**ChalkTalk**

A New Social Media Application

Project Proposal

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Introduction

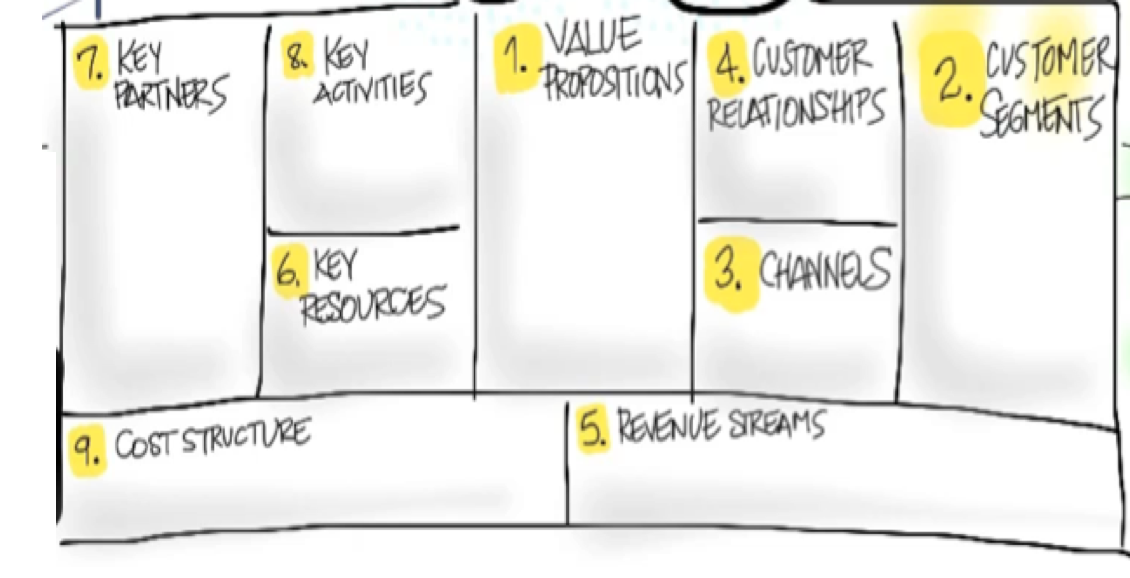
Having a social life as a college student can be beneficial in many ways, whether it be physically or emotionally. Socializing can help students learn different things outside of a classroom, expose them to different cultural aspects, build confidence, and even impact their futures. However, many students have trouble connecting with new people due to different reasons, such as shyness, social anxiety, or even lack of time. Other students may struggle with finding extra-curricular activities around campus or a new friend or group of friends to attend these activities with. It can be difficult for students to find people with the same interests as them when everyone is constantly growing and changing, especially during their college years.

           ChalkTalk would allow students to build their social networks through a social media application that will include everything a student would need to start socializing. Our target customers will be college students, whether they have trouble socializing with other students, need to find different activities on campus, or just need someone to talk to. There will also be various opportunities for expanding this application in the future based on features that are highly demanded by our users.

           Privacy will be an important aspect when creating this application so that users will feel and be safe when socializing. The application will strictly be for college students with an accessible university email. We will include security measures that will keep users’ information private and be sure they understand to always be careful when meeting up with other users.

           This app will focus on creating a safe online environment for students to connect with others that share the same interests as them. It will help students engage in student life, by giving them opportunities to create new friendships and allowing them to get involved in activities around campus.

Business Model Canvas



1. Value Propositions
   * An easy to use application
   * Help connect customers
   * Help customers interact with strangers with the same interests
   * Inform them of campus activities and student organizations that they may not be aware of
2. Customer Segments
   * University students
   * Organization officers
   * Graduates
3. Channels
   * Application Stores
     + Google Play
     + Apple Appstore
   * Customer feedback for future application improvements
4. Customer Relationships
   * This application will build a community of college students
   * Friendships
   * Social interactions
   * Users will be acknowledged through feedback and changes will be made to application to accommodate any concerns
5. Revenue Streams
   * Free application
   * Advertisements
6. Key Resources
   * Knowledge of student activities on campus
   * Different interests
   * Creative team with different skills
   * Access to free development and design tools, such as Android Studio
7. Key Partners
   * Universities
   * Student Organizations
   * Businesses that will allow advertisements for application
8. Key Activities
   * Gathering information about student activities
   * Platform development to grow our applications span across more campuses
9. Cost Structure
   * Cloud space to host our application, network server
   * Free access to all software needed for development of application

Problems

In college, it can sometimes be hard to find the time to meet new people, talk to your classmates, or find out about clubs, student organizations, and events on campus. There have been applications and websites in the past that have implemented the idea of using location to connect with people on campus, but this comes with a major flaw that anyone can access these forums for schools if in the general location. This means that people use their anonymity to “troll” or bully students on the forum and they may not necessarily attend the school. This can be annoying to people who legitimately want to meet and connect with other students that attend their university. With anonymity, people also intentionally mislead others, which is frustrating for students who are looking for help.  For keeping up with events, clubs, and student organizations, there are databases that have this information, but they are all separate and can be a hassle to sort through. Some events and clubs don’t make it on the university’s official site and this makes small clubs and events harder to get attendees. Students want an application or website that can help bring students together, keep them updated on current events, and also be reliable. We feel that ChalkTalk could be the solution.

Solutions

After much thought, we believe we have a viable solution to this problem that students often run into. To help with being able to find new people and talk to classmates, we have decided to create an application that is a forum for students to post about different topics. We will have topics such as a general, current events, course specific threads, upcoming events on campus, and buying/selling. To fix the issue with bullying and illegitimate answers, we will only allow users who have an accessible university email to use the application. We will allow users to make their own usernames, but by having a college email, the user is easily identifiable. By not giving people total anonymity, we hope it discourages those that plan to use the application to bully and mislead others for fun. This application’s goal is to foster students socially and academically without the fear of negative aspects of forum culture that arise on the internet.

Market

        The primary customers for our social media platform will be college students. The application will cater to college students because the focus of the application is to help students keep track of student life such as clubs, classes, university events, and other things going on around campus. It will also allow them to meet new people involved in these activities without people that do not attend the university interfering. Also, the application requires a university email that ends in “.edu,” for a user profile to be made, which will narrow our market down to mostly college students.

In the past five years, the social media market has produced billions of dollars in revenue. The social media market has been increasing for years and is projected that a third of the population in the world will be using some sort of social media platform by the year 2021. According to the United States census, there are more than sixteen million students enrolled in college. Also, the National Center for Education Statistics states that from 2005 to 2015, the number of students enrolled in universities rose 14%. These two facts show that there is quite a sizable niche market for a social media platform targeted at college students.

The current market for social media is saturated with many different platforms and the typical college-aged person is known to use social media more than older generations. Most people do not use just one social media platform because there are so many social media platforms to choose from. Each application has their own unique feature that keeps them on the market, such as Snapchat’s temporary photos and Twitter’s short text posts. Our application’s unique feature will be our focus on college students. There have been social media target at college students in the past, but none of them focused on actual student activities that took place on campus. Instead, the applications were just location based, such as YikYak. Other social media applications have also targeted college students, like the campus stories on Snapchat,. Other than that specific feature, there is nothing else on the application that is specifically for college students. This is the gap in the market that our application will try to fill by specifically targeting college students by keeping them updated on news around campus, allowing easier communication between students of that university and keeping students informed of events on campus that the students may not be aware of otherwise.

Our marketing strategy will be to start small by focusing on one college campus, Louisiana State University, then expand and incorporate more universities on the application. Our model for a revenue stream for our application is advertisement based because we have a hold on a specific demographic, college students. This makes it easier to find companies that would be interested in advertising to that demographic, and we can assure the company that their advertisements would be reaching their intended audience.

Competitive Advantage

There are not many applications that are like ChalkTalk. There are some similar services that are offered, like TigerDroppings, but it doesn’t give students a place to really connect with other fellow students. ChalkTalk will also be a mobile application, so students will be able to connect to the application at any time on their phones. There are other chatting applications available, but their main focus is on romance. Our application won’t be for dating, but instead for college students to socialize by making lifelong friends. There are also more general chat applications, but often times the user will need to know who they want to contact before they can chat with each other. These applications do not help people meet each other but are more for people to stay in contact with others they already know. ChalkTalk will allow students to chat with others that attend the same university and possibly share common interests. This application will also give them the ability to look through campus events that they may or may not be interested in. These events will be advertised on different websites and social media, but ChalkTalk will allow students to select events they want to attend and decide whether or not they would like to chat with others that are interested in the same event. The simplicity, easy usability, and unique design will set our product apart from other similar products.

Development

Our development team for ChalkTalk is small with only three members. This makes it difficult to evenly distribute front-end and back-end development roles. Therefore, all team members will be working on both front-end and back-end development. The development of ChalkTalk will start with the user interface of the app. We will start by planning the application’s main components and create a design that will be easy to navigate for our users. Secondly, we will start coding efficiently so that the product is functional. Our team has a variety of skills that will be useful during the development of this application. We will be using free software, such as Android Studio, to develop the application using Java and other languages, such as JavaScript, for designing. The code must be easy to understand so that each team member is able to read through and know exactly what is going on. Then, we will run multiple tests of the application and fix any bugs that we may find. Multiple tests will be ran again. We will be able to promote the application once it is finished and running smoothly.

Customer Interviews

(1-5)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First Name & Last Initial | Madison A | Cade M | Anthony M | Victoria T | Briana L |
| E-mail | moonmasquerade@outlook.com | cadem9@gmail.com | anthony.mishoe@yahoo.com | vtruon6@lsu.edu | blande5@lsu.edu |
| Major and College (i.e Computer Science, College of Engineering) | Studio Art, College of Visual & Performing Arts | Microbiology, College of Science | International Studies, Humanities and Sciences | Kinesiology | Interior Design, College of Art & Design |
| University or College | LSU | LSU | Virginia Commonwealth University | LSU | LSU |
| Year | 1st Year | 4th Year | 2nd Year | 5th Year+ | 4th Year |
| What social media applications listed below do you use? | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr, Reddit, Other | Snapchat, Reddit, Other | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Reddit | Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Reddit | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram |
| If you answered Other to the above question, please share which app you use. | Discord, GroupMe, Twitch | LinkedIn |  |  |  |
| If you are an LSU student, have you ever heard of or used the website, TigerDroppings? | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| If you answered yes to the above question, did you use it? Do you feel it helped connect LSU students and fans? |  | No | Yes | No | No |
| What is your purpose when using social media? | Meet and talk to new people, Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Meet and talk to new people, Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Meet and talk to new people, Keep up to date with news and events, Other | Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events |
| If you answered other, please explain your answer. |  |  | Look at funny content created by other users |  |  |
| Do you feel that you sometimes struggle with communicating with classmates about classes? | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Do you feel that you sometimes struggle finding classmates who have similar interests as you? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Do you feel it is difficult to keep up with events and announcements around campus? | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Do you feel you are aware of all existing clubs, student orgs, and academic help around campus? | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| If you answered no, do you feel that a database with these sources would be helpful in improving student life? | Yes | Yes |  | Yes | Yes |
| Would you be interested in a campus chat app that would allow you to meet new friends that share the same interests and also attend the same school with you? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| If so, do you think requiring an university email and using your real name would help combat this issue and keep the app academically focused? An example of this would be Quora. | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Yes | Yes |
| Do you find that forums that do not require proof of attendance or does not require usernames (i.e. YikYak, Swiflie) are a breeding ground for trolling and bullying? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Yes |
| Rate the following from 1-5, 1 being the least interesting and 5 being the most interesting. | | | | | |
| General chat page for all students | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Chat based on your major (can be used to find study groups or make new classmate friends) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Chat for upcoming events (can be used to meet up with someone new that is going to the same event as you -- you or the other person is going alone and needs a friend) | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Forums for different topic, news, and interests. | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Buying and selling (student section tickets, textbooks, etc) | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

Customer Interviews

(6-10)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First Name & Last Initial | Kacie L | Macey W | Jason W | Hollee N | Lexi M |
| E-mail | klivin9@lsu.edu | Mwil344@lsu.edu | jwil437@lsu.edu | hnitch2@lsu.edu | leximenard513@yahoo.com |
| Major and College (i.e Computer Science, College of Engineering) | International Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences | Anthropology | Computer Science, College of Engineering | Communication Disorder, College of Humanities & Social Science | Psychology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| University or College | LSU | LSU | LSU | LSU | LSU |
| Year | 3rd Year | 3rd Year | 5th Year+ | 3rd Year | 3rd Year |
| What social media applications listed below do you use? | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram | Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Reddit | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram | Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr |
| If you answered Other to the above question, please share which app you use. |  |  |  |  |  |
| If you are an LSU student, have you ever heard of or used the website, TigerDroppings? | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| If you answered yes to the above question, did you use it? Do you feel it helped connect LSU students and fans? |  | No | Maybe |  |  |
| What is your purpose when using social media? | Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Meet and talk to new people, Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events | Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events, Other | Meet and talk to new people, Stay in touch with friends and family, Keep up to date with news and events, Other |
| If you answered other, please explain your answer. |  |  |  | Entertainment | Share funny memes, quotes, recipes, or videos with others, Entertainment |
| Do you feel that you sometimes struggle with communicating with classmates about classes? | No | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| Do you feel that you sometimes struggle finding classmates who have similar interests as you? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Do you feel it is difficult to keep up with events and announcements around campus? | No | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Maybe |
| Do you feel you are aware of all existing clubs, student orgs, and academic help around campus? | No | No | No | No | No |
| If you answered no, do you feel that a database with these sources would be helpful in improving student life? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Would you be interested in a campus chat app that would allow you to meet new friends that share the same interests and also attend the same school with you? | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| If so, do you think requiring an university email and using your real name would help combat this issue and keep the app academically focused? An example of this would be Quora. | Maybe | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |
| Do you find that forums that do not require proof of attendance or does not require usernames (i.e. YikYak, Swiflie) are a breeding ground for trolling and bullying? | Yes | No | Yes | Maybe | Yes |
| Rate the following from 1-5, 1 being the least interesting and 5 being the most interesting. | | | | | |
| General chat page for all students | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Chat based on your major (can be used to find study groups or make new classmate friends) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Chat for upcoming events (can be used to meet up with someone new that is going to the same event as you -- you or the other person is going alone and needs a friend) | 2 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Forums for different topic, news, and interests. | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Buying and selling (student section tickets, textbooks, etc) | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |