

Overview

Facebook local is a mobile social media app that allows users to find Facebook events occurring near the user. While this app has the potential to provide people with spontaneous outings, access to unknown events and plan an event solely from their cell phone, it doesn't seem to be getting the kind of popularity one would expect. While it is difficult to compare the main mobile Facebook app (which holds ~90 million reviews on the Google Play Store) to its partner apps such as Facebook Messenger (which holds ~62 million reviews on the Google Play Store), apps like Facebook Local are nearly unheard of (with only ~10,000 Reviews on the Google Play Store). It is shocking to see that such a useful app is being ignored by the general public, so I am going to try to find a potential reason.

Facebook Local Renovated

A Case Study on my findings during a 48-hour design challenge. I decided to analyze an app that presently existed but didn't hold more than 10k reviews on the Google Play Store. I chose this because reviews are often written when someone has an extremely good or bad experience using an app. And on average only 15% of the people that download an app will leave a review without a special reason. Therefore, if an app had a very low number of reviews, it could mean that the app could have room for revision or another app on the market fill the app's niche better. I ultimately was surprised when I discovered how Facebook Local only had about 9K reviews on it when its parent and sibling apps such as Facebook Messenger held millions of reviews. So, I decided to dive in and learn as much as I could about the interface associated with Facebook Local.

Overview

Purpose of the project - To learn what could improve the number of people using Facebook Local and get a larger number of reviews.

Objective - I needed to develop: a wireframe that worked just like Facebook Local, conduct research on negative reviews, and create a second wireframe using the results from the research.

Approach - I decided to go through my design process the way I have on my previous projects: Learn, Explore, Select, Develop, Refine, Deliver.

Learn

Learn about the users, the app, other competitive products, and modern research.

Users

Now, as expected, this app is meant to be used directly in conjunction with Facebook. So, the app relies heavily on people informing people of Local events based on their interests and liked groups. However, despite the app covering many potential needs of a user, it does have the ability to overwhelm a user. For instance, after surveying some engineering students, I learned many students cannot keep their main Facebook app's notifications on because they know they will get sucked into seeing live feed and updates and stories that they would rather see later. This fear of viewing certain notifications prevents them from seeing all possible notifications such as local events occurring in one's neighborhood.

This means that the main people that would use an app like Facebook local are the people that would also not want to view every single notification that comes through as it comes through. This type of app could be useful to everyone with access to Facebook. Whether it be people who work at a desk all day or students that need to prevent procrastination. The target audience for this app could

possibly be any person that wants to be involved in their community but is also too busy to view every Facebook notification. During my survey I found a few additional answers, but for the focus of this 48-hour challenge, this will be the main group I will be targeting: busy young adults and adolescents that use Facebook regularly.

App

So, it is possible that Facebook developed this app fully aware of that issue. After all, it would be an effective way to get people to stay on Facebook even if they can't spend the time to use the entire app. But no matter the reason, let's discuss the app's purpose. Its main functions are it has all the capabilities of Facebook's events pages but all on a mobile device. Every function and feature that events on Facebook have can be found here. It allows users to see which of their friends are going to a certain event, display interests in possible events, and ultimately discover new events. For the purpose of these 48 hours, these are the functions I will focus on.

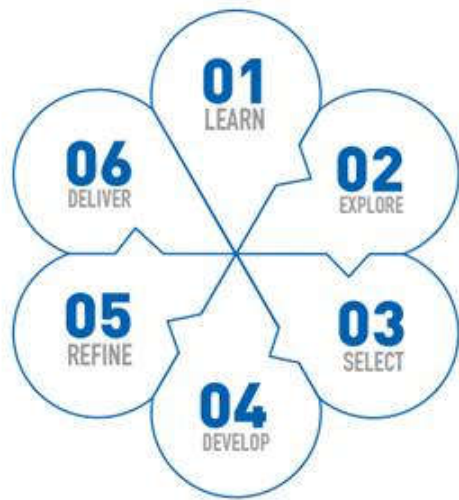
Competitive Products

Due to the niche market of this product, I will ignore competitors for this case study outside of Facebook.

User Feedback

So, I looked for some user feedback that could be remedied by some beneficial product design alterations. Now some of the complaints for the project were somewhat unfixable for this challenge. For instance, several people didn't like how they couldn't find any events in their rural hometowns located on the side of a mountain while others had issues with the app crashing and going slow. Without knowing the nature of the events in every given area or the code layout of the app, I am incapable of making an improved product on those two fronts. But here were some reviews that were common that I thought were very fixable.

1. "Wow what a letdown! This app has so much potential! What happened? Very leggy; takes ten times as long to scroll. Searching?! Nope, nothing popped up for my searches, however going back to FB I can find what I was searching for. I really wanted to like this. Hopefully there is a revamp soon."
2. "Took 5 minutes to install and open. Looked around the app for 5 minutes. Slow. Incoherent. I really wanted to like this because I like the idea, but it just doesn't serve its purpose well. So, I uninstalled. Maybe in a few months I'll reinstall and see if things have improved."
3. "Very failure app. If you can mix Facebook events with calendar features. Then it can be good. But right now. It's worst. I also can't change my calendar view in here"
4. "No category for conventions or Comic-Con!! Not easy to find any comic book convention, anywhere. Only get 1 or 2 results. Conventions are huge events and fall under multiple categories like arts, literature, shopping etc. Needs its own category!!!"
5. "My events, popular events, suggested events, just show me all the events in one list with some filters. That's all. Gone back to Facebook events page. Stupid app"
6. "A whole app but it still is worthless. Let people search by day, distance away, and show on map. Not too complicated."



PROCESS

01 Learn. Gain knowledge of users, context, technologies, gather user data, research competitive products, conduct interviews and field studies. **02 Explore.** Build user profiles on gathered data, produce materials that will aid the outlining of the project, site maps, content inventories, screen flows, navigation models, task flows, user journeys, scenarios.

03 Select. Evaluate, test, and select wireframe concepts for prototype development. **04 Develop.** Create design specifications and evolve concept/wireframes into full design solution. **05 Refine.** Evaluate design with stakeholders to obtain feedback and conduct usability testing. **06 Deliver.** Complete design and produce deliverables.

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The Problem

Pain Points

Too similar to Facebook for people to recommend

Takes too long to scroll down for relevant events.

Can't sync Google calendar with Facebook Events directly

New category for Conventions and Cultural events

Create the Option for a color scheme to be light or dark.

More filters! Days, price, Open or closed now, rating, busy or not busy

The Process

Ideation and Implementation

Write solutions to pain points and include screenshots. Try to include animations.

1. Too similar to Facebook for people to recommend
 - There are a couple of ways to go about making look different, but changing the color scheme seems the easiest.
 - Like Smash vs Glee; this app needs a darker or lighter tone

Some of the reviews pointed out how they uninstalled the app extremely close to the when they installed it. That means that we only have a short amount of time for people to try this app before running back to the original product. So the first thing that should be changed is the title screen. I wish that this app had a title screen or a loading screen to help prelude the apps function while it's gathering data instead of showing the signature place marker icon. It is so common with competitors different loading screen may give it a different vibe within the first few minutes of usage.



I chose a white background with a blue highlight for my color scheme since it has a slight remanence of Facebook's color scheme while lacking the sharp edges associated with the main Facebook Apps. And since fades in color make images seem more welcoming on time tested art, so it seemed like an appropriate introduction to the main app.(

<https://cen.acs.org/articles/415/Van-Goghs-Fading-Colors-Inspire.html>)

2. No reason to get others to download it

a.

- Create a streak system! Like going to a Health event once a week or a visit a convention once a year. While this won't get everyone in the Facebook community involved, the ability to overcome something with someone else is a valid method to get others informed of this app's existence (<https://blog.stormid.com/the-psychology-of-sharing/>).
- Possibly a System for how many events you go to with a certain friend may be a method. A more practical solution is to make it so the app can also highlight if certain friends will arrive at certain events. This system is more simple then the streak system but basically all it does is create a highlight for each person that has been to 5 events with the present app user. That way, people will be less likely to uninstall the app if this visibility function is emphasized. After all, if you are going to an event that has 1 of your Facebook friends, you may not care unless one of them is one of your closer friends. This perk would be something that the present Facebook Event system is lacking, and it could be beneficial to this app
- This app may also need an improved marketing plan. When I google "Facebook Local" with quotes over the past year, only 1 results appeared. And often they weren't about Facebook Local; search engines typically just found results that included the phrase "Facebook. Local"



The other issues were much easier to fix.

3. Takes too long to scroll down for relevant events.



- On launch, let the user preference what kinds of events they want to see (Suggested, popular, etc.)
 - On launch and in Options, allow a user to preference what groups or pages events they would like to see first
 - In Options, allow a user to choose not to have a certain type of event (like fitness) if they chose to
4. Can't sync Google calendar with Facebook Events directly
 - Export .csv or .isc file button
 - Most popular calendar software is designed to can import .csv or .ics files This isn't much of a "Design" flaw since Facebook does have a calendar that allows you to reverse sync products, but it could be more explicit.



5. New categories and filters should be included. For Special Categories such as Conventions and Cultural events. Special filters such as “Open Close Hours”
 - Straight forward. It will go next to arts
 - Some categories overlap like cultural and art or Conventions and literature
 - This is important since many conventions exist and don’t have the word “Convention” in their name.



Conclusion

1. As a programmer, I understand that NONE of the changes I have suggested are very “simple” or easy to make. Anyone can be an anonymous critic, but the true critics are the ones that analyze the beauty of the program that was developed. I will remember this because I personally found the user design of Facebook Local as an aspiration more than an assist.
2. As an engineer, I know that many of these complaints aren’t “quantifiable” as design requirements. So, I will be sure to always take my project guidelines and quantify them from the get-go to give me some type of goal to aim for as I design.