Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
Executive Summary

Community Partner
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Student Development Team
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Background

The Pittsburgh Park Conservancy (PPC) was founded in 1996 by a group of citizens concerned with the deteriorating conditions of Pittsburgh's historic city parks. Since 1998, PPC has worked with the city of Pittsburgh under a public-private partnership agreement. They have raised over $76 million for park improvements, for Pittsburgh's four regional parks: Schenley, Frick, Highland and Riverview.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy currently has a mobile app that is difficult to use. Because the app is difficult to use, they have not promoted or otherwise circulated the app , and it does not have many users (our client reports <100 downloads). They do not believe that the application in its current state reflects well on the organization.

Project Vision

We propose a mobile application that will encourage residents of pittsburgh to visit the parks and interact with the PPC. The app will primarily be informational, providing a detailed trail map marked with points of interest, donation capabilities and a way to view the PPC's events calendar.

Project Outcomes

Our team built a new mobile application that has helped enhance PPC's mission and improve the quality of life for Pittsburgh park visitors. Our app not only provides points of interests, information on events and individual parks but also successfully guides visitors within the parks through an adept user design. For example, the use of Google Maps provides more trail data than the previously used Apple Maps. Now, trails and points of interests are displayed directly on the map, thus, making it easier for users to get from point A to point B within the park.

Project Deliverables

We will be providing two zip folders with wireframes and source code repositories to Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

Recommendations

In order for our client to sustain our solution, it is imperative they hire the most qualified developers who understand their mission. Without knowledgeable developers, it will be impossible for PPC to maintain the app and further development to make it self-sustaining. If they continue to hire developers who are unable to meet their expectations, like their previous developer, it will be impossible for PPC to reach their mission of improving the quality of life of Pittsburgh's parks' visitors.

Most of the requirements we were unable to meet could only be met if changes were made to the backend, first. In order for these changes to be implemented by future developers or IS students they must possess knowledge of Ruby on Rails web applications and the Model-View-Controller design pattern. In addition, they should be able to make the future changes to the mobile apps as well. These students must also understand how to maintain a successful client relationship and communicate requirements, deadlines, and scope creep with the client

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Student Development Team

Taylor Poulos served as project manager. Taylor is a Junior in Information Systems, Human Computer Interaction, and Creative Writing. Over the summer, he is working at Expii, a crowdsourced textbook project based in Pittsburgh. He worked with Evan Wineland on the iOS version of the PPC app, and served as the liaison with our project adviser Joseph Mertz as well as the overall project manager

Evan Wineland is an Information Systems major. He will be interning for Apple this summer. He worked with Taylor Poulos on the iOS version of the PPC app, which required familiarizing himself with Swift. He also served as the general point of contact with Lauryn, our liaison from the PPC-- sending agendas, coordinating meeting times, etc.

Weikun Liang is a junior double majoring in Information Systems and Human Computer Interaction. She will be interning for Amazon this summer. For the project, she worked with Taylor to create the wireframes for the Android and iOS app. In addition, she was responsible for implementing the Android application together with Sanum.

Sanum Sheikh is a junior Information Systems major with a double major in International Relations & Politics. She will be interning at Nike this summer. On team Parks, she conducted quality assurance for the Android app, maintained the project plans, as well as produced sprint reports every week to keep track of project progress.