

A Reliable Mobile App For Runners In Unfamiliar Territory

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When we think of a mobile app that could help us navigate through unknown territory such as a highway, an urban sprawl, or a country back road, we think of Google Maps. Generally, Google Maps is a solid GPS-based app that effectively helps drivers and public transport commuters go from Point A to Point B. However, for runners and those who travel the roads on foot, Google Maps is less so stellar. The Google Maps' "walking" feature has been in its beta stages since 2008, and the most up to date version still misses out on certain features that could prove useful to runners such as a voice navigation service.^[2] Routes that Google Maps generates for walkers and runners going from Point A to Point B are also less reliable as they may force travelers to take roads that shouldn't be accessed without a vehicle, or roads that are currently under construction. There are several running apps in the mobile app market, but many of these do not compensate the concerns pressed here as these apps all assume that the user actually knows where he or she is going.^[1] But this is not a reliable assumption as there many instances where runners may want to take the road less traveled by. Runners who move to a new location, work out during a business trip, or even participate in running events like Survive D.C. where they play tag through a large urban sprawl they may be unfamiliar about, are all instances where the user—the runner—will be running as fast as they, not knowing where they're going. They cannot be bothered to be slowed by looking at their mobile device to see where they are every second.

In this project, I propose creating a mobile app designed to help navigate runners on roads they are unfamiliar about. The app will also carry a feature where users create an account that will allow them to post travelling routes they find that others users can up-vote or down-vote as reliable. These posted routes will work similar to the songs that are on Pandora's playlists in that the more popular or up-voted routes will appear higher up on the list of suggested routes that the user can take.^[3] By having real people of the local area post the routes they've ran, this running app can reliably inform users who visit the area and are unfamiliar with the lay of the land. Users can also add notes to certain points on the route to inform of other users if there is currently construction going on and a detour is suggested and such. If such an app is created, we can test its efficacy by having volunteer runners run in an area they are unfamiliar about with the app and compare their times with local runners of the area.

1. Tahnk, J. L. (2010, February 23). 10 Essential iPhone Apps for Runners.
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3. Pandora Radio. (2013, September 7). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved September 8, 2013, from
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