

Executive Summary

In this project, a tool was successfully developed to equip travellers with tailored recommendations for their next trip based on their personal experiences. The tool provides a unique business opportunity, as it alleviates the stress and confusion associated with planning where to go, where to eat and where to stay when travelling. To use the tool, the only information required is a selection of previously visited establishments and ratings of these experiences. Hence, travellers can use the tool by providing ratings of local establishments they have visited. Ultimately, they will be provided with cross-border recommendations for exciting, similar areas to visit at their next destination. The tool is applicable to any geographical location but is developed as a proof of concept using New York City (United States) and London (United Kingdom).

The quality of the recommendations were assessed through the creation of three stereotypical personas. The recommendations provided for the personas by the tool were promising, since they aligned with the expectations. This conclusion was reached, since the characteristics of the recommended areas were similar to the places the personas already visited. Currently, the tool is deployed and accessible through an API, where travellers can upload their information and receive travel recommendations suiting their preferences. Thus, the proof of concept is already proven to be feasible and could be made user friendly by developing an intuitive interface.

The reviews provided by the travellers influence the recommendations given by the tool. Reviews can include both liked and disliked establishments, which creates a holistic view of the traveller. This is enabled by a model that compares and identifies similar area characteristics across cities. The model deconstructs areas and converts complex characteristics into a simple representation. Thereby, the model uses the travellers' reviews combined with the deconstructed area characteristics to provide recommendations in the form of a map with highlighted areas. These are coloured according to the presumed appeal to the traveller for easy identification of promising areas.

A great opportunity lies in the scalability of the recommendation tool, since it has been built using readily available Google Local data. Essentially, the tool is scalable and able to provide recommendations on a global level if desired. If the tool is deployed and accounts for the continuous stream of information, it can adapt to the constant change and gentrification of large cities and suburbs. By doing this, the tool always stays ahead of other non-personalised travel recommendation tools, which further adds to its unique business opportunity.