Online Deck Collection Project Proposal

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Summary

Deckbuilding software is a tool that every trading card game benefits from and gives players a way to create and manage decks in a more convenient way. These products offer colorful ways to organize and share decks with the community and provide users with a platform to view cards for prospective decks.

The market for trading card games, specifically Magic: The Gathering, has been in a stable and increasing condition for the last several years. An approximate 35% increase in market size over the last few years, as well as a mostly steady market prior, is a good sign for the community involved. The market, both primary and secondary, consists almost entirely of individual players and local trading card shops. As customers in the market, we understand that the main drive towards using a particular product comes from elegant design, ease of access and understanding, as well as consistency of bug fixes and updates. Our product will readily provide these things to make an impact on the market and what software players and customers decide to use.

There certainly is some established competition, but, having evaluated many of the alternatives currently on the market, we're confident that none focusses as precisely on the pain points of the customers as we would. Our marketing strategy is primarily focused on benefitting the individual player by making the basic tasks as quick and simple as they can be. We know that other options have not optimized the essentials, and we're seeking to do just that. Also, since our product will be free it will have the potential to grow fastest, as there's no risk of investing in our service. There are multiple barriers in our way, namely the recalcitrance of the market to our entrance, and time, but these should both be manageable.

The Vision

Deckbuilding in trading card games (TCG) is a time consuming task and is often done by hand. Keeping track of a person's collection is also often done simply by looking at how they store their cards. The vision is to provide people with software that gives a convenient database for them to store information about their collection, a powerful deck building tool that works with the database, and card purchasing sites to show what is needed after creating decks. The main goals would be to provide software that will be:

- Accessible
- Simple yet Elegant
- Up-to-date

Gap in the Market

Current options for digital card collection programs are not up to par. The options available are rarely updated and poorly designed. Some don't deliver with regards to their

offered capabilities, missing what is truly important to users. Some available applications are also too expensive for the lackluster service they provide. The customers' general dissatisfaction with the very limited available options manifests a major gap in the digital deckbuilding market.

It is important for users to be able to add cards to their collections as quickly as possible upon release or announcement of those cards. Current applications do not allow for this, as they are not adequately updated in a timely manner. This causes users to have to wait months before seeing the new cards added to the program's database. This is, understandably, very frustrating for users. The lack of involvement from developers in keeping the services up-to-date causes users to feel consistently undervalued and disappointed.

In addition, the services simply aren't designed well. This disadvantage presents itself in two major ways. For one, the programs are not visually pleasing, having poor design. Gloomy color schemes and uninviting aesthetics send a negative subliminal message to users. The second major consequence of this poor design is inaccessibility. The softwares can feel awkward or cumbersome to use, causing further annoyance to customers.

Lastly, there is an assortment of minor issues that needs to be addressed. Deckbuilding applications should offer easy-to-use yet extensive sorting and searching of cards, which is not currently seen in the market. The products should be affordable and enjoyable to use. Our service will address these shortcomings of the current market, providing a user-friendly and pleasing product for our customer base.

Meeting the Market's Needs

This software will meet the market's needs by providing a website that is designed by people that want to use it. The objective is for the website to be clean and easy to use at home or on the go. The website will be free and therefore offer no downsides for using it compared to similar websites. Design ideas will be implemented as they are completed so that the site will always be available for access.

Implementation

Marketing and Distribution Strategy:

We will market our product as accessible, simple but high-end, and always up-to-date as those are the major pain points that our software will address. Marketing could be done by providing info at local card shops and clubs and by online advertising. We would expect information about our program to spread by word of mouth throughout the card playing community.

Developing Strategy:

We will develop our product as a web application using necessary coding languages and open-source resources. As a team, we will develop our product in modules and review the work

of other members to ensure quality. We will develop it with our vision in mind and keep it up-to-date following its completion.

Financial Strategy:

The bulk of our income would come from selling advertisement space on our application. Though we have no current plans for this, a common strategy in conjunction with selling advertisement space is be to offer a premium version of our service, in which the user would pay a small fee and be provided the service, advertisement-free or possibly with a few extra features unavailable to other users.

Management:

Our team consists of four computer science students with knowledge in application coding and website development, as well as knowledge about the card game which our application will be designed for. In addition, we will depend on Professor Supratrik Mukopadhyay, PhD as an advisor.

The Problem

The current resources available to consumers are underdeveloped, as they either exclusively offer ways to showcase decks to others or are used as a resource to assist with creating decks by hand. Currently, the best options are subscription based, and can be expensive for someone wanting to use it at their leisure. Most of the free options are ad free and have been forgotten by the developers due to low revenue.

We Provide the Solution

Our product will provide users with a way to easily store their collection and have that information at their fingertips. This also give users the ability to create and manage decks in a mobile environment. Motivation to keep our product current for users with an ad driven revenue base.

Industry Need for our Technology

Current products for digital card collection are very limited, as there aren't many sufficient and worthwhile options available to consumers. There does not yet exist an application that shares our vision, which is very focused on customer experience and satisfaction for the users. With our solution, we hope to meet this need in the industry.

Market Analysis

There are many other websites and apps that are in the market already such as μmagic app and edhrec.com. These companies, along with the hundreds of others that haven't been listed, have been in the market for a long time. Although websites such as tappedout.net are

widely used, we will prove, with our fresh take on possible solutions, that our product is superior.

Primary Market

The majority of the market consists of any person, group, or organization that deals with the business of Magic: The Gathering. This range includes individuals that have little effect on the market and play with their friends, as well as businesses that deal with the buying and selling of cards and accessories in quantities of all sizes.

Market Size

Trading card games, especially Magic: The Gathering, have retained and increased in popularity since their release. Prior to 2008, the market experienced several declines in size, however, these decreases have since healed. From 2008 to 2012, the player base increased by around 1 million per year. Since 2012, the market has increased by approximately 35% per year.

Secondary Market

Although individuals are part of the Primary Market, they are also a part of the Secondary Market, along with competitors and anyone that deals with the prices of cards. In Magic: The Gathering, cards tend to retain their value for long periods of time and increase their value as time progresses. Transactions in the Secondary Market consist of players and individuals that are making purchases that are not due to the information given by the website.

Competitors

tappedout.net allows for you to build decks and communicate with other fans, but it also has many other focuses such as card concepts, event coordination, forums, and Q&A.

edhrec serves as a card database, but many of its other functions, such as journalism, are not within the purview of our market.

deckbox.com serves as a card database, deck builder, but also as a marketplace and forums.

Marketing Strategies

Overview: Our Online Deck Collection will target the issues most important to individuals playing the game, then work its way up to helping communities and businesses involved in the MTG scene. Our system will optimize collection input, collection management, and deck building first and foremost. By creating systems that look and feel better to use than any other, we will have a made an ideal place for users to then share their collections and creations with each other.

Core competency: Since we are both fans and programmers, we enter with a perspective that this market needs in order to provide the best services to users. Our site will cater to the fans, and be immediately accessible to all.

Sales Strategy:

Pricing: We plan on funding our site with advertising revenue. This means that anyone who comes to our site can see the benefits of what we have to offer. A user can come to the site, test its features, and choose to make an account. We may later develop premium options, but the core of our services will be free.

Positioning: We plan to provide the best experience for the individual user, so that they can spend less time on tedious organizational tasks and more on enjoying the game.

Promotion: We will market via public relations, internet advertising, and by partnering with local card shops.

Place: Our site will be most comfortable from a computer, but can be pulled up on the go as well, making it good for in-person events.

Adapting Our Strategy

Our team will be flexible to adaptation and changes whenever necessary. If something about our marketing and development strategies aren't working, we will be able to rework and adjust those strategies easily.

By developing our product in parts with plenty of tests and peer-reviewing everything, we will be able to see possible future issues as well as handle unexpected issues without losing significant amounts of time or work. This will also make it easy to adapt to new requirements in a changing market or industry.

Our marketing strategy will also be open to adaptation, as the main issues we address with our vision are useful and easily marketable to many different focus groups. If we find that one customer persona is not responding as much as another customer profile might, we will easily be able to market our product in a way that draws adequate interest from another group.

Barriers

There are several barriers to the success of our product. Namely:
- It may be difficult to create a database of cards for one game, let alone multiple, in a short time.
- Establishing partnership with other companies, specifically card databases, in order to fully realize our goals
- Convincing enough customers of the need for our product
- Competition with the established services

Risks

We are not veteran programmers, so it will be a challenge to realize our goals in a short time.

The established solutions may be satisfying the majority of our target customers enough as it is, precluding a successful entry into the market.

Customer Discovery

The initial hypothesis for the website was that potential customers would be eager to experience the project as it progressed into a finished product. The main idea for the website was to provide a genuine product that was produced for Magic players, by Magic players. The hypothesis was proven to be true.

Customers were interviewed through the means of surveys that were brought to different local card shops. We explained the purpose of the survey and asked the clerks and store owners to encourage people to fill them out. Many of the customers at the shops got up immediately to fill out the surveys. This shows that customers were eager to see the product in action and follow its progress towards a final product.

The surveys will also be used to determine the order in which features will be implemented to the website. Most features were deemed important enough to include without the opinions of the customers. However, additional features will be added to the final product based on the average score of the surveys that were filled out and submitted.

A separate file will be included that contains a blank survey that was used for customer discovery.

Business Model Canvas

Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationship	Customer Segments
Local card shop owners	Updating service regularly	Leaving ads in places where possible customers will naturally be	We will show customers that we care by keeping service up-to-date	Magic: The Gathering players
	Key Resources Open source resources for development	Encouraging spread of information by word-of-mouth among our customer base	**Channels** Local card shops Online card groups	

Cost Structure	Revenue Streams
Open source resources for development should keep costs to a minimum	Advertisement revenue Possible premium service for small fee available in the future