

Pods – Project Proposal

Pods: Find Your Pea

Team Description

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Project Description

Pods is a lightweight social coordination platform designed to help college students form short-lived groups for everyday activities such as studying, exercising, attending events, or socializing. Instead of relying on just group chats or social media, users can create or join “pods,” which are temporary activity-based groups that expire automatically after the activity ends, which connect the online world to the real world. The system reduces social friction and decision paralysis by enabling intent-based, low-pressure coordination in real time.

Business Goals

The primary business goals of Pods are:

- Reduce social coordination friction by providing a faster, lower-pressure alternative to group chats and social media for forming real-world activities.
- Enable spontaneous engagement by supporting short-lived, intent-based group formation rather than persistent social feeds.
- Increase student participation in academic, social, and recreational activities by making it easier to find others with aligned intent.
- Help freshmen and transfer students meet students on campus and acclimate faster.
- Provide a coordination platform that could extend beyond college campuses to other environments such as coworking spaces, conferences, or residential communities.
- Allow for overall ease in meeting people with like-minded academic and physical interests
- Monetization opportunities:
 - Monetize through targeted ads
 - Monetize through anonymized and aggregated user activity data
 - Monetize through Google Adspace and also premium plans which allow for better benefits like larger activities and the ability to form your own communities

Main Features / Engineering Objectives

The system will provide the following core features:

1. User Authentication
 - Users authenticate using email-based login (mocked or simplified authentication for development).
 - Depending on the user's college email, they will be able to join their prospective campus feed.
 - Each user has a basic profile containing name and optional metadata.
2. Pods (Communities)
 - Users can join predefined pods (e.g., general campus pod, class-based pod).
 - Pods serve as scoped spaces for activity discovery
 - Each pod has a general chat for users to meet each other and discuss
3. Activity Posts
 - Users can create activity posts specifying:
 - Activity type (study, gym, social, etc.)
 - Time window (now, later, tonight)
 - Maximum group size
 - Expiration time
 - Posts are visible only while active.
4. Join Request System
 - Users can request to join an activity post.
 - Requests are sent to the host (the activity poster) for approval.
5. Host Approval Logic
 - Hosts can accept or decline join requests.
 - Accepted users are added to the pod's temporary group.
6. Temporary Group Chat
 - A lightweight group chat is created once users are accepted.
 - The chat automatically closes or deletes after the activity expires.
7. Automatic Expiration & Cleanup
 - Posts and chats automatically expire and are removed from the system.
 - No historical feed is maintained

Scope

In Scope:

- User authentication and profiles
- Pod creation and membership
- Activity post creation and discovery
- Join request and approval workflow

- Temporary group chat
- Automatic expiration of posts and chats
- Recommendation algorithms based on previous interest

Out of Scope:

- Payments or financial transactions
- Location tracking or GPS-based discovery
- Persistent social feeds or messaging
- Integration with official university systems

Stakeholders

- Primary Users: College students using Pods to coordinate activities
- Secondary Users: Student organizations or informal groups acting as activity hosts
- Developers: Project team responsible for design and implementation
- Instructors / Evaluators: CS 411 course staff assessing project quality

Constraints

- Time Constraint: Development limited to the CS 411 semester timeline.
- Technical Constraint: System must be implementable using available web technologies and frameworks.
- Resource Constraint: No access to official university systems or proprietary data.
- Design Constraint: System must remain simple and avoid feature creep to ensure completion.

Risks

- Low User Adoption: If too few users participate, coordination value decreases.
Mitigation: Focus on pods that work at a small scale
- Scope Creep: Adding unnecessary features may delay completion.
Mitigation: Strict adherence to MVP scope and prioritization.

Appendix

- GitHub Repository:
[https://github.com/your-username/pods-project \(*placeholder*\)](https://github.com/your-username/pods-project)