

THE SAME COUNTY



The Same County

Hayley Dearden Takeuchi
Multi-disciplinary Design, University of Utah
DES 3520-001 Design Product Studio 2, Tsoutsounakis
Fall 2020
In partnership with the Rural Utah Project



Table of Contents

01 Research & Observations

- 5 The Rural Utah Project
- 6 San Juan County
- 7 Problem Space
- 9 Currently in Use
- 10 Physical Identifiers
- 11 Positive Precedents
- 12 Negative Precedents
- 13 How do we Identify Ourselves
- 14 Politics & Identity
- 15 Partisanship
- 16 Partisanship Online
- 17 Politics of San Juan County
- 18 The White San Juan County Experience vs The Indigenous San Juan County Experience
- 19 Research Observations

02 Opportunity

- 21 Opportunity Brief
- 22 Considerations
- 23 How will people recognize and identify their connections to others?

03 Process

- 25 Possible Connectors
- 26 Personas
- 27 Personas

04 The App

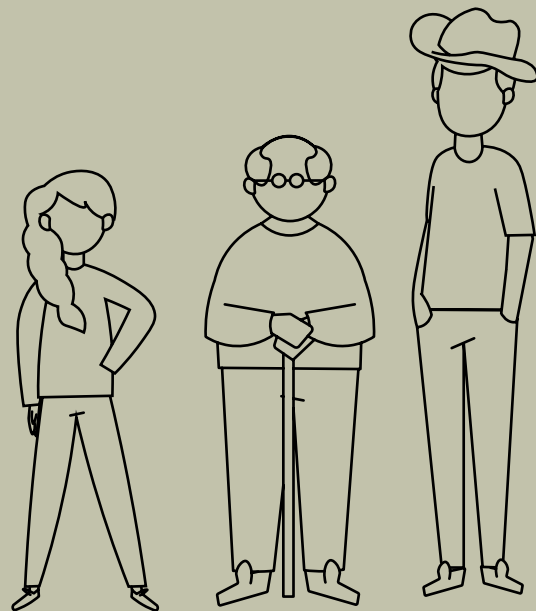
- 29 The Same County
- 30 Overview
- 31 Logging In
- 32 Creating Profile
- 33 Values
- 34 Hobbies
- 35 Local Issues
- 36 Profile
- 37 Connections
- 38 Location
- 39 Notifications

05 Impact

- 41 Impact

42 Bibliography

44 Colophon



01 Research & Observations

The Rural Utah Project

Who They Are

The Rural Utah Project was founded in late 2017 as a 501(c)(4) non-profit, to shake up the status quo in Southern Utah, and to give underrepresented voters in Utah a seat at the table. The non-profit seeks to take action to understand and advocate for the communities that for too long have been misrepresented in Utah's most rural and remote areas. Their areas of focus include Indigenous Lands, Southern Utah's recreation communities, growing rural towns, and the hard-to-reach places across Utah's vulnerable landscapes.

What They Do

The Rural Utah Project seeks to empower underrepresented voters in rural Utah through training, education, voter registration, and issue advocacy.

Where They Are

The Rural Utah Project's work all began in San Juan County, Utah. With the redistricting of the county, in 2018 it became possible for the first time in history to elect an Indigenous-majority County Commission in the home county of Bears Ears National Monument. In 2018, the Rural Utah Project registered over 1,600 voters on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County. In concert with a robust get out the vote program, this work paved the way for the landmark election of Willie Grayeyes and Kenneth Maryboy, who now serve on the first ever majority-Navajo San Juan County commission.



San Juan County

San Juan County was thrust into the national spotlight in 2016 when President Obama declared Bears Ears a national monument



The people of San Juan County have been fighting with outsiders and with one another over what to do with the land.

In 2017, President Trump shrinks the size of Bears Ears



In 2018, the three-person County Commission became majority Native American for the first time in history.

Problem Space

What does a Rural Activist need to feel successful?

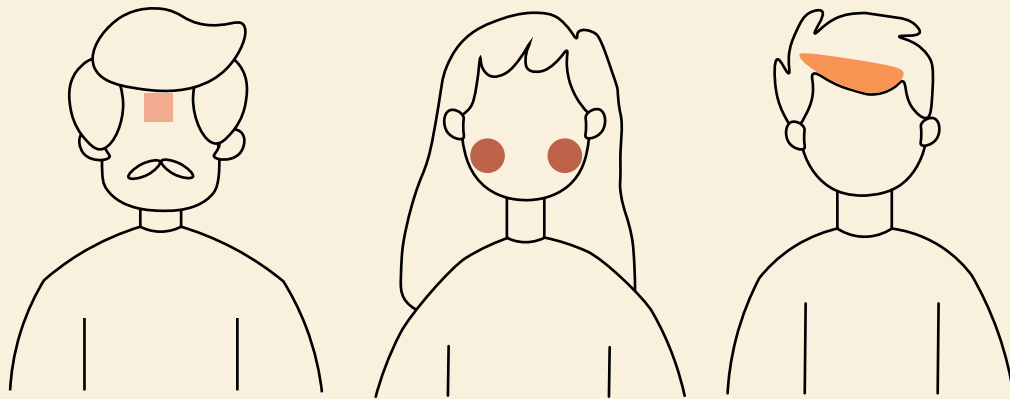
I reached out to RUP Field Organizer Sam Van Wetter and asked him the question “What do you wish you had?”

His response:

- A big siren that tells everyone there’s an election coming up and local politics very much depend on the result of it
- A slingshot to get election material into everybody’s living room maybe via chimney
- Everyone in the county color-coded (like on their face or hair or something) so that when i walk up to them I could see their stated political affiliate, their actual political sympathies, and the issues they’re most concerned with
- A program that could gather obituary/mortuary records from rural Utah counties so that we could faster and more accurately update the voter roll for deceased voters
- A skywriter that said “All Politics Are Local”
- A way to convince second-home owners that their vote might be more potent and important in the rural areas where they live part-time.
- Lawn signs that aren’t necessarily supporting any campaign or cause but says something to the effect of “I Live Here I Vote I Care A Lot And I’d Rather Have Actual Conversations About Issues Than Argue On Facebook With People Who Live In A Different Ideological Reality
- Also a way to convince people that politics doesn’t have to be divisive culture wars and identity politics but instead can be services to make peoples’ lives better

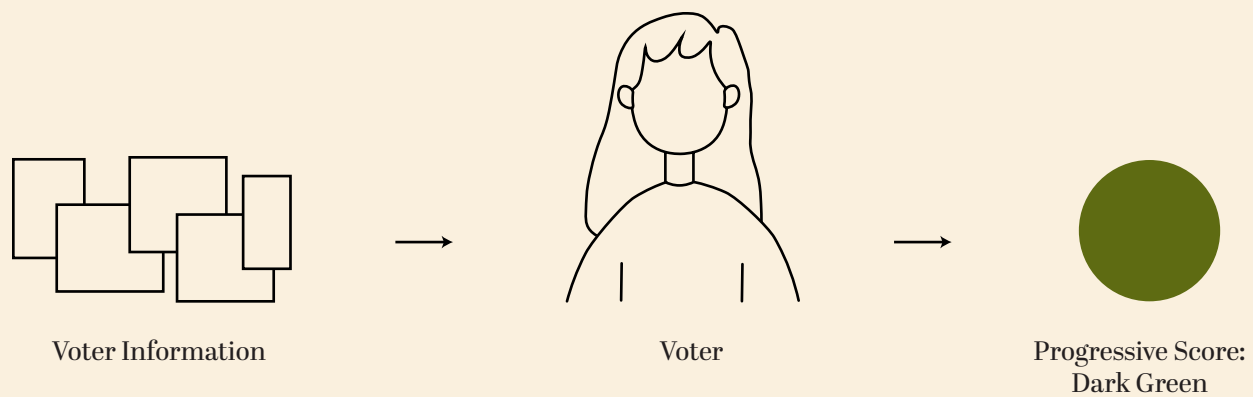
Problem Space

Everyone in the county color-coded like on their hair or face or something so that when I walk up to them I could see their stated political affiliate, their actual political sympathies and the issues they're most concerned with.



Currently In Use

BLOP (Big List of People) - software that harvests voter registration information from public sources and assigns them a score. This score refers to how likely they are to support progressive issues.



People who are most likely to vote in favor of progressive issues are colored “green”. Bright green is people who are publicly supportive and openly liberal. Darker green is good, but less sure. Bright red is known “bad”. This helps to determine whether or not this voter is worth talking to and working on.



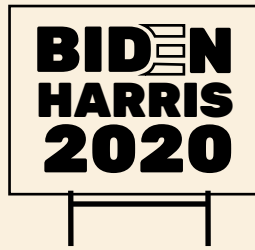
BLOP will automatically classify a voter based on party affiliation even if that isn't an accurate depiction of their politics. There needs to be a way to identify these people outside of their voting history and relieve some of the partisan identifiers. The current system greatly limits the way we can unite across party lines.

Physical Identifiers

Sam's response lead me to research how people use physical identifiers to portray something about themselves.



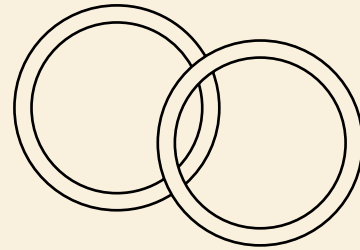
Stickers



Lawn Signs



Awareness Ribbons



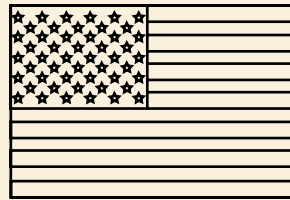
Jewelry



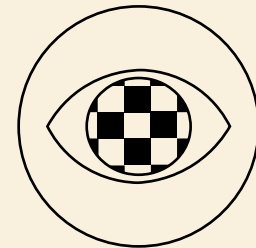
Clothing



Pins & Buttons



Flags



Symbols

Positive Precedents

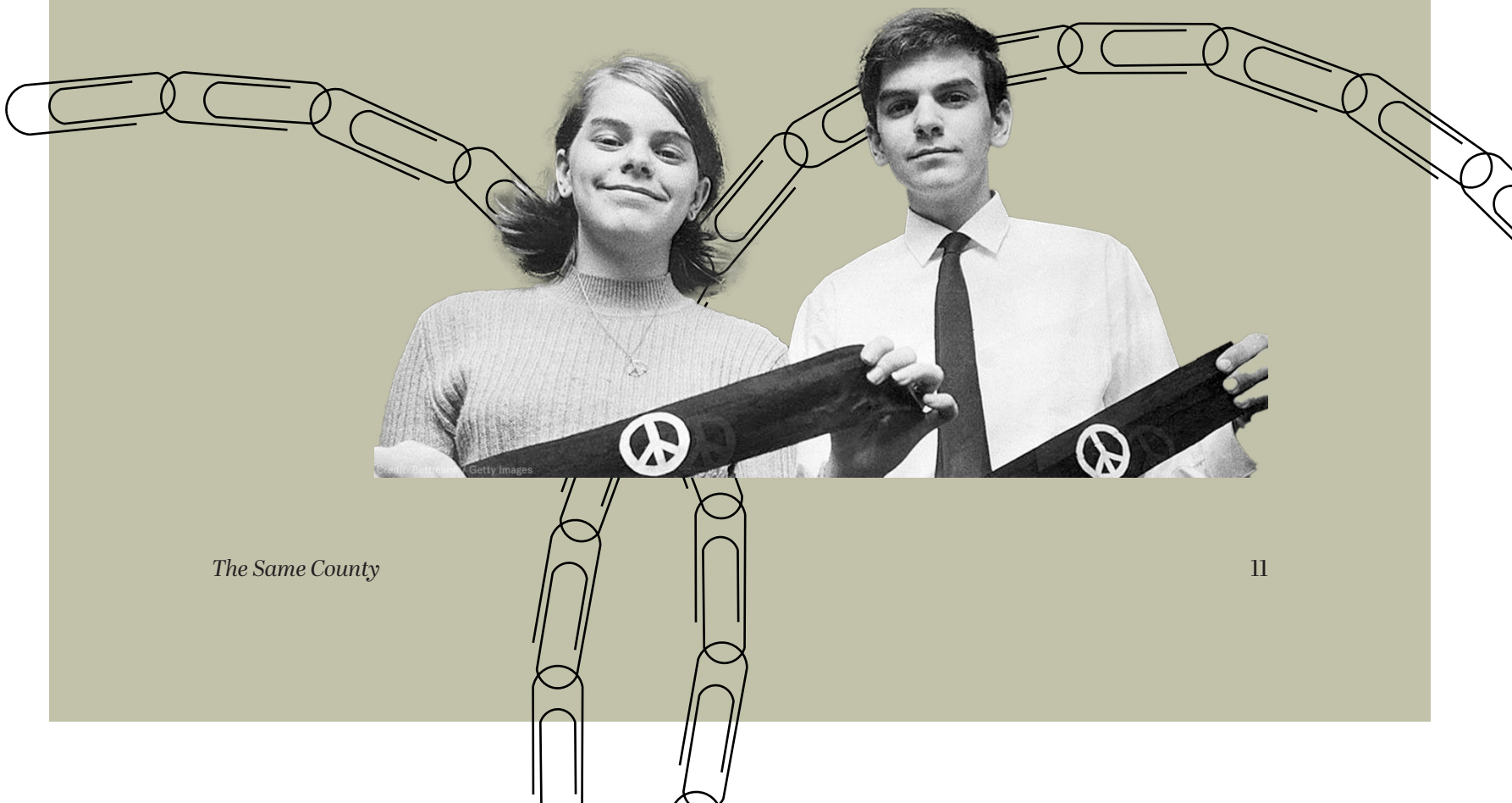
Armbands

In the 1970's, public school students started wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam war.

Safety Pins or Paper Clips

When the Germans occupied Northwestern Europe during World War II, Dutch and Norwegian citizens communicated their national solidarity with safety pins or paper clips.

In a 1941 British war film resistors were depicted wearing safety pins under their collars or hems, flashing them to other trusted underground confederates. Students at Oslo University began wearing paperclips on their lapels or as bracelets to signify unity.



Negative Precedents

Holocaust Badges

The German government's policy of forcing Jews to wear identifying badges was but one of many psychological tactics aimed at isolating and dehumanizing the Jews of Europe, directly marking them as being different (i.e., inferior) to everyone else. It allowed for the easier facilitation of their separation from society and subsequent ghettoization, which ultimately led to the deportation and murder of 6 million Jews.

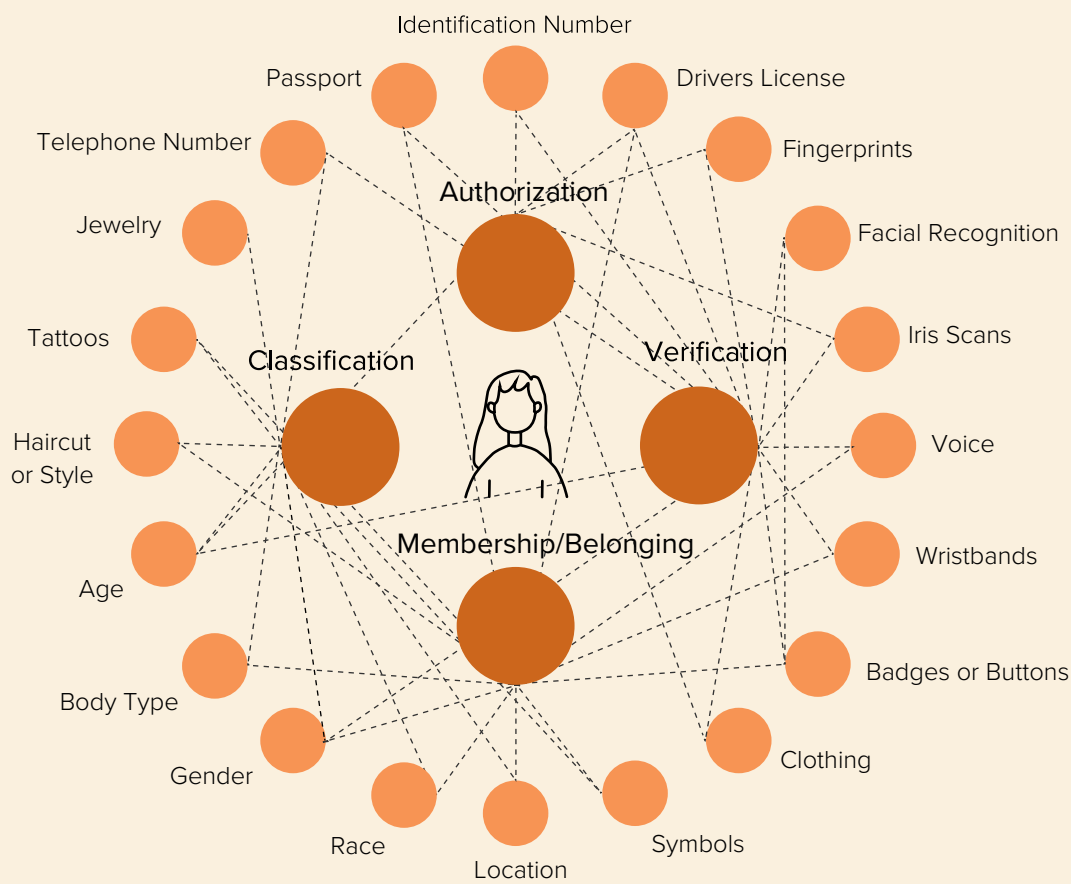
Facial Recognition in China

It's been estimated that China's government has detained as many as two million members of the country's Muslim population, the Uighurs who reside in Xinjiang. China's government has made Xinjiang a test project for forms of extreme digital surveillance. Cameras with AI-powered facial recognition are everywhere, and various pilot projects use AI to give people a "social credit" score, punishing some for certain behavior and rewarding others for what the government considers good citizenship.



How do we identify ourselves

Identification involves the relationship between body, environment, and society. The individual facets of a person's identity is difficult to pin down because they are interwoven both biologically and socially. Human identification systems can be broke down into classification, authorization, verification and membership/belonging.

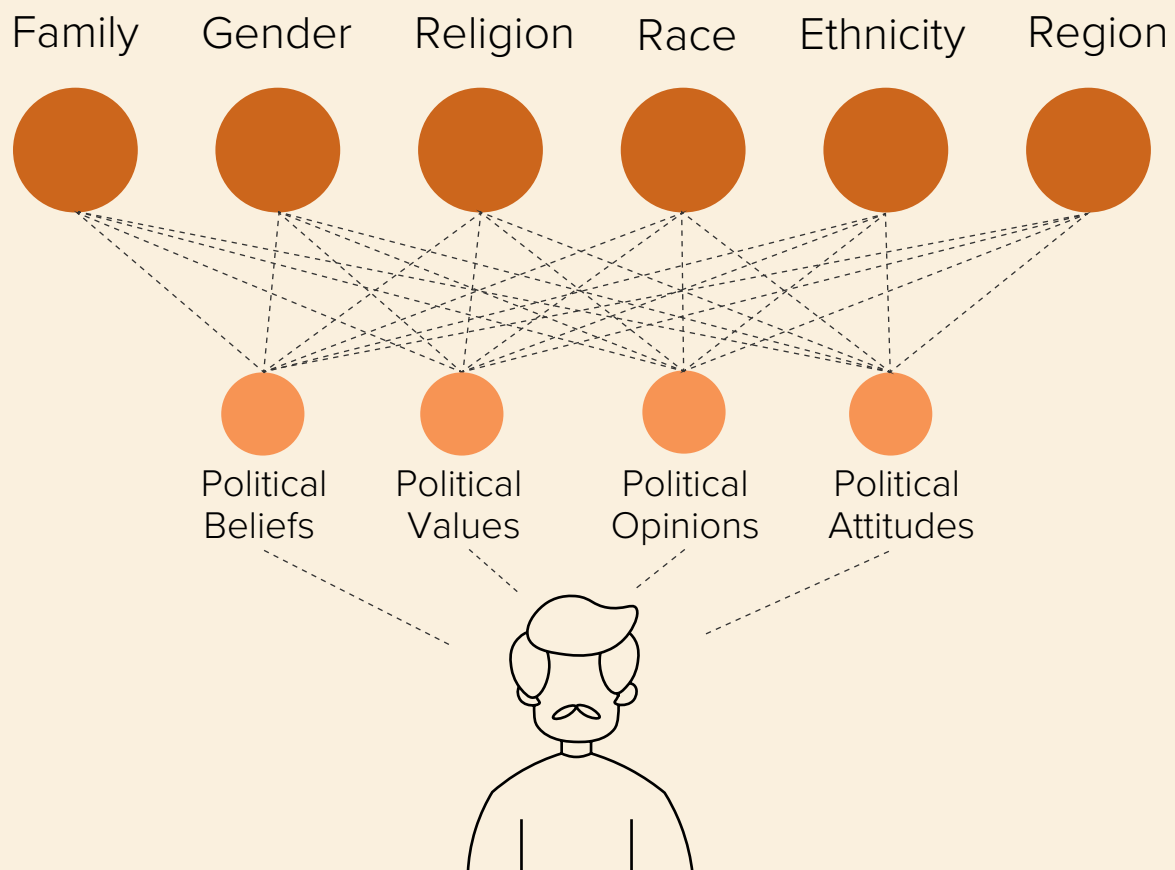


“As identification scientists we observe and describe the body, we categorize and individualize, we attempt to answer the simple question, ‘who are you?’”

-Rebecca Gowland and Tim Thompson

Politics & Identity

How do we determine our political identity? This identity concerns the parts of the individual's identity that display their political values and political beliefs as well as the categories of their political thinking. a citizen's political identity takes shape in response to questions about their political position: the political values they prefer, their political identifications and beliefs and the categories of their political thinking. Political identity is almost always associated with a group affiliation, showing how membership of a particular group can convey specific political opinions and attitudes.



Partisanship

In 2016, race and identity emerged as the central dividing line in American politics

Partisan identities have become more closely aligned with social, cultural and ideological divisions in American society. Party supporters including leaning independents have developed increasingly negative feelings about the opposing party and its candidates. This has led to dramatic increases in party loyalty and straight-ticket voting, a steep decline in the advantage of incumbency and growing consistency between the results of presidential elections and the results of House, Senate and even state legislative elections.

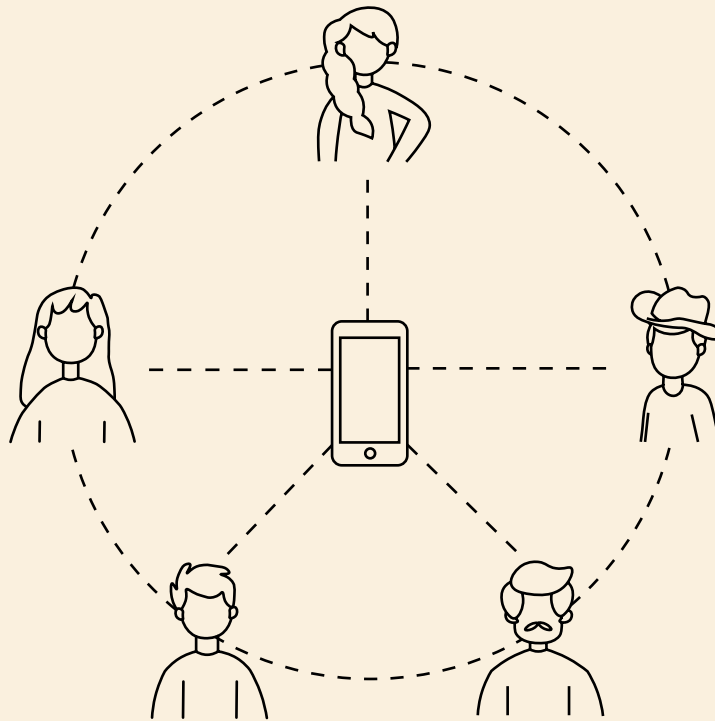
“A single vote can now indicate a person’s partisan preference as well as his or her religion, race, ethnicity, gender, neighborhood and favorite grocery store. This is no longer a single social identity. Partisanship can now be thought of as a mega-identity, with all of the psychological and behavioral magnifications that implies.

The danger of mega-partisan identity is that it encourages citizens to care more about partisan victory than about real policy outcomes. We find ways to justify almost any governmental policy as long as it is the policy of our own team. What is best for America... is secondary to whether our party’s team gets what it demanded.”

-Lilliana Mason, “Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity.”

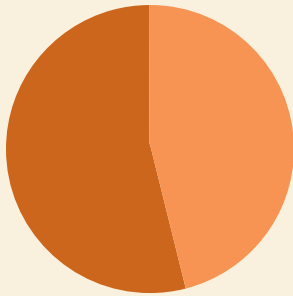
Partisanship Online

Partisanship is encouraged by our behavior on-line. Our mobile devices use algorithms that connect individuals in homophilous networks that only connect us to people, organizations, and messages that support our existing views. Research on group identity suggest that more conservative or more extreme individuals may exhibit higher levels of political homophily. Their networks may come to resemble “echo chambers,” providing them with reaffirmation and shielding them from disagreement. Therefore you are less likely to find people to challenge or diversify your belief system.



Homophilous: the tendency to form strong social connections with people who share ones defining characteristics, as age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, personal beliefs, etc.

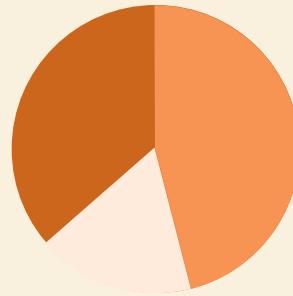
Politics of San Juan County



Population

53% Native American

47% White



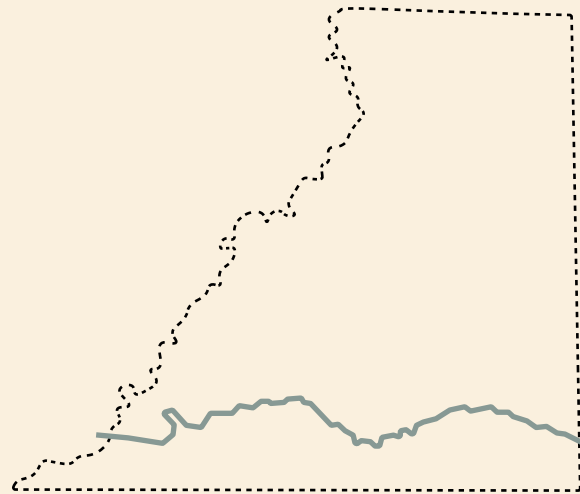
In the last election

47.8% Voted Republican

36.9% Voted Democrat

15.3% Voted Independent

“North of the river” — the San Juan river has become the de facto dividing line in San Juan County between Republican and Democrat, anti-monument and pro-monument, (mostly) Mormon and Navajo.



The White San Juan County Experience vs The Indigenous San Juan County Experience

“Like many white people in San Juan County, he viewed “**pot hunting**” as a harmless family **tradition**—rescuing art from dirt. Always, he said, on private land.”

“I’m worried about having **two non taxpaying commissioners** telling us how to use our tax money.”
-Lynn Laws

“But all these things, all these issues we’re talking about, **San Juan County** didn’t do that. That’s the federal government.”
-Phil Lyman



“When I saw a white man I used to get really intimidated, I was taught that because of the boarding school, and it’s really hard to get over and express your opinion. In a public setting especially, in a political setting.”
-Wilfred Jones

“The good old boys have always been **looking down on the Native Americans**”
-Kenneth Maryboy

“This is the 21st century. **Why are we still arguing about who we are?** It shouldn’t matter. We’re all county residents.”
-Wilfred Jones



Research Observations

01 San Juan County is deeply divided politically.

Native Americans tend to vote Democrat and are viewed as a threat to the Republican control of county that hasn't voted for a Democrat, at least in a presidential election, since Franklin D. Roosevelt, back in 1936.

02 Racism is alive and well in San Juan County.

San Juan County has been found guilty of gerrymandering and disproportionately favoring white candidates for years. The Indigenous population has been discriminated against and have continued to face backlash from the white community despite winning two out of the three county commissioner seats.

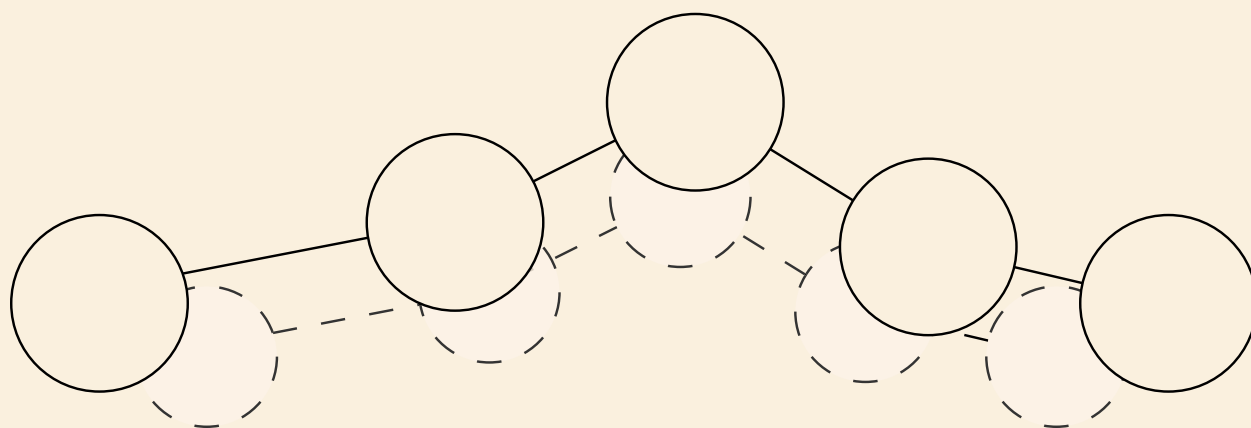
03 There is misunderstanding and a lack of community on both sides.



02 Opportunity

Opportunity Brief

An identification system for rural communities that includes multiple dimensions of identifiers that promotes connection and community. Partisan politics and racial tensions in San Juan County have led to a divisive political and social climate. How can we create a new sense of community through connection?



Considerations

Privacy

Privacy is important to many Americans therefore the solution I create needs to allow the user control over what information is shared with others.

Commonalities

My solution should include a way for individuals to relate to one another by finding commonalities. Relating in a way that connects not divides.

Non-Partisan

My solution should not promote the agendas of either political party.

Neutral Colors

By staying non-partisan my color choices should also not be tied to or relate to either political party. Colors are reflective of the South Eastern Utah landscape.

*How will people recognize and identify
their connections to others?*



03 Process

Possible Connectors

Undiscovered or unknown connections represent missed opportunities to develop relationships and engage more meaningfully with our community.

Roles

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Mentor
- Student
- Friend
- Sibling
- Caregiver
- Neighbor
- Teacher
- Partner
- Activist
- Child

Values

- Leisure
- Creativity
- Intelligence
- Curiosity
- Discipline
- Honesty
- Independence
- Unity
- Spirituality
- Security
- Diversity
- Humor
- Responsibility
- Kindness
- Tradition
- Beauty
- Respect
- Family
- Confidence

Hobbies

- Gardening
- Painting
- Bird Watching
- Antiquing
- Listening to Music
- Reading
- Photography
- Dining Out
- Baking
- Cooking
- Musical Instrument
- Board Games
- Quilting
- Sewing
- Wood Working
- Going to Bars
- Dancing
- Drawing
- Ceramics
- TV
- Movies
- Radio
- Writing
- Sports
- Fitness

Local Issues

- Broadband
- US Postal Service
- Road Quality
- Healthcare Access
- Public Lands
- Renewable Energy
- Clean Water Access
- Farmland Preservation
- Education
- Economic Diversification

Personas

Due to COVID-19 I was unable to achieve in-person interviews so I used my research of the county to create possible users of the app.



Linda
Age: 64
Occupation:
Painter
Status: Divorced
Kids: 2
Location: Bluff, UT

About: Linda is a landscape painter. She is a member of Great Old Broads for Wilderness and volunteers with Friends of Cedar Mesa. She is concerned about protecting public lands and educating others about its importance. She loves having her children and grandchildren come visit her. She enjoys gardening, reading, listening to NPR, cooking, and hiking.



Kimberly
Age: 38
Occupation: Rancher
Status: Married
Kids: 3
Location: Navajo Nation, UT

About: Kimberly is a rancher who raises cattle for beef. She is interested in increasing Tribe's food sovereignty. She is also interested in increasing economic opportunities for her community. She is also interested in improving the rural education system for her children. She enjoys listening to music, cooking, playing the guitar, and watching movies with her family.

Personas



Jim
Age: 55
Occupation: Farmer
Status: Widow
Kids: 5
Location: Monticello, UT

About: Jim is a farmer who's pioneer ancestors settled in the area of Bluff. His family has lived in Bluff for several generations and he has many relatives in the area. He recently was diagnosed with diabetes and his worried about his access to adequate healthcare. He enjoys horseback riding, hunting, playing the guitar, and visiting family.



Carl
Age: 35
Occupation: River Guide
Status: Single
Kids: 0
Location: Bluff, UT

About: Carl is a river guide on the San Juan River. He also works part time at the Comb Ridge Eat and Drink. He was born and raised in San Juan County. He left to attend college, but returned after because he is interested in promoting economic opportunities in his community that he feels has been ignored by the government. He enjoys listening to music, hiking, fishing, and visiting his nieces and nephews.

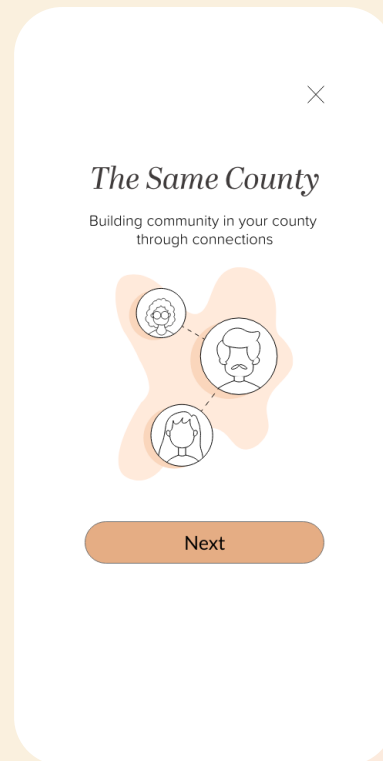
04 The App

The Same County

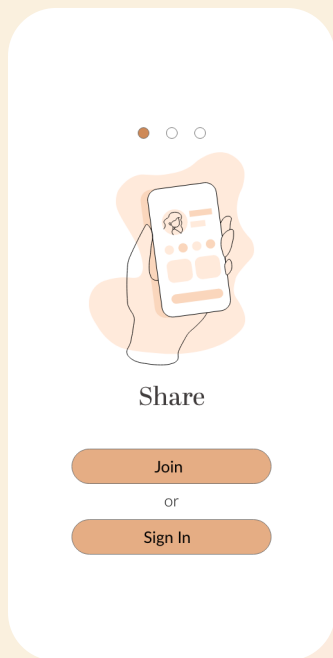
San Juan County residents can discover their connections through finding commonalities in:

- Roles
- Values
- Hobbies
- Local Issues

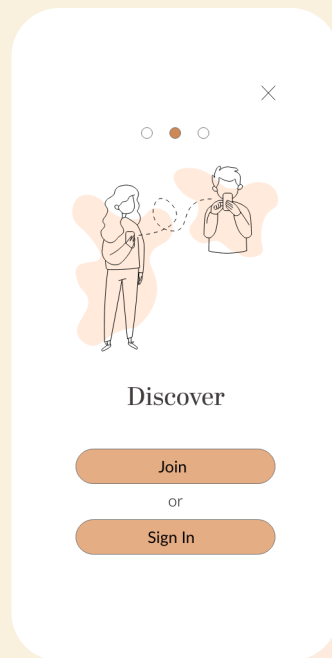
Decreases division and promotes unity.



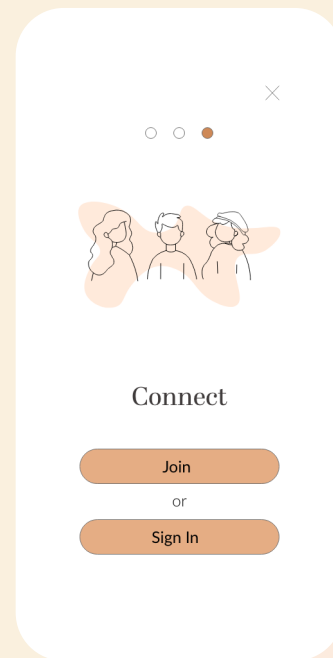
Overview



User creates profile and shares information about themselves



User discovers common connections among fellow county members



User connects with and builds a new community with new connections

Logging In

Upon opening the app the user creates an account and signs up. As part of the log in process a location is needed in order to connect users with people in their same area. Privacy and location settings will be able to be set to the user's preference.

The image shows two overlapping mobile app screens. The left screen is titled 'Create Account' and features three input fields for 'Name', 'Email', and 'Password'. Below these fields are two buttons: a prominent 'Sign Up' button and a smaller, less visible 'Sign In' button. The right screen is titled 'Set your Location' and contains a paragraph of text explaining the app's purpose and a 'City, State' input field. At the bottom of this screen is a 'Next' button.

Create Account

Name _____

Email _____

Password _____

Sign Up

[Sign In](#)

Set your Location

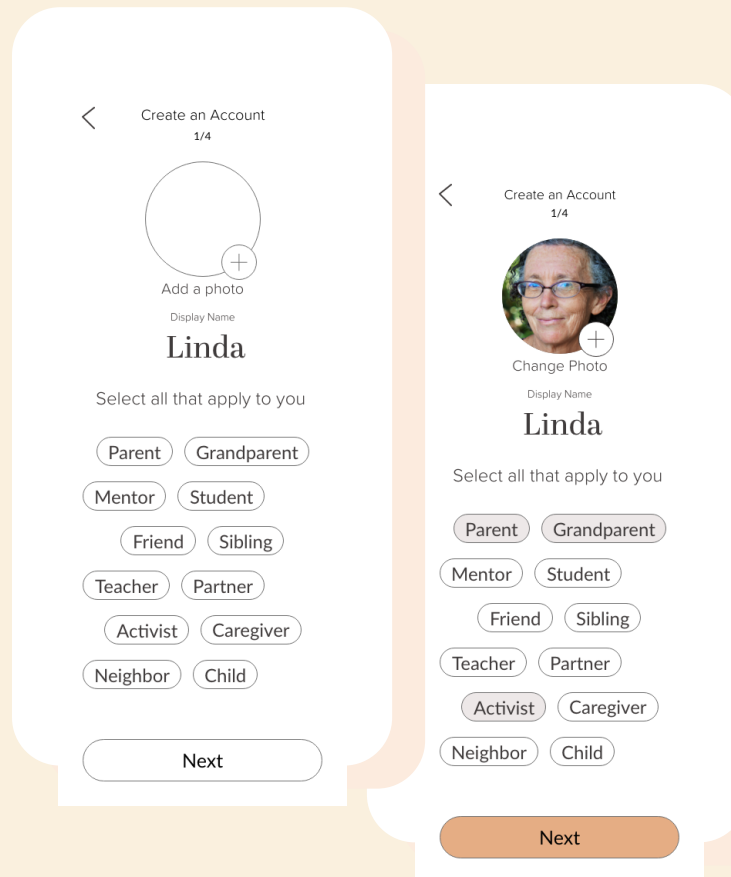
The Same County is all about connecting you with people in your same area. Help us connect you by sharing your location. You'll be able to set privacy and location settings to your preference.

City, State _____

Next

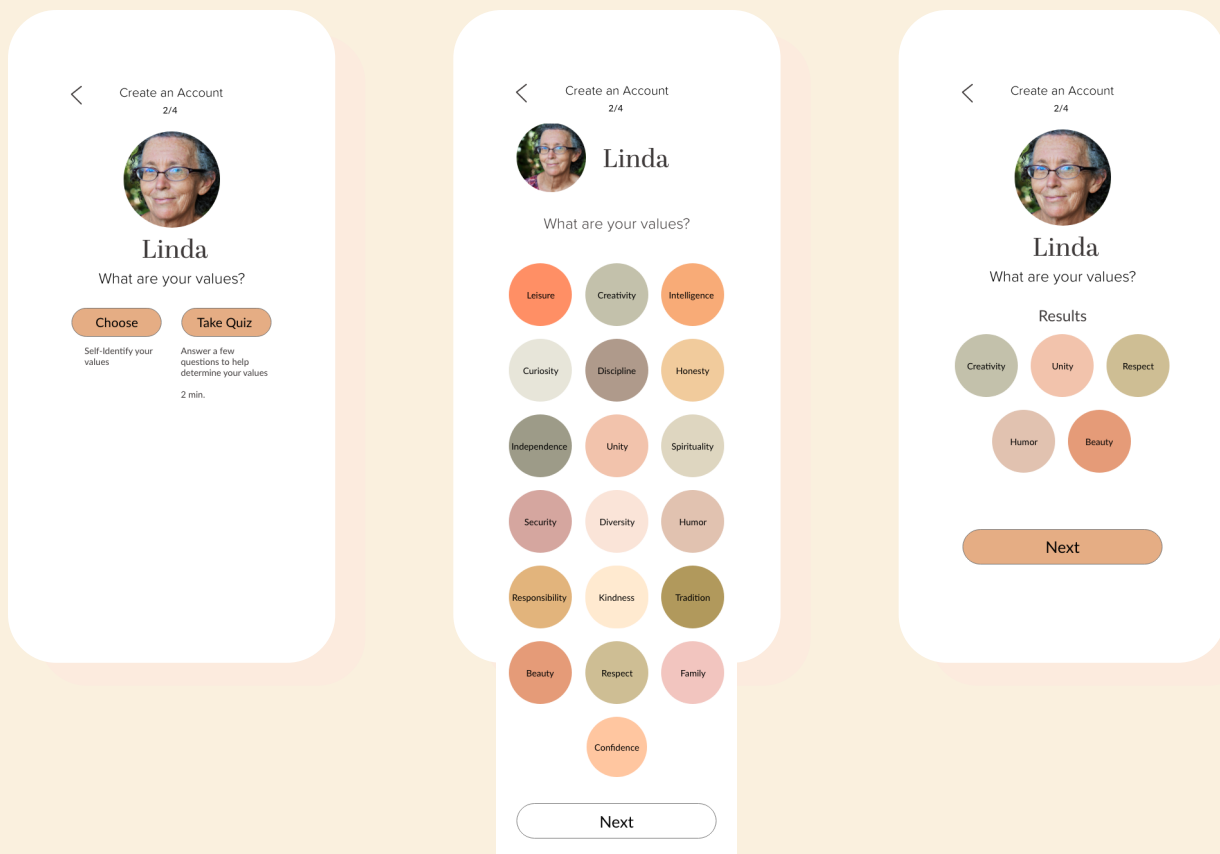
Creating Profile

The first step to setting up your profile is to add a photo and then select the roles that apply to you. This allows users to find that they may share common responsibilities and life situations with others in their county.



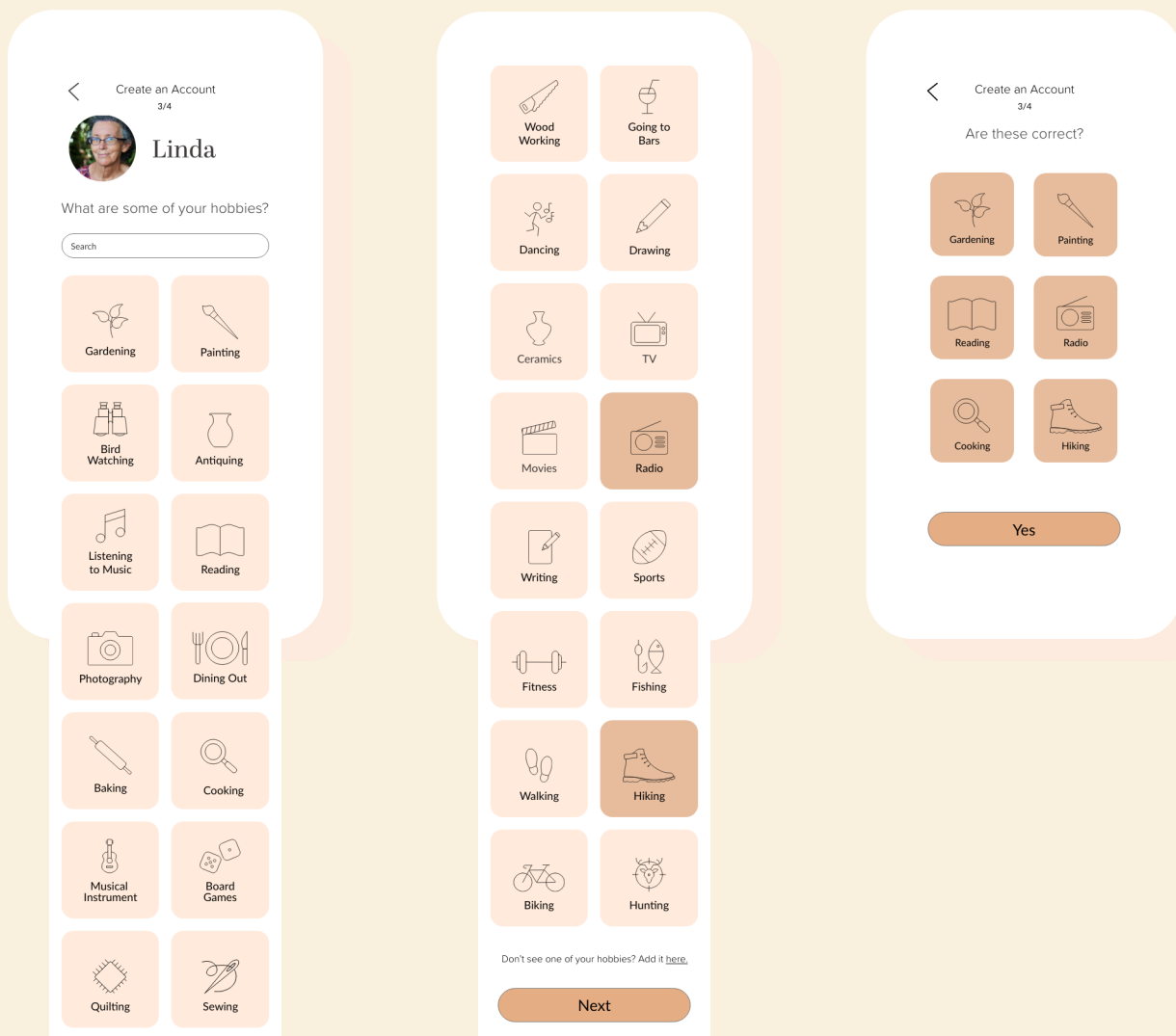
Values

Next step is to identify your values. Values are universal and do not belong to a certain group which will enable connections to be made across aisles. The values were selected and based on Schwartz's theory of values. If a user is unsure of their values they will be able to take a short quiz that will help them discover their values.



Hobbies

The third step is selecting hobbies that you enjoy or are interested in. This allows users to connect with others who enjoy doing the same things as them.



Local Issues

Local issues don't have to be partisan issues. Community members can discover that they may share the same opinions when it comes to specific issues facing their community even if they differ in political party affiliation.

← Create an Account
4/4

Local Issues

Identify the issues facing your community that are most important to you.

1. Every county resident should have reliable access to broadband internet.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. Taxes should be used to increase funding towards infrastructures such as roads and bridges.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. I strongly depend on the U.S. Postal Service as a public service and connection to other parts of the country.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. Public lands should be closed to further development for coal mining and oil extraction.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. A transition to net-zero agriculture like paying farmers to trap methane, convert agricultural waste into useful byproducts, and invest in renewable fuels and energy will result in new job opportunities in my community.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. Every county resident should have access to quality health services.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. Due to lack of access residents in my county are more likely to have lower educational attainment.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. The single-sector economy of my county would benefit by diversifying into one that engages in tourism, clean, energy, and outdoor recreation or other such possibilities.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. Having access to a reliable, clean water source is a concern for my community.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. Farmland preservation and food security it a concern for my community.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree




10. Accessing mental-health services is a challenge for those in my community.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree




← Create an Account
4/4

Your Results

Strongly Agree




  

Broadband Access Transition to Renewable Energy Healthcare Access


  

Post Office Dependence Road Quality Protecting Public Lands

Agree


  

Mental Health Services Farmland Preservation Educational Attainment



Economy Diversification

Neutral

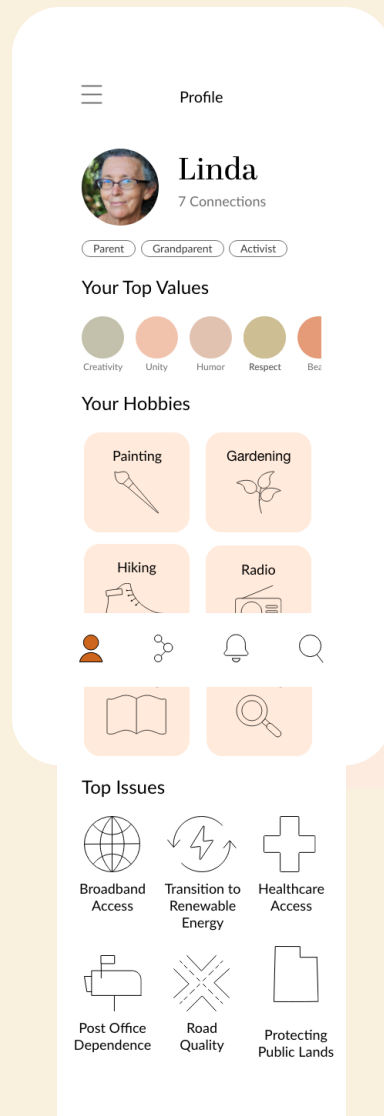


Water Access

Next

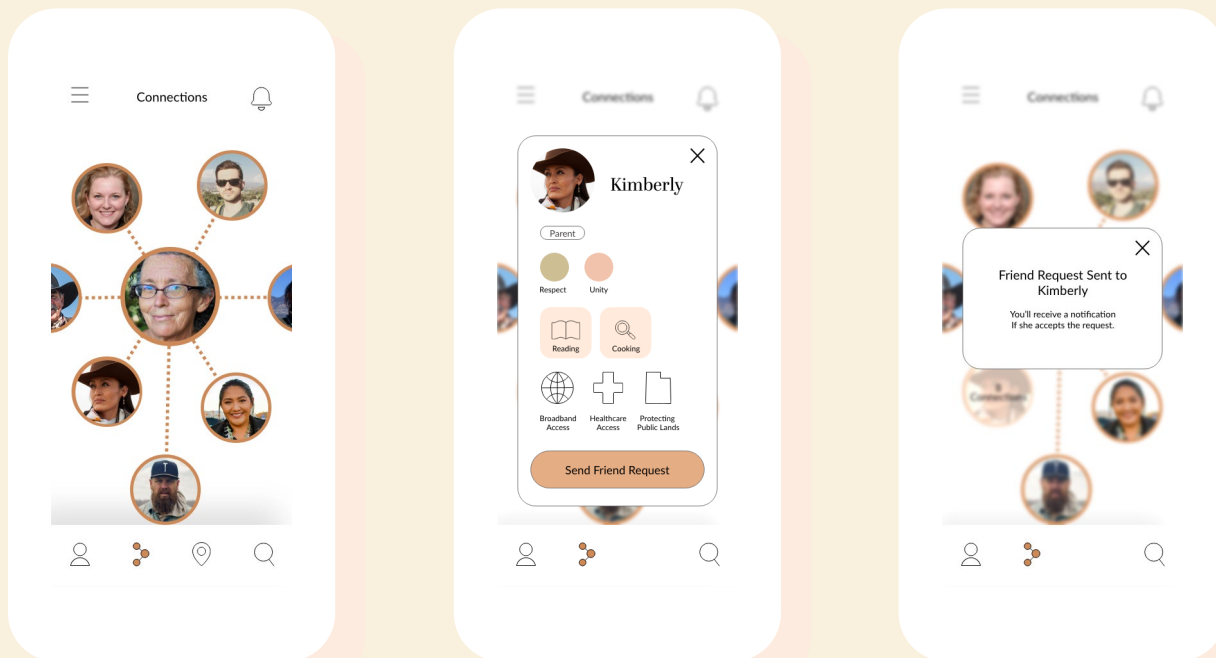
Profile

All the steps to creating the profile have been completed. The user can view their results here on their “profile” page.



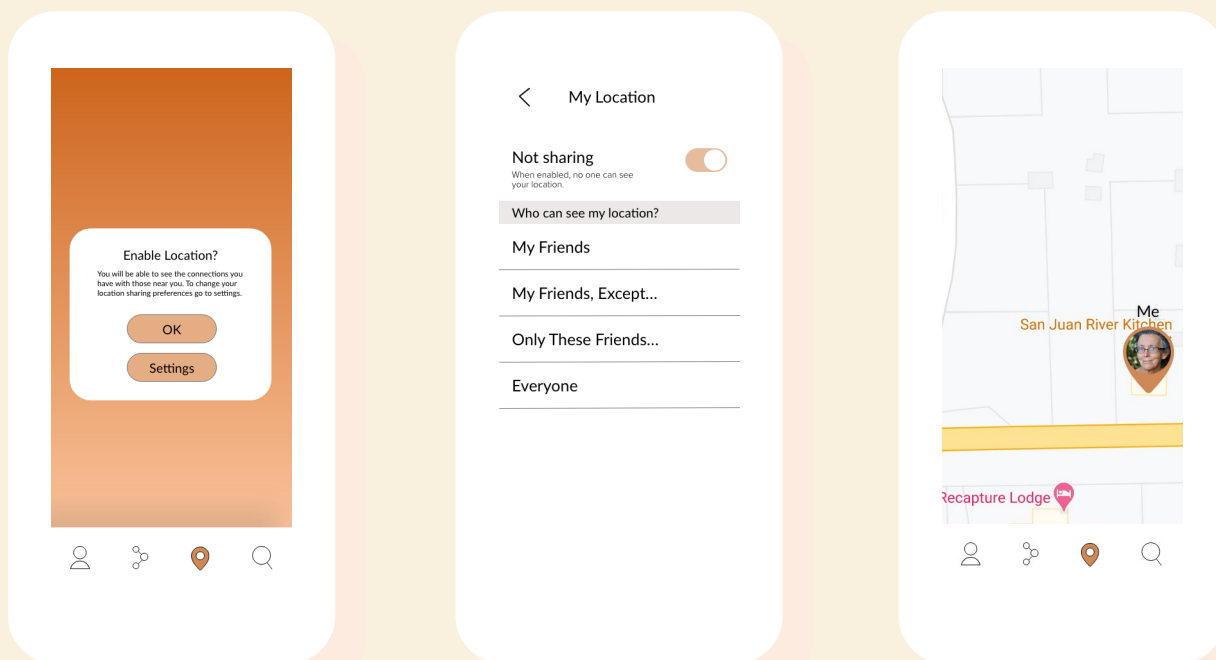
Finding Connections

Once the profile is completed a user will then be able to view their connections, meaning what they share in common with their fellow county members. Users will have the option of friending their connections to be able to view their full profile and possibly view their location.



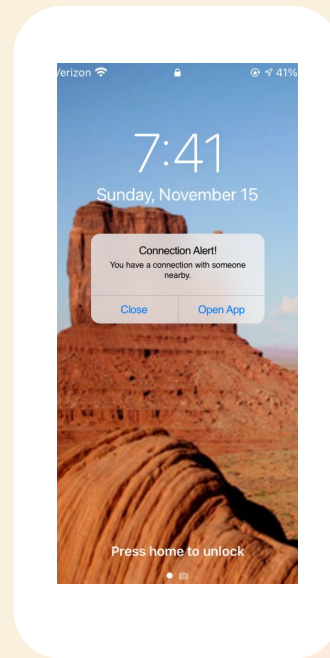
Location

A final feature of the app is location sharing. Users will have full control of who they share their location with whether it be everyone they have a shared connection with or only those which they have 'friended' through the app. Depending on the location settings of others, a user will be able to see when a connection is nearby.

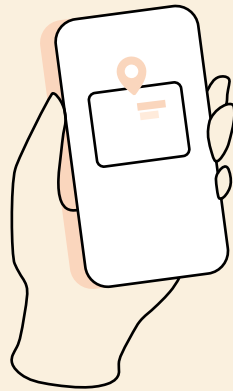


Notifications

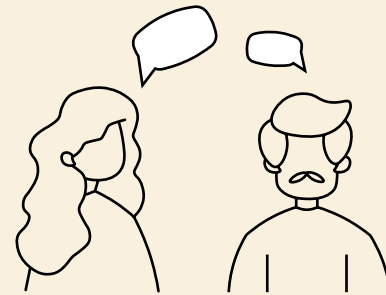
If a user has decided to share their location they will receive notifications when one of their connections is nearby. This enables the user to not only see their connections digitally but in a physical space as well.



User is out in public



User receives notification that one of their connections is nearby



User locates the connection via app and starts up a conversation

05 Impact

Impact

Encourages seeing people different than you not as “other”, but someone with passions, responsibilities, and interests that may be similar to yours.

Decreases divisive rhetoric and make room for conversations about commonalities.

Helps residents recognize that they are all members of the same county.



Bibliography

1 “Rural Utah Project.” n.d. <https://ruralutahproject.org/>.

2 San Juan County

3 “TINKER V. DES MOINES - LANDMARK SUPREME COURT RULING ON BEHALF OF STUDENT EXPRESSION.” n.d. ACLU. <https://www.aclu.org/other/tinker-v-des-moines-landmark-supreme-court-ruling-behalf-student-expression#:~:text=Facebook,Tinker%20v.,protest%20the%20war%20in%20Vietnam>.

4 Buck, Stephanie. 2016. “During Nazi Occupation, Office Supplies Became Symbols of Resistance.” Timeline, November 11, 2016. <https://timeline.com/safety-pin-brexite-trump-dutch-12ce84093550>.

5 Arsenault, Joshua, ed. n.d. “Jewish Stars and Other Holocaust Badges.” The Holocaust Memorial Center. <https://www.holocaustcenter.org/visit/library-archive/holocaust-badges/>.

6 Taddonio, Patrice. 2019. “How China’s Government Is Using AI on Its Uighur Muslim Population.” PBS, November 21, 2019. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/how-chinas-government-is-using-ai-on-its-uighur-muslim-population/>.

7 Gowland, Rebecca, and Tim Thompson. 2013. *Human Identity and Identification*. Cambridge University Press.

8 TURSKA -KAWA, AGNIESZKA, and MIRO HAČEK. 2018. “Local Elections as a Sphere for Forming Citizens’ Political Identity.” *Politics in Central Europe* 13 (January). <https://doi.org/10.1515/pce-2017-0003>.

9 Drutman, Lee. 2016. “How Race and Identity Became the Central Dividing Line in American Politics.” *Vox*, August 30, 2016. <https://www.vox.com/polyarchy/2016/8/30/12697920/race-dividing-american-politics>.

10 Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven Webster. 2016. “The Rise of Negative Partisanship and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections in the 21st Century.” *Electoral Studies* 41 (March): 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.11.001>.

11 Boutyline, Andrei, and Robb Willer. 2016. “The Social Structure of Political Echo Chambers: Variation in Ideological Homophily in Online Networks.” *Political Psychology* xx. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12337>.

12 Brewer, Graham Lee, and Anne Helen Peterson. 2018. “In Southern Utah, Navajo Voters Rise to Be Heard.” *High Country News* and *Buzzfeed News*, October 28, 2018. <https://www.hcn.org/articles/tribal-affairs-in-southern-utah-navajo-voters-rise-to-be-heard-award>.

13 Grabar, Henry. 2020. “The Battle for San Juan County, Utah.” *Slate*, August 25, 2020. <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/08/san-juan-county-utah-native-americans-republicans-bears-ears.html>.

14 Chowdhury, Madhuleena Roy. 2020. "The 3 Best Questionnaires for Measuring Values." <https://positivepsychology.com/values-questionnaire/>.

15 Ajilore, Olugbenga, and Zoe Willingham. 2019. "Redefining Rural America." Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2019/07/17/471877/redefining-rural-america/>.

16 Anderson, Emily, Anne Bitter, Avery Conner, Henry Gilbert, Hannah Horman, Nathan Kunz, Savannah Mailoux, et al. 2017. "World's Apart? Utah's Urban Rural Divide." Praxis Lab: University of Utah Honors College. https://d2vxd53ymoe6ju.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/20200330042426/Two_Utahs_Final-Report-Honors-Praxis-2018.pdf.

Photos

pg 2 Photo by Rural Utah Project

pg 5 Photo by Rural Utah Project

pg 6 Photo by Trent Nelson. The Salt Lake Tribune
Photo by Rick Bowmer
Photo by Utah Dine Bikeyah
Photo by Evan Vucci. The Salt Lake Tribune
Photo by Zak Podmore. The Salt Lake Tribune

pg 11 Photo by American Civil Liberties Union

pg 12 Photo by Evgenii Khaldeai

pg 17 Photo by Utah.com

pg 18 Photo by Tim Mossholder. Unsplash
Photo by Getty Images

pg 19 Photo by Sidvics. Wikimemdia Commons


pg 21 Photo by Aubrey Odom Unsplash

pg 28 Photo by Anthony Metcalfe. Unsplash
Photo by Irina Zhorov. High Country News

pg 29 Photo by Brett Sayles. Pexels

pg 31 Photo by Josh Ewing. High Country News

pg 46 Photo by Aubrey Odom. Unsplash



Fonts used Abril Display and Proxima Nova.

Special thanks to Sam Van Wetter, Madeline McGill, Daylene Redhorse and Ali Vallarta at the Rural Utah Project.

Original illustrations and iconography done by Hayley Dearden Takeuchi