Campfire

(Formerly EventsApp)

Created By:

Jeremy Aranguren

Nora Bonifas

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Linette Maliakal

Janeen Soria

Github Repository:

https://github.com/Zoryna/events-app (master branch is most recent)

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Project Members

Jeremy Aranguren

Roles: Developer (CSS, JS), Design, Cordova Plugins
Contributions:

- Geolocation
- Google Maps

Nora Bonifas

Roles: Developer (HTML, CSS, JS), Design, Firebase
Contributions:

- Developed (attempted) user authentication for backend in Firebase
- Helped to implement code work for Firebase (database and authentication)
- Developed some of the login screen

Maria Gocal-Kappos

Roles: Developer (HTML, CSS, XML), Design, User Interface, User Experience
Contributions:

- Developed Interests Screen
- Developed individual interest pages
- Added in and designed the Splash Screen
- Assisted in development of Profile Screen

Linette Maliakal

Roles: Developer (HTML, CSS, JS(& JSON)), Design, Firebase
Contributions:

- Made initial structure of pages for project
- Created the Add a Event screen and did the CSS for it
- Added and designed FAB button on Events screen
- Updated navbar to be just universal icons
- Made realtime database JSON file for events on Firebase
- Firebase storage of data, implementation in code

Janeen Soria

Roles: Developer (HTML, CSS), Design, User Interface, User Experience

Contributions:

- Developed the navigation bar
- Developed the Events Screen
- Developed the individual events' screens
- Developed the Profile Screen
- Developed some of the login screen

Abstract

Campfire is a mobile app where a user can meet other people in their local area who are interested in attending the same events as them. It also allows users to meet other people based on just their similar interests. The application allows a person to create an account, find events in the area based on their interests, create an event to organize meetups with other people who would want to attend, and it also helps users find new interests and see who share the same interests and if those interests have upcoming events. Campfire was designed in the hopes of connecting people locally through finding others interested in the same activities to attend together or if users simply want to connect just through shared interests.

Project Narrative

Our goal with this project was to create an app that would allow users to meet new friends in their area who had similar interests to them, whether it was to meet solely based on that interest or to attend an event together. For example, if someone really wanted to attend a concert but none of their friends liked that artist, they could meet someone who could go with them using the app so they wouldn't have to go alone. The other option is that if someone is more interested in making a new friend than going to a specific event, they can meet someone who likes the same things as them, such as someone they can play a video game with or someone who they can knit with.

We put a lot of emphasis on making this app be geared towards meeting new friends, rather than dating. A lot of times if someone is new to the area or if they want to make a new friend who lives closeby, they will use apps like Tinder to meet new people to hang out with. Since Tinder is a dating app known especially for meeting others interested in casual sexual relationships, this has a tendency to leave that idea hanging over the head of these people. Essentially, the idea that "we met on a dating app, so we should be dating." Making our app friend-focused takes away this feeling and allows people to interact more organically, and if they do choose to date it is completely up to them.

It was also our intention to fill an empty space in the app world when it comes to apps that allow you to meet friends. Many apps, such as Bumble, only allow you to meet friends of the same gender as you, which is a bit strange as most people have both male and female friends. Our goal was to create an app that would let you be friends with anyone, regardless of gender or other similar details.

Design Specifications and Considerations

Mobile applications are usually created to help people do something in an easier, more efficient way. In other words, they are meant to solve a problem. When creating a mobile app, one must think about the problem they want to solve. We wanted to create a mobile app, so we had group meetings to discuss and analyze known mobile apps and how they were successful. We reviewed popular social media apps and their features, and we saw that the apps have similar features, but each one had a different prominent feature it was known for.

After some discussion, we realized that there are not many well-known apps that have the purpose of helping people find events locally nor are there well-known apps that help connect users with others who share the same interest. We decided that we wanted to create a mobile application that connected users through events and interests. We began with our initial idea of the app, and we had group meetings where we created sketches on a whiteboard of what we envisioned the app to look like and what features it should have. We came to the conclusion that we will have three main screens: Profile Screen, Events Screen, and Interests Screen. Then we went forth and divided the work.

When initially opening the app, the user is met with a splash screen featuring the silhouette of a fire as well as the name of the app, “Campfire.” The design was kept simple so as not to be distracting, but also not too simple so as to capture the user’s interest since the splash screen is the first thing they will see. The background of the splash screen was originally black, however when we finalized our color scheme we decided to change it to the dark blue that is seen in the navigation bar.

Initially, our navigation bar was just an icon at the left and right of the screen and the title of the screen between them. After studying the design of other mobile apps, we decided that our navigation bar should have a colored background behind the icons and the title. By having a colored navigation bar, users can easily locate the icons that lead them to the other screen. It also visually separates the navigation bar from the contents of the current screen the user is viewing. We used icons to represent each screen. For the Profile Screen, we used an icon that is the shape of a person because users would associate it with user profiles. We used a calendar icon to represent the Events Screen because users will associate a calendar with dates and planned events. A heart is the icon for the Interests Screen because hearts are associated with liking something. If a user wants to find something they like then they can tap on the heart icon. We used icons rather than text to label the screens because they are easier for users to remember and include in their mental model of the application.

The Profile Screen displays the user's picture, first name, age, their interests, and the events they are planning to attend. We aimed to develop the database for users' profiles so they can login and logout and have their picture, name, age, and their chosen interests and events saved. We also wanted users to be able to view the profiles of other users. However, we were unable to implement it on our app because we would have initially needed Firebase to be fully functioning in order to have users' profiles saved and for them to view other users' profiles. We concluded that users should be able to know some information about the users who are attending the events and who interested in a certain subject. We wanted to add features that allowed users to click on a button to add them to an event or interest and then have it automatically appear in their profile. In our current stage of development, the function to add the information into the database needs to be implemented.

We decided that the user only displays their first name for security purposes. We want users to meet other people, but we are also aware that some users may not want to show too much personal information for safety concerns. Users have their age displayed so other users are aware of the type of people they might meet.

We decided that the Events Screen, where it displays a list of upcoming events in the local area, will be the initial screen upon opening the application. The Events Screen, which is also the Home Screen, acts like a feed where users can see the most recent events. In order for users to be able to add their own hosted event or an event they heard about, we included an "Add Event" FAB button with the plus icon to signify the option on the Events page itself. It was inspired much by the FAB buttons famously used by Google Drive to make new documents or folders, etc. When the user clicks this button, they will be taken to a page where they can fill out fields of a form to describe and give the necessary information for the said event. They can then submit the event and it should appear at the top of the Events screen, with an animation showing the other events get pushed down. This animation and function has yet to be perfected in our application though.

When clicking on an event, it will take you to that event's screen where it shows the location, the description of the event, and the number of people attending. We only implemented "Felted Buddies!" and "Competitive Knitting" so far, because ideally we wanted to display real events where each existing event or added event automatically creates their own events box and screen. However, that is difficult to achieve at our point of development since we do not have a database that contains a list of realistic, current events. Furthermore, we had a few designs in showing the locations. At first, we wanted the map to show both the user and the event's location to help give the user an idea of how close they are to the event they want to attend, but later we decided that that should be a separate button.

We wanted to have a button that would show both locations then give the user the option to click another button for directions that we would either implement or have it link to their map app on their phone. However, we were only able to get the map to show the event location. There is also a button at the bottom of the event page where you can select “Going.” We want the button to add the user to that event so later other users can see who is attending it, but the currently the button will alert the user that they pressed the button and it will display that they are planning to attend the event.

The interests screen features a list of interests that the user can add to their personal list of interests. The interests are displayed as dark purple squares, in contrast to the events so as to visually differentiate the interests from the events. Clicking on one of the interest boxes takes the user to a new screen with a list of other people with the same interest, for those who want to meet someone, and a list of events related to this interest, for those who want to go to an event related to their interest.

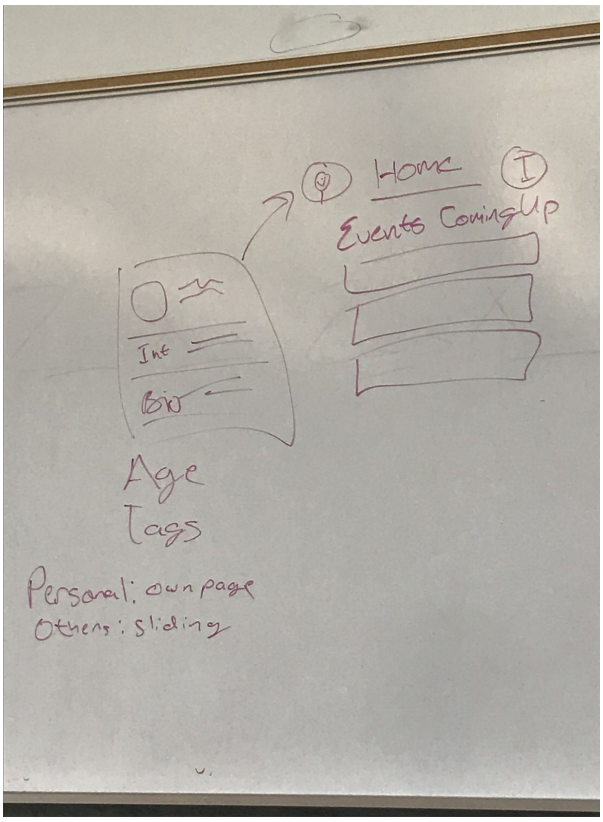
The most challenging design aspect for our app was deciding the name and the colors. Our mobile app is about bringing people together through events and shared interests, so we searched for many words that are associated with people grouping together. We eventually decided that our app name is “Campfire,” because it is a gathering, and it’s associated with connecting with other people and new experiences. Once we decided the name, we chose the colors. Since campfires are usually done during the night, we chose dark colors, which are dark blue, dark purple, and dark green. We used a lighter green for the icons and the buttons to help users recognize them as features different from the events and interests.

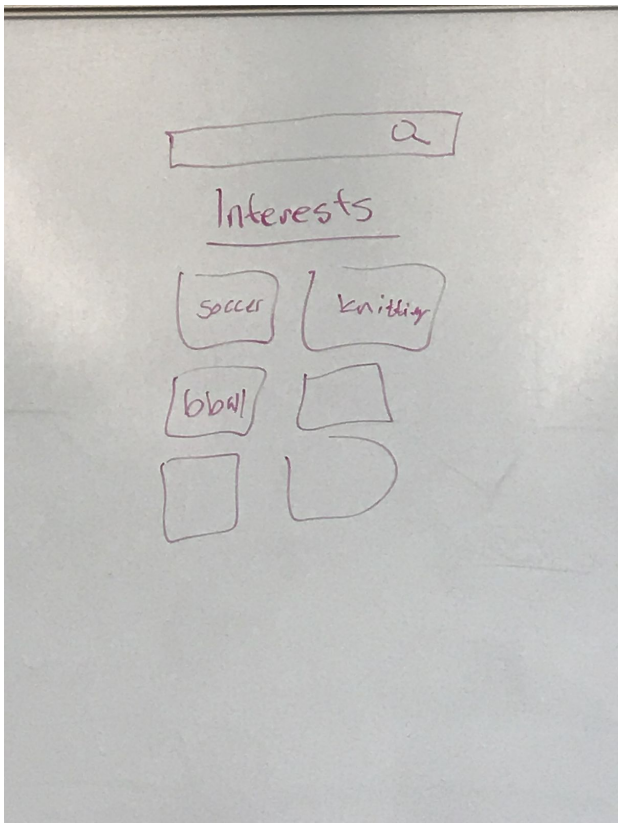
In order to store the events and their information, we needed to make use of a database to do so. Based on the resources we saw, we thought Firebase was the best choice given that we could also have user login through Google and Facebook. Linette went ahead and got started on making the json file for keeping track of the event information already on the website. She organized it in a format that allows input for aspects about the event such as its address, location coordinates (which it would obtain from the Map function that turns the address into coordinates), interests associated with the event, and time of the event. She also tried to make a JS file to add events onto the event page and have that button actually functional, but it is still a work in progress.

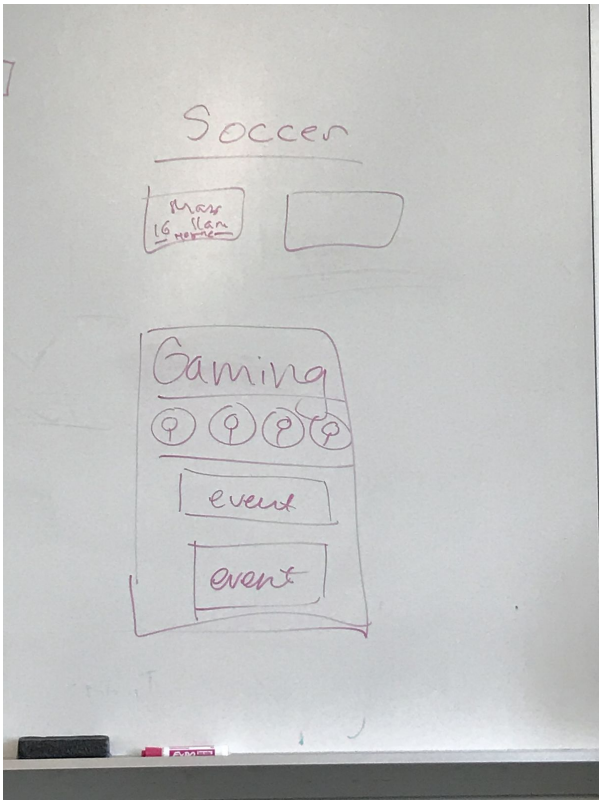
To create a user-based experience that was more personal, we wanted to have a login via either various social media platforms, google, or a personal sign in. Implementing firebase proved fairly difficult at first. After struggling to implement the database and initial login settings, we decided to go with a simpler login screen until we could do more research on social media login implementation. The user can sign-in and sign-up via email, and Firebase stores the data for future sign in attempts. We struggled significantly with implementing the email notifications. You can see in the master branch that there is a very different login screen that what was pushed to Nora’s branch. Using

example code on github, she was able to get a login screen that would function better than the master branch's, but did not fit with the aesthetic of the app and it's consistent color scheme. She used many different examples of login screens including slack, twitter, the AirBNB screen (from the class discussions) and other code examples from github. The code in her branch is from a Firebase example found in their github page and was edited to fit the apps needs as closely as possible, with a lot of manipulation to see what would work and what wouldn't.

The next page contains images of our ainitial sketches. The left image is a sketch of the initial Events/Home Screen and how it leads the user to the Profile Screen. The right image is a sketch of the Interests Screen. The last image at the bottom is a sketch showing a specific interest after users tap on an interests box.


Home
Events Coming Up
Int
Bio
Age
Tags
Personal: own page
Others: sliding


Interests
soccer
knitting
bowl

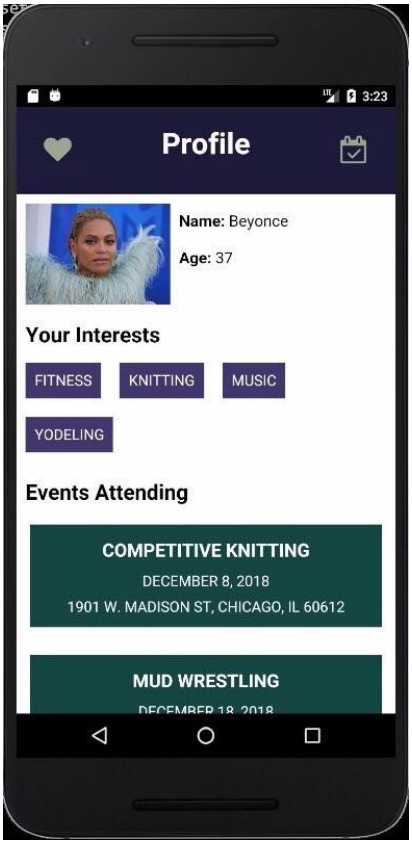

Soccer
Gaming
event
event

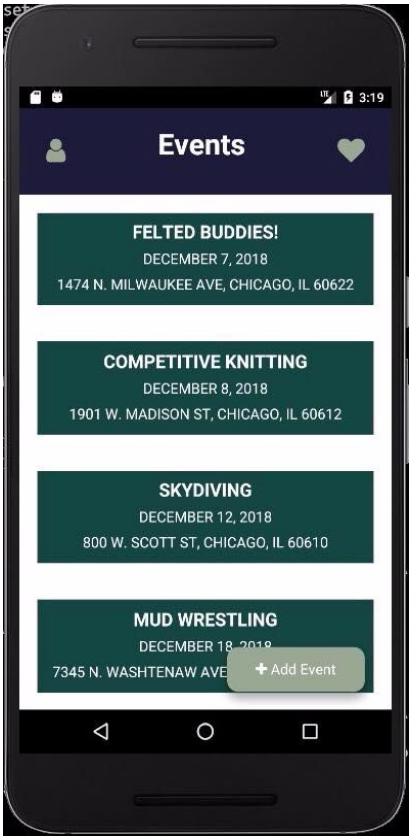
When the user is at the Home Screen, for example, the Profile icon is at the left and the Interests icon is at the right. If the goes to their Profile, to the left icon, then the icons on the Profile Screen have the Interests icon at the left and the Events icon at the right. In other words, the navigation among the screens is like a carousel because the icons at the top change depending on what screen the user is in. All the interactions within the app involve tapping on the features, which are the icons, buttons, events, and interests, or scrolling down the screen. Our Login feature and “Add an Event” feature is partially working, and they involve the user tapping on the white boxes to type in their information.

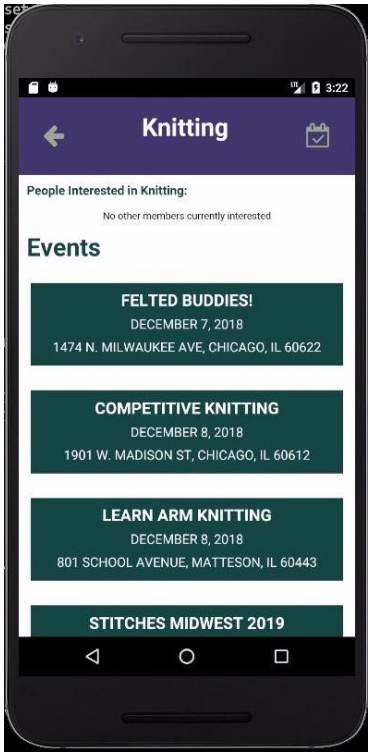
Campfire uses four colors, and each color is connected with a different feature. The darkest color, the dark blue, is used for the navigation bar. It has the darkest color because we want the rest of the features on the screen to pop out more. Initially, we did not think to have the navigation bar have a colored background but including it assists users in finding the icons and the title of the screen without distracting them from the main content. The events boxes are dark green, and the navigation bar for the individual events are dark green instead of dark blue. In changing the background color, users will automatically know that they are viewing a page for an individual event. The interest boxes are a dark purple, and the navigation bar for the individual interests are dark purple instead of dark blue, so users will know that they are viewing the selected interest. We used light green for the icons and the “Add Event” and “Going” buttons. Light green was used for the icons because among the other colors, it contrasted the best against the darker colors. Since the buttons are a different color from the events and interests boxes, users will know that they are interactions that allow something to be added.

Throughout the app, we used the Gestalt Law of Proximity and Law of Similarity. We used Law of Proximity when we designed the Profile Screen. The Profile Screen is the only page where it contains both interests and events. The interest boxes are close together and the events boxes are also near each other, and the interests and events are separated by a title. The close proximity of the interest boxes to each other have the user associate them as a group and the same concept also applies to how the events boxes. We used the Law of Similarity for the Profile Screen, Events Screen, and the Interests Screen. Throughout the app, we used green rectangles for the events and purple squares for the interests. If the users see the green rectangle in the Events Screen, Profile Screen, and the Knitting Screen, they will know that they are events. If the users see the dark green color, which is also used as the navigation bar color for the individual events, users will associate it with events. If the users see a purple square in the Interests Screen and the purple navigation bar for the individual interests screen, users will connect it to interests. In the Profile Screen, the interests boxes look more like rectangles, but since they are also purple, users will know it’s an interest.

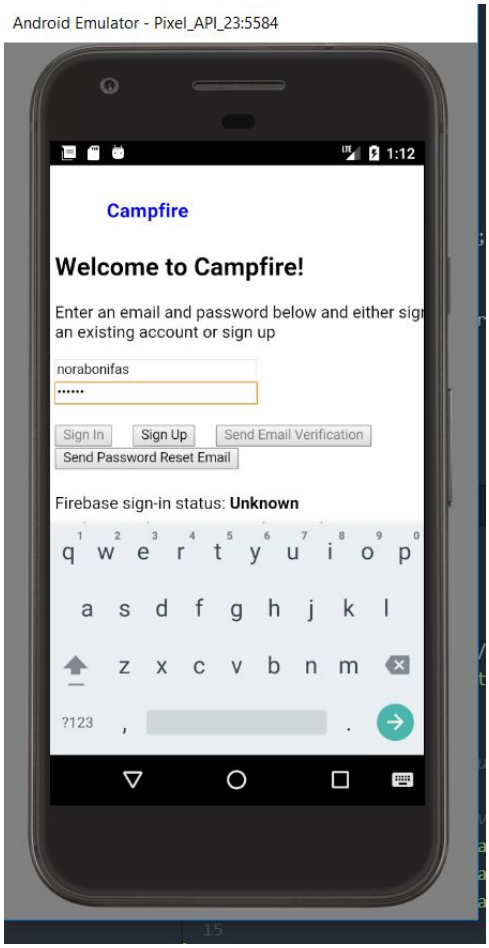
Below are images of the Profile Screen, the Events Screen, and the Interests Screen on the first row. In the second row, we have included images of the different colored navigation bar for the individual events and interests. In the next page we have the Master Branch Login screen.








1:34
Email
Password
Submit


Android Emulator - Pixel_API_23:5584
1:12
Campfire
Welcome to Campfire!
Enter an email and password below and either sign
an existing account or sign up
norabonifas
Sign In
Sign Up
Send Email Verification
Send Password Reset Email
Firebase sign-in status: Unknown

Testing and Iterative Design

Given the feedback we received from the two stages of presentations we gave, we were able to figure out what we needed to work on and improve. From one comment, a person thought our application was meant to be a dating app (not entirely sure if that person mixed up presentations). Though with that, we made sure to specify and clarify that our application was by no means meant to serve the purpose a dating app would.

We also realized that we needed to work more on the design of the application, because after DEV week, all we had was the backend stuff to show and the navigation options were purely buttons, a very roundabout way of making that feature.

In terms of figuring out a name for our project, we went around asking our friends and other people we knew what we should name it. We came up with a list of names ourselves, but in order for people to give us their unbiased opinions on what the name should/could be, we simply told them the concept of our app and what we were hoping to achieve with it. From there, we were given some fairly good suggestions and came up with the name Campfire and settled on that after long debates of what was already taken and what had problems with its associations.

Restrictions, Limitations, and Constraints

Ideally, we wanted our mobile application to be cross-platform, but majority of our group members did not have Mac computers. When developing our app and pushing changes onto our Github repo, we had to make changes among branches manually, because running the emulator changes other files in certain folders, and it can make merging complicated. We would have had more time if we did not have to spend time manually updating branches. Some of us had problems with the emulator running since some of us used computers that were more compatible with consistently running an emulator. It was challenging to create real events to show because in order for there to be real events, we would have needed a database that contained data on events entered by other people. We also wanted users to have the ability to see if there are other users attending an event. It was hard to achieve this because we would have needed to be in a further stage of development where we have more users using the app and saving the events that they wish to attend.

There are many parts of Campfire that we wish to have implemented if we had more time. For the implementation of geolocation and google maps, we wanted to test geolocation to make sure it gather events we created in other cities. We would were not able to test it because of time restraints as well as being able to understand how the location works on the emulator. We would need to be more familiar with how the emulator gives the app its location. Then we would be able to test it by giving the emulator a location somewhere else in the US and creating an event near the location given to the emulator. Additionally, with more time and practice, Firebase implementation could have been much more successful and smoother. Much of the misunderstanding here came from vastly overcomplicating the implementation process and trying to accomplish too much at one time. We would definitely spend more time implementing this at the beginning of the project, rather than at the end, were we to design this again.

For the user interface and user experience, we wanted to create our own icons so our app would be easier to distinguish. When users want to go to the other screens, they have to tap on the icon, but we also planned on allowing users to make the motion of sliding left or right to change screens. For the individual events, we wanted the map to show the user's location and the location of the other events, so users know where they are and how far they are from them. We also wanted users to see which users will go to the event, so they can tap on their profile and look at their information. For the Profile Screen, we initially wanted to include a star rating. In other words, we wanted users to have the option to rate other users and then for others to see that rating. If users are going to an event and they want to check which users will go to that event,

they can look at the ratings to see if the people there are agreeable people. For the Interests Screen, we initially wanted to include a search bar at the top so users could find their a specific interest among all the options. For adding more Google APIs, we wanted to add a function that will allow the user to see how far they are from the event incase the event it created for like a quick game of basketball or soccer in a park. Also, allow the user to see directions by either from the app itself or open the phone's map app.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our app facilitates meeting new people who are similar to the users by allowing them to meet people interested in the same hobbies or events. It was important to us to allow people to meet new friends of either gender without the idea of “dating” hanging over their heads, so we made sure to emphasize that this app is for meeting others in a platonic way (and what happens after is completely up to them).

Keeping these things in mind, we eventually developed Campfire, which, while not fully ready for release, fulfilled all of our checkpoints. Using Cordova, various plug-ins, and the mixed skills of each of our team members, we collaborated effectively with everyone “specializing” in a certain area to complete our goal.