

My College Shepherd

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1. ABSTRACT

MyCollegeShepherd is a web based collaborative tool which acts as one stop for all the information an new student will need while settling in a new university. There are ample social sites like zillow,yelp,uber, roommate.com ,but none of those are specifically focused towards students' need. This tool allows the student to pilot their way into finding a house,room mate,initial setup etc will be addressed.

2. BACKGROUND

To date there have been many ventures on application for finding roommate. Craigslist is the first thing that comes to our mind . But there are lots of scams floating around on Craigslist.[9]The 9 Best Roommate Finders on the Web) . There have been couple of other applications like roommates.com , which allows you to create a profile for free, but to read messages from other users you need to pay for a full account. Hence this was the motivation to create an application which is student friendly . There is a reliable list of students from the same university since the account can be verified from their college id.

This application has also drawn inspiration from Yelp[2] - to-go app when we want to find a place to eat. Yuhan Wu in Yelp case study- Easier decision: gives us very important insights on decision making . She states "If Yelp displays the information of restaurants that I care about

and can trust in, it would be easier to make a decision." This reflects largely on how much the applications nowadays are profit and marketing centric . The CollegeShepherd hence is an attempt to create an application which is 100 percent student centric . Giving them precise information on things like local grocery stores , food deliveries etc .[6]A review on major UI design guidelines states that,"Match Between The System And The Real World: The system should use concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. " Notably there have been many applications like studyabroad.com which have been useful for students travelling abroad . Also there have been sites like moving.com [5] which have been which gives you tips for setting up the apartment . Hence my application has drawn inspiration from such useful interfaces to make a student friendly interface which would attend the questions and problems they will face when entering a new country or city .

The application will be implemented using Flask which is a Python web framework built with a small core and easy-to-extend philosophy. It is a lightweight WSGI web application framework and is designed to make getting started quick and easy, with the ability to scale up to complex applications. The data is sent from json file to html pages using flask. [4] Flask Web Development). I have also taken some design considerations for working on this site from the research papers which reflect light on good poli-

cies while designing a website . One such example is “Avoid Scrolling. Try fitting all the important elements on the screen at once without forcing the user to scroll down. “[7] UI Design Considerations for Data Entry

3. APPROACH

A lot of thought and effort was put into getting the best design for a good user experience. Lot of learnings for same were drawn from [1]Sketching User Experiences: Getting the Design Right and the Right Design. The main page constitutes login/sign up which is part of base header . The same has been implemented using modal plugin. The page also flashes breaking news . You can get redirected to new tab to read more on news from here . Some basic validations like password length , re-enter password check , required fields , email format have been implemented for login and sign up .

The firstpage on login constitute various options like : Apartment Set up , information , food , local grocery stores, find roommate , going around . For easy alignment and to mix well with other Bootstrap components Card, an extensible content container has been used .

The roommate page filters the students from the database and shows the filtered choices on basis of Locality , budget, sex , food, hobbies etc . The dummy student data has been stored in data .json and is imported in run.py

Apartment setup, food , local grocery stores, going around pages also are based on card . Extensive research has been done to include relevant data . For now data included is based on keeping in mind the area around the Drexel university . Link to the relevant sites has been connected with their respective images , for easy user experience, in case he she needs more information.

Information page has been designed in way that the headings are clear and concise and user can look into multiple topics without navigating away from page . Using the card component, you can extend the default collapse behavior to create collapse. Each tab panel contains information like How To Build Credit, Packing For

The image shows a mobile application interface for finding a roommate. The background is a light brown wood grain. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Locality:** A text input field containing "#123, Example street" and a location pin icon to its right.
- Budget:** Two input fields labeled "Min" and "Max". The "Min" field contains "0" and the "Max" field contains "50000". Below these fields are two horizontal sliders with blue circular handles.
- Looking to live with:** Three radio button options: "Male", "Female", and "No Preference". The "No Preference" option is selected, indicated by a blue dot.
- Food Preferences:** Four radio button options: "Veg", "Non-Veg", "Vegan", and "No Preference". The "No Preference" option is selected, indicated by a blue dot.
- Hobbies:** A list of hobbies: "Adventurous", "Coder/Hacker", "Foodie", and "Party Starter". These are listed in a white box with rounded corners.
- Search:** A grey button with the word "Search" in white text, located at the bottom of the interface.

College, Get a State ID / Driver's Licence, Student Friendly Apps etc. [10]What You Need to Know Before Your First Trip Abroad, was very helpful in understanding the most relevant content for this page.

4. EVALUATION

To evaluate the application, different usecases were implemented. [3] Web Application Testing: A Review on Techniques, Tools and State of Art. Regression cases were run, whenever new feature was introduced to ensure the integration of new feature is successful. Negative testing was performed for login and sign up validations. All these scenarios passed successfully. The most critical evaluation was for the filter feature, which constitutes 5 filter options. All possible permutations and combinations were checked to ensure that the results match the database. All the href links like breaking news, links on pages for apartment, food deliveries, local grocery stores, were tested, if they lead to the intended site.

5. DISCUSSION

The application designed is small scale implementation, of the proper web application which can be implemented for various colleges worldwide. The data used for now is dummy to avoid using anyone's personal data. The site if used with real data can be used by new admissions. Many international students including me, are not aware of the places around unless we google extensively for various kinds of site. In fact most of the information is learnt when we actually land in college. MycollegeShepherd can be a very handy information base if referenced along with the admissions. Students can prepare themselves prior to landing in new country or city. My further work will be inspired by research works like - [8]Effective UI design Study for E-Commerce Websites. There is lot of scope of improvement for this site for now. Eg. I haven't yet implemented posting your entry as room mate. I would also like to align the information like apartment set up, local grocery

store, food deliveries as per the country, city the college is located in.

6. REFERENCES

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