

Proposal for Dispark

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Hypothesis

If we build a functional website for park owners/recreation directors to upload parks and offer rental opportunities through a customer facing portal, then they will subscribe to our service to help advertise and coordinate rentals and create a database of parks and available features at each space.

Executive Summary

Parks offer healthy public spaces for children, families, teams, and organizations to gather everyday. Public park facilities are constantly being rented, whether it be for sports events, parties, or gatherings. This can often create an unnecessary burden on facility managers of having to answer phone calls from customers and documenting reservations. Our solution removes the stress off of that individual(s), and offers a reliable and customizable way to offer facility rentals, and it provides customers with an interactive and easy to use interface

Our target clients are recreation directors and managers aiming to connect more with their customers. Many departments lack a customizable and user-friendly customer facing portal. Dispark would offer managers to create almost “profiles” for parks to show offerings, descriptions, and pricing for rentals, as well as an online payment option for customers to reserve facilities.

Dispark’s main competition include software such as RecDesk, Active Network, and Skedda. RecDesk and Active Network offer park departments software to manage their daily tasks and schedules, but fail to address the need for online reservation and payment options. While Skedda does offer facility rentals, it does not offer the customizability and effective UI that park managers need in order to inform their renters and attract a greater demand.

Dispark is an affordable, customizable, accessible, and easy-to-use web-based solution to facilitate park rentals and offer park search options. It will allow customers easier access to rent/search for park opportunities, and will ease the stress of phone calls and booking by hand that many park departments use to this day.

Dispark will harbor open-source web design and technologies to reduce the stress of costs on development and fees for future users.

Gap In the Market

Currently, when someone wants to make a park rental with a given park, or are looking for a park to make a rental at, there isn’t any easy way to do it. Some parks allow one to call in ahead of time and make their reservation, but this can be a hassle for both the park employees and park goers. If someone were just looking for a park to rent a space at, they might call a friend and hope that they know of one suitable to the cause. Both of these issues can be easily resolved with a website. One that allows users to both search for park rental opportunities and make their reservations.

Meeting the Market's Needs

Dispark fills the gap in the market by providing convenience in making rentals. This product saves park goers and park administrators time and effort, thus reducing staff responsibilities, and making the experience of renting a park facility a pleasant and stress free one.

Implementation

- **Management**

Dispark will be managed by its developers Kendall Comeaux, Dean Compton, Braylon Frederic, Vaughn Ohlerking

- **Development**

- Front End (User Interface):
 - HTML - "Standard markup language for Web pages"
 - CSS - "A style sheet language used for describing the presentation of a document written in a markup language like HTML."
 - Javascript - "An object oriented programming language designed to make web development easier and more attractive."
- Back End (Web Server and Database):
 - PHP - "A server side scripting language. that is used to develop Static websites or Dynamic websites or Web applications."
 - SQL - Query language to connect frontend to database (MySQL)

- **Marketing and Distribution**

We will start by marketing our service to local parks and eventually expand to include more cities.

- **Monetization**

- Small startup fee
 - Small percentage fee per rental transaction
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The Problem and our Solution

Park owners and recreation directors have trouble connecting with park goers, potential renters, and vice versa. Dispark would allow owners to list their parks along with their features and provide a feature where park goers could search for parks based on distance and/or features. The website would also provide a way for people to rent out public spaces and create a reservation stored within the website.

Industry Need for Our Technology

Right now, the most common way for people to rent and reserve parks involves either walking up to the management office's front desk and requesting a reservation, or making a phone call to the office where they will manually enter your reservation into their system, or scratch it down on a calendar. This doesn't take care of payment. It's a significant inconvenience for all parties involved, a pain point if you will. The easiest solution is a simple online reservation and payment website. Additionally, park owners have no easy means of listing their parks, Dispark would be a convenient listing site for parks and rec centers alike.

Market Analysis / Primary Market / Secondary Market

Dispark's main competition include, and Skedda. RecDesk and Active Net are more geared towards daily task management for departments, and they are not capable of handling rentals. Skedda is a rental software, but is not used in the park industry because it lacks the customizability that park administrators need to advertise and inform park goers.

- Primary Market
 - Local/City Governments - Recreation/Facility managers would be able to upload and manage rentals from all of their parks in one place.
 - Private Park Owners - Dispark would potentially offer a smaller subscription for private park owners to upload fewer parks so that they would be encouraged to use our software to manage rentals and provide information on their parks.
- Secondary Market
 - Park Renters (Coaches, League Managers, Teams, Park goers) - Will have a place to go to easily find what facilities they need and potentially reserve or rent directly from our website.
 - Casual Park Goers - Dispark will provide an accessible and easy to navigate UI for casual park goers to search for parks and park features in their area that are in our database.

Marketing Strategies

- **Overview**

The Dispark team will market our product to parks in our area who are looking to streamline the renting of their facilities. As our product grows more popular we will expand it to make it easier to find these parks as well and rent from them.

- **Primary Customer Analysis and entry strategy**

Our main customers will be park managers looking to improve their user interface, we will market our software as a way for customers to easily access and rent from parks.

- **Core Competency**

The core competency of Dispark is bringing park management a simpler, more user friendly method of renting out their properties that includes a user portal for renters in order to reduce input needed from management.

- **Sales Strategy**

We will start small, selling to local parks then eventually expand outwards once our name and reputation are more well known.

Competition

- RentYourRecreation offers a similar service but is not user friendly, and is more focused on recreational activities for the general public to find rather than being a place for park owners and recreation managers to list themselves.
 - Companies such as Find Your Park provide a means to search for parks based on specific features but don't provide a means to reserve time slots or rentals.
 - Google maps is highly not user friendly, often provides poor information, and doesn't give a means to rent facilities.
 - Active Net and RecDesk are geared towards daily tasks and activities and don't have a proper customer facing portal.
 - Skedda has rentals but isn't as customizable to what park administrators need. People also complain about them being too expensive.
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Development Strategy

Dispark will be developed from the backend forward to ensure the ability of developers and others to be able to easily add front end capabilities. Bugs will be fixed as they are found, and the Minimum Viable Product will be the first priority. Non-essential features will be added as time permits. Ascension parish parks will be used as a model and for testing usability of the program.

Barriers

Dispark will face a handful of challenges/barriers:

- Gaining an initial base of park listings for users to search through.
 - Software creation
 - Database storage
 - Competition from other management softwares
 - (Potential) Dealing with government transactions
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Critical Risks

Dispark could fail to outperform the performance of the competition, and even if it is to succeed there the possibility of the program becoming outdated if not properly maintained and updated as market demands change.

Interviews

Interviews were gathered through online surveys distributed through a potential local customer.

What is your name? 6 responses;

What is your job? 6 responses;

Assistant Recreation Director

Senior Program Coordinator

Recreation Director

Parks & Recreation Technology Assistant

director of Parks

Recreation Supervisor

How often do you rent out facilities at parks(tennis courts/baseball fields/meeting areas)? Is it easy to manage? 6 reponses;

daily, no it is not very easy to manage at all

Daily and NO it is not easy!

Frequently. Managing isn't difficult but we are always looking for ways to improve and steam line our rentals

Often during summer. Yes.

daily and it is difficult

Daily Yes

Do you currently use any kind of software to facilitate rentals at your rental facilities? Would you be willing to switch? 6 reponses;

We currently keep rentals and practices on a spreadsheet for each park and on our departmental calendar for buildings

Community Pass and Civic Rec. And Yes.

Yes and yes if the new software provides us with a better way to serve our renters.

Depending on the facility, either CivicRec or GoogleSheets (ie. Excel) is used. Willing to look at streamlining if there was a free option to do so that better fits our platforms.

no formal software Yes we are willing to switch and trying to switch

Yes ActiveNet

What do you like about your current system of managing rentals of facilities? 6 reponses;

I don't like anything about my current management system

Not much

Simplified and user friendly

Customizability

nothing, too cumbersome

Easy to use Customize able

What features would you change about your current system or like to see in a new system? 6 reponses;

I would like something that can hold all of my rentals with pricing. I would like electronic agreements that can be completed online by filling out a few blanks and a click of a button. I would like to have all facilities listed with pricing for each facility including individual fields with dimensions.

An automatic posting of names to make it more automated to see who is assigned what courts.

Online booking, User friendly , secure payment options , and double booking protection.

Nothing specific.

be able to instantly confirm availability and turn around reservations quickly

A customer facing portal, such that they could view and self book available amenities.

If you have any comments or tips, please provide them here: 6 reponses;

The only thing that I may include on the field rentals is adding what fields are appropriate for which age groups. ex: St. Amant Park Field 2 13-15 year old field, bases 80' distances, (whatever the pitcher's mound is set at as well)

NA

Thanks for including us in your project and good luck!

N/A

any new software would need to be internal user friendly to be successful

In what context?

Data Interpretation

Through gathering survey information, the gap in the market has been proven to exist. The focus points will be making a customizable portal while keeping it user-friendly for administrators and their customers. In order to distinguish ourselves from the competition, we will centralize on allowing administrators to display all the information they need and offer online rental capabilities.
