

Scout

Social media and outing application

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ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

The purpose of the research paper is to analyze the problems and demands of users in the travel domain with a possible solution. First, the paper briefly introduces pre-existing services and the current scenario of the travel domain and E-tourism. Further, a deep analysis has been done based on the research paper and study conducted. A brief overview of the research is provided, including some significant factors influencing travelers, history of traveling (some last year trends and data), user's concerns, and demands. This paper contains five interview insights to support the above research and understand their likes and dislikes in current services. The study is also helped with the persona and scenario section, giving a visualization of all insights and take-aways collected from the research and interviews. Conclusion and Further Work Conclude what is done until now and discuss the extent of the solution's effectiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Different types of sites that fall under the travel site umbrella cover many features varying from recommending travel destinations to booking transport and accommodations to providing tour guides and much more. These services are a result of the rise of the domain of 'e-Tourism'. Among this wide range of services, users still struggle to find relevant information on any location they have in mind fast and efficiently since most of these services fail to provide information that matters to the users. Users are humans, they have humane concerns that can only be addressed by another human being. Some sites have taken this into account and created travel forums where users can chat, but people are still unsatisfied. Evidence is the increasing popularity of travel vloggers and social media influencers whom people find easier to relate with. But these video diaries are like long logbooks of a traveler that take up a lot of time to watch. Thus, people need a service that serves as a bridge between E-Tourism and the social media domain. This leads to creating the service idea that we intend to bring to reality through our knowledge and skills.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite advancements in the travel industry, most people today judge a destination by word of mouth. *But it isn't always possible to find someone who's been to where you are to visit. And even if you can, their words might not be enough to satisfy your curiosity. Also, the opinions of a single party may be biased, which makes getting a second opinion vital.*

People prefer the personal experiences of others who've been there; over facts & data, which explains why vlogs and short reels are popular. But even after watching hours of videos and reels, one might not find the results productive enough. Doing so would also require a lot of writing down notes as it's not possible to go through a whole video every time you want something, especially during a trip.

1.2 SOLUTION STATEMENT

We propose a platform where the user can know all about a location by watching the journeys of other users, and discover local markets, street food, popular local spots etc that aren't visible on Google but were still visited and geotagged by our users. It will also be a place where people could upload pictures or videos and have reviews and ratings for the location. This would allow the user to not depend on word of mouth but Know about the location himself.

1.2 USP (UNIQUE SELLING POINT)

View the journeys (that were given public access) of other people who've been to the particular place that you are planning to visit. See their journey for all sorts of details like popular spots they visited, best local cuisine they tried, contact info of the cab driver/hotel manager/tour guide/restaurant food delivery who's services they used, good photoshoot spots(if they found any) etc information on tourist places(popular or not) that isn't found on google; ALL AT ONE PLACE. All you need is one person who's been there before. Assess the credibility of the information provided from the reviews and ratings section for the journey. Write your own reviews and ratings to describe your own experience after the journey and testify on the behalf of the traveler.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

We read 12 papers, out of which we went with 8 for our report. The report has divided sections, including the topic, the methods used, and the points we got from the surveys.

2.1 Is Social Media influencing Tourism?

The research was done on the people of Indonesia to find if social media is an efficient way to help people's decision-making while planning a tour. The research used the AIDA (that is, Attention, Interest, Desire, dan Action) model to help them reach their results. The study also conducted a survey with an average response of 396 people that displayed that the most used social media platform was Instagram deriving the result that social media plays a role in people's decision-making regarding tourism (Damanik et al., 2020).

The research showed that the travelers rely more on what experienced travelers review and suggestions are on social media about a destination while decision making. The study conducted interviews and questionnaires to get insights on the topic. The survey resulted in most people using social media to discover a place. Family and friends are also two significant human resources people rely on to discover a travel destination (Fardous et al., 2017).

2.2 DO PEOPLE NEED A PLATFORM FOR TRAVELING REVIEWS?

This study is about traveling locations based on user feedback from E-Wom sites and utilizing sentiment analysis techniques. The study revealed the following points, Word of mouth influences the picture of the destination before visiting, considering the quality of the experience. The Internet, where information is shared on a variety of destinations, forms a new image of the destination. People share posts and evaluate experiences that create various perspectives. People value positive ratings more than negative reviews. The longer the review, the more understandable the semantic orientation becomes, which indicates the user's need for a platform to find good Reviews easily (Gonzalez-Rodriguez et al., 2014).

2.3 PAST RESEARCH WITH ANALOGOUS IDEOLOGY

The study was done for a platform called Ourtravel where people can post different types of road situations, such as traffic, roadblock, accidents, etc., which could be shared with other people. The platform had three trials: the Bridge Trial, in which 24 participants posted incidents about a bridge for over four months; The Festival Trial, and Business Trial, which were done targeting specific communities. The research concluded

that the people trusted strangers online for the information, had no issue sharing their location, and had many improvements compared to its previous competitors (Harding et al., 2013).

The study was done to find cultural heritage sights using data from social media and ranking them in the user's context. The researchers suggest ways to provide relevant photos/data by analyzing user activity on social media platforms like Flickr and Instagram. Still, even after knowing these methods, there are some problems related to search results and for which they provide algorithms. The results indicated that the combination of geotags and data from social media, such as image data, helps have more information for the user during their travels (Nguyen et al., 2017).

2.4 USERS' PRIVACY- USERS' WILLINGNESS TO GEOTAG POSTS ONLINE

A pan India survey(244 responses, 50% males, 50% females; 65% married) was done to research factors Impacting the Influence of Location Sharing In Social Media on motivation to travel. The survey found that sharing photos of moments can claim the individual identity, form communication channels, validate visits, share an experience and strengthen social bonding. People who spend more time on social media are more likely to geotag photos (Asvikaa & Gupta, 2018).

Another study researched considerations behind instant photo sharing and factors that could postpone such sharing when geotagged using a survey (690 responses)—identifying four typical photo-sharing patterns. It revealed that the photos taken in private space are less likely to be shared, much less with geotagging, people are less privacy concerned in general. People tend to upload pictures instantly when motivated by general interest than by personal interest (Wu & Zhang, 2011).

2.5 HOW WE CAN DEVELOP A CREDIBLE WEBSITE

To overcome the problem of people believing less on the internet information as it contains inaccurate information, it is necessary that people trust the website. The research was done through a properly developed questionnaire. We calculated the internal reliability of seven scales. We also looked at disparities between subgroups of various categories. With this, we concluded the 7 guidelines from our research.

2.6 THE TAKEAWAY

All the papers gave us some unique insights, acting as a part of the information and collectively giving us a base we needed to follow for our further work. Each section covered multiple points in our research. The first section helped answer how social media and tourism act together and people's behavior towards social media on tourism. The second section showed people's reliance on the internet to get their information for traveling and how the user behaves with the data. The third section was to learn how similar previous features or apps acted in the real world and learn from them and their mistakes. The fourth section revealed insights into users' behavior on online platforms regarding their privacy. The fifth section shows us the importance of trustworthiness which a user should develop on a website and how to develop it. The knowledge from here helped us act as a base for our next section, Interviews and Surveys.

2.7 COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

We decided to go with three applications from which Momento was a journal app which we needed to analyze our journey creation feature and other two that are google travel and TripAdvisor to know how different and well our app is providing information to the user regarding locations. This process helped us know how our website is different from theirs. Studying the different applications helped us understand how different features of the application work and what we can do to improve them.

3 METHOD

Our target audience included holiday makers and influencers.

3.1 SURVEYS

We took interviews of 5 respondents and a survey wherein we followed a structured questionnaire format to give the whole process a smooth structure. Four of the interviews were conducted in an online mode and one

in an offline mode. The primary purpose of conducting structured interviews was to get variant opinions and views and develop the website accordingly. The consent from all was taken before the interviews. The questionnaire followed a general interview format and contained questions to get us good insights.

The Interview was conducted following good interview habits, we first made the interviewee comfortable and in the next 1-2 minutes, we explained to them our motive behind taking the interview. After this, we took their permission and asked questions from the questionnaire; this interview process took approximately 10 - 15 minutes each interview.

3.2 Proofs

To get more users insights two surveys via a google form was conducted, survey 1 was conducted before the literature review to know whether the problem existed or not, and survey 1 got 48 responses, survey 2 was conducted after the literature review to understand the problem more deeply and to understand users needs and expectations, survey 2 got 37 responses.

[Link to Survey1](#), [Link to the survey2](#)

3.3 INTERVIEWS

[The spreadsheet](#) contains the consent form for each interview.

3.3.1 INTERVIEWEE 1 (Name: Jane Doe One, Age: 23)

"I don't want any new website. I trust the current platforms, especially Google maps a lot."

She is a traveler traveling 7-8 times a year. She likes sightseeing and a discursive type of tourism where she likes to visit famous landmarks the most. She usually doesn't search much as she is only interested in famous places whose information is available everywhere. She's a person who is fond of taking pictures but doesn't like posting them much. Being a user of the platform, she is totally happy to receive information about the best spots, locations, etc., but she doesn't want to post it unless it has a silver lining.

3.3.2 INTERVIEWEE 2 (Name: John Doe One, Age: 20)

"Google map is the best because along with the location it shows the nearby places like restaurants."

He's a traveler traveling 7-10 times a year mostly for sightseeing. The geographical location and the landmarks of the place matter the most to him. His decisions are mostly made from social media, movies, series, random google searches, etc. He researches the whole place via google before visiting the place. The research includes hygiene, crowd, facilities, transportation, stay, etc. He clicks pictures of the place and posts around 5-10 on social media. He would himself help people and take help of people using a website to tell and receive information about best spots, locations, etc.

3.3.3 INTERVIEWEE 3 (Name: John Doe Two, Age: 22)

"Everywhere I go or everything I do will depend on the people I'm with."

He's a traveler traveling 5-6 times a year. The location of his travels depends on the people he's with. He'll go sightseeing with friends and on an adventurous place with his friends and search everything on google then shortlists. If he travels with family, he pre-plans everything otherwise he doesn't. He checks out the location, stay, neighboring places, convenience and especially the negative views as they mean the most. He is a person who clicks photos rarely and doesn't post anything on social media. But he is willing to post pictures on a website where people can get help from them. He is satisfied with google but the main problem he has with Google is that we don't know the authenticity of information on google.

3.3.4 INTERVIEWEE 4 (Name: Jane Doe Two, Age: 19)

"I am a make-up artist who loves to click photos and explore beautiful places especially near me."

She's a budding influencer and make-up artist who loves to travel 5-7 times a year. My interests are in sightseeing, religious and cultural types of trips. While choosing a place, reviews, ambiance and history are of the utmost importance. She pre-plans everything by doing a google search and looking at different platforms because she personally cannot judge a place solely by google due to the editing of the pictures. She checks social media if that place is present on social media, especially the nearest metro station, cost, ambiance, landmark, and duration from home. She, being an influencer, posts a lot on social media and is willing to post on a website that would provide information to people about places. She would love it if the website contains information about the nearest metro station, genuine reviews, unedited photos and must visit suggestions along with everything it already has.

3.3.5 INTERVIEWEE 5 (Name: John Doe Three, Age: 20)

"I am a person who visits a place and then creates an opinion rather than creating opinions based on others' reviews."

He is a traveler traveling 2-3 times a year. His interests include archaeological, sightseeing and adventurous kinds of trips. The information he looks at the most includes hotels, tourist spots, weather and safety. He gets an idea of a place through social media but doesn't depend on reviews given as they are fake. So, he trusts word of mouth over reviews.

3.3.5 TAKEAWAYS

People want to know good tourist spots and locals of a place. They want a separate platform where they can easily find travel-related services and know most of the things about the location. A platform where they can read genuine and authentic reviews. People also doubt the location looking at the photos and want a platform where they can judge with original photos from other users. They also find it easier to trust detailed feedback(including photos,videos etc) from limited people rather than several short reviews.

4 DEMO

This is the link to the video of the demo.

And this is the link to the website: <https://scout2.locat.it/>

4.1 TASK FLOW DIAGRAM



4.2 HOW THE TASK DEMONSTRATES THE USP

The task displayed shows the user how the user will interact with the system to get some specific results. This result is our USP.

4.3 HOW THE USER WILL INTERACT WITH THE SYSTEM

The task displayed shows the user how the user will interact with the system to get some specific results. This result is our USP.

4.4 USER INPUT

There are two ways to input one for location and one for a profile. The user will input the profile name (if they want to search for someone specific) into the empty bar on the top of the screen. Otherwise, they'll enter the location that they want to know about.

4.5 INTERFACE FEEDBACK

After getting some input the system will process it and display a similar profile if the profile name is given or Journeys with a similar location as the input. The Output Will be shown to the user as something like the screen below which the user can further interact with to view those profiles.

4.6 Steps to go through with our website to go with the task flow

Step 1 - Click on the search Journey button

Step 2 - Type a location or profile name for example- Leh for location or sarthak for profile

Step 3 - Choose a journey from the given result by clicking on view

Step 4 - Choose a moment from the journey to view in detail by clicking on view

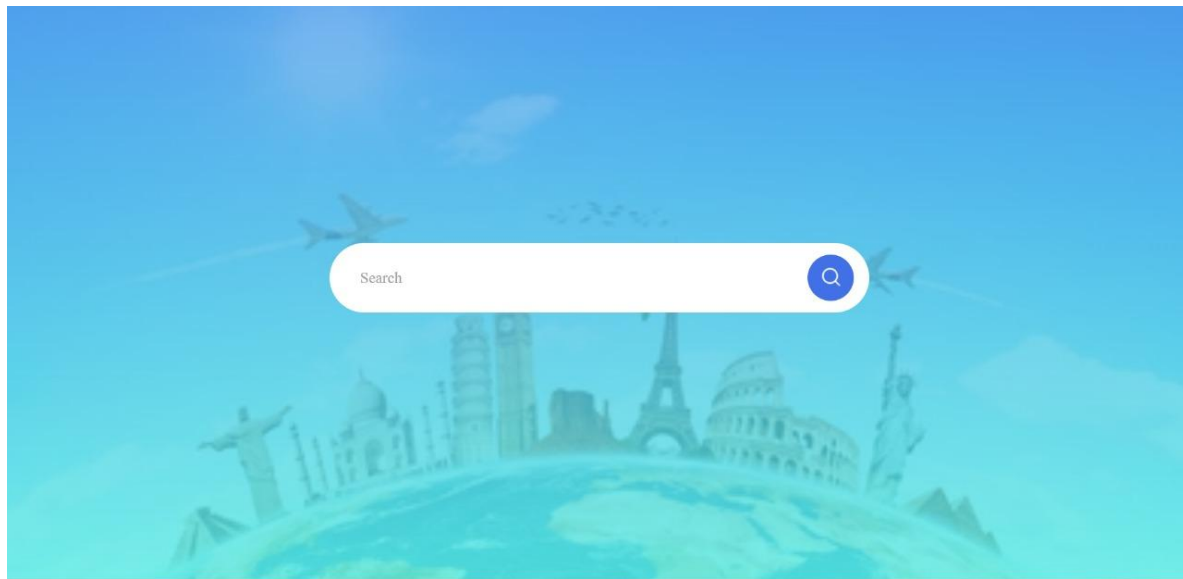
Step 5 - To add a comment go back to previous screen and add comment through the comment box then submit using send button

5 USER EVALUATION

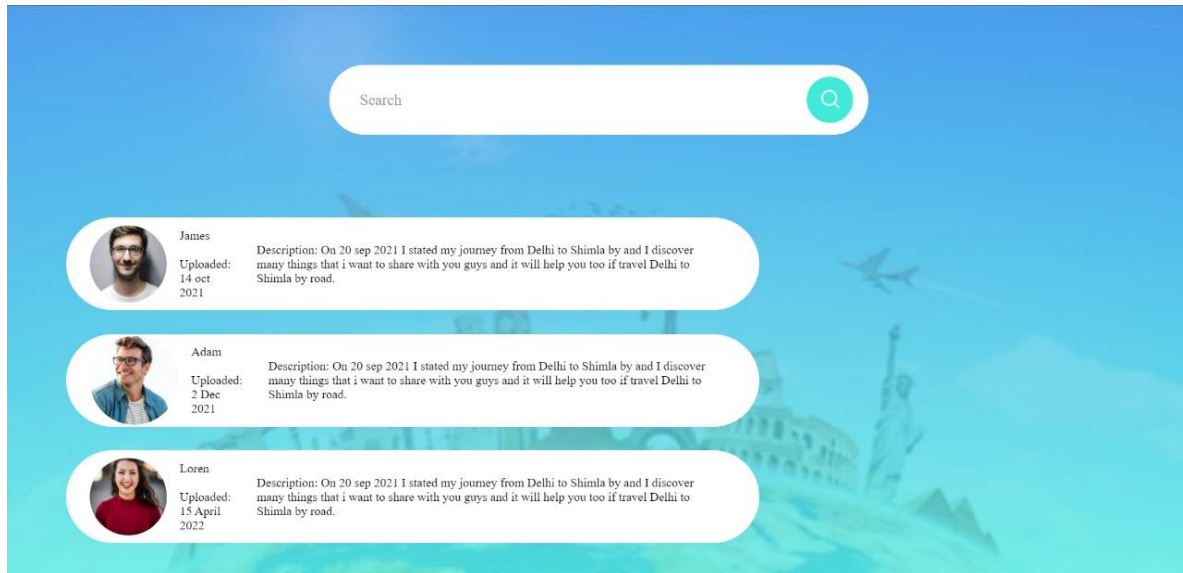
Our target audience included holiday makers and influencers. Hence we found a candidate who met these criterias. We then proceeded to the user evaluation. During the course of the evaluation, the user found the platform to be fulfilling its purpose just fine. But they expressed their concerns in other areas like the UI which according to them was not up to the mark and thus we iterated over different designs to find the one that best suited the user's needs.



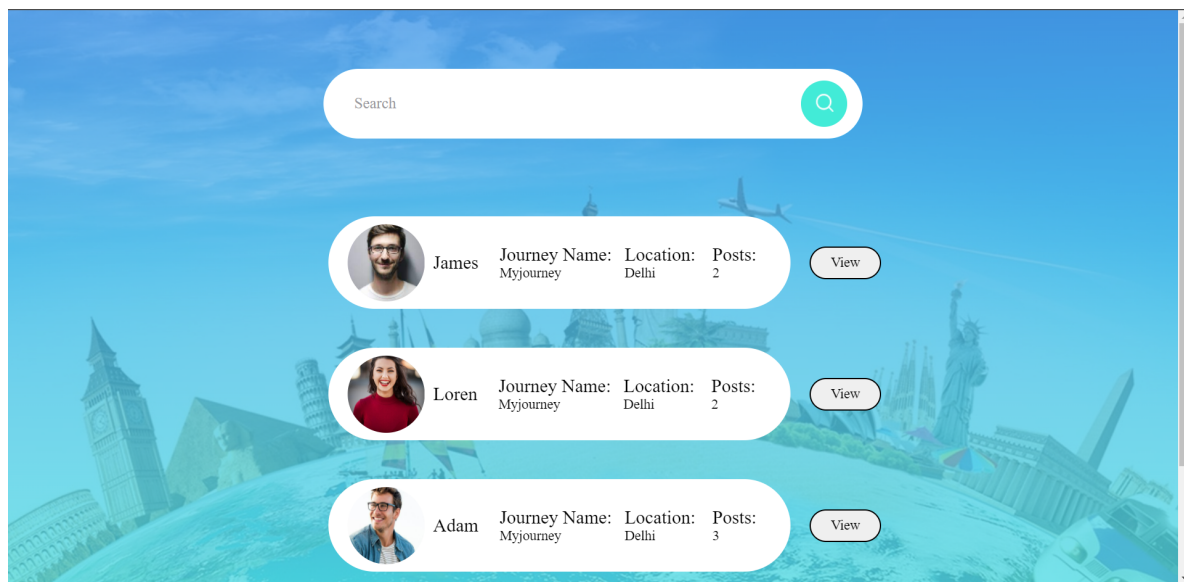
The search screen was quite vague at first and the user had difficulty understanding as to exactly what type of search results it would fetch.



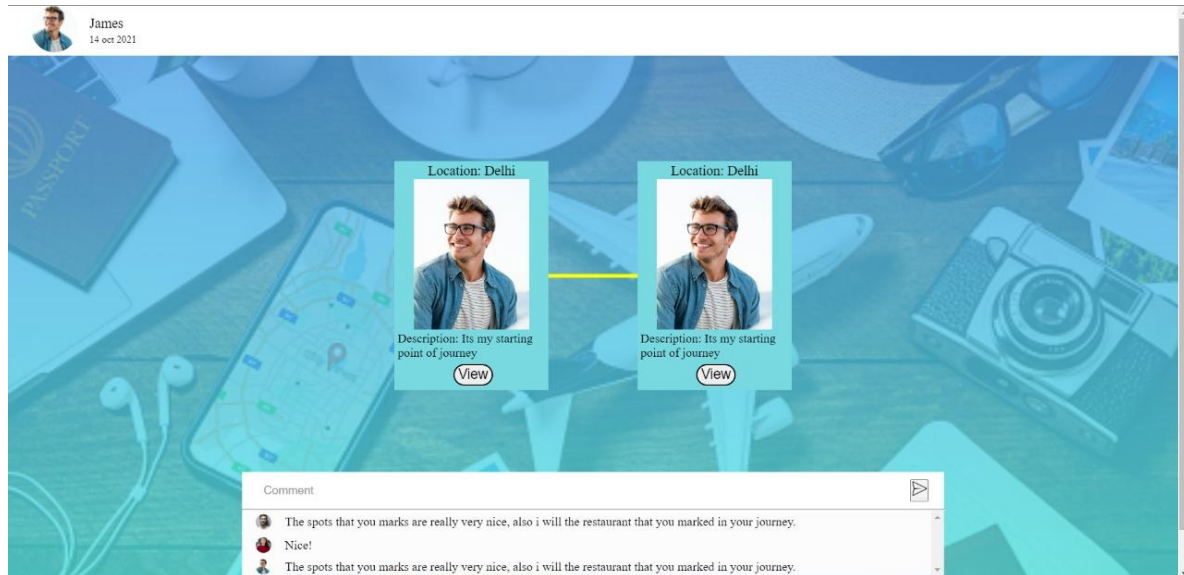
So we put some search results as an initial view just to give the user a better understanding of exactly what type of search results the search would fetch. But things could be made better as stated by the user.

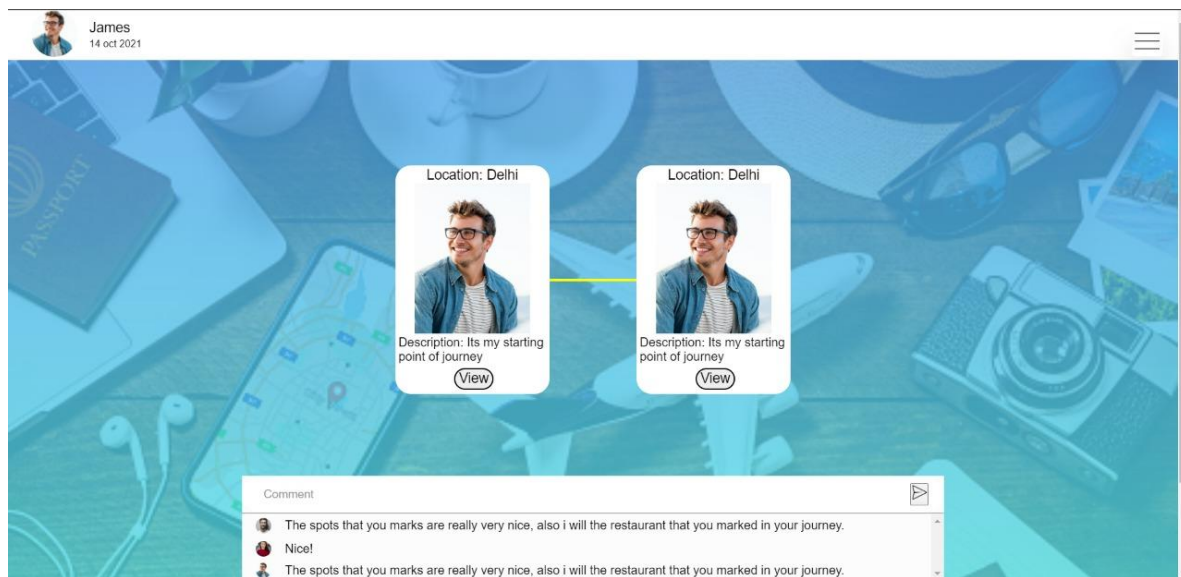


So we further tried to make things more obvious so it would be ;as the user said ; a no-brainer.



We also made some minor changes to improve the aesthetics of the platform as well. But we weren't able to accomplish much since we had yet to master the coding part for the frontend.





6 CONCLUSION

Making the idea an actual world project started with thinking of a unique idea that could help solve people's problems and then identify the stakeholders. The second step was a literature survey, which was to do research regarding the problem statement, which helped us identify our primary stakeholders and helped refine our problem statement knowing its correctness. The study helped us understand different aspects of our problem statement, people's behavior regarding the problem, and getting experience from earlier research on similar applications. The Research and insights we got from our research helped us form a basis for the questions we needed to know the answers from the stakeholders. The next step was to interview people to gather information and requirements of our users. The third step helped us know the problem users actually had regarding our problem and understand their expectations. The interviews and survey insights helped us reform our problems statement towards what people wanted. All these were stepping stones to reach the point where we know what we actually need to work on.

In the end, the final product came quite close to the ideal version of the application that was envisioned since the process started. But still, it has ways to go in terms of both UI/UX and the usability aspect. It can also be argued that the full potential of the idea would never be unlocked unless it has been implemented to the very best of our abilities. The process followed throughout the course of the project was a logical one and in fact one of the most efficient approaches possible.

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