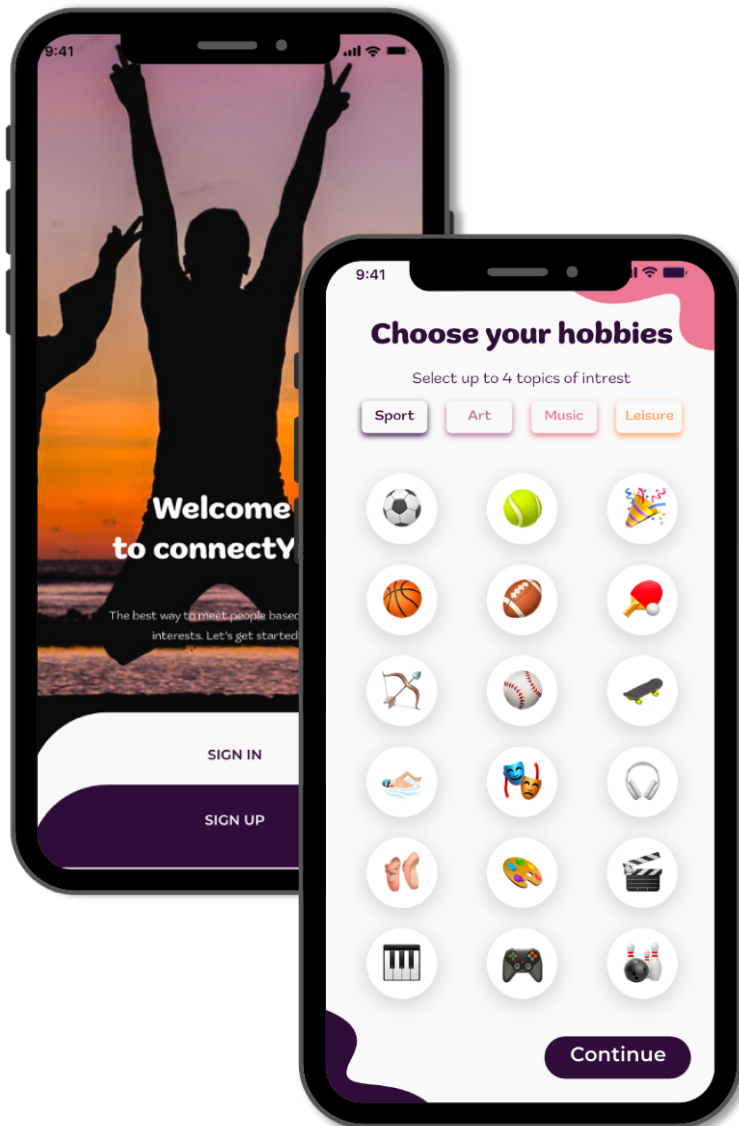




Concept Document

connectYall



Alexandra Maftai
Denisa Coteanu
Denisa Zaharia
Salih Işık

Version 2.0
19.01.2023

Table of contents

Introduction	3
connectYall: your hobbies at a glance	3
<i>Features of the app</i>	<i>4</i>
App functionality.....	4
<i>Login and account creation</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Hobby selection</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>User profile</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Explore page</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Receiving messages.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Sharing profile pictures</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Settings.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Launching & adding new features	9
Advertisement	10
Security measures	10
Research	11
Feedback & Presentations.....	13
Q&A.....	14

Introduction

In this document we will cover all the main ideas of our concept, as well as how it came to life. We will explain design choices and the decisions we have made during our process.

connectYall: your hobbies at a glance

Wishing to provide people with better socializing options post COVID-19, 4 students from Fontys University of Applied sciences teamed up, and created a unique concept, that focuses on connecting people based on shared interests, not considering physical aspect.

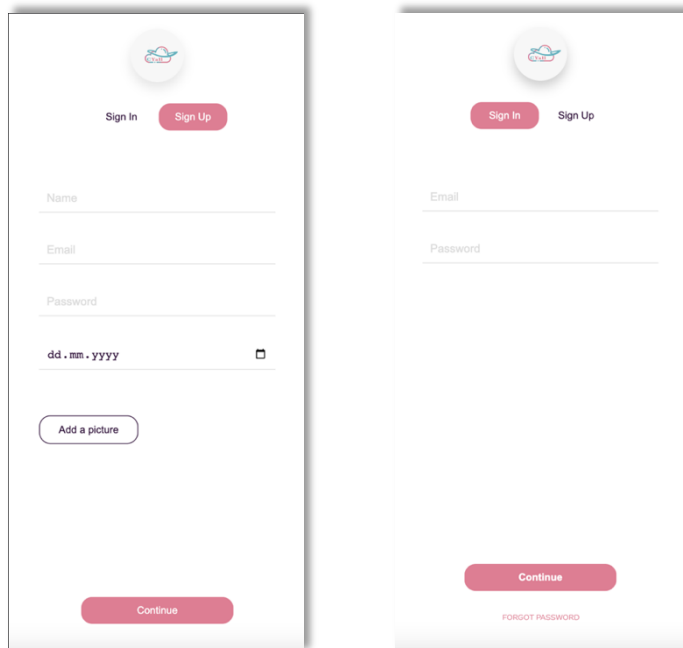
Due to lockdowns and restrictions, people became more isolated, and many previously common activities started to feel out of place, even developing social anxiety for some people. For international students like most of us, socializing and finding friends with the same interests as us was even harder, as online education was still happening and social activities were not yet organized. **connectYall** comes in help to those people who wish to bond over mutual interests, without the pressure of looking good at all times or useless small conversation - you can skip directly to talking about what you enjoy doing!

Features of the app

- Create your account and choose from a wide range of hobbies.
- Possibility to interact with other users based on the hobbies you have in common and compatibility percent.
- Each week, you get 3 matches with whom you can choose to chat to and befriend.
- No pictures shown, until you befriend that person, chat with them, and you both agree to share your pictures with each other.
- Possibility to check the “*Explore page*” and see others with similar interests to yours.

App functionality

Login and account creation

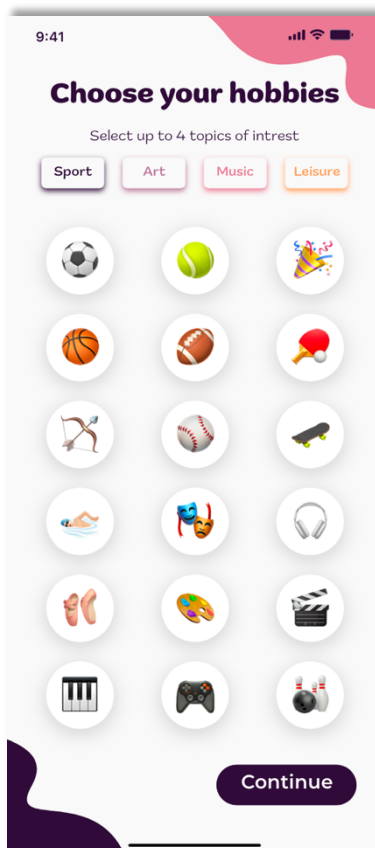


The image displays two mobile app screens side-by-side. The left screen is for account creation, featuring a 'Sign Up' button and input fields for Name, Email, Password, and a date of birth (dd.mm.yyyy). It also includes an 'Add a picture' button and a 'Continue' button at the bottom. The right screen is for login, featuring a 'Sign In' button and input fields for Email and Password. It includes a 'Continue' button and a 'FORGOT PASSWORD' link at the bottom. Both screens have a logo at the top and a clean, modern design.

Since most apps have a standard design and functionality for creating your account, we kept with those guidelines, keeping in mind that we want our users to navigate as easily as possible through the app we were developing.

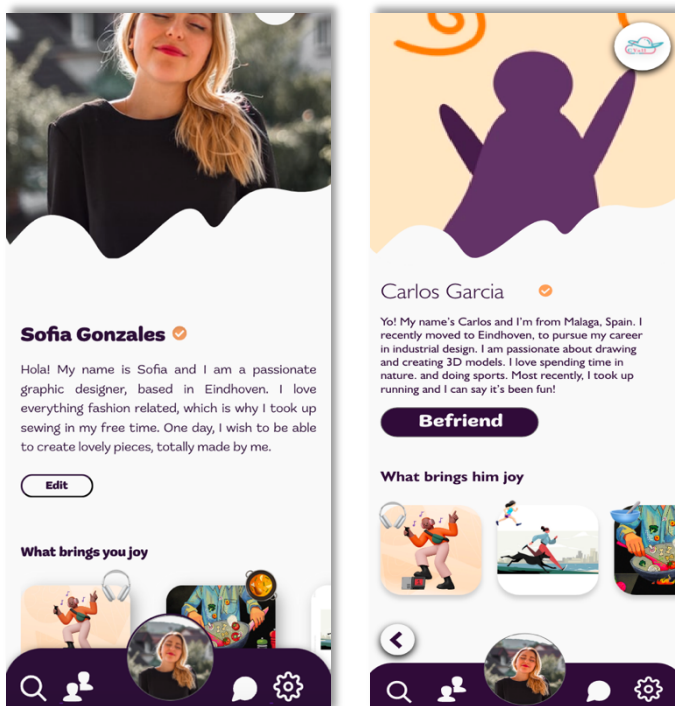
We currently have a database on MongoDB Atlas, where we store the users, and logging in is possible with a specific username and password combination.

Hobby selection



This section is particularly important, as it is the first real contact the user has with our app, and that is choosing his interests, which later will serve as a bridge for communication between him/her and the people they befriend. You can choose up to 4 interests, from four categories – *sport*, *art*, *music*, and *leisure* – or browse through all of them. After this section in creating your account is completed, the user is welcomed into the app, opening with their profile.

User profile

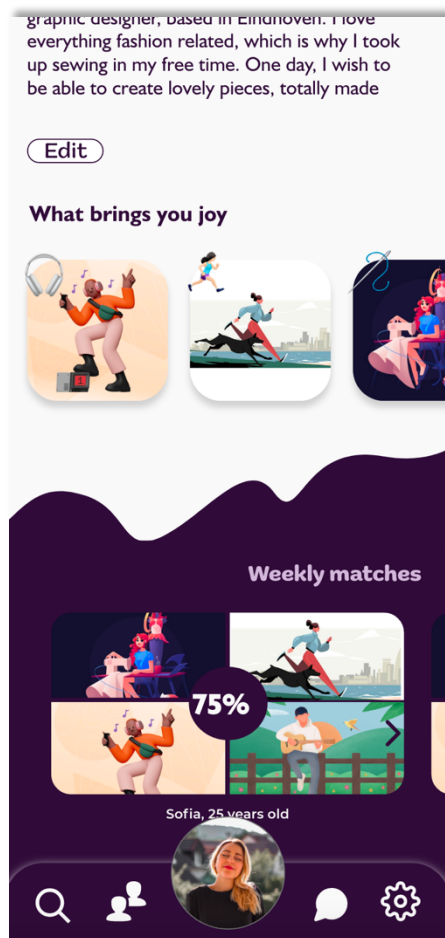


With the design we chose, we are keeping the focus on the hobbies the user has, with the section “*What brings you joy*”, as well as keeping it interactive, with the possibility to edit, or access the big menu to browse through the other sections of the application.

To maintain a stability in terms of how we use our icons for hobbies, we included the emojis you use when creating your profile in the “*What brings you joy*” section.

To keep the anonymity of our users, we implemented standard pictures for those of which you have not decided to share your profile with (and befriend). You can still see their hobbies and decide if it would be a nice idea to become friends. Once you befriend them, you will have the possibility to chat, and get to know your mutual interests. We want the focus to be on the hobbies, which is why we made the section “*What brings him joy*” occupy a central position within the page.

Weekly matches

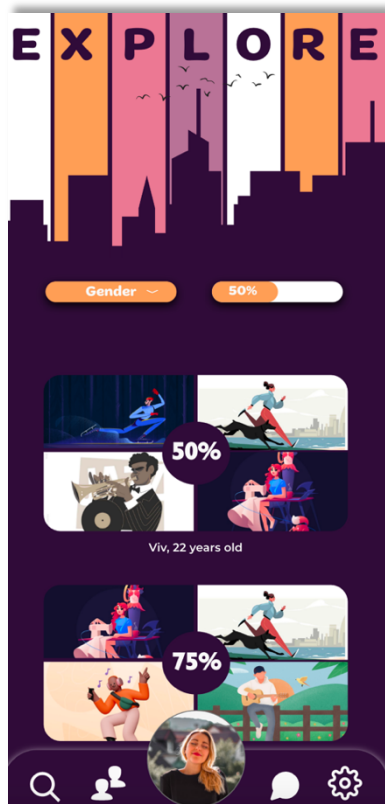


The weekly matches section on the logged in user's profile, captures the essence of our app, that functions using our self-made algorithm, who filters users and gives you recommendations of possible people you could become friends with. Right now, we limit it to only three weekly matches, but in the future, as we extend our research, we might find that the ideal number of matches to recommend should be higher (or lower).

We also keep the 'playful' design in this part of the profile, as we want to encourage users to open more and feel like they are communicating in a safe environment.

To remind users of the level of compatibility between the two, we added the compatibility percent feature, who shows exactly how compatible you are with another user.

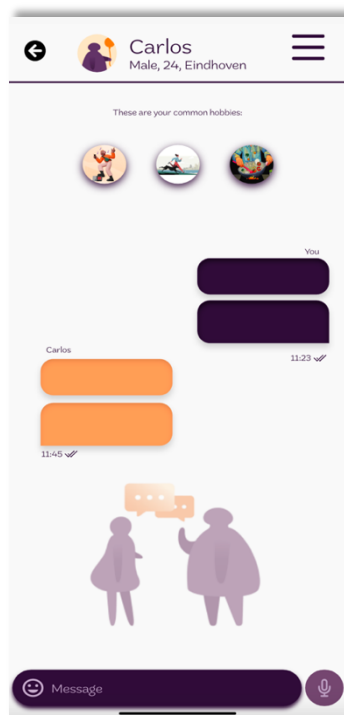
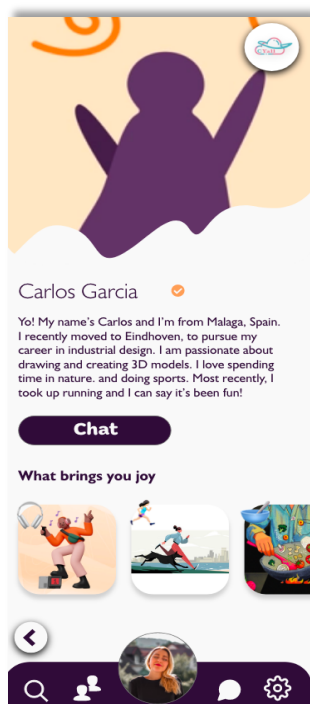
Explore page



The *'Explore page'* gives users freedom when choosing their friends, while also keeping the anonymity and privacy – by including a scrollable section, where we keep the compatibility percent, as well as the name and age of that person.

Since gender is not a priority for our app, we decided to exclude it, and leave it up to each person to decide where they fit in.

Receiving messages

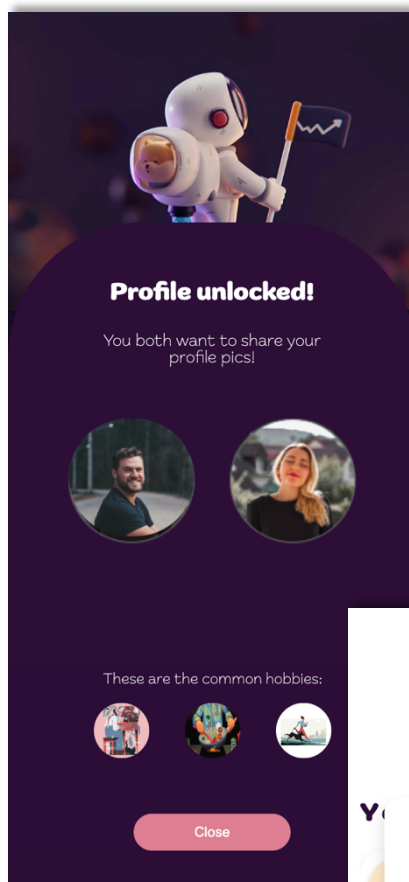


When receiving messages from other users, it is extremely important to mention that those users need to be in your friend list. Once you have a new friend, the *'Befriend'* button will transform to *'Chat'*. You still cannot see their pictures though, being protected by the statement of privacy.

If you have any messages, you can simply go to the chat icon in the menu. Once you enter the chat with a person, we made sure to keep a remainder of your

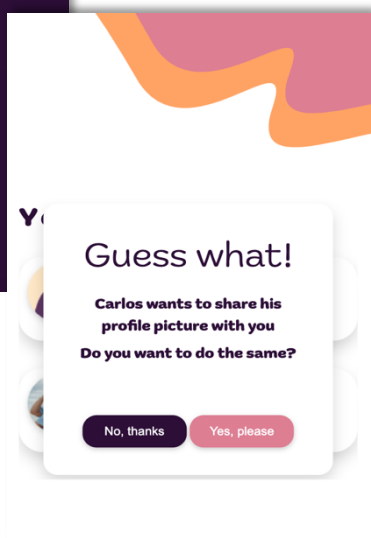
common topics of interest, so you can communicate as easily as possible. We made the interface simple, with no possibility of sending pictures or videos to ensure that the privacy remains in place for each user.

Sharing profile pictures

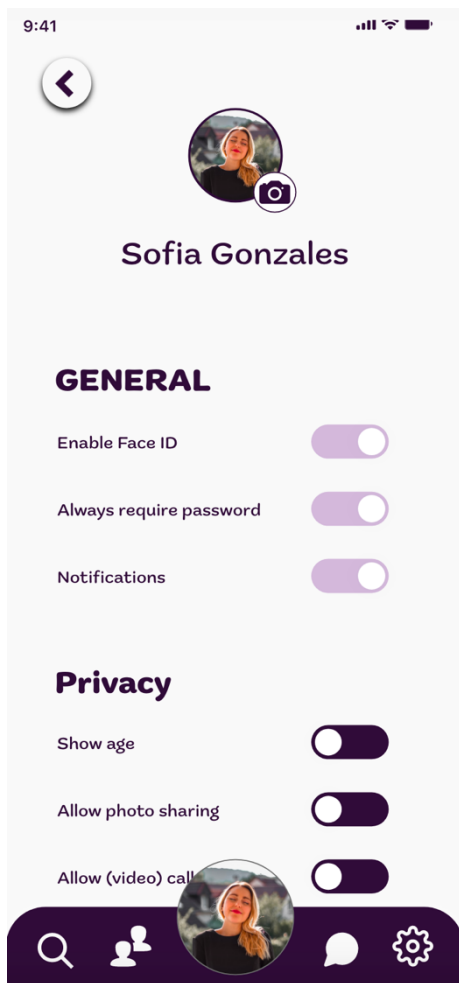


Since we understood that it is important to people to know what they look like, but we did not want to make it our primary scope, we implemented a feature that allows you to share how you look like with your friend.

You get a notification when someone wants to share it with you, which you can accept or decline. You can also choose to take this step first.



Settings



When you click on the settings icon in the menu, you will be redirected to the settings page.

Here, you can change all your settings, the most important ones being the ones in the section Privacy – here you can decide what you want to show about yourself on your profile, as well if you want to allow profile photo sharing with other users.

A feature we discovered in the testing sessions still needs to be added is the ‘Change your hobbies’ – people’s interests change over the course of life, so it is mandatory to include this one as well.

Launching & adding new features

Our target audience is mainly formed of young people, which is why we created this as a mainly mobile application. We plan on updating it to be a PWA and launch it in the mobile stores.

New features will be added, in order to improve the experience on the app. We plan on creating **‘connectYall communities’**, a feature which will allow users to enter spaces where they will find others who enjoy doing the same things, in an already organised environment (such as tennis clubs, for example). To ensure that this function respects the privacy of our users, we want to keep the before mention features, as well as collaborate with already existing real clubs from different fields and offer memberships within their spaces.

Advertisement

To ensure that our product reaches the right audience, we need to advertise it as such. Our target group consists of people between the ages of 18-30 years old. Which is why we are creating a user story that has the purpose of making people empathize with it and find comfort within our application.

Another way in which we plan on promoting our application to young people, is by sharing the promotional video that we created amongst them. Since most of them spends the majority of their time online, we will focus on digital advertising.

Security measures

Because we are dealing with social interactions, things can become sensitive. On top of what we have already put in place, we want to work with professionals who can help us implement an ID-check functionality, which will verify the identity of the users who create an account and make sure they are not bots or ill-willed people (this will be checked ideally by an A.I. system that can identify if those people have a criminal record on their name).

Research

The goal of our research for this project was to define **1)** if our difficulties with socialisation post COVID-19 were the case for other people too, and if so **2)** identify a target audience for which we were able to **3)** identify their goals and needs.

We came up with this idea based on our *personal experience*, as international students post COVID-19. As we are social beings, it is mandatory that we experience some form of human interaction as often as possible. Not doing so, might result in facing with depression, especially common when moving abroad. This term was defined by specialty literature as “*expat depression*”, as The Daily Sabah mentions.

To broaden our target audience, we did brainstorm sessions in which we tried to find other situations in which people might have felt socially isolated. After conducting a survey that reached 49 answers, we were able to identify a target audience, among people with ages between 18-30 years old.

Having identified the main problem, we wanted to focus on, as well as a target audience, we needed to empathise more with our users. To do so, we conducted interviews, which allowed us to gather information about how they dealt with social isolation and what helped them overcome certain situations. We found out that what helped people most during these times is talk with people with whom they had things in common and could empathise, exchange ideas and maybe even meet.

Through different methods, such as empathy mapping and user journey scenario, the team observed that the *most common reasons* that led people to feel lonely were either moving to a different country, lacking friends with the same interests as them, or finding it hard to socialise post pandemic.

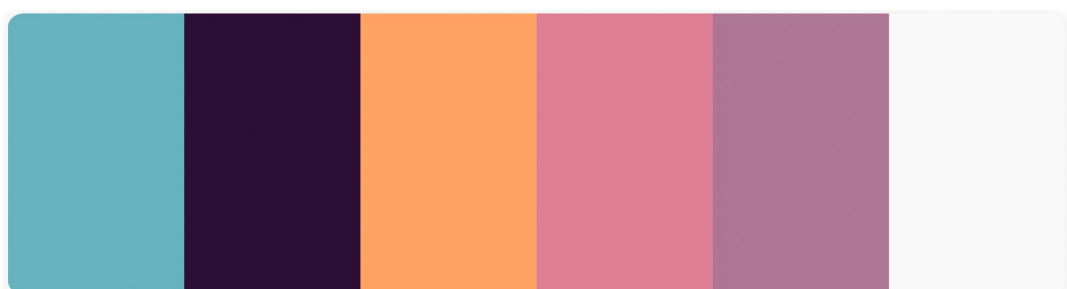
After a lot of thoughts put into consideration, we chose *connectYall*, the name we gave to an application that would connect people based on mutual interests. The name comes from *connect you all*, underlining the fact that we want to provide equal chances for everyone to make friends, not taking aspects such as physical aspect or social status into consideration.

We received many questions as to why we chose this idea, when there are already multiple socialising options on the market. The reason is that we feel like we can bring our own addition, as most of what is already out there considers the physical aspect very much, by making users upload photos of them, in order to stand up more. We want to provide equal chances for everyone to find a true friend.

Because we wanted to make sure we stand out from our competitors that are already on the market, we made sure that each feature we introduced in our app is unique and can still fulfil people's needs. As the research we conducted showed us, people still lack a method to escape social anxiety and go to people and just talk to them; or, if they have a group of friends, most of them revealed that they don't really have much in common, which makes them wish for more meaningful connections.

We started our visualisation for our product by choosing a colour palette and creating a logo.

Wanting to induce a feeling of friendliness and joy to our users, as well as the feeling of safety and calmness, we came up with this colour palette for our application and our promotional products:



The logo we created was designed to contain the chosen colours, as well as represent our core values for the app: easy to use, safe and meaningful.



Feedback & Presentations

After the **pitch presentation** at the *LiveWall* headquarters, we received some feedback from our teachers as well as the company's representatives.

The main point of the feedback was that our presentation was focused a bit too much on the research part, and by the time we were closing up with the concepts, we were already rushed. However, our idea is good and now we need to make sure we plan everything right so we can “make it our own”.

The **second presentation** we held was also the last one, and the one in which we showed our progress in the past months.

We made sure to incorporate the feedback from the first one, by adding unique features which we did not find anywhere else, thus making it our own.

During the semester, we gathered feedback from our teachers as well (in matters of design, functionality or how to improve our research in order to get the best out of it).

Q&A

We want to address some questions we feel show more information about our mission that we received during the process of creating this application.

Why create yet another social media app? Aren't there enough already on the market?

The reason is that we feel like we can bring our own addition, as most of what is already out there considers the physical aspect very much, by making users upload photos of them, in order to stand up more. We want to provide equal chances for everyone to find a true friend. Thus, we eliminate the physical aspect problem, by creating our app to only focus on hobbies and people interactions.

Why make it an app?

Our target audience consists mainly of young people, who spent the majority of their time online. We took this informed decision after analysing where do they spend more time: in the computer browser or their phone? The answer was the later one, and we started with creating functionalities for our app.

We do plan on expanding, making it accessible from the web as well (PWA). This way, everyone can access it, regardless of their phone brand or browser.

How did you choose your design?

We wanted to make it a friendly app, so we tried to implement as many playful elements as possible – the wave shape in the pages, the vibrant colours.