

## The Allen Theatre

**Definition:** This app is for a theatre that I really love in my hometown. It is a very small establishment that really needs some more advertising because it does not get too many visitors. So, my app will work to make information about the theatre available so that more people want to visit the theatre.

### **Features:**

- Give general information about the theatre and associated coffee shop and make the information interactive so that use is easy for customers. This information would be about the history of the business because of how important that history is to the business as well as menus for the coffee shop and hours for both the shop and the theatre. Interactivity could be achieved through images or a slideshow that includes captions of the various events in the business' history.
- Allow users to find the theatre on a map and easily move that information into a directional app, whether it be through easy copying to the clipboard or integration of Google maps directions. This could be accomplished by using the Google Maps API for the initial display of location. I will need to look further into the Google API to see if directions can be incorporated into an embedded map, but if not, I could have a button that will copy the address to the clipboard to make it easy for users to add the address to a directions app.
- List the current film and times for the current show as well as upcoming shows and events that will be hosted at the theatre and coffee shop. This could be accomplished using a database that stores the current event info as well as the current and upcoming films at the business.
- Incorporate notifications about new events and films being shown at the theatre. This could be accomplished using the Cordova-plugin-local-notifications plugin on GitHub. Through this plugin, notifications could be sent when new data is received from the database. The device can be alerted of changes in the database using MySQL triggers.
- Allow user to contact the theatre straight from the app by being able to click on the phone number and having it start a call. This is possible through the Cordova/Ionic framework that facilitates phone calls from an app.

### **Market Research:**

- Fandango: Fandango is an app that allows users to see movie times in local theaters as well as allowing users to purchase tickets. Fandango also shows reviews and descriptions of upcoming and current movies. Users can search for theaters near them or in other locations, look at available movies in those theaters and the times those movies will be shown, and get tickets that can be printed or shown on a phone. There is also an option to add rewards cards for specific theater chains so users can still get rewards while using the Fandango app. In the "Spotlight" section, different upcoming films are advertised and times for those movies in local theaters are also cycled through. Nearby theaters and discounts are also shown in the spotlight area. From any screen, you can also search for

theaters, movies, and actors/actresses. The app is fairly intuitive to use. The menu is placed conventionally and the color scheme is consistent. However, the advertisements that are used in the app are very intrusive. It would be better if they were all banner ads and they didn't use motion so that they are not distracting. Obviously, the point of the ads is to grab attention, but the amount of these distracting ads detracts from the user experience. Otherwise, the app is very useful. It has a very large database of theaters and gives accurate times and movies for the theaters it supports. It is also nice that the app does not require you to create an account to purchase tickets or use the app's features. However, the account does allow you to use a rewards card. Buttons are easily pressed and navigation is intuitive, but there are a few links that are very small and could be difficult to select. There is a secondary menu in the top right that is a little redundant and unnecessary because there is already a hamburger menu on the left. The items in the menu on the right should just be added to the menu on the left. The styling of the menu items in the right menu is also odd and makes them look like they don't belong. It would be very helpful if the app included snack prices as well as ticket prices for theaters so that users can budget their trip to the movies. I would give the app a 4.5 / 5.

- AMC Theatres: AMC Theaters is an app that shows users local AMC Theaters, their movies, and their show times. The app also allows users to purchase tickets using native wallet apps and save ticket stubs from past showings. Users can also customize their dashboard to show them their favorite theaters, movies, or ticket stubs quickly. Additional information about movies, like ratings and descriptions, is available and when users find movies they would like to see, they can add those movies to a list where they can easily be found. Multiple rating systems are shown in the app so that users can compare ratings and know more about the movie before they see it. The first screen shows current and upcoming movies in AMC theaters. These different categories can be closed and moved around depending on the user's tastes. The movement of these items uses conventional imaging to illustrate the possibility of customization. Customization is also shown by allowing users to select which tab they would like to see first on their home page. Users can also search for different movies and theaters by name. It is also possible to find nearby theaters without having location services on. Snack menus and preordering are also available through the app, which is very convenient for users in a time crunch. The app also offers specials and gift card sales through the mobile interface. Navigation through the app is simple through the use of a hamburger menu and different subsections for different sets of menu items being clearly delineated. The tabular layout of the home screen is also easy to understand and the buttons are just large enough to be usable for fat-thumbs. The initial tutorial of the app is very well done and simple so that the user can understand the different ways to interact with the app. All less-obvious navigations or options are explained concisely. Some problems with the app are that the snack menu is hard to navigate. Options that seem like they should be clickable are not, and when a list item was chosen, the page was reloaded without change. Preordering snacks would be a huge convenience for users, but it is a shame that the app does not follow through with usability in this feature. Also, there is a secondary menu in the snack

section that has similar options as the main navigation, but takes you to different pages. This makes for a confusing experience. I would give this app a 4/5.

- Marcus Theatres: This app allows users to find theaters, movies, and show times for theaters. They can view these theaters in a map or a list and add favorite theaters to minimize searching. When searching for movies, users can filter by popular movies, by when the next showing is, by film title, or by movies in the closest theaters. Additionally, the location can be changed when searching for movies as well. When a movie is chosen, theaters and times in the area are shown along with a description of the movie, cast, rating, and running-time. There is also a section for upcoming movies. Gift cards and rewards cards can also be added so that purchase count for points at the theater and users can use their gift cards. For the most part, the design of the app is acceptable at best. The hamburger menu for the main navigation is on the right side, which goes against convention and makes the app harder to use. The color scheme is fine, but the buttons and layout are generally tacky. There are also very few theaters available to view information about through this app, so having an option to search theaters is not very useful. Along the same vein, there are no upcoming films to show for any of the three available theaters, so the coming soon tab does not give any information, which makes the user question whether the page is still loading, or if there is no content. The popups that the app uses to tell users that there are no theaters in their location do not match the color scheme of the rest of the app, which makes them seem disconnected from the site. The page that shows the privacy policy of the company seems to be a low quality browser that opens to the company website. Navigation from this page is difficult to understand. One nice thing about the app is that the location is set in one place. So, if the user sets their location once, the movies, theaters, upcoming movies, and home tabs all start with that location set. In some other apps, the location has to be set differently on different tabs, which makes browsing more difficult. Another nice aspect about the app is that it directs the user to directions from their location to the theater if the location icon is clicked on. It would be really nice if this were more intuitive, but it is an appreciated feature nonetheless. The phone number and address of each theater is also available and the phone number is callable when clicked. Many of the buttons are also too small for a mobile setting, like the location icon, the phone numbers, the favorites feature, and many menu items. The main navigation items are easy enough to select, but the sub-navigation options on each individual page are harder to use. There is also some lag between each page loading, which could become frustrating to users. Overall, I think the app has a lot of potential, but needs more development to be competitive. I would give the app a 2.5/5.

### **Potential Users:**

When asking some family members from home about my app idea, they were all enthusiastic about it because we all enjoy visiting the Allen Theatre. Usually, when talking about movies to see, my family will check Fandango to see what movies are in the local chain theater. Then, we decide what movie to see from the Fandango app. However, we often forget to check the Allen Theatre to see if they have a movie that we would like to see because we don't have an app that allows us to easily check what movie is showing and when. My family thinks that this

could be a common problem among movie-goers who want to support the Allen Theatre. They want to go to see a movie at the Allen, but it is simply easier to get information about other theaters. So, making an app that would make this information more accessible could be very useful to citizens in my area and could help to bring patrons to the Allen Theatre.

There is also a coffee shop that is connected to the Allen Theatre, called MJ's Coffee Shop. MJ's hosts various events throughout the year and has a fairly regular crowd that comes for their coffees, teas, lunches, and pastries. My sister thinks that she would be more likely to go to an event at MJ's, like an open mic night, if she knew it were happening. Notifications about events would be a great way to accomplish this. My sister suggests to not make notifications very intrusive, however. She thinks that notifications should be an option, not required, so that users don't uninstall the app just because of the notifications. The amount of users would not be very high to begin with because of the small audience of the theatre. So, it is important to not scare away any of the users. My sister also mentioned that it would be nice to be able to be reminded more often or add events to a calendar app for more frequent notifications if the user wants to be reminded more often.

When asking some friends from around Rochester, they had a very different view of my app because of their distance from the theatre. However, they still thought it was a good idea for my town, even though they would never use the app unless they were from my area. They suggested that the app should have the map centered on the theatre rather than the user's location so that direction savvy users can simply use the map if they would like rather than using a directional app. Also, they suggested that the app's home page show the current movie times and a description of the movie rather than any of the other content so that information that users want the most quickly, including prices for tickets, is the easiest to find. Other information on events, history, and the coffee shop is less time-sensitive, so it should be on other pages rather than the landing page.

This review of users was very helpful because it allowed me to see what regular users want in an app. The people I asked gave me different perspectives that helped me to plan ahead for building this app. I will definitely incorporate different notification settings now that the issue of scaring users away with over bearing notifications was brought up. I will also keep the other issues brought up in mind as I design the app. I need to make sure that the most important information is easily found on the landing page while still keeping the other information accessible. Most importantly, talking to potential users helped me to keep the users' perspective in mind in development. My potential users also brought up the question of images and how to incorporate them without letting them overtake the content of the app.

### **How My App is Different:**

The most obvious way that my app is different from other competitive apps is that it lists the Allen Theatre's show times. All of the other apps that were reviewed above do not include the Allen Theatre because of how small it is. However, it still has a fair amount of followers and there is a need in that gap of information that could be met with my app. Additionally, my app will allow users to get customizable notifications about the movies that they would like to see. They will also be able to get notifications about the coffee shop events that happen every once in a while. I will also make sure to follow convention with the menus I use and make every button

or link in my app easily pressed and understandable. All of the apps I reviewed had problems with small links and buttons. My app will also not include a purchasing feature and it will not include searching for different theaters or movies because it is focused on one theater that plays one movie at a time. Finally, my app will include prices from MJ's coffee shop. Most of the apps that I reviewed did not include snack prices of the theaters that they advertised. This is an important aspect of the Allen Theatre and of the movie watching experience. So, it will certainly be included in my app because half of the Allen Theatre is MJ's coffee shop. One of the other apps reviewed had an area with snack prices and options, but it was not well executed. The menu was hard to navigate and understand. My app will have a full menu that will be organized by category. Each category will be clearly stated and there will not be more than two levels of organization anywhere in the menu section. The menu will also clearly state the prices of each item along with a description of the item, which was hard to locate in the competition's site.