

Let's Travel!

Milestone 1

09/29/2020

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The Problem

Travel can be an enriching experience, but also one that is fraught with complications and challenges. According to the World Tourism Organization, international travel keeps rising year over year. Which means more and more countries are opening to international travelers, some of which might not be used to traveling. Such places like the Middle East sees double the global average of travelers compared to the rest of the world⁸. A person traveling to a new area, be it in a foreign country or a new area of their own, has to learn a lot: how to treat people in different societies, their customs, their currency, and how to get around to name a few. It can be an enormous struggle to navigate a new space of any kind without any knowledge of it. For example, those traveling to America, may not know where the safe and not safe areas of a city. Further, they do not know our customs or our currency. This disconnect can cause mistakes from as little as paying someone too much money, to possibly disrespecting someone, or at worst becoming a victim of a violent crime or scam.

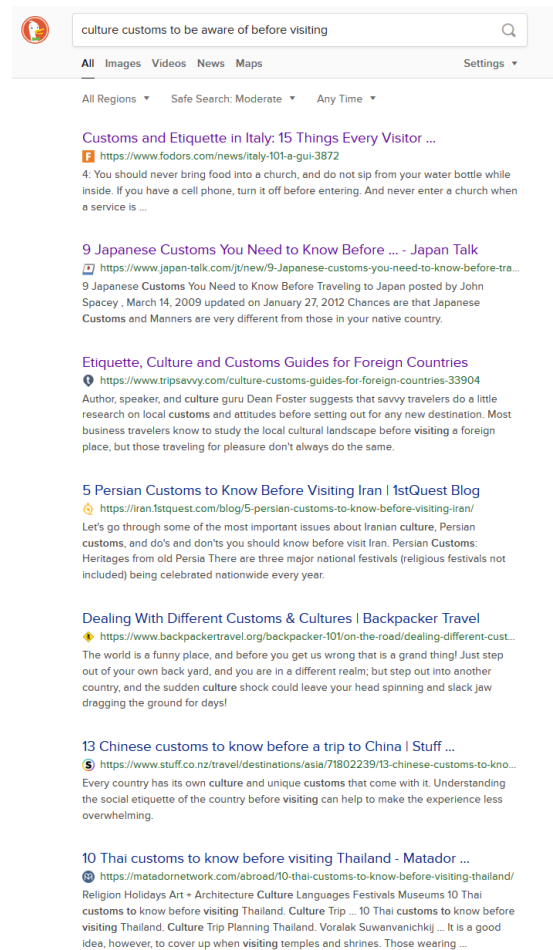
According to **Dejan Kvrjic**, a popular travel blogger on lifehack.org, there are a variety of reasons why people do not travel. These reasons are widely varying but include:

- Not knowing customs of country
- Not knowing the currency exchange
- Not knowing the safe areas
- Not speaking the language
- Finding Points of Interest
- Finding Local Transportation

A list of disasters that could spawn from a variety of these problems include:

- Lose a business deal from a misunderstanding
- Disrespecting a person in the country
- Getting lost and can't read signs
- Feeling of loneliness

Demand



The screenshot shows a search engine interface with the query "culture customs to be aware of before visiting". The results are filtered by "All" (Images, Videos, News, Maps) and "Settings". The search results include several links to articles about cultural customs and etiquette for various countries.

- Customs and Etiquette in Italy: 15 Things Every Visitor ...**
<https://www.fodors.com/news/italy-101-a-gui-3872>
 4: You should never bring food into a church, and do not sip from your water bottle while inside. If you have a cell phone, turn it off before entering. And never enter a church when a service is ...
- 9 Japanese Customs You Need to Know Before ... - Japan Talk**
<https://www.japan-talk.com/jt/new/9-Japanese-customs-you-need-to-know-before-tra...>
 9 Japanese Customs You Need to Know Before Traveling to Japan posted by John Spacey, March 14, 2009 updated on January 27, 2012 Chances are that Japanese Customs and Manners are very different from those in your native country.
- Etiquette, Culture and Customs Guides for Foreign Countries**
<https://www.tripsavvy.com/culture-customs-guides-for-foreign-countries-33904>
 Author, speaker, and culture guru Dean Foster suggests that savvy travelers do a little research on local customs and attitudes before setting out for any new destination. Most business travelers know to study the local cultural landscape before visiting a foreign place, but those traveling for pleasure don't always do the same.
- 5 Persian Customs to Know Before Visiting Iran | 1stQuest Blog**
<https://iran.1stquest.com/blog/5-persian-customs-to-know-before-visiting-iran/>
 Let's go through some of the most important issues about Iranian culture, Persian customs, and do's and don'ts you should know before visit Iran. Persian Customs: Heritages from old Persie There are three major national festivals (religious festivals not included) being celebrated nationwide every year.
- Dealing With Different Customs & Cultures | Backpacker Travel**
<https://www.backpackertravel.org/backpacker-101/on-the-road/dealing-different-cust...>
 The world is a funny place, and before you get us wrong that is a grand thing! Just step out of your own back yard, and you are in a different realm; but step out into another country, and the sudden culture shock could leave your head spinning and slack jaw dragging the ground for days!
- 13 Chinese customs to know before a trip to China | Stuff ...**
<https://www.stuff.co.nz/travel/destinations/asia/71802239/13-chinese-customs-to-kno...>
 Every country has its own culture and unique customs that come with it. Understanding the social etiquette of the country before visiting can help to make the experience less overwhelming.
- 10 Thai customs to know before visiting Thailand - Matador ...**
<https://matadornetwork.com/abroad/10-thai-customs-to-know-before-visiting-thailand/>
 Religion Holidays Art + Architecture Culture Languages Festivals Museums 10 Thai customs to know before visiting Thailand. Culture Trip ... 10 Thai customs to know before visiting Thailand. Culture Trip Planning Thailand. Vorelak Suwanvichikij ... It is a good idea, however, to cover up when visiting temples and shrines. Those wearing ...

Further investigation and research uncovers many examples demonstrating the challenges that travelers face. On the TripAdvisor forums, user Yinci Y, posted a write up travelling to Minsk, Belarus from the view of a solo female traveler⁹. One only needs to scroll down to see how many people were appreciative of her quick rundown of the city and its relative safety. A quick search (left), reveals how many sites currently exist to help travelers in the planning of travel and understanding of cultural customs in new countries. Larger implications are also obviously at stake when accounting for business travel, evidenced by Erin Meyer who discusses in the Harvard Business Review situations in which business dealings fail at the fault of participants who were unaware of local custom³. David L also details his experience and challenge When travelling, language barriers can place additional stress on the situation. Some destinations, such as the more rural areas of Japan, do not have signage that offers English translations. This was a challenge David L. reported about his recent

solo trip in Japan². Different countries also contain different scams people need to be aware of as evidenced by Briana Biancolin's article on common scams in throughout Europe¹. Further evidenced by the United States Embassy in Hungary's website on travel advisory lists common scams for traveler's to be wary about⁷.

Target User Research

Based on our research from Eurostat⁶, Solo Traveler World⁴, and US Travel⁵ reports there are several different personas that reflect a typical international traveler. Each persona has a different backstory and situation that influences their needs in travel preparations.

Persona 1

Name Da Liu
Country of Origin Taiwanese
Work Traveling Businessman
Family Single
Age 31

Da is a young professional that just got hired by a very small international company in Taiwan. Up until recently he hasn't been able to afford traveling far away. So, his experience abroad is minimal and he has only ever visited neighboring countries. He's excited to get started on this new adventure, but a little bit apprehensive. Having studied English growing up and more when he got the job, he has gained basic business fluency, but outside of business his vocabulary is lacking. After landing in Los Angeles, Da heads to a restaurant. While there he realizes he is not sure how tipping works in the United States; he's heard many different versions of how much is appropriate, but has to download an app while he's eating to try and determine how much he should leave at the end of his meal. When the waiter hands him the menu, he also realizes he can't read half the ingredients on the menu. Now he is downloading a translation app so that he can make sure he understands exactly what is on the menu and what he is ordering for dinner.

Persona 2

Name Claudia Wolf
Country of Origin Germany
Work Retired (fmr. Secretary to CEO of a wealthy auto company)
Family Married
Age 65

Claudia is a fresh retiree and is excited to finally have the chance to travel around the world. Before retirement Claudia was as busy as could be. Working for a large German auto company she was always on call and constantly scheduling business meeting. Free time for her and her husband was minimal and vacations were always based in or around Germany, just in-case something in work came up. She's excited to travel to new and exotic locations with her husband, but a little anxious of expectations on tourists outside of Germany. Her and her husband decided on a trip to Israel. They both studied up on the culture

before heading out but concerned they may forget something important once they are moving around the country.

Persona 3

Name Mary Charette
Country of Origin United States
Work Soon to be Travel Blogger
Family Single
Age 22

Mary is a fresh graduate from the University of Colorado and decided long ago that she would travel all around the world. Coming from a family with a lower socioeconomic status meant Marie was only ever been able to visit states neighboring Colorado. She started a vlog at university which has given her enough income to start to truly travel the world. She is optimistic and anxious to get her new vlog series started and is excited to throw herself into the fray by first travelling to China. Mary is unfamiliar with China and their customs; therefore, she will need all the resources she can get to manage her way through the bustling streets of Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Beijing. She realizes after she arrives while she is trying to find a way to get to her hotel that she's not sure how the Yuan equates to the US Dollar. While unpacking her stuff and winding down for the night she is finally able to connect to free Wi-Fi that lets her browse currency exchange apps.

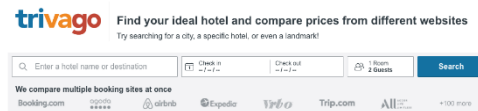
Existing Systems

Applications that assist people in travelling do exist, like currency exchange websites, or travel booking agents, but none exist all together. Many applications solve the problem with making it easy for someone to travel, by booking everything for them, but many do not make the traveler more comfortable. Furthermore, no application offers all these services in one centralized location.

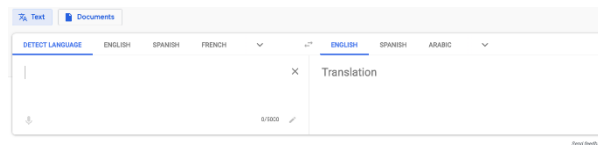
Existing systems include but are not limited to:

- Airbnb
- Expedia
- Google Flights
- Google Translate
- TripAdvisor
- Lonely Planet
- Yelp

Airbnb is a service that allow travelers to rent out local homes and other spaces for accommodations, often at a lower rate than hotel chains. TripAdvisor is a program that allows users to see what other travelers have reported during their experience in a certain country, city, or region. This program comes closest in address the problems travelers face but does not accomplish all the tasks. Trivago and Expedia help to compares hotel prices and shows the users reviews from previous guests while Google Flights show the user a list of flights allowing users to locate deals on accommodations and transportation.



Google Translate translates a variety of different languages to the user's current language in a simple web browser.



Yelp, like TripAdvisor, allow previous travelers to leave reviews and feedback for future patrons of restaurants and other businesses so that those seeking a particular service or experience can better locate it.

All these systems help travels prepare for the experience they are embarking on. Whether it be arranging the logistics or identifying places of interest, there is an app out there tailor-made for that specific purpose. A myriad of separate websites also exist that provide insights into the cultural expectations of a traveler's destination and during the planning process these are always available as a resource. All of this requires pre-planning and being prepare prior to traveling. These systems make it hard to do anything in the moment however, so if a traveler finds themselves unprepared, it can be a highly stressful – and in some cases dangerous - experience.

Analysis of Need

Analyzing the feedback and responses from frequent and soon-to-be travelers, we gained a better understanding about the need for an application that makes travel as simple a process as possible. Analyzing this qualitative data made it clear that those looking to travel must perform a variety of tasks in preparing to do so. These tasks range from arranging logistics (such as where to stay and how to get there) to basic research about what areas they should explore and what areas are best avoided. Furthermore, for those looking to diversify their experience and explore new cultures, it can be important to learn ahead of time what actions or behaviors might accidentally offend or cause problems in different environments. Finally, a clear challenge is the various number of

platforms and different services that a single traveler must use together in order to prepare for a single trip. Being able to centralize this process and perform all the necessary steps for planning as well as making these systems available in the moment if something is forgotten would be large steps in making travel an easier and more comfortable process for many interested travelers.

Task Analysis

Users utilizing a travel application would need to complete many tasks:

1. Search Chosen Destination
 - a. Select “Safe Neighborhoods” option
 - i. Select Category (transportation or accommodations)
 - ii. Select Filters (ratings,
 - iii. View rates, pricing, and options
 - b. Select “Points of Interest” option
 - i. Choose type (cultural, historical, religious, government, etc.)
 - ii. Review list of Points of Interests
 - c. Select “Do’s & Don’ts” option
 - i. Select category (eating out, table manners, conversations, personal space, public transportation)
 - d. Select “Currency Converter”
 - i. Choose original currency
 - ii. Enter amount
 - iii. See equivalent amount in local currency
 - e. Select “Translate” option
 - i. Take photo of item to translate
 - ii. Select translate button
 - iii. View translated text

The Solution

The most important aspect of travel is to ensure the safety of those that are exploring a new country or other region of the world. Prioritizing information on cities and countries where all travelers should go and others that should be avoided is key to a positive travel experience. Second, is the focus on pricing to allow a variety of people to travel and ensure that cultural experience and the implicit education that occurs during travel are open to everyone regardless of their background. Travelers should be able to access these features in one simplistically designed system that they can use before and during the travel experience. A solution will need to have several filters and options to choose from so that the users will be able to narrow down options to exactly what they need. Travelers need to be able to look at a map that clearly features or highlights safe and unsafe areas. Providing this type of information will give users the insight required

to be comfortable so they can enjoy more and worry less. A solution will also need to provide features that will give real time information. Travelers need to be able to select from translation, currency calculators, and cultural reference features to have the relative information at their fingertips. These information sources will provide immediate information so that travelers can navigate complicated situations like tipping at a restaurant or the correct way to greet a stranger.

Let's Travel is the solution! It will be the go-to reference app when travelling domestically or abroad. With this app, the users will be able to travel to anywhere and get up to speed on all the Do's and Don'ts while. From basic etiquette to local culture, the app will give access to boundless data and information on the places of interest as well as the areas not well known to the average tourist to enrich the travel experience. Functionally the app will provide the ability to plan their trip logistically using information pulled from numerous internet sources about travel and accommodation availability and pricing, paired with information about culture considerations to eliminate the anxiety of missing vital information that can shape the travel experience. These insights will give the user the information required to plan a trip, and also make sure that travelers can recall information or reference materials with ease while also being while in the midst of their travels as well. *Let's Travel* will also feature a built-in translation program utilizing the front facing camera to allow the user to view local content in their language of choice. The app will be aimed at anyone over 18 looking to travel in another city or country around the world. The focus of the app will be to help people from all over the world, from students traveling abroad on a budget to families needing to find the areas that are safe and kid friendly. As English is currently the most popular travel language the app will be in English for its initial release. This consideration also means the design will avoid any complex vocabulary so even those with the most basic command of English will still be able to find what they need. The interface of the app will need to be designed with visual and contextual clues that make it easy for would-be or current travelers to get all the information they need in one place without having to rely on upwards of ten different services to accomplish one goal: an enriching and enjoyable travel experience.

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