**Off the Trail**

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**Purpose**

Off the trail is a web application created for travelers and backpackers looking for community-sourced recommendations and reviews of popular tourist locations. The users are able to both review locations and search through user recommendations. Additionally, the application has a gear page with user reviews of backpacking and trail gear.

The design thinking used for this application was inspired by creating a travel site with user base similar to Google maps or Wikipedia. The Off the Trail development team empathized with backpackers and the lack of information provided on the internet about trails, tourist destinations, and gear ratings. Therefore, the development team came up with a centralized website/blog created for this community.

Registered users can post about trips they have taken in different cities and rate the various attractions that they have been to. Unregistered site users can then search through these reviews and make informed decisions on whether they would like to take a similar trip. In addition to posting about trips, registered users can list their own personal inventories of gear along with personal reviews of the gear.

**Architecture**

The team decided to source its architecture through a web API, an azure database, and an angular web framework. The application needs to be highly available for its large network of users. Once the application is launched the estimated number of users will be in the thousands, with an estimated growth into the hundred-thousands. There is currently a tightly knit online backpacking community that communicates through blogs and subreddits. However, those websites are not review based and contain a large amount of posts to sift through. Off the Trail is primarily location and gear review based so quick searches for locations and gear will quickly assist visitors in making trip-planning decisions. This application will provide all of them with a central location to share information. However, the data will need to be secured in order to protect user identities, and IP addresses. In order to secure the data, the development team has taken steps for enabling token-based authentication and CORS.

**Outcomes**

The development team for Off the Trail will have the following metrics and measures of success:

* Number of users
* Daily Web traffic
* Number of gear reviews
* Number of Trail/Trip reviews

Off the Trail will be a successful application with enough web traffic to generate ad revenue once about 1000 users register with the site. This has been predicted to bring in around 3000 web visitors a month (visitors do not have to be registered users). Once this milestone is hit, it has been forecasted that the monthly visitor traffic will grow exponentially and by the end of the year 50,000 unique IP addresses will visit the site. If these numbers are not hit by the second year after the app’s launch, the website will have to pivot. The planned pivot for Off the Trail is a secondhand backpacking gear retailer similar to the musical instrument retailer reverb.com. With its architecture already supporting a catalog of user gear, a store could be added and travelers and outdoor enthusiasts across the world can sell and buy lightly used gear from each other.