**Project Proposal for Gather, a social app aimed at college students**

Group members:

Sweta Ghimire

Peyton Leathem-Boe

Sam Miller

Josh Millsap

**1. Introduction**

In a world of increasing complexity, it is becoming more and more likely that a student fresh out of high school will be moving out of state or even out of country. More than likely, they will have no social network to fall back on. Though they could join social activities such as clubs, in many cases lack of time and shyness can act as an impediment to a student’s social life.

Many social media apps focus on connecting a person to their existing friends, rather than helping them to make new ones. Gather would focus on allowing people-particularly students- to build their social networks via chat, creating a safe medium between various users that would allow them to get to know each other from a distance.

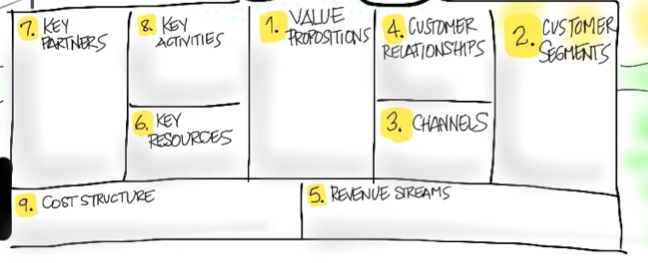
Our target customer base is college students, particularly college students who have difficulty making connections in their day-to-day life due to lack of time or introversion. The app creates opportunities for secondary customer bases as well, and should the team decide that there is sufficient demand there will be opportunities for expansion down the road.

The app will have a free version and a paid version that includes features such as the ability to create a private group, with restricted access. The paid version would also include a direct messenger for private conversations between two individuals. Once the app gains in popularity, there will be opportunities for businesses to pay for our app to recommend their business sites as potential locations for groups who have been chatting to meet in person.

As all of the members of the team understand the importance of privacy there will be measures put in to ensure that people keep their information as private as possible, along with frequent reminders in the app to meet in a well-lit, public place.

While there are apps with a similar goal, many of these apps focus on romantic partners rather than platonic, and such apps as do focus on platonic relationships do not create an area for their users to communicate and bond with a large group who shares their interests. Our app focuses on creating a wide pool of acquaintances with a common interest, some of whom may serve to become valuable assets or even important friends down the line.

**2. Business Model Canvas**



1. Value Propositions

In contrast to our competitors, our product focuses on creating a place for our customers to interact with like-minded strangers from the safety and convenience of their phones. Our product recommends groups to our users based on their interests, rather than requiring that the user be invited into a group by prior friends. Our focus on usability, speed, and slick design will also set our product apart from similar products on the market.

2. Customer Segments

We intend to specifically target college students looking to make new social connections, but there is definite possibilities for the app to be used outside of our target audience. Such an app could easily be used by adults moving to a new city, or graduates who are looking for new social group. The text-driven nature of the app would also make the app a good choice for those with physical or mental disabilities who find large crowds of people difficult to access yet who still would like to communicate with a new social group.

3. Channels

We plan to find places that our primary target would congregate and use guerrilla marketing tactics to help build a solid customer base. Within the app users can invite others on their contacts list to install the app and join them. Creating a website for our app, something that customers could simply browse without any commitment, would assist in convincing customers to try our product rather than the competition’s. Using feedback from said customer base, we could improve our product and create a core customer base of loyal customers who could then recommend our products to others. There is a possibility of using connections within LSU, such as contacting the LSU papers and recommending our product as a possible feature.

4. Customer Relations

Our team believes that customer relations is a vital part of our creation process, and as such we intend to listen to any feedback intently, and make changes where necessary for the happiness of our customers. Though there are many areas online where a customer could post reviews, we intend to assign a section of the app for user feedback, and we will maintain a set of social media accounts to ensure that our users feel like their voices are being heard.

5. Revenue Streams

While most features of our app would be free and we do not intend to include ads in the traditional sense, there would be a paid version of our app that allowed for the creation of private groups and direct messaging between two users. Once the app’s popularity grows, we can also charge local businesses to recommend their locations as potential meeting spots for groups.

6. Key Resources

We have a resourceful, creative team with a wide variety of skills that will be essential to the creation of our app. We also have a significant pool of intellectual resources in the form of our professors, and access to useful software such as Photoshop and Illustrator. Free software such as Pencil and Android Studio will also be important resources in the development of our app.

7. Key Partners

Our key partners would be businesses who allow us to use their location as a site for advertisements, such as the on-campus coffee shops where students tend to congregate. Schools may also provide sponsorship Later our key partners would consist of businesses who look to our app to increase their clientele.

8. Key Activities

Our key activities consist of planning our product well in order to ensure that our value propositions can be met.

* Plan the UI of the app
* Create a workable, flexible design
* Code a clean, highly functional product
* Engage in multiple tests
* Fix any bugs and optimize the code
* Once the product is finalized begin promotional strategies

9. Cost Structures

Due to the nature of our creative team, the cost of creating our product will be extremely low. We have free access to all of the software we need to make our app, and as a group we have all of the skills necessary to finish our app, eliminating any need for outsourced work. We have unfettered, free access to an intellectual network, and the most cost we might incur is the cost of materials for advertising.

**3. User input**

According to our user input, our customer base of college students are overwhelmingly interested in the product we intend to supply them with. Within a group of ten people with a wide range of social skills, the numbers overwhelmingly indicated that such an app would be useful even to outgoing college students, and more than half of our interviewees indicated some difficulty in finding people with similar interests to their own. The majority of our user interviews found making friends on campus difficult, and expressed an interest in a free social app that was fast, offered a slick interface, and was responsive. Several customers left highly useful feedback that we intend to incorporate into our design.

**4. Our Team**

Our team consists of Sweta Ghimire, Peyton Leathem-Boe, Sam Miller, and Josh Millsap. Each member of our team has experience coding in Java, and all four have experience with Android phones. Josh has website design experience while Peyton has experience with graphic design and writing. Sam is knowledgeable in server and network management. Sweta has knowledge in a variety of programming launguages, including Haskel, Python and Java. As a unit, the team has the necessary skills to implement an app that meets our value propositions and extends even further than what we have promised.

**5. Competitive Advantage**

We have a competitive advantage in that nothing on the market quite offers what our product offers. Many of the apps that do offer similar services have a poor relationship with their clients, such as the app Cliq that has several poor reviews where users express their dissatisfaction with the lack of features available on the free portion of the app and with the requirements of the app. Other apps offer connections on a one-to-one basis, rather than creating a wide network of people with a similar interest. Ours also offers the option of portability, creating thriving social groups that can be accessed from the convenience of a phone app.