

Daniel Kim  
HCDE 318  
28 January 2018

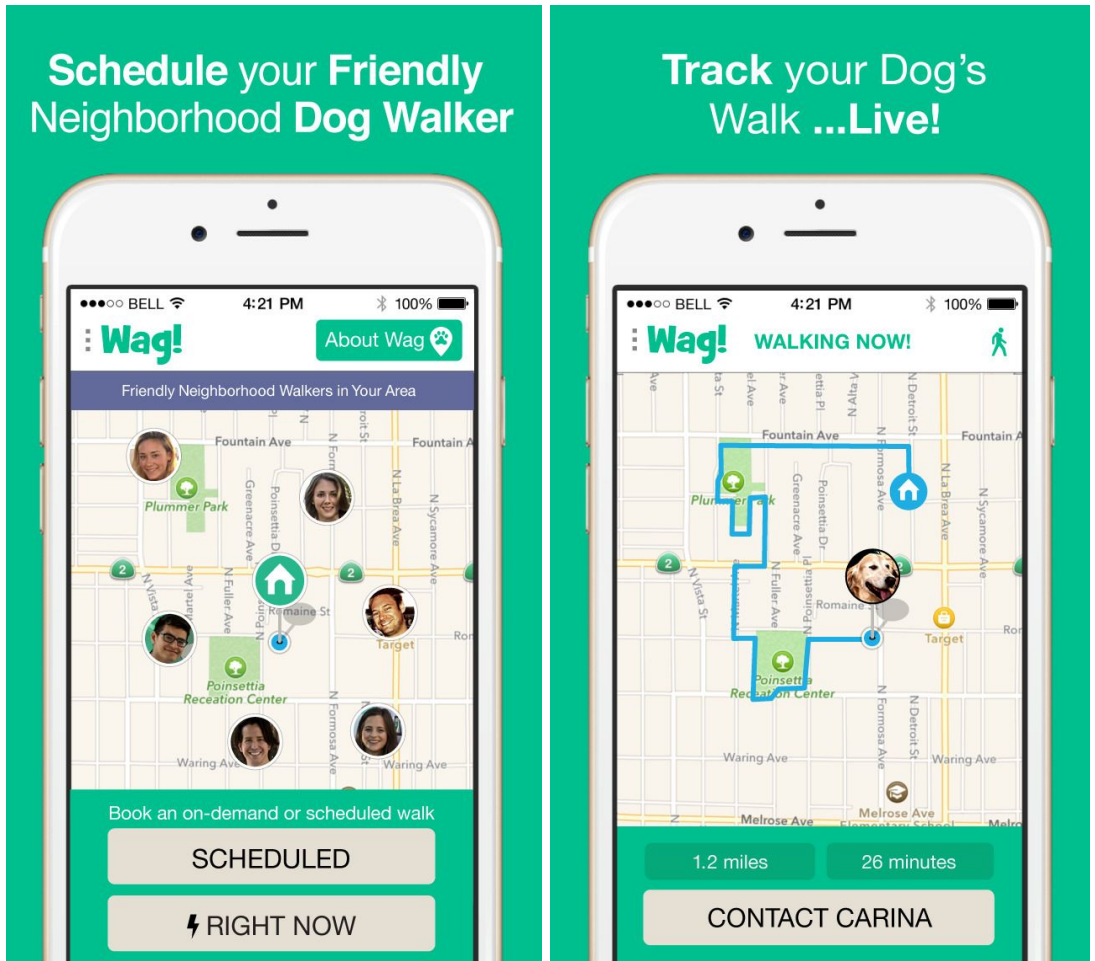
## I3: Competitive Analysis

### Competing Product

Wag! is an app and service that matches dog owners to dog walkers, similar to Uber, Caviar, and other gig economy companies. Anyone over 18 with a smartphone can apply to be a walker or sitter, and applicants are registered after watching training videos and passing a \$25 background check [1]. Customers who sign up are sent a free lockbox that allows walkers to pick up a dog from the house while the owners are away, presumably at work or on vacation. This is similar to how many Airbnb's work, and it's a system that relies partly on trust, although homes are insured up to \$1,000,000 [1]. Once on a walk, owners can track the walkers on a map with gps, and walkers can drop pins to mark when the dog relieves itself. After the walk is over, walkers drop the dog off and fill out a short report card for it.

From multiple sources and reviews, it seems that Wag! does a better job of serving dog owners than dog walkers [2]. This is largely due to the high volume of people signing up to be walkers and a disproportionately small number of dog owners requesting walks. Requests are typically picked up within a matter of seconds, which means that many walkers have to constantly monitor their notifications and hit "accept" without looking at the details first [2]. This could potentially leads to problems like walkers accepting requests for dogs who are too big or energetic for them, or who may be untrained and in need of a more experienced handler. In addition, Wag! takes about 40 percent of the payment, which is relatively high compared to many similar services.

On the other hand, many walkers report good experiences with dogs and their owners. There appears to be a generally good relationship between the two user groups, despite a few incidents of dogs getting loose, or in one case running away entirely [3]. One of the strongest pros for dog owners is the ability to request walks on-demand, without having to go anywhere or personally hand a leash off to anyone. For many customers, this is what gives the app value, and it seems Wag! has mostly succeeded in making that process smooth and less worry-free.



From the customer view, Wag! displays a map showing nearby walkers, and the route they take during a walk.

**References**

[1] "Frequently Asked Questions". [Online]. Available: <https://wagwalking.com/faq>. [Accessed: 28 Jan 2018].

[2] "Wag App Review – My Experience As An On-Demand Dog Walker", 2017. [Online]. Available: <https://financialpanther.com/wag-app-review/>. [Accessed: 26 Jan 2018].

[3] "EXCLUSIVE: Brooklyn dog lost during walk arranged on Wag! app, the Uber for dog walkers", 2015. [Online]. Available: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn-dog-lost-Walk-arranged-wag-app-article-1.2451901>. [Accessed: 27 Jan 2018].