. Have you been in or heard of dangerous situations near campus?
  - a. Tell me about that dangerous situation
  - b. How does that change the way you walk about at night?
  - c. Why do you think walking at night in the U-District is unsafe?
5. What methods are you currently using to stay safe when walking around in the dark?
  - a. Have you ever used night safety services here at UW?
  - b. How do UW Alerts affect how you walk outside at night?
6. What would help you feel more comfortable walking at night?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Interview:**

**Age:** 20

**Gender:** Female

**Times walk outside in dark:** 4+ times a week

**Time:** 26:58 minutes

Q: How often do you find yourself walking around campus outside when it's dark or dusk?

A: *At least minimum 4 times a week.*

Q: Why's that?

A: *Walking back from boyfriend's house or friends house. I like walking at night. I love night runs. I don't go on them because it's sketchy. SO sometimes I just walk back because I like the night air.*

Q: How far are you from your boyfriend's or friend's house.

A: *13 mins from boyfriends. Its past a cemetery which is sort of sketchy. I live near the cemetery. It's a little scary. I go on night walks to get somewhere so 20 minutes or less.*

Q: *You choose to stay later?*

A: *Yeah, and I'm cheap and don't want to pay for an uber.*

Q: There's no bus?

A: *No bus that connects sometimes. Or at night or weekend they come every 20 - 30 minutes and if you miss one, standing in the dark is worse than walking in the dark*

Q: Where do you walk usually?

A: *I just moved to my house So the walks I do there is all around the neighborhood. Like walking to the grocery store in UVill.*

Q: Your house is near UVill and far from campus?

A: *Yeah. When I lived at Twelve, I did night walks on the Ave because I would get back late from class.*

Q: Do you walk back from campus to your house?

A: *It's a 40-minute walk home so no I take the bus.*

Q: Do you see a difference between where you lived last year and UVill?

A: *The Ave is sketchier. But also, it's louder so that almost makes me feel better. Versus the suburbs and I have a thing with parked cars and like shrubs. You never know who's in the parked car. They could just nap you. And shrubs, people can hide in those.*

Do you ever walk on the Burk Gilman?

A: *I feel the same as walking in UVill. I know that it's sketchy, it's heavily traffic like more than the suburbs area.*

Q: Do you try and avoid places and why?

A: *I wouldn't walk downtown at night. Because it's a lot of homeless people I'm scared of and drunk people. Other than that no, it's a practical thing for me. If you gotta walk, you gotta walk you know? Sucks, there's no way around it unless you Uber and I don't*

Q: What proportion do you walk alone or with a group?

A: *By myself, 40 with someone 60. Normally I'm with people but not all the time.*

Q: Who would those people be?

A: *My roommates (4) or boyfriend.*

Q: How do you feel walking alone vs. others?

A: *I feel better walking with others. Especially the boyfriend just because he's larger and he's a male. With my 4 roommates and it's 5 of us girls I feel perfectly fine walking because it's 5 of us. With 2 it's 2 is the same as 1. It's a yikes.*

Q: So, walking with 1 other girl feels the same as walking alone?

A: *Yes, I still will have my hand on my pepper spray.*

Q: You have pepper spray?

A: *Depends how sketchy it is, but I have this walking. Or when walking I have it open and in my hand. I'm definitely holding it outright in my hand*



Figure 1: Interviewee holding pepper spray

Q: Do you have it out when you're walking with your friends or boyfriend?

A: *No. I mean I have it like out because I carry my keys casually but it's not ready to go. I used to have keys, and I liked it because I can hold it between my fingers and stab someone. I've really thought about this.*

Q: Do you think this is about gender?

A: *Oh yeah oh yeah. My boyfriend doesn't have to worry about it; he worries about me. It's because of gender and size. I mean I always walking really quickly, but I normally do. But at night I make a note to walk quickly because I think it's like a confident thing. Like oh damn, that girl is walking fast she can probably run fast. It also decreased the time you are outside.*

Q: Have you ever used your pepper spray?

A: *No*

Q: What factors affect your walking outside?

A: *The boyfriend thing impacts it. Because something I don't want to spend the night because I have to bring all of my things. I also feel weird going over there at 8 and leave at 9 so I usually stay until 11 or 11:30 pm. He lives in Ravenna. So it's 12 minutes from me. Club meetings dont really but my meeting ends at 6 so as it gets darker. Exercise for sure. If you go to the IMA. Sometimes I wait for the bus or I run back on the Burke Gilman. It's 2 miles to my house.*

Q: Safety concerns don't really affect you

A: *No not really. It impacts how i do it. If I was a guy, I wouldn't be worried. People get attacked and raped and kidnapped in the weirdest situations. I don't think I'm increasing my probability by*

walking outside at night. If it's going to happen it's going to happen. Like in a dorm. It's going to happen anywhere.

Q: Do you ever call somebody?

A: Yes. Last year when I lived at Twelve, Sketchway, sometimes dudes would be in the parking lot. I would call someone or sometimes I would fake it. You can't live your life in fear.

Q: Have you ever been in or heard about a dangerous?

A: Like shootings on the Ave, regularly which is sketchy. I feel like always the burke Gilman has a sense of being sketch at night. I have not had an experience though. It's been questionable.

Q: You said you like going out at night?

A: If I had a perfect world, I would exercise at night every night. Its calmer and I like the darkness. The air is crisp. I like crisp air.

Q: You don't exercise at night because?

A: Safety reasons. I used to have a light I put on my wrist so people can see me. It's not going to protect me. Just visible for traffic.

Q: If you were in a traffic heavy place, would you run outside?

A: I might. It depends on the length of the run. Let's be honest, I aint going to win any fights. So, the only time I can get away is running away. I'm pretty fast. You have to think about the distance of the run. If you are going to run 5 miles or 2 miles there's the same probability of something happening on both. But if you're on the 5 miles you're more tired. At mile 5 I'm done. If I was doing a 1 mile run then I would feel better because it's easy

Q: What methods are you using to stay safe

A: Pepper spray. Constant vigilant like looking over my shoulder to check out my surroundings. I never listen to music so I can hear everything. Plus it's quiet so it's nice.

Q: What locations would you uber?

A: If it's pouring down rain. I hate rain. And distance if it's more than a 15 – 20 min walk I think you need to think about an uber or a walk to a bus station and then take the bus.

Q: Have you ever used night safe?

A: No, I don't understand them. There's little towers everywhere but I don't know what to do

Q: If you did know would you use them?

A: Theoretically, yes. But no because I don't walk on campus a lot at night. And I feel relatively safe on campus. It would be just walking home which is 2% campus 98% campus. They don't go outside campus, do they?

Q: Would you rather walk through campus or through UDistrict at night?

*A: Campus. I guess maybe UVill because there's a night scene there. Yeah night scene at UDistrict so there's a lot of people out and about so that's fine. Campus it's just city-y and cities are notoriously dangerous. UVill seems downtown and campus seems isolated. Nothing stopping from walking on campus and shooting people, but it almost feels like it because it's a school. The Ave is so scary. I've run before. 7-minute walk to a 4-minute walk. Even with my backpack. Training haha. If I'm really not feeling it, I take off. Every day is leg day.*

Q: Can you tell me about a time you were walking outside at night?

*A: My roommate and I went to a frat party. It was near Halloween. We were walking back, and we were sober. And it was just us two and it was in 15<sup>th</sup>. We were walking pretty quickly because it was dark probably around 11:30. This guy walked out of his apartment. And turned on our side of the sidewalk and walking towards us. He kept walking. I did one of those sqrt things and ran sideways around him. He kept walking towards us. It freaked me out. I don't think he had any intent on doing anything, but it freaked me out because he's a man and he was walking towards us. I was like no. that's a no.*

Q: Do you think you or your friends is more cautious?

*A: I feel I'm more aware. But also, I take more risks. They uber and they generally don't walk at night or they call someone to pick them up. I'm a strong independent woman I don't need to call someone I can just walk back by myself. I feel like I'm more aware but I'm putting myself in those situations more. I'm prepared with my pepper spray. It was like 9 bucks on Amazon but all they only had pink or purple. I was like no I'm not going a pink pepper spray. They're like marketing to female fear. I got a black one for a dollar more. The pink ones are less expensive.*

Q: What would help you feel more comfortable walking at night?

*A: To be larger. But can't do that. I want someone to call at all times. Do you care if I just talk to you while I'm walking home? Sure, I can call my friends but they're doing hw and don't want to talk to me for 7 minutes. They're busy.*

Q: Why do you feel more comfortable?

*A: If something happens to you, they will know about it and people are less likely to attack you if you're on the phone because they know you're with someone.*

Q: Have you ever taken self-defense classes?

*A: No but I want to but they're expensive and I don't have time for that. If they were available as NW credit and free I would. Also, here's a thought. Education let's not have men attack women. Let's not put pink on pepper spray, let's teach men to not attack women. Always buy heels you can run in.*

## **Key Findings:**

1. Walking at night is a practical thing
2. Walking with a male feels safer than walking with a female
  - a. Walking with 1 male is equivalent to walking with 4 other females' safety wise

3. The Ave, Sketchway, and Burke Gilman are some of the sketchier places near the UW, therefore likes to avoid when it's dark
4. Is very aware of her surroundings and always carries pepper spray in hands when walking alone at night (see figure 1 on page 4)
5. Knows about UW Night Safety, but doesn't know how to use it
6. To feel safe walking alone at night, she wants to be able to call someone and talk

### References:

- [1] Janeth Sanchez, *Free Speech Friday: University District safety a concern for UW-Seattle students*, The Daily, Jan. 2018. Accessed on October 6, 2019. [Online]. Available: [http://www.dailyuw.com/opinion/article\\_61a37f96-f19b-11e7-b841-7f5a0c7c8e49.html](http://www.dailyuw.com/opinion/article_61a37f96-f19b-11e7-b841-7f5a0c7c8e49.html)