

Final Project Part 1: Need Finding

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Event Sketches

Activity 1



Activity 2



Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to come to this event?
2. Why does this topic matter to you?
3. Was there anything you liked or disliked about the panel/speaker?
4. Did you feel that everyone was able to voice their opinions during the event?
5. In your opinion, do you feel there were contrasting ideas in the room (both from the audience and speakers)? If so, what contrasting idea stood out the most?
6. What qualities do you look for in an argument? (What type of evidence do you look for)
7. Is there anything that stood out about the event you would like to share?

Summary of Event and Interviews

We went to two UC Berkeley approved events that were held on campus on Tuesday October 10th, 2017. Each event had their own specific topic, but both were political in nature. The first event consisted of four panelists answering questions and discussing the topic of White Supremacy, Gender, and Speech in the wake of Charlottesville, whereas the second event was a speech from the Dean of the Law School, Erwin Chemerinsky, about free speech on campus.

It was interesting to see the similarities between the events even though they had different topics and very different speakers. For example, in both events it was very obvious that the audience was passionate about the topic and wanted to learn more about it. So much so, that in both events there was an individual who felt passionate enough to stand up and voice their opinion to the rest of the room. Furthermore, in both events, there was a moderator that would keep the event moving and not let the event stop because of conflicting opinions. This seemed to be a crucial part of both events that made them informative and enjoyable.

However, it was the differences in the events that were very meaningful and insightful, since we saw how individuals interact with diverse opinions. In particular, the speaker's view on politics showed greatly in their speeches. Although all of the panelist/speakers from the two events were very educated individuals, the panelists from the first event were very left leaning and talked very negatively about right leaning groups. While the second event's speaker was very neutral and used the law (in particular the first amendment and previous supreme court cases) to

support his argument. Furthermore, he did not just point out one extremist group, but ones from both political perspectives, such as Anifita and the KKK, to argue his perspective. Although he used the law as evidence and tried to stay neutral during his speech, there were moments he suggested his personal left leaning mentality.

These differences were very prevalent in the interviews we conducted. In total, we conducted 3 interviews (one from the first event and two from the second event). Between these three interviews we observed that the interviewees were very biased to what the speakers had said during the event. Because of this, Interviewee 1 talked heavily about white supremacy and how each political perspective uses it for their own agenda. Whereas interviewee 2 and 3 both focused on law and would not delve deep into their own perspectives but instead reiterate what the speakers have said.

Unfortunately, these events were predominantly made up of individuals age 40 and above even though both events were held on a college campus where majority of the people are between 18 and 21. Based off our experience hearing the speakers and interviewing the audience, we can see that the major problems with these events are that it does not entice a diverse age range to come participate and learn about the current political system or history. Furthermore it does not open new perspectives for the audience unless the event is comprised of multiple speakers from all different perspectives (which is more difficult on campuses like Berkeley). Aside from this, it was also apparent that having a moderator helped keep all

conversation civil and allow for the limited diverse opinions to be spread through the room.

**Activity 1: Free Speech on Campus: A Discussion with Dean Erwin Chereminsky in
Honor of Constitution Day**

Point of View Statement

We met with Barbara, who worked at the Berkeley Law School where the speaker, Erwin Chemerinsky, was her dean. She was glad to attend because he knows that he provides insightful thoughts and learns a lot from him every time. She also values being able to learn something new at these talks.

We were amazed to realize that Barbara had a hard time finding **good** evidence.

Whether it be from news, radio, or articles, she realizes that everything can be slightly biased. She understands that everyone has biases, and there may be more sources that are more trusting than others. This was surprising to hear from someone who works in the School of Law that even finding truly reliable sources as evidence is difficult.

It would be game-changing to provide a platform to allow users to find reliable, scholarly-backed sources when trying to learn more about specific topics.

How Might We....

- How might we guide attendees interested in political events to have access to more diverse perspective news sources when trying to learn more about a topic?
- How might we assist millennials to be more informed about public talks with ongoing discussions so that they can be more proactive and aware of various perspectives on current news topics?

Activity 2: White Supremacy, Gender, and Speech in the Wake of Charlottesville

Point of View Statement

We met Maria Faini who is a Ph.D. candidate in Ethnic Studies and Critical Theory. Her work focuses on U.S. imperial culture, specifically war writing and atmospherics; P.T.S.D., moral injury, and suicide; and veteran art practice and performance. She was the facilitator for the event, allotting time to panelists and calling out people for questions and answers.

We were amazed to realize that Maria thought that a middle ground between debate sides could be reached even if both sides don't change their stance on the matter. We also realized that the facilitator, while heavily invested in this issue, didn't convey a political side or viewpoint in her answers to our questions. She also tried to bring in as many panelists as possible (who were all very invested in the topic) and couldn't bring all that could've come, revealing that she believed promoting more political panels on campus would help foster creating this middle ground of understanding between extreme sides.

It would be game-changing to create a news platform that entices and incentivizes individuals to discuss, in a panel-like fashion, their perspectives with people from different backgrounds and age groups to get them interested and excited about politics.

How Might We...

- How might we encourage college-educated millennials to regularly engage in and take part in online discussions on polarizing political topics?

- How might we assure millennials that fellow participants of online discussions who belong to the opposing political side express claims that are legitimate, meaningful, and worth discussing with?