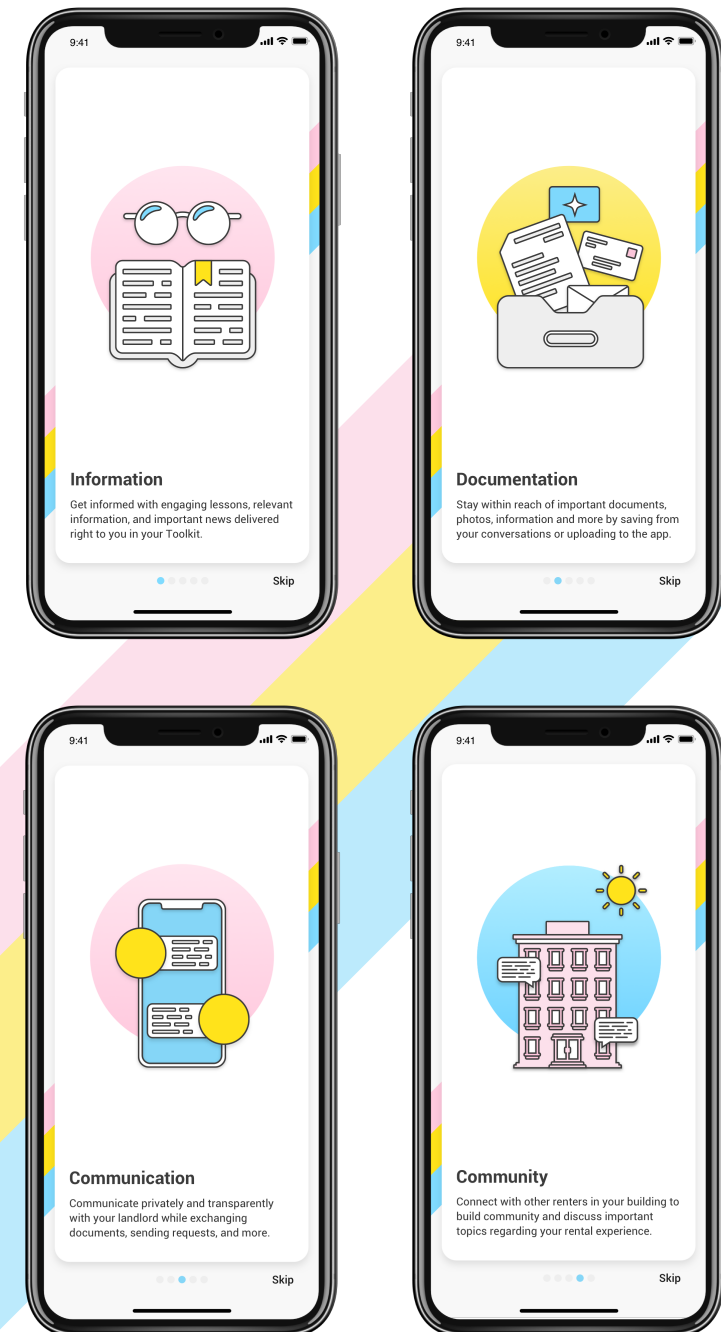# Rentability

table of contents

overview

With over half of the population of Vancouver being renters, and with a rental vacancy rate of only 0.7%, our project began by asking the question: **How can we help these renters who are so often put into vulnerable situations because of the reality of the rental market?**

Our solution to this question was to develop Rentability, a digital service that supports renters through their entire rental experience. To do so, Rentability brings together four key service areas – **Information, Documentation, Communication, and Community**.

The integration of these services allows users to conveniently learn about rental topics, manage important documents, communicate with both landlords and other renters, and more, all in one place. Rentability not only makes the delivery of information more personally relevant and engaging, but also streamlines existing processes through its feature areas. Because of this, we see Rentability as a service that renters can engage with consistently throughout the course of their rental journey, while also meeting key goals of the **Housing Vancouver Strategy**.

Information

Get informed with engaging lessons, relevant information, and important news delivered right to you in your Toolkit.

Skip

Documentation

Stay within reach of important documents, photos, information and more by saving from your conversations or uploading to the app.

Skip

Communication

Communicate privately and transparently with your landlord while exchanging documents, sending requests, and more.

Skip

Community

Connect with other renters in your building to build community and discuss important topics regarding your rental experience.

Skip

team

Sean Burris

Health Sciences,
Arts @ SFU

Jeffrey Baldwin

Interactive Arts &
Technology @ SFU

Emily Paterson

Political Science &
Urban Studies @ UBC

Selina Tang

Health Sciences,
Sciences @ SFU

the beginning & initial problem statements

With two of our team members being renters, we were interested in the rental issues in Vancouver. We began by conducting some **secondary research** online about the issues renters face in our city, and did activities like the **5 Why's** to try to get to the bottom of these issues. We then combined those results with our own experiences – and assumptions – to create an **initial problem statement**.

" *Young adults face insecure living arrangements and lack of agency in rental space, because of availability, vacancy rates, costs, lack of government support, landlord accountability, credentials, and profiling.* "

Our first problem statement admittedly had some confusing language, and was definitely hard to act on. So, through continued research and discussion, we identified several aspects of the rental experience where we believed we may have the opportunity to make a difference, and framed these into a new, **more actionable problem statement**.

" *Young adult renters need betters ways to effectively navigate available rental space, ensure landlord credibility and accountability, learn about the rental process and renters' rights, and challenge rent increases, because they struggle to stay in Vancouver.* "

The needs we identified here were largely assumptions, but they gave us an idea of what kind of questions we wanted to ask going forward in our interviews with renters and experts.
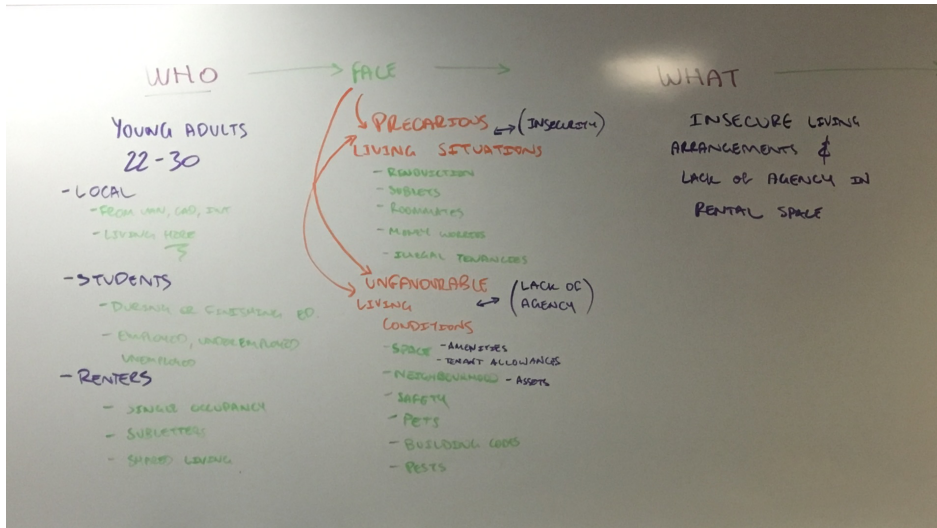
qualitative research

To get a better understanding of the issues renters face, we created a qualitative questionnaire and conducted **10 interviews with young adult renters**. This included several students, but also working professionals and even a renter at the very bottom end of the market to get a broad range of perspectives.

Each interview lasted about **45 minutes**, and after gathering some demographic information, we focused on **eliciting stories** about each interviewee's rental experiences to gather interesting insights.

A few of these **insights** that stuck with us moving forward were:

- Most rental rights information is acquired through friends and their experiences as it comes, rather than in a proactive manner.
- Renters would approach family and friends first for advice before consulting online services.
- Communication can be a big issue when landlords and tenants don't speak the same language – Same language is preferred.

We also reached out to a number of **experts** and had the opportunity to speak with two of them.

Through talking with **Andrew Sakamoto**, we learned about the struggles TRAC, an information resource for renters, has had in reaching renters and fully servicing their needs.

We also spoke with **Ideen R.**, a business owner and landlord in Vancouver. Ideen reiterated that many renters, as well as landlords, aren't well informed about their respective rights and responsibilities. He also indicated that he as a landlord would be interested in a service that streamlined the renting process in Vancouver.

10 interviews with renters

goal

eliciting stories

45 minutes per interview
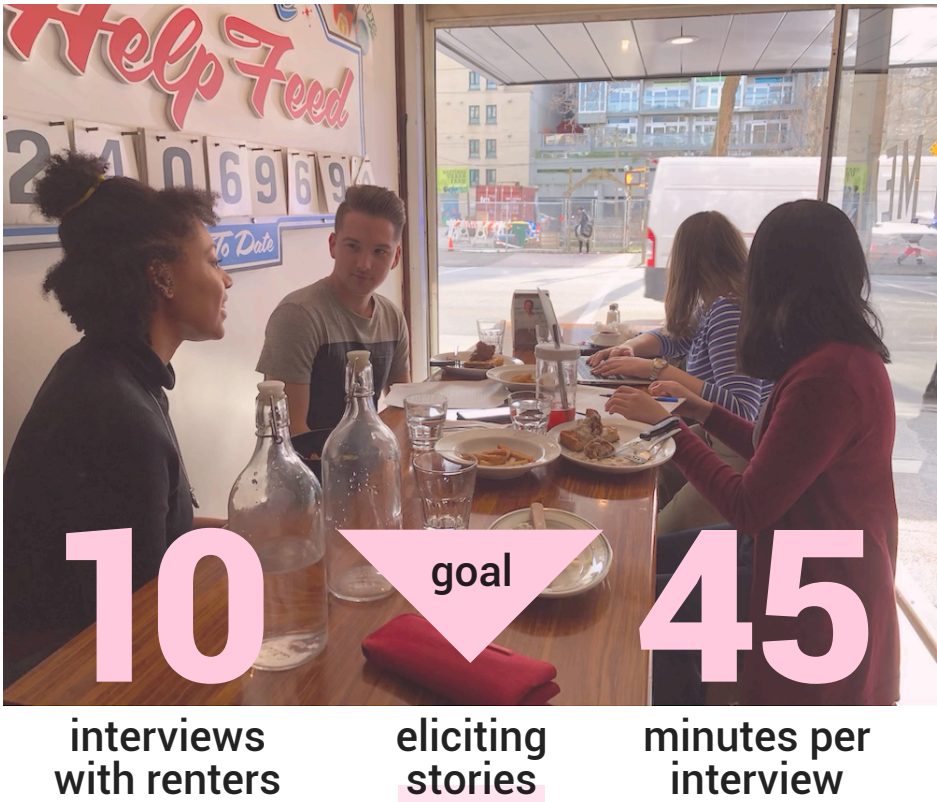
Andrew Sakamoto

Executive Director, Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC)

Ideen R.

Business Owner & Landlord

quantitative research

While conducting interviews, we also created an **online questionnaire** to gather quantitative data from a greater number of renters. Following demographic and general living situation questions, respondents were asked to respond on a scale of 1–5 to ten questions on a variety of rental topics.

We received over **110 responses**, with a good mix of respondents coming from different age, educational status, income, and living situation groups.

Looking at the simple data, a few things stood out:

- The average renter felt only somewhat informed about their rights as a tenant.
- Confidence about being able to continue living in Vancouver was not something that many renters had.
- While some renters were quite worried about their landlord violating their rights, it wasn't a big worry for most.
- While few renters felt uninformed about their lease, the highest number felt only somewhat informed.

While this information was useful, it wasn't particularly surprising, and worked to reinforce our initial assumptions. We were curious if we could uncover more surprising results if we cross-referenced the scaled question data with different demographics, which would show us if certain groups responded differently to certain questions.
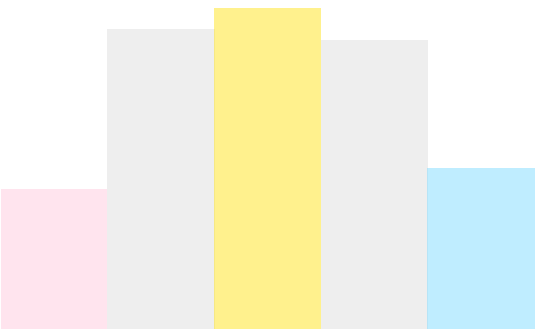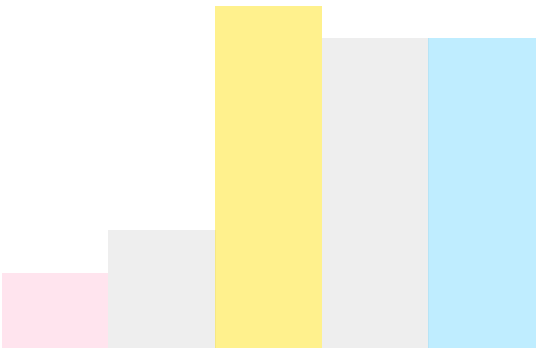
How informed do you feel about your rights as a tenant?

How confindent are you that you will be able to stay in Van. for the foreseeable future?
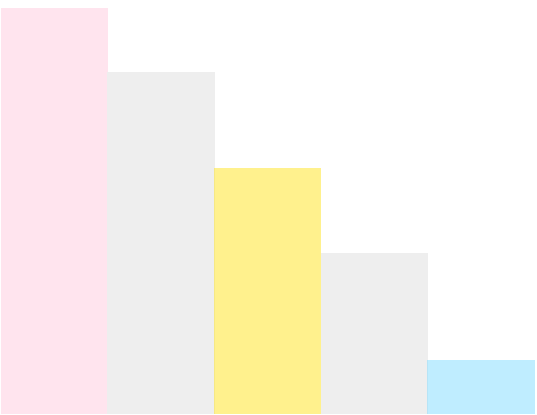
How worried are you that your current landlord may attempt to violate your rights as a tenant?

How familiar do you feel with the terms of your lease?

Not at all   Neutral   Extremely

activity – defining our audience

Through analyzing the questionnaire data, we identified various demographic groups who responded differently enough from the average for us to take note.

Those making over $60K, spending less than 30% of their income on rent, and who signed a lease were predictably **more comfortable** in their rental situation.

On the other hand, we identified **five demographics** who appeared **less secure** about their rental situation based on the average response of each group:

- Those who make **$10K–$40K** (46% of respondents)
- Those who work **over 40 hours** per week (16% of respondents)
- Those who **sublet** (24% of resondents)
- Those who **live alone** (21% of respondents)
- Those with an income-to-rent ratio **over 40%** (25% of respondents)

Overall, a high income-to-rent ratio was the greatest indicator of insecurity in housing. Among these groups, the **biggest insecurities** were regarding:

- Their current landlord attempting to violate their rights
- Being forced to leave their unit
- Not being informed about their rights as a tenant

At this point, we believed our goal would be to create a solution that worked for, and addressed the needs of, these more vulnerable groups. We combined this information with our other research learnings and created a **new problem statement** which we took into the midpoint (next page).
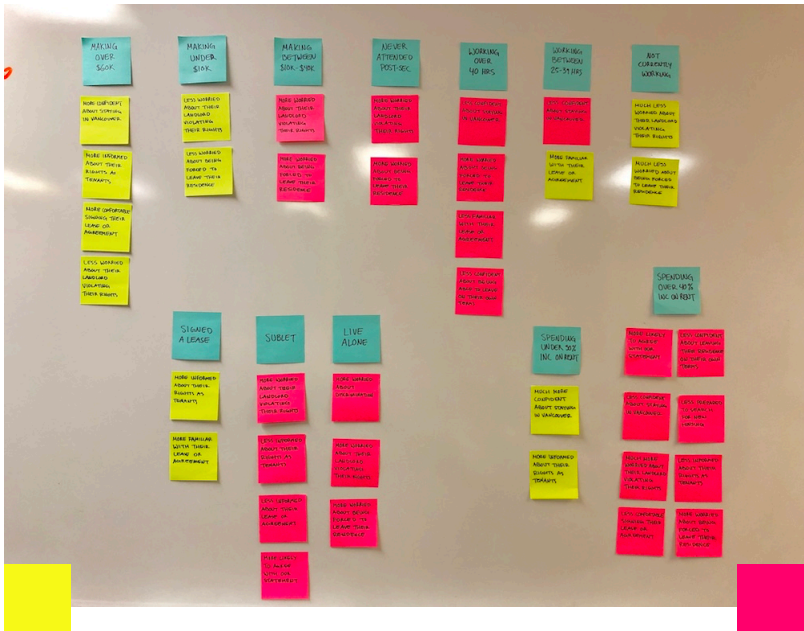
Less insecurity   Greater insecurity

8
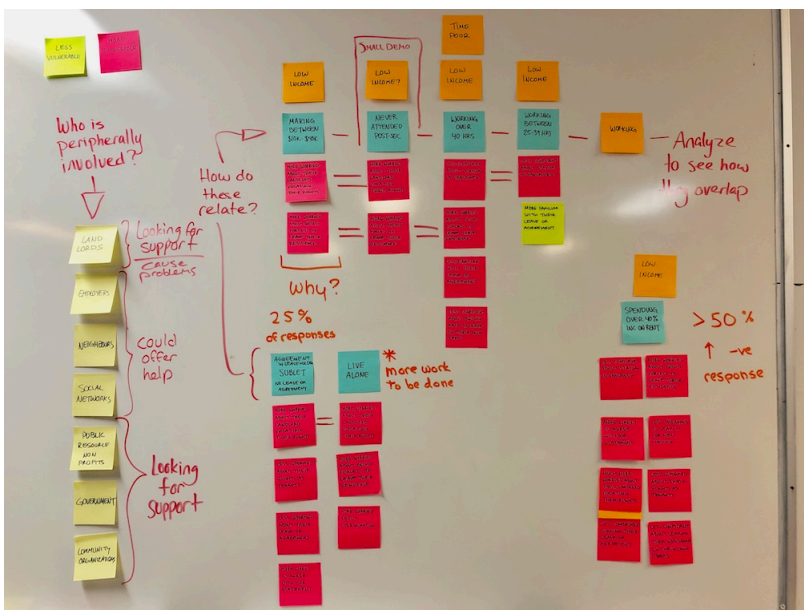
midpoint problem statement & directions

Our updated problem statement incorporated our learnings from our research and our audience-defining exercise. We believed a very specific problem statement, in contrast to our earlier ones, would help us narrow our scope and ideate a more meaningful solution within those constraints. It read:

> *Young-adult renters – especially those who are **working**, **low-income**, or **time-poor** – need a better way to address their insecurities regarding:*
>
> *• Being informed about their **rights as tenants**, when they are being violated, and what to do;*
>
> *• Being forced to **leave their residence**;*
>
> *• And not being prepared to **search** for new housing;*
>
> *Because the current offerings are **not engaging** and do not encourage **proactive learning**.*

While this problem statement was well informed by our research, we would later realize that it was **too long and specific** with what it was hoping to achieve. Still, it did influence our **initial idea directions** for the midpoint presentation. We explored ideas along three paths: a **physical product**, a **digital service**, and a **social service**.

In addition to our problem statement, we developed a set of **guiding principles** to keep in mind while we developed ideas. We wanted our solutions to:

- Be **preventative**
- Be **time-sensitive**
- Establish **connections**
- Consider the **user's journey** over a long term
- Be **sufficiently different** from existing products and services

Physical Product

A toolkit that could be delivered to renters, containing a variety of resources and engaging activities that they could interact with and learn from.

Digital Service

An online platform to support renters and help them learn about their rights in an engaging way that would encourage proactive learning.

Social Service

A pop-up booth at community events or high-traffic areas to help inform renters of their rights and responsibilities and direct them to existing resources.

midpoint realignment

Following the midpoint presentation, we received some important feedback that resulted in us completely recreating our problem statement. The first piece of feedback was that we had strayed too far from **City goals**. We had the chance to speak with two employees from the City of Vancouver, and they suggested to look into the **Housing Vancouver Strategy**. In *Chapter 8: Supporting Renters*, we learned that the City was actually interested in developing some sort of **toolkit to support renters**.

We also realized that we needed to further **refine and simplify our problem statement** in response to the feedback we received. In doing so, we believed it was important to bring the focus of the problem statement back to the course goals of **resiliency** and **community**, reference how we wanted to **differentiate** from existing services through **interactivity**, and in general make our problem statement **less prescriptive** and more open for a variety of solutions.

Final problem statement goals:

+
Bring back resiliency and community

Reference differentiation

Make less prescriptive and more open

HOUSING VANCOUVER STRATEGY

Strategy 1: Create and enhance community-based supports for renters in Vancouver

KEY ACTIONS:

- Develop a tool kit to enhance supports for renters in their neighborhoods and the capacity of local legal assistance agencies and community-based organizations

Housing Vancouver Strategy
Chapter 8: Supporting Renters

final problem statement

" The City of Vancouver needs to support renters in a way that is more engaging and interactive because existing resources fail to do so and do not actively build resiliency and community. "

ideation & new directions

Our final problem statement refocused us on **engagement and interactivity** as a way to differentiate. We began our ideation by using the **SCAMPER** method to see how we would could build upon existing services while integrating interactivity.

We ideated a greater number of solutions, which resulted in more **novel ideas**. These included, for example, a rental information game that was incentivized with monetary prizes. However, we chose to move beyond these ideas by not focusing so heavily on novelty in a solution, but rather on **optimization** of existing services.

We each took some time to develop ideas on our own. When we reconvened, we found that our ideas generally fell into **four service categories**. We named these categories and defined them as:

Information

A more interactive and engaging way to learn important information for tenants.
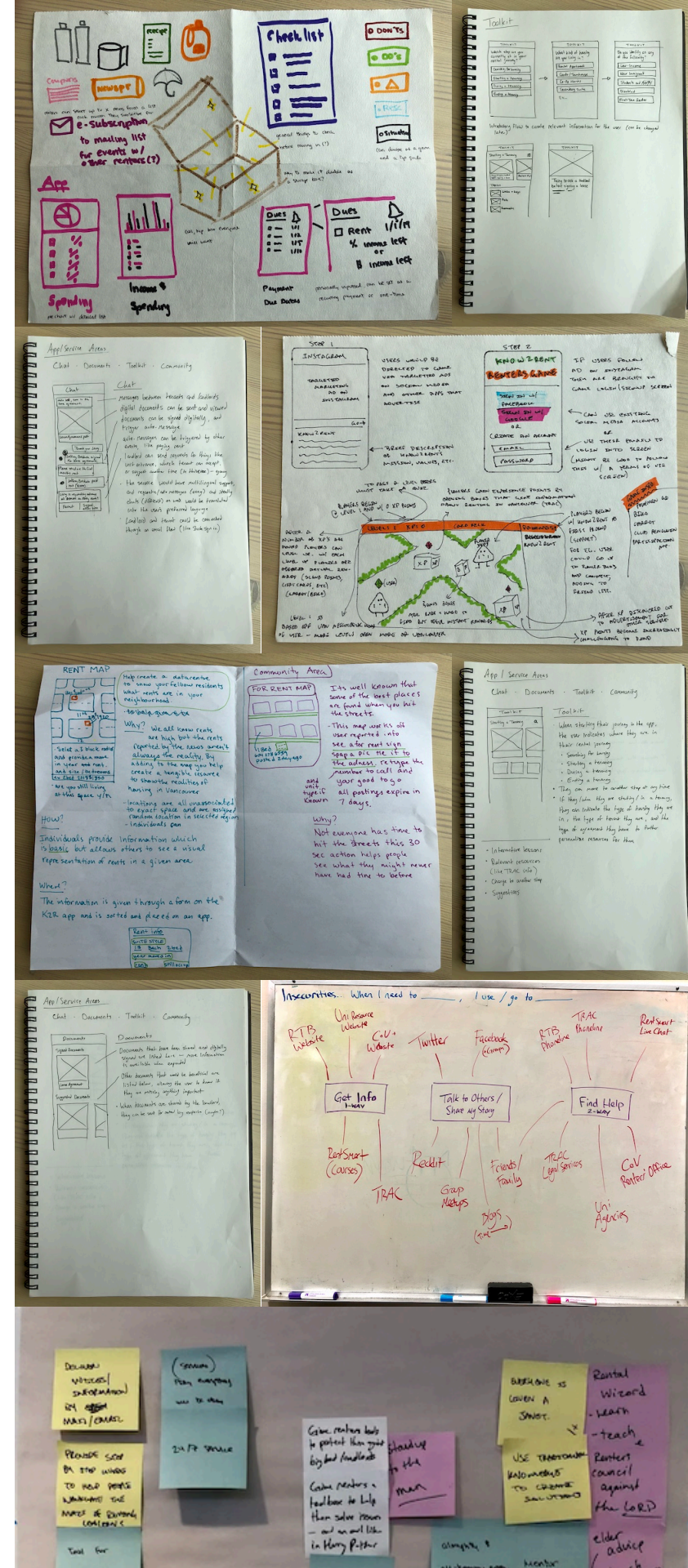
Documentation

A better way to store and review important documents and more.

Communication

A better way for renters and landlords to communicate.

Community

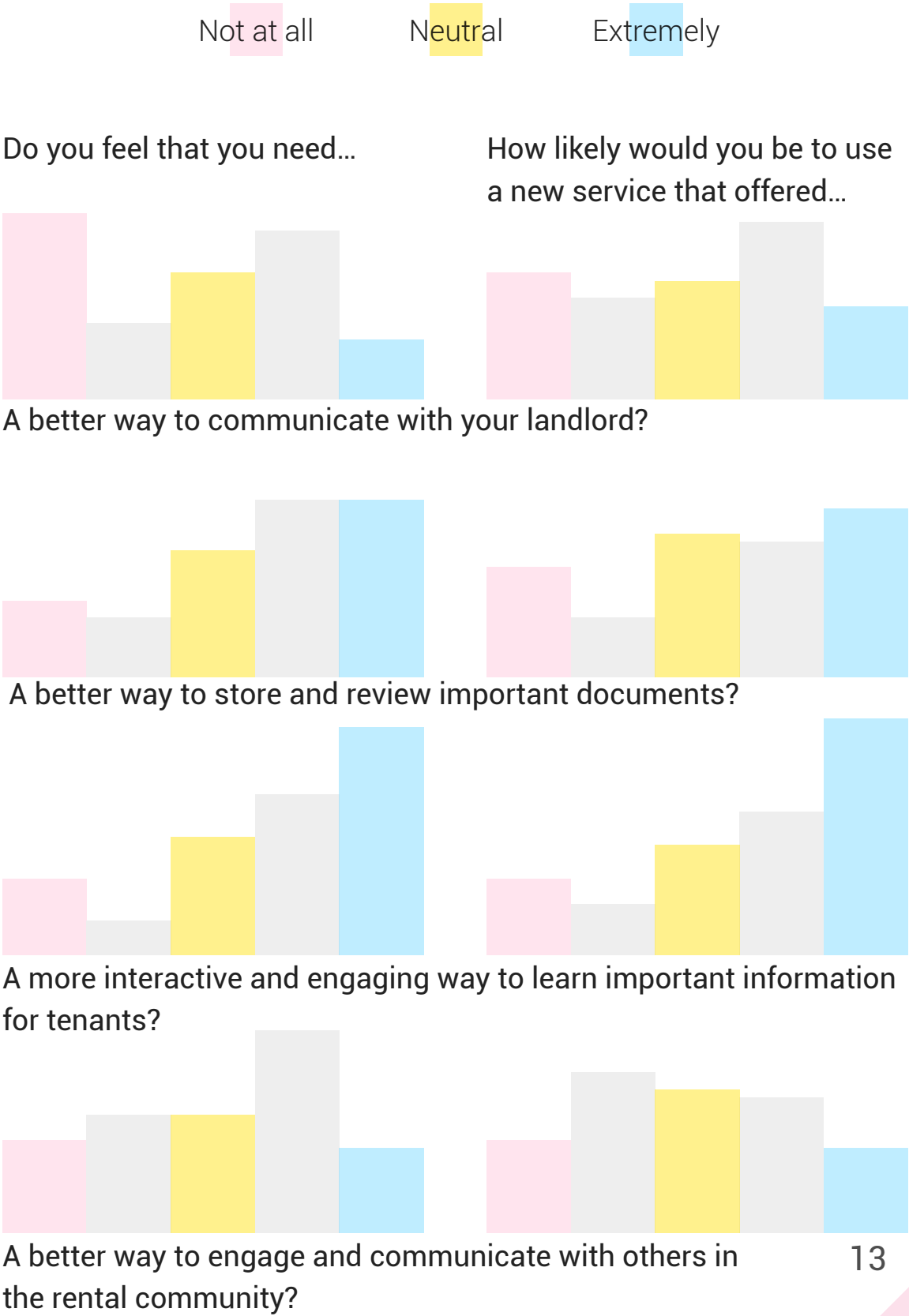A better way to engage and communicate with others in the rental community.

quantitative feedback

With these four directions in mind, we created a second **online questionnaire** to gauge **need and interest** in each of the directions. We also asked respondents to rank feature ideas within each direction, as well as to rank the four directions overall at the end.

Over **70 people** responded, and the respondents felt that they needed "*a more interactive and engaging way to learn relevant and important information for tenants*" most. They also indicated that they would be more likely to use a service that provided that value than any of the other three.

This indicated to us that **information** should be at the core of our solution. In terms of delivery, respondents were most interested in **engaging lessons** over articles or games.

As for the other directions, none were received poorly, though documentation had the next most interest. At this point, we became interested in how these service directions could **work together** to provide value that renters wouldn't be able to get anywhere else.

Not at all   Neutral   Extremely

Do you feel that you need…

A better way to communicate with your landlord?

A better way to store and review important documents?

A more interactive and engaging way to learn important information for tenants?

A better way to engage and communicate with others in the rental community?

How likely would you be to use a new service that offered…

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qualitative feedback

We also conducted **12 additional interviews**, with friends and survey respondents, to get deeper feedback on the four directions. While we still heard interest in information, we also heard interest in the other directions once we were able to elaborate on individual feature ideas and share initial drawings. This was important, as it encouraged the idea of a service that combined multiple service directions.

We were even able to get new ideas from these interviews — for example, while the initial idea of connecting to a greater community of renters didn't garner much interest, one interviewee's experiences led to us pivoting that direction to focus on connecting with other renters in the same building.

Insights:

- Supporting renters in their journey post move-in is a key opportunity
- Information should be presented in as simple a manner as possible
- A variety of communication services already exist and are used
- Landlords and tenants may not agree on a communication method
- Insurance of privacy of data and communications is important
- Sending and managing requests from both sides could be improved
- Store documents, photos, videos, receipts, screenshots, notes
- Tenants had a Google group to discuss rental and building issues
- There is an opportunity in automatically connecting tenants
- Small-time landlords are often unaware of their responsibilities
- Property-managed rental units offer greater security
- People use services in these areas, but how could they be streamlined and combined?

Opportunity Fest at SFU Surrey provided a space to get feedback on our fully fleshed-out idea with a broad audience that included entrepreneurs and others we may not have otherwise talked to.

We won **third place** in our category of General Social innovation, which definitely encouraged us and reinforced that we were on the right track.

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user profiles

Sarah

Age:	25
Lives In:	Kitsilano
Dwelling Type:	Basement suite
Education:	Fourth-year student at UBC
Employment:	Part Time
Income:	$30k, variable w family support

- Has three years of experience in the rental market.
- Most rental knowledge has come through peers.
- Currently shares a basement suite with a roommate.
- Hasn't faced issues with her landlord.
- Is being forced to leave to make room for the landlord's son.
- Looking for relevant information as she wants to live alone.
- Is worried about feeling isolated if she lives alone.

Sullivan

Age:	32
Lives In:	Downtown
Dwelling Type:	Rented condo
Education:	Undergraduate degree
Employment:	Full-time accountant
Income:	$78k

- Has been renting mainly condos for the past 6 years.
- Lives with partner and child.
- Is feeling insecure about his tenure in current space.
- Has experienced landlords who weren't familiar with rights.
- Would appreciate better communication with landlords.
- Likes to be organized and manage everything in one place.
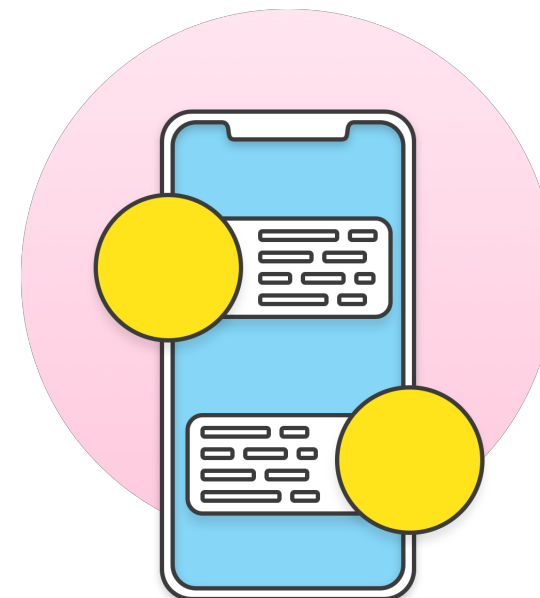- Is interested in purpose-built rental.

solution

Rentability is a digital service that supports renters through their entire rental experience. To do so, it brings together four key service areas:
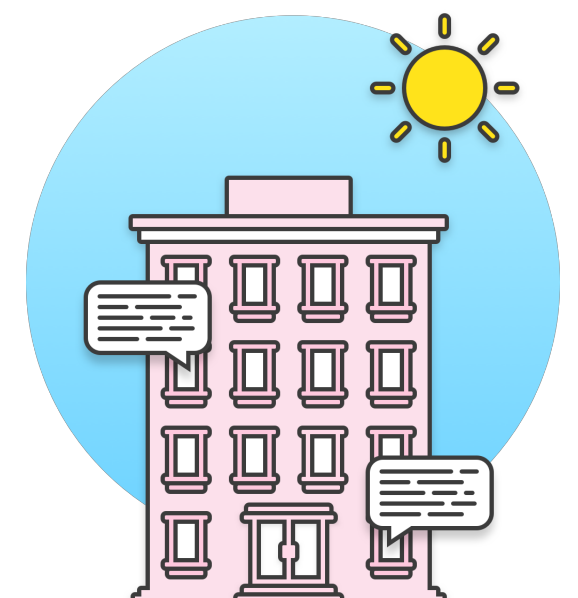
Information

Documentation

Communication

Community

The integration of these services allows users to conveniently learn about rental topics, manage important documents, communicate with both landlords and other renters, and more, all in one place. Rentability not only makes the delivery of information more personally relevant and engaging, but also streamlines existing processes through its feature areas. Because of this, we see Rentability as a service that renters can engage with consistently throughout the course of their rental journey, while also meeting key goals of the Housing Vancouver Strategy.

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Information

As Information was indicated to be the most important service direction by our survey respondents, it is the core of Rentability.

When the user signs up, Rentability asks them to identify key aspects of their rental situation, including their stage of tenancy, type of housing, and if they fall into any special renter categories. They can also indicate any specifc topics they are interested in learning more about. This helps Rentability deliver the user with the lessons, topics, and news that are most relevant to them, allowing them to focus on what is important. As the user moves through their rental journey, the information delivered to them evolves to stay relevant.

In addition to personalization, one of Rentability's key differentiations in terms of information delivery is lessons. Lessons are meant to respond to specific questions, such as "Which type of roommate agreement am I in?" and provide a more engaging way to learn about rental topics. They do this by boiling down the most important information and presenting it alongside visuals and even short videos, which the user can quickly step through, followed by a review at the end. If they would like to go more in-depth into a topic, that option is available as well.
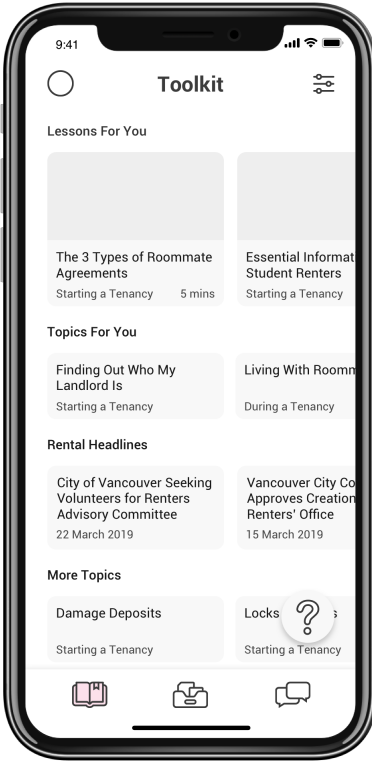
Finally in information, we also envision a smart chat feature that would allow the user to get quick answers to specific questions.
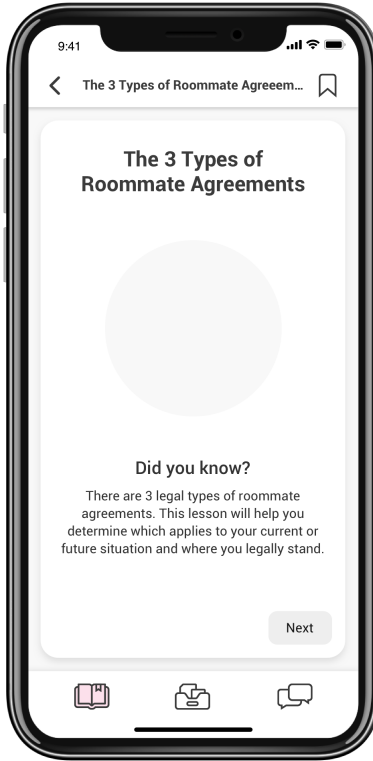

Information Onboarding Screen
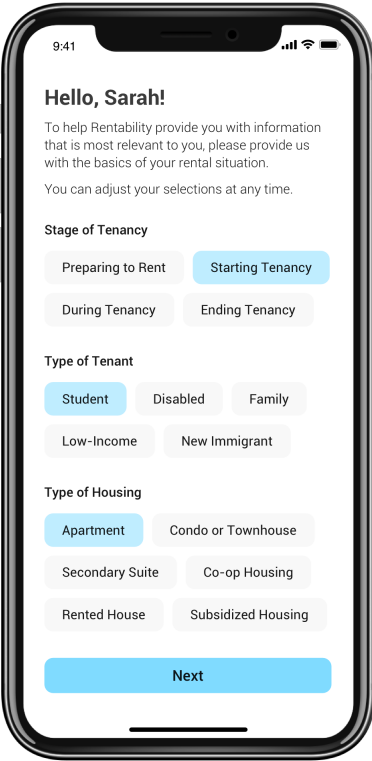
*Personalization Step 1*

Toolkit Screen

*Example Lesson Introduction*

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documentation

Rentability allows renters to stay within reach of important documents, photos, information, and anything else pertaining to their rental experience. Currently, users may have important documents stored on their computer, in an email as an attachement, or physically somewhere in their home. Or, they may not even have a copy at all. To solve this, Rentability allows users to save items from their conversations, import from other applications, or upload directly from their phone to have everything one place. No matter where in their journey they began using Rentability, they'll know where to find these important items.

This section is integrated with the Toolkit, as Rentability also allows users to bookmark lessons and topics from the Toolkit for easy access later. It is also integrated with Conversations – documents, photos, and more shared between landlords and renters are automatically saved here.
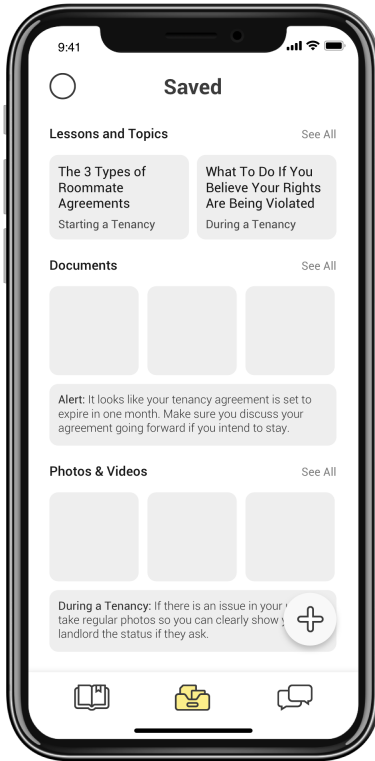
This feature would also provide timely suggestions as to what the user should be storing for future reference. For example, if the user indicated they were Starting a Tenancy, they would be encouraged to upload relevant documents and take photos of any deficiencies in their unit.
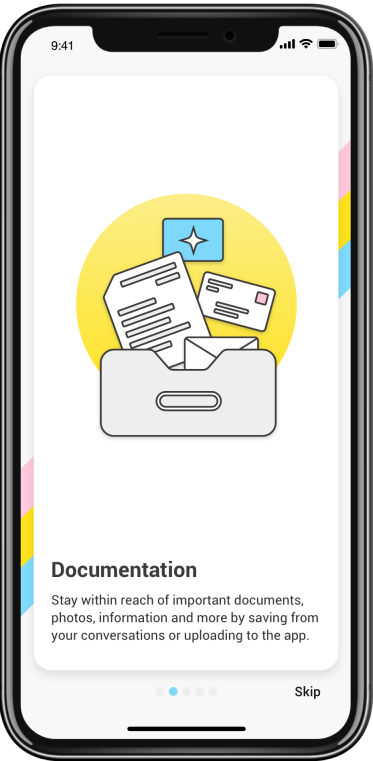
Documentation Onboarding Screen
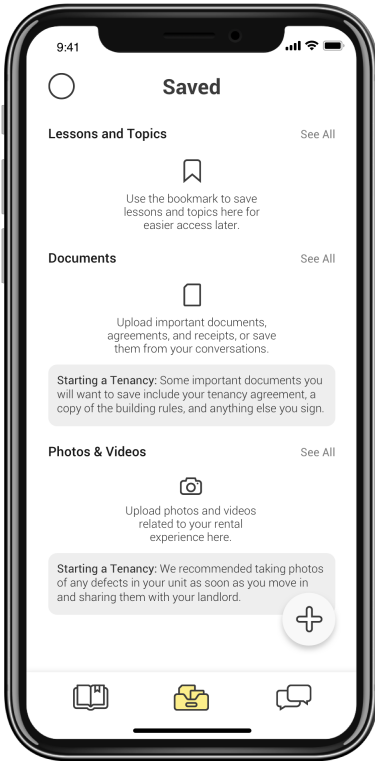
*Saved Screen – Empty State*

Saved Screen

communication

The communication feature is a better way for renters and landlords to interact with each other. Accessed in the Conversations tab, renters can easily connect with their landlord using the prompt.

In addition to allowing users to send messages, this feature is intended to streamline several important process. Documents can be exchanged and signed, requests (for entry or for maintenance, for example) can be sent and managed, and messages will be automatically translated in situations of language differences between tenants and their landlord.

To encourage landlords and building managers to adopt the service, it is important that Rentability make things simpler for them as well. In addition to streamlining document and request processes, the communication feature also allows building managers and landlords to easily broadcast messages to all of their tenants, saving them time.
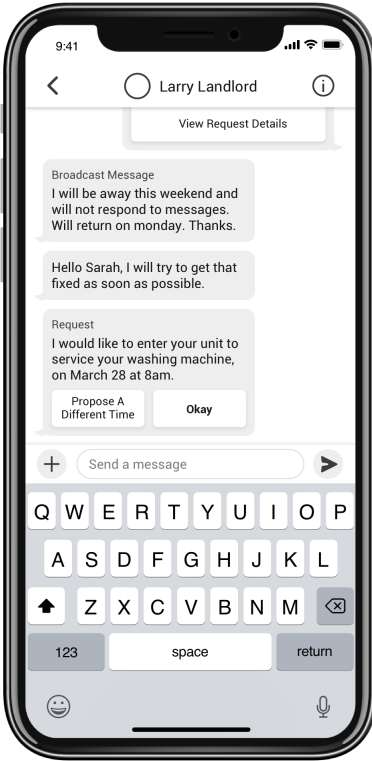
Both parties would have a record of all documents, photos, and requests exchanged, and chats would be easily searchable, which would work to enhance transparency between both parties.
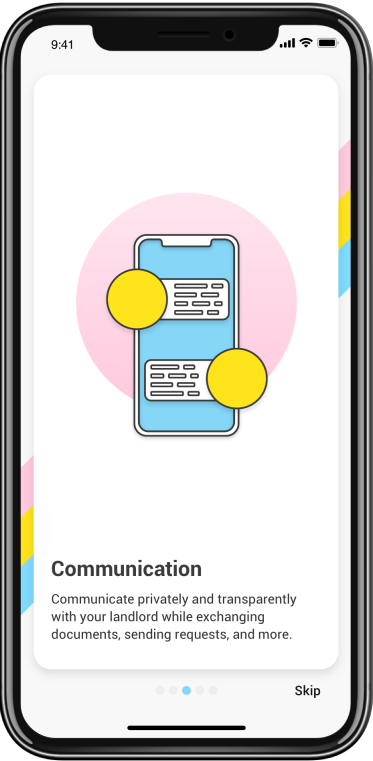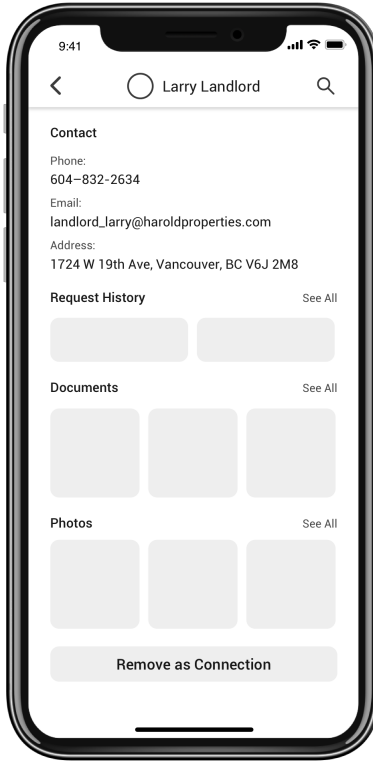

Communication Onboarding Screen
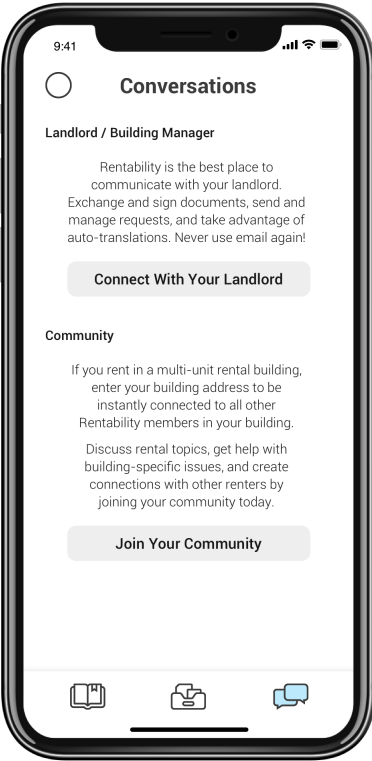
Conversations Screen – Blank State

Conversation With Landlord

Landlord Conversation Detail Screen

community

Also accessed in the Conversations tab, the community feature allows the user to connect to all other Rentability users in a multi-unit apartment building and partake in discussions through group threads.

Here, renters who share a landlord and address in common can discuss important rental topics, get help with building-specific issues, support each other in disputes, and develop social connections. Creating a channel for this kind of communication was key to enhancing resilience and community among renters, an important goal for our project.

Renters can connect to their neighbours by simply entering their address and choosing their building community. Making the connection process simple and automatic means tenants have no barriers to being included, while also taking the burden off of individual tenants to maintain or grow the community.
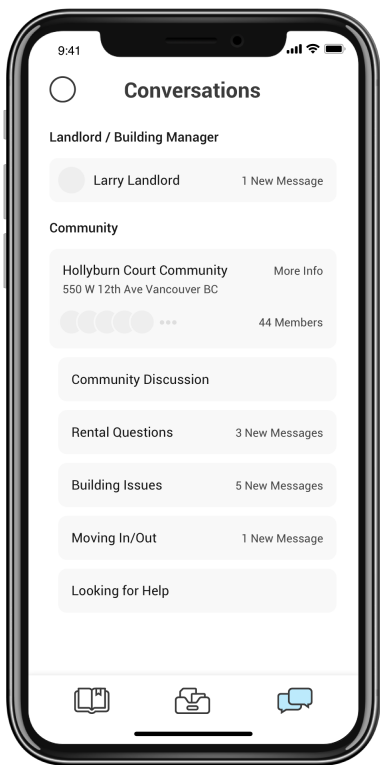
Community could have the potential to broaden its scope, but we believe connecting renters within the micro-community of a single building most successfully address their needs and insecurities and provides value not available anywhere else.

Community Onboarding Screen
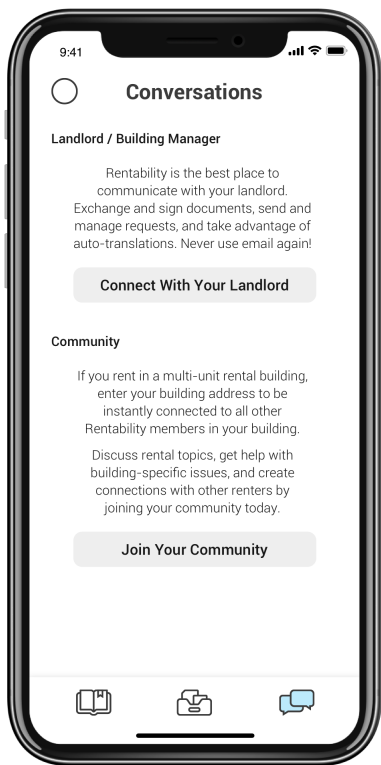
Conversations Screen – Blank State

Conversations Screen

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competitors & differentiation

Because of the way Rentability incorporates four different services areas, it has competitors in each area, but not necessarily as a whole.

TRAC, a non-profit, and **RTB**, a government agency, both offer information and resources to users, in a static manner. Rentability is differentiated from those services by the way it personalizes the information provided to users, offers more interactive learning, and allows them to store information.

For communication, we would be competing with services like **email** and **text messaging**, though we believe Rentability's communication feature offers enough added value within it, for both tenants and landlords.

There are places online, like **Facebook** and **Reddit**, where renters can discuss rental topics, but none are built specifically for it, and none allow renters to easily connect with other tenants in their building.

As for more encompassing services built specifically for renters, there exists a Vancouver startup called **Rebca** that has not launched yet, but could be a competitor when they fully enter the market, depending on the value they provide to renters.

Currently, though, no products in the market are designed to support renters through their rental journey in the four service areas Rentability offers.
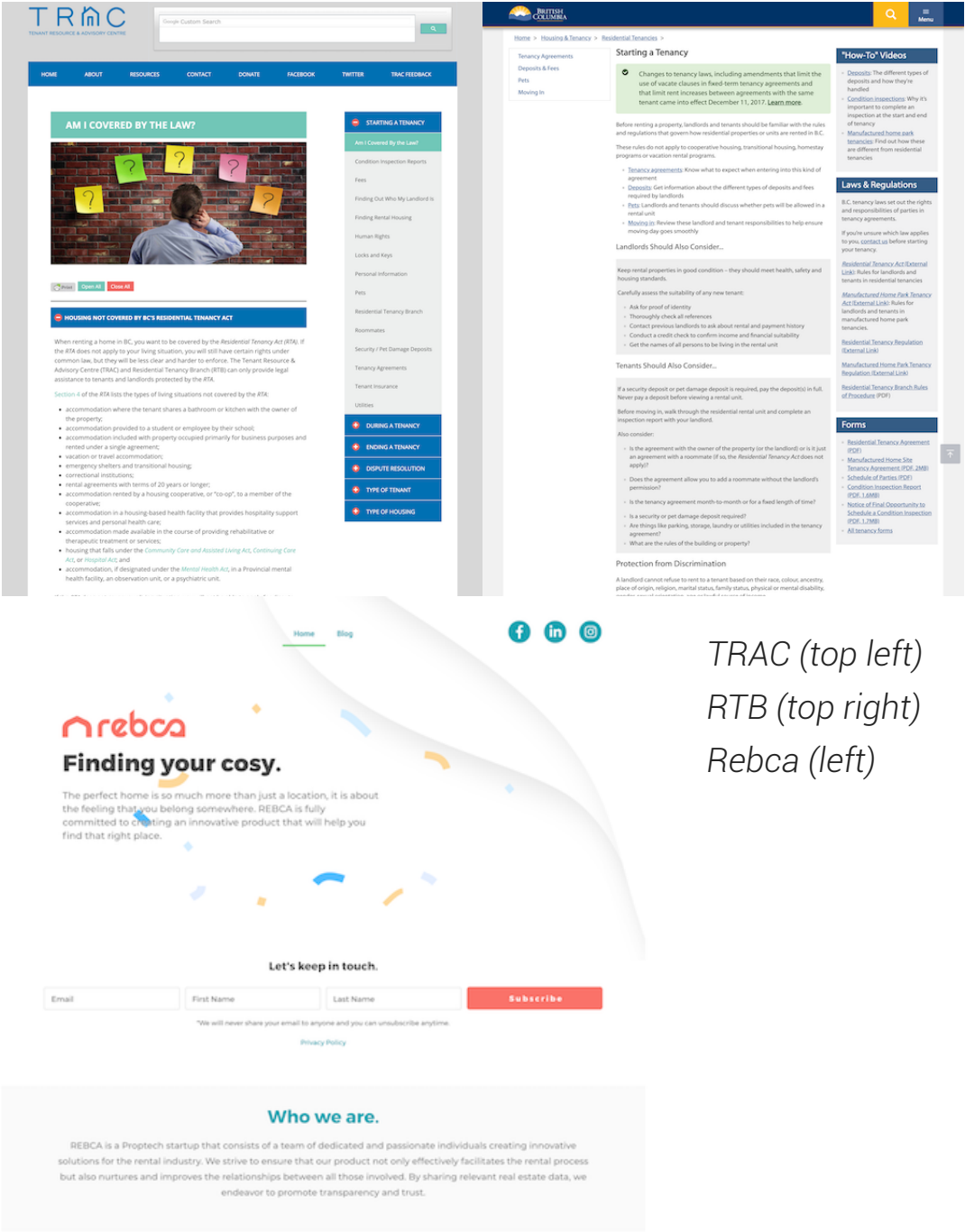
TRAC (top left)
RTB (top right)
Rebca (left)

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business model canvas

Key Partners
- Landlords
- Property Management Companies
- TRAC/RTB
- Municipal and Provincial Governments

Key Activities
- App/Web Design
- App/Web Development
- App/Web Maintenance
- Info/Lesson Creation
- Acquiring Partners
- Advertising

Key Resources
- Information
- Employees

Value Proposition
- Important & Relevant Information
- Interactive Education
- Ease of Delivery & Access
- Better Communication With Landlords
- Connection with Neighbouring Renters
- Strengthens Resiliency & Community

Customer Relationships
- Engagement
- Support

Channels
- Digital Service
- Delivered Through App Store

Customer Segments
- Renters
- Landlords and Building Managers

Cost Structure
- Startup App Costs
- Employee Salaries
- Advertising/Outreach

Revenue Streams
- Licensing Rights
- Grants/Funding/Investors
- City/Provincial Investment
- Rental Advertising on Platform (Future)
- Brokerage Fees (Future)

financial forecast

We created a **three-year plan** to illustrate how we believe Rentability could grow and eventually sustain itself as a business. As a resource to support an already vulnerable population, it is important that we **not charge renters** to use the service. As a result, we anticipate relying on investments and grants as we build the service and then the user base, before broadening the scope of the service to allow for new customer groups to support us financially.

Year 1: We will be focusing on developing the app/website and applying for grants, funding and looking for angel investors. We hope to partner with Red Academy, an institution that takes on community projects without monetary compensation and assists in app/web development as a part of coursework. If that is not possible, we may look into outsourcing our development work. We will also look to incorporate our business for future licensing opportunities.

Year 2: Is mainly focused on developing our user base and promoting our app on social media, newspapers, bus stops, and billboards. We will be solely relying on grants, funding and investors to sustain our operations through this year and we will begin to pay salaries as well.

Year 3: We anticipate breaking even by this year and licensing our app to the City of Vancouver, development companies and rental property management companies. They would be allowed to post listings for available spaces for a small fee per post. We also hope to act as a broker between renters and utility companies to connect those who are at the beginning or end of their rental journey. A brokerage fee would be collected for each successful contract. We would also look to include a section on the app for landlords to be more aware of their own rights and responsibilities in parallel to those for renters.
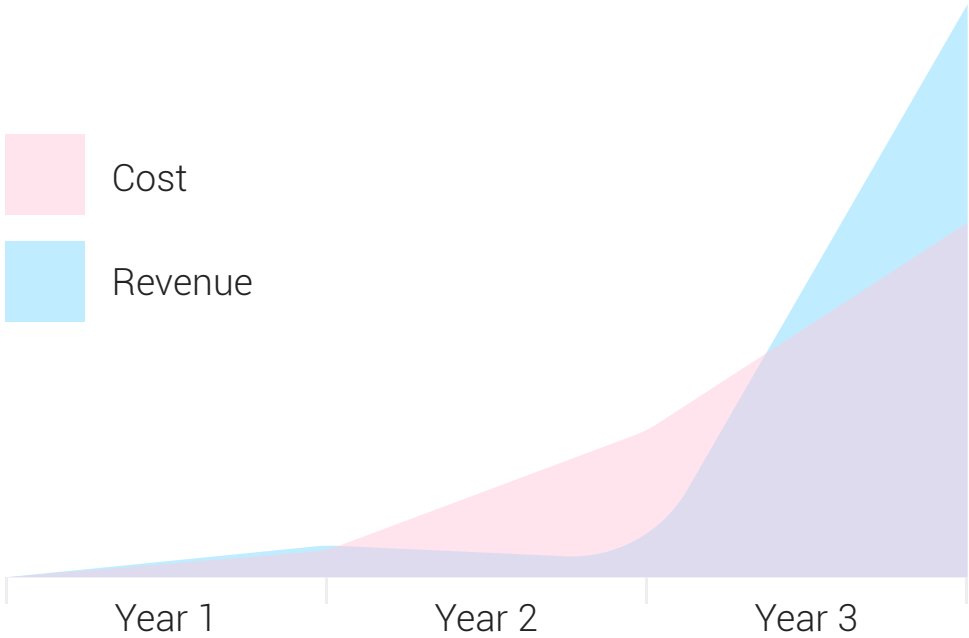
| | Cost |
| | Revenue |

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Costs			
Start-Up:	$385	-	-
Maintenance:	$550/m	$550/m	$1050/m
Miscellaneous:	$500/m	$500/m	$500/m
App Store Fees:	-	$175	$140
Employment:	-	$12000	$42000
Equipment:	-	-	$3000
Revenue			
Investors:	$12000	$12000	$12000
Grants:	$30000	$15000	$115000
Advertisements:	-	$1000/m	$1000/m
Licensing Rights:	-	-	$42000
Brokerage Fees:	-	-	$10000/m

next steps

We are quite happy with the progress we were able to make on Rentability in the last few weeks of the course. However, there are a still few things that we were not able to accomplish within the timeframe of this course.

One of the next steps we would take would be to create additional high-fidelity mockups and, with those, an **interactive prototype**. This would allow us to get feedback on not just the idea of the service and its four service areas, but how specific features within the different service areas work, the overall information architecture, and the look and feel of the service. We would then be able to further refine – or if necessary, overhaul – the service in response to the reactions of our prospective users.

We would also reach out to **landlords** to gauge their interest in using the areas of the service relevant to them, namely, communication. We didn't anticipate charging them to use the service initially, but would they be willing to pay, and if so, how much? Additionally, we would reach out to **purpose-built rental** development and managements companies, to gauge their interest in advertising units on the service down the road, and to learn what they would be willing to pay for advertising or even to license the service for their own use. We would also speak to the **City of Vancouver**, to see if they would be interested in supporting our project, financially or in name.

If we were to continue this project as a venture, our largest hurdle would be our lack of development or business backgrounds. So, on the business side, we would continue with additional outreach to prospective partners, as well as financial experts and app developers, to learn more about the business and financial landscape for the project. We would also look to programs such as Launch Academy and Red Academy for mentorship and assistance.

acknowledgements

We would like to give a special thanks to all of the great people who helped, guided, and supported us along the way.

Thank you to our instructors, Alia Sunderji, Timothy Ames, and Tamara Connell, for your teaching, encouragement, and challenges to push us further.

Thank you to Ileana Costrut, Miriam Esquitín, Rochelle Heinrichs, and all of the staff at CityStudio for your kindness and allowing us to use your space.

Thank you to Andrew Sakamoto, Ideen R., Marga and Graham at the City of Vancouver, and everyone else who gave their time to speak with us. Your stories, insights, and feedback were invaluable to our project.

This project would not have been possible without you.

alia sunderji

timothy ames

tamara connell

ileana costrut

miriam esquitín

rochelle heinrichs

25

appendix

sean burris

Sean worked to keep the group on track by coordinating group meetings, user and expert interviews and ensuring that none of the members were too overburdened by the project. This was helped by identifying and asking his group members to identify key strengths, and encouraging them to work with those, as well stretch their comfort zones where needed. Doing this was part of Sean's Personal Development Plan. His hope was that by identifying the strengths of his group members he would be able to foster a good working environment for all those involved. Sean was happy to be able to identify these strengths, and encourage his group members best selves to show up for the project.

Sean also focused largely on the identification of the user, analysing the results of the qualitative and quantitative data sets with the rest of the team to determine who would be the projects main focus. Sean also focused on the projects problem statement, beginning with a specific statement, moving to a broader statement and finally landing on the final problem statement. Sean encouraged the group to develop their own ideated solutions. Sean pushed himself out of his comfort zone by focusing on users experience before thinking of solutions for the problems. Sean was also challenged in the last stretch of the Civic Innovation Change Lab by having to think entrepreneurially. Sean encouraged the rest of the group members to adopt this frame of mind. While this was not a part of his Personal Development Plan, Sean enjoyed this aspect of the project. He felt as though if there was more time for the project, the revenue streams for Rentability, as well as additional features for the app could have been more developed.

Towards the end of the project Sean helped design the script for the final presentation, that would also serve as the content for the process book. Sean thoroughly enjoyed working with his group and learning new things like user centred design and improving on existing skills.

jeffrey baldwin

Jeffrey was excited to bring his experience as a user experience designer to a multidisciplinary group within the Civic Innovation Change Lab. His experience in the field was important from the beginning of the project, as he helped his group mates to get acquainted with the process of human-centred design.

One of the major involvements where Jeffrey drew upon his experiences was in the qualitative interview process, having conducted user interviews previously as part of school projects and in work environments. He helped create the guide for the interviews, making sure questions were worded to be unbiased and open ended, and organized in a way that would allow the conversation to flow naturally from one topic to the next. He assumed the position of lead interviewer in the 45 minute conversations with renters, focusing on making the interviewees comfortable while getting them to open up and share stories about their rental experience. He also had a hand in creating the online questionnaire that was sent out to renters, and, once the data had been extracted, looked through it to find patterns and insights.

For his Personal Development Plan goal, Jeffrey identified learning and facilitating human-centred design exercises as an area in which he could improve. He led the team through the Define Your Audience exercises, as well as several other ideation exercises that he created on the spot, to try to push the team into coming up with a meaningful and differentiated solution. One aspect of his goal which he was not able to realize, but would have liked to, was running design exercises with prospective users, whether individually or in groups.

Jeffrey took on a greater leadership role as the project progressed. While often taking up the role of the critic during the ideation phase, he realized that as the only designer, he had to do more to lead the team towards a solution. While the group focused on the delivery of information, he ideated in some new areas, including communication and documentation. He strongly believed that a solution that integrated multiple service areas was the best possible solution, and championed this idea to the group. As someone who does not normally develop product ideas with a consideration for the business side, though, he was challenged into considering how Rentability could keep its mission of supporting renters at its heart, while at the same time find a way to be financially sustainable.

Jeffrey created digital mockups of the service to show what the service could look like if created, including an onboarding flow and the main screens of the app. That process involved considering how the four service directions would be organized within the app, as well as what the visual style of the app would be. He was also responsible for the creation of the Hubbub poster, presentation slides, and this process book, and helped to write much of the content within those deliverables.

emily paterson

Emily brought a Political Science and Urban Studies background to the team dynamic. As she is a city policy nerd and follows municipal politics regularly, she was able to provide up-to-date intel on the City's goals and interests. Emily also provided a renter's lens to the project as she is a renter herself and is sick of dealing with the current rental situation in Vancouver. She helped to conduct primary and secondary research with her wealth of rental knowledge, and also contributed numerous ideas during ideation sessions and she was willing to voice an opposing opinion when needed. Emily helped to identify and narrow down the user group at various points in the process, to help better tailor understanding for further ideation and prototype development. Emily worked to connect with potential users and experts to schedule interviews throughout the whole project. She also helped to facilitate the interviews and continually gather research while not in class.

With Emily on the team, there was never a shortage of snacks to be eaten. She was stretched to take a step back from a leadership role and to work on her listening skills. Emily was also able to learn more about process and idea building that she feels will be valuable skills in projects going forward. One of Emily's personal development goals was to work to write more creatively and for different uses, she was able to do that in many different aspects of the project from interview question development to user profiles. Emily's skills proved to be a crucial part of the team as a whole.

Emily was excited to push herself to think from a entrepreneurial perspective in Change Lab, she had some experience with business classes in the past, but hadn't had the opportunity to apply a business lens to a project based on social good. She found this to be a rewarding and challenging aspect as it allowed her to build new skills that can be applied in a multitude of ways.

selina tang

Selina is an important member of the team that helped make the project what it came to be. As a Health Sciences student with experience in data analysis she was able to use her skills to help define the user group and provide more understanding to the problems that were identified in user surveys. This allowed the group to target the issues at hand to develop a tailored solution to the renters of Vancouver. Selina always brought a constructive attitude to make meetings a positive place to get work done, and also often brought fun snacks to make meetings more fun.

Selina was the mastermind behind our business plan and budget. Selina stretched herself to work to create our business plan. To do this she put in a large amount of time to research and develop a launch budget for the project. Creating a budget for a startup app was very much a skills gap for the whole team but Selina put in the time to figure out what goes into creating an app from the ground up to create a detailed and well thought out budget and 3 year business plan. Selina was able to stretch herself beyond existing skills and grow not only in concrete ways but also as a member of the group.

For Selina's Personal Development goal, she wanted to step out of her comfort zone and find her voice. At first, it was difficult because she was focused on finding her footing in the team dynamic. But once she became comfortable with her teammates she was able to contribute meaningfully in team meetings and provide another perspective to the project. She realized that she did not need to completely change her personality to reach her goal, but instead should focus on developing her current self to become an even better version of herself, as her weaknesses could be considered strengths to her team. Over the course of the term, Selina came out of her shell and became a lively and exuberant voice adding to all aspects of the project.
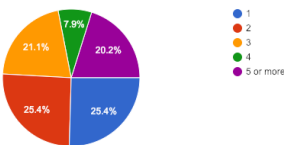
research questionnaire data

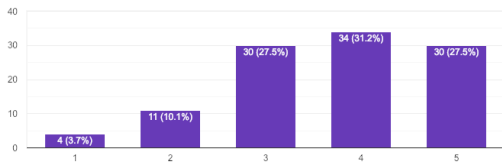**How old will you be at the end of 2019?**
109 responses

What is your current legal status?
114 responses

- Canadian Citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Temporary Visitor – Student Visa
- Temporary Visitor – Working Visa

87.7% / 8.8%

What is your current educational status?
114 responses

- Never attended university or college
- Not completed university or college, but not currently attending
- Currently attending university or college as an undergraduate student
- Currently attending university as a graduate student
- Graduated from university or college

47.4% / 7% / 29.8% / 7.9%

How many hours per week do you work on average?
113 responses

- I do not currently work on a weekly basis
- Under 25 hours
- 25–39 hours
- 40 hours
- Over 40 hours

34.5% / 15.9% / 9.7% / 17.7% / 22.1%

What is your current annual income?
114 responses

- $0 to $10,000 per year ($0 to $833 per month)
- $10,000 to $20,000 per year ($833 to $1666 per month)
- $20,000 to $40,000 per year ($1666 to $3333 per month)
- $40,000 to $60,000 per year ($3333 to $5000 per month)
- Over $60,000 per year (Over $5000 per month)

24.6% / 14% / 15.8% / 23.7% / 21.9%

How many different units have you lived in, in the Vancouver area, since leaving your family residence?
4 responses

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

7.9% / 20.2% / 25.4% / 25.4% / 21.1%
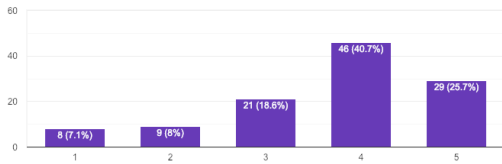
Which of the following describes your current living situation?
3 responses

- I live alone
- I live only with a partner
- I live with one or more roommates

53.1% / 21.2% / 25.7%

Which of the following describes your current lease situation?
1 responses

- I signed a lease with the property owner or a rental agency
- I signed an agreement with an individual who is the holder of the lease (subletting)
- I did not sign a lease or agreement

75.7% / 16.2%

Who do you pay your rent to?
2 responses

- The owner of the property
- A rental agency
- An individual who is the holder of the lease

62.5% / 24.1% / 13.4%

How much of your income is currently spent on rent?
4 responses

- Under 30%
- 30 - 40%
- 40 - 50%
- Over 50%
- My rent money does not come directly from my income, as it is supported by savings, family, loans, or another source.

11.4% / 21.9% / 26.3% / 27.2% / 13.2%

On a scale from 1 (not at all comfortable) to 5 (extremely comfortable), how comfortable did you feel signing your current lease or agreement?
109 responses

4 (3.7%) / 11 (10.1%) / 30 (27.5%) / 34 (31.2%) / 30 (27.5%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all familiar) to 5 (extremely familiar), how familiar do you feel with the terms of your lease or agreement?
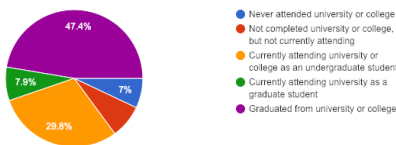108 responses

7 (6.5%) / 11 (10.2%) / 32 (29.6%) / 29 (26.9%) / 29 (26.9%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all informed) to 5 (extremely informed), how informed do you feel about your rights as a tenant?
113 responses

13 (11.5%) / 28 (24.8%) / 30 (26.5%) / 27 (23.9%) / 15 (13.3%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all worried) to 5 (extremely worried), how worried are you that your current landlord may attempt to violate your rights as a tenant?
113 responses

38 (33.6%) / 32 (28.3%) / 23 (20.4%) / 15 (13.3%) / 5 (4.4%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all worried) to 5 (extremely worried), how worried are you that you may be forced to leave your current residence for any reason?
112 responses

32 (28.6%) / 38 (33.9%) / 20 (17.9%) / 16 (14.3%) / 6 (5.4%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all confident) to 5 (extremely confident), how confident are you that you will be able to leave your current residence on your own terms?
113 responses

8 (7.1%) / 9 (8%) / 21 (18.6%) / 46 (40.7%) / 29 (25.7%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all prepared) to 5 (extremely prepared), how prepared would you be to search for new housing right now?
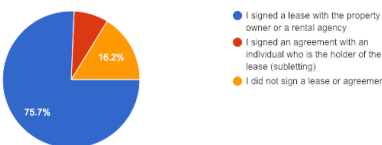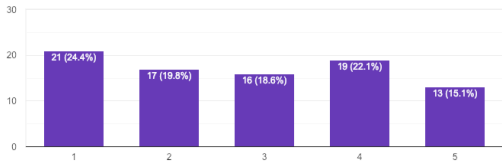113 responses

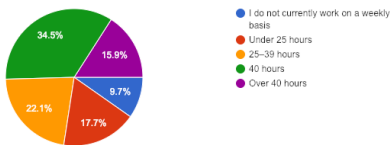30 (26.5%) / 29 (25.7%) / 25 (22.1%) / 24 (21.2%) / 5 (4.4%)

On a scale from 1 (not at all confident) to 5 (extremely confident), how confident are you that you will be able to continue living in the Vancouver area for the foreseeable future?
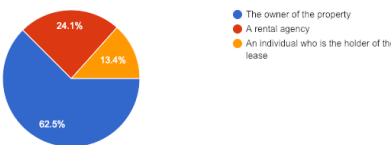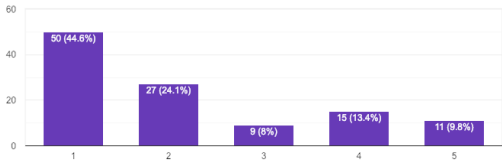86 responses

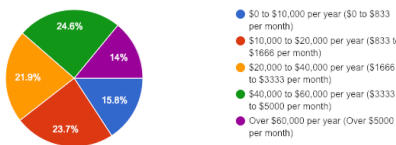21 (24.4%) / 17 (19.8%) / 16 (18.6%) / 19 (22.1%) / 13 (15.1%)

On a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), how much would you agree with the following statement: I feel that I face harder circumstances obtaining housing because of a factor of my identity, including age, sexual orientation, gender identity, racial identity, disability identity, or other identity factor.
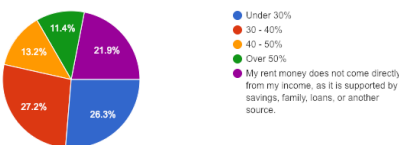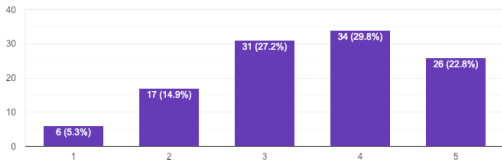112 responses

50 (44.6%) / 27 (24.1%) / 9 (8%) / 15 (13.4%) / 11 (9.8%)

On a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), how much would you agree with the following statement: Young adults feel insecure when finding housing in Vancouver because of potential gaps in knowledge surrounding rental housing.
114 responses

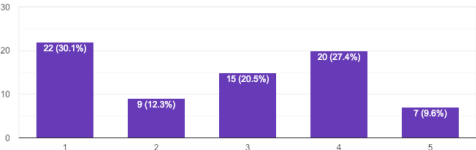6 (5.3%) / 17 (14.9%) / 31 (27.2%) / 34 (29.8%) / 26 (22.8%)

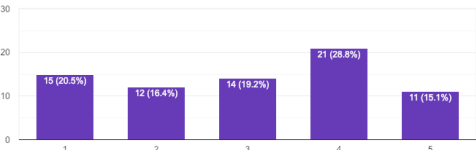# feedback questionnaire data

Communication

Do you feel that you need a better way to communicate with your landlord?
73 responses

How likely would you be to use a new service that offered a better way to communicate with your landlord?
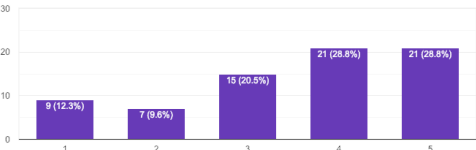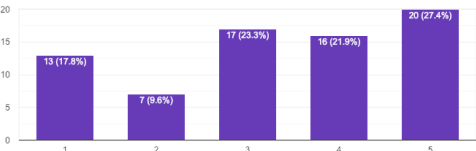73 responses

Documents

Do you feel that you need a better way to store and review important documents (e.g. lease agreements)?
73 responses

How likely would you be to use a new service that offered a better way to store and review important documents (e.g. lease agreements)?
73 responses

Information

Do you feel that you need a more interactive and engaging way to learn relevant and important information for tenants (e.g. your rights as a tenant)?
73 responses
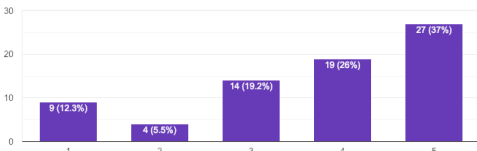
How likely would you be to use a new service that offered a more interactive and engaging way to learn relevant and important information for tenants (e.g. your rights as a tenant)?
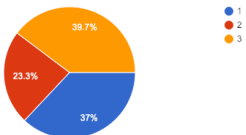73 responses
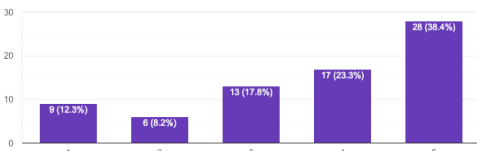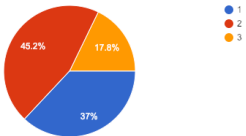

Potential Directions

A social smartphone game that offered real life rewards (similar to Carrot Rewards –www.carrotapp.com).
73 responses

Interactive lessons that are suggested to you based on where you are in your rental journey.
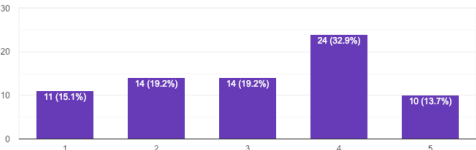73 responses

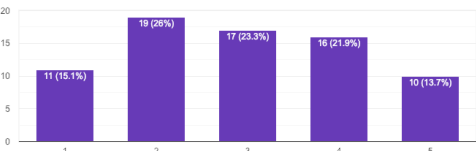*+ 1 more feature idea...*

Community

Do you feel that you need a better way to engage and communicate with others in the rental community?
73 responses

How likely would you be to use a new service that offered a more interactive way to engage and communicate with others in the rental community?
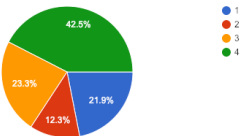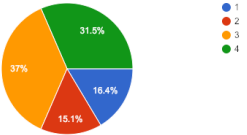73 responses

Potential Features

Forums where you could discuss different topics related to renting in Vancouver with other renters.
73 responses

The ability to connect with experts to discuss rental topics.
73 responses

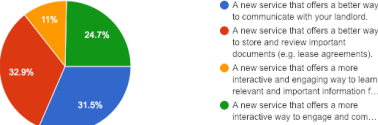*+ 2 more feature ideas...*

Ranking

Rank #1
73 responses

Rank #2
73 responses

Rank #3
73 responses

Rank #4
73 responses

32

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