

Homelicious: taste from home

Description:

Homelicious is a food sharing platform offering opportunities to taste various food made in local kitchens. Homemade desserts/meals/snacks have been gathering increasing popularity recently due to low price, diverse choices and exotic tastes. Home kitchens also provide chances for culinarians to explore the option of starting their own home food businesses. Leveraging the power and convenience of internet, Homelicious provides a community-based online platform where consumers could easily search for homemade cuisine within their neighborhood (most likely geographical) while simultaneously, manufactures('home chefs') are able to advertise their food businesses, acquire more orders and deliver better catering. The fact that most food needs to be delivered fresh requires both the producer (i.e. chef) and the consumer to part of a same geographical community. Homelicious is an example of a sharing economy paradigm, offering a socio-economic system based on sharing of human and physical resources.

How it works:

Homelicious is an online platform aimed at streamlining the process of ordering and distributing homemade food within local communities. The platform is comprised of two major actors: the consumer who searches domestic kitchen catering and the chef who prepares food in his/her own kitchen. Culinarians(chefs), register on the platform and commence their virtual home food businesses. They are able to supplement their service by including details (e.g. description, photo) about meals available, or explicitly stating range of delivery, minimum amount of ordering, etc. Consumers, register on the system and search for desired catering, and if found one, they can order online and make appropriate payment (either prior to or after delivery). The order represents a contract between the chef and the consumer that ensures the consumer to receive food requested within a predetermined time frame and the chef would obtain financial compensation for offering such service. Both the chef and the consumer need to specify their communities for catering, which are most likely based on geographical proximity. Once the user (of the platform) declares to which community he/she belongs, he/she will automatically join the social network within the neighborhood that allows him/her to either explore potential customers as a chef or search various food as a consumer. Consumers are able to rate/comment food providers or refer local kitchens to each other either through the platform or other social media (e.g. facebook).

Challenges for Homelicious:

Home chefs often struggle to reach potential consumers due to lack of advertising and communication. Simultaneously, there are numerous consumers actively searching for food but fail to locate desired catering. Connecting these two parties in a streamlined and user-friendly process is a main challenge of Homelicious. Furthermore, consumers are always concerned with food sanitation so delivering safe, healthy food from licensed food handlers comprises additional challenge to the platform. One possible way to ensure food safety is to work with local health department and check chefs' license or kitchen environment before registering on the platform. Culinarians are also susceptible to order cancellation after significant amount of commitment. Thus safeguarding chefs' labor poses one more challenge to the system. Such challenge could potentially be resolved by introducing the blacklist for consumers or enforcing cancellation fee.

Feature set:

- **Profiling:** All users registered on the platform have their own profiles. Users are categorized into consumers and chefs, and different categories lead to different profiles.
 - Consumer: Profile includes name, address (geographic community), food preference, payment information. Consumers can update their own profile or view each other's profile except for personal data (e.g. payment information, exact address).
 - Chef: Profile includes food handlers' names, cuisine by region or style, delivery range, working hours, and methods of payment accepted.
 - Both chefs and consumers are able to update their profile and view each other's profile except for sensitive/personal data. (e.g. payment information)
- **User Authentication:** Users need to login to the system in order to either place orders or sell nourishment.
 - Users are authenticated through username/id and password, which is one of the most widely-use and convenient authenticating mechanism online.
 - Consumers are able to log in with their facebook account or google account.
- **Social Network:** A user can act either as chief or consumer.
 - Chef: As a chief, the user can post meals/snacks/nourishment available as well as price for each dish. The chef could also add additional descriptions including but not limited to: Composition, calories amount, allergy precaution.
 - Consumer: As a consumer, the user is able to browse through list of catering available based on filtering (e.g. proximity, price, rating) and place order through the platform. The consumer could add catering specifics (e.g. gluten-free, allergy) into the order and optionally arrange payment through the platform prior to delivery.
 - Chefs will receive notification from the platform through preset methods (e.g. emails, sms, phone notification) once orders are placed and deliver custom-tailored nourishment to the consumer based on requests.
 - Consumers can view history of orders placed and cancel order in case of unexpectancy.
 - Consumers are able to view each other's preference and refer local kitchens to each other through the platform or through other social media.
 - (Optional) Consumers can share orders with other consumers within the same community for the same chef if their order does not reach the required minimum amount of ordering.
- **Rating and commenting:**
 - Consumers are able to comment/rate chefs based on services provided and other can make informed choices based on rating/comments.
 - Comments include text or images and could be categorized into negative/neutral/positive reviews.
 - Rating will utilize a simple star rating system (1-5 stars with 5 stars as the best)
 - Consumers could rate chefs in different aspects: general taste, food sanitation, delivery speed, catering specifics, etc.
- **Search and Recommendation System:** The platform enables consumers to search through all chefs within local community and receive recommended whenever requested.
 - Search: Searching allows consumers to locate caterings based on different filters -- names, price, geographical proximity, cuisine.
 - Recommendation: The system should be able to provide recommendation based on user's preference combined with chefs' rating or geographical location and methods of payment.

- **Reputation System:** The system will resemble a reputation system that computes and publishes reputation scores for the chief. The reputation score of a chief is based on ratings that the consumers provide about how satisfied they were about the food and the chief. Ratings are typically passed using a simple star rating system. Reputation scores are representing a collection of consumers' opinion and can be used by the system to provide recommendations about the homemade kitchens.
- **Admin:** The platform will provide administrative functionalities for users.
 - Entering admin site always requires re-authentication (password only if already logged in).
 - Change password
 - Consumers:
 - Update payment methods or delivery address
 - View history of orders and cancel uncompleted orders
 - Delete/update reviews/ratings
 - Chefs
 - View reviews/ratings
 - Respond to reviews
 - Contact consumers through consumers' preset methods (e.g. email)
 - Post/Delete food available
 - Change sequence of food listing.
 - Update food descriptions
 - Change methods of payment accepted
 - Site Administrator:
 - View number of consumers/chefs
 - View average number of orders per day
 - Revoke chef qualification (e.g. if food poisoning occurs)
- **Feedback system:**
 - Chefs can report consumers should the consumer cancels orders frequently or leave unmatched reviews.
 - Consumers can report chefs if sanitation problems are found or chefs fail to complete the order over an extended period of time.

Team member:

Name: Yilin Xiong CDF account: g4xiong
 Name: Siyang Ye CDF account: g4yesiya
 Name: Zhe Yu CDF account: g3yuzhe
 Name: Wen Xiao CDF account: g4xiaowe

Feature Allocation:

- Documentation: Wen Xiao, Siyang Ye

- Front end:
 - Home view, Search view and detail view: Zhe Yu
 - User views: Yilin Xiong
 - Admin views: Siyang Ye
 - Responsive design and dummy data design: Wen Xiao
- Back end:
 - Profiling, User Authentication: Wen Xiao
 - Social network, Rating and commenting : Siyang Ye
 - Search and Recommendation System, Reputation System: Zhe Yu
 - Admin, Feedback system: Yilin Xiong
- Testing: Siyang Ye, Wen Xiao
- Security: Zhe Yu, Yilin Xiong