Magenta
Making democracy fun again.

MIMS Capstone 2024

Coming Up
Suggested for you

Berkeley City Council Meeting
Friday, April 26 at 2pm
2180 Milvia St, Berkeley, CA 94704

This Week
Near 94705
Farmer’s Market
The United States guarantees its citizens freedom, peace and security through a representative democracy.
There are three levels of government
Local government has the most influence over individual citizens’ everyday lives.
Here in Berkeley, local government has a central role in addressing critical student issues such as access to affordable housing and safety.
Young adults ages 18 - 34 represent 31% of California’s population, but only 18% of likely voters.
The effects of this deficit may be amplified in university towns like ours, in which **students** represent 38% of Berkeley’s population.
A national survey asked 2,018 young adults why they did not vote in the 2022 elections.

- 38% forgot or were too busy
- 21% did not have enough information
- 32% didn’t think it mattered
When asked about **different forms of participation** aside from voting, and most expressed an interest

- **40%** Join a protest or demonstration
- **21%** Volunteer for a campaign
- **10%** Run for office
When asked about **different forms of participation** aside from voting, and most expressed an interest.

Yet **only 40% felt well qualified** to do so.
Students may lack the information they need to confidently engage in local politics.
Student needs suffer when they are underserved by and disconnected from their local government.
How might we increase local political engagement among students?
Student needs are too important to leave up to chance

Qualitative Research — Quantitative Research — Solution Design — Usability Testing

Evidence-based development process that is effective and reproducible
How, exactly, did we do it?

Qualitative Research — Quantitative Research — Solution Design — Usability Testing
We asked students about their experiences with local political engagement and information resources.
We Did Research.

Research Goals

- How do students conceptualize and practice local community and political engagement?
- What aspects of the local political sense-making process they find “fun”?

Method

- 15 semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students with >2 years in Berkeley.
- 2 Special activities: preferred multimedia and local voting simulation.
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**Politics in Berkeley**

- "Berkeley is more like Southside I think."
- "Berkeley is in a way that’s very different, it’s a sense of community in a space like that."

**Berkeley City**

- "I think the city is very friendly and welcoming."
- "The nightlife of Berkeley is really important.
- "Northside: 'I try not to go too much because it’s far.'"

**Information intake**

- "My task will sometimes start off on that."
- "Local government is really important — it’s the closest to the people."

**Local Gov**

- "I’m basically here, to be honest. As a student it’s just one part of democracy."
- "We don’t pay as much attention as global gov. issues.
- "I can’t tell you a single person who’s in charge of our local government.

**Defining (Berkeley) Community**

- "In terms of the city, I guess what I feel is a lack of feeling, maybe through the political part, I think that it’s a lack of feeling.
- "Because it’s a Big City, where we have two kinds of very political perspectives. So there’s a lot of debate on that stuff, and I feel like I notice that in that community, but I notice that in the large Berkeley community as well."

**Partners as a continuation of Southside**

- "I feel like I’ve seen that, and it’s a better place to be."
- "I think that the city is better, and the community at large is better, out of it from being a..."

**Methods of participation**

- "I think usually I judge what you see more than what I see.
- "You like what you see, not what you read.
- "I don’t know if it’s a better understanding of Berkeley as a city."

**UC Berkeley politics connect to general local Berkeley politics**

- "Because all the people that I would be interacting with a lot of them who are taking an action or taking initiative to be a part of local politics are usually connected to the university."

**About Berkeley: Model UN, Speech, FRIENDS (model UN talks too much)**

- "Lean on your environment."
- "Those people who talk about it."

**Other parts**

- "I think, or at least I think, generally that there’s less exposure for people who don’t have the time or don’t have the community.
- "And that’s something I like, like, everybody working hard in Berkeley."

**Methods of participation**

- "I think that’s because I don’t see a lot of people walking and doing things."
We Did Research.

**Research Goals**

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- 2 Special activities: preferred multimedia and local voting simulation.
"Politics" feels unapproachable and intimidating: engagement is only equated with protest.

“I do feel a little bit of regret considering just how active people are on campuses trying to support the causes they believe in that I also do believe in. I respect that they’re able to do that. But I myself just...don't.”

Political engagement exists as a dichotomy, where you’re either “all-in” or “all-out.”

“I might not know enough about a certain topic or just like, like I don't know, I just kind of feels like from the outside like looking in like it’s a bit like intimidating to join in.
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“I might not know enough about a certain topic or just like, like I don’t kind of feels like from the outside like looking in like it's a bit like intimidating to join in.
We used quantitative data as our cross-reference.

48 questions, 155 responses (n=155)

Machine Learning

3 Clusters
High, Medium and Low levels of political engagement
Four Engagement Types

Three Tiers of Engagement

Validate Multiple Forms of Democratic Engagements!

Validate Multiple Levels of Democratic Engagements!
Three design goals to lower Politics’ pedestal

1. Provide permission for all four engagement types
2. Validate each cluster of political engagement
3. Enable students to explore and practice political engagement
Magenta is the solution

Our mobile application provides busy students with “a political starter pack” that makes local political information highly accessible, provides avenues for political participation, and makes it fun and engaging.
User onboarding

Politics isn’t one size fits all, and neither is Magenta.

We foreground what users care about while still allowing for them to explore something new.
Politi-Persona

Our proprietary personality quiz figures out how users like to engage with politics and uses it to personalize their experience.
Politi-Persona

Users get a better understanding of their political personality, what activities they might enjoy, and where they might want to focus next.
Politics can be complicated. We keep it simple so that users not only build understanding, but feel confident in what they know.
Activity Suggestions

We get users involved by giving them specific actionable tasks they can do each week - personalized to fit them.

This week’s activity suggestions for your Politi-Persona:

- Attend this week’s city council meeting
- Sign up to do voter outreach
Events

We gather events happening in users’ communities, cities, and their universities to help users get involved in any way they can.
Explore

With our explore page users can choose to learn more about what interests them.
Explore

We meet users where they are by providing background, context, explanations, and updates on local policy.

Here’s everything you need to know about Measure B

Background
The voters of Alameda County approved Measure B in 2000 and Measure BB in 2014 to provide sales tax funding for transportation projects.

What does it do?
Measure B is Berkeley’s plan to level up our bus system.
Badges

We build habits by rewarding users for their engagement.
A solution designed for and validated by students

- Qualitative Research
- Quantitative Research
- Solution Design
- Usability Testing
We validated with user testing

Testing What?

- **Effectiveness**: Does participants’ sense of Berkeley expand after using Magenta? Are they excited to participate?
- **Efficiency**: How much effort does it require for users to find and understand these features?
- **User satisfaction**: How does the experience of exploring and reading Magenta’s information framework feel?

Method

- 6 test tasks
- Contextual Inquiry
- 7 users (n=7)
We found...

86% of users were able to **successfully** and **confidently** summarize information provided to them through Magenta’s framework.

“Makes [politics] feel very engaging, like I want to know what is going to happen next.”
100% of users found Magenta easy to use and easy to navigate.

“The activities made me feel like I could do something … a little reminder of what I could do to help myself.”

“The colorful design makes you continue reading.”

All users would recommend Magenta to at least one other prospective user

“I know a lot of people like me who don’t really care about local politics, but would find it useful to know what’s happening in the world and just hop in.”

“I would share this with close friends and family. They have the same struggle like me where we want to get more involved with news but it’s so complicated.”
How might we increase local political engagement among university students?
Magenta makes democracy fun

User-focused features

Politi-Persona

Accessible framework for understanding

Connection with local community
Want to learn more about Magenta?

Our official website is your hub for following our journey and connecting with the platform.
Thank you for listening!

Get connected and take our personality quiz @ magenta-capstone.webflow.io