Wyd? A Spontaneous Planning App.

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Abstract
Wyd? (What [are] you doing?) is a social networking app specifically targeted towards students at UC Davis. The app makes it simpler to stay informed about whether friends are available to study or hang out on campus in the small gaps of free time between classes. Users are able to publish a status with information about what free time they have including: how long they are free for, whether they would like to study, hang out, or both, and emojis that they can choose which suggest what kinds of activities they are interested in doing. Posts are only visible to a users friends in the app. *Wyd?* is focused on facilitating the creation of immediate plans with friends and not for future event planning.

Introduction
Between obligations, students like to get together with their friends on campus to hangout or study. However, it is difficult to know who is available, who is on campus, and who is doing what. Usually, college students have unique schedules. Rather than the 9 to 5 work schedule employees usually have, they have dispersed class schedules, with short intervals in between classes where they are free. Furthermore, each college student may have a different schedule from their friends, thus not knowing when both are available to make plans. We want to focus on the process of these spontaneous meetups where

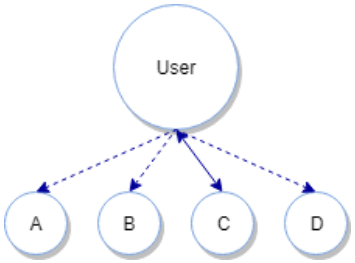

Figure 1: Planning over text. A - D have been reached out to, only C responds.

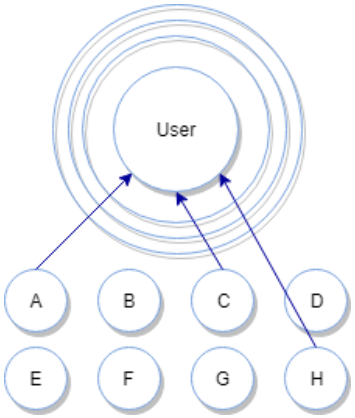

Figure 2: Planning with *Wyd?*. A - H can see the user has free time. A, C, and H reach out.

individuals text their friends to see who is free and then create group chats to see everyone's interests.

In this type of event planning, rejection is not an uncommon occurrence. Current solutions available include email threads. However, email threads are commonly related to business and formal communications. Such channel may be inappropriate for informal, spontaneous meetups between friends. Alternatively, group chats are also a possible solution, however many group chats are disorganized because of how fast the conversation progresses, as well as complex social dynamics that may affect any event planning decisions.

Wyd? allows users to share their availability, in addition to willingness to coordinate an event, with their friends instantly. We are proposing to change the process of creating spontaneous meetups, which would focus on immediacy and reach. Instead of individually reaching out to multiple friends via private messaging, *Wyd?* broadcasts a user's status if they are free to meet up, and therefore would not require them to ask multiple friends to hang out individually. *Wyd?* also introduces passive participation, in which users can instead check which of their friends are free rather than broadcasting their status.

With the focus on spontaneity, *Wyd?* is designed for quick interactions between the user and the interface, using graphical signifiers such as emojis to signify what they are interested in doing in the meetup. It is available as an online web app that users can access on their mobile devices. A mobile platform was chosen because college students are often on their phones, and a web application would be the easiest to ensure compatibility with a large range of devices.

Background

Wyd? mitigates several problems that has found to arise in spontaneous event planning. We have identified several problems that may occur in such process:

Increased possibility of rejection. Rejection is known to deter individuals from coordinating meetups. Current solutions available compels users to actively reach out to friends, even though half of the time it would lead to a rejection[3]. A lot of these rejections may come from unfortunate circumstances such as inflexible schedules, unmatched interested, etc. which is prevalent due to the circumstances college students are in.

Lack of current solutions. Most current social media platforms with event planning features, like Facebook, are designed to create large events. These platforms have the advantage of not only giving the user the ability to invite a large number of people to an event, but also the ability to know who is interested in going to an event. However, with this comes the risk that, although people are interested, they may not actually go. As such, those invited cannot be sure who will actually attend the event, and people are more willing when they know that their friends are going [4].

Conceptual Model

With *Wyd?* we propose an alternative way to coordinate spontaneous events that mitigates the previously mentioned problems. Our app effectively abstracts the process of polling one's contacts via text (Figure 1) and asking who is free, once the user themself has free time. (Figure 2)

Two personas have been created to model our audience, one representing an outgoing, extroverted college student who is eager to hangout with their circle of friends and

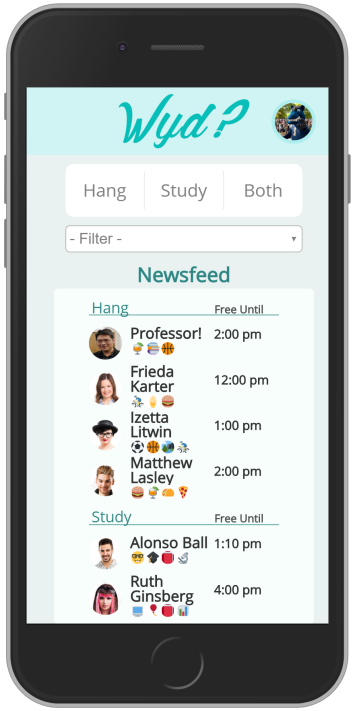

Figure 3: The Main Screen with friends free to hang out and no activity in progress by the user.

the other a shy, introverted student that may be deterred to create such events because of the fear of rejection and shyness. Both personas embody the lack of solutions to solve this very specific problem to college students; for our first persona, there are currently no social platform for immediate meetups that could fill their interest to hangout with a number of friends during the short periods between classes, and for our second, a way to reduce the risk of rejection by knowing who is actually free.

Prototype / Implementation

The current design has 3 screens: the Login Screen, The Main Screen, and the Settings Screen. The Main screen (Figure 3) allows users to select and edit their availability and contains the "News Feed" with other friends who are available. In the Settings Screen, users can manage their friends, edit their profile, and access a FAQ section. Only three screens are used in order to maintain a simple interface that is both easy to learn and to use[3].

In creating our solution, we leveraged several design concepts. An example is our choice of color scheme. We chose blue as the main color, as it has a wide appeal among all genders and conveys "friendliness toward the user" [1], and is consistent with other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, that use blue; it fosters an environment where users are compelled to interact with one another.

From the Main Screen, the user can perform three actions. First, they can indicate that they are free for a certain amount of time. This is done by selecting whether they would like to "Hang", "Study", or "Both", selecting the amount of time they would like to hang out for, and selecting up to four emojis; the emojis are used to signify types of activities the user might like to do.

Second, they can see others availabilities through a newsfeed that summarizes the user's friends availability. This feed can be filtered and the user can click on a friend they are interested in hanging out with, which then let's them either call their friend or send a text message to them via their phones messaging application. (Each users account is associated with a phone number.)

Finally, users can customize their profile. The user is able to edit their profile picture in addition to their first and last name. From here, the app settings can be entered, which is consistent with other social media application's design, like Snapchat.

Our current prototype is a web app that can be accessed via the internet. We built this prototype using a combination of javascript libraries, including bootstrap, jQuery, and twemoji, which allowed us to standardize the emojis across different phones. Due to the lack of time, we did not implement a back end, as this allowed us to focus more on the front end and overall design of our app.

User Testing

Our user testing focused on the design of the app as apposed to the concept. We conducted A/B testing to see whether users preferred selecting picture signifiers (Figure 4) or writing a description (Figure 5) of what they wanted to do in the activity indicator. The test consisted of providing users with prototypes of the two figures. They were then asked to quantitatively evaluate there preference on a scale of 1-10 (1 referring to a strong preference for the picture signifiers keyboard, and 10 for a strong preference for writing their own description). In addition, they were also asked to provide feedback for both designs. What we found was a strong preference for selecting picture signifiers because they are clear and easy

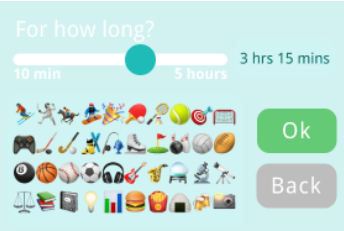

Figure 4: User group A's emoji-selector.

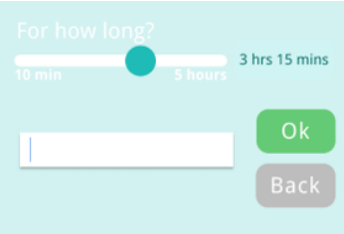

Figure 5: User group B's emoji-selector.

signifiers, and supports the idea of immediacy and spontaneity of the app. Selecting picture signifiers also gives the newsfeed posts with a minimalist design, since all the posts look similar and are not cluttered with words.

Discussion

We can identify three main limitations with our app. First, we focused on building a fully functional front end, however, a back end still needs to be written in order to complete the app. Without the back end its impossible to roll out *Wyd?* to campus and evaluate the apps feasibility in its entirety. While our platform is secure and takes minimal information now, securing a source of revenue to fund back end costs, like Ads, complicates this security and privacy, which, given the current political climate, would need to be given much thought. Next, during our demo the issue was raised that it is difficult to get users to go from an online interaction to a real life one. *Wyd?* is already better equipped than other social networks due to its immediate nature and abstraction of real world actions, however, additional steps to encourage real life interactions are needed because if the user doesn't gain any new social experiences, they will stop using the app. Finally, we don't have any location-based authentication implemented. This poses a problem because the user could potentially see posts from their friends far away from Davis and get confused.

Future Work

First, we would also like to field test *Wyd?*. Since, the testing we've done has been centered around the design of the app, we want to see how the core functionality of the app would fare via Piggyback Prototyping[2]. We think that using Twitter would be a suitable existing social media app to "piggy back on". We would map the core function of our app, announcing that the user is free, to the user's Twitter followers (likely constraining the feed to a hashtag) and then see who contacts the users if they themselves have free time.

We would also like to allow the customizing of a status so that it is visible either to certain friends or to everyone in their friend list, and also suggest who to hang out with based off users friends' posted availability. These would increase user freedom in addition to efficiency of hanging out.

We would also like to port *Wyd?* to a mobile app, as opposed to a webapp because most social media applications are app based.

Finally, we would like to expand the app to more college campuses, and eventually the general public. Location features would have to be implemented in order to only show friend's posts that are nearby, Otherwise those who are far away from one another cannot necessarily meet up quickly and this challenges *Wyd?* immediate nature.

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