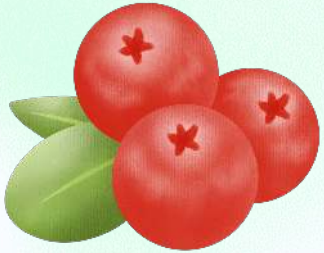
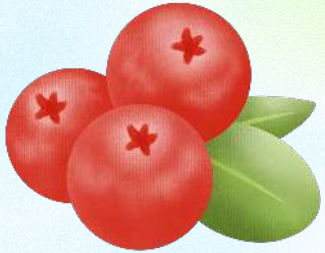
Assignment #4



The KRAMberries



Katherine Kricorian, Rebecca Alcala, Angela Yang, Meredith Nam

sparking connections at third spaces with one click.

the problem

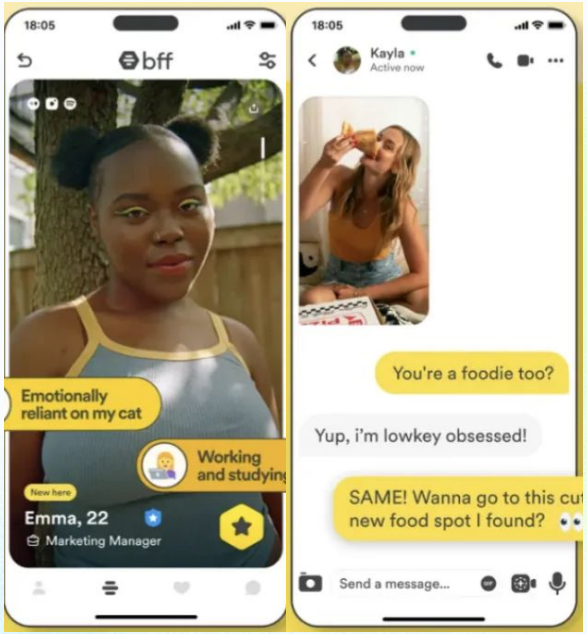
people of all ages and personalities living in the Bay Area **struggle to make meaningful interactions w/ strangers @ third spaces**, even when they frequent third spaces. but, what does "meaningful interactions @ third spaces" even mean? **our interviewees long for low-effort, non-overwhelming conversations** that respect their interests, boundaries (& third spaces' boundaries), and routines in third spaces, but **these conversations are difficult to achieve, esp. when people hesitate to approach others, fearing rejection**.

spark, our solution

- users **input interests and region (i.e. North Bay, South Bay)** into app. can form groups w/ friends or register as individual user.
- anonymously **"tack" location-specific event and/or third space recommendations** onto community calendar or **"collect" others' recommendations** onto individual calendar
- based on user's schedule/inputted info, **app sporadically suggests third-space activities**, directly in group and/or user calendar.
- users **check in** to third spaces w/ one-time location check (opt-out option available) and **match** with other present users based on shared/contrasting interests, w/ auto-generated conversation starters.

Bumble BFF *(app)*

view profiles of people **in your area**; profiles display **interests**, **friendship** desires, and **personal photos**. create interest-based groups with the goal of **meeting in person.**



similarities

focus on **meeting new people** and grouping users w/ **shared interests,** connecting online/offline

differences

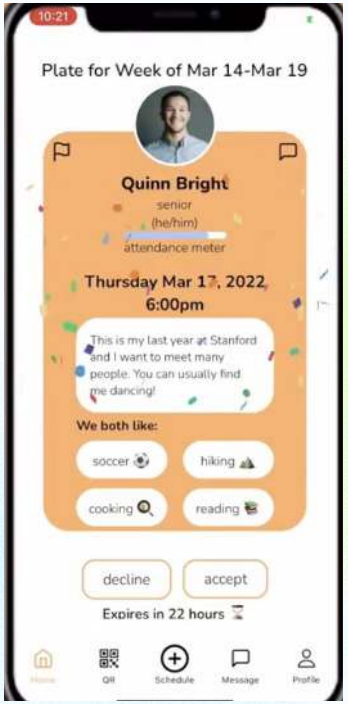
users must c**reate groups and offline events** themselves, requiring them to coordinate schedules and **plan logistics w/out help**. no spontaneous interactions b/c interactions are based on **mutual, expressed interest online** before offline interactions occur.

takeaways

- user profile systems are distinct to **established dating/friend platforms** like Tinder and Bumble; **to differentiate our app** from these products, how can we **avoid user profiles** while still building around shared interests?
- although starting chats is effortless w/ swiping system, coordinating offline events may be **time-consuming and emotionally draining**, leading to “incomplete” or “unfulfilled” connections
- therefore, our app introduces more support with **conversation starters** and **automated planning** centered around what the user already likes and will actually do

Plates *(app)*

match with fellow students based on **shared interests.** connect over **on-campus meals** scheduled by the app.



similarities

aims to connect individuals in **same geographical area** based on **schedules and interests**, provides conversation starters to break the ice

differences

limited to students @ same college, focus on **shared meals @ dining halls** so user interests **only impact conversations**, not activities or their location.

takeaways

- our HMWs focus on creating **low-effort opportunities for interaction** in people's daily routines. need to be careful not to force people **out of their comfort zones,** as they may feel put-off (so transparency for how interests & location influence activity recommendations).
- low-effort doesn't always translate to low-cost; be mindful and **promote free/affordable activities**, so that users are not unjustly excluded.
- safety/ethical insights: location sharing/check-in is unique to our app, but **full transparency** for when and how it's used; offer **opt-out options,** blocking/reporting specific accounts

222 (app)

receive weekly list of **different experiences** in user area based on interests. select an experience based on time and invite others to apply to join. **app does all planning.**



similarities

meet local people, **automatic event planning** based on shared interests.

differences

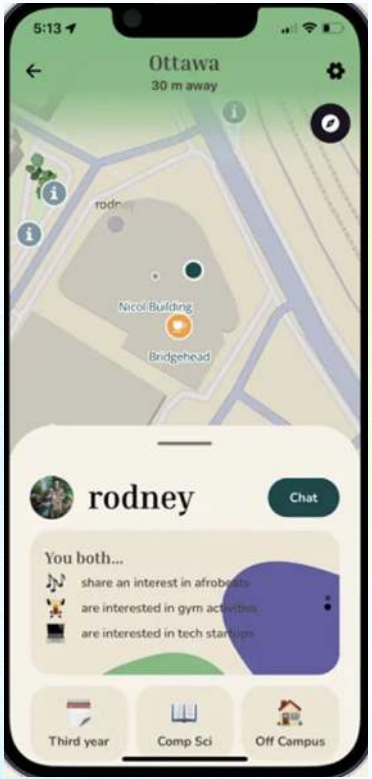
must **commit to weekly planned events** (canceling last min. or no show = ban from app), and fill out follow-up survey to further tailor future experiences. must **subscribe monthly** to access (monetary barrier).

takeaways

- risk of bias with questions on specific event types, ages, and city locations; we should balance **deepening and expanding user interests** without generalizing stereotypes, so people create **diverse communities**
- consider what kinds of people monetized apps attract, esp. in urban areas where prices can be high. how do we make interests an **accessible way to form connections**, rather than exacerbating elitism? meeting new people, having free time, and going out shouldn't be luxuries, esp. since this contradicts how we want spontaneous connections to be **low-pressure and not impact daily routines/third spaces,** particularly for working adults.
- potential **data privacy concerns** with location sharing, personal data, and banking info → we may not want a "view others' locations" feature and should not include any features that require payment

thirdspace: IRL sidequests *(app)*

take photos of sidequests and **send to friends nearby**. friends can accept or reject joining you. after accepting and meeting, users must **take a photo together.**



similarities

“right place, right time” for interactions, focusing on **spontaneous interactions** based on users’ **current locations.** app activity centers on in-person activities.

differences

connect w/ **existing friends rather than strangers**. 2-minute time limit to accept sidequest request, so **inflexible for coordination**. requests user to take real-time images.

takeaways

- safety component: thirdspace keeps **user locations hidden** until both users agree to meet up → similarly, our app will temporarily send a request for notification **without tracking user data constantly**
- in thirdspace, users wish they could change the time limit for accepting sidequest offer → our app **won’t have time limit** forcing users to commit to a social plan
- our app will include **verification process** to keep users safe and comfortable when meeting with strangers

competitive analysis

Feature	spark	Bumble BFF	Plates	222	thirdspace
Synchronized Calendar	✅	❌	✅	❌	❌
All features are free to use	✅	✅	✅	❌	✅
Location-Based Event Check-In	✅	❌	❌	✅	✅
Privacy & Safety Tools (i.e. block users, disable location)	✅	✅	✅	❌	✅
Community Third Space Discovery Board	✅	❌	❌	❌	❌

direct stakeholders

young adults living or working in cities/urban areas interested in meeting new people. will likely download the app with the specific focus of having more serendipitous encounters with people they already know or getting connected to new people who share some interests.

elderly people interested in more social experiences but are unsure where to start may also download the app. We may include more targeted components to make the app accessible and straightforward for elderly users who may not be familiar with tech. They may use the app to allow for more spontaneous social interactions without feeling nervous to initiate or like a burden.

indirect stakeholders

cafe owners; cafes are common third spaces where many app users may run into each other/meet one another for scheduled hangouts. Cafe owners may experience more traffic or customers, which could be good for certain businesses or overwhelming to workers.

public transit riders; when accessing urban third spaces, public transportation is convenient. could recommend public transport routes to enhance more serendipitous interactions, potentially creating more crowds for other public transportation users.

THE SMASH HIT

if 100 million people use *spark*, there may be **too much foot traffic** in third spaces and public transportation. certain third spaces may **overcrowd w/ long lines** that overworked employees must handle. although our tool recommends and schedules meetups based on shared interests, it could prioritize certain spaces (**popular, well-established, paid promotion**), causing other businesses to suffer. let's focus on recommending diverse third spaces that **push users to explore new areas, cultures, and communities**, as we learned people still enjoy conversations & spaces beyond their stated interests.

MOTHER NATURE

let's say the environment is our client. as people travel more to third spaces, **vehicle emissions** may increase. we may want to integrate a feature that **suggests public transportation routes** to users' destinations or encourage users to walk or bike. extensive use of our app may harm nature-based third spaces like parks, gardens, and hiking trails (**stepping on native plants or littering**). we can manually add environment-themed meetups, such as **cleanups, tree planting, gardening,** etc.

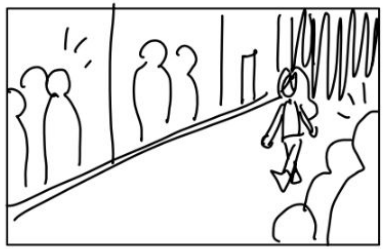
THE BACKSTABBER

users could lose trust in *spark* if it has **unengaged or bot users** that don't intend to meet up. users may feel like they won't get any genuine or unexpected interactions from others in any of these third spaces. **users may feel unsafe** on *spark* if we don't verify users' identities. can ban minors and implement a **verification process** during account creation via university email or official ID. can implement **"report" and "block" features** if users want to avoid specific users/spaces. can also double-check that third space options on *spark* are reputable by asking them to **submit a license/background check.**

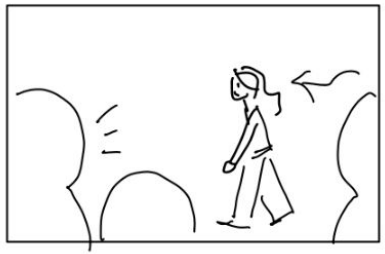
our 3 tasks

Level	Task	Justification	Timestamp
Simple	Share specific interests and personality type.	There's a clear goal and user can convey a clear message about themselves; no coordination with others is needed.	0:30
Moderate	Find an interesting third space to visit during their free time.	The user has to weigh their interests, schedule, and commitment against several options and choose one.	0:51
Complex	Initiate meaningful conversation and spark connections with other people in a third space.	This requires coordinating multiple people's schedules and interests, plus a potentially risky decision to meet strangers.	1:12

Storyboards



MC (MC = main character) walking alone in a bustling public place (Uni Ave, SF streets, etc.)



Wide shot of the MC walking alone with bustling streets around them



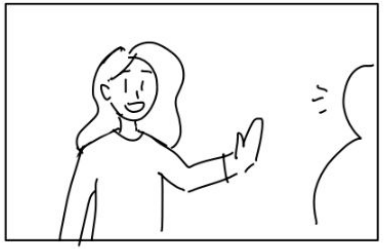
MC looks longingly at other people (couple talking, friends laughing, people walking dogs together, etc.)



Closer shot of MC walking head down, camera pans across their sad face

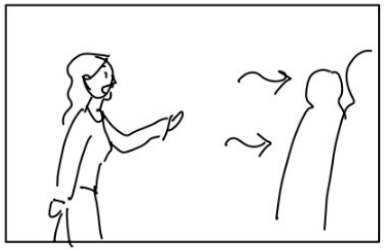


MC sees a group of people talking that looks somewhat approachable

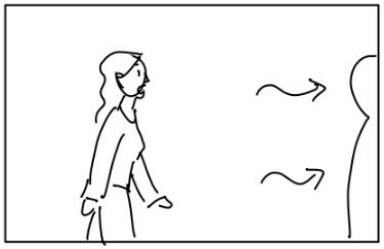


MC reaches out hand to begin to talk to them

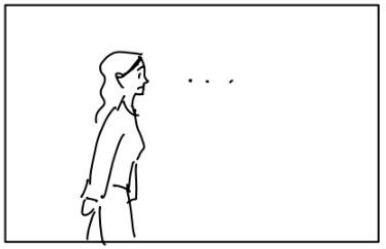
Storyboards



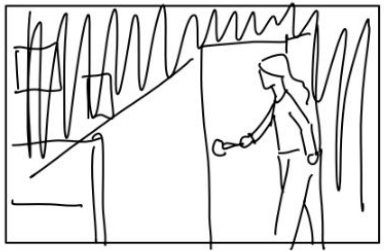
MC takes too long, group of people walk away



Sad music plays as people walk away



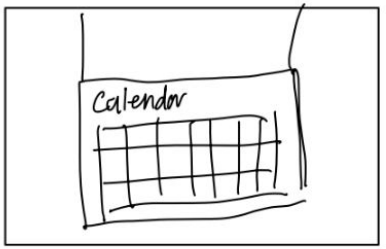
MC pulls hand back and looks sad



MC goes back to their room, dark lighting and cool toned colors



Behind-the-shoulder shot of MC looking at their calendar



Close-up shot of their empty calendar with no plans

Storyboards



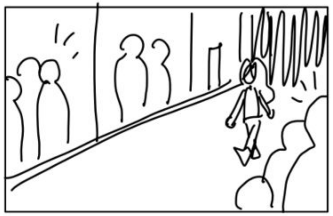
MC tries checking their phone to see if they have any updates…



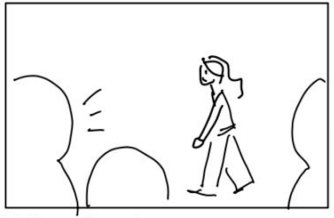
…but no notifications either (represent using an abstract interface)



MC sits dejectedly on the edge of their bed in silence



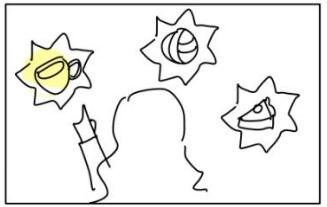
Cut to new scene where MC is walking down the same street (a “redo” of the same day)



MC walks down same bustling street, except this time…



…a notification/star pops up to notify them of a third place suggestion



MC inputs their interests and customizes their profile, ex. choosing their favorite hobbies (TASK #1)

TASK #1: Simple

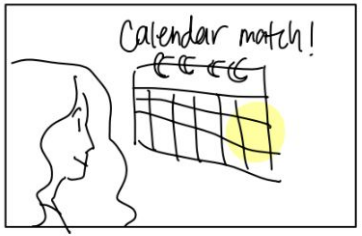
Action: User can share their profile with specific interests and personality type.

Explanation:
There’s a clear goal and user can convey a clear message about themselves; no coordination with others is needed.

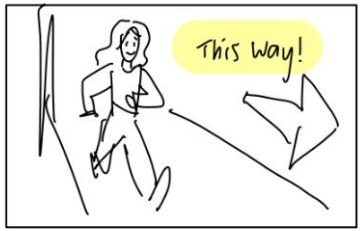
Storyboards



MC will get some third space recommendations using a floating abstract interface



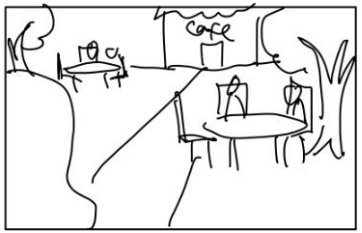
MC's calendar gets conveniently populated with a time slot for an interesting third space (TASK #2)



MC energetically follows floating signs that guide them to their destination



MC's hair blowing in the wind with the sun shining down on them to show their optimism for this newly suggested third space



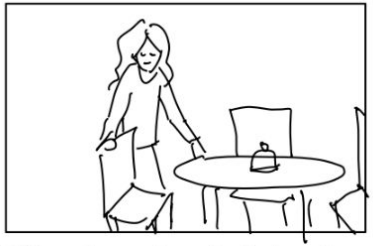
MC reaches the cafe and sees people sitting at the tables chatting

TASK #2: Moderate

Action: User selects an interesting third space to visit during their free time.

Explanation: The user has to weigh their interests, schedule, and commitment against several options and choose one.

Storyboards



MC pulls out a chair to sit, music is expectant and energetic



MC checks in to this third space using tangible button, which will notify others who have also checked in



Another user who has already checked in will also light up in the distance (start of TASK #3)



Over the shoulder shot of the user and the MC making eye contact



Other user waves at camera (through the POV of the MC)



MC waves at camera (through the POV of the other user)

TASK #3: Complex

Action: User initiates meaningful conversation and sparks connections with other people in a third space.

Explanation: This requires coordinating multiple people's schedules and interests, plus a potentially risky decision to meet strangers.

Storyboards



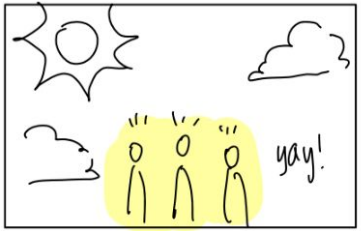
MC stands up and goes over to talk to the other user, finding unexpected similarities about each other



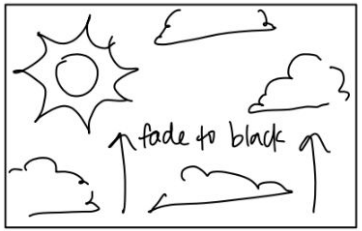
Another user who is passing by happens to notice them chatting



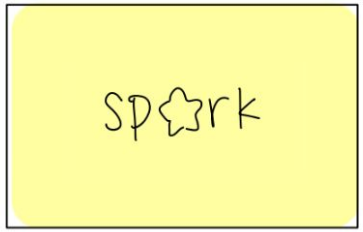
Third user joins in with three sparks now- users are meeting new people and exploring a new third space



Wide shot of the three people chatting happily, with their three sparks glowing brighter (end of TASK #3)



Camera pans up to a sunny blue sky, fading to black



Main logo and tagline appears on ending screen

TASK #3: Complex

Action: User initiates meaningful conversation and sparks connections with other people in a third space.

Explanation: This requires coordinating multiple people's schedules and interests, plus a potentially risky decision to meet strangers.

watch our video here!

thank you!