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Ethnographic Design Lab Final Report: How SmithScape Came to Be

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ANT 300
Ethnographic Design Lab Final Report
*How SmithScape Came to Be*

SPRING 2017

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATIONS

On October 14, 2016, Maya Lin announced her design and plans for the New Neilson Library. With construction starting in the summer of 2017 and ending in the summer of 2020, a predicament arose. Where will Smith College students study? Neilson Library currently provides a large quantity and variety of study spaces, but with the absence of Neilson Library for the following three academic years, current and incoming Smith students will have to navigate campus to find new study spaces.

In order to aid Smith students in finding and navigating campus for new study spaces, the administration planned to adopt Scout, a digital application created for the University of Washington to help students find campus study spaces, campus food and tech items that meet specific criteria. It is currently available as a mobile web application that can be accessed from any desktop computer or mobile device. The Smith administration intended the application to only help find study spaces. Specifically, Scout helps “find study spaces that meet specific criteria such as lighting, ambient noise, proximity to food and coffee, and availability of amenities such as printers, whiteboards, outlets, etc.” and “view spaces on all three UW campuses right from your desktop or mobile device”\(^1\). Because this application serves a large university campus, the Digital Wayfinding Steering Committee was created at Smith College in order to adjust the application to technologically and culturally serve the Smith community.

The Digital Wayfinding Steering Committee, a group initially comprised of two student workers, the Neilson Library committee—including several faculty members—and

\(^1\) https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/spacescout/
administration, was responsible for the project of the digital application’s transition into the Smith community. Professor Caroline Melly, a member of the Neilson Library Committee and Professor Suzanne Gottschang, with her experience with the health research project *The Survey of Well Being of Young Children (SWYC)* in conjunction with the Computer Science and Engineering departments, are both associate professors of the Smith College Anthropology Department and pushed for anthropological methods to be used to inform the project and the overall success of the application in the Smith community. Brightspot, an experience design and strategy consultancy, was hired to “understand how the library’s spaces, services, collections, tools and technology are used in research, teaching, and learning, explore the role that the future Neilson library could play in supporting research, teaching and learning as well as in encouraging collaboration, creating community, and offering inspiration, incorporate new user-centered insights into library planning and design”² The findings gathered by Brightspot were used to inform the *Smith College Program Summary: Redesign of the Neilson Library Complex.*

The Brightspot report, while informative, only focuses on physical spaces at Neilson library, specific ways people use the spaces, and its academic functions in the future. Furthermore, the research largely lacks the deep descriptions of Smith’s culture that is widely celebrated by students on campus. As a result, Professor Melly and Professor Gottschang created two anthropology classes in the Spring of 2017 that would help to conduct research, gather data, and inform the administration on how the digital wayfinding application could be altered and presented to the Smith community to achieve maximum success.

ANT 200: Colloquium: Internet Connections and Digital Divides and ANT 300:

Ethnographic Design Lab (EDL) were the two anthropology courses co-taught by Professor Melly and Professor Gottschang in the spring of 2017. The colloquium is an anthropology methods course that was comprised of 21 anthropology majors from varying class years. The Ethnographic Design Lab, a special studies course, was comprised of three senior anthropology majors: Geena Choo, Yoon Roh, and Danyi Zeng, who also served as team leaders in the colloquium course. At the start of the term, the ANT 200 class was split into three groups or themes: Smith culture, technology, and space, with a team leader assigned to each. Students in the colloquium course conducted the research through participant observation, interviews, surveys, focus groups, and archival research, while the Ethnographic Design Lab, in conjunction with the professors, oversaw designing the overall research project, compiling and analyzing data, informing the Digital Wayfinding Steering Committee of their findings, and advising on actions to be taken regarding the success of the application and its rollout.

**THEORY REVIEW**

Bruno Latour and many other social theorists have argued that in scientific research no absolutely true data exists. It is essential to acknowledge the contemporary microenvironment of laboratories, researchers’ arbitrary decisions, broader academic history, and many other socioeconomic factors in science studies (1987). Following such school of thoughts, more recent scholars address that successful technological development also requires fundamental participation of social scientific research and the awareness of locality. For instance, in *Divining a Digital Future Mess and Mythology in Ubiquitous Computing*, Paul Dourish and Genevieve Bell summarize several roles anthropology and ethnographic studies play for developing ubiquitous computing, which directly inspired our project to develop an online and smartphone app at Smith College (2011).
The first and most crucial point our research adopts from the book is to emphasize human-machine interactions. Technology is designed for people, so we should strive to gain an understanding of users as people and their user experience. The app will not survive unless it precisely fits people’s requirements and helps improve the user’s daily life. The researchers need to thoroughly examine the intertwined use of technology in daily life and find the specific moments when people present certain interactions with the targeted technology (Weiser, Gold, and Brown 1999, 693-4, quoted in Dourish and Bell 2011, ch 2). Hence, the anthropological studies can contribute to the primary design of technological products. The abundant and diverse data from ethnographic research will offer supportive evidence, from which anthropologists can generate effective suggestions for computer engineers, marketing managers, and other sectors on the team (Dourish and Bell 2011, ch 2).

A primary standpoint we started with is underlining the locality in our fieldwork. Science and Technology Studies (STS) claims that any technology installed in a certain region will be further assigned unique features, because local groups prefer to interact with technological products based on their own cultural understandings. Recent examples include the successful construction of the bush bumps in local Zimbabwean villages, the resistance of prepaid meters in the lower-class area in South Africa, the final integration of Uber with local Chinese apps, and so on (de Laet and Mol, 2000; Von Schnitzler, 2013). Although the app we helped develop has a much smaller scope compared to global apps, we recognize that in order to let Smith students be more willing to accept the app, we must re-modify the prototype of the app transferred from a remote university to our specific campus. As Smith students, we quickly realized that Smith culture means being different from each other. Such patterns require our project to carefully and thoroughly examine the inside mentality among the student body to understand their general
cultural identity and specific preferences to apps on electronic devices.

Participation observation and ethnography, indispensable research methods of anthropology, are able to help us to collect, to analyze, and to glean from complicated social qualitative data gathered from the field. The observations and interpretations of socioeconomic settings gained from fieldwork experience will reveal both the comprehensive social patterns and the local people’s interactions with technology (Dourish and Bell, 2011). Qualitative ethnography is a platform for anthropologists to integrate different aspects of social life, which will help the design process of the product and its later implementation within a broader cultural environment. In this way, technology with sensible cultural features will make the products much more acceptable among people in the region. Therefore, in the starting phase of the project, we were devoted to collecting data about Smith culture, students’ studying habits, and students’ experience of using apps. We tried to deconstruct and reconnect these three categories to acquire coherent information that the designers of the app can use for developing functions, features, user interfaces, and other various aspects of the tool that will improve students’ wayfinding procedures on Smith campus.

Thus, as anthropologists, we devoted a large amount of time in the project to study the physical environment and cultural context of Smith College, a women’s liberal arts college located in Northampton, MA. Our goal was to better understand the student body, as Smith students, or Smithies, are the main creators of Smith culture and would be the users of the app. We tried to give voice to the students other than just the administration. Most researchers in this project were students who themselves represent certain cultural characteristics of the campus. The way they designed the research questions, interacted with other students, and analyzed the data reinforced the students’ initiative in the process. Basically, we approached the development
of technology not only for searching its functionality but also for incorporating unique cultural meanings of Smith campus.

**METHODS AND PROJECT DESIGN**

For this project, we decided to conduct ethnographic research in order to understand the social and cultural lives at Smith in a broader context along with the issue of study space availability during the reconstruction of Neilson. In the beginning of the semester, we discussed readings regarding ethnographic research methods, that helped the class to brainstorm research questions related to our project. After several heated debates, we finalized our research question to: How can the application for locating study spaces in Smith College be user friendly and culturally adopted by the Smith community? ANT 200 started with participant observation from February 18th to March 1st, conducted semi-structured interviews from March 4th to March 30th and structured interviews from April 9th to 18th, and organized focus groups from April 1st to 10th.

*Why ethnography*

Ethnography asks questions that address broad problems of social and cultural life (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 31). Ethnographers use qualitative data to provide profound insights or deep description that quantitative data cannot do. Quantitative data is rather used to supplement the findings and trends of qualitative analysis. (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 38). Ethnographic research both indicates and situates a problem within a larger and more holistic context of cultural patterns (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 41).

The project aims at adjusting an outside application that is more user friendly, culturally inclusive, and efficient in locating accessible study spaces for the Smith community. Because of the vivid complexity in Smith culture, we believe ethnographic research methods can help us
collect, deconstruct, and analyze the internal dynamics existing on campus. Hence, we are able to apply the findings from the inconspicuous cultural patterns to make precise recommendations for the development team of the app. Due to the strong need to offer an explanation for the complex culture at Smith, to solve the problem of finding new studying spaces for Smith students when Neilson Library closes, and to offer navigation suggestions, we chose to write an ethnography about Smith culture, technology, and space on campus.

In this project, we used four ethnographic methods such as participant observation, archival research, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews to conduct the research. Meanwhile, we also used focus group as a consulting strategy with a lens of applied anthropology to supplement our traditional ethnographic methods, which will be discussed later in this section.

**Participant Observation**

Participant observation is a major ethnographic research method that the researcher places herself in the field where she studies to observe her subjects in their cultural context over a period of time. In participant observation, anthropologists place themselves in the field, start with everyday activities such as listening, observing, and recording the environment, and analyze the findings in a narrative form. With the acknowledgement that anthropologists are both observers and participants, participant observation allows anthropologists to produce a situated knowledge and put in efforts to learn the particular mindset of an insider and to view the world from their subjects’ perspective (Angrosino 2007, 10-11).

For this project, we decided to divide the project into three themes: culture, space, and technology and conducted participant observation with a specific focus on each theme. In total, we were able to conduct almost 74 hours of participant observation at the Campus Center, all
libraries including Neilson, Hillyer, and Josten, the Schacht Center for Health and Wellness, Ford Hall, academic buildings on campus. Each participant observation session lasted for in between thirty minutes to one hour, during which students observed and took notes about interesting phenomena they noticed. In several class sessions, students came back with their data and discussed about their findings and shaped questions for following interviews and focus group.

Archival Research

Archival research engages with previously published works and relevant literature to understand past ways of thinking (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 120). As Boellstorff et al. states “culture always has history” (2012, 120), archival research allows ethnographers to understand historical progress, to describe changes, and to analyze any impact in the past (Rodrigues and Baber year 69). Archival research produces both quantitative and qualitative data as it focuses on maps or other records, but also shows cultural processes, allows for cross-cultural and cross-national comparability, and generalizability (Angrosino 2007, 65).

In this project, we had six students who researched at the Smith College Archives with the support from college archivists. Divided into the three-themed groups, mentioned earlier, each group found both qualitative and quantitative data for the themes that they were assigned and wrote reports on their findings.

Interviews

Interviews are able to offer both quantitative and qualitative information so researchers can answer complicated questions regarding social phenomena. They provide interviewees the opportunity to explicate and vocalize the actual meanings behind their own actions, beliefs, ideologies, justifications, motivations, aspirations, and culture (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 92-93).
Interviewees can be more willing to discuss sensitive topics without any difficulty in the private and comfortable setting an interviewer provides. (Boellstorff et al. 2012, 93). Furthermore, the interviewer can pick up on gestures, facial expressions, and even small nuances that the interviewees express within the cultural context of the interview process. Thus, student researchers were aware of the nuances and interview settings so that they could collect culturally and socially valid information for later analysis.

*Semistructured interviews*

The semi-structured interview is a research method that is based on the use of an interview guide but open to interviewees expressing their opinions (Bernard 2011, 212). The interview guide is a written list of questions and topics in an order that is open to change depending on the flow of the interview. Even though this method allows the interviewer to be in control, it still leaves spaces for both the interviewer and interviewee to openly discuss the questions at hand (212).

For this project, we conducted 42 semi-structured interviews with students and members from the Smith administration. For these interviews, we received permission to audio-record. In particular, these interviews asked questions about one’s background information, studying habits, spaces on campus including Neilson Library, and possible future technology at Smith. These questions were framed to answer specific habits or perspectives that could not be answered by participant observations or other methods, and through several discussions, ANT 200 students wrote the list of questions categorized into three sections: campus space, technology, and background information about the interviewee. The interviewees were randomly selected through the snowballing method where students reached out to people not within their friend groups and comfort zones.
**Structured Interviews**

The structured interview is a research method where interviewees are asked to respond to a given set of close-ended options or questions, such as a questionnaire or survey (Bernard 2011, 212). In this method, the interviewers are in complete control of the interview’s direction, so they are read the questions out loud. The interviewees are expected to follow the direction of the interview rather than expressing their opinions and ideas freely. Structured interviews provide quantitative data that indicates widespread trends and diversifies the collection of overall data (Boellstorff et al. 127).

For this project, we conducted 22 structured surveys with students on campus. Based on our previous data from participant observation, archival research, semi-structured interview, we had a general understanding of the culture, studying habits, and technology. In order to see the overarching theme/the general patterns and gather specific information in the previously mentioned sections, we asked close-ended and specific questions that are more related to the design of the app.

**Focus Groups**

A focus group is a research method that gathers a group of people to participate and discuss a specific topic for a given time. In a controlled environment, the research method provides both qualitative and quantitative data to collect as people freely express and discuss their opinions through words and quick polls. As mentioned previously, focus groups are not a common method in anthropological research and are typically used to provide feedback on a political campaign, television series, or product in development. Recently though, focus groups are used as a method of applied anthropology in industries. Because the core of our project
regards the development and success of an application, we thought it necessary to pursue focus
groups as a research method.

At this point of our project timeline, we were seeking more specific answers relevant to
the design of the app itself. We need finalized our discussion about the name, branding
strategies, user interface, and other features we would like to suggest to the Committee. Thus,
focus group allowed us to have an efficient environment where randomly selected students from
different majors and class years to share their thoughts about the prototype of the app, so that our
project was able to acquire first-hand evidence to reevaluate our previous conclusions and
readjusted our final proposal.

For the project, we conducted 3 focus groups and had 19 participants in total. We
recruited people through Facebook and recommendations from friend groups, and they were
expected to spend an hour to discuss about the app. During the focus group, we recorded the
focus group with a video camera, which might have influenced the participants to be self-
conscious about their answers and response. The questions for the focus group was specifically
shaped to receive feedback on the branding of the app, features of SmithScape, and rollout plans.

DATA

SMITH CULTURE

Smith College has a very specific culture amongst its student body, often defined by
qualities such as independence, boldness, outspokenness, political activeness especially in
gender and identity politics, social justice, the LGBTQ+ community, trust, inclusivity, and a
home-like atmosphere. Smith’s community is equipped with its own language, energy, aura, and
cultural norms that are acknowledged by everyone within the community itself, but it is
important to note that while there are common qualities that are apparent at Smith and in its students, every Smith student or Smithie is an individual, incredibly different from the other and not necessarily fitting into the archetype of a Smithie’s description or activities.

However, Smith students indeed prioritize certain social discussions, academic engagements, and women empowerment than other aspects in their college life. Thus, we need to study the cultural patterns to find their unique understandings of the campus community. The following topics regarding Smith culture were themes that arose from our data regarding the overall atmosphere at Smith and how all Smith students are aware of these characteristics whether they choose to participate or not.

**The Smith Bubble**

When describing Smith, one student stated that “Smith stands apart because of its “energy”, “community”, and “shared vocabulary””. While students expressed many positive traits of the Smith community, there was a consensus that Smith is a ‘bubble’. “Smith Bubble” is a term used to express the idealistic expectations and beliefs held by students and the isolation of the Smith community from the rest of the world. Students constantly mention the traits of being Smith-specific, such as the energy, community, and shared vocabulary. For example, an interviewee stated that she “dislikes that students at Smith are pushed to become the next Hillary Clinton”. For many students on campus who hold similar opinions to the interviewee, “leadership potential does not equate to a potential to succeed”. Besides the pursuits of success, many ideological expectations towards a much benign social environment towards minorities, gender equality, and so on always help create inflated friendly atmosphere on campus. This omnipotent force surges within and is part of the Smith Bubble.

**Stress Olympics**
When observing Hillyer library, an anthropology student conducting participant observation recorded the constant *sigh, sigh, sigh* heard from various students studying in the space. Stress is entrenched and part of Smith culture. Stress Olympics is a term used to identify when students try to outdo each other regarding their stress levels. Essentially, students compete with their stress levels and the winner is the individual with the least amount of sleep, the most amount of work, and the absence of free time. On the topic of Stress Olympics at Smith, a student states “It’s so normal. You can’t really fight it because it’s part of the culture... I just want to tell people that I’m stressed too, it’s what you do”. In many observed instances, students kept their peers in check while studying or “coaxing” friends into talking or taking a break. To be busy and to be stressed are considered the norm at Smith College, it is almost looked down upon if you are ‘doing nothing’ and free time for oneself is a luxury or something one has to convince oneself or a friend to have. Even though a student may not be stressed about anything, the very absence of having nothing to stress about is stress-inducing itself.

**Food**

“If there were cookies at the library, I might actually study there”. Going hand in hand with the predominant stress culture at Smith, students respond to food. Free food, good food, available food, any food always attracts and catches the attention of most Smith students. Smithies were described as “incentivized to go to an event because the advertising promised a free sundae bar”.

The majority of students expressed how food and meals at Smith were central to their daily lives. Having a meal with a certain group of friends in particular dining halls influences a student’s daily routine and lifestyle. Regarding the intersection of technology and food in Smith’s community, the most popular Smith based app to date was the Smith College Mobile
app. Although this particular application had six major functions, students stated they solely used it for dining menu purposes. Furthermore, many Smith students expressed their frustrations that the application was no longer functioning, stating that it was annoying and bothersome to have to look up the menus on web applications on their phone. There was a general consensus that if the wayfinding application were to have an additional dining hall menu function, its success would greatly increase.

**STUDYING HABITS**

*Individual Study and Group Study*

Although many students choose to both study alone and in groups, the two strategies serve different purposes. Students mentioned that they study alone for memorizing speeches, reading, writing papers, and studying for exams. They usually choose to be in quiet study areas such as personal rooms in their own houses, the reading room at the entrance of Neilson, the periodical room on the third floor of Neilson, and dining halls. The response indicates that people prefer to study alone and in quiet spaces when high concentration is required.

As for group study, students stated that certain class assignments require them to work in a group, even if they personally prefer study alone. Moreover, since academic life is deeply integrated in students’ lives at Smith, people tend to perceive studying as an extended social time. So besides studying alone, students study in groups usually with friends for math problem sets, language homework, lab reports, hard science homework, or sending emails. For instance, one of the interviewees said that studying in a group is an excuse to hang out with her friends who are usually too busy to spend time together. Basically, students have various reasons to aggregate and study together. Based on the data, it is clear that studying habits at Smith are
highly divided based on course requirements and social purposes, even if individual choices are very different.

**The Ideal Study Space**

Based on the data, studying is a big part of student lives at Smith, but there is a strong sense of individuality in study habits and preferences. Even though the study habits shown in the data can be broadly divided into two categories—studying alone and/or studying in a group, many students listed a few common characteristics they would prefer for their future study space.

Quiet, comfortable, good lighting, open space, and snacks were the most popular traits mentioned in our interviews. A representative ideal space for studying on campus is the Mezzanine level of Josten library because of the “comfortable chairs, tables at an appropriate height, and easily available snacks” as one interviewee mentioned.

**SPACE**

**Versatility**

Due to the various studying habits that students indicated, the options for studying areas are broad, including personal rooms, academic and non-academic building, the campus center, and off-campus locations like coffee shops in town. Students also indicated the versatility of space that is catered for their varying needs. As mentioned above, since studying is a part of socializing, there is a need for students to have spaces that are multi-functional, as one student indicates, “rather than spaces being single purposed they can instead be ever-changing to help move beyond simple functions” to affirm the need for a versatility of spaces on campus.

**Territorial & Trust**

One overarching theme in terms of space on campus is that students are territorial. There is a social understanding or norm that your belongings such as backpacks, jackets, or any
personal items can be used to mark your territory in spaces on campus. For instance, one observer mentions that people tend to occupy these spaces as much as they can, and other students respect their “right” to this spot to describe the “spreading out” characteristic. Even the carrell culture that Smith College libraries maintain can be an example of Smith students claiming to occupy a permanent space for themselves throughout a semester or a year. Carrels are assigned to students at the beginning of each academic year based on their seniority or whether they are doing a special studies or thesis. Students have expressed their hesitations studying at carrels that are heavily decorated or personalized compared to carrels that are bare and stark, even though both are indicated as reserved. There is a sense of violation or invasion when a student enters a space that clearly belongs to another. These cases present the territorial characteristics of Smith students in space, and it also shows the trust and respect in the community to leave their belongings without hesitation and re-locate.

Many students from our class proved the behavior mentioned above in their observations, but more interesting data kept showing up. For example, one student observer witnessed a moment where a student left her water bottle to save a booth at the campus center café, but when she came back, the space had been taken by another student. So she politely gave up the space to the new owner of the space, and left with her water bottle. This interaction, according to the observer, actually marks the moment to be “very symbolic of the Smithies’ ideas of space and ownership.” From the data, we realized that using spaces on campus involves dynamic interpersonal communication within the subtle cultural context.

**General Sentiments Towards Neilson**

As the main library, Neilson provides numerous study spaces for students and serves as a focal building for academic work. While many students have indicated that they frequently visit
Neilson, others have stated their unwillingness to work in Neilson because of several characteristics that do not fit the ideal study space, such as the lack of individual space, dim lighting or no natural light, and the depressing aura and dingy feeling that causes a negative atmosphere and mood. For many students, Neilson library is perceived as a place typically associated with stress, homework, and academic life. Therefore, a lot of students also avoid studying in Neilson to prevent themselves from experiencing any negative feelings in addition to their stressful lives. In general, nevertheless, students agree that Neilson library is a main academic hub on Smith campus.

**Emotions and Lack of Awareness towards Neilson Closing**

While conducting research, we noticed students expressing their disturbed and unsettled emotions or lack of awareness and acknowledgement of the closing of Neilson. For instance, during a focus group, a rising sophomore, voiced her anger since she felt that she was “chosen” to not have Neilson for the rest of her academic career at Smith. Another interviewer also recorded that one student looked “immediately disheartened” while talking about finding a substitute to Neilson. Furthermore, there is fear associated with other people who usually study in Neilson invading other study spaces on campus. One student mentioned “they [people who study Neilson] are gonna need somewhere to go, and they are gonna come where I study, and I have my territory”. These quotes reflect the sentiment of fear that students share based on their territorial characteristics and ownership of space.

Because students from different majors demand distinguishable spaces for their various academic tasks, a variety of thoughts about the ownership of study spaces exist. For example, several students in the interviews shared their concern that humanities majors prefer to use spaces in Seelye where they usually go to class, while STEM majors want their department
buildings in the science quad to remain limitedly accessible during evenings. (Currently, STEM buildings, such as Ford, require students to swipe their OneCard to enter for lab work and other class projects during evenings). These opinions indicate the strong territorial characteristics that students express towards other students who may not belong to ‘their’ academic buildings.

More fundamentally, students did not talk about the future temporary absence of Neilson on campus. Even if several events -- including the public panel with Maya Lin on campus -- were conducted in the past year when the decision was just announced, at the start of the 2016-2017 academic year, few campus-wide panels or activities were held. At the same time, we found little attention to this issue amongst the student body. Certainly, everyone on campus vaguely knew the reconstruction of the library, but nobody was clear about the alternative solutions for their later academic careers. Even in many of our research processes, student researchers constantly encountered questions from interviewees and other participants about the future plans of finding study spaces.

Based on these examples, it is clear that the closing of Neilson influences students’ choices of studying spaces on campus, disrupts the feelings of students, and provokes negative and somber reactions among students.

**USE OF APPLICATION TECHNOLOGY**

*Functionality*

Smith students mainly value applications on smartphones based on their functionality and sense of community. Many students claim that because of the limited space on their smartphones, they only keep apps that “add value to different parts of [their] life”. An ideal app should be function-oriented and convenient, yet exceptions may occur when the name and visual designs of the app are aesthetically appealing or when friends highly recommend apps. However,
despite the first-sight appeals or recommendations, if the function of an app does not satisfy the user’s requirement, she will delete the app very soon. According to our research, widely-accepted apps among the students are social media applications, including Instagram and Snapchat. Smithies enjoy interacting with friends through straightforward digital and visual communication within smaller social groups, so Facebook is less attractive for students due to its overwhelming and complicated user interfaces.

**Smith-oriented**

The data indicates that there is a strong desire for a Smith-specific app. When we asked about previous Smith apps students used, most of them mentioned the First-year experience app and the dining app, both of which played roles in current campus life. Students stopped using the First-year experience app after they became more familiar to the campus and deleted the dining app after it stopped functioning. Besides acquiring information from electronic devices, students mainly figure out campus-wide events such as SGA sponsored events, lectures, and other social campaigns through talking to friends during meal times or class announcements. Technology becomes a major choice on this campus only due to its convenience. The student body values interpersonal relations at Smith, which largely explained why many students felt deeply upset when the food app stopped updating daily menus.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FOR THE APP**

Based on the data we presented in the last section, the research team came up with several recommendations for the app and its marketing strategies. The name of the app was the first critical step for both the app itself and branding. As our data shows, Smith students pursue
their cultural identities, so the app name had to incorporate the specific identities and interesting/fun aspects to appeal to the users at Smith. Thus, we encouraged the ANT 200 students to find fun and meaningful cultural elements that not just existed in our data but also in everyone’s daily campus life. We submitted a list of interesting ideas that contained various meanings ranging from a main purpose of the app, a sense of campus space, to an expression of cultural identities.

During the later phase of the project, we chose three brand names that most represented the overall project—SmithScape and SmithSpread from the ANT 200 class and StudySmith prompted by the administration. These names were presented at the focus groups to gain feedback and reception from the Smith community. SmithScape originated from the sense of the landscape of Smith culture. The name is also inclusive because it does not directly clarify the specific purpose of finding study spaces by the app. It leaves more potential for adding other functions that are widely demanded on campus, such as checking daily dining menus. SmithSpread was derived from the idea that Smithies tend to take up spaces whether they study alone or in a group. Besides, many students in class supported SmithSpread because they believed through using the name in daily life, Smith students could reclaim the meaning of “spread” in a feminist manner rather than associate the concept with “man spread” in mainstream notions. StudySmith, raised by the administration, represented the direct purpose of the app.

As our data showed, Smith students favored names that carried culturally fitting and slightly-twisted meanings rather than dull, mundane ones. However, they did not want obscure names that would have caused potential misunderstandings and reluctance when downloading the app. This is because if a student does not understand the meaning behind the name, she will not spend much time on deconstructing intricate cultural jokes. Consequently, we chose
SmithScape as our final brand, because it contained “Smith” as a straightforward attraction for students to acquire consensus of identity, and “Scape” indicated the general scope of functions in the app. This brand will help address the beautiful physical landscape of the school as well as imply potential cultural dynamics on campus. Students will be able to use a new Smith app named SmithScape in the summer of 2017.

Besides the branding, our classes largely contributed to the fundamental features and the design of the user interface of SmithScape. Based on the understandings of Smith culture, we discussed the check-in feature, the different characteristics of spaces for the filter feature, the degrees of privacy of several residential spaces, and other details in the app:

1. The check-in feature should be easy to operate on the app and should have an automatic drop-out time limit. Because such a system relies on the autonomous awareness of students, this simple feature can greatly reduce student burden of finding available spaces and boost their frequency of use.

2. Further categorizing the levels of noise is necessary in the filter. Depending on whether students study alone or with a group, they need different kinds of environments. The data show that some people prefer white noise instead of a completely silent space. Students also need various circumstances for different types of tasks – such as reading, studying for an exam, writing a paper, or working on a project.

3. Natural light matters and is necessary as a filter on the application. Some people need abundant natural light for studying, while others would rather study in a more closed space.

4. Having a vending machine, rather than a café, should be a filter feature. The original app had a label indicating cafes or locations to buy food around the building. A feature for food is always popular among students, but vending machines replace the basic functions of a café
for a much smaller campus.

5. Only whiteboards, rather than blackboards, should be considered as a filter because students require and prefer whiteboards over blackboards for self-studying.

6. In the current system, science buildings are only accessible by one card to major students and students enrolled in relevant courses in after-class hours. The Wayfinding Digital Steering Committee are conducting future negotiation with STEM departments.

7. No houses and dining halls are included as study spaces to this date. Most students believe the privacy of the house communities and the sense of domain in dining halls belong to house residents and their guests. Therefore, as SmithScape is open to the public, we suggested to not reveal these spaces on the map.

8. SmithScape will be extremely helpful for new first-years if they are able to explore the downtown Northampton through the app. Many students expressed their interests in spending time with friends and studying as a group. Furthermore, students regard the downtown area as a close part of their Smith life. The acceptable walking distance and vivid atmosphere around Main Street help students to relieve themselves from the intense academic life on campus. Thus, the app can offer the location of cafés downtown for those who seek slightly relaxing studying and socializing spaces. With possible negotiation, the appearance of café brands might bring certain amount of financial support to sustain future updates of the app.

9. Smith font and smith colors\(^3\) (Blue #002855; Gold #F1AB00). This easily recognizable design of the user interface will increase the sense of locality and familiarity of the app. Simultaneously, SmithScape can reinforce the sense of community for the users.

10. Finally, future updates of the application should incorporate the additional and distinct

\(^3\) Although it is not the official color of Smith College, the strong visible blue and gold of the Smith athletes makes most students think these two colors best represent the school.
feature of listing the daily dining hall menus. Throughout our research, the majority of student participants stated that they missed the ‘old’ dining app that no longer works.

FOR MARKETING

*Flyers*

In order to advertise to students effectively on campus, we suggested creating fun and interesting flyers that address a clear message. Since Smith has a very small community compared to other universities, the traditional paper advertising method is still dominant on campus—people check boards and pay attention to flyers on poles, academic buildings, campus center, library, houses, or even in bathrooms. Knowing the positive effect that flyers could have brought to the app advertisement, it would have been good to make flyers that did not resemble those designed by specific administrative-level organizations or centers at Smith College. For specific designs of sample flyers ANT 300 created, please check appendix 5.

*Events at Neilson*

From the data collected, it was clear that most Smith students were not actively thinking about Neilson closing. While the community was aware that Neilson would not be in use for the following three academic years, it seemed that most did not want to think about this event and its impact on their lives. ANT 200 proposed several party ideas for celebrating the time and memories they have had at Neilson before the semester ended. Based on their suggestions, we suggested a large-scale party to be hosted in Neilson Library on the night of the last day of classes. Throughout the party, SmithScape would be advertised to students to let them know of a solution to the study space predicament. The EDL believed that a party would help students acknowledge the closing of Neilson as well as celebrate or commemorate the ‘Old’ Neilson that will be forever changed during reconstruction.
However, due to the overlap with finals and the busy schedule that both students and staff members had before the closing of Neilson, it was ultimately agreed upon to have a study break for students in Neilson during finals rather than a party. Furthermore, the Neilson Library renovations were a touchy subject to many of the library staff as Neilson was considered their home and that of their colleagues. A party or celebration type event was therefore not well received in general by the library staff who would have been responsible for planning the event. Thus, the library decided to provide deserts and drinks to mark the final end of Neilson for students during their packed final schedules. For further information about the party plans and our intentions, please read appendix 6.

*Campus Campaign: “Before Neilson Revives”*

Similar to the Before I Die project, we propose to create a Before Neilson Dies or After Neilson Dies project where students can express their feelings and opinions about not having Neilson for next three years. “Before I Die, I Want to __________” is “a global participatory public art project that invites people to contemplate death, reflect on life, and share their personal aspiration in public” started by the artist Candy Chang (http://beforeidie.city/). Based on our observations and class discussions, we have noticed that it is imperative to open spaces and discussions for students to share their feelings and address their needs about the next few years when they will miss Neilson. This campus-wide cultural project would raise the awareness of not having Neilson and allow students to reflect and share their emotions and opinions about “the temporary absence of Neilson”. This project could take place in the Neilson underground tunnel area where students already decorate the wall with chalks and share their ideas. At the same time, chalking on other parts of campus and create hashtags on social media can also efficiently promote the students’ participation in the activities.
A successful marketing strategy requires us to introduce the app and prove the usefulness of the app to the members of the community. By participating in all these events, students will recognize the need of future solutions—the app and other libraries on and around campus—to navigate spaces on campus from next years.

**CONCLUSION**

An essential part of the overall project was providing a suitable name for the application itself. The original application name, *Scout*, was not suitable for the Smith College community due to its lack of relevance. Because everyone involved with the application wanted to ensure its success, there were conflicting ideas regarding possible brand names. Amongst the EDL and ANT 200 students and professors, there was a clear bias and favoritism towards the name SmithSpread that was generated amongst class discussion. This name was suggested because of its play on the term ‘manspreading’. The brand name was a way to reclaim the term as a way for Smithies to ‘spread out and take space’. Moreover, the name could also be associated with a food spread, expanding on the idea that the application could be more than just a study space locater. In addition, the students also poked fun at the sexual connotations of the name and believed it would be received in humor by the community.

The attachment that grew to this specific brand name caused students to fervently believe that it would be favored by the overall Smith community, but in the three focus groups conducted SmithSpread was least well received. Regardless of the clear results from the focus groups, both EDL members and ANT200 students tried to justify the outcome by stating that it would have been received well if the focus group members had just understood the meaning behind the name. While many students were disappointed by the outcome, it was a defining
lesson in how one cannot always be so sure of an outcome and how dangerous biases are in the research process.

Overall, through the project, we helped the development team to shape an outside application to be culturally adjusted to the vivid smith culture and characteristics. Even though the end result may not be what ANT 200 and 300 classes fully anticipated, we believe that the insights and qualitative data that we provided to the administration and the library committee have been critical and helpful for them to recognize the different aspects of students, their culture, studying habits, technology, and their needs. One of the achievements that our project concluded was the critical need for a technology to be culturally-suitable to function in a small community like Smith College.

We successfully persuaded the committee and the administration to adopt SmithScape as the name of the new app that will be assisting students to have a better campus life starting from the summer of 2017. We hope that our findings and suggestions were important and wish SmithScape will survive for more than three years, even after Neilson revives from its reconstruction. We appreciated the warm support from our professors, Professor Melly and Professor Gottschang, members of the Steering Committee, especially Brendan, students in the ANT 200 class, and all other staffs and faculty members who were willing to participate in this project, and of course each other.
Our Reflections

Geena

Being a part of this special studies, which has allowed me to lead a group of students, participate as a member of the Digital Wayfinding Steering Committee, use anthropological methods, analyze qualitative data, gain exposure to the field of user experience and so much more, has been an incredible and rewarding journey as part of my undergraduate career as an anthropology major.

My love for anthropology as a discipline and the its department at Smith College is deep and unrelenting. It has fundamentally changed me as a human in teaching me empathy and self-reflexivity and has given me a lens to view and critically analyze the world. While I believe that anthropology is integral to anything that we do and should be implemented in more realms of industry, not everyone agrees or understands. This project has allowed me to see and learn how my academic discipline and its methods can be directly utilized to solve problems in the business and user experience sector. It has provided me a bridge between my undergraduate and postgraduate experience. Furthermore, this project has allowed me and forced me at times to work with so many people from undergraduates, professors, administration, and more teaching me the invaluable skills of teamwork and perseverance that is hard to gain as an anthropology major.

Yoon

This project was a great opportunity for me to learn about applied anthropology and the importance of using the anthropological approach that gathers data from the field, analyzes the data with the understanding of a situated knowledge, and provides a holistic view on a subject.
Being a team leader, working with ANT 300 peers and professors, and participating in the Steering Committee Meetings were challenging. However through this experience, I learned how to work in groups, be a leader, communicate with various people effectively, and to engage others in a project. I also learned about what anthropology means to me and how much I value my learning and training from all my anthropology classes through a project like the Ethnographic Design Lab. Now, I believe I can be more self-reflective, have a critical perspective, and possibly use this experience in my future career.

**Danyi**

Participating in different sectors of the project, I began to realize the pragmatic roles anthropology can play in the real world. The theories, participant observation, diverse perspectives to analyze data, and many other fundamental discussions my teammates and I had encountered in previous courses all helped us to think and work as anthropologists. The experience was quite different from what I have done in previous anthropology courses. My work in this project constantly went beyond reading and writing – two fundamental and always critical skills, but communication also matters. Sometimes, I had to leave my comfortable zone. I had to appropriately address “no” to my teammates and helped them to find alternatives. Meanwhile, I had chances to promote teamwork and to learn inspiring thoughts from my peers. I also learned to approach a class both as a student and a facilitator, from which I harvested practical skills besides my academic ability.

The project offered me a unique opportunity to not only examine what I have learned from readings but also face the unexpected challenges among a group of people who had different backgrounds and pursuits that typical ethnographies had not yet mentioned. Applied anthropology requires researchers who are used to working alone to collaborate with engineers,
scientists, doctors, and experts in many other fields. As an undergraduate student, I appreciated my experience in the project that opened a different sub-field in anthropology for me. I saw interesting potential intersections between anthropology, technology, and product design. I am now able to further convince people the values an anthropological standpoint can provide in many industries that care about user experience.

Last but not least, I am deeply proud of my teammates, my professors, and my beloved anthropology major. The questions we raised, the difficulties we overcame, and the progress we achieved in this project are my invaluable memories at Smith. I hope SmithScape will be the rock star on campus in the next few years!
ANT 200 Formal/Structured Interview Questions

Thank you for meeting with me. This interview should take approximately 20 minutes. Blah blah blah

PART I: Smith and Study Culture

Please read this aloud first: In this first part, I’d like to ask you a few questions about Smith, its study culture, and places you like to study. There are no right or wrong answers; we are just looking for your impressions and personal preferences. Try to choose the answer that best fits your experiences. I’m happy to read the question and the choices more than once, so just ask.

1. When you think of the center of campus, which of the following do you think best represents that space?
   
   a. Chapin Lawn
   b. Campus Center
   c. Seelye Hall
   d. Neilson Library
   e. Ford Hall
   f. Other________________

2. Do you like to study in a_____ group? GO TO 2.1
   _____ alone? IF ALONE GO TO 2.3
   _____ or a mixture of both? IF BOTH GO TO 2.1 2.2 & 2.3

   2.1 When you study in a group, who do you usually study with?
   a) _____Friends
   b) _____Classmates
   c) _____Whoever is sitting at the table
2.2 Are there particular subjects or tasks that you like to work on in a group study setting? If so, what are they?

(Prompt: study for exam, group project)

2.3 What is your favorite place to study alone?

2.4 Are there particular subjects or tasks that you like to work on alone?

3. When you need to study, do you study in Neilson Library
   a. _____ All the time
   b. _____ Frequently
   c. _____ About half the time
   d. _____ Not very often
   e. _____ Never  **GO TO 3.3 Below**

3.1 When you do study in Neilson, could you tell me the top two reasons you do so from the following list:
   a. _____ You are between classes
   b. _____ You have a big project/paper due
   c. _____ You have group work for class
   d. _____ You need to access library resources _____ (periodicals, books, scanners, computers, printers)
   e. _____ You just like to study in Neilson

3.2 What are your favorite study spaces in Neilson? ____________________________

   a. Could you tell me why you like this/these spaces?
3.3 Could you tell me why you never/rarely study in Neilson?

4. Could you describe in three words your favorite study environment?

______________________________

PART II: Adopting New Apps

Please read this aloud first: In this second part of our interview, I’d like to ask you a few questions about your use of phone apps. Once again, there are no right or wrong answers; we are just looking for your impressions and personal preferences. Try to choose the answer that best fits your experiences and perspectives. I’m happy to read the question and the choices more than once, so just ask.

1. When it comes to using apps, are you a:
   a. Smart phone user (Yes/No)
   b. Tablet user (Yes/No)
   c. Laptop user (Yes/No)
   d. Campus computer user (Yes/No)
   e. I don’t use apps **GO TO Part III: Scenarios**

2. Please choose the answer that best represents your experience:
   Do you recall the last app you downloaded?

   _____ I dislike apps and don’t use them **GO TO Part III: Scenarios**
1. I don’t download apps because I don’t have space on my device.
2. I download apps but can’t remember anything I have downloaded recently.
3. Yes, I recall an app I recently downloaded:
   What kind of app was it?
2.1 How did you find out about the app?
   a. Friend told me
   b. Tech savvy friend told me about it
   c. Saw/heard it advertised - Where?
   d. Roommate
   e. Classmate
   f. Relative
   g. Saw it while searching for another app
   h. Professor recommended
   i. Other
2.2 Why did you decide to download it?
   a. It addressed a particular need I had
   b. Everyone else was downloading it
   c. I was curious about how it worked
   d. It was visually/aesthetically pleasing
   e. I wanted to be able to keep in the loop
   f. Other

3. Do you currently use any Smith-focused apps? ___Yes  ____No
   IF NO GO TO Question 4
   3.1 Name of app
   3.2 How often do you use it?
      a. once or twice a day
      b. several times a day
      c. once or twice a week
      d. once or twice a month
      e. rarely
4. Have you used any Smith apps in the past? _____Yes _____No
   IF NO GO TO Part III: Scenarios
4.1 Name of app?_______________
4.2 How often did you use it?
   a. ______ once or twice a day
   b. _____ several times a day
   c. ______ once or twice a week
   d. _____ once or twice a month
   e. _____ rarely
4.3 Why did you stop using it?
   a. _____ It disappeared
   b. _____ It didn’t serve enough of a purpose for me
   c. _____ No room on my phone
   d. _____ I found a better app to replace it
   e. _____ My needs changed
   f. _____ It wasn’t user-friendly or was unappealing
   g. _____ I figured out other ways to get information I need

**Part III: Scenarios**

**Please read this aloud first:** *In this final section of our interview together, I’d like to present you with a few possible scenarios. I’d like you to imagine yourself in these scenarios and to choose the answer that best fits your experiences and perspectives. Once again, there are no right or wrong answer; we are just interested in learning about your impressions and personal preferences. I’m happy to read the scenario and the choices more than once, so just ask.*

**Scenario 1:** Imagine you could design your dream study space for quiet individual study. Which of the following elements would you most like to see?
   a. ______ A quiet little nook that no one knows about.
b. ______ Lots of natural light.

c. ______ A nice big table and a lot of space to stretch out.

d. ______ A good amount of background hum and bustle to keep you focused.

Scenario 2: Imagine you have an interview for a summer internship at the Blueger Building in downtown Northampton tomorrow morning. You’ve never been there before, and you do not know where it is located.

2A. Which of the following choices best describes the next step you’d take?

______ I’d consult the map graphic available on the Blueger Building’s website.

______ I’d use a GPS-based app like Google Maps.

______ I’d email the person with whom the interview is scheduled to ask for directions.

______ I’d call the administrative assistant in the office to ask for directions.

______ I’d ask (choose one):

______ a Friend   ______ my Big sib   ______ my Roommate

______ a Classmate   ______ a Person on street

If you’d ask one of these people, would you do so (choose one):

______ by text   ______ in person   ______ by phone
2.E. What kind of information do you need before you head to the Blueger Building for your interview?
   a. _____ I just need to know the general vicinity and I can figure things out or ask from there.
   b. _____ I need a lot of details – I want to know details like what the building look like, what the closest intersection is, what landmarks are close, etc.

2.F. Once you are on your way with sufficient information about your destination and it’s time to head to your interview, which of the following best describes your approach?
   _____ I head out in the general direction I learned about from consulting maps or other people.
   _____ I keep my phone in my hand with a map turned on to guide me.
   _____ I keep in touch with someone who knows the way by voice/text.
   _____ I look for signs and landmarks.

Scenario 3
You need a place to study between classes and Neilson is now just a big hole in the ground. Would you:
   _____ Find an empty classroom?
   _____ Sit in the hallway?
   _____ If the weather is nice, sit outside? If Yes ⇒ Where?
   ____
   _____ Go to a computer lab
   _____ Go back to your room
   _____ Go to the CC
   _____ Go to a dining hall
   _____ Go to Hillyer Library
   _____ Go to the Josten Library
   _____ Other (specify: ____________________________ )
Part IV: Demographics

Please read this aloud first: Before we conclude, I’d just like to ask you a few quick demographic questions, if you don’t mind. You can feel free to skip any question you’d like. We hope that these answers will help us to make better sense of the patterns we see in our data.

1. When do you expect to graduate from Smith College?
   a) This spring
   b) 18J (after completing Fall 2017 semester)
   c) Spring 18
   d) 19J (after completing Fall 2018 semester)
   e) Spring 19
   f) 20J (after completing Fall 2019 semester)
   g) Spring 20
   h) Other

2. What is(are) your major(s)?
   a) Major 1: _________________________________
   b) Major 2: _________________________________

3. Where do you live while you are a Smith student?
   a) I live on campus: __________________________
   b) I live off campus: __________________________
Focus Group Discussion Guide

To do list:
- Pick up snacks for tomorrow
- Pick up cameras
- Bring papers and pencils for tomorrow
- Print participant consent forms (2 per participant)

A few tips:

Use people’s names when you call on them.

Try to avoid asking why or why not follow ups – ask them could you tell us more? If everyone agrees on something dig into and find out why individuals feel/think the way they do. Same if they disagree.

If someone is difficult, don’t let that rattle you – be very cool and calm and move on.

If a particular topic is taking up a lot of time – sum up what you hear and move on.

Introduction:

Consent forms & explanations: 5min

HANDOUT: Consent Form, Name Paper and Blank Sheet of Paper

Hello everyone,

Welcome! Our names are XXXX and XXXX and we are students in ANT 200 and we will be moderating this focus group. Everyone in room introduces themselves as well.

We want to thank you all for taking the time to come out today.

Before we get started we will need your written consent to participate in the focus group. The form that is being handed out explains the details of our project and we ask that you read these and if you wish to continue, that you sign both copies and return one copy to us.

(handing out forms)

Note that there are three places to sign – please read and sign these as indicated on the form. We are videotaping the session but the tape will only be viewed by members of the class and our professors. None of the information you provide today will be linked to you – it will be kept confidential.

In addition, we want to establish some guidelines for our discussion today:

No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view
We're video recording, one person speaking at a time
You don't need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others
share their views

Rules for cellular phones and pagers if applicable. For example: We ask that you turn off your phones or pagers. If you cannot and if you must respond to a call, please do so as quietly as possible and rejoin us as quickly as you can. DECIDE WHICH ONE

My (our) role as moderator will be to guide the discussion

We hope you will talk to each other

We are also passing around paper for you to write your name on and fold in half so we can all see each other’s names. We are also handing out another blank piece of paper for you to jot ideas down on.

Someone collect forms – Name:

As the consent forms explained, today’s discussion will be about a new app for finding study spaces. As you all know, Neilson will be closing for the next three years and we will be losing a lot of study spaces. The College has worked with a consulting firm to design a digital wayfinding application that will allow Smithies to find and locate study spaces. The purpose of this focus group is to gain insight from you all, members of the Smith community about the app. In the first part of this discussion we want your help with naming the app. Then we will ask you what kinds of features might be useful to you, then we will take a five minute break for snacks/ice cream and we will end the session talking about ideas for a rolling out the app and a goodbye party for Neilson so we can make recommendations to the administration and library staff.

Warm Up Question: So could we go around the table and tell us your name and which house you live in?

Section 1: name & branding 10 min

Speaker:
Scribe:
Whiteboard

We are looking to provide the library and administration with a name for this app and we would like your help. On the board, XXX is writing the three possibilities for the app’s name. Write them across not in a list: SmithScape, StudySmith, SmithSpread

Please take a look at these and write down your top choice. Give a few minutes for this

Ok, let’s just quickly go around the table and get a sense of people’s choices…. 
THEN: Call people by name.

Ask them - in a more freeform discussion

What do you like best about XXXX (their choice)?

What do like least about XXXX?

Why does XXXX appeal to you? What kinds of things does it make you think of?

Why does XXXX not appeal to you? What kinds things does it make you think of?

When we say: SmithScape what images do you see? Do the same with the other names

You can say things, based on what they write, etc, like: It seems like everyone agrees that StudySmith is not appealing – why is that? Or it could be the opposite – everyone agrees that they like StudySmith the best. Either way, sum up a bit what you hear and use that to generate discussion.

Wrap up this section by asking everyone: Could you write on the piece of paper, your first and second choice names?

Ok, Before we move on to the next topic for discussion – is there anything else you would like to tell us about the name of the app?

Section 2: features & future 10 min

Speaker:
Whiteboard:
Scribe:

PART A:

Before we talk about the app we are working with, we would like to ask you to think back to the last app you downloaded….How did you learn about it? Are you still using it? (What features worked for you? What didn’t?)

Have you used any apps at Smith? Discuss with them what made them use or not? Using now? etc.

Can introduce the Web version of app, since it’s almost finished – put on screen.

Now we would like to introduce you to the beta version of the app – it is still a work in progress but most of what you see is how the app will look/work. We can’t change much about this but we would like your input on some of the features that the app could have and about what we might include in future versions of it.

TURN ON PROJECTOR

Show app – 1-2 minutes go through how it works – use an example: I want to study for a big exam and I need a quiet space – here is how I could use the app to find this space:…..
So, what are your first impressions? *Probe questions:* Could you tell us more about XXXX? Then call on others. XXXX what do you think about the app?

We know you have just been introduced to this app but what features do you like best? *Prompt them if necessary.*

If you could tell the developers, what feature(s) do you think is(are) missing? *You can list them on the board as they tell you– check in/out, reserve,*

Is this an app you would consider using? What is appealing about it? What is not?

On the paper, write down three words you would use to describe this app/web page?

Ok, so I am hearing that you would like: SUM UP the Conversation (as an example) XXXX features if we can add to the app? Is there anything else?

Let’s take a brief break and get some snacks, then we will talk about rolling out the app and saying goodbye to Neilson!

**Break - 5min food service**

**Section 3: rollout 10 min**

Speaker:
Whiteboard:
Scribe:

We are working to figure out the best way to get the word out about the app so we would like to ask you a few questions about how you find out about things on campus.

There are flyers all around campus. Can you think back to one you have seen recently? Why did it get your attention?
If none, what advertising has gotten your attention on campus? Big posters in CC? Online announcements? Emails? House announcements?

What about social media? Which websites do you go to get information? Shares from your friends? Or official account?

What might motivate you most to download an app? Free lemonade in the CC, a free cookie, or XXX?

Are there other ways you think the app could be marketed to students?
We are thinking that one way to both say goodbye to Neilson and to introduce the new app would be to have a farewell party in Neilson. We would like to hear your thoughts on what would make you want to attend?

*If silence...wait....but if more silence....* Have you been to Night at Your Museum? Other parties you all know about that we don’t – list here.

Are there any ways you might want to say goodbye to Neilson? Chalking? Writing messages on walls? Mementos – your photo with Neilson, etc.

*Sum Up What You have Heard*

**Conclusion: Other questions 5 min**
Speaker:
Whiteboard:
Scribe:

We want to thank you for helping us with this project. Your ideas and suggestions will be used to make recommendations to the administration and library about the app and the goodbye party.

Before we end though, does anyone want to add anything?

Would you be interested in talking more about this project? If you are, could you provide your name and email on the paper you were using during the session?

Could you also please pass in the papers we used today?

Thank you so much!! Please take some more snacks before you leave.
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: USERS

Campus Spaces and Experiences
1. What makes Smith unique? What defines the Smith experience for you?
2. How would you describe “Smith culture” to someone unfamiliar with the campus and its students? What are some defining aspects of this community?
3. How would you describe its spaces? What would you define as the center of campus?
4. What colors do you associate with your Smith experience?
5. The first time you arrived at Smith (for a campus tour, accepted students weekend, etc) what is the first thing that you noticed that made you think you’d really arrived here at Smith?

Study Cultures and Habits
1. What are the first three places you think of when planning to study?
2. What kinds of studying do you do in these spaces? Prompts – writing, reading, math problems?
3. When do you like to study alone? With others?
4. Describe your perfect studying situation (where would you go? With whom? What is the atmosphere like? Who would be there? How is the space arranged? What kind of equipment is available? How is the space furnished?)

Technology
1. Do you download and use apps? If so, why? Why are they appealing or useful to you?
2. Think about some of the apps you’ve downloaded recently: Why do you choose to download a particular app? Which apps do you use most frequently and why? Are there any apps that you have downloaded and don’t use or that you’ve removed?
3. Could you show me one of your favorite apps? What do you like about it? How did you learn about it?
4. How do you learn about new apps? (you might offer some prompts: friends, relatives (which ones), housemates, advertisements, while using other apps, etc.)
5. If you could have an app that helped you on campus - what it would do?
6. What is the biggest problem/obstacle that you deal with in your daily life at Smith? What kind of technology might help you? (Move this to later? Trying to ask similar question to above)

Background
1. How long have you been at Smith?
2. What house do you live in?
3. What campus groups or orgs are you a part of?
4. What is your major?
5. Where is home? What was your educational background before you came to Smith?
6. How would you describe your experience at Smith thus far?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - ADMINISTRATORS/CREATORS**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: DESIGNERS**

1. For non-Smith interviews: What is your affiliation with Smith? Have you worked with Smith staff on other projects?
2. For Smith interviewees: What is your position here at Smith? How long have you worked here?
3. Do you a play a role in the current wayfinding app development process? If so, can you explain to me what that role has been?
4. What do you think students need to find good study spaces?
5. In your opinion, what role does technology play in ________? (solving social problems? Enhancing educational pursuits? Contemporary college students’ lives?)
6. Do you download and use apps? If so, why and what kinds? Why are they appealing or useful to you?
7. In your opinion, what role might a wayfinding app play in improving students’ experiences during (and perhaps beyond?) the Neilson Transition
8. What features might you like to see as part of this app? What features do you think students would like to see?
9. What challenges do you foresee in implementing this app?
10. What possibilities might this app open up? If we think about this app as an experiment or a starting point, where else might it lead us?
11. Is there anything else you think I should know?
Title of Study:

Investigator(s):

Caroline Melly, PhD  
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Smith College

Suzanne Gottschang, PhD  
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Introduction

• You are being asked to be in a research study of the relationship between space, community making, study habits, and technology on Smith’s campus. This research is aimed at helping to design, market, and integrate a digital wayfinding application for use by Smith College students looking to locate study space on campus.

• You were selected as a possible participant because you are either a potential user of this technology or you may have insight into the design or management of this technology.

• We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to aid in the design, marketing, and integration of a digital wayfinding app that is both culturally meaningful and sustainable for Smith students. The summer of 2017 marks the beginning of the so-called "Neilson Transition" on Smith College's campus. During this time, Neilson Library, Smith's main library and a critical social and scholarly hub for students, will be vacated and shuttered in anticipation of a major renovation and reconstruction project that is slated to last for three years. This will be a time of great upheaval for students, faculty, and staff alike. One particularly acute effect of this project will be on student study space, as Neilson is perhaps the most important location for both individual and group study. Library administrators are currently hard at work configuring new study spaces and staking out and mapping existing locations. To make these study space possibilities visible and accessible to students, the library has partnered with an external IT firm (Common Media) and has formed a steering committee to shape and pilot a digital wayfinding application (an "app" for phone or computer) built on an existing model that is used at the University of Washington in Seattle. This app will allow students to visualize, compare, and reserve a wide range of study spaces on campus. Library staff hope that it will help students to navigate a fragmented and shifting campus landscape but also that it might become a culturally integrated and useful tool for students even after the renovation is complete.

This study employs ethnographic methods--including participant observation, archival methods, focus groups, and interviewing--to better understand how and where students study, how they understand and navigate campus space, how and when they use technology (and when they abandon it), and how this particular technological innovation might shape study practices, conceptions of space and place, and the making of community at Smith.

Ultimately, this research will be used to inform the design, marketing, and roll-out of the wayfinding app. Findings from this research may also be presented as a paper or published as an article on the relationship between technology, community, and space.
Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: You will be asked to participate in an open interview that will focus on the topics outlined above. This interview should last about a half hour and will be conducted in a comfortable neutral location. You may be contacted for a follow-up interview.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- It is possible (though unlikely) that some of the questions may make you uncomfortable or distressed. If this is the case, you are welcome to skip a question, to take a break, or to withdraw from the study for any reason.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The study carries no direct benefit for participants.
- However, this study will give students the opportunity to learn how to gather and analyze ethnographic research for the purpose of a real-life design problem.
- Moreover, this project will aid in the development of a wayfinding app that will help students to navigate a fragmented and shifting campus landscape. This app will help build a sense of community during this transition time.
- Finally, this research can also contribute to our understanding about the ways in which variously positioned stakeholders adopt, use, and reshape technologies. It will offer insight into how communities are shaped by digital technologies and how those technologies, in turn, shape communities.

Confidentiality [choose one of the following]

- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. Transcriptions of all written/audio/video notes will be saved to a digitally encrypted, password protected file for use by the students on the team. All paper documents will be destroyed as soon as a digital, password-protected copy is completed. Digital files will be stored in password-protected documents on a dedicated Slack (slack.com) site that is password protected and limited to the students/faculty/staff on the project team.
- We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments

- You will not receive payment for your participation in this study.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the researcher not use any of your study material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Caroline Melly at cmelly@smith.edu or by telephone at 413-585-3683. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you
may contact Nnamdi Pole, Chair of the Smith College Institutional Review Board at (413) 585-3936.

- If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to Nnamdi Pole at the number above. Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can be found on the IRB website at www.smith.edu/irb/compliance.htm

**Consent**

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.

Name of Participant (print): ____________________________

Signature of Participant: ____________________________ Date: ___________

Signature of Investigator(s): __________________________ Date: ___________

[if using audio or video recording, use this section for signatures:]

1. I agree to be [audio or video] taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): ____________________________

Signature of Participant: ____________________________ Date: ___________

Signature of Investigator(s): __________________________ Date: ___________

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): ____________________________

Signature of Participant: ____________________________ Date: ___________

Signature of Investigator(s): __________________________ Date: ___________
Sample Logos & Posters

- **Why the Grecourt Gates?**
  - We should try to use an icon that is more relatable to location, space, and studying at Smith College
- **Colors are quite strange, the background is quite off putting**
  - Should use Smith Colors, blue, gold, and white
  - Blue background with white or gold lines
  - This logo is very similar to the new Instagram logo which was not well received (see below)

  ![Instagram Logo](image)

  - Funky color gradient with graphic white lines would be something to stay away from
- A lot of empty space around the orange circle itself
- Some suggested logo color schemes below

![Logo Suggestion 1](image)   ![Logo Suggestion 2](image)
POSTER

- Colors are off especially the green
  - Something more vivid and eye catching
- Dots are not a good idea but the arrow/compass icon is good
- Where will I Study font should be bolder and thicker
  - Should be changed to “Where will you study”
- The hand holding the iPhone it looks fake
- The iPhone itself looks like an iPod/outdated
- We think that the website map image was a good idea
WHERE WILL YOU STUDY WHEN NEILSON LIBRARY CLOSES?

Coming soon
SMITHSCAPE
a studyspace location app

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call: 483.585.2910
Email: libraryhelp@smith.edu
Visit: any library location to talk with staff
WHERE WILL YOU STUDY?

WHEN NEILSON LIBRARY CLOSES

MORE INFO?
CALL 413.585.2910
EMAIL LIBRARYHELP@SMITH.EDU
VISIT WWW.SMITH.EDU/LIBRARY
SMITHSCAPE PRESENTS

NEED A STUDY SPACE?

MORE INFO?
CALL 413.585.2910
EMAIL LIBRARYHELP@SMITH.EDU
VISIT WWW.SMITH.EDU/LIBRARY
NEED A STUDY SPACE?

FIND IT NOW ON SMITHSCAPE

MORE INFO?
CALL 413.585.2910
EMAIL libraryhelp@smith.edu
VISIT any library location and talk with staff www.smith.edu/library
SmithScape
a study space locating app
when Neilson closes
coming soon

Find your new studying spaces
Build your new studying habits
on Smith Campus

for more information
call
email
visit
SmithScape
a study space locating app when Neilson closes
coming soon

Find your new studying spaces
Build your new studying habits
on Smith Campus

for more information
call
email
visit
lib icons here etc
**Progressive Party Proposal**

**Introduction**

As a part of the marketing plan we wanted to raise awareness of the closing of Neilson, to introduce SmithScape to the Smith community, and to demonstrate that the administration acknowledged the unsettled emotions of students regarding Neilson closing. In order to address all three of these issues, we suggested to hold a Neilson Goodbye Party that would provide an opportunity for students to say goodbye to the main library that has been central to their lives on campus. Below is our proposal for the Neilson Party.

Based on our research data, we believe that it is important to celebrate the final days of Neilson by having a goodbye party as a student body. It will be an opportunity for students to party, dance, eat, socialize, and enjoy the space in Neilson, a place that is typically associated with stress, homework, and academic life. The final party will recognize the disturbed and unsettled emotions that students have expressed about Neilson closing, the students’ ownership of the library itself, and their successful academic accomplishment in this school year.

**Planning Details**

*Date:* 5/4/17, after the end of year carnival  
*Sponsors:* Neilson Library Committee and the Digital Wayfinding Steering Committee, and possibly SGA.  
*Funding:* We are unsure about the estimated cost of the party, but we need funding for food, t-shirts, stickers, pens, stamps, pamphlets, and other misc. items  
*Theme:* Pajama Party  
*Locations & Activities:*  
- From Chapin Lawn to Neilson, and can have simultaneous activities in other three libraries.  
- Collect stickers/stamps from Chapin Lawn, Neilson, Hillyer, Young, and Josten to get certain souvenirs  
- In the reading room: House competition - Sign in at the reading room (Top three houses get prices) and offer food.  
- Cookies, chocolate, cupcakes
• Cotton candy machine
• Popcorn candy machine
• Beverages: chocolate, coffee, cider
• In the browsing room: dance room with WOZQ DJing
• The sofa area in front of Burack’s collection
• Scavenger hunt in all libraries (Neilson, Hillyer, Young, and Josten)
• Decoration on check-out cards
• Pin making and giving out free gifts (stickers, pens, stamps)
• Book finding in the specified area
• Ping-pong tables, bowling, raffle
• The lawn outside Neilson
• Cheap-way paintball/Tie dye, white shirts
• Ping-pong tables, bowling, raffle

**Concluding Remarks**

The party itself will be a good marketing strategy to introduce the new wayfinding app that will help the student navigate campus for study spaces. Among the list of suggested activities, we can simultaneously promote the app as the purpose of this party is to recognize that Neilson is closing but as well as providing a solution (SmithScape) to this predicament. If the party is thrown by the SGA in collaboration with the library staff there will be more exposure of the app itself to the student body.

The party can also use hashtags such as #NeilsonReborn, #NeilsonRevival, or #GoodbyeNeilson to increase student participation through social media. For instance, we can start an Instagram competition where students can submit pictures related to the closing and revival of Neilson. Since social media has been a big part of student lives, it is important to incorporate social media as a marketing strategy to constantly interact with students and increase their interests in the project.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


https://www.smith.edu/news/maya-lin-shares-design-for-new-neilson-library/

https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/spacescout/