CS 482 Senior Project

OddJob

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Table of Contents

[Introduction 2](#_Toc37847212)

[About OddJob 2](#_Toc37847213)

[Research 3](#_Toc37847214)

[Relevance 3](#_Toc37847215)

[Development 4](#_Toc37847216)

[Brainstorming 4](#_Toc37847217)

[Environment Setup 4](#_Toc37847218)

[App 5](#_Toc37847219)

[App cont. 5](#_Toc37847220)

[App cont. 6](#_Toc37847221)

[Future Features 6](#_Toc37847222)

[Future Features cont. 7](#_Toc37847223)

[Conclusion 7](#_Toc37847224)

[Works Cited 8](#_Toc37847225)

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Senior Project – OddJob (App)

# Introduction

The idea for our app stemmed from a simple question: “What does everyone want, and how can we give that to them or make that accessible to people?” Some answers were not as appropriate as others, but the most recurring answer was money. From this answer, we began to establish the groundwork for OddJob. OddJob: a platform for users to search for odd jobs in their area of expertise that need completion, or for users to post odd jobs that they need completed. It may seem like a mouthful at first glance, but it is a very basic concept at the core. Having a basic concept such as this was one of our goals while brainstorming ideas for an app. We did not want to over-complicate the process and put more hardship onto us. In contrast, OddJob may be shed in the same light as a ‘ZipRecruiter’ or ‘Indeed’, but this is not the case and should not be seen as such.

# About OddJob

To clarify the difference between platforms like ‘ZipRecruiter’ and ‘Indeed’, which are intended for “professional” use; OddJob is quite the opposite in fact. The former platforms seek to land users with potential careers, whereas OddJob is utilized for a means to make a little extra money on the side. However, once we started to get more in depth to the project, we could see the true potential OddJob poses. At first glance it may seem that on the surface, OddJob is a mere app for “odd jobs”. However, we also realized the capitalist society we live in which unearths a new territory we did not think of – competition. That being said, we integrated a feature in the app that allows a user to “counter-offer” on posts if they feel they deserve to be paid more based off their experience, reviews/ratings, and resume of past jobs they’ve completed – which is found in the “Profile” section of the app. Here, the “employer” can view the user’s credentials and determine if they do deserve to be paid more than they are offering. Thus, we settled on this philosophy – you get what you pay for – which translates to many areas of life as well. Our main goal for the app by the end of the semester is to implement the ability to make a post, see the post on the corresponding page and to interact with that post.

# Research

Upon research, we discovered several other look-a-like apps which expressed very similar ideas to what we were doing. However, those apps were still treading in professional/semi-professional territory and mainly supported freelance careers like graphic design, software engineers, and various coding sectors; all computer/software heavy jobs. These discoveries have only supported our opinion on why we think OddJob is special. OddJob encompasses all jobs, from mowing the lawn, fixing computers, DJ’ing a party, or delivering groceries; which leads into our next point – the relevance of OddJob in today’s world.

# Relevance

We wondered how relevant our app would be. Would it be successful? Would it be popular? Would people continue to use it 10 years from now? Basic questions that any entrepreneur may ask themselves. There will always be a “goods in exchange for service” mentality, as there has been for centuries. But in terms of relevance, we look no further to what is currently happening today. Covid-19 is sweeping the globe, almost seemingly putting the world on pause. In its wake, leaving thousands jobless and the economy on the brink of collapsing. OddJob, although it may not be a significant mediator of the current disaster situation, could be a large influence in many of the unemployed lives around the world. Take, for example, the current social distancing method put into place. This restricts many people from obtaining necessities they may need. Say no more, a post on OddJob shows four people in your area delivering groceries, or three people are available to run various errands (pharmacy, hardware store, etc.) We know we are just scratching the surface with the potential OddJob has and it would be really interesting to see what the world would be like right now if OddJob was fully functional and operational.

# Development

## Brainstorming

The start of our development process consisted of several brainstorming sessions. We continuously broke down the scope each session so we could grasp what our plan for the semester was. To avoid being overwhelmed, we formed our vision and goals for the app because our pure excitement of what OddJob could potentially become was enthralling. The sessions were divided into what we would need to have completed, as well as, develop a prototype of what the full app could look like in the future. We realistically could not complete our app to full-scale in four months with the manpower and resources we had at our disposal.

## Environment Setup

Moreover, the development process also consisted of consulting fellow classmate Brandan Schmitz for his knowledge and expertise in app development. It was definitely jarring to try and absorb what Brandan was providing us, as his experiences exceeds any level we have completed. That being said, Brandan was very helpful in setting the environments up on our personal computers, along with providing some tips in importing and cloning code from GitHub (Brandan Schmitz. 2020). We also had a little bit of knowledge of the Flutter framework, since Trevor is enrolled in the App Development course at UJ. This provided us with a textbook we could reference when stuck or when looking for ideas to integrate (Mark Clow. 2019).

## App

During the actual development of the app there were some trials and tribulations that we would need to overcome. Although we had initially set up our local environments on each of our respective laptops, we would soon discover that Trevor’s environment was not able to display an emulator that corresponded with our imported Git file which the project was located. We troubleshot endlessly in order to try and get Trevor’s emulator to display properly so that he could see the changes he would potentially make when writing code - but to no avail. Because of this setback, we decided that it would be easier to transition into new roles for the remainder of our development process.

### App cont.

We decided that Garret would continue with the main programming of the actual app, because he had a working emulator. Garret became the sole programmer on OddJob, besides the login page which Trevor had developed (MTECHVIRAL. 2018). Trevor transitioned into a new role of becoming OddJob’s official lead designer, which entailed flushing out the current app, as well as, its future potential with elaborate design mockups. Alongside this, Trevor would be the main contributor to the accompanying project paper and PowerPoint which would be used alongside our app for the final presentation. With this newfound direction, we found it easier to be able to work on our respective parts so we could then collaborate on different design choices. Doing this allowed us to change or implement what we would like to see next into the app – whether that be theme design, widget design, or the overall functionality of how the app would operate.

### App cont.

The flushing out the overall design would be a collaborative process, with Garret communicating to Trevor the limitations of what was possible (or what he would need to research) and how we could change or implement different alternatives. An example of this development process came about when we were designing how the main Home Page would look. Initially we had made a prototype which only involved two tabs: “Looking for Posts”, and “Ad Posts”. We realized that we could easily implement a filter to declutter and organize these types of posts for the user into one page, allowing us to use more tabs for other app functionalities; such as the user’s profile or their own personal posts which they could monitor and log (Tensor Programming. 2018). Since Garret is not involved in the App Development class, he has essentially had to learn Flutter (SDK), Dart (language), and Android Studio (IDE) from scratch and learn how to build OddJob through self-instruction and video instruction (Brandon Donnelson. 2018).

# Future Features

Additional features that we plan OddJob incorporating include stipulating the app would get a portion of completed contracts. OddJob would take a meager percentage of completed contracts as a “service fee” by logging the wage which was agreed upon within the app. Furthermore, we envision the app having a “User’s OddJob’s” section found in their Profile page. The user will be able to view active jobs, pending jobs which they applied for, jobs they have completed, jobs they have liked/saved, and a page to see your offers. We believe this is an important feature that will allow the user to manage and maintain their portfolio. By having this section separate from the main app, we think it will benefit the user’s experience. This section will divide between what is the user’s own posts and what is not, allowing for more efficient utilization of our application. The user will easily be able to flip the script from viewing available jobs, making posts, and then managing their OddJob’s.

## Future Features cont.

Moreover, since OddJob is a platform of exchanging services, the app will take a small portion from the revenue of completed contracts - a gratuity fee, you could call it. Therefore, in order for these transactions to transition smoothly, the user is required to provide a form of digital payment information. This can be done while initially setting up the account, or before they can interact with posts or making posts.

# Conclusion

As we are nearing the end of our journey, the light is shining bright at the end of the tunnel. While undertaking this project, we couldn’t help but reminisce about our experience here at UJ. Shared experiences in the classroom, favorite classes, and what we will miss about the University. Now, as we prepare to implement the final stages of our project, we hope that our knowledge amassed during our tenure is displayed efficiently and effectively. With the best and safest wishes, we respectfully say, good-bye.

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