CommunEATy Pilot Summary

Objective

The pilot for the **CommunEATy** app aimed to test the core functionalities with real users and gather feedback on user experience, design, and overall app usability. The primary focus was on assessing:

- **User registration** and **login**
- **Restaurant search** and **posting functionality**
- **Following other users** and viewing their content
- **General app navigation and user experience**

Pilot Process

1. **Recruitment of Participants**:
   We recruited **12 users** from diverse backgrounds, including food enthusiasts, tech-savvy individuals, and casual app users, to ensure a broad spectrum of feedback. They were given instructions on how to download the app and provided test accounts or were asked to create accounts themselves using the app's.
2. **Pilot Execution**:
   Over a period of 3 days, users were asked to explore the app, focusing on key features such as:
   - Creating an account and setting up their profile.
   - Searching for restaurants and viewing details.
   - Posting their restaurant experiences, including adding text and images.
   - Following other users and interacting with their posts.
3. The participants were encouraged to explore both basic and advanced features, including viewing lists, adding favorites, and sharing their own content. Each user was asked to document their experiences and any issues encountered during their interactions.
4. **Feedback Collection**:
   Feedback was collected via two primary methods:
   - **Written Feedback Forms**: Participants filled out structured feedback forms after using the app, focusing on specific areas such as ease of use, design, navigation, performance, and feature requests.
   - **Follow-up Interviews**: A short interview was conducted with some of the participants to dive deeper into their feedback, gain more context on issues raised, and identify potential improvements.

Key Feedback & Insights

1. User Experience and Design

- **Positive**:
  Users generally found the design to be clean and straightforward. The color scheme was praised for being appealing, and the navigation between screens was largely intuitive.
- **Constructive Feedback**:
  Some users found that the app could be less sensitive when moving between tabs. Several users also mentioned that a map view may be helpful. One user also requested a dark mode color scheme.

2. Registration and Login

- **Positive**:
  The login and registration process was smooth.
- **Constructive Feedback**:
  Some users noted that there was no indication of password strength when creating accounts, which could be helpful for security-conscious users.

3. Restaurant Search and Posts

- **Positive**:
  Searching for restaurants worked well, and users enjoyed browsing through other user posts. The ability to add posts with images and associate them with specific restaurants was seen as a valuable feature.
- **Constructive Feedback**:
  Users mentioned that the search feature could benefit from filters (e.g., restaurant type, location, user ratings). Additionally, some participants suggested including more categories/tags to help organize the restaurant data and user posts more effectively.

4. Social Interaction (Following and Posts)

- **Positive**:
  The ease of following other users and viewing their posts was appreciated, especially for food enthusiasts who like keeping up with recommendations from friends and influencers.
- **Constructive Feedback**:
  Several users felt that there should be a way to interact with posts more directly, such as adding comments or even allowing users to save posts to personal lists for later reference. Users also noted that notifications about new followers or likes on their posts were missing, which would improve engagement.

5. Performance and Stability

- **Positive**:
  Most users reported that the app performed well overall, without any crashes or bugs.
- **Constructive Feedback**:
  There were some concerns about loading times, particularly when viewing a user's profile with multiple posts. Users also suggested adding a loading indicator to show when data is being fetched from Firebase, as the current lack of feedback made the app feel unresponsive at times.

Key Improvements Based on Feedback

Based on the feedback, the following improvements will be implemented in future iterations:

- **Enhanced Search Filters**: Adding options to filter restaurants by categories, user ratings, and proximity.
- **Post Interactions**: Adding features such as commenting on posts, saving posts to lists, and notifications for new interactions (likes, followers).
- **Loading Feedback**: Implementing loading indicators when data is being fetched from Firebase to improve perceived performance.

Conclusion

The pilot was successful in providing insightful, constructive feedback from real users. The participants found the app concept and core features valuable but highlighted areas for improvement in search functionality and social interactions. These insights will be useful for refining the user experience in the next development phase.