Tourist App

Description

It would be useful to have an application that allows users to browse for different kinds of attractions (natural, urban and so on) by searching for them and having a list of results, being able to view them on a map, read and write reviews as well as rate and view pictures of the attraction. The user base for this application is still raging from 18 and 54 years having a smartphone.

Below is an update list of features, the list is the exact same one as in Part 1 however the features that are removed from the 1st version are stroked.

User Level Features

- Log in with Facebook, Google and other social network accounts.
- ~~Upload pictures of attractions (eventually with GPS coordinates and make trip albums).~~
    - ~~Each user has a limited total size for his albums.~~
- ~~Album management.~~
    - ~~Picture management.~~
- ~~Friends list.~~
- ~~Create trip plan (eventually including friends with which the user goes on a trip).~~

Attraction Level Features

- Browse attractions by country, city or tags.
- Browse on a map.
- Post new attractions (links, description, pictures).
- Rate and review visited attractions (also rate reviews).
- ~~Show a last visited date.~~
- Rate accessibility (car, train, bus etc.).
- ~~Facebook integration (check in on Facebook from app).~~
- ~~Recommend to friends.~~

Design space

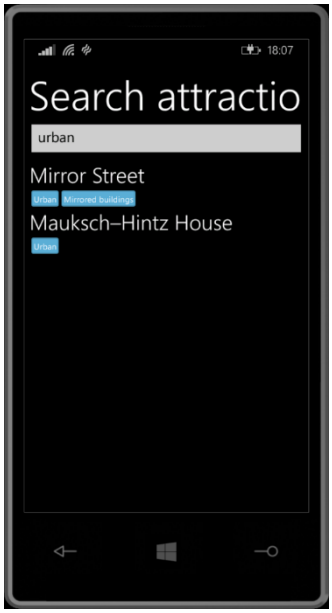
The requirement that is proving quite problematic is the map. A user is free to move on the map however in the same time the application must update the current location with existing attractions in his current view. This means that attractions beyond his view should not be loaded while the ones in view should be visible by pins or icons on the map. Determining the actual view is one issue, when a user zooms out enough no icons should appear as it would not be very useful to see a chunk of icons hovering over the city name.

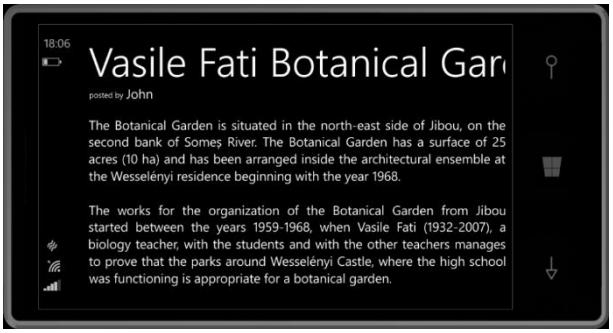
The easiest tasks are the search ones that do not involve the map as any user can do it without authentication meaning that no security issues arise. The hardest ones are the ones including a map, posting new attractions followed by browsing on a map. Posting new attractions has most dependencies, user log in, picture upload and content validation.

The user scenario considered when making the design alternatives is the one we considered to be most common, searching for an attraction. The application opens up either in a greeting view or directly in the search view. After typing a sentence to search for the results are showed in a list from where they can be individually viewed in detail.

Design alternatives

Alternative 1





This proposal is an actual Windows Phone App that uses mock data to show how it would be used. When the application starts the user is first presented the greeting view (1st image) which shows attractions having the tag he/she chosen as favorite. By tapping on one of the attraction the user is navigated to a detailed view having at the end the attractions GPS coordinates and used tags.

From the greeting page the user can also tap on the search button and search for attractions by entering a few key words. Then a list of attractions is displayed and again if one of them is tapped the user sees the details of that attraction.

Advantages

- Clean design
- Responsive (screen rotation)

Disadvantages

- The "Hello" on the greeting screen is a bit counter intuitive, some users thought it is the app name
- It does not include a map
- Non-navigable tags and even if they were they are a small area to tap on
- No ratings or reviews

Alternative 2

This proposal has the search view as the view that greets the user when the application starts. After typing in the search box and tapping the search button a list of attractions is displayed each having an image associated with the type of attraction (parks have the same image, museums as well and so on). When tapping on one of the attractions shown in the list a detailed view is displayed.

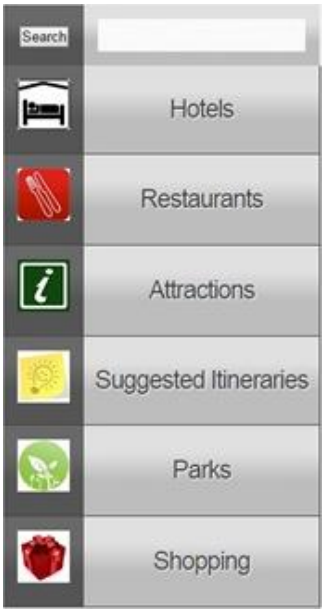
Advantages

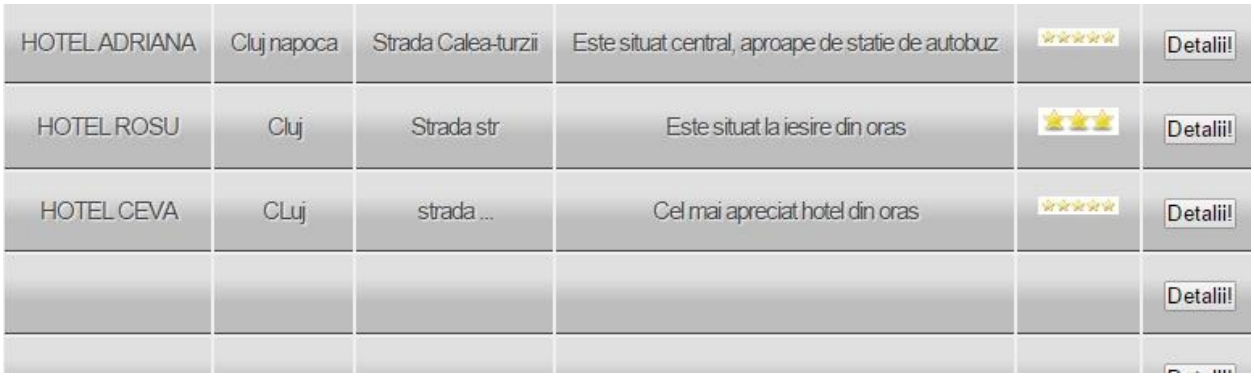
- Contact details for attraction
- Can view on map
- Has photo gallery

Disadvantages

- List items are a bit crowded in with the fame but nicely delimited
- No ratings or reviews

Alternative 3





The 1st image is the greeting view that is shown to the user when the application starts showing nearby attractions by category, each category can be tapped to view the results which are seen like in 2nd image. Also the user can type in search phrases and tap the search button.

Advantages

- Has rating

Disadvantages

- Table-like view
- Does not have map
- The search results view is too large, unlikely to fit a smartphone screen

Conclusion

All design alternatives have been presented (viewable at http://touristdev.azurewebsites.net/) to a few potential users and their feedback has been included in the advantages/disadvantages as well as in choosing what tasks to pursue for a 1st release. The most asked feature was the map and next after that the rating and review. The updated feature list based on user feedback is in the description section. All other features are postponed for future versions.