GT Food Finder

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Introducing Food Finder, a new GTmob widget that interactively connects consumers to the food available around them. Developed through GT-RNOC, this application offers many advanced features including customized dining options, food feedback, and dining polls. Designed along the lines of Foursquare and Yelp.com, Food Finder brings the Georgia Tech Dining Hall menus to the mobile web, allowing users to see 'smart' menus with their preferred tastes displayed towards the top. In addition, this mobile web app allows users to post feedback on the dining choices, creating a two-way flow of information between the chefs preparing the food, and the consumers who eat it. With Food Finder implemented on a dining network, customers can find what they want to eat quickly, and the dining services can get the feedback they need to better their services.

Beyond simple food feedback, however, Food Finder also allows dining services to create polls, allowing users to vote on such things as a rotating menu option for something special they want to eat tomorrow, or flexible dining hours.

Use Cases

Users can view all the food available for the day by selecting "Food Today" on the main screen. A full listing, as well as a preview picture and a review score for each item, will be presented to the user. The user can also enter search terms to search for a particular food. After selecting one of the food entries, the user can see a detailed description and the cost of the food in the detailed view. Users can read reviews, draft her own review or add a bookmark for the food in this view. When reading a review, users can view the profile of the submitter of the preview, and discover the taste of the submitter.

Users can also select popular suggestions or submit her own suggestion for tomorrow's food by selecting "Food Tomorrow" on the main screen.

A listing of popular items can be found in "Hot Items" from the main screen, while the locations of dining halls can be found in "Find Location".

Business Case

Target market and pricing

The target market of GT Food Finder is GT student and staff. As Food Finder is set up on GTmob, we will not be able to bill our customers until we implement a billing system. We plan on making Food Finder more usable to users first, and we will worry about profitting later.

A few potential ideas of monetizing Food Finder could be to allow dining halls to place advertisements, or to allow them to pay for a higher place in search listings, but implementing these ideas without hurting user experience will be a challenge.

## Comparisons against competitive solutions

Word of mouth: Food Finder is actually an enhanced form of word of mouth, since comments are directly from users. Additionally, because any comments made by any user can be seen by everybody browsing Food Finder, the communication and sharing is not limited to "circles" of people.

Yelp: The granularity of Yelp is restaurants, while that of Food Finder is food.

Foursquare: Food Finder does not currently support tracking of user locations (although it could be implemented in the future). Moreover, as Foursquare deals primarily with users' whereabouts, Food Finder is more concerned about the individual types of food (or more generally, goods and services) offered by dining halls.

Implementation

Overall Architecture
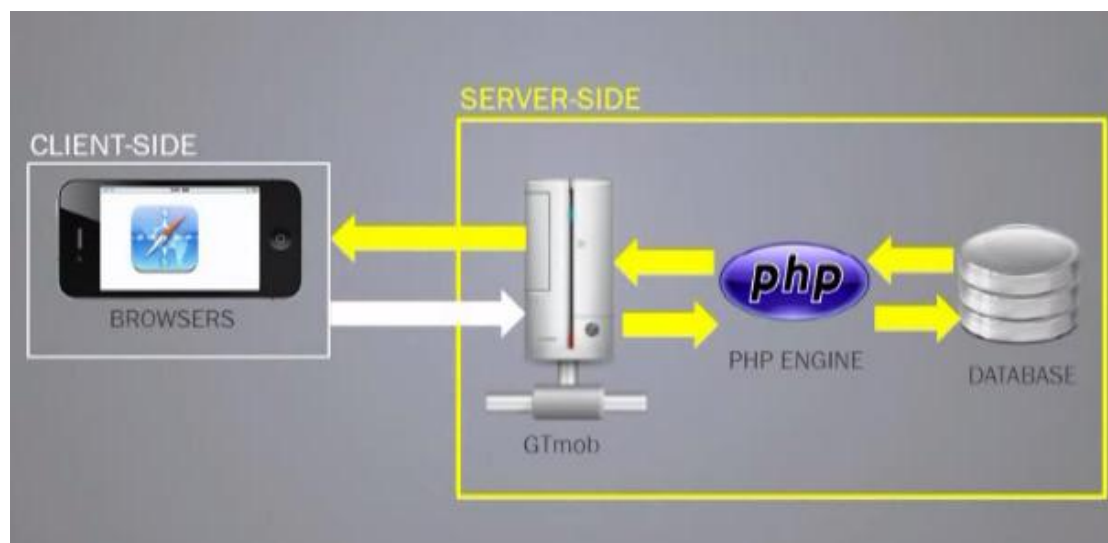
Food Finder is built upon the GTmob platform. On the server side, the Web server of GTmob hosts our PHP code, which is executed by the server-side PHP engine and whose output is sent to clients, and static files like CSS, JPEG, etc. Data storage is supplied by a database on the back end, which contains tables for users, meals, comments, dining halls, friend lists, etc. On the client side, the Web browser renders the result pages based on the output of PHP code and static files sent by the Web server.

Future Work

- Nutrition Calculator: besides food ingredients we already have, this is to help users calculate daily/weekly/monthly calories consumption by simply choosing the food he/she takes.

- Vegetarian Special: to provide recommandations for vegetarian
- Reputation System
- Complain Board: for special complaining issues.
- Share Comment on Twitter & Facebook
- Hours of Operation of each dining hall
- Religion-specific recommandations