Group 9

CCT485
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TEAM MEMBERS

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PROJECT IDEA – SUMMARY

The idea for the project revolves around creating a platform that helps students join or create events. This platform will let students find events local to their campus and find the nearest and upcoming events across a variety of hobbies/interests. Ideally, the focus of the platform would be to provide a hub for students to create or join events for more niche hobbies/interests (Movies, Music, Study-groups, or Sports). The goal of the platform is to help students connect with classmates in similar interests, strengthen the social life on the university campus.

USABILITY PROBLEM

Finding events is challenging for most students because the process of looking for an interesting event is unintuitive and time-consuming. There is no singular hub that contains all upcoming events around/in campus. Thus, making students research through different social medias too see what is happening. Just because a student doesn't find an event they were looking for, does not necessarily imply the event does not exist. The students could be searching the wrong sites and or term. With this process, students will need to know exactly which sites to check, network or be in different clubs/groups, just to know about the different event opportunities. Events should be made more publicized and general to one hub. Events should not be hard to find, so the process can be improved in usability.

USERS

The targeted users for the project will be university students, specifically University of Toronto. The project will focus on students from both Mississauga campus and St. George campus, and seeing how the students interact with finding or creating events.

CURRENT SOLUTIONS

Currently, there are various services that provide a solution to event finding but, each system has both advantages and disadvantages. The most popular service would be Facebook Events, letting users search a database of upcoming events in a local area. Finding events on Facebook can be tricky, these are events that are generally more public. Trying to find a study group for an exam or drop-in basketball game is a lot tougher. Facebook events also disregards all events that could be listed in clubs or group pages, which has a big population within the student body. Then services like MeetUp or EventBrite, let users create events seamlessly but the platforms are filled with company workshops and irrelevant miscellaneous events. With all these events, it is hard for the user to filter potential candidates they could be interested in.

CHANGES/IMPROVEMENT

Creating a platform that creates a hub for all events will hopefully make the process of finding events more engaging and enjoyable for the user. Having the user to jump between different services just to find an interesting event, is time-consuming and a hassle. Developing a minimal user-centric interface but intuitive will be important to the end product. A new interface will allow missing features like key-filtering, different views, profiles or gamification (rewards). The important part of the interface will be creating an easier process for finding events. This could be designed as a certain view like a map with pins, a calendar list, enhanced searching features (popular searches, recent tags). With preliminary research and formative studies, we will be able to design an intuitive interface that will help improve the process in finding events that interests students.

INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS

Participant #1: The participant is Asian and a recent graduate currently working as a developer for a software company. They were given the task of finding a school-related event that they were interested in. They used a laptop to search up "UTM events" using Google and was returned with a few events that Google had catered using their algorithms. None of the events sparked interest for the participant and he decided to use his phone to look for events on Facebook. He was frustrated with the usability of Facebook and could not find any interesting events using the search bar, he eventually found the events tab and was interested in Facebook suggested event being a protest against OSAP which was relevant enough for him.

Participant #2: The participant is first year undergraduate student at UTM. She was asked to find events available on campus that she may be interested in. She walked to the CCIT building to look for posters on walls that may include events. Finding none, she went to the student center to look for events. None of the events posted at the student center interested her so she gave up.

Participant #3: The participant is a third-year undergraduate student at McGill. He was asked to find events available at his campus that he may be interested in. He first logged into his school email and went through his inbox to look for potential events that were sent to him. After that, he searched his school's subreddit to see if any events were interesting. Finally, after skimming through both his inbox and the subreddit, he settled on a computer science networking event.