

# **AskLocal**

Active Communities
Real-time question and answer
about any location.

# **Problem Space:**

The problem space we are exploring is the limited amount of information available on the internet about locations. From the conducted user research and surveys, it was found that 90% of the respondents look up information such as reviews, hours, and facilities before visiting the place. From these survey results, it was also established that not all data available about certain locations is always true as some business may fail to update their details or provide incorrect information. These results allowed us to think of ways to allow information to be easily accessible with precise data.

As part of our background research, it was found that there are a range of mobile and web apps available that are used to fill in the gaps such as yelp that allows users to see reviews about places and Google which provides the address, contact information, website details, hours, and busy times. However, none of the currently available applications provide real-time information which we aimed to solve with our application. Also, due to our chosen domain being active communities, the purpose of AskLocal is to ensure users are involved in giving something back to the community by asking and answering questions that are not readily available elsewhere.

## **User Group:**

The user group for our application are people who go out often and are always looking online for information about places. Particularly, our app targets active users who are always interested in giving reviews about locations. Below are two distinct personas that were created in the initial part of the design process to help understand the category of users we should target and what types of features to include in the application.

Mary Jane is a 30-year-old housewife who often buys fruit and vegetables from the local markets. There are a couple of markets near her home but she only has the time to visit and buy groceries from one of them. Today she wants to buy mangoes but is unsure which market has them available and if both of them have them which market is selling for a cheaper price.

In this case, the AskLocal app would be handy for the user as markets do not have their own website and are rarely associated with other websites. Due to this, Mary Jane would be able to use AskLocal and have the ability to ask questions regarding which market is the better option in terms of availability of certain products or the quality and price of the groceries. Users that are at the markets will see the question appear and reply back with the necessary information.

John Doe is a 25-year-old traveler and loves to visit waterfalls. Sometimes he is lucky to see water but other times there is no waterfall present which makes his whole trip worthless. Most websites give indications as to when water may be flowing but due to some weather conditions or other catastrophes, this information is not always accurate.

From this scenario, John Doe would be able to use the AskLocal app to ask whether a waterfall is flowing and users that are at the waterfall or within a 5km radius will be able to answer. John is also able to confirm that the waterfall is flowing and give the user a good or bad rating depending on their answer.

# **Design Process**

## 1 Ideation

The ideation process consisted of background research and user research as well as some idea generation. As a team, we brainstormed ideas of what the app could be and the features that it should include. We also created a few personas to reflect the ideal user group and to gain a better understanding of the types of users and their needs. Finally, we used this information to create a low fidelity design to present to users and see what they like or dislike about the concept.





#### 2 Feedback

In terms of feedback, everyone that we showed our app to was intrigued by our ideas and thought our concept was very innovative. Some people pointed out their concerns about the colour scheme used, the interface layout and overall navigation of the app which we took note of for future implementations. Other than this, we also received some helpful suggestions on how to motivate users to answer questions and the types of rewards we can offer within or outside the app.

#### 3 Prototyping

Taking into consideration the feedback received and the research conducted in the previous steps we used Adobe Experience Design to create a click-through prototype. For this prototype, it was decided that we would give users a scenario followed by a series of tasks making them ask and answer questions. We then went ahead to make a functional prototype which allows users to log in and select a location as well as asking and answering questions.



#### 4 User Testing

All user testing was done by university students with scenarios of asking and answering questions related to the university. As the click-through prototype was a complete and advanced version of the application from the low fidelity design we tested it in more detail in regards to the steps the users had to take to ask and answer questions. The overall response for this was good with a few minor areas for improvement. The functional prototype was tested similarly.

### **Final Product:**

AskLocal is an application that allows real-time communication between people at a location and people who are wanting to go to that location. Throughout the many design iterations of user testing and prototyping, there are numerous improvements made to enhance the quality of the application and provide a user-friendly experience. All of the changes and improvements made have been effectively reflected in the final prototype.

#### Searching for location:

To search for a place, the user will use a map and search bar, they will also be able to find places near them which will auto-generate based on places they have visited before. The user will be able to view the questions asked in the location and be able to filter them according to date, votes or categories.

#### Asking and Answering:

To ask a question, users will be required to have points which they can gain by answering other people's questions. When asking a question, users can set the amount of points they want to give to the person that best answers the question. This reduces mass questions being asked about places. Also, when setting questions, users will have the ability to set the duration for the question to remain on the app. For example, asking whether a bar has a long queue to get in might only be relevant for an hour maximum. Once this hour is over, the question will disappear and the user who was rated the highest in terms of the best answer will get the set points.

#### Points and Rating:

Points are gained by answering questions and they are only rewarded to the user with the best-rated answer. Other users can upvote already provided answers and if an answer is considered to be duplicate it will be removed.



