

Assignment 3: User Research & Top Findings

| Finding | Impact |
|---|---|
| People care about phone etiquette and discretion. This applies even more in fancy restaurants, where they're most likely to encounter new food terms. | Users must be able to quickly look up terms and get the information they are looking for. |
| People sometimes encounter terms they don't know while shopping at the grocery store. | Food Dictionary could be used in different settings and contexts in addition to a restaurant. We should think about uses in grocery stores, at home, on the way to the restaurant, etc. |
| Asking the waiter will often be the easiest way to find out about a food term. At the same time, some people are embarrassed to let others know that they don't know something, so they don't ask. Sometimes, waiters might not know enough detail to satisfy a foodie. | If Food Dictionary is discrete enough to use, some users would prefer using it to asking their server, but the most important thing will be to have the right information available. |
| People trust chefs and other experts to describe what an ingredient is and how it can/should be used. | Food Dictionary will have immediate legitimacy if we can have a celebrity chef sponsor it with their content. |
| People care about more than just a definition. | Our content needs to reflect what people want: what an ingredient goes with, what it's similar to, and its origin. |
| Our users know food – they don't necessarily need to be handheld through every basic thing. | We don't have to give our users step-by-step directions about how to use an ingredient. If we give them the right information, they will figure it out on their own. |
| People want to understand ingredients better, not just use them in a recipe. | It's not important to provide specific recipes, but give information about how the ingredient is typically used, in combination with other ingredients. |
| Food and pictures go hand in hand. When people search for food terms, they're looking for pictures just as much as descriptions. | We need to use large, high-quality, compelling images. |
| People are definitely interested in using the food dictionary at home. They might use it while browsing menus before going out, or in the kitchen while cooking. | We will need to support multi-device use more actively than we originally thought. |
| Some people want to track things like favorite foods, dislikes, and allergies. | We could allow users to personalize the content and/or participate in creating it. |

Research Protocol

We interviewed 7 people representing various levels of “foodie” expertise, including a professional pastry chef, a food blogger, and several home cooks.

Intro

For each interview, we gave a general overview of our topic, and gathered basic information on the interviewee.

Questions and conversation

We compiled a list of questions about eating/cooking habits, along with questions about what food apps they use and what they do when they encounter new food terms. We planned for our interviews to be relatively casual given the subject matter, and we'll expand beyond our main questions based on how the conversations flow. These are some of the questions we used as starting points:

1. What do you do when you don't know what something is on a menu?
 - a. What resources do you prefer?
 - b. How do you feel when there are a lot of crazy menu words?
2. What are some foodie apps you have on your smartphone?
 - . What do you do with your foodie apps?
3. Which ones do you actually use?
4. How often do you have an unfamiliar food (new type of food/ingredients)?
5. How often do you go out to eat?
6. How often do you cook for yourself?
7. What's the threshold that you're willing to pay in a single sitting at a restaurant?
8. Do you know what a haricot vert is? How about a pupusa?
9. How do you keep up with your foodie knowledge?
10. How do you decide what restaurants to go to?
11. If you're cooking at home, how do you find new recipes?

Diary

We asked our interviewees to keep a really basic diary of situations where they encounter an unknown food term. We asked them to capture some very basic information: date/time, location, context, food term, and whether they looked it up somewhere (and if so, using what).

Due to the relatively short timeframe of our research, we did not get much data for this. We are hoping to get a few data points as we continue through the semester.

Concept walkthrough

We sketched a few simple paper prototypes using index cards simulating the phone version of our app. We used a search landing screen, a search results screen, a "browse" list of terms, an inline preview/dropdown screen of a definition, and a detail screen of a definition. We walked through the flow with each interviewee and got his/her feedback.



