



NerdHerdr

Alexis Miller, Natalie Morin, Tyler Anne Isaman, Taylor Dean, Tess Wu

Primary Persona: Student User

The interviewee sample size consisted of 7 students, 3 intermediate and 4 beginner students. All of the interviewees were USC students aged 18-22 who were studying a broad range of fields, with focuses ranging from technical to art and business. Four were women while three were men.

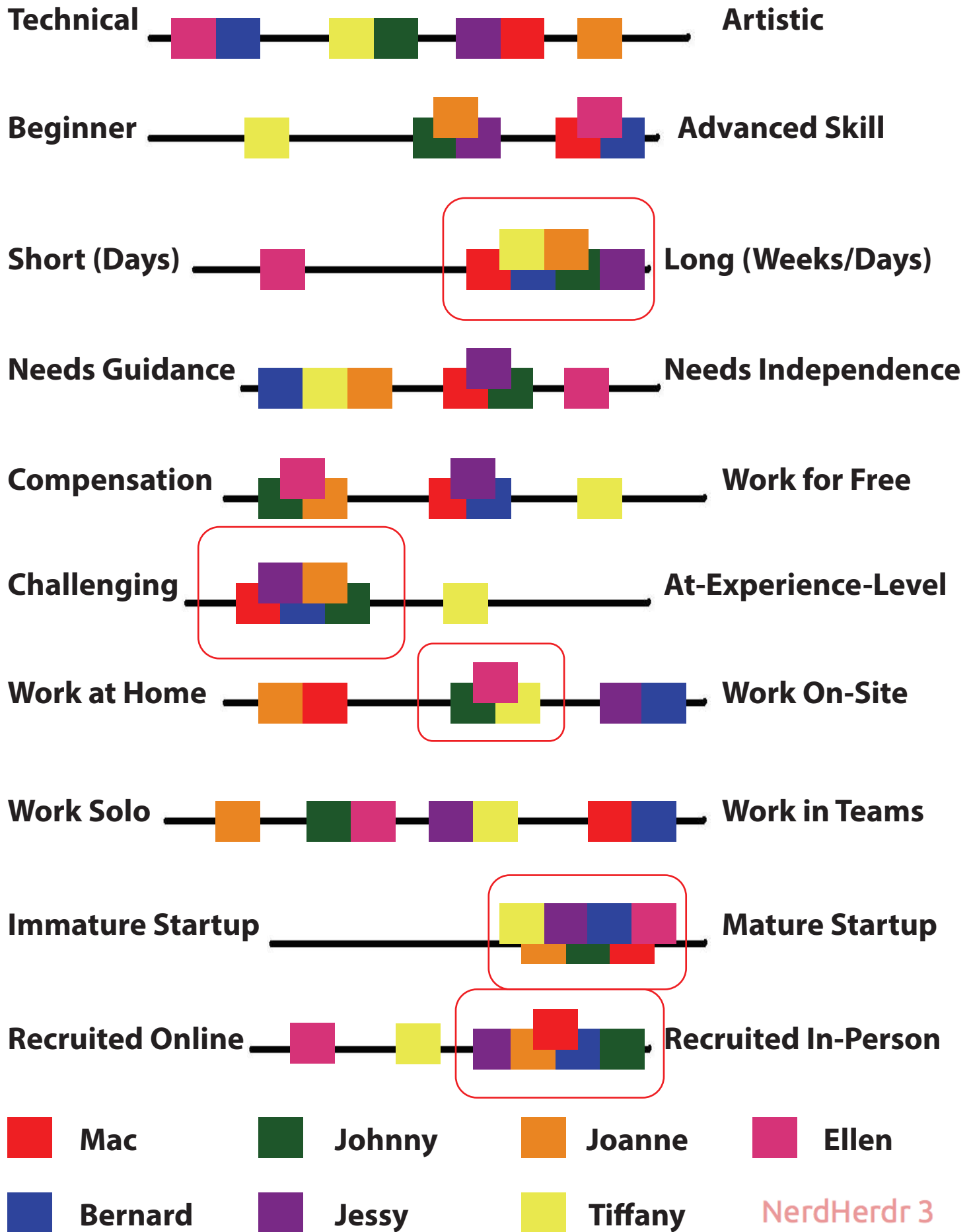
Questions

- Could you please tell me a little bit about your background and what projects you're currently working on?
- Would you describe yourself as a beginner in your field or more experienced?
- Based on your average availability each week, how much time would you be willing to commit to this service on a USC startup?
- On average how long (days or weeks) would as an ideal project on this service last?
- On an ideal project how much guidance would you expect?
- Would you expect compensation using this service? If so how much?
- Do you want to be challenged when working on these projects? Or would you rather stay within your given skillset?
- Would you prefer to telecommute or work onsite with the team?
- On an ideal project what level of independence would you prefer? If you prefer to work on a team, how many team members are ideal?
- Would you prefer to work for a well established startup or one that is just getting started? Please qualify your answer.
- How do you like to be recruited? Online or in person.
- Have you ever tried to reach out to talent before?
- What are the biggest problems or inefficiencies in your development process today?
- How would you expect a system for talent recruitment to work?

We found that our interviewees mapped closely to create one student persona. Most students preferred to work on projects with mildly challenging work and many did not place great value on compensation. Many students wished for projects that lasted about a month or longer depending on its the size and nature of the project. Students were hesitant to identify as completely technical or artistic as many possessed skills in multiple areas although their

response to this question did not seem to correspond significantly to different spectrum values. Most students considered their skillset to be intermediate to advanced and preferred to work at more mature startups. There was a mix of students who either preferred to work at home or on site, which tells us that we need to address different work styles. Finally, all students tended toward in-person recruiting over online recruitment when looking for jobs.

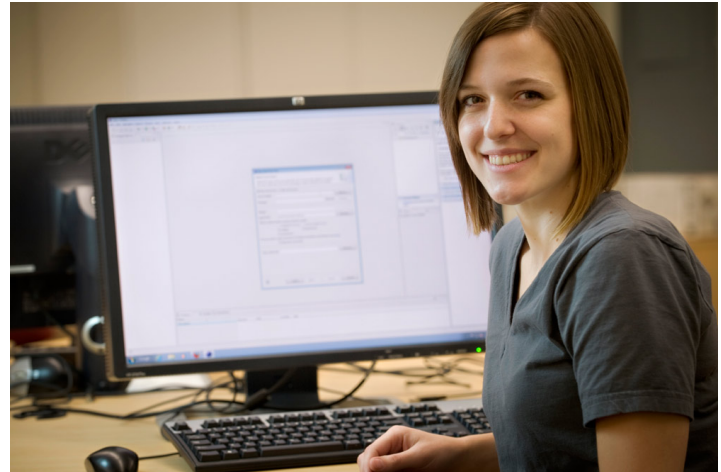
Student Spectrum Mapping



Janice McAllister

Student Persona

Janice is a sophomore studying business with a minor in ITP web development at USC. She was born and raised in Orange County. Currently, she is searching for a new intern experience and is exploring her options this Spring. In her last internship experience Janice felt she learned a lot but is now ready to delve more deeply into web development and take on larger roles. However, Janice feels that she still lacks the technical knowhow to be given more responsibility with web development. She consistently finds herself looking to push the boundaries of her abilities and has passion for pursuing new projects. She constantly enhances her skills through varying and difficult projects. Her philosophy in life is, "Nothing is impossible!" She believes that her skills warrant some benefits although it is not a priority for her. Last year Janice discovered that her most beneficial work came from employment that lasted a month or more. Janice is constantly going out and attempting to socialize with new people as she prefers face to face contact with all her friends. Janice's junior year has her staying very busy with her major and minor workload so she has very little time to travel to downtown LA. Instead, she finds that she gets the most work done in her apartment or on campus where she can work both alone and around others. One of her good friends, Josh worked for a mature startup last fall and his positive experience has convinced Janice to try out the mature startup world. Throughout this next semester and this Summer Janice has the goals of challenging herself and working on an in depth project where she can learn through her own work and through others. One dream is to work for Chill, a company that provides a video platform designed to allow people to bond and share in a social experience. She loves that idea that it helps us remain close to others and allows her to foster her development skills in small but stable tech startup. Regardless of where she ends up Janice is determined to make the most of the coming months and all the opportunities that it holds. In a few years Janice hopes to take her knowledge and fulfill her goal of founding her own startup in the LA area.



Secondary Persona: Startup User

The Interviewee sample size for our second persona consisted of five interviews, three startup founders and two student leaders involved in mature USC student organizations. Two of our startup founders are currently working on the beginning stages of their companies while the third is currently seeking funding for his mature project. The USC Auto Club and DOZ are student organizations that have been around for at least five years each. Both organizations have a strong base and are currently working on expanding their reach.

Questions

Startups:

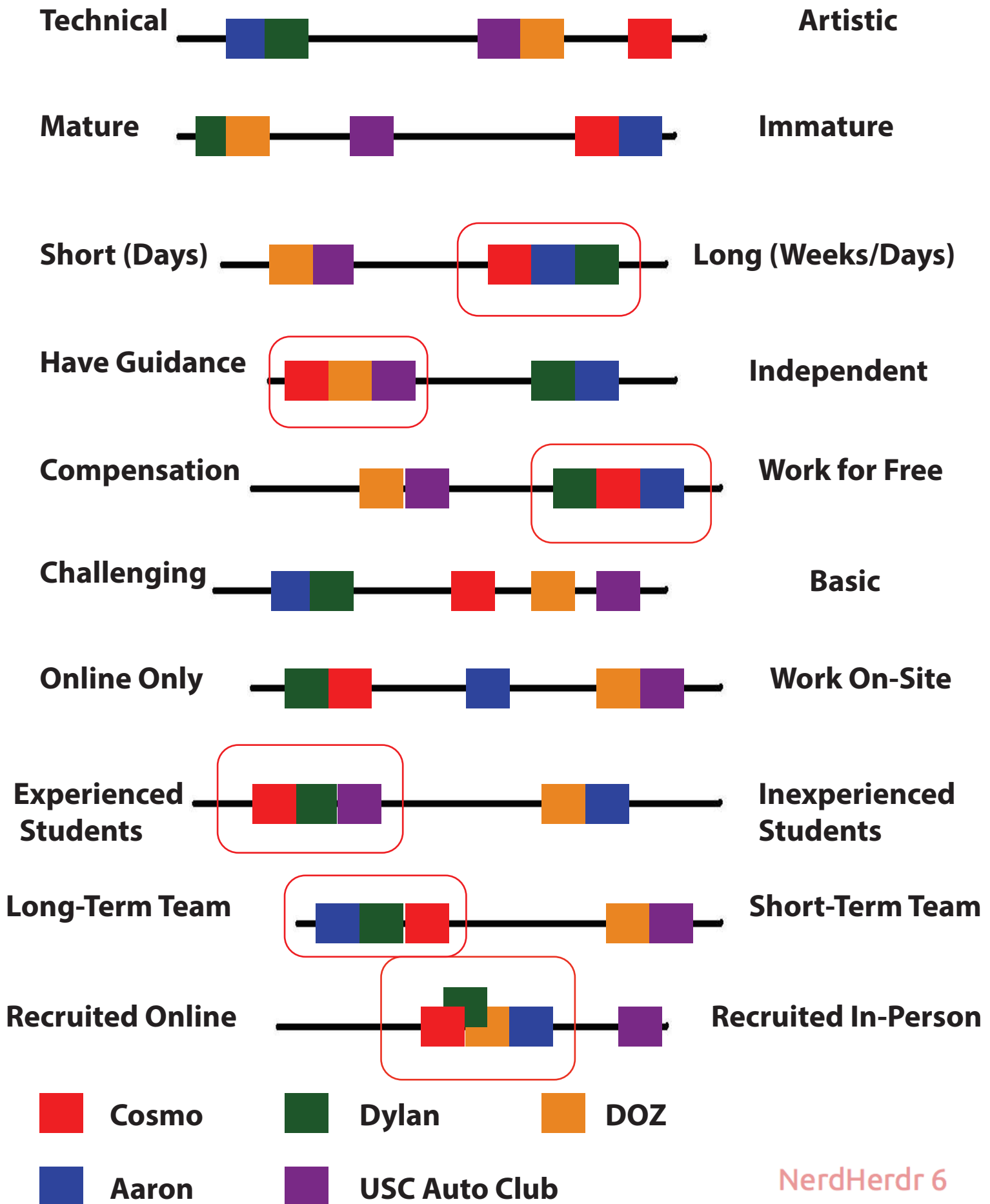
- Could you please tell me a little bit about your background and what startup projects you're currently working on?
- What is your timescale for fully fledged projects?
- What are the biggest problems or inefficiencies in your development process today?
- How do you recruit talent to work on your projects?
- How would you expect a system for talent recruitment to work?

Student Orgs:

- Could you please tell me a little bit about your background and what the Auto Club is working on/towards?
- What are the key services that your organization provides (both internally and externally)?
- What types of PR does your organization do?
- Describe a time when your organization needed certain skills to finish a project.
- How would you expect a system for talent recruitment to work?

We noticed that there was a disparity between the needs and goals of students who were involved in mature startups/organizations and those involved with initiatives that were less developed. Mature startups and organizations were clear about the kind of student they would want to hire as they had more experience recruiting. They were more willing to pay (usually found funding or have a university budget), needed experienced students who could *prove* their skills by adding a resume or a link to examples of their work, did not want hires to work remotely and wanted a guarantee that they could be trusted to carry out work. Immature startups and organizations were not finding many students to help them because they didn't have funding or salaries to offer or couldn't find people with appropriate skills. If they did find help from students, however, they would only need them as website developers or photographers for a short amount of time (similar to freelance). All of the startups and organizations tended to find that lack of experience (technical, usually) was slowing their development processes and they also didn't have a lot of time to spend on recruiting through email. They all opted for a type of recruitment platform that allowed those hiring to quickly view examples of the student's work, view their contact info and more generally be as simple and efficient as possible due to their lack of free time.

Startup Spectrum Mapping



James Williamson

Startup Persona

James is a second semester sophomore at USC and hails from Newport Beach. He is a business major with a film minor, but is trying to get his own startup, Mishmash, up and running. Mishmash is a social media site and app that allows users to check into a location and based on number of check-ins get rewards from a myriad of companies. He thinks



that his idea is great, has gotten a lot of encouragement from his friends and family and has made some strides so far, but feels he does not have skill to execute many of the components of the startup. He has a mind for PR and business strategies, but feels that he needs many more hands on deck than the couple of friends that he has already recruited in person and at his fraternity. Ideally, he'd want to collaborate with Viterbi programmers, ITP web developers, business and PR students. Currently, his recruiting process includes searching through Facebook, ConnectSC, Craigslist, computer science groups and poaching students from CS meetings. He's really focused on finding experienced technical students and doesn't want to have to wade through recruits whom he cannot trust or don't have the skill or time that he needs. He also has been recruiting from around the greater Los Angeles area, but wants to narrow his net to just USC students, as he would want the startup to stay "in the Trojan family" and feels that he and his peers could mutually benefit from each other. Ideally, he'd want to be recruiting mostly online, but does not want to rewrite out lengthy emails or information about the startup. He wants direct links or attachments of previous work examples and to know students' work goals. He thinks it's okay if they have intermediate experience, as long as they can do the job and are hard workers, like he is. His hires are most likely not paid much at this point, but is working on writing grant proposals, finding sponsors, and trying to submit his startup to competitions. James is not interested in short-term recruits--he's tried finding freelance graphic designers and programmers, but they are too fickle and he likes the idea of building up a solid, close team. He wants a relationship with his team and does not every hire people who live remotely. He hopes that after he finds enough people to lend their skills to MishMash and he can allocate some seed money (or pool everyone's money together), he can establish the startup in an office close to the USC campus and start spreading the word about the app. He knows that the Trojan family is a great source of support so as long as he invests in them they will help him succeed and grow. Since he is only just about to finish his sophomore year, he has high hopes for the next two years and wishes that his startup will develop and grow at the same pace as he does.