

ENSE 405

Activity #3: Technology configuration inventory

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Community (UN SD goal):	Sub-goals 12.7, 12.8, 12.A, and 12.B of Goal 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
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Project:	Community and learning-oriented meal planning application

Instructions

It is useful to inventory the current technology configuration of the community, i.e., the current technology that the people working, learning, advancing knowledge (etc.) in the specific area you are engineering software for are using, as a way to understand the community better and what matters to them better. If yours is a new community, it may not have any specific technology yet, but even for brand new communities, the current configuration may not be empty, for instance if general tools like email or phone are going to be used. You can use a version of the table on the next page to inventory and analyze the current configuration of your community:

1. Get the big picture. Research the area and make a list of all the platforms and stand-alone tools in your community's configuration as best you can
2. For each platform, list the tools and check the ones that are being used. Why are some not being used? Are there duplicates? Are there issues around integration between tools?
3. To the left, make a note of which community activities/orientations the tools currently support in your community
4. To the right, identify the key features of tools. Are some of these features commonly or rarely used? What are the reasons for that?
5. Assess actual tool use if you can. Identify which are dominant and which are only used by smaller groups and individuals.

NOTE: Add new rows as needed below. Please know your search should be as exhaustive as possible given the area you are researching

Platform	Meal Planning Application (dedicated website and social media presence)		
Healthy Meal Plans (Free with one paid service)			
Supported activities	Tools	Key features	Usage notes
Selecting recipes which match dietary patterns	Recipe Database	Searching existing recipes, adding to a local collection of user’s recipes, filtering recipes for intolerances, scaling serving sizes, includes nutritional information, instructions to prepare the recipe	Filtering out recipes is a good way to be inclusive to all diets. No ability to import your own recipes. Regularly updated database. Scaling servings is a good idea to reduce amount eaten/prepared, but the scaling can only be a guideline



	Recipe Calendar	Add/remove recipes by day, week.	Useful to make a large plan at once. Mainly just a convenience tool/feature.
	Premade weekly meal plans (paid service)	Quickly add to a local collection of user's recipes, filter recipes for intolerances, customizable	Mainly a convenience feature for those not wanting to spend time planning. Plans are nutritionally balanced (guideline). Can say that this feature is less used as it is behind a paywall.
Acquiring food necessary for the meal plan	Grocery List	Add/remove items to the list based on recipes chosen for the foreseeable future	The grocery list is accumulated from all chosen recipes, even those far in the future
Preparing food necessary for the meal plan	Instructional videos (and plain text instructions)	Visual and auditory instructions for preparing some recipes	Not all on the website, some videos posted to sister YouTube account directed from application
Lacking activities or tools (as compared to other applications)	<p>Inability to import your own recipes. This is controversial because some persons see taking online recipes as theft; it is obvious that being unable to import recipes also means you cannot import your very own, unique recipes as well.</p> <p>Inability to review, critique, or share recipes. The site is free, so sharing would be to direct someone to the site rather than share directly within the site.</p> <p>Grocery list does not take into account how long food stays fresh for, which influences how far into the future one should plan meals; despite the ability to add plans for weeks ahead, if one does plan so far ahead then the grocery list does not discern between groceries now and groceries then.</p> <p>Preparing the recipes assumes that one is familiar with kitchen tools, or has the same tools. This is not inclusive and assumes such knowledge is common sense. Does not advise where one should retrieve such knowledge.</p>		
Popularity	Not outstandingly popular. The market is quite full of similar sites and applications. Social media presence is under 10,000 connected persons as per Facebook, Youtube, Instagram.		
Sustainability Goal Notes	No educational material or assistance in getting food sustainably. The platform is not community-based and so does not provide education to choosing locally available foods nor where to get locally available foods.		

	No education material against unsustainable diets. The platform does not advise against diets which development is unsustainable: i.e. diet suggesting one eat mostly meat. The platform does not explicitly suggest sustainable diets either: the existing recipes on the application follow the trends of their creators and are biased. The site is an initiative by Ontario Creates , suggesting it has local (Canadian) influences.		
Additional Notes	The website is not group-based, it is like you are on an island of meal planning alone and are influenced by what is on the island.		
Cooksmarts (Entirely paid service)			
Supported activities	Tools	Key features	Usage notes
Selecting recipes which match dietary patterns	Recipe database	Searching existing recipes, adding to user’s current week plan, includes nutritional information, instructions to prepare the recipe	Cannot filter for intolerances, limited dietary options: paleo, gluten-free, vegetarian
	Premade weekly meal plan	Can customize per (limited selection of) diets	Cannot customize per intolerances, can customize by choosing another recipe from database. Site suggests weekly meals are based on seasonal items for the USA.
	Partnership with other applications (MyFitnessPal, Weight Watchers) via plugins	Connects plans to other applications to do extra work like tracking nutrition	The website delegates features to partners rather than do the work itself
Acquiring food necessary for the meal plan	Grocery List	Add/remove items to the list based on recipes chosen for the foreseeable future	Cannot add your own items to the list to consolidate it with items outside of meal planning
	Partnership with other applications (Instacart)	Connects the grocery list to other applications to do extra work like ordering food	The website delegates features to partners rather than do the work itself, or force you to do the work yourself. Inclusive of persons unable to acquire their food themselves.

			Delivery may be limited by location.
Preparing food necessary for the meal plan	Instructional videos (and plain text instructions)	Visual and auditory instructions for preparing some recipes, detailed instructions on the tools required	All on the website
Sharing recipes which were enjoyed	Facebook share plugin	Shares the recipe on Facebook	Useful to promote the application. Any critique is likely not to get back to Cooksmarts
Reviewing recipes	Recipe database	Every recipe may be reviewed by oneself and others using the application	The one part of the application that isn't siloed
Lacking activities or tools (as compared to other applications)	Inability to import your own recipes. This is controversial because some persons see taking online recipes as theft ; it is obvious that being unable to import recipes also means you cannot import your very own, unique recipes as well.		
Popularity	Popular/large enough to be able to host partnerships with related companies and nonprofits. Has blogs, podcasts, and eBooks. Social media presence is under 200,000 connected persons as per Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.		
Sustainability Goal Notes	<p>The application does not explicitly describe where to obtain locally sourced food, but does suggest that one should do so.</p> <p>No education material against unsustainable diets. The platform does not advise against diets which development is unsustainable: i.e. diet suggesting one eat mostly meat. The platform does not explicitly suggest sustainable diets either: the existing recipes on the application follow the trends of their creators and are biased.</p> <p>The application does partner with non-profit (unsure if behind a paywall for the non-profit) and corporate communities (likely behind a paywall or discount) to provide "resources" to these groups. Undefined exactly what resources these are: the site describes access to the instructional videos and budget meal plans. Unsure if the budgeted meal plans are available to regular users.</p>		
Additional Notes	<p>The paywall reduces the audience the website attracts. This does not encourage the worldwide audience that the UN Goal 12 requires.</p> <p>The website encourages people to discuss it on social media, but not within the application itself. On one hand, the separation of opinion from tools is logical, but social media opinion does not have direct influence on the application in a programmed sense.</p>		

Platform	Meal Planning Educational Website		
Love Food Hate Waste (Free)			
Supported activities	Tools	Key features	Usage notes
Selecting recipes which match dietary patterns	Recipe database	Searching existing recipes, search for recipes that use leftover food, instructions to prepare the recipe, suggested serving size, can filter by some intolerances	A neat feature to use leftovers from prior meals in a new meal: reduces waste supporting Goal 12 responsible consumption. Can share recipes on social media but not review or critique directly
Providing educational resources as to the “why of it all”	Blog posts	Shares notable articles promoting sustainable consumption, sourcing legitimate organizations and facts	A friendly way to introduce serious topics and suggest actions that any person could do that support sustainable practice.
Providing education resources as to “how to do it all”	Blog posts	Articles with sound suggestions to storing and obtaining food	Another friendly way which suggests actions anyone can do that support sustainable practice.
Preparing food necessary for the meal plan	Plain text instructions	Per recipe	All on the website
Lacking activities or tools (as compared to other applications)	Not a true meal planning application; you must accumulate the recipes and plan the weekly with another tool. No grocery list, no partnership with local groceries to get food.		
Popularity	Not outstandingly popular. Social media presence is under 100,000 connected persons as per Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Mainly on Facebook.		
Sustainability Goal Notes	The application does not explicitly describe where to obtain locally sourced food, but does suggest that one should do so. Great educational material as to how to consume sustainably, but does not port this		



	knowledge directly into activity. The user must apply the knowledge to some other tools or their own meal planning activities to have any effect - the application does not enforce good practices but suggests them.		
	Website is brought by the National Zero Waste Council , an initiative of Metro Vancouver.		
Additional Notes	The website encourages people to discuss it on social media, but not within the site itself. On one hand, the separation of opinion from tools is logical, but social media opinion does not have direct influence on the site in a programmed sense.		
Platform	Meal Planning Application (mobile and website)		
PlateJoy (Entirely paid service)			
Supported activities	Tools	Key features	Usage notes
Selecting recipes which match dietary patterns	Recipe database	Searching existing recipes, adding to user’s current week plan, includes nutritional information, instructions to prepare the recipe	Very customized to the user's preferences. Users can add recipes manually, no way to import from other sites or applications.
	Custom weekly meal plan	Can customize per diet. Meal plans are customized by intake survey with 50 points of consideration including such things as vitamin focus.	Site does not suggest meals use seasonal/local ingredients. Site likes to advertise that “real” nutritionists and doctors tailor the meals and said persons are available to contact anytime.
	Partnership with other applications (FitBit, other calorie trackers) via plugins	Connects plans to other applications to do extra work like tracking nutrition	The website delegates features to partners rather than do the work itself



Acquiring food necessary for the meal plan	Grocery List	Add/remove items to the list based on recipes chosen for the week	Can add your own items to the list to consolidate it with items outside of meal planning
	Partnership with other applications (Instacart, Amazon)	Connects the grocery list to other applications to do extra work like ordering food	The website delegates features to partners rather than do the work itself, or force you to do the work yourself. Inclusive of persons unable to acquire their food themselves. Delivery may be limited by location.
	Shopping links to useful appliances for cooking (not free to buy, but free to look at)	Includes instruction as to how to use the appliances.	Appliances come from partnered retailers, no guarantee appliances are locally made.
Preparing food necessary for the meal plan	Instructional videos (and plain text instructions)	Visual and auditory instructions for preparing some recipes, detailed instructions on the tools required	All on the application
Sharing recipes which were enjoyed	Facebook or by link share plugin	Shares the recipe on Facebook, let's you messages friends the link on any chosen application	Useful to promote the application. Any critique is likely not to get back to PlateJoy.
Reviewing recipes	Recipe database	Every recipe may be reviewed by oneself and others using the application	Reviews are simply a star rating.
Lacking activities or tools (as compared to other applications)	None, in comparison to the more extensive applications investigated in this document.		
Popularity	Not outstandingly popular. Social media presence is under 20,000 connected persons as per Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Mainly on Facebook.		

Sustainability Goal Notes	<p>The application directly partners with large grocers and makes no suggestion to procure from local producers.</p> <p>No education material against unsustainable diets. The platform does not advise against diets which development is unsustainable: i.e. diet suggesting one eat mostly meat. The platform does not explicitly suggest sustainable diets either: the existing recipes on the application follow the trends of their creators and are biased.</p>
Additional Notes	<p>The paywall reduces the audience the website attracts. This does not encourage the worldwide audience that the UN Goal 12 requires.</p> <p>The website encourages people to discuss it on social media, but not within the site itself. On one hand, the separation of opinion from tools is logical, but social media opinion does not have direct influence on the site in a programmed sense.</p> <p>The application's main selling point is that it caters to its users preferences like what to eat and how to make it, but does not cater to sustainable preferences like where to get food and alternative solutions to unavailable foods. This “problem” is resolved with using a large retailer but this does not support UN Goal 12.</p> <p>The website’s claim that certified nutritionists and doctors customize meal plans is intriguing, because if true the meal plans would be scientifically correct; and the application supports employment of people who likely have professional goals towards helping others eat better. Again, we can describe the goals as more personal than globally-supportive.</p>
Final notes concerning platforms	
<p>Most meal planning platforms cater to the single person or family. The platforms support achieving personal goals like eating a better variety of foods to meet nutritional requirements, weight loss, and general wellbeing, by providing users with convenience tools. Convenience tools consist of online catalogs, catered plans that require little planning involvement, and pipelined processes that take your groceries you need for your plan and have them delivered to you without needing to personally go to a local store.</p> <p>Applications are generally not free, which means that for all the good these applications provide, they are not universally available. The popular and robust applications are absolutely all proprietary software and are not available to the community to modify and explore. There does exist some publicly available software (for example, on GitHub), but most projects appear to be nowhere near commercial release; these projects range from short, student-created applications, to single tools made by a small, non-profit team.</p> <p>Those platforms which really push the sustainability envelope are missing the convenience tools of the more popular meal planning applications, and vice versa; we can describe LoveFoodHateWaste as an educational website more so than a meal planning application due to its lack of tools.</p>	

Stand-alone tool	Meal Planning Blogs		
Meal Plan Addict (Free)			
Supported activities	Tool	Key features	Usage notes
Meal Planning Application reviews	Website blog post	Provides a personal review, allows other persons stumbling upon the page to post responses and questions	Encourages local discussion, but the posts are not highly advertised so actual involvement is low.
Recipes		Curated by the blogger, likely to have taken influence from other sources like books, celebrities, social media	The blogger will often make note of the ingredients being locally available and where to retrieve them
Cooking tips		Curated by the blogger	The blogger is likely to suggest helpful tips like weird things that happened to the when using some tool, and what to do if things go wrong in the middle of cooking
Shopping links to useful devices, printables, books (not free to buy, but free to look at)		Some posts are sponsored, and some are not.	Likely to be related to the blogger’s favorite recipes and tools. Most likely a way to generate revenue on a free blog.
Lacking items (as compared to other applications)	Not a meal planning tool per se: blogs are additional resources which could be used in planning.		
Popularity	Not outstandingly popular. Social media presence is under 40,000 connected persons as per Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Mainly on Instagram.		
Sustainability Goal Notes	No accurate education material on what, where, which, how, or when to eat.		
Notes concerning stand-alone tools			
Other stand-alone tools that encompass meal planning include: 1. Physical recipe catalogs, collected by the individual 2. Physical and online recipe/meal planning books, similar to blog postings, collected by the individual 3. Small-to-intermediate online groups who discuss meal planning (less than 100 active persons per group most likely) 4. Small in-person groups who discuss meal planning			

5. Online tutorials and video logs discussing meal planning

For each of the above tools, one thing is common: any information gleaned from using them must be collected and organized by the individual. Group meetings could encourage progressive movement in the community, but the groups are small and meal planning is not what one would describe as a fast growing community. Rather, meal planning is much more a personal endeavor and it's popularity is mostly driven by social media and the human desire to look good.

There is no community pressure to make individuals behave a certain way or use certain tools (however, there is an abundance of convenience tools on the market); so, there is no pressure for meal planning providers to behave sustainably or enforce their users do the same. There is a disconnect between sustainability education and activity in the meal planning "community": those who do educate within the community educate on personal opinion and choices.