

Authentic Food

Application for the Venture Cup *Idea* Competition December 2013

Kannathasan Pandian

Test Engineer at Phase One AIS
kap@phaseone.dk

Paul Henckel

Software Engineering student at ITU
pkrh@itu.dk

Maria Karampela

Software and Cognition student at KU
makar@itu.dk

Category: **People & Society**

The idea

Few things are more fundamentally important for human beings than eating. We eat to live. We also eat to experience, and in this age of globalisation where many people immigrate to other countries for work or travel, our interaction with food and the food cultures itself is undergoing changes. The food culture that we bring with us is not necessarily the same as the food culture present in the country we are in - necessarily so because sometimes the ingredients simply do not grow under different climate. Some food gets naturally included into the local food culture of the country in its authentic form, but often the inclusion happens with a small alteration to make it more suitable for the mainstream market of that country and thereby loses its authentic qualities --- like going to a thai restaurant to get served green asparagus instead of green chili, or to a indian restaurant to get served chicken masala without masala.

We think that each individual is the quality of measure to evaluate the authenticity of food, and should be able to get authentic, quality food of their choice whenever they want to without disappointment.

We also think that each individual is the resource and the authority of how exactly to prepare a dinner to make it authentic. The saying that there is nothing like your moms food is not without reason.

We want to make a service for people to reunite with authentic food experiences and promote a more social food culture for natives, foreigners and tourists of Denmark.

The problem it solves

Let's first identify three roles:

1. The Guest: is a person who wants to eat dinner X at time T1.
2. The Host: is an individual who is preparing dinner Y at time T2.
3. The Restaurant: is a company at a given location that offers on (or off) premise meals that can be selected from a standard set of options within opening hours.

Ask any mexican in Denmark where to get good, authentic mexican food and they will tell you that there are no places in Denmark.

Ask any greek in Denmark where to get good, authentic greek food and they will similarly tell you that there are none.

That is the situation for most foreigners in Denmark. They feel that the only way they can experience the real authentic food of their native country is if they make it themselves or take a trip back home.

We feel that the number of people with different backgrounds and who do not find restaurants suitable in meeting their needs, is growing.

By creating a service that easily allows guests to find the food that they want and by peer review ensure that it matches their expectations, we solve the problem of dissatisfied guests.

By creating a service that easily allows hosts to offer their expertise in food and share it with others, we enhance the enjoyment of making food.

And by making guests connect with hosts in a person to person way, we enhance the local community and increase our collective awareness about food and culture.

The team

Kannathasan Pandian is a qualified test engineer at Phase One A\S. He is also the president of the NGO Indians in Denmark that promote different activities for Indian immigrants and others.

Maria Karampela is a masters student at KU with interests in computing and cognition. Expertise in understanding how people interact and become cognisant with software frameworks.

Paul Henckel is a masters student at ITU with interests in ubiquitous computing and interaction design. When not studying he has a part time job as a test engineer at Phase One A/S.

With Paul's danish background, Maria's greek background and Kanna's indian background, we think we have a good base to start from.

The business case

Since selling food is not allowed by law in Denmark, we plan to offer the service free of charge for people to use at startup. If customer base starts to grow a lot we will introduce a small member fee for superusers to help drive framework - a freemium strategy.

We will team up with grocery companies for revenue and advertisements.

How to make it happen

We already have parts of a service blueprint in place and are still in the process of trying out different low fidelity prototypes on users to .

Some important concepts that we want to implement in our design of the service are:

- Natural interaction: This is particularly important for the Host role. We want to create a small gadget, the smart egg timer, which is a piece of hardware containing WiFi that hooks up with our service framework, an audio sensor for voice detection and a speaker for service feedback. An IVR system.
- Eponymous users: Like eBay, the method by which users on a website, gain confidence in another user is by a review system. We also want to model part of the Airbnb service and allow users to sign in with their Facebook account so that we can show them if the host or guest is a 'Friend of a Friend'. We feel that these initiatives will create enough incentive.
- Mental model review system: Because each person is different, we want to reflect this in the service in an implicit way. We will do this by data-mining on the user and use this to apply 'weights' on the review ratings that the user sees when he searches for hosts or guests.