

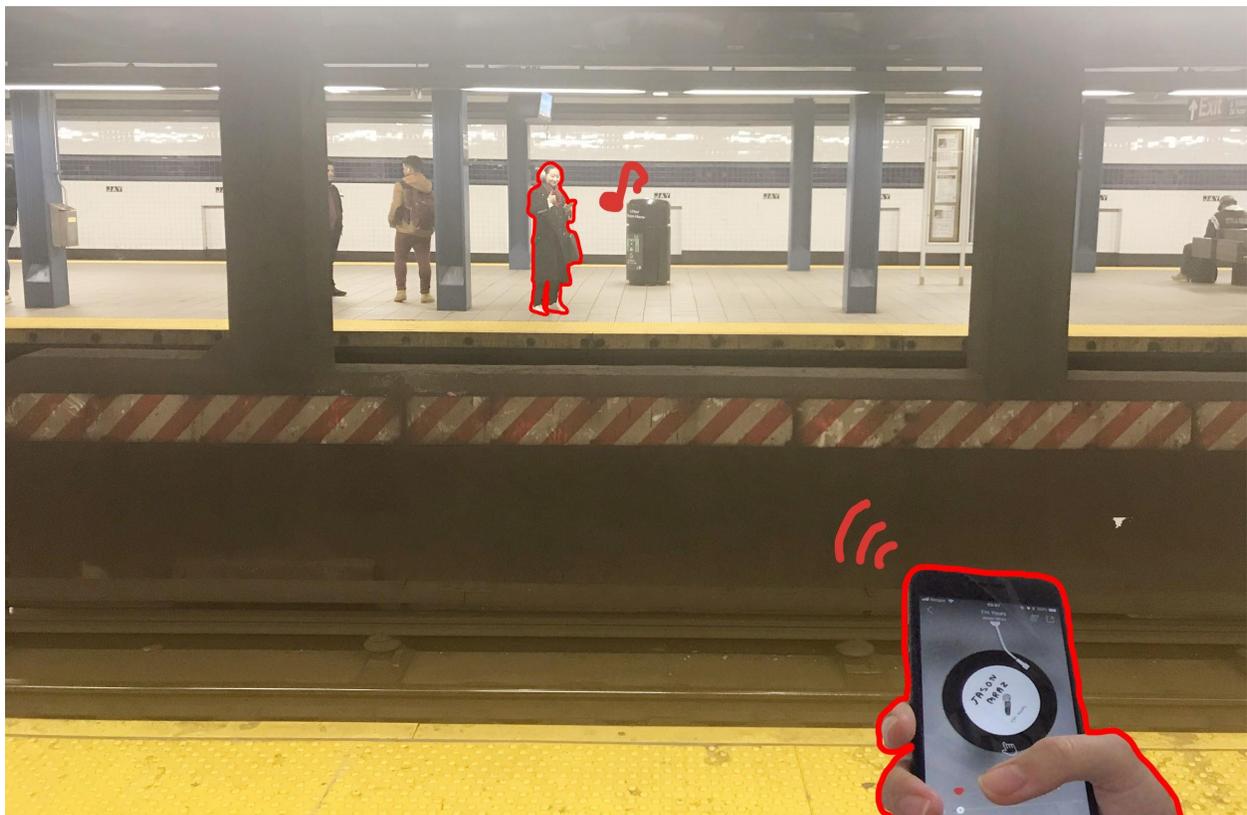
STAND BY ME

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Qin Yin | Yiren Wang | Shuyi Chang | Chuang Xie

|Abstract

Stand By Me is a casual social game that friends or acquaintances could play when waiting for the subway trains. In the game, players are paired off. Two players play music for each other and use specific gestures to tell each other if they want to keep listening. Players decide when they want to get on the train and end the game. The goal of this open ended game is to let people enjoy the music and the time they privately share while waiting for subways through a secret, wordless, yet deep communication.



|Rules

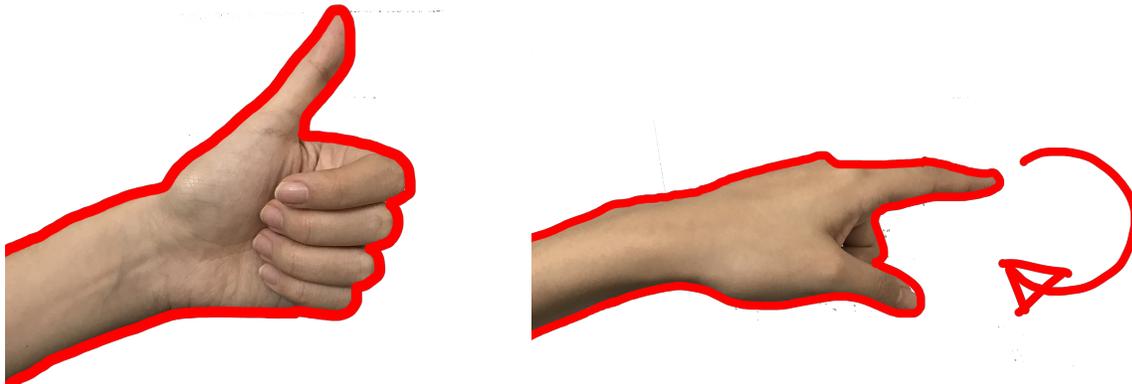
At the end of the day, a group of friends entering the subway station, taking trains toward different directions...

Before entering the station:

- Take out your bluetooth headphone and pair with one of your friends. Connect your headphone to your friend's phone, and your friend connect hers/his headphone with your phone too. Make sure that you and your friend are taking trains in OPPOSITE directions so later you will be standing on different sides of the track (for example, if you are taking a northbound train, your friend must be taking a southbound train).
- Use the song *Stand By Me* to test your bluetooth connection, marking the beginning of the game.

Standing on the platform:

- Find your friend and stand facing each other.
- Change the music to a song that is in your phone and you want to play for your friend.
- Thumb up to tell your friend that you love the song she or he is playing. Do a rotating gesture to tell she or he that you want her/him to switch the song. You can do the gestures whenever you want.



If your train is coming:

- If you want to continue playing the game, stay where you are.
- If you want to catch the train and go home, play *Stand By Me* to end the game.
- If you hear your partner playing *Stand By Me*, it means that she/he is leaving, you can play the same song back to say goodbye.

|Design Process Statement

From the beginning, we have made a decision to take advantage of the unique physical feature of a subway platform: passengers are separated by the track into two groups, each group standing along the platform on one side. Passengers can see each other yet cannot get closer nor talk. At times, there are trains stopping at/passing by the station, blocking passengers' view. Thus our first prototype is based on the spatial separation. It is an attempt to build communication across platform. Players are asked to stand on the two separated platforms facing each other and they are able to gain points if succeeding in taking a photo with their opponents' head or hand in it. Yet when we playtested on the platform, the prototype felt somehow broken because no one really wanted to move but kept hiding behind the columns. Moving, although thought to be the interesting and dynamic part of our game, makes players too easy to be shot. Moreover, as the rules imply that players should be better on their own to win, all the actions required by the game, including running and hiding and taking pictures, felt extremely awkward as most of the passengers around are all silently standing still.

Therefore, we realized through our early playtest that the atmosphere and environment of the site can be a big influence on our game. The magic circle here can be easily broken given the fact that the game must be played in public space with so many outsiders around. During our site research, we also noticed that there are quite some people on the platform wearing their headphones. Listening to music on one's own is a claim of separation from the surroundings, yet bluetooth headphones can be easily connected to someone else's phones, and listening to someone else's music can actually be a privately shared communication, which is deep indeed. The physical barrier created by the track implies that the two players cannot really stand 'by' each other, yet through the music, a feeling of caring and sharing interests with each other can be created. Even when played with friends, the game reveals characteristics that players might not have noticed before and leads to further understanding. Rules are only about switching music and more freedom is left for the players as they can choose songs they want to share, making eye contact with their partner on the other side of the platform or simply smile when they enjoy the song.