*“*Food for friends*”*:

New way for people get friends through social net work application and food

**THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of**

**the Requirements for**

**the Degree of**

MASTER OF SCIENCE (Integrated Digital Media)

at the

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

TANDON SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

By

Tianyu Ren

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Approved:

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Date

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University ID#:

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Date

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NYU Polytechnic School of Engineering

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Software Application Developer

Date

# Vita

Tianyu Ren was born in Beijing, People’s Republic of China, in 1990. He attended school at the Hangzhou Dianzi University, where he studied Printing Engineering and received a bachelor's degree in Engineering in 2012. In 2013 he began a master’s degree in Integrated Digital Media at New York University, where he learned web design, multi-media design and digital media. The artistic atmosphere in New York attracts him. After

graduation, he intends to pursue a career in commercial photography and videography.

# Abstract

*“*Food for friends*”*:

A new way for people get friends through social net work application and food

**by**

**Tianyu Ren**

**Advisor: Prof. Brian MacMillan, MS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for**

**the Degree of Master of Science (Integrated Digital Media)**

**May 2016**

**Food for Friends** is an application to help people who we are new in a new place or travelers to have new friends. At the same time, through this application people can get reasonable price food and have an unforgettable travel experience and memory. Through this platform, users can have different experiences than provide by other travel or food guide applications or any other social network applications. People can get face to face connections with other people.

Keywords: food, friends, application, new travel experience, social network

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# Background

## Introduction and Statement of Purpose

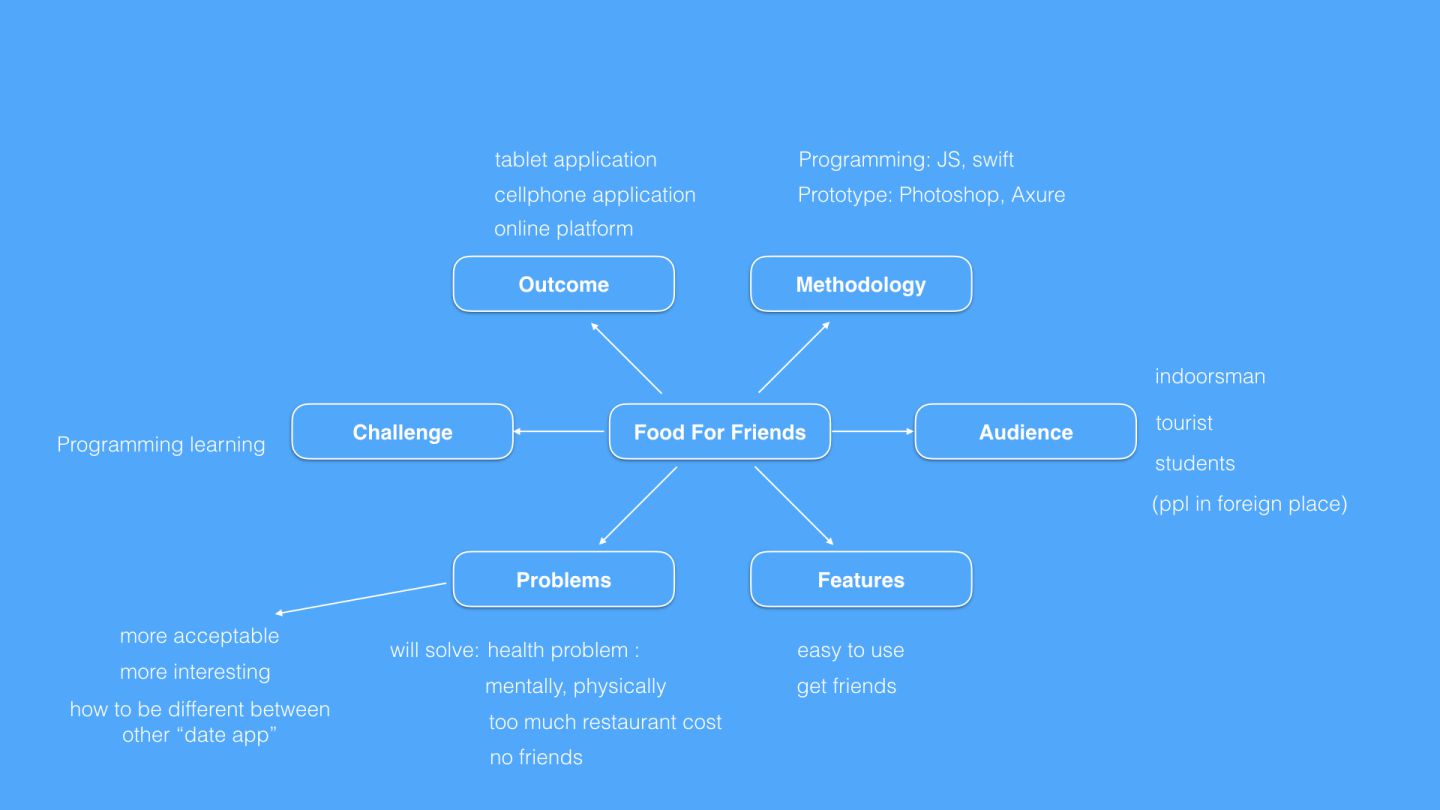


图 1 Brain storm Mind map.

With globalization increasing rapidly, people from different cultures and different countries are mixing a lot, through travel and immigration. Millions people are living in NYC, and there are so many different cultures. [However, I think this advantage was not good use.] Humans are curious about different cultures but most of them don’t have opportunities to get a different culture friend. And also there are many new people come to a new place every day. How to help them go inside to the new cultures (new environment) is a big problem. [Food for Friends is an application that hopes to overcome this problem by allowing people new to a city to meet while eating.]

There are lots of social network mobile applications in the market and there are also many food rating platforms now too. The market for restaurant and social network users is growing so fast, and lots of new apps are coming out every day. When people make friends with others using applications, actually they are using their personality attributes to build connections with others, based on habit and interest. I pick one of the most important and specific conceptions from people’s interest and use it to build a new way to help people to connect with each other and have fun.

By using “Food For Friends”, people who are in a strange place or tourists are able to get to know new people and make new friends when they are having delicious food. There are already a few information-sharing mobile applications and websites trying to provide useful travel information for travelers, such as Yelp and Expedia. However, they ignore the importance of connections between people, and people in these kinds of platforms just can see the tips and information that people written, but sometimes these writings are not current so they may be useless. This makes their user experience bad. To give a better user experience for people and help people get friends when they are in a new place, “Food for Friends” gives people useful and latest information, and help more people in their trips.

“Food For Friends” is a web based information-sharing mobile application for travelers and people in new places who are without friends and feeling lonely, which aims to be the best trip-guide for travelers *and* a good social network platform. The main idea of the “Food for friends” is about four functions for users: restaurant recommendations, travel guide, friend making and socializing.

There are some apps in the app store right now that have similar features to Food for Friends. So how is “Food for Friends” different?



Figure : Food for Friends has four functions: restaurant recommendation, travel guide, friends making and gather people

“Food for Friends” is an application that combine some useful and important features from other applications.

It is well known that Yelp and Expedia are very useful recommendation applications, they can provide lots of useful information and tips about restaurants and places, and people even can know who wrote the reviews through the Facebook account link. Most of the time these kind of applications can help us to find what we want. However, when people are outside alone, what they most want is a person to share happiness and wonderful experiences with them. Therefore, there is an another function in “Food for Friends” that helps people find other people and get them together by GPS, people who have the same interest on food and habits could get together and have fun together. The inspiration of this function is from date applications such as “Zoosk”, people can build themselves’ groups and have fun together with the group members.

## Target and Audience

“Food for Friends” focuses on travelers and other people, for example immigrants, who come to a strange place and want to have some friends. At the same time, “Food for Friends” also wants to help people have nice and delicious food at a reasonable price with a friendly and unforgettable experience and memory. It can also be a useful food guide for foodies.

# Methods and Techniques

## Design

Why I choose the iOS platform as the first choice?

I have chosen to develop the first version of Food for Friends in iOS for Apple phones iOS 7.0+. The reason why I choose iPhone users as the main audiences is because the advertisement income for iOS developer is more than Android developer (see figure 2). At the same time, unlike the Apple store, which has very strict auditing system procedures, Android apps have huge security risks particularly in China, Android users’ personal information can’t be well protected.

1. Security problems of Android



Figure 3: The logos of Android app stores in China

Food for Friends is an application only for iOS system. iOS system is much safer than Android system although Android system have much more market than iOS system. In China, there are more than 30 Android app stores, and most of them are not such formal as the Google app store. There are so many hacker apps in these stores and it should be a big security risk for users’ personal information. Therefore, because there will be a lot of personal data on the “Food for Friends”, iOS app store should be the best platform for it.

1. Advertising Income

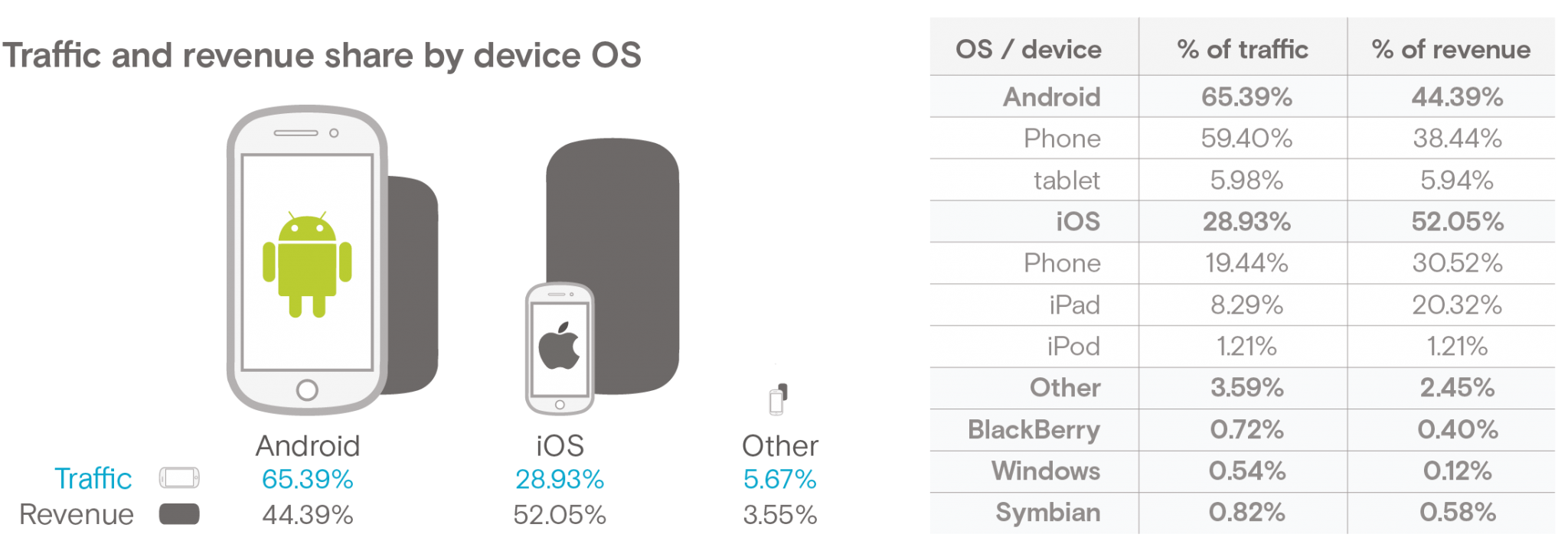
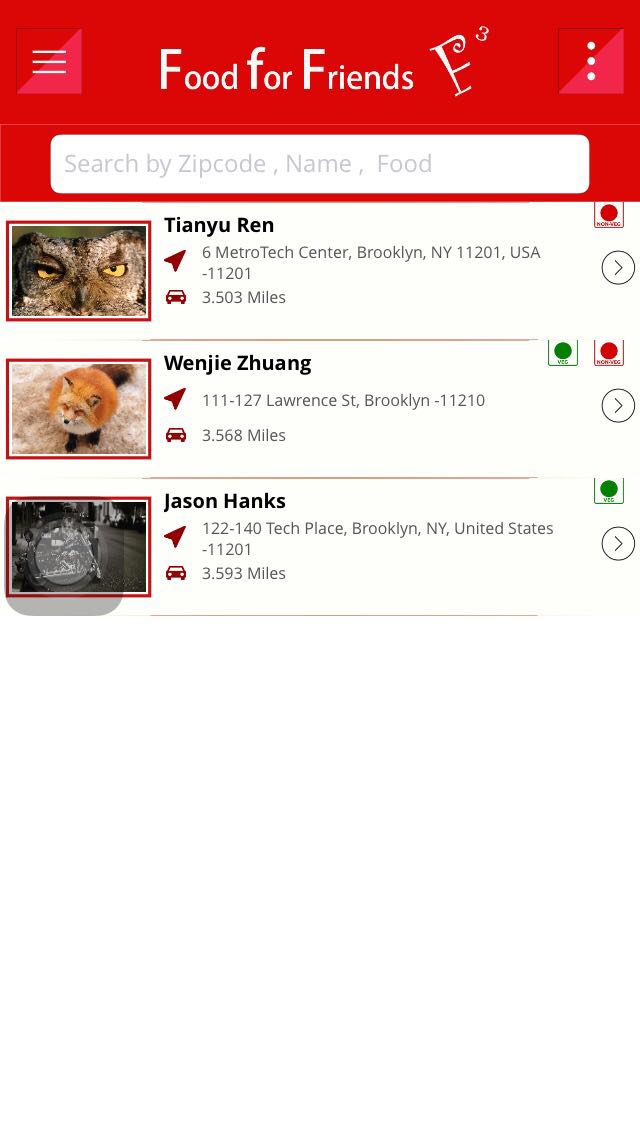


Figure 2: iOS vs Android advertising income in 2015Q3

There is another reason for using the iOS system: Although the iOS market is smaller than the Android market in the whole smartphone market (figure 2), the advertising income for iOS developers is still higher than for Android developers. For “Food for Friends”, advertising income from the restaurants would be important part of the whole income.

UI design as seen in **Figure 1**



1. Show a list of users who are near by

2. Show the address of users who are near by

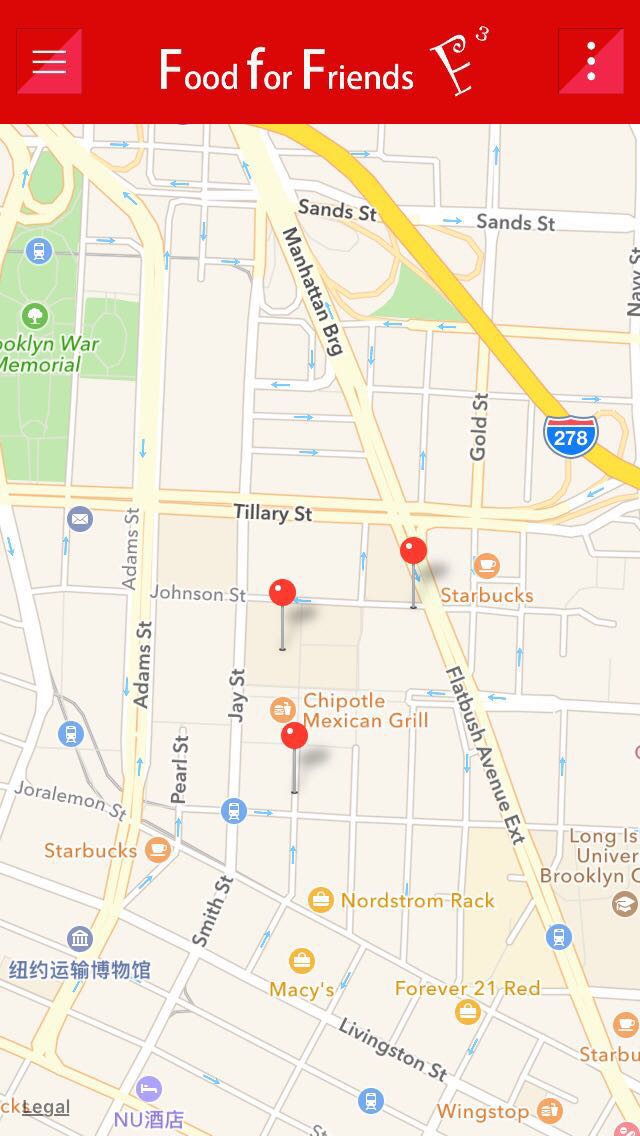
3. Show if users are vegetarians

4. Search users or restaurant in the data end

5. Left top button is the main menu button

6. Right top button is the map button could show positions of users who are near by on map

图 2 Home page



1. Show the positions of users who are near by on map

2. Left top button is the main menu button

3. Right top button is the button back to home page

图 3 Map page



1. Show the location

2. Show the phone number

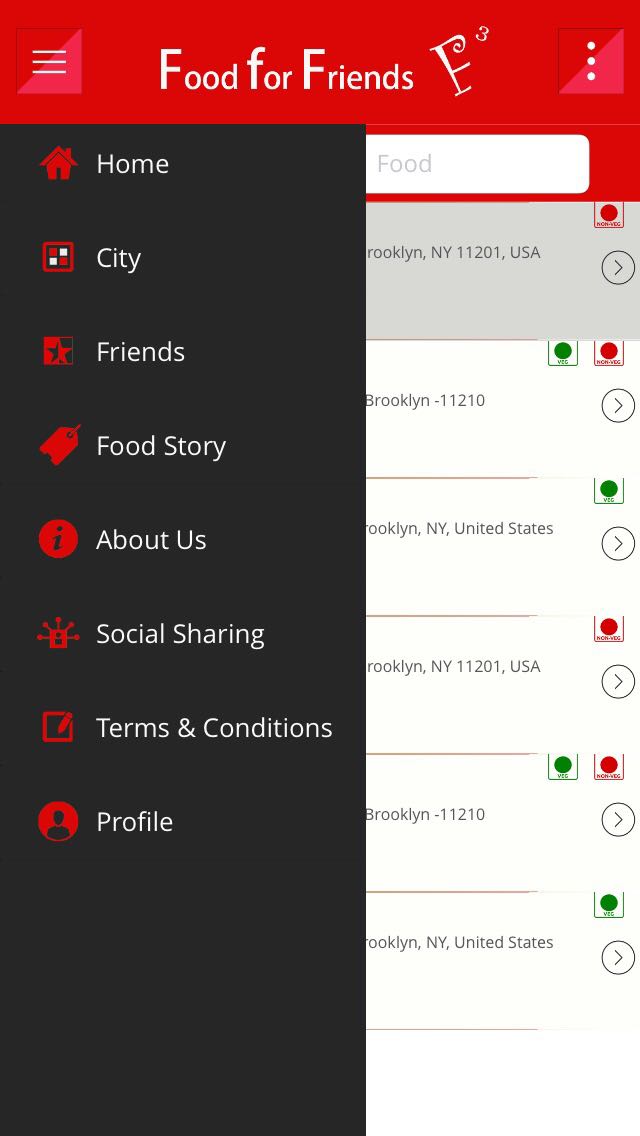
3. Show the favorite food of the user

4. Show the personal detail: age, hometown, interests, and personal intro

5. The bottom buttons: call button, map button, data/group/dinner invite button, social media button, SMS message button

6. The right top button is the friends button

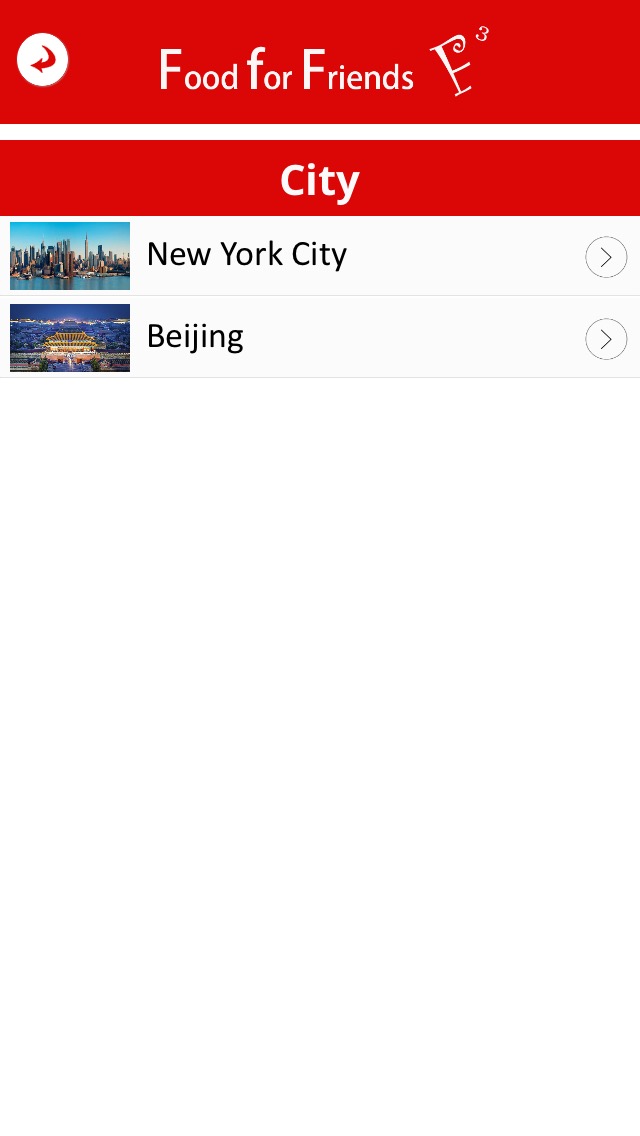
图 4 Personal information page



1. Main menu

2. Home button will take users to figure 2

图 5 Main menu



1. Left top button is back button. It takes user to the previous page

2. Different cities options

图 6 City page

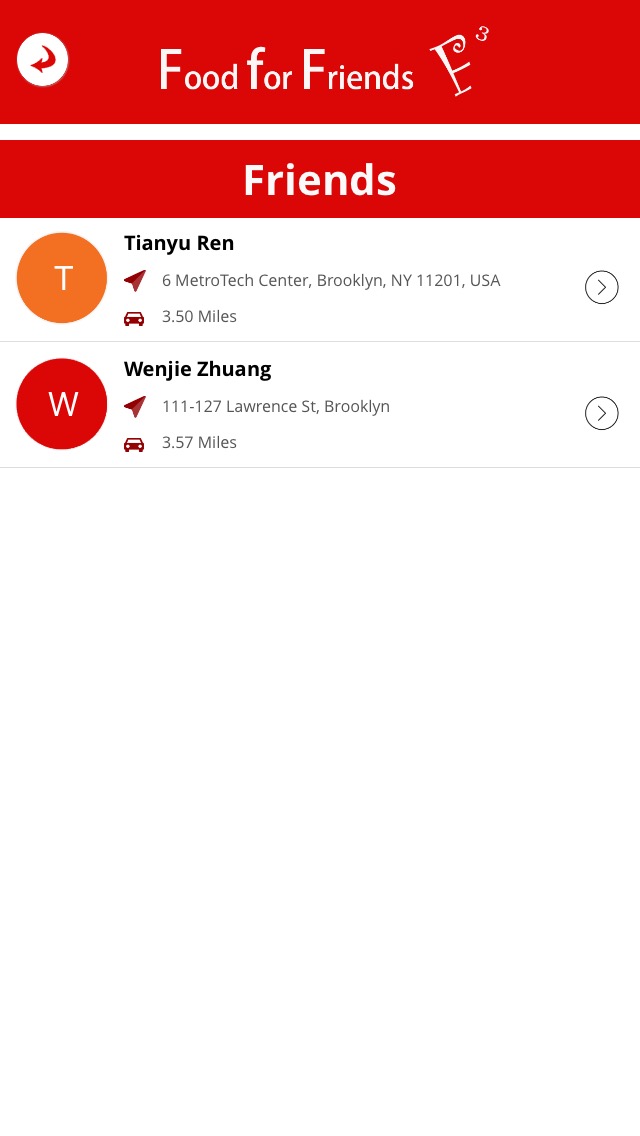
1. Left top button is back button and takes user to previous page

2. Shows a list of restaurants

3. Shows if users are vegetarians



图 7 City page 2

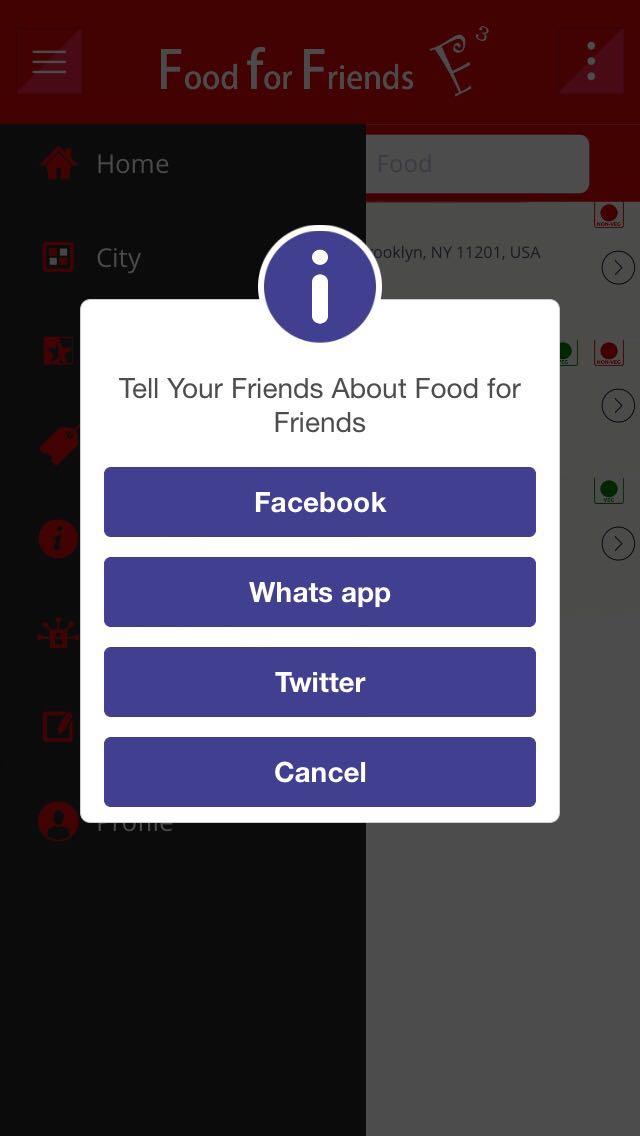


1. Left top button is back button and takes user to previous page

2. Shows the list of friends

3. Shows the friend’s position and distance from holder

图 8 Friends page



1. Can link to other social network account and share what you get in “Food for Friends”

图 9 Social share page

## Development tools

Food for friends is a three tiered application (see Figure ). For the front end it uses iOS version 7 and higher. For the middle tier it uses php. The database is mySql. The application was developed using Xcode version 7.2. The front end was developed in HTML & CSS, javascript by using Adobe dreamweaver.

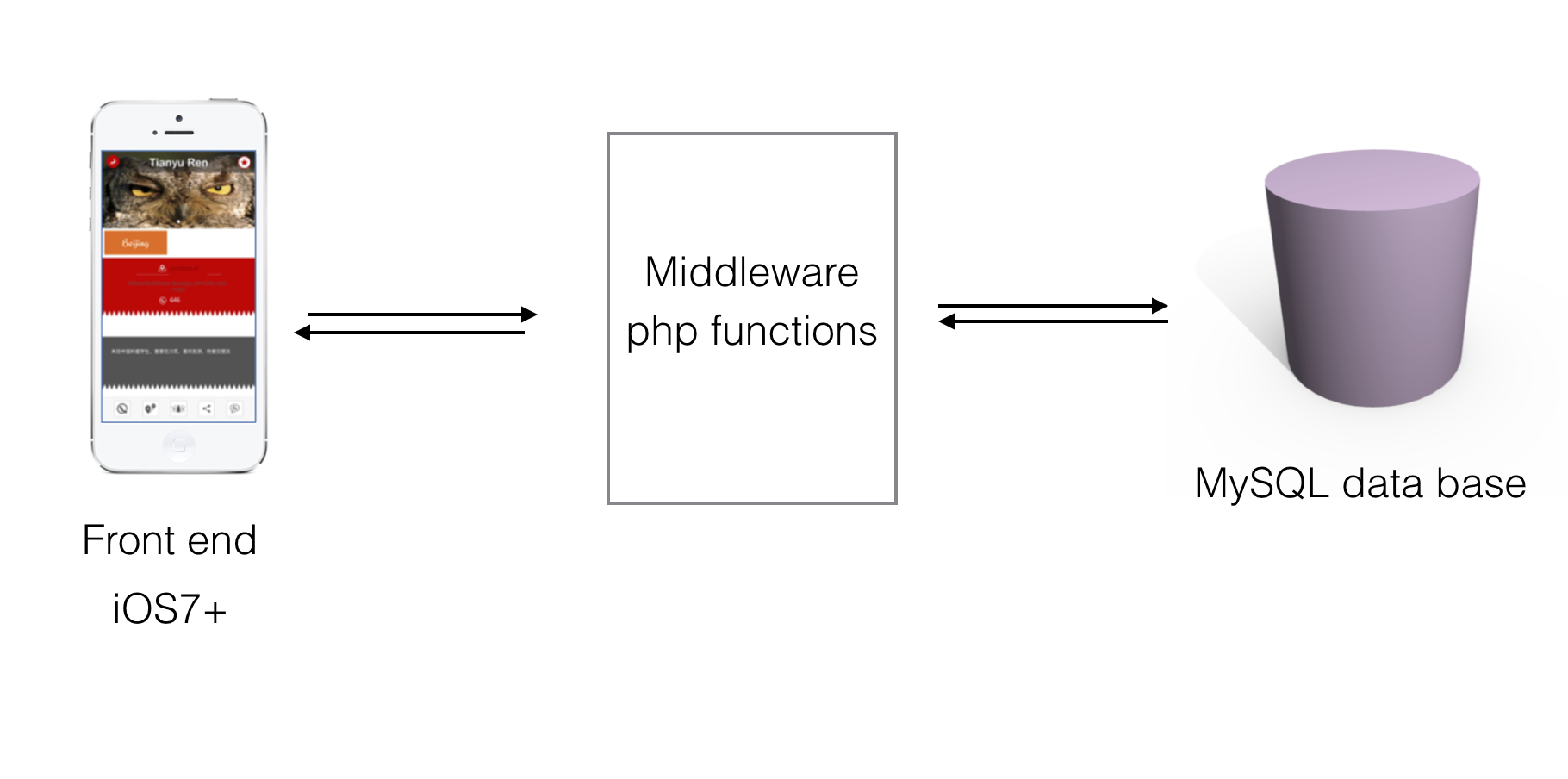


图 10 System diagram

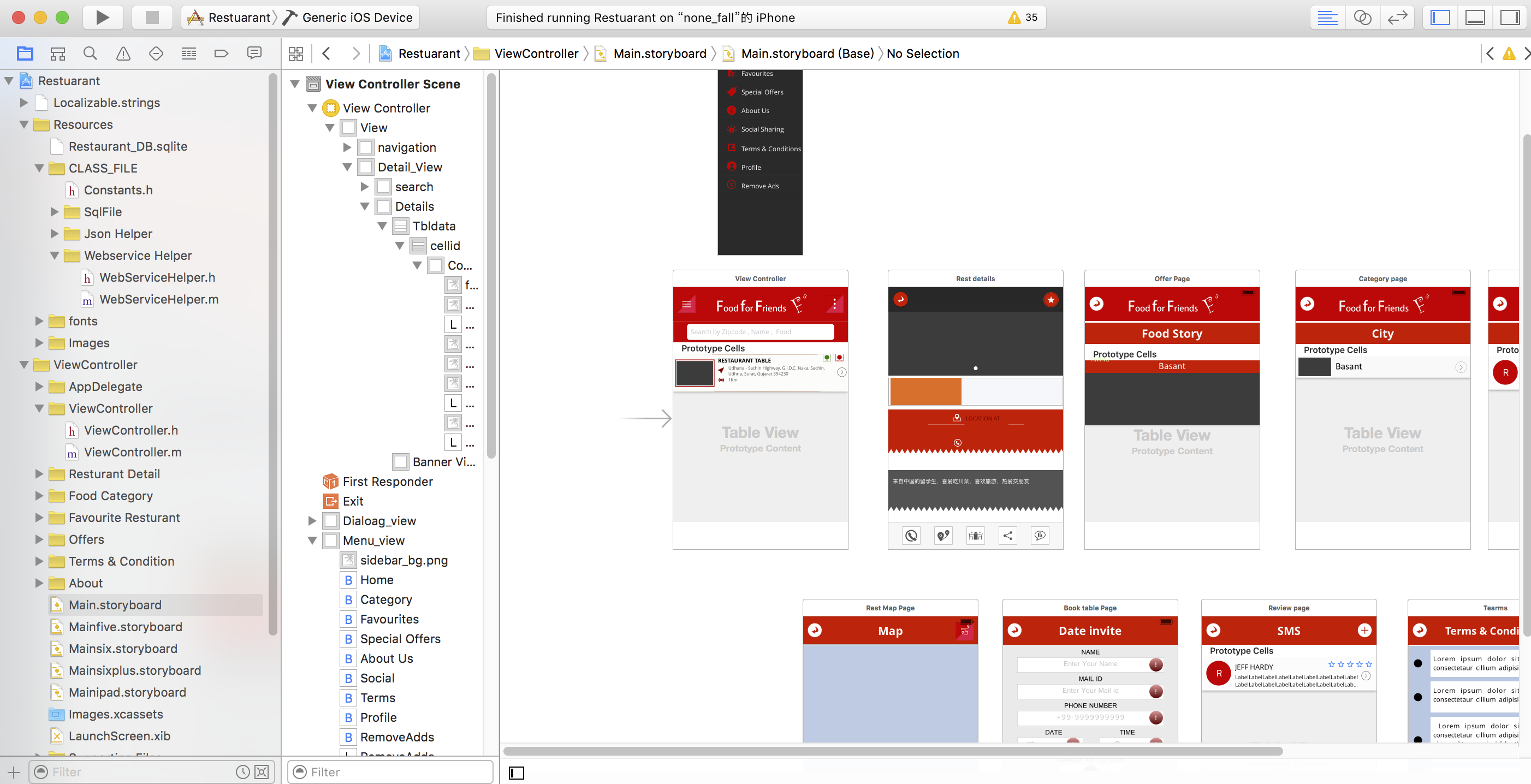


图 11 Xcode development

Data base:

DBMS: MySQL

C++

Front end: HTML & CSS javascript

Adobe Dreamweaver

Middleware: PHP

## License Agreement

Food for Friends uses a standard license agreement modelled on an Apple agreement (see Appendix 1), and edited. The license has the following goals:

1. Establish that the Food for Friends license is not transferrable to other people

2. Get users consent to use of data

3. Warn users that this license doesn’t cover third party services, for example the connection to Facebook. These services are covered by other license agreements.

4. Warning that some content may be offensive (e.g. restaurant reviews)

5. No warranty for software so that I am covered if it doesn’t work

6. Limitation of liability so I cannot get sued if it causes harm.

This still needs to be reviewed by a lawyer.

## Privacy

Food For Friends replies on the use of certain private information. Here is the private information it will store:

1. Personal phone number and/or email, password.
2. Age, restaurant visit history, interests and portfolio photo – can you provide a picture of this functionality
3. Location data

No credit card information will be stored. The site will pay for itself through the cost of the app and advertising.

The information will be stored on a secure server.

## Marketing

From my research, I find that Chinese are more comfortable on sharing food with other people during the dinner, so this it would be much more acceptable for Chinese using this application than Americans, for example.The business model for “Food for Friends” it based on the tourism Ads and restaurant ADs, people can see the ADs in the home page and restaurant. Restaurant and tourism guide could set Ads over there.

At the start, I want to begin marketing “Food for Friends” among Chinese travelers and expatriates. I have created a multi-platform social media campaign. I let people use their Weibo and Wechat account to be authenticated using one of these applications. Weibo and Wechat are the two most popular social network apps in China and have over 200 million users (source) so it would be easy for people to use them for authentication. As well, I have created Weibo official account and Wechat official account to spread the influence of it. The resource of the social media is a very important part of the Food for Friends marketing. Also Food for Friends has a official Weibo account where users can share the food stories which users wrote in the app, and at same time it will share special offers for people too.

Add screen shot of Weibo account.

Can you provide examples of where you would advertise? Meet-up? Magazines? Clubs?

The main income of the app is from advertisements, and most of the advertisers will be restaurants, food markets, hotels, theaters, tour guides. If people don’t want to see the Ads, they could choose to pay $0.99 to remove the advertisement.

Comarketing

Work with restaurants and meet-up groups (for example meetup.com, gofindfriends.com), citysocializer.com

Provide coupons as an incentive to sign up.

BIG QUESTION

How do you convince people to share their private information?

* Perhaps make phone number optional, and allow email only.

# Outcomes and Conclusions

## What Worked

## What Did Not Work

What did you leave out???  For example tourist destination information Options For Expansion

What would I do next?

* Complete functionality, such as ….

Appendix 1: User Agreement

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